



# CRECER

CHALLENGING RACISM & EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES  
THROUGH ETHNOCULTURAL RESEARCH

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 2017 - 2018

Derived from the Spanish word "crecer," meaning "to grow," the Challenging Racism & Empowering Communities through Ethnocultural Research (CRECER) team is a community-based participatory research team within the Department of Educational and Psychological Studies at the University of Miami committed to social justice for ethnic minorities and immigrant populations through academic research and community intervention and engagement.

CHALLENGING RACISM AND EMPOWERING  
COMMUNITIES  
THROUGH ETHNOCULTURAL RESEARCH  
(CRECER) LAB  
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## MEET THE TEAM



**GUERDA NICOLAS, PH.D.**

Dr. GUERDA NICOLAS joined the Department of Educational and Psychological Studies at the University of Miami in August 2008 and the past the Chair of the Department. She was an Associate professor at Boston College in the Department of Counseling, Developmental, and Educational Psychology prior to joining the EPS faculty. She obtained her doctoral degree in clinical psychology from Boston University. She completed her predoctoral training at Columbia University Medical Center and her postdoctoral training the New York State Psychiatric Institute/ Columbia University, Department of Child Psychiatry.

As a multicultural (Haitian American) and multilingual psychologist (Spanish, French, and Haitian Creole), her research is reflective of her background and interests. She is a licensed psychologist and was the Assistant Director of the Institute for the Study and Promotion of Race and Culture (IS- PRC) along with Dr. Janet E. Helms.

Her current research centers on partnering with ethnically diverse and immigrant communities to develop culturally effective mental health interventions to combat depression, address issues of racism and racial discrimination stress, enhance the racial and ethnic identity development of children and adolescents, and promote individual, family, and community well-being.

## MESSAGE FROM CRECER DIRECTOR

Dear Readers,

This issue of the Executive Summary highlights the work accomplished by the CRECER research team in collaboration with our community partners in Miami and in Haiti.

The values of CRECER are that we should not produce knowledge simply for knowledge sake, but to ensure that the work we do is meaningful for the communities and the people with whom we work. We value the resources and strengths of all of our partners who make the work that we do possible and sustainable. Therefore, the summaries of the work highlighted here are more of a reaction of their efforts than of ours.

As we are attempting to cope with the number of troubling social issues occurring in communities throughout the US, we hope that our community partnerships that seek to build the identity and family systems of people of color are making a difference.

Thank you to our community partners and to the foundations who continue to support our work both nationally and internationally. We look forward to another great year of programming in the 2017-2018 year!

Sincerely,  
Dr. Guerda Nicolas



## MEET THE TEAM

### ACTIVE MEMBERS



**NATACHA JANAC, M.S.**

Natacha earned her master's in Nashville TN, at Tennessee State University and is a clinician who enjoys working with children and families. Currently, she provides mental health therapy through Devereux Advance Behavioral Foster Care Agency. Natacha joined the CRECER team in Spring 2014. She serves as the Chair of the policy council of Miami-Dade County Community Action & and Human Service Head Start/ Early Head Start program; aiming to fight the war on poverty by providing comprehensive child-development, nutrition, education, and social services for children and parents.

She is a member of the (CAA) Community Action Agency board of directors, who over-see all the programs and services provided by the Miami-Dade Community Action and Human Services Department (CAHSD). Natacha is also a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc.; an organization that provide services to the community and helps educated young women to understand their worth. Natacha's research interests include working with families and communities and mental health issues in Haiti. Natacha is one of the founding Haiti Community Trust Board Members. She aims to focus her research on the strengths of marginalized individuals and their communities. She believes her work has the potential to make a transformative impact through empowerment and by promoting well-being.



**MONIQUE C. MCKENNY, M.S.ED.**

Monique McKenny is a second-year doctoral student in the Counseling Psychology Program at the University of Miami. She completed her undergraduate studies at George Washington University (2015) and obtained a masters degree in Counseling and Mental Health Services from the University of Pennsylvania (2016). Prior to graduate study, Monique worked for multiple youth focused non-profit organizations, including Capital Partners for Education and Children's Scholarship Fund Philadelphia. Her research interests are racial socialization, racial stress and trauma, self-efficacy in youth, and culturally relevant interventions. More specifically, Monique is interested in how racial socialization and familial support can be used to mitigate negative outcomes from social determinants like racism. She is interested in exploring how researchers and community members can work together to develop culturally relevant interventions for Black youth and their families. Monique has been recognized by the Ford Foundation Predoctoral Fellowship with Honorable Mention and awarded a scholarship by the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation. At CRECER, Monique is excited to serve as coordinator for the Strong Roots Program at the Barnyard Community Center.

## MEET THE TEAM



**“MAXIE” ASHLEY MAXIE-MOREMAN, M.ED./  
M.A.**

Maxie is a second-year doctoral student in the Counseling Psychology program at the University of Miami (UM). She currently serves as a program co-coordinator for the Kulula Mentoring program as well as coordinator for the Annual Day of Dialogue. Maxie also serves as co-chair on the Early Scholars Committee for the Caribbean Regional Conference of Psychology and co-chair on the Student Engagement Committee for the Intergroup Dialogue Working Group at UM. Lastly, Maxie is co-owner of Adventures of Bray Bray LLC, a children’s picture book series, which centers Black boys and promotes racial and ethnic identity development.

Maxie earned her B.S. in Psychology from the University of Florida and her M.Ed. and M.A. in Psychological Counseling at Teachers College, Columbia University. Maxie’s research interest is the correlation between racial identity development and academic outcomes of Black students in public secondary schools in the US. She is also interested in intergroup dialogue around identity issues.



**ESPRENE LIDDELL-QUINTYN, M.A.**

Esprene Liddell-Quintyn is a doctoral student in the Community Well-Being program at the University of Miami. She earned her Bachelor’s degree at the University of Guyana and her Master’s degree at Penn State Harrisburg. Before joining, the CRECER team, Esprene provided compassionate care and assistance to women with mental health challenges and supported research and organizational development initiatives at non-governmental organizations.

Her research focuses on examining intimate partner violence (IPV) within the Caribbean and among Caribbean immigrant women. She hopes to use her research to design interventions, build community social capital and build individual efficacy to combat IPV. Esprene is also interested in examining the acculturation and mental health experiences of Caribbean immigrant women. As a member of the CRECER team, Esprene will serve as the coordinator of the Breakthrough Evaluation Project and the co-coordinator of Day of Dialogue.

## MEET THE TEAM



DOROTHY ADDAE, B.A.

### MEMBERS COMPLETING INTERNSHIPS AND/OR DISSERTATIONS



KIMBERLY HO MISIASZEK, M.A.

Dorothy joined CRECER in 2013 and is a doctoral student in the Counseling Psychology Program at the University of Miami. She earned her B.A. in Psychology from the University of Missouri, working with Dr. Anna Bardone-Cone and Dr. Lisa Flores. Dorothy began her graduate career at the University of Illinois-Chicago in 2012 focusing on acculturation and adjustment of immigrant and refugees prior to transferring to Miami with Dr. Dina Birman. Dorothy's work with CRECER has included assistance with the Day of Dialogue event, as well as being project coordinator of the Kulula Mentoring Project and the Strong Roots Caregiver Program.

Dorothy's international background contributes to her passion and research focus. Her interests centre around the immigration experience, acculturation, and international policy. In addition to adjusting to the new country, Dorothy is interested in the identity development of immigrant children and immigrant family processes. Lastly Dorothy desires that her work and career will help in bridging the practice research gap, in disseminating and implementing research in communities.

Kimberly Ho Misiaszek is a counseling psychology doctoral candidate at the University of Miami's School of Education and Human Development. Her research seeks to understand and improve the psychological health of ethnic minorities and immigrants. Children and families with trauma and substance abuse histories, as well as behavioral, emotional, and developmental disorders have been the foci of her clinical work. She will be completing her internship and postdoctoral fellowship at Yale School of Medicine's Child Study Center, with an emphasis in trauma and children. She earned her M.A. in Mental Health Counseling and Wellness from New York University and a B.Sc. in Communications with a double major in Psychology and Public Relations from the University of Miami. A student of classical ballet since age 5, she also holds an advanced levels certificate of ballet through the Royal Academy of Dance and has performed throughout the island with Jamaica's Movements Dance Company.

## MEET THE TEAM



**CHRISMERLI RODRIGUEZ, B.A.**

Chrismerli is a second year Master student in the Mental Health Counseling program at Florida Atlantic University. Her current research interest Multicultural counseling, she wants to explore the best methods to provide culturally effective therapy and becoming cultural competent therapist. Chrismerli joined CRECER in the Fall 2016 and is involved in the Strong Roots: Children's Branch. She plans on perusing her doctorate education and continue her research in multicultural counseling. Chrismerli holds a receive bachelor's degree in psychology with a minor in Sociology from Florida Atlantic University.



**AMINA SIMMONS, M.A.**

Amina Simmons is currently a fourth year doctoral student in the Counseling Psychology program at the University of Miami. She also holds a masters in Educational and Counseling Psychology from the University of Missouri-Columbia and bachelor's in Psychology and Africana Studies from Pomona College. As an advanced doctoral student, Amina serves college populations as both a research assistant/mentor on the Challenging Racism and Empowering Communities through Ethnocultural Research team (CRECER). She also works with college students as a practicum clinician at the University of Miami Counseling Center, where she is serving her second year. Amina's clinical and research interests include college student development and women's wellness with an emphasis on Black American women and student parents. She was recently named a 2017-2018 Mitchell Trauma Fellow and received full-funding to conduct her dissertation, a mixed methods phenomenological study exploring Black American women's experience of race-based traumatic stress, health service utilization, and psychological well-being. In both research and clinical work, Amina has experience with diverse populations, across various settings (e.g. hospitals, universities, residential treatment, community centers), and operates from a strengths-based model of community partnership, utilizing therapeutic interventions that recognize and address trauma and resilience. Ultimately, Amina hopes to serve as both a practitioner and faculty member within a university setting, working closely with administrators, faculty, and staff to support and promote holistic well-being for college students.

## MEET THE TEAM



MARISOL MEYER, B.A.

Marisol is a first-year doctoral student in the Counseling Psychology program at the University of Miami. She has just joined the CRECER team and will be involved with the Kulula Mentoring Program. Her current research interest is the creation and implementation of tools and technology to promote positive mental health outcomes for multicultural underserved populations. She is also interested in exploring ways to increase opportunities for children belonging to these populations to develop emotional literacy skills. Marisol earned her B.A. in Psychology and in Anthropology at Dartmouth College.

### NEW MEMBERS



VANESSA THOMAS M.ED.

Vanessa Thomas is a University of Miami Alumna and recent graduate from UM's School of Education and Human Development, Marriage and Family Therapy Master's Program. Vanessa received her B.A. in Psychology at The University of Akron in Ohio. While there, she was involved with a research project that focused on academic success amongst Black youth in the local inner city schools. Additionally, the focus of her senior research project was on personality traits and their influence on intimate relationships. Currently, Vanessa works as a therapist in a community mental health center, primarily with children and families involved in the foster care system. Her work also involves youth and adults who have experienced trauma, which she does both in individual and group therapy settings.

Vanessa's role in CRECER includes being this year's group leader and facilitator for The Children's Branch of the Strong Roots Program. Her research interests include culture and trauma especially child hood abuse as well as racial identity amongst Black girls. Clinically, Vanessa enjoys working with minority youth, families, and couples and has a strong interest in international work (specifically in Africa and throughout the Caribbean).

# THE STRONG ROOTS PARENTS AND CAREGIVER PROGRAM

PROJECT COORDINATOR: RHONDA GRANT

CO-FACILITATOR: GINA ROSS

CRECER COORDINATOR: DOROTHY ADDAE

SITE: THE BARNYARD- COCONUT GROVE

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Program Goals and Objectives

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Coordinator and Facilitator Reflections

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## PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Strong Roots Parent and Caregiver Program was developed as one of the few family-based programs designed to target racial socialization within ethnic minority families. A parallel child program, the Children's Branch, was also created to complement the goals of this parenting program and to facilitate parent involvement in the overall program. The integration of these two programs created a multilevel intervention that features both joint and separate activities with the ultimate goal of fostering cultural knowledge and psychological well-being within parents, children, and the family system.

# PROGRESS REPORT FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2017 - 2018

## SESSIONS:

Meetings were typically bi-weekly and were coordinated around school and holiday schedules.

- 1 open house/program orientation session
- 11 parent/caregiver group meetings
- Black History celebration
- End of the year celebration

## PARTICIPANTS:

- 13 caregivers have participated in the group sessions, with 5-7 caregivers attending sessions on a regular basis
- Majority female, 1 male participant
- Majority African American or Caribbean Black
- Small number of caregivers of Hispanic descent

## CURRICULUM

Caregiver sessions were facilitated by a community parent coordinator, who is a veteran Strong Roots participant and a parent co-facilitator. Caregivers discussed Black families and the roles of Black mothers across generations (Module 1: racial socialization), self-care and the role Strong Roots plays in that (Module 3: well-being), and navigating difficult conversations such as news events and sex, and approaches to discipline. (Module 2: interactions and communication).

## MEASUREMENT

Two measurement sessions were conducted pre and post program implementation. Measures assessed participant demographics, family dynamics and quality of family relationships, ethnic identity, socio-economic, and overall life satisfaction. Measures were administered by the CRECER coordinator.

## PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Participants expressed valuing Strong Roots for the space and opportunity to share their experiences raising the children in their lives. The presence of new attendees broached the fact that Strong Roots is often spoken about as a “class” the community. Upon discussion it was agreed that any type of parenting class had a negative connotation and would not appeal to potential caregivers. They believed that a more accurate description of Strong Roots was: An educational support group that focusing on raising children and families.

## COORDINATOR AND FACILITATOR REFLECTIONS

“From the beginning, it was kind of hard (leading Strong Roots) but as we began to get further into the sessions, it got easier and more relaxed. “I thought I wouldn’t be able to do this, which I overcame.”

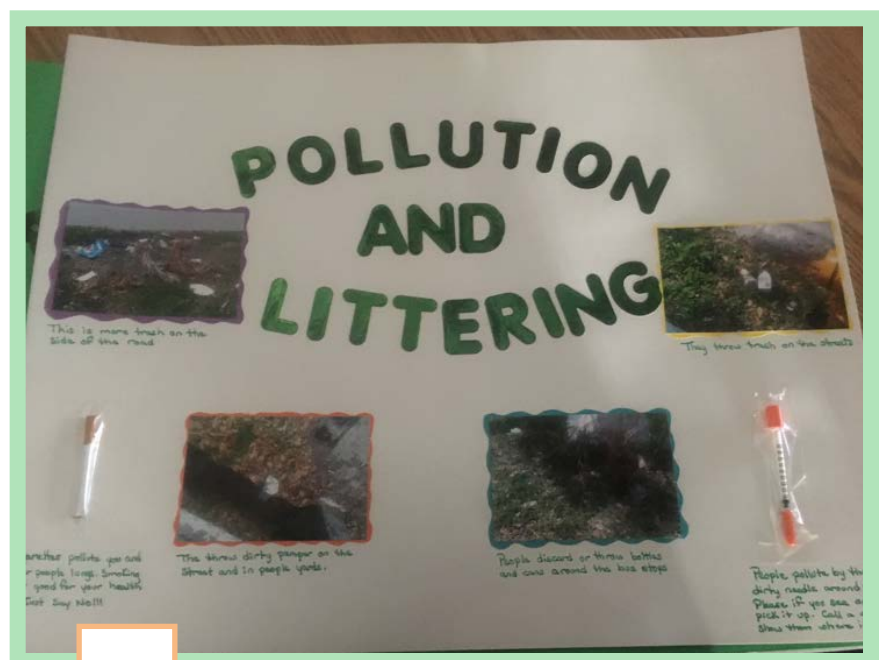
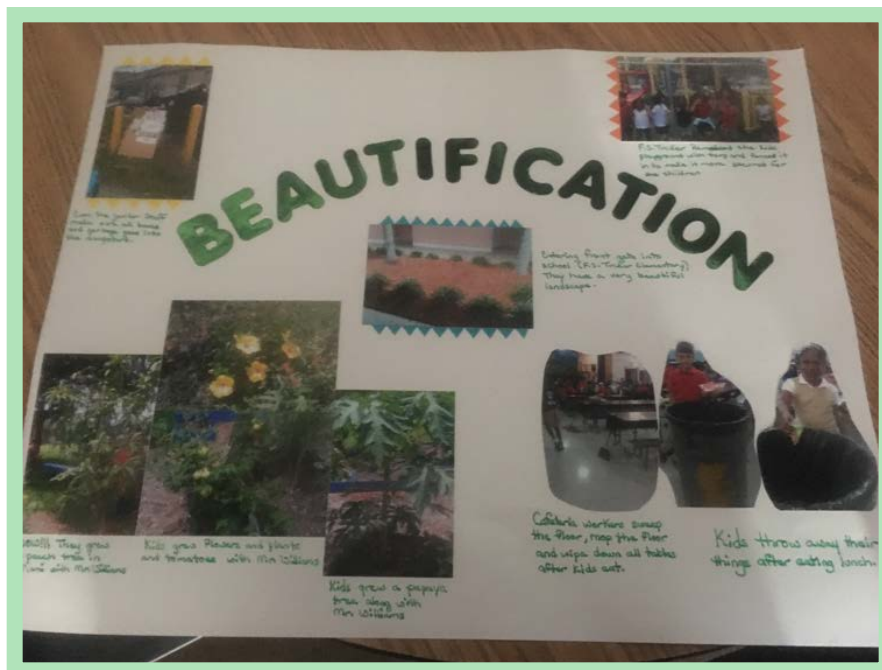
“This experience was wonderful for me, I have become more comfortable sharing my feelings with others as well. It’s very important to have strong leadership for Strong Roots because it helps the other parents to understand and become stronger in communicating with each other.”

## LESSONS LEARNED

Contextual considerations were at the forefront for this cycle, particularly with attendance and participation. Recruitment efforts were a focus due to staff changes and families transitioning out of the barnyard. In addition to having staff actively reminding parents of the meetings at the Barnyard, the project coordinator and co-facilitator have also passed out flyers and actively recruited in person at the Barnyard. Reminder messages and calls are also made during the week of each session.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

To address attendance and participation for upcoming cycles collaborating with the Barnyard on more systematic efforts would be beneficial. The Barnyard's fall registration period provides an opportunity to develop a registration list for Strong Roots. Furthermore a discussion with personnel about required participation in Strong Roots for families may also prove effective.





# THE STRONG ROOTS CHILDREN'S BRANCH

PROJECT COORDINATOR: CHRISMERLI RODRIGUEZ,  
VOLUNTEERS: KRISTINA OROZCO, ASHELY ROLL AND MARIA PALMA  
SITE: THE BARNYARD- COCONUT GROVE CARES, INC



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## PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Children's Branch is the child component of the Strong Roots program. In this portion, projects and exercises focus on children's individual and community identities (with particular focus on their racial and cultural identities), and relevant practices of dialogue and communication.

## PROGRESS REPORT

### SESSIONS:

- 1 open house/program orientation session
- 11 Children's Branch Sessions\*
- 1 Black History Month Celebration

1 End-of-the-year celebration

\*Meetings were typically bi-weekly and were coordinated around school and holiday schedules.



### PARTICIPANTS

Across the program, 41 children have participated in the group sessions, with approximately 19 children between the ages of 2 and 13, attending sessions on a regular basis.

**Participating children primarily were of African American or Caribbean Black, backgrounds in addition to a small number of Hispanic descent.**

# FALL 2017 CURRICULUM AND CHILDREN'S FEEDBACK

## MODULE ONE (FALL 2017)

The goal of the first session in Module one is to establish rapport between all members of the program – the children, the volunteers, and the staff, and introduce the program. The first session had 12 children who showed up with their parents. We began in a circle and said one's name and one thing we were thankful for. The children then stood up in a circle and said their names to a beat, as form of an icebreaker. Afterwards, we gave children a nametag to write their name on and decorate.

The next session had a slightly lower attendance, with 11 children and focused on the booklet called "All About Me". The booklet explored key characteristics about themselves, such as their physical identity, their community identities, their family tree, and their favorite things. Children were able to identify and discuss most of these characteristics amongst themselves and with the volunteers. The following session focused on exploring the children's family tree and overall support system. This session started the session with a BINGO game in which three children had the opportunity to win a prize. During the third session children continued to work on their "All About Me" booklets. Throughout this session the children and volunteers engaged in conversation about bullying and fear of isolation. In the fourth session the children started out by playing "feelings charade" in which each child took turns identifying each other's expression. During this session each child shared what they found beautiful about themselves and each other. The goal of the session was to promote positive self-view and explore children's view of themselves.



## MODULE TWO (SPRING 2018)

After winter recesses six sessions were held, that covered the remaining material of Module one and Module two. In the fifth session, the children prepared for the Black History Month Live Museum. The goal of this session was for children to choose one black figure who is still alive and prepare a presentation for the Black History event. The day of the event each group presented on a variety of Black figures including Serena Williams, Gabby Douglas and Supreme Court Justice Sonya Sotomayor. The following session the children identified members of their village and create “gratefulness” card for each key member of their village. The children and volunteers engaged in discussions about people they were grateful for and their reasons for being grateful. During the next session children explored their view on skin color and emphasized that his/her skin color is special and beautiful. The session started with a reading of “The Skin I Live.” The children discussed the book among each group with positive responses on the pictures and theme of the story. Afterwards, the children drew an outline of their own body on butcher paper. Throughout the activity the children were fully present and expressed feelings of contentment. Subsequent session children discussed with volunteers how they deal with stress and solve problems. Some of the examples of how the children solve their problems included talking to a friend and/or family member and playing a game with their friends. The volunteers and children discussed helpful tools to solve problems. In addition, the children made stress balls out of water beads. The children thoroughly enjoyed this activity and even shared their stress balls with their parents and caregivers. The remaining sessions were spent completing the curriculum including finishing their gratitude cards and coloring their banner made by a volunteer and the children. The last session the children completed the “What Stuck?” activity in which they reflected on their favorite aspects of the program. The children shared that they enjoyed completing the activities including the BINGO, the play and discussions. The children added that they learned to get along better with their sibling and be nicer to others. During the session the children discussed the End-of-the-Year celebration and their performance. The children had to choose a performance demonstrated the impact pollution and gun violence had in their community.

## PARTICIPANTS’ FEEDBACK

The children expressed that they enjoyed being able to complete more hands-on activities like stress balls, BINGO, and body tracing. The children also enjoyed completing the session and activities outside. Being outside served as a motivation to finish the more directive activities. The children responded well to being in groups with both younger and older children. The older children would often help the younger children by guiding them through activities. The volunteers indicated the need for more activities that are hands-on. The volunteers also suggested a reward as an incentive for completing discussions and activities.

## REFLECTIONS

Overall, the children responded well to the activities added to the curriculum including revised BINGO and making stress balls out water beads. The children enjoyed the activities that were more interactive and required group work. The volunteer was also able to facilitate great discussions with the children. This can be attributed in great part to the number of volunteers available and dividing the children into groups. This academic year there was a slight drop in attendance that could be attributed to a change of schedule of another program. In addition, two volunteers withdrew from the program which impacted the size of the groups and one-on-one time with the children. In the future we will continue to encourage group work and add more volunteers to ensure that the children receive individualized attention.

## FUTURE PLANS AND LESSONS LEARNED

In the future the goal would be to modify curriculum to include more interactive technology as well implement assessments to understand the impact and effectiveness of the curriculum.

# THE KULULA MENTORING PROGRAM

PROJECT COORDINATORS: MAXIE MOREMAN AND MONIQUE MCKENNY  
SITE: THE BARNYARD- COCONUT GROVE CARES, INC



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## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Kulula took place at the Barnyard Community Center for twenty-one sessions during the Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 semesters. A total of 2 Counseling Psychology Ph.D. students at the University of Miami served as co-coordinators of the mentoring program and supervisees of the Kulula mentors. A total of 6 mentors from the University of Miami (five undergraduates and one alumna), implemented the program, which ran weekly for an hour on Monday evenings. Of the children signed up to participate in October, there has been an average weekly attendance of 12 mentees. The mentees are divided into 3 smaller groups or jamaas (Swahili term for group or family). Mentees demographics include: 68% females and 32% males, ranging from kindergarten to 6<sup>th</sup> grade.



## MEETING ROUTINE

At the beginning of every Kulula meeting, all the mentors and mentees gather together in a large circle, to perform the opening ceremony of watering the tambiko (Swahili for libations) plant. This ceremony serves as a unifying start to the Kulula meeting. The plant signifies the growth the mentees and mentors hope to gain through the program and their acknowledgement of things they're thankful for that have contributed to their growth thus far. Each individual takes a turn watering the plant and responding to prompt, "what are you thankful for?" Then, mentees and mentors work in their respective jamaas for 30-40 minutes on the curriculum, joining as a group to close by singing the "I Love Myself" song together.

On a weekly basis, the mentors and program coordinators gather for a post Kulula debrief to discuss any behavior issues, concerns, or updates for the coming week. Monthly, the mentor group comes together for a Kulula family dinner. Dinners include a time for fellowship and team building and serves as a space to discuss the mentees progress, reflect over the past month's meetings, and prepare for the next month.



## CURRICULUM AND PROJECT

Kulula’s Afrocentric based curriculum focuses on social, identity, and academic development. The 5 modules throughout the curriculum address the following questions: “Who Are The People In My Life?”, “Where Am I From?”, Who Am I?”, and “Who Do I Want To Be?”.

Each jaama began with the 1<sup>st</sup> module “Who Are The People In My Life” which encouraged the mentees to examine the relationships in their lives. The 2<sup>nd</sup> module, “Where Am I From?”, prompted mentees to complete journal activities and discuss what they believed were some positive and negative elements in their relationships, where members of their family live, and their knowledge of their community and family history.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> module, “Who Am I?”, encouraged the mentees to examine the perceptions about themselves phenotypically, including standards of beauty, negative judgment, and self-esteem. Other projected module(s) for the Spring 2017 semester included: “Who Do I Want to Be?” Mentees completed journal activities and discussed positive and negative images of themselves and representation in the media.

Mentors emphasized building positive images of self through creation of self-affirming collages and encouraged future-oriented discussions (i.e. deciding to pursue college). Other themes and topics discussed included: leadership, achievement, values, and community change.

## KULULA MENTORS

Kulula mentors consisted of six University of Miami undergraduate students. Mentor racial and ethnic demographics included Black American, Caribbean, and African as well as Latino. Mentor gender included cis-gendered female.



## DATA COLLECTION

Data collection takes place at the beginning and end of the academic year to assess any changes in racial identity, racial socialization, self-efficacy, and feelings of social support. In the 2016-2017 academic year, under the supervision of the PI, the project co-coordinators developed a brief qualitative version of the original quantitative evaluation measures that was more developmentally appropriate for the elementary aged students who were seeking participation. More specifically, the newly established measure was revised to account for a broader age range of students (e.g. kindergarten through middle school), participant fatigue, and utilizes developmentally appropriate language.

Literature on the Adolescent Racial and Ethnic Socialization Scale (ARESS; Brown & Krishnakumar, 2007), the Multi-Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM-R; Phinney & Ong, 2007), the Self-efficacy Scale (SES) for Children (SEQ-C; Muris, 2011), and the Child and Adolescent Social Support Scale (CASSS; Malecki & Demaray, 2002), informed the development of the new qualitative measure to assess participants: basic demographics, knowledge about race and ethnicity, social support, and academic self-efficacy.

The changes were approved by the Institutional Review Board for 2017-2018 and the project co-coordinators moved forward with planning regarding implementation and analysis utilizing the new measure. Coordinators plan to pilot this new measure during the 2018-2019 academic year. Following the pilot year we will move forward with formal implementation and analyses of data.



## KULULA EVENTS

Major events held within the Kulula program this year included the Black History Celebration and the End of the year celebration. Both were a huge success and brought out Kulula mentees, mentors, parents, and community members.

The Black History Celebration was held in February and featured a “live museum”. With the help of their mentors, mentees chose a person of color that they admire and created a portrait of them. The students were encouraged to choose a public figure that is still living and serving their community. During the celebration, guests were invited to walk around the Barnyard to see each portrait where the mentees stood ready to present information about the achievements of the figures they chose. Our mentees worked hard to honor some of their role models through this presentation, including Michelle Obama, Chance the Rapper, Serena Williams, and Kevin Hart.

The End of the Year Celebration centered on the youth’s civic engagement projects and challenged us all to think about what we could do to better serve our community.



## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROJECT

The civic engagement project is the last major aspect of the Kulula curriculum. It challenges the mentees to manifest what they have learned throughout the year on relationships, service, and pride into a project that will uplift and empower their own communities. This year, our mentees decided to focus their energies to address gun violence and pollution.

Aiming to reach a large audience, the mentees proposed that they create videos for their cause to educate their community and highlight ways to help. With the help of their mentors and equipment from the Digital Media Lab at the University of Miami, the mentees researched, acted in and directed their own feature films focused on gun violence and pollution.

A film screening was held at the End of the Year Celebration where the mentees’ parents and family could see them on the big screen. The mentees showed great insight as they explained complex concepts like gun restriction and the consequences of littering. These films will go on to have great impact and hopefully promote lasting change once shared online with the Barnyard community and on the UM CRECER website.

## ADDITIONS AND CHANGES FROM 2016-2017

This year the Kulula co-coordinators decided to extend the mentor training from 1 day to 2 days. Previous trainings involved co-coordinators reviewing the Kulula mentoring project, a brief overview of the curriculum, team building exercises and discussion regarding the current environment and history of gentrification in the Coconut Grove community. The extension allowed co-coordinators to add activities and discussion around social identities (i.e., race, ethnicity, gender, SES, etc.). Additionally, with the extension co-coordinators were able to provide a more in-depth review of the curriculum and also incorporate skits. Mentors responded well to the new additions.



# BREAKTHROUGH MIAMI COLLEGE BOUND

PROJECT COORDINATOR: ESPRENE LIDDELL-QUINTYN  
SITE: UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI, CORAL GABLES CAMPUS



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## PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Breakthrough Miami is an eight-year tuition-free academic enrichment program for under-resourced middle and high school students in Miami-Dade County. Breakthrough Miami uses a student-teaching-students model to provide middle and high school opportunities and support, as well as ensuring students graduate from high school on time and attend college. Students enter the Breakthrough Miami program during their 5th grade summer and can continue in the program up through high school graduation. Breakthrough Miami's College Bound School Year program prepares high school students for the challenges of college and beyond, with advanced academic support, guidance on college selection and experiential learning that develops life skills. The program is held monthly on Saturdays at the University of Miami Coral Gables campus.

## EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the academic and psychosocial impact of the program. The current evaluation focuses on 9th graders participating in the Breakthrough Miami College Bound program. Students participating in the evaluation completed assessments at the beginning of the program and at the end of the academic year. This progress summary details the results of both the pre and post- assessments.

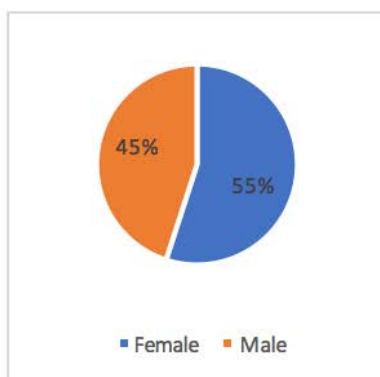
## DEMOGRAPHICS

This section provides descriptive information for the parents of the 9<sup>th</sup> graders and the 9<sup>th</sup> graders who attended Breakthrough during Fall 2017 and Spring 2018. Of the 47 students who completed the survey, their ages ranged from 13 to 15 years. The following shows the percentage of students whose parents were born in the US compared to parents who were born outside of the US.

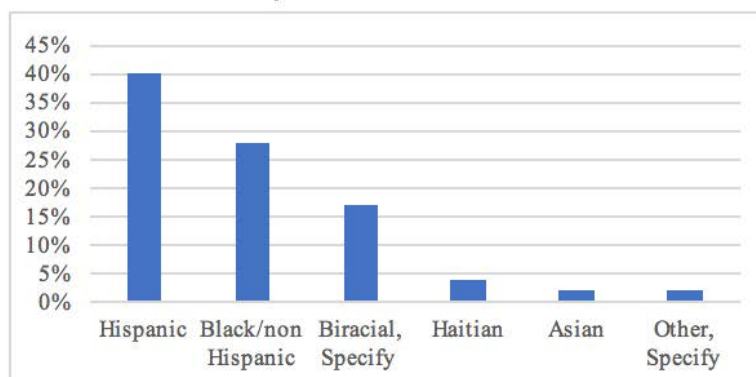
- Mother born outside of the US: 60 percent
- Mother born in the US: 40 percent
- Father born outside of the US: 57 percent
- Father born in the US: 36 percent

Parents born outside of the US came from one of the following countries: Belize, Brazil, China, Honduras, Jamaica, Cuba, Columbia, Italy, Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Panama, Venezuela, Mexico, El Salvador and Singapore.

**Sex of Ninth Graders**



**Race or Ethnicity of Ninth Graders**



## ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Students are engaging in quantitative pre and post-testing which evaluates a number of areas related to achievement, psychological and social variables, and college readiness factors. Specifically, areas of focus include:

**Self-efficacy.** Students' sense of self-efficacy was measured in terms of social, academic, and self-regulatory/coping abilities. Higher scores reflect positive youth personal adjustment.

**Racial and Ethnic Socialization.** Students completed a questionnaire on coping with racism and discrimination, promoting cross-racial relationships, ethnic heritage, cultural values, and ethnic pride. Higher scores indicate higher racial and ethnic socialization.

**Leadership.** Leadership skills were measured in terms of achievement, planning, utilizing language to reflect leadership, and the use of debate or discussion. Higher scores indicate positive leadership skill perceptions.

**Social Support.** Students' level of social support was measured through items that assessed levels of support from family, friends, and other special persons in the student's life. Higher scores indicate higher levels of social support.

**Civic Engagement.** Students' sense of civic engagement measures student's sense of self-efficacy in terms of taking civic action to solve a problem in their community. Higher scores indicate a higher sense of civic engagement.

**Percent of students with increased scores at post-test**

Measure	% of students with increased scores at post-test	N
Racial and Ethnic Socialization	40%	19
Self-Efficacy	43%	20
Leadership	38%	18
Psychological and Cognitive Engagement	47%	22
Social Support	43%	20
Civic Engagement	55%	26

## POST-EVALUATION REFLECTION

At post-test, scholars reported lower scores in the following areas: racial and ethnic socialization, leadership skills, psychological and cognitive engagement skills and social support. On the other hand, higher scores were observed for civic engagement and self-efficacy.

## LESSONS LEARNED

Sixty-nine students completed the pre-evaluation, however, it was challenging to assess the same number of students at post-evaluation because some scholars were participating in other extracurricular activities on the day we administered the post-evaluation. Therefore, the number of scholars assessed decreased from pre-evaluation to post-evaluation. To avoid this from reoccurring, we will work with the Breakthrough staff to select appropriate dates for post-assessment so that we can reach all scholars enrolled in Breakthrough.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Breakthrough will implement short talking sessions and incorporate activities during the academic year in an effort to build scholar's civic engagement skills and leadership skills. The Breakthrough staff will also consider recruiting teaching fellows that reflect the race and ethnicity of the scholars. In addition to this, CRECER team members will coordinate a workshop on one Saturday of the month to teach scholars about racial identity and racial socialization. CRECER also plans to integrate Kulula modules into the Breakthrough program in the upcoming academic year.

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## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The School of Education and Human Development at the University of Miami partnered up with Rebati Sante Mental and the Musée Ogier-Fombrun, to implement the Mental Health Training program that aims to provide training to teachers on mental health issues. The overall goal of the program is to equip the teachers with the knowledge and support that will enable them to address the socio-emotional needs of the students they teach. Our Mental Health Training Program is grounded in a community empowerment and sustainability framework.

## PARTICIPANTS

For the program year 2017-2018, the Mental Health training took place in Saint Marc, Arcahaie and Montrouis. A total of 4 trainings were provided from the months of January 2017-May 2018. The training in March was held in one location with 30 participants. Each training was led by a regional leader and selected trainers for each region. The trainings had an average of 15 participants from each of the cities. Totaling 45 participant plus trainers. Four participants from each location that exhibited a great understanding of the material and had consistent participation were chosen to become trainers for future trainings.



Edmonde Suplice Bausile Ex Senator of Haiti

## ACTIVITIES

During the month of May 16, 2018, a Mental Health Conference was held in Arcahaie to celebrate “Flag Day”. Our Flag is Our Identity. A totally of 7 schools participated in the conference with 500 attendees.

## SUMMARY OF TRAINERS

- A total of 12 individuals have been trained as trainers through the program from January 2018-May 2018.
- The trainers represent different areas in the region such as Arcahaie, Luly, Mountrouis, and St. Marc.
- The trainers created their own team name, Unity Team.
- Meetings are held monthly with the trainers who will be involved in the upcoming training and a large training meeting is hosted twice a year with all of the trainers.



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### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Often, scholarly endeavors about community-based work focus narrowly on methodology with regard to implementation of interventions or outcomes of proposed projects and partnerships. While this work is valuable, it seems that there may be an integral piece of the process that academics, organizers, and communities can easily overlook. The building of partnerships is the cornerstone of community work, yet rarely do we see scholars talking about what that process looks like. This process of bringing community entities that often have very little contact with one another, although they serve many of the same community members is about both intentionality and careful facilitation of a dialogue.

## SUMMARY OF PROGRAM

Day of Dialogue is a community driven event that the Challenging Racism and Empowering Communities through Ethnocultural Research (CRECER) team has been facilitating in Miami since 2006. Started at Boston College and moving to the University of Miami, under the guidance of Dr. Guerda Nicolas, Day of Dialogue provided community organizations with the opportunity to come together to both identify and take action to address the needs of the community. Previous dialogue topics have included: racism, tolerance, promoting youth engagement, Native American communities, building bridges across cultures, addressing the needs of Blacks in Miami, and facilitating race dialogue in different settings. This year, the collaborative partners hosted the tenth day of dialogue that focused on microaggressions and intergenerational communication.

During our tenth day of dialogue we held a youth focused event in which a variety of community organizations as well as youth and adult community members participated in skits illustrating microaggressions and the state of intergenerational communication. Additionally, participants engaged in small group break out sessions in which they had discussion around those topics. Participants reconvened at the end of the event to engage in youth and adult fishbowls where they reflected on the small group discussion. In addition to the fishbowl reflections, youth performed original poems to close out the event.

## LESSONS LEARNED

DOD CRECER coordinators and community partners learned two key lessons after facilitating another annual day of dialogue. The first lesson learned is that when community partners anticipate coordinating a youth focused event it is imperative to immediately involve the youth in the planning of the event. Although, youth were involved in the planning process this year it would've been helpful for them to also decide on the topic and coordinate the logistics of the event along with community partners.

The second major lesson learned was that marketing and promotion efforts must be more structured in upcoming years. The community team distributed responsibility for marketing amongst organizations, but perhaps assigning one organization the role of marketing will prove more efficient in future day of dialogues.

Each year day of dialogue is provided we gain new insight into how this community event can continue to grow, inspire and inform. Lessons taken from this year and previous years will be integrated in the upcoming annual day of dialogue.

# SELECTED ARTICLES AND BOOKS

## FROM THE

# CRECER LAB

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Smith, L., Bernal, D. R., Schwartz, B. S., Whitt, C. L., Christman, S. T., Donnelly, S., Wheatley, A., Guillaume, C., Nicolas, G., Kish, J., & Kobetz, E. (2014). Coping with vicarious trauma in the aftermath of a natural disaster. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 42(1), 2-12. doi:10.1002/j.2161-1912.2014.00040.x

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If you are interested in developing competencies in community-based, culturally-informed research, are interested in bringing a CRECER program to your community, or would like to make a donation, please contact us by any of the following ways below.

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# GET INVOLVED!



We are always looking for individuals and organizations who share our commitment to social justice and our dedication to enhancing cultural identities and promoting health and wellbeing amongst ethnic minority and immigrant individuals and communities.

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