

My life and career have been shaped by issues of diversity, equity and inclusion. Growing up in a community with large racial and socioeconomic diversity, I developed an early awareness of the challenges that many of my lower-income peers faced: from needing to work multiple jobs in high school to struggling to afford a four-year college degree. These constraints were exacerbated by attending a high school with limited resources and opportunities. The gulf between my public school education and private school alternatives became evident upon attending a private liberal-arts college, where I was faced with a less diverse and more affluent set of peers. In addition to feeling under-prepared, as a dual major in computer science and economics I experienced the challenges of being a woman in male-dominated STEM fields.

My decision to pursue a Ph.D. in Economics stemmed from a desire to study the social inequities I had witnessed firsthand. I have studied questions around the barriers that women and students from minority-racial backgrounds face in STEM fields and access to mental health services in low-income communities. Across these topics I have worked to incorporate an equity-lens into all stages of the research process. For example, when designing a field experiment involving underrepresented minority students, I employed a race-conscious approach to ensure that the study did not have negative impacts on students or exacerbate existing racial gaps. I also served as a teaching assistant for a course on the Economics of Discrimination which offered an opportunity to practice thoughtfully navigating conversations about sensitive topics related to race and gender with undergraduates from different social backgrounds. I brought this equity-lens to my work at Abt Global. On one project, as the study-design lead, I volunteered to attend a conference on data sovereignty issues facing indigenous populations to better understand how to run a culturally-sensitive impact evaluation in schools that included students from indigenous tribes.

The inequities I observed in my early life also motivated an early commitment to mentorship. As an undergraduate, I helped lead an organization for students from underrepresented backgrounds in Economics and served as an active member of groups for women and students from underrepresented identities in computer science. Outside of collegiate mentorship, I worked to reduce barriers to access in STEM fields for students in low-income communities by volunteering as a computer science instructor in underfunded schools. In this work, I witnessed how students internalized gendered and racial stereotypes about STEM fields at early ages. In my senior year of college, these observations led me to co-design and facilitate a computer science mentorship program for high school students from underrepresented backgrounds. During my Ph.D., I helped lead the Economics department's graduate Women in Economics group and served as the director of the department's internal Ph.D. mentorship program, which matched incoming Ph.D. students with a graduate mentors. These programs were instrumental in cultivating community within the department and providing support to female-identifying individuals and first-generation graduate students.

Across my research and mentorship, I have worked to incorporate a diverse set of voices in discussions. This often involves intentionally highlighting the voices of underrepresented individuals in conversations where those voices have historically been left out. I believe truly equitable research requires continuous learning, both from your fellow researchers and from the communities who are impacted by the research. I hope to continuously learn how to foster diversity, equity, and inclusion in my future workplace, as I have throughout my career.