

KERRY E. VACHTA, PhD
Evaluation/Education Associate
Carleton College, Science Education Resource Center (SERC)

CAREER SUMMARY

Specializing in systems change and program evaluation; adaptive planning and learning; community-based and participatory research and evaluation; and strategic thought partnership, I have spent my career honing and applying the skills needed to support community-based, non-profit, educational, and philanthropic organizations in their pursuit of equity-centered, community-driven change - primarily around environment, food, and health. I help my partners create a shared vision, develop a plan to achieve that vision, and apply data gathered through systematic, typically multi-level/multi-method, evaluation to assess how well the plan is working and the intended and unintended impacts of their efforts as they unfold. Through strategic thought partnership, we apply the resulting learning to make evidence-based adjustments that better align practice and process with desired outcomes to, ultimately, achieve success.

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Evaluation/Education Associate, Carleton College Science Education Resource Center (SERC) - At SERC

I provide evaluation and learning support for partners in education and the public sector (among others) who are working on vital initiatives designed to improve public understanding of, and engagement in, critical environmental concerns and to facilitate community engagement in the design and adoption of innovative and equitable solutions.

Founder and Executive Director, Rogue Scholar, LLC and Just Research, LLC (February 2018-Present).

Through these consulting firms, I put the skills I developed during my 30 year-long academic and evaluation consulting career (e.g. systems change, organizational and program evaluation; participatory and community-based research; strategic and adaptive planning and learning; thought partnership; grant development and management, etc.) to work. Rogue Scholar is available to work with governmental, philanthropic, non-profit, community-based, and private sector organizations. Just Research provides the same services on a sliding scale for community-based and smaller non-profit organizations working for social justice and equity - especially health-, food-, land-, and environmental justice. Following Spark's unanticipated closure, Rogue Scholar became the initiative-level evaluator for Missouri Foundation for Health's Infant Mortality Reduction Initiative.

Data & Evaluation Specialist, COVID Crisis Counseling Program team (October, 2020-Present) Lutheran Family Services Rocky Mountains (October 2020 - present). Providing internal evaluation services, learning and thought partnership to support the efforts of the FEMA-funded Crisis Counseling Program team as they work to help individuals, families, organizations, and communities in the Denver area and Western Slope through the COVID19 pandemic.

Senior Researcher, Spark Policy Institute (November 2018-Feb 2020). In this role, I helped to secure and direct evaluation, organizational consulting, and systems change projects. This included writing proposals; designing research and evaluation plans, tools, and protocols; and supervising an interdisciplinary team of researchers, project managers, and other support staff through all aspects of projects designed to help clients create, implement, and assess typically community-based/participatory, multi-level and cross- sector strategies to effect systems change around complex problems including generating deliverables for internal/client, funder, and public audiences. I served as Spark's team lead on the national BUILD Health Challenge evaluation team and Lead Evaluator of the Missouri Foundation for Health's Infant Mortality Reduction Initiative.

Extension Specialist: Participatory Research in Environment and Community Health. Michigan State University Extension Health and Nutrition Institute (October 2014 - June 2017). PI/PD Detroit Child Health Incubator Research Project (CHIRP) CHIRP was a \$4.4million, NIFA-funded 6- year participatory action research partnership with Detroit community-based organizations addressing child

health and well-being “through a food justice lens”. Authored grant. Designed financial and data management tools for partners to maintain compliance with research protocols, federal and university regulations. Facilitated flow of funding, resources and information between partners, the university and the funder. Designed all research and evaluation protocols and instruments. Secured IRB approval. Hired/trained/supervised research team. Conducted and/or supervised data collection, entry, analysis and reporting to partners, funder, and academic audiences.

Research Associate Professor, Oakland University, Rochester, MI (March 2011 - August 2014). PI/PD Detroit Child Health Incubator Research Project (CHIRP) (See previous position for description and responsibilities.)

Director, Evaluation Research Unit, Center for Urban Studies, Office of the Provost, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI (August 2006 - March 2011). Established contracts and grants sufficient to support the unit with an average annual budget ~ \$450k. Designed and served as Lead Evaluator for more than 25 projects. Hired, trained, and supervised team of project managers (typically doctoral students), undergraduate research assistants, and support staff. Conducted and/or supervised data collection, statistical and qualitative analysis, and reporting to clients and funders.

Director, Evaluation Services, Private sector grant writing and evaluation firm. (August 2005 - July 2006). Developed evaluation plans for grant proposals. Developed evaluation protocols and measures, analyzed data, generated reports for federal funders (typically US Dept. of Education) and clients. Served as lead evaluator for select projects/clients. Recruited, contracted and managed sub-contractors. Established evaluation and professional guidelines for sub- contractors. Managed departmental budget.

Director for Community-Based Research, Center for Community Action and Research. The Pennsylvania State University at Harrisburg (June 2001 - July 2005). Created and implemented CBR program linking graduate students with CB/PAR and related opportunities in service to CBOs in Harrisburg and Middletown, PA. Led development of training and manual for other faculty interested in adopting CB/PAR and service learning and directory of community partners interested in hosting students.

Assistant Professor, Environment, Community & Social Change. The Pennsylvania State University at Harrisburg (July 1998 - July 2005). Designed/delivered courses in Community Psychology, Action Research, Environmental and Urban Sociology, Race & Ethnicity, and intersectional Women’s Studies. Departmental and Campus service.

Director, Environmental Programs and Offerings, Antioch College (July 1996 - 1998). Designed environmental studies curriculum and courses to meet the needs of students in 2 sponsoring divisions: one focusing on policy and economics, the other on social movements and humanities. Recruited cross-listed offerings from other university faculty. Chaired senior thesis committees. Served on multiple campus committees. See teaching dossier (available upon request if not attached) for program content.

Project Manager, Urban Resources Initiative, Michigan State University Department of Forestry (URI/MSU). (June 1991 - 99). Built community partnerships to design, implement and evaluation participatory community redevelopment projects and their impacts on the participating communities and CBOs - including their use of the projects to facilitate strategic planning and leadership skills and to address equity and land-justice. (Profiled in the US Environmental Protection Agency’s 1995 report, Sustainability in Action: Profiles of Community Initiatives Across the United States, highlighting the nation’s most promising contributions to urban sustainability. Available at: <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951d015292091;view=1up;seq=3> p. 162.)

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Forestry: Michigan State University. Fall 1999 (with concentrations in Urban, Community and Environmental Studies). Dissertation: *Participatory Development and Organizational Empowerment: Community Forestry in Detroit*.

M.A., Ecological/Community Psychology: Michigan State University 1993. Master's Project: *Using the Cognitive Social Learning Variables to Predict Participation in the Environmental Movement*.

B.A., Psychology: University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign 1987.

B.A., Sociology: University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign 1987.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Colorado Evaluators Network

Colorado Collaboratory Professional and peer development network to improve the practice of Equitable Evaluation.

American Evaluation Association Including the following Topical Interest Groups (TIGs): Collaborative, Participatory & Empowerment Evaluation, Independent Consulting, Non-Profits and Foundations Evaluation, Organizational Learning and Evaluation Capacity Building, and Systems in Evaluation

SELECTED RESEARCH AND EVALUATION PROJECTS

(Served as Lead/Principal Evaluator. Authored grants marked *)

Foundation/Agency Evaluation Projects and Grants

Missouri Foundation for Health, Infant Mortality Reduction Initiative Evaluation. Project Lead. Spring 2019-July 2020.

BUILD Health Challenge. Initiative level evaluation team, Spring 2019-Feb. 2020. (Cohort 2.0 Evaluation Lead.)

Kresge Foundation: Detroit Food Justice Task Force 2010-2011.*

Ford Foundation: Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion: Community Recognition, Reconciliation and Renewal Project 2008 - 2011.

United Way of Southeast Michigan: Resource Investment Sub-Committee, Developing an Awardee Self-Evaluation Tool. 2010.

Skillman Foundation: Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion: Building Inclusive Communities in Southwest Detroit 2009 - 2010.

Skillman Foundation Good Schools: Making the Grade Initiative, Detroit, MI 2006-'08.

Completed Major Grant

National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) Childhood Obesity Prevention Program Child Health Incubator Research Project (CHIRP)*. Grant co-author, Principal Investigator/Project Director. Project Budget: \$4.4 million. Evaluation research budget: \$950,000. 2011 - 2017.

Other Federal Grants

USDA Small Business Innovation Research, Detroit Civic Agriculture Network. 2010.*

National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, Biotechnology Instruction for High School Science Teachers WSU Center of Environmental Health Sciences, Detroit, MI: 2010 - 2011.

National Science Foundation (NSF). Broadening Participation in Computing Information Management and Systems Engineering, Wayne State University Department of Computer Science, Detroit, MI: 2006 - 2010.

National Institute of General Medical Sciences of the National Institutes of Health. Wayne State University Initiative for Maximizing Student Diversity, Detroit, MI: 2006.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. Providence/St. Johns,
Detroit, MI 2006 2007.

State Grants

Martin L. King, Jr.-Cesar Chavez-Rosa Parks (KCP). Initiative for Select Student Support Services Wayne State University Pathways to Nursing, Detroit, MI 2006.

Client Self-Funded Evaluations

Bradford Academy Stakeholder Evaluation, Southfield, MI 2008-'09 2007-'08 2006-'07

Youth Development Commission (YDC) Program Evaluation, Detroit, MI 2007 2006

YDC Board, Administration and Fund Development Evaluation, Detroit, MI 2007.

University of Detroit Jesuit Academy. Evaluation of the Making the Grade Initiative Award- funded Project 2007.

SCHOLARLY PUBLICATIONS

Conference Posters

Vachta, K. E., Kweli, M. T, Campbell-Stewart, L., Davis-Williams, P., Adjuman, H., Yakini, M., Jordan, D., Thompson-Curtis, M., Spady, L., Ademé, S. and Newsom, A.. (2016). *Detroit Child Health Incubator Research Project: Creating a transformational community.* Poster presented at the 2016 Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior (SNEB) annual conference.

Vachta, K. E., Kweli, M. T, Campbell-Stewart, L., Applebaum, D., Mosley, S., Davis-Williams, P., Adjuman, H., Yakini, M., Green, S. Thompson-Curtis, M., L. Spady & S. Ademé, and Newsom, A.. *Participatory Action Research and the Child Health Incubator Research Project: Transition and transformation.* Poster presented at the 2015 SNEB annual conference.

Vachta, K. E., Kweli, M. T, Campbell-Stewart, L., Applebaum, D., Mosley, S., Davis-Williams, P., Adjuman, H., Yakini, M., Spady, L., Niajoy, S., Thompson-Curtis, M., and Newsom, A. (2014). *Participatory Action Research and the Child Health Incubator Research Project: Emerging consensus and collaborative solutions.* Poster presented at the 2014 SNEB Annual conference.

Vachta, K. E., Kweli, M. T, Campbell-Stewart, L., Applebaum, D., Davis-Williams, P., Adjuman, H., Yakini, M., Spady, L., Thompson-Curtis, M., and Newsom, A. (2013). *Participatory Action Research and the Child Health Incubator Research Project: Expanding and deepening the learning community for children's health in Detroit.* Poster accepted for presentation at the 2013 SNEB Annual conference.

Vachta, K. E., Kweli, M. T, Campbell-Stewart, L., Applebaum, D., Davis-Williams, P., Adjuman, H., Yakini, M., Spady, L., Thompson-Curtis, M., and Newsom, A. (2012). *Participatory Action Research and the Child Health Incubator Research Project: Building a learning community for children's health in Detroit.* Poster presented at the 2012 SNEB Annual conference.

Articles

Vachta, Kerry E. "Participatory Democracy." Green Politics: An A-to-Z Guide. 2010. SAGE Publications. 13 Dec. 2010. <http://www.sage-ereference.com/greenpolitics/Article_n94.html>.

Vachta, Kerry E. "Farmers Market." Green Food: An A-to-Z Guide. 2010. SAGE Publications. 13 Dec. 2010. <http://www.sage-ereference.com/greenfood/Article_n58.html>.

Vachta, K. E. (2006). "Power, Prestige and Practice: The Legacy of the Perpetual Quest for Legitimacy in Community Psychology." The Community Practitioner of the Community Psychologist.

McDonough, M. H. & Vachta, K. E.. (2005). "Community Empowerment and the Urban Forest" in R. G. Lee & D. R. Field Communities And Forests: Where People Meet The Land. Oregon State University Press: Corvallis, OR.

- Cunningham, K. C. and Vachta, K. E.* (2003). Critical Currents in Community Service Learning and Community-Based Research: History, Theory and Practice. Joint issue of Journal of Applied Sociology 20(2). and Sociological Practice, 5(2), 23-41. (*Authors listed alphabetically)
- Vachta, K.E. (2002). "Participatory Development and the Sustainable City." In The Sustainable City, Proceedings of the 2002 conference, Segovia, Spain.
- Vachta, K. E. (2001). Book Review: "Citizens, Experts and the Environment: The politics of local knowledge by Frank Fisher." Society and Natural Resources.
- Grove, M.; Vachta, K. E.; McDonough, M. H. & Burch, W. B. Jr. (1992). "The Urban Resources Initiative: Community Benefits from Forestry." In Paul H. Gobster (ed.). Managing Urban and High Use Recreation Settings: Selected Papers from the Urban Forestry and Ethnic Minorities and the Environment Paper Sessions, 4th North American Symposium on Society and Resource Management pp. 24-30.

Conference Presentations

- Vachta, K.E. (2002). Participatory Development and the Sustainable City. Sustainable City 2002, Segovia, Spain.
- Cunningham, K. & Vachta, K. E.* (2002). Service Learning and Community-Based Research: Reflections on Opportunities and Challenges. 52nd Annual Meeting of SSSP. (*NOTE: authors listed alphabetically)
- Vachta, K. E. (2001). Quantitative/Qualitative or Positivist/Post-positivist?: Participatory Research and Sociological Inquiry. 72nd Annual Meeting of the Pacific Sociological Association (PSA), San Francisco, CA.
- Vachta, K. E. & McDonough, M. H. (2001). Toward a Model of the Empowerment Process at the Community Organizational Level. 72nd Annual PSA Meeting, San Francisco, CA.
- Vachta, K. E. and McDonough, M. H. (2000). Participatory Development and Organizational Empowerment: Community Forestry in Detroit. 8th International Symposium on Society and Resource Management, Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington.
- Vachta, K. E. and McDonough, M. H. (2000). Reclaiming Community: Participatory Research and Environmental Justice in Detroit. Midwest Sociological Society, Chicago, Illinois.
- Vachta, K. E. and McDonough, M. H. (1998). Community Forestry and Organizational Empowerment. Society of American Foresters, Traverse City, Michigan.
- Vachta, K. E. (1996). Applications of Social Forestry in the Urban United States: Community Outcomes of the Urban Resources Initiative in Detroit. 6th North American Symposium on Society and Resource Management, State College, Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania State University.
- Grove, M. & Vachta, K. E. (1992). The Urban Resources Initiative: Applications of Social Forestry in Baltimore and Detroit. 4th North American Symposium on Society and Resource Management, University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Conference Sessions Organized/Chaired

- "Race and Environmental Justice: Theory and Action," at the August 2003 annual SSSP meeting, Atlanta, GA. Co-sponsored by the Racial and Ethnic Minorities and the Environment and Technology divisions.
- "Environmental Inequities and Community Responses" at the August 2004 annual SSSP meeting, San Francisco, CA. Co-sponsored by the Racial and Ethnic Minorities and the Environment and Technology divisions.

SELECTED PROFESSIONAL EVALUATION PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS TO CLIENTS

Select Formal Research & Evaluation Reports To Clients/Partners*

- Vachta, K. E. (2021). Colorado Spirit CCP Team Professional Quality of Life. (A report to CDPHE on a statewide survey exploring compassion satisfaction, burn out, and secondary trauma among crisis response workers.)
- Vachta, K. E. (2021). CDPHE Colorado Spirit Statewide Professional Quality of Life Assessment, Site-Specific Results and Recommendations. (Reports generated for the leadership of each of the 17 sites.)

Vachta, K. E. (2021). Q12021 LFS Colorado Spirit Wellness Team Quarterly Progress Reports.

Vachta, K. E. (2020). Missouri Foundation for Health. IMRI-Wide Key Learnings Summary. January-July 2020.

Vachta, K. E. (2020). Missouri Foundation for Health. IMRI Progress Update, January-July 2020.

Vachta, K. E. (2020). BBF Progress Update, January-July 2020.

Vachta, K. E. (2020). Flourish Progress Update, January-July 2020.

Vachta, K. E. (2020). Creating an IMRI Dashboard Tutorial.

Vachta, K. E. (2019). Missouri Foundation for Health, Infant Mortality Reduction Initiative 2018-2019 Annual Report. With Amanda Valenta and Joby Schaeffer.

Spark Policy Institute & Equal Measure (2019). *BUILD Systems Change Compendium*.

Spark Policy Institute (2019). BUILD Health Challenge: Implementation Assessment Site Reports. (Lead Author - summary reports to each of the 19 partnerships summarizing overall and site-specific results.)

Vachta, K. E. (2012-2016). Progress of the CHIRP collaborative. Annual Reporting to National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

Vachta, K. E. (2014). CHIRP Overall Progress Report: Y1-4. Mid-project report to National Institute of Food and Agriculture summarizing progress toward project goals and findings from 2011-2014.

Vachta, K. E. (2010). Broadening Participation in Computing Demonstration Project, Final Report.

Vachta, K. E. (2010). Report to the Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion - Summary of Key Findings: Plymouth Canton.

Vachta, K. E. (2009). Bradford Academy Annual Evaluation Report 2008 - 2009. (Annual reports were provided for each of the preceding evaluation years.)

Vachta, K. E. (2008). History and Development of the Skillman Foundation's Good Schools: Making the Grade Initiative.

Vachta, K. E. (2008). A Contextually Sensitive Evaluation of the Skillman Foundation's Good Schools: Making the Grade Initiative 2008 Implementation Report.

Vachta, K. E. (2008). Youth Development Commission Program Evaluation: 2007 Annual Report.

Vachta, K. E. (2007). A Contextually Sensitive Evaluation of the Skillman Foundation's Good Schools: Making the Grade Initiative, Key Personnel Report.

Vachta, K. E. (2007). A Contextually Sensitive Evaluation of the Skillman Foundation's Good Schools: Making the Grade Initiative, Detroit City-Wide Parent/Guardian CATI Survey Report.

Neely, C. & Vachta, K.E. (2007). A Contextually Sensitive Evaluation of the Skillman Foundation's Good Schools: Making the Grade Initiative, Impact Report.

Neely, C. & Vachta, K.E. (2007). A Contextually Sensitive Evaluation of the Skillman Foundation's Good Schools: Making the Grade Initiative, Technical Assistance Report.

Vachta, K. E. (2007). Evaluation of Good Schools Award-Related Activities at University of Detroit Jesuit Academy: Final Report.

Hanlin, A., Scott, W. & Vachta, K. E. (2007). Youth Development Commission Program Evaluation: 2006 Annual Report.

Vachta, K. E. , Martinez, V. E., Evans, L., Hall, F., Solava-Reid, S. and Thomas, A. C. (2004). Preparing for Mainstreet USA: A report to the Greater Middletown Economic Development Corporation on the Middletown downtown area.

Vachta, K. E., Robinson, J., Sanders, T., Cervasio, T., Coscomb, T., Gangaware, A., Jones, A. Martin, A. and Pinnick, M. (2004). Putting the Neighbor Back in the 'Hood: A report on the 2nd Annual South Allison Hill Multicultural Festival.

Vachta, K. E. (2003). Report on the Results of the Household Survey. (United Way of the Capital Region, Harrisburg. PA).

Vachta, K. E. (2003). Report on the Results of the United Way of the Capital Region Household Survey. Supplemental Report: Urban/Rural Comparison Results.

Vachta, K. E. (2003). Final Report to the South Alison Hill Weed and Seed AID Team. With Jim Bankes, Heather Erb, Melissa Henry, Angela Keen, Weckea Lilly, Christine Quimby, Catherine Sensenig, Brenda Stephens, Jason Weller, and Charmeka Whitehead.

- Vachta, K. E., & Cunningham, K. with the assistance of graduate assistants Christine Quimby and Jason Weller (2003). Revitalizing the Center for Community Action Research (C-CAR): A report on the Level I CYFC grant to establish service learning and action research partnerships.
- Vachta, K. E. (1997). Urban Resources Initiative: Community Forestry in Detroit. (Report to the U.S.D.A. Forest Service).
- McDonough, M. H. & Vachta, K. E. (1997). Urban Resources Initiative: Community Forestry in Detroit. (Report to the W. K. Kellogg Foundation).
- McDonough, M. H., Vachta, K. E., Funkhouser, S. L., & Gieche, A. L. (1995). Creating Community-Forestry Partnerships. SuDocs Call No.: A 13.36/2:P 35. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.
- Vachta, K. E. & Buncic, C (1994). Community Resources Manual. Department of Forestry, Michigan State University.
- McDonough, M. H. & Vachta, K. E. (1991). Systematic Incorporation of Adoption-Diffusion Concepts into the Cadillac Pilot Project. Report to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Forestry Management Division.

*In addition to formal reports listed above, data briefs too numerous to list were provided to clients following each data collection activity for internal/formative purposes. In many cases, quarterly or bi-annual reports were also provided for internal/formative purposes.

References, Teaching Dossier, Writing Samples and other materials available upon request