Announcement of 5 New Catalyst Training Grants

October 18, 2017 – The Berkeley Initiative for Transparency in the Social Sciences (BITSS) is pleased to announce the recipients of our second round of Catalyst grants![1] In the next year, these five Catalysts will lead a graduate level course in the U.S.; conduct workshops in Peru, Niger, and Southeast Asia; and facilitate conversations with policymakers in Rwanda!

The Catalyst Program formalizes a network of scholars working to advance the teaching, practice, funding, and management of transparent and reproducible social science research. It connects and empowers individuals to create change in their own classrooms, universities, and networks, as well as to mobilize on a broader scale to inspire a shift in scientific norms towards research integrity.

Now with 82 researchers at 62 institutions in 24 countries around the world, Catalysts are developing open science curricula, presenting at high profile conferences, and equipping the next generation of researchers with a toolkit to practice transparent and reproducible research. Since the program's inception in 2015, 13 Catalysts have received Catalyst Training Grants to support activities that have reached over 550 students, research practitioners, and faculty.

BITSS is excited to still have funding available to support a few additional Catalyst projects! We are accepting proposals from designated Catalysts for activities to be completed before June 2018. Proposals will be accepted until **11:59 pm on Sunday, November 12, 2017** for the final round of reviews by the review committee.

Interested in becoming a BITSS Catalyst? Apply for the program here.

Read a brief synopsis of each Catalyst project below. We'll post more information about individual events as the projects move forward. Stay tuned!

Catalyst Training Projects

PhD Level Course: Transparent, Open, and Reproducible Policy Research

Catalysts: Sean Grant (RAND Corporation)

Location: Pardee RAND Graduate School and RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, CA

This course aims to train graduate students at the Pardee RAND Graduate School in Policy Analysis and researchers at the RAND Corporation in the essential theories and methods of transparent, open, and reproducible research. This elective can be taken by graduate students with an analytic concentration in "Social and Behavioral Science" as well as RAND staff eligible to audit Pardee courses. After introductory sessions on the research transparency and open science movement, enrolled students will discuss and learn the essentials of the open science toolkit, namely: pre-registration of study methods and analysis plans; reproducible workflows; open research materials, code, data, and access; reporting guidelines for preparing research manuscripts; and replication.

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[1] Proposals were reviewed by a Review Committee of research transparency experts from diverse fields, including two external reviewers and one internal BITSS reviewer.

Knowledge Sharing on Best Practices in Research Transparency and Reproducibility to Address the *File Drawer Problem* and Publication Bias in Rwanda

Catalysts: [Mercyline Kamande](#) (Impact Evaluation Research for Development (IERD); Mount Kenya University Rwanda)

Locations: Mount Kenya University Rwanda; University of Rwanda; and Economic Policy Research Network, Rwanda

This project seeks to share knowledge and skills to motivate open, transparent, and reproducible research in order to address the file drawer problem and publication bias in Rwanda, as well as to improve the usability of research findings for policy-making. The Catalyst will first conduct exploratory research on the extent of the file drawer and publication bias problems in Rwanda. The project will then introduce to scholars in the areas of economics, business studies, social science and public health the tools that exist to address the problem, as well as the benefits of using best practices in open, transparent, and reproducible research. These practices will include pre-registration and pre-analysis plans; sharing materials, data, and code using platforms like the Open Science Framework; and replication studies and meta-analysis.

Research Transparency and Reproducibility workshops will be held at two of the leading universities in Rwanda – the College of Business and Economics at University of Rwanda and Mount Kenya University Rwanda. Independent researchers from the Economic Policy Research Network will also be included. To ensure learning, weekly peer coaching meetings will be conducted by IERD to extend the peer learning experience realized by those enrolled in an online course currently in progress. The project will also include policy dialogue sessions with other stakeholders including Rwandan policymakers.

Southeast Asian Social Sciences Workshops for Transparency and Reproducibility

Catalyst: [Ben Marwick](#) (University of Washington)

Locations: University of Yangon, Yangon; Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok; Royal University of Phnom Penh; National University of Laos, Vientiane; and Vietnam National University of Social Sciences, Hanoi

Reproducibility, transparency and openness of research has received a lot of attention and resources in Western countries, but the global South and East have had fewer opportunities to participate in these important developments in many research areas. This project will bring to five mainland Southeast Asian institutions, with whom the Catalyst has collaborated, a two-day workshop to motivate and update social scientists in the global East about current issues relating to the reproducibility, transparency and openness of research, and provide them with skills to improve their research along these lines.

The Catalyst will draw on BITSS materials and his own publications and presentations using the R programming language to teach general social science skills to enhance the reproducibility, transparency and openness of research. The workshops will be optimized for low-bandwidth internet, drawing on previous experience teaching computational methods in these locations. Workshop summaries will be generated in local languages and freely distributed online and in hard copy to more easily transmit the contents to students and other scholars.

Reproducible Research Computational Tools for the Next Generation of Social, Behavioral and Policy Scholars

Catalyst: [José Manuel Magallanes](#) (Pontificia Universidad Católica del Péru; University of Washington)

Location: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú

In developing countries, accepted applicants to pursue PhD studies in highly-developed countries in the Social, Behavioral and Policy (SBP) fields will face several challenges. It will be particularly challenging to develop abilities to carry out research in a more transparent way, considering that this topic may not be present in the curriculum. There is enough time for them to learn the basic tools of reproducibility before they leave their countries, so as to encourage their adoption of transparent practices.

To master these tools, this workshop motivates and trains accepted applicants who are about to start their SBP PhD studies. The content will consider the background of SBP students in Latin America, and offer several workshops in Peru. The workshop will guide the students into the steps to ensure their research in shareable and replicable via the use of tools such as LaTeX, R, RStudio, Zotero, GitHub/AWS, Sharelatex/Overleaf, and Docker. This project will also provide curricular material in Spanish, which can be used for future activities in the region. It is also a great opportunity to involve universities and government agencies funding international higher education; which may increase the interest in the introduction of these topics in the higher education SBP curriculum.

Research Transparency and Reproducibility in the Social Sciences -- Impact Evaluation Workshop

Catalyst: [Elise Wang Sonne](#) (United Nations University – MERIT)

Locations: University Abdou Moumouni of Niamey, Niger

In order to raise the quality of academic manuscripts written by Niger's graduate students to allow them to compete in the demanding arena of research, the Catalyst has partnered with the UC Berkeley OASIS Initiative to organize a three-day intensive bootcamp on research transparency and reproducibility in social science research and impact evaluation.

The aim of this activity is to (i) raise the awareness of Masters and PhD students in public health, sociology, psychology, political sciences, economics, and statistics of the Abdou Moumouni University in Niamey (Niger) of common academic research misconduct issues and present solutions to avoid and address them; and (ii) train researchers working for the UC Berkeley-OASIS Initiative in Niamey on data management and organization, developing pre-analysis plans, pre-registering studies, and dynamic documents, which will be extremely useful for their day-to-day tasks pertaining to ongoing impact evaluation projects.