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MDP Newsletter

Spring 2022

Issue: 19

Director's Note

Greetings from the **University of Florida's Master of Sustainable Development Practice (MDP) Program** and welcome to our **Spring 2022 newsletter**. As we bring the 12th academic year of the MDP program to a close, it's an appropriate moment for reflection and appreciation during these challenging times. In the past year, UF MDP students conducted their field practicums in Ethiopia, Morocco, the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico (two students), Uganda, the Amazonian region of Peru, Costa Rica, and one student carried out a global study on health worker protests during COVID-19. A table below summarizes the interesting and diverse topics pursued by our students. Here, I would like to recognize their professionalism in carrying out these challenging practicums and express my appreciation to faculty members who provided invaluable guidance and support during the planning, implementation, and analysis of information from their capstone projects. I also want to convey my gratitude to the organizations that hosted our students, creating opportunities that aligned our students' projects with their needs. If you would like to learn more about the work of our students, please visit the Institutional Repository here:

[https://original-ufdc.uflib.ufl.edu/ufir/results/brief/4/?t=sustainable+development+practice+\(mdp\)](https://original-ufdc.uflib.ufl.edu/ufir/results/brief/4/?t=sustainable+development+practice+(mdp))

The past few years have placed in stark relief the daunting challenges facing the sustainable development agenda, embodied in the aspirational Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations. If not familiar with the SDGs and the breadth of the 2030 Agenda, an overview is provided here: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>.

Significantly, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by all UN Member States in 2015, acknowledging the urgency of embarking on a global, collective effort to transform our world into a more sustainable, peaceful, and equitable home for present and future generations. Since the adoption of the SDGs the world has experienced a confluence of complex challenges, including, among others, the COVID-19 pandemic, unprecedented extreme climatic events, rapid biodiversity loss, economic shocks precipitated by supply chain disruptions, and now the devastating conflict in Ukraine. At the best of times, progress towards the SDGs would test the collective resolve of mankind and would require continuity well beyond political cycles that often determine the commitment and support channeled to address global challenges (consider the withdrawal of the United States from the Paris Agreement during the Trump administration). During crises, attention and investment shift to 'immediate' concerns, resulting in the tendency to scale back or even postpone collective, governmental investment and action to address the chronic problems impacting the planet and humanity.

The difficult question, then, is how to sustain progress on challenges embodied in the SDGs in a world immersed in turmoil? It is unlikely that the world, characterized by uncertainty, will ever attain the degree of stability we yearn for, yet postponing attention to chronic, and in some cases, even existential threats is not a viable path to the future we aspire to, for present and future generations. While much can and is being done both by governments and by a growing number of entities in the private sector, taking local action is an approach with which everyone can get involved.

An attribute of the MDP program that attracts students is its emphasis on practice and the opportunities identified to contribute to the ongoing, local-scale efforts of diverse organizations seeking to achieve, objectives like the following: improve access to nutritious foods and water, conserve biodiversity, enhance educational opportunities, improve the provision of health services, increase participation in electoral processes, empower women and youth, reduce environmental contamination, strengthen value chains to increase income accruing to entrepreneurs, farmers and communities, and create employment opportunities, to name a few. MDP students take on this type of work in the local Gainesville community as well as internationally, when conducting their capstone field practicums, while doing coursework in UF (see examples below), and afterwards in their professional practice as MDP alumni. It is an inspiration to witness MDP students and alumni – and youth in general - from around the world committed to making the world a better place, in line with the broad SDG agenda.

I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank once more core and affiliate faculty members who have generously contributed to the MDP program. We are fortunate that each year faculty members across different departments of UF enthusiastically support our students in every facet of their programs. I also want to convey my appreciation to the Center for Latin American Studies, the Center for African Studies, the International Center and the Tropical Conservation and Development Program for their continuous, vital support to the MDP program.

Congratulations to our new graduates who completed their programs during this past academic year. We are proud of how they

succeeded in navigating challenging circumstances to carry out their capstone field practicums on timely topics with renowned host organizations. We wish you much success as you embark on new professional challenges, and we look forward to hearing from you in the coming months and years.

In the Faculty Spotlight, Alejo Sánchez interviewed Dr. Bette Loiselle, Director of the Tropical Conservation and Development (TCD) Program. Bette began her tenure as TCD Director 11 years ago and has sustained a close association with the MDP Program ever since. Students across many departments of UF participate in the TCD certificate, including MDP students, creating a vibrant network of students and faculty devoted to different aspects of conservation and development around the world. Bette has also served on MDP student committees, and the TCD program has awarded different types of competitive funding to our students (from graduate assistantships to travel grants).

Bette is an exemplary role model for our students, particularly in the way she and her husband, together with and many other colleagues and students, have carried out research on bird populations in the Amazonian region of Ecuador over the past two decades. This long-term research has enabled them to track population trends and how they are impacted by climate change, placing in evidence the importance of continuity in research efforts. Of course, continuity is equally important in nearly all efforts to further processes of sustainable development, so Bette's passion and commitment are an example and inspiration to us all.

Director's Note

Finally, I want to extend my appreciation to Alejandro Sánchez (Alejo) who has served as the MDP Graduate Assistant over the past year. Alejo has taken leadership in the development of our newsletters each semester, in the preparation of our weekly listserv (enhanced with humorous memes) and supported my Spring course "Design and Methods of Sustainable Development Practice". He has taken on all these tasks in an enthusiastic fashion, while navigating his coursework and preparing his field practicum final report. He also took the initiative to represent UF in the North American Chapter of the MDP Student and Alumni Advisory Council (SAAC), succeeding, in conjunction with other dynamic students and alumni from other MDP programs, in raising the profile and functioning of the SAAC. Many thanks Alejo, we wish you much success and happiness.

Glenn Galloway PhD
MDP Program Director



Spring 2022 Poster Session



2022 Fieldwork Festival Poster Session participants (from left to right): Priya Pershadsingh, AJ Hart, Dr. Renata Serra, Alejo Sánchez, Jennifer Johnson, Sarah Strohminger and Ana Ugalde.

Prizes awarded to our MDP Students at the Spring 2022 Fieldwork Festival Poster Exhibit

Name	Project	Region / country	FP Placement	Poster Session Award
Alejandro Sánchez	Facilitating smallholder farmer engagement with data-driven agriculture: a case of study in the Yucatán Peninsula, México.	Yucatán, México	UNDP Pequeñas Donaciones Mexico (PPD), Guardianes de las Semillas, Misioneros A.C.	Conference Grand Prize
Raine Donohue	Identifying pathways to prosperity for rural communities in the Peruvian Amazon through the PRIME framework and the Green Value Tool.®	Iquitos, Peru	Earth Innovation Institute	Best Video Prize
Ana Ugalde-Brenes	The business case for women's participation in beekeeping cooperatives: a case study of the Kuxtalil honey producers' cooperative in Yucatán, México.	Yucatán, México	UNDP Pequeñas Donaciones Mexico (PPD) and Kuxtalil Women's Cooperative	1st Prize MDP
Jennifer Johnson	Learning from the international diversity of health worker protests.	Washington, DC	Accountability Research Center	2nd Prize MDP

MDP Graduates

Spring 2022

Our graduating students celebrated in person at the Ben Hill Griffin Stadium and the O'Connell Center with family and friends, and at Poe Springs graciously hosted by the Strohminger family. We are very proud of our new graduates who accomplished so much under the limitations and stress of the pandemic, and we wish each one great success in their next steps.



Katherine Fiorillo Dowhaniuk Cohort 11

Specializations: **Gender and Development, African Studies, TCD**

Committee chair: **Karen Kainer (Forest Resources & Conservation)**

Committee member: **Sarah McKune (African Studies / Environmental and Global Health)**

Capstone Field Practicum:

Measuring women's empowerment in agroforestry activities in northern Uganda.

Host organization: **Kijani Forestry**

Location: **Gulu, Uganda**

AJ Hart Cohort 11

Specializations: **Conservation Tourism, TCD**

Committee chair: **Angélica Almeyda (Latin American Studies)**

Committee members: **Taylor Stein (Forest, Fisheries, & Geomatics Sciences), Glenn Galloway (Latin American Studies)**

Capstone Field Practicum:

Volunteer tourism and community-based conservation efforts in Costa Rica: an examination of a volunteer tourism experience and its impacts on the Osa.

Host organization: **Latin America Sea Turtles Association**

Location: **Puntarenas, Costa Rica**



MDP Graduates

Spring 2022

Jennifer Johnson Cohort 11

Specializations: **Agriculture Education and Communication, Latin American Studies**

Committee chair: **Sarah McKune (African Studies / Environmental and Global Health)**

Committee member: **Ricky Telg (Agricultural Education and Communication)**

Capstone Field Practicum:

Learning from the international diversity of health worker protests during COVID-19.

Host organization: **Accountability Research Center**

Location: **Global project, Remote**



Jose Alejandro Sanchez Morales Cohort 11

Specializations: **Tropical Agriculture, Entrepreneurship, Latin American Studies, TCD**

Committee chair: **Cheryl Palm (Agricultural and Biological Engineering)**

Committee members: **Renata Serra (African Studies), Glenn Galloway (Latin American Studies)**

Capstone Field Practicum:

Facilitating smallholder farmer engagement with data-driven agriculture: a case study in the Yucatán Peninsula, México.

Host Organization: **UNDP Pequeñas Donaciones Mexico (PPD), Guardianes de las Semillas, Misioneros A.C.**

Location: **Yucatán, México**



MDP Graduates

Spring 2022

Sarah Strohminger Cohort 10

Specializations: **Natural Resource Policy and Administration, Water Resources, African Studies, TCD**

Committee chair: **Renata Serra (African Studies)**

Committee member: **Esther Mullens (Geography)**

Capstone Field Practicum:

"We sent down water from the sky:" analyzing impacts of fog water harvesting in Ait Baamrane, Morocco.

Host organization: **Dar Si Hmad**

Location: **Ait Baamrane, Morocco**



Ana Yancy Ugalde Brenes Cohort 11

Specializations: **Gender and Development, Latin American Studies, TCD**

Committee chair: **Renata Serra (African Studies)**

Committee member: **Rebecca Williams (Center for Latin American Studies)**

Capstone Field Practicum:

"Las reinas de sus colmenas:" examining women's empowerment in Kuxtalil cooperative's network in Yucatán, México.

Host organization: **UNDP Pequeñas Donaciones Mexico (PPD) and Kuxtalil Women's Cooperative**

Location: **Yucatán, México**

Congratulations!

MDP Final Presentations Spring 2022



Ana Ugalde



Sarah Strohming



Jennifer Johnson



AJ Hart



Alejandro Sanchez

MDP Spring 2022 Awards

Dr. Sarah McKune (MDP core faculty) was recognized by the UF Graduate School as a **2022 Graduate Education Diversity Champion Award Winner**. This award is presented annually to recognize UF faculty members who champion diversity within the graduate education community here by actively and positively promoting equity, inclusion, and cross-cultural awareness.



MDP STUDENTS FIELD PRACTICUM TRAVEL GRANTS

TCD Field Research Grant:

- Katherine McCall

TCD Practitioner Grant:

- Hannah Jo Maier

Center for Latin American Studies Field Research Grant:

- Trent Gautney

Center for African Studies Field Practicum Travel Grants:

- Antony Gitei Gathiru, Katherine McCall, Hannah Jo Maier, Fallon Riaño Jiménez

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Travel Grants:

- Antony Gitei Gathiru, Katherine McCall, Hannah Jo Maier, Fraleigh Krause



Summer Field Practicums

2022



Field Practicum Projects

Summer 2022

The COVID-19 pandemic is still complicating MDP student Field Practicum planning and implementation. But all those who wished to travel abroad are doing so, while the others have secured excellent local opportunities in Gainesville and Florida. We wish them health and success in their summer work and travel.

For their field practicums our students are receiving generous support from the MDP Program, the Center for African Studies, the Center for Latin American Studies, the Tropical Conservation and Development Program, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the Wildlife Ecology and Conservation Department, the Environmental and Public Health Department, the Livestock Systems Innovation Lab, the Land and Water Lab, and the Family Nutrition Program.

Field Practicum Projects

Summer 2022

Name	Theme	Region / country	FP Placement
Jeantel Cheramy	Analyzing heavy metal removal in point-of-use water filter systems.	Gainesville, FL	UF Environmental and Public Health / Gift of Water (GOW)
Antony Gitei Gathiru	(In)equality and female participation in sports: A case study of Moving the Goalposts Kilifi, Kenya.	Kilifi, Kenya	Moving the Goalposts
Trent Gautney	Community engagement planning for electoral reform in the Cooperative Republic of Guyana.	Georgetown, Guyana	Electoral Reform Group (ERG)
Genaro Guerrero Espinosa	Modeling sugar cane sustainability in Florida.	Gainesville and Okeechobee, FL	UF Land and Water Lab, UF Everglades REC
Catherine Hart	Farm to Community.	North Florida	UF IFAS Family Nutrition Program
Omar Hernández Carmona	Facilitating the co-design process of Partnership for Reimagining Gainesville (PRG) monitoring and evaluation system.	Gainesville, FL	Partnership for Reimagining Gainesville (UF and City of Gainesville)
Chioma Fidelia Iyamu	Elementary school food waste diversion and composting.	Gainesville, FL	St. Patrick's Interparish School

Field Practicum Experiences

Summer – Fall 2021

Name	Theme	Region / country	FP Placement
Sarina Kawall	An examination of human-wildlife conflict as it relates to small carnivores and small livestock.	Rupununi, Guyana	Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) Sustainable Wildlife Management programme
Fraleigh Krause	Build the person, change the world.	Santiago Texacuangos, San Salvador, El Salvador	Harvesting in Spanish
Hannah Jo Maier	Illustrating women's empowerment: The application of flipbooks in Kijani Forestry's community trainings in Gulu, Uganda.	Gulu, Uganda	Kijani Forestry
Katherine McCall	An evaluation of SAYDS's Youth Systems Thinking Program in Kenya.	Nairobi, Kenya	Systems Acumen for Youth-Led Development Solutions (SAYDS)
Priya Pershadsingh	Developing and piloting a fundraising strategy for Citizens For A Better South Florida.	Miami, FL	Citizens for a Better South Florida
Sebastian Ponce	Eco-tourism and mindfulness in Sapana Village, Nepal.	Sapana, Nepal	Sapana Lodge
Fallon Riaño Jiménez	Feasibility of the Rwanda Dairy Farm Assessment and Advisory Tool.	Kigali, Rwanda	Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Livestock Systems / UF
Nicole Senuku	Systems thinking in structural poverty: Creating equitable and inclusive prosperity for all.	Gainesville, FL	Community Spring

Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Bette Loiseau

Alejo: Good morning Bette! Thank you for your time and for sharing your thoughts with us. Could you please tell us a little about yourself? Where did you study? What attracted you to conservation & development work?

Dr. Loiseau: I completed my MS at the University of Illinois and PhD at the University of Wisconsin. While in my MS program, the issues of tropical deforestation were at the forefront, largely driven by declines in Neotropical birds that "wintered" in tropical forests but bred in US/Canada forests. It was then that I was attracted to issues of deforestation, forest fragmentation, role of protected areas and, what was then the new idea of sustainable development. While doing my PhD, I studied the importance of biotic corridors, in particular, a forested corridor that connected lowland forests at La Selva Biological Station to montane forests of Braulio Carrillo National Park in Costa Rica. A number of montane breeding birds migrated relatively short distances (tens of kilometers) to spend part of the non-breeding season in lowland or foothill forests. This biotic forested corridor was essential to conserve those populations as forests were being rapidly converted in the region to cattle pasture or banana plantations. While doing my dissertation, a large international effort was underway with INGOS, Costa Rican government, academic and local stakeholder groups to develop the mechanisms and funds to conserve this corridor. In 1985 it was officially recognized and incorporated into the national park, and was instrumental in securing the biotic integrity of the Biological Station. This was for me a wonderful introduction to the importance of scientific research and alliances among a large number of stakeholders to further conservation efforts. Since these early years of the 1980's, I have continued to work on ecological studies, mostly focused on birds and seed dispersal of plants by animals, in tropical forests of Central and South America.

Alejo: What research projects are you working on right now? What are the benefits of long-term research studies like the ones you have conducted in Ecuador?

Dr. Loiseau: Outside of my "hat" as Director of the Tropical Conservation and Development Program, my main research focus for the past 20 years has been in the Amazon of eastern Ecuador, specifically the Yasuni Biosphere Reserve and the Tiputini Biodiversity Station. Here we have studied the long-term population dynamics of tropical birds, and the unusual mating system of a group of Neotropical birds called manakins (Aves: Pipridae). Tiputini is arguably one of the world's most biodiverse sites and the research station is located in a relatively remote part of the 1.7 million ha reserve. The station is run by the Universidad San Francisco de Quito and has a small crew of 12-18 employees, most of them Kichwa from nearby villages or from Coca. My main collaborator is John Blake, but over the years we developed a long-term collaboration with Tiputini station managers, USFQ professors, and local guides to study terrestrial vertebrates using camera traps. Both the bird and terrestrial vertebrate studies are among the largest scale, continuous studies in tropical forests, and have been important in allowing us to document changes over time. The denizens of tropical forests live a long time - e.g., even a bird of only 15 gms (less than 1 ounce) can live for 20 years! Granted that is unusual, but clearly to understand current patterns of abundance and distribution requires more than just a few snapshots in time.

Alejo: As Director of the Tropical Conservation & Development program, how are you connected to the MDP program?

Dr. Loïselle: MDP is an important linkage to the TCD program and has been since its establishment more than 12 years ago at the University of Florida.

MDP and TCD students and faculty share a similar vision for improving human well-being and the importance of biodiversity and biocultural conservation, sustainable development, and environmental justice and equity in achieving lasting success. TCD is thrilled to have MDP students as part of our community as they bring real world experiences, cultural and disciplinary diversity, and real passion for making a difference.

While funds are always limited, TCD is honored to be able to use funds to support MDP graduate assistantships, field practicums, travel, and other activities that MDP students engage in. Many of our faculty are shared between the two programs, and MDP students are often leaders within the TCD Student Group.

Alejo: How has the pandemic impacted your work in conservation & development? How do you see it impacting development work more broadly in the future?

Dr. Loïselle: The pandemic directly impacted our ability to travel and conduct research and other activities in the field. Our colleagues in the field suffered considerably because of disruptions in their work and livelihoods, though impacts on their and their families' health, among other things. We did learn, however, how to communicate and engage more virtually, which in some ways resulted in more inclusive activities. People that might not have been able to travel to workshops could now participate if they had a decent internet connection. The long-term impacts for conservation and development are still uncertain, but in some regions, while we were concerned about the pandemic, illegal and other unsustainable development activities increased and were supported by governments. Many inequities in access to resources only intensified and may be hard to reverse.

Personally, the past few years have exemplified the importance of considering the power imbalances and inequities as central to solving pressing environmental issues and the need to strengthen alliances and provide support to grassroots and other local groups. We see a new effort arising from the donor community that may bring significant resources to bear to help move the needle in the right direction. So, despite the recent drawbacks, there is some reason to be optimistic

Alejo: Any advice for someone considering entering the broad field of conservation & development?

Dr. Loïselle: It's a great and rewarding field to pursue. If you are going to graduate school, be sure and find a good match with your interests, a supportive advisor and lab group, and pursue research that excites you and you are passionate about. Also think about the professional and personal skills you are going to need to be successful in conservation and development. By the nature of the field, you need to have inter- and, most likely, trans-disciplinary training, be able to work with diverse stakeholders, and often manage conflict. Take the time and initiative to learn across disciplines and develop and practice facilitation and conflict management skills. These will serve you well throughout your career. Also reflect on what would be your ideal job when you finish graduate school, and seek out other skills training (e.g., administration, project management, communication, modeling, etc.) as needed to prepare you for the future. Graduate school is a great time to start to build these professional skills that will serve you for a lifetime.

Alejo: Finally...please tell us, what's your favorite restaurant in Gainesville?...thanks!

Dr. Loïselle: So many great restaurants in Gainesville - love The Top and Mi Apa.

Alejo: Again many thanks for your willingness to feature in our spring faculty spotlight.

...Take the time and initiative to learn across disciplines and develop and practice facilitation and conflict management skills...

Bette Loiselle



Again many thanks to Dr. Bette Loiselle for her willingness to feature in our spring faculty spotlight.

MDP Alumna Highlight: Caroline Baylor

After graduating in May 2021 (Cohort 10), I moved to New York City and have worked since January for a non-profit organization called Pure Earth. This organization has worked on cleaning polluted areas around the world since 1999 and recently narrowed its focus to lead and mercury contamination in 12 countries. I am currently Program Associate for the Latin America & Caribbean region, which means that I assist with administrative tasks for our projects in México, Colombia, and Perú.

The team in México works mainly on lead contamination, training traditional potters to use lead-free glaze when making their pieces. In Colombia, the team has been developing efficient technologies to treat mercury-contaminated mining waste. In Perú, the team is currently working exclusively on artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) projects, training miners in the Amazonian region of Madre de Dios to extract gold without the use of mercury and to ecologically close their mined-out concessions through reforestation. Working at Pure Earth has been amazing so far – it really has been exactly the type of organization I was seeking with an MDP degree.



MDP Alumni Highlight: Amira Hussein And Irving Chan Gómez

Amira Hussein (Cohort 10, Egypt Solid Waste Management Center of Excellence, Faculty of Engineering, Ain Shams University) hosted Irving Chan Gómez (Cohort 5, Director of Global Partnerships for B Lab) in Cairo, Egypt in April. Amira shares this message:

I hope all is well and happy summer!

I am so excited to share with you that I have finally met Irving in person 😊

He was on a business trip to Kenya with a 12 hour layover in Egypt. So, we met and spent the day together here in Cairo and it was so much fun. We took these pictures by the pyramids and the river Nile to document the moment and to send it to you all, because we knew you would be happy to see UF MDP Alumni connecting together.

Sending you greetings from Cairo and I am looking forward to hosting you all in Egypt whenever you visit ❤️



Student Activities: Outside the Classroom

Cohort 10

Catherine Hart: UF IFAS Family Nutrition Program – Public Health Specialist for Northeast Florida

Cohort 11

A.J. Hart: TCD Student Group, Tropilunch Co-Coordinator

Alejandro Sánchez: MDP Graduate Assistant; MDP Global Association Student and Alumni Council UF Representative; TCD Student Group Officer; Team Florida Cycling Officer

Ana Ugalde Brenes: Graduate Assistants United Graduate Assistant; Gender and Development Working Group Officer

Jennifer Johnson: Accountability Research Center, Volunteer; TCD Student Group

Katie Fiorillo: Kijani Forestry, Development Officer; IDRC research project on livestock vaccinations in Nepal, Uganda, and Senegal

Priya Pershadsingh: IDRC research project on livestock vaccinations in Nepal, Uganda, and Senegal; MDP Global Association Student and Alumni Council Representative

Cohort 12

Antony Gitei: ki-Swahili Teaching Assistant

Chioma Iyamu: Center for African Studies Graduate Assistant

Fallon Riaño Jiménez: Graduate Assistants United Graduate Assistant

Fraleigh Krause: Created Gainesville, Marketing Coordinator

Hannah Jo Maier: UF International Center, Peace Corps Recruiter

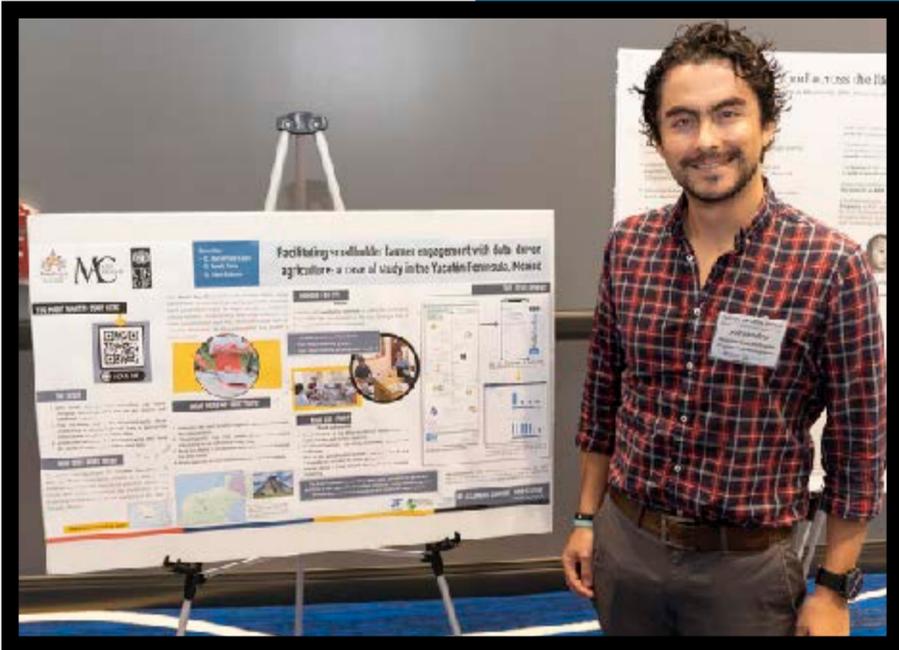
Jeantel Cheramy: Haitian Creole Teaching Assistant

Nicole Senuku: Dept. Languages, Literatures and Cultures Graduate Assistant

Sarina Kawall: Center for Latin American Studies Graduate Assistant

Omar Hernández: UF-BCLS Path to Purpose Advanced Leadership Cohort Fellow; UF-Warrington College of Business Social Impact & Sustainability Initiative Scholar; UF-TCD Student Group and TCD Steering Committee Latin America Representative; International Alliance for Localization, Volunteer; City of Gainesville – Citizens Advisory Committee for Community Development, Student Member

Spring socials!



Spring socials!



Spring socials!



DONATIONS

We have all been witness to the invaluable work being carried out by MDP students with broad, cross-departmental faculty support and by our growing body of alumni.

Now is an opportunity to contribute to our exciting program! The MDP UF Foundation Account will support MDP students, for example, in the realization of their capstone field practicums and to attend relevant conferences where they can present their work and engage with other practitioners.

Donations can be made online at:

<https://www.uff.ufl.edu/OnlineGiving/FundDetail.asp?FundCode=020485>

We especially thank all of you who contributed to MDP on Gator Nation Giving Day (Feb. 17, 2022)!