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*Continue Your Learning*  
*Create Sustainable Social Change*  
*Get a Degree that Will Impact*  
*Your Community*  
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**JOIN THE WISR MULTICULTURAL**  
**ACTION-RESEARCH LEARNING COMMUNITY**

The *Western Institute for Social Change (WISR)* offers **personalized** BA, MA and PhD degree programs to those who wish to **combine academic studies and community-based inquiry** with their community and professional involvements. We also collaborate with community groups in community-action projects.



We are a **multicultural learning community** that engages people who are deeply and continually committed to **progressive social change**. For over three decades, **WISR has successfully supported the creative, community involvement efforts of over 200 adult learners**. WISR students and the communities with which they are involved reflect great geographic, intellectual and cultural diversity. Our extraordinary students offer an exciting community for your studies where *“Multicultural is WISeR”*.

**CONSIDER THESE ILLUSTRATIONS OF OUR STUDENTS AND THEIR WORK**

- **Shyaam Shabaka**, founder and CEO of **Eco-Village farm in Richmond, California**, has developed an urban farm as a model of sustainability and social activism aimed at educating and involving disenfranchised youth and other low-income citizens in addressing both local and larger societal problems.
- For decades, **Jake Sloan** has been a **leader in promoting equal employment opportunities in construction in Oakland and neighboring communities**. In his PhD studies at WISR, Jake is studying the history of the civil rights movement in the area of employment opportunities, and is compiling oral histories which draw on the wisdom of people engaged in this struggle during the past 50 years.
- WISR PhD student, **Agnes Morton, MPH** is a Community Health Nurse/Health Educator with research interests in health disparities, health literacy, health promotion and disease prevention in medically under-served communities. After 40 years in California, she has recently returned to her birthplace and home community of Overtown in Miami--where she is active with a **grassroots organization fighting for social justice and using participatory research to address health disparities**.
- WISR MA alumnus, and PhD student, **Dennis Hastings**, is a member of the **Omaha Tribe of Nebraska and Iowa, and is their cultural authority by tribal resolution**. During his studies at WISR, Dennis has researched Omaha history and initiated such significant actions as: passage of legislation in Nebraska to protect Indian burial sites; the production of award-winning television documentaries and docudramas; and the successful negotiation of the return of the Omaha tribe's Sacred Pole from Harvard's Peabody Museum. Dennis told the story of the Pole's meaning to his tribe in his Master's thesis, *Blessing for a Long Time: The Sacred Pole of the Omaha* (University of Nebraska Press, co-authored with Robin Riddington).
- **David Yamada**, WISR Ph.D. candidate and Professor of Law at Suffolk University in Boston, is a national leader in **mobilizing people to recognize the debilitating social and individual effects of workplace bullying** and is formulating laws, social policies and public awareness to address this insidious problem.
- The **Director of San Francisco's Homeless Children's Network, April Silas**, and WISR PhD candidate, has conducted several participatory research projects at her agency. One project, showed that well-intended shelter rules often result in re-traumatizing experiences for single, homeless mothers that drive them and their children back to the battering relationships they were attempting to escape.
- **Mohammed Ibrahim**, advisor and member of the **Presidential Committee on Energy Policy in Nigeria**, is concerned with the interconnected issues of environmental justice, sustainability, public health, and redirecting wealth from Nigerian oil to the most impoverished communities of Nigeria.



*“Multicultural is WISeR”*

### **EXAMPLES OF OUR COMMUNITY-ACTION PROJECTS**

WISR works with community groups to support *participatory action-research* as a way to promote critically needed inquiry into community problems and **engage the community in solutions**.

- A three-year project on the teaching, learning and use of **action-research among community organizations** in the Bay Area—funded as a nationwide demonstration project by the US Department of Education’s Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education.
- Major **study of the needs and problems confronting low-income elders living in downtown Los Angeles** — for the Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency.
- A project involving groups of **African American elders to improve community health, contribute to community development decisions, and improve in-home care services**—funded by several local corporations and the Henry Kaiser Family Foundation.
- **AIDS prevention education projects** with members of local African American and Latino communities—funded by several private foundations and local public agencies.
- **Assistance to the Bay Area Black United Fund (BABUF) in a participatory evaluation of the first three African American Health Summits** (2003, 2005, 2007), resulting in three Black Papers on the insights gained from those Health Summits. This is part of BABUF’s ongoing African American Health Initiative.
- **Assistance to Neighborhood House of North Richmond** in training community-based interviewers as part of their Kaiser Foundation-funded project aimed at promoting **Healthy Eating and Living** in Richmond.
- Collaboration with **Neighborhood House of North Richmond** on participatory evaluation of their **Youth Violence Prevention Project** and their mentoring project.

### **WISR offers BA, MA and PhD degrees in the areas of:**

- Human Services and Community Development
- Social Sciences
- Psychology
- Education and Social Change
- MA in Psychology that meets the State’s academic requirements toward the Marriage and Family Therapy license.