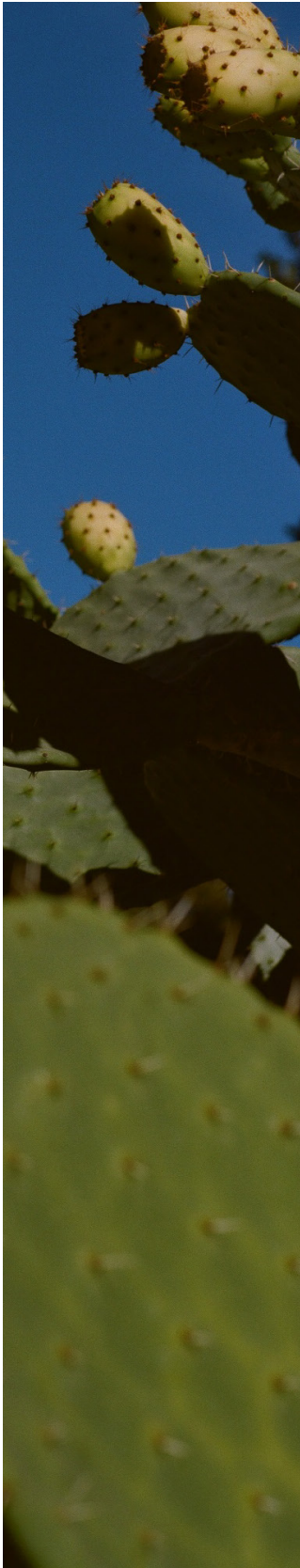Stanford Impact Labs

PUTTING SOCIAL SCIENCE TO WORK FOR SOCIETY

Stanford Impact Labs is a model for how academics and practitioners can work together to make real and lasting change throughout society. It is a continuous ecosystem of purposefully applied research, continued education and training for faculty and students, and an unflagging commitment to create a culture of public impact at Stanford.

IMPACT AT SCALE

Stanford Impact Labs (SIL) is a new university-wide model for teaching, training, and investing in the social sciences to transform our public impact. We provide financial support and guidance to collaborative teams of researchers and practitioners from government, business, nonprofit organizations, and philanthropy through mentoring and a multi-tiered project investment.

By applying methods more often found in engineering and medicine to the social sciences, SIL opens up novel pathways for project teams to collaboratively develop, test, and scale new approaches to the world's biggest social issues.

Where Research and the Real World Work Together

Stanford Impact Labs is a new model for solving society's biggest problems. Together, these people, projects, and partnerships are putting social science to work for society.

DESIGN FELLOW: IRENE LO

Design fellows work alongside faculty to design and launch new impact labs with partners in government, business, nonprofit, and community organizations. Irene Lo, a 2020–21 design fellow, is working with the San Francisco Unified School District to create tools that help families choose from a set of schools close to where they live, rather than rely on a city-wide lottery. This work is capturing the unintended consequences of zone-based school assignment policies on education–and making access to education more equitable.

AI FOR IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

The first place immigrants and refugees call their new home can provide a stumbling block to their success—or a stepping stone. For 80 years, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services has been offering welcome and hope to more than half a million people. Now, with funding from Stanford Impact Labs, LIRS is working with the university's Immigration Policy Lab to more quickly and accurately predict where immigrants and refugees will thrive—opening up doors to opportunity, employment, community, and higher wage outcomes.

They are using a novel AI algorithm called GeoMatch to analyze immigrants' personal characteristics, locations, and historical data and find a new home where they'd likely be a great fit. Taking into account the factors placement officers already consider, the algorithm is using data to improve outcomes for immigrants and refugees, their families, and their communities.

DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY FOR ALL

MediaWise, the AARP, the American Library Association, and the PBS NewsHour Student Reporting Labs are working with Stanford Impact Labs to fight misinformation. They are placing a special emphasis on older adults, who are more likely to be targeted by and exposed to misinformation online, and adolescents, who encounter misinformation and disinformation on popular platforms like WhatsApp and TikTok.

Together with the Empowering Diverse Digital Citizens Lab, these organizations are testing and learning from interventions with older populations, librarians, adolescents, and community groups to see what helps them sort fact from fiction online. A more informed citizenry is a more empowered one—and by focusing on the human component of tech and media, these organizations are creating a stronger democracy.

SCHOLARS IN SERVICE: GOPI GODA

As a scholar in service, Gopi Shah Goda worked within government and community-based organizations to address disparities made worse by COVID-19. In her service with the White House Council of Economic Advisers, Goda focused on federal policies to address such disparities related to long-term care, retirement, and social insurance programs. Goda is a senior fellow and deputy director of the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research, where she continues to study the lingering consequences of the pandemic.

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW: MALISSA ALINOR

Malissa Alinor, a 2021–23 postdoctoral fellow, is working with the VMWare Women's Leadership Innovation Lab to identify how organizations can minimize the harm of competency microaggressions to vulnerable employees and create more inclusive workplaces.

DESIGN FELLOW: FRANCIS PEARMAN

Francis "Alvin" Pearman, an assistant professor in the Graduate School of Education, served as a 2020–21 design fellow. His Connect.ed project aims to transform urban schooling to better respond to the needs of local communities.

ADDRESSING RESIDENTIAL INSTABILITY IN OAKLAND

When their housing becomes unaffordable, low-income residents of Oakland will make many sacrifices to remain stable and in their homes. Such valuable insights that bring a human story to housing data have come out of a partnership between the City of Oakland's Department of Housing and Community Development and the Changing Cities Research Lab. In understanding how racial disparities and issues like tenant harassment and overcrowding affect where and how people live, whether they must move, and what happens afterwards, these organizations are tailoring policy proposals to better meet the needs of Oakland's residents and improve stability in their lives.
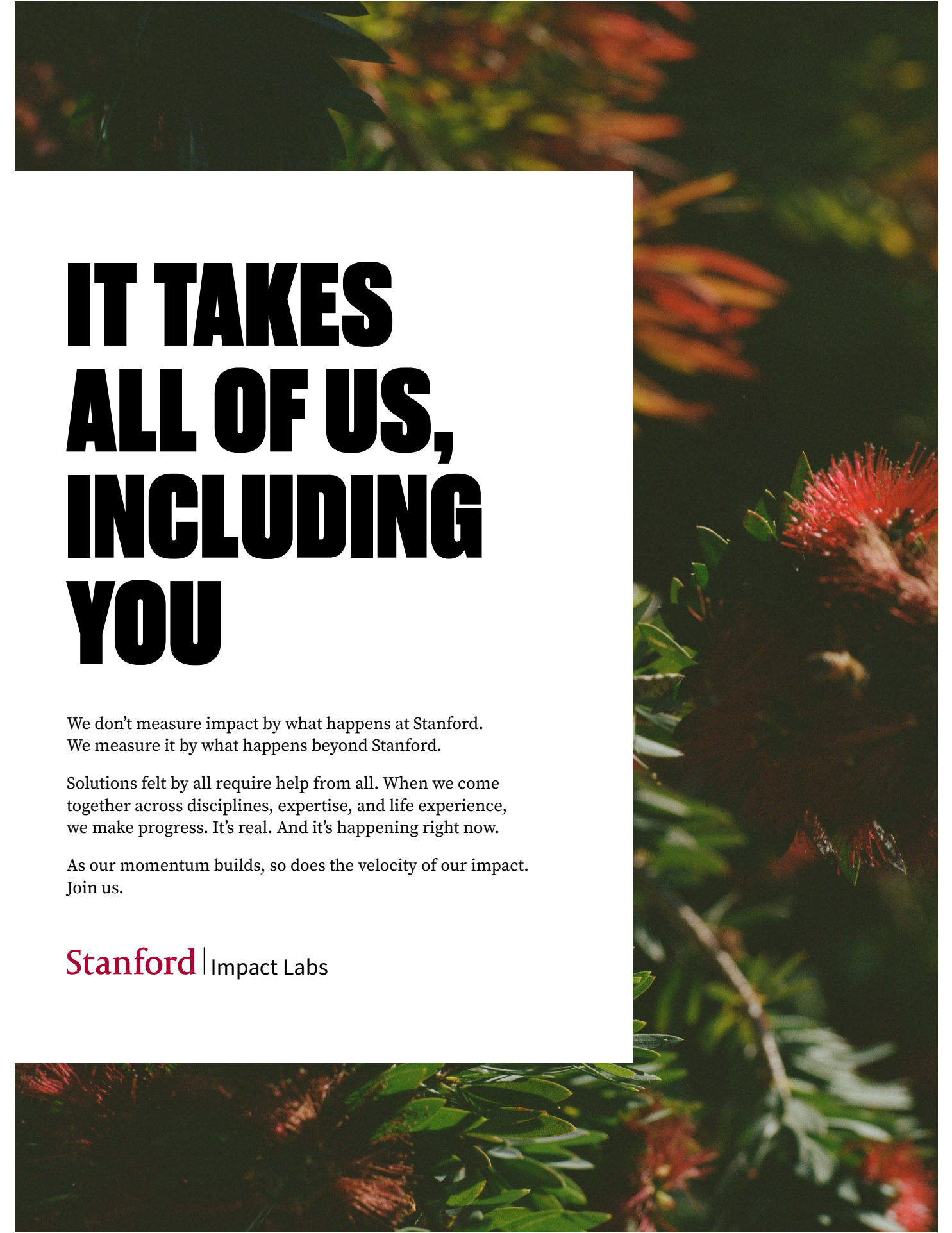
FACULTY HIGHLIGHT: LISA GOLDMAN ROSAS

Lisa Goldman Rosas is generating evidence about how nutritious food and fresh vegetables can reduce chronic disease and improve health outcomes in low-income neighborhoods. Her work with the Food for Health Equity Lab involves bringing together farmers, researchers, and community leaders to help shape healthier communities. Rosas is an assistant professor in the Department of Epidemiology and Population Health.

DATA SCIENCE & SOCIAL SYSTEMS MAJOR

The new Data Science & Social Systems majors, incubated by Stanford Impact Labs, creates a clear pathway for students to integrate science and service. A BS in Data Science helps students to master the foundations of data science in math, statistics, computer science, and optimization; a complementary BA track in Data Science & Social Systems enables students to work at the intersection of computer science, statistics, and the social sciences to understand human behavior.

As nearly every industry becomes increasingly data-driven, students will study well-defined social problems to harness data science for good.

IT TAKES ALL OF US, INCLUDING YOU

We don't measure impact by what happens at Stanford. We measure it by what happens beyond Stanford.

Solutions felt by all require help from all. When we come together across disciplines, expertise, and life experience, we make progress. It's real. And it's happening right now.

As our momentum builds, so does the velocity of our impact. Join us.

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