

WHAT'S NEXT

connects with folks that would typically be open to home-sharing platforms,” he says.

Noirbnb cofounders Jide Ehimika and Stefan Grant are taking a different approach. “Noirbnb doesn’t believe travelers should have to hide their identity to expect to be treated with fairness and respect,” Ehimika says. “We understand the intention behind the recommended measure, but this is part of the reason why the black travel community has been slow to embrace the home-sharing model.” Neither Noirbnb cofounder is worried about competition from the NAACP initiative, noting that they have been working

on inclusivity far longer than Airbnb.

Meanwhile, Airbnb hopes to extend its one-year agreement with the NAACP into a longer-term partnership. “Minority guests shouldn’t be limited to a reduced selection of rooms—meaning higher prices, less convenient [lodgings], and just fewer choices all around,” says Edelman. He believes that Noirbnb and Innclusive are admirable for their inclusivity efforts, but that they won’t be able to change the system on their own because Airbnb will continue to dominate the market. “Society would be best served by Airbnb improving practices on its site,” he says. ■

COLLABORATION

Bringing Together Research and Action

BY STEPHANIE WYKSTRA

Late in the evening on November 8, 2016, after what felt like the “worst party” he’d ever attended, Will Adler considered his future. He was halfway through a PhD in neuroscience at New York University, but he felt a tension between his academic interests and his desire, in light of the US election results, to do something more immediately useful. So he invited fellow students and professors in NYU’s neuroscience

STEPHANIE WYKSTRA ([@swykstr](#)) is a freelance writer and research consultant based in New York City who has worked as a researcher with nonprofits and in academia. Her work has recently appeared in *Slate*, *Vox*, and *Inside Higher Ed*.

and psychology departments to a meeting, and they began considering how they could direct their skills to improving public policy.

By late fall, they had formed [Scientist Action and Advocacy Network](#) (ScaAN) with the goal of partnering with nonprofit organizations that could use their help. They soon got in touch with [Raise the Age](#), a campaign advocating for New York to increase the age of criminal responsibility to 18. (New



PROPUBLICA

INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

An independent, Pulitzer Prize-winning newsroom
publishing deep dive articles on topics like:

Politics
Immigration

Education
Health Care

READ OUR LATEST STORIES AT WWW.PROPUBLICA.ORG.

revealnews.org

WHAT'S NEXT

sharing. While researchers may think they're being clear, Levine says, they're often using terminology and making assumptions that differ from their partner's. For example, researchers generally consider control groups necessary in an experiment, but the idea of excluding people from an intervention may seem like a waste of resources to practitioners. Research4Impact's guide to collaboration recommends taking time to clarify jargon and discuss reasoning.

A further barrier to academics getting involved in partnerships with nonprofits is the perception that to be successful, scientists must be single-minded. When he was a

postdoctoral student, SCAAN's Wei Ji Ma, now an associate professor of neuroscience and psychology at NYU, asked other scientists whether he could combine NGO work with his career in science. The answer was often no, with an insistence that to be successful, a scientist must have "total focus."

Nevertheless, Ma decided that he was committed to staying involved in social action and found that he could do so alongside his science career by partnering with others—the very idea behind SCAAN.

Levine has also noted that academics often meet the idea of collaborating with nonprofit or government partners with

"grudging acceptance." He speculates that this attitude comes (in part) from the feeling that the collaboration is not very intellectually interesting, and hopes that bringing together a community through Research4Impact will help show otherwise. Levine thinks that in the long term, the platform may also contribute to shifting the system of academic incentives from one where tenure review committees reward academics mostly for publishing to one where they give more consideration to the practical impact of the academics' work.

In the coming year, SCAAN and Research4Impact both aim to expand their reach. SCAAN

is partnering with the [New York Campaign for Alternatives to Isolated Confinement](#), summarizing research on the psychological effects of solitary confinement, and assisting the tenants' rights group [Metropolitan Council on Housing](#) in better understanding the people it serves. The group has recruited members from other NYU departments, including environmental studies, and is getting involved with environmental projects. It is also reaching out to those who want to start similar initiatives at other universities, such as Princeton. Like Research4Impact, it sees limitless opportunities for partnerships. ■



 **FJC** A Foundation of Philanthropic Funds

Reach for great heights.

Partner with FJC and take your charitable giving to the next level.

(888) GIVE-FJC
www.FJC.org

 **CHARITY NAVIGATOR**
Four Star Charity