



Micro
SOCIETY®

Annual Report 2021



"Juggle setbacks so they become moments of intellectual excitement."

- Dr. George H. Richmond,
MicroSociety's inventor



Letter From the CEO

Like the year before it, 2021 was full of challenges – and ripe with opportunities.

The pandemic continued to test our schools and the MicroSociety model. In response, we fortified the remote-learning foundations we began building in 2020. As educators, empaths, and advocates, we also got curious about what children need to thrive in a difficult present and how to help them emerge from it prepared to boldly and confidently walk into the future.

Here at MicroSociety Inc., we continued to build a MicroSociety “version 2” – a digital iteration of our model both in-line with the times and steeped in the wisdom of our past – and to develop a 3D MicroEconomy online game. In a major turning point in June, we were awarded a generous \$250,000 18-month grant by R.K. Mellon Foundation to pilot “MicroSociety 2.0” and a digital-first community partner program at Penn Hills Charter School of Entrepreneurship in Pittsburgh. We launched the pilot in November and have been immersed ever since in an eye-opening experience with broad implications for our educational movement.

During 2021, we also embraced online professional development delivery. Our training consultants pivoted from in-person training to a rich online model.

We have been immersed in an eye-opening experience with broad implications for our movement.

They were able to virtually “walkthrough classrooms” to provide feedback on physical learning space, instructional strategies, and student engagement. They explored model fidelity and best practices in a new digital frontier. And they hosted intimate small-group and one-on-one sessions with administrators and educators to troubleshoot and brainstorm through setbacks and sticky spots.

In July, we held our first ever virtual summer conference, bringing a sense of community, connection, and camaraderie through the screen to our stakeholders around the world. Broadcasting and recording our workshops allowed us to reach a larger audience, engage a global pool of experts, and amplify the learning.

We also began upgrading our curriculum with a revised MicroAdventures series, revamped banking venture guidebook, and a brand new HEART strand lesson progression to address the social and emotional needs of students during everyday learning and while operating their societies.

And finally, we began to reach out to a new set of MicroSociety stakeholders – parents! With the launch of our “Parenting With George” e-book series, we are turning our founder’s wisdom about kids and how to motivate them into parenting strategies that empower the whole family.

Today, we are not the same educators, administrators, parents, community members, or even human beings that we were in 2019. But I remain steadfast and confident that the tragedies, trials, and tribulations gave us a sharper vision, greater wisdom, and new awareness that will serve us well as we enter the next era and guide children who will change the world.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Carolynn King Richmond". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'C' at the beginning and a long, sweeping line at the end.

Carolynn King Richmond
President & CEO



What is MicroSociety?

The MicroSociety model engages children in compelling, standards-aligned real-life learning through the creation and operation of student-run miniature societies. For one period a day, students run businesses and nonprofits, choose jobs, earn and invest school currency, operate governments, settle disputes in court, and innovate solutions to challenges that arise naturally in their societies.

MicroSociety activities leverage students' interests and abilities, build confidence and resilience, and make kids feel important. And students want to do well academically because school is key to their success.



Our Vision

One day, every child will be motivated to learn, inspired to achieve, and prepared to create a brighter, more inclusive future for themselves, their families and their communities.



Our Mission

We build transformative learning environments that graduate confident, curious risk-takers and powerful thinkers who are primed to succeed and ready to lead.



Our Services

With training, curriculum and other support services, MSI helps schools plan, launch, build and develop MicroSocieties that meet the needs of their unique populations and communities. Together, we lift up all children – disadvantaged and advantaged, minority and majority, special needs and gifted, urban and rural. And we create communities of belonging that speed children's development as contributors, producers, creative forces, proactive citizens and leaders.

Online Training

With Covid restrictions in force across the country in 2021, MicroSociety's Certified Trainers used Zoom to provide professional development to teachers and administrators at contracted MicroSociety schools, even engaging in classroom walkthroughs. Online training is likely to become a staple of our support services into the future, given its convenience, low cost, and effectiveness.

New Contracts

We signed contracts to support exciting new MicroSociety programs launching during the 2021-2022 academic year at Stenstrom Elementary School in Seminole County, Florida, and in 2022-2023 at Kawaiaha'o Digital Academy, a new middle school in Honolulu, Hawai'i.

Curriculum & Support Material Updates

We overhauled our MicroAdventures Primary and Intermediate series, which provides teachers with lessons across all the MicroSociety strands, and revamped our banking venture guidebook. We also introduced a brand new HEART strand curriculum designed to guide social and emotional learning and the building of kind, fair societies.

Our First Virtual Conference

Due to the pandemic, MicroSociety Inc. in 2021 held its first ever online summer conference. Our 28th Annual MicroSociety Conference was held July 7-8 and themed “Building Together: Creating Strong, Inclusive and Agile Societies That Meet the Moment.” And educators from across the global community of MicroSociety schools and after-schools gathered virtually to learn from each other and from our training experts.

Highlights included presentations from five of our top schools about how they adapted during this difficult pandemic year. Also hits were sneak peeks at our MicroSociety 2.0 digital initiative, in-development MicroEconomy 3D game, and new HEART curriculum.

Importantly, we learned about building community through dialogue, fostering diverse and inclusive societies, and harnessing curiosity to move forward with hope.



Annual MicroSociety Consulting Pays Off

Call them life-long learners.

The leadership and staff at Jersey City Global Charter School (JCGCS) has received professional development services from MSI every year since its founding in 2013, and produced outsized results.

Regularly engaging with a trainer brings “another set of eyes and another set of experiences” that helps JCGCS continually improve its MicroSociety program, says Samuel Howard, JCGCS's founder. New faculty members get oriented, and the school works on specific areas of need and adopts innovations. “As the world changes, the model evolves and so does the PD. We never grow complacent,” he says.

The model evolves and so does the PD.

JCGCS launched with 180 K-2 students, and added a grade each year until it hit 400 K-8 students. Next year, it will add another 100 students when it opens a new middle school building. The school's population is incredibly diverse. “Jersey City is a microcosm of the world. We have students from 28 different countries,” Howard says. Some 96% of students are minorities and 43% are economically disadvantaged.

The growth mindset has paid off. In 2021, JCGCS was ranked #5 best charter elementary school in New Jersey and #7 charter middle school by U.S. News & World Report, based on state test performance, graduation rates, and success preparing students for high school. It ranked #38 among the state's 1,370 elementary schools and #60 among its 715 middle schools.

Over the years, students have demonstrated significant gains in literacy and math, high levels of self-confidence and engagement, strong leadership skills, and a willingness to give back to their community. We know none of that happens by chance.



MicroSociety 2.0 Pilot Programs

During 2021, we stepped up our effort to take MicroSociety digital. What began as a pandemic embrace of online learning became a mission to ensure that our students, especially those from disadvantaged communities, have the opportunity to acquire the 21st century skills they need to thrive in the high-tech, high-skill workplace of the future and achieve economic mobility.

We completed a Google-based web portal template, which provides a kid-customizable home for student business ventures, government agencies and nonprofits (VANs), and online banking and shopping system. And at the close of the year, we launched pilots of "MicroSociety 2.0" at two elementary schools.

Penn Hills Charter School of Entrepreneurship

Approximately 288 K-5 students and 33 teachers are involved in our pilot project at Penn Hills in Pittsburgh. The effort began in July, after we were awarded a generous grant from the R.K. Mellon Foundation to pilot the Micro 2.0 technology and integrate a dynamic community-partner mentorship component.

Aspen Heights Elementary School

In December, we began work on a second pilot of Micro 2.0 technology at Aspen Heights, a K-5 public school with 235 students, 13 teachers and 9 educational assistants in Red Deer, Alberta, Canada. During the 2020-2021 school year, the school used an early version of our banking system and in 2021-2022 continued to help us develop it.

A Peek Inside the Penn Hills Pilot

The pilot project kicked off in the summer of 2021 with MSI-Penn Hills team-building and planning work. MSI hired a tech firm, AG Strategic Design, to troubleshoot technology issues and help us create a longer-term tech strategy. And we brought on third-party evaluators to document Micro 2.0's impact.

In the fall, MSI delivered customized Micro 2.0 web portal and bank assets to the school. And by November, we trained key teacher/facilitators and students taking on "web designer" jobs in how to use it. Soon, those students were designing fun and informative VAN web pages and preparing for e-commerce. The pilot was off and running!

R.K. Mellon Foundation

MSI is deeply grateful to the Pittsburgh-based Richard K. Mellon Foundation, which awarded us a \$250,000 18-month grant that made this project possible. The foundation's generous "Planning and Innovation" grant came through its Economic Mobility program.

Community Partnerships

A key goal of this project is to enhance student career readiness through a bigger and better community partner program. Penn Hills will onboard 8 to 10 new partners to mentor the VANs in its "Soarmania" society, both online and in-person, and MSI will create video assets for viewing on Micro 2.0.

Duquesne Fellowships

Up to six university student fellows will mentor Soarmania VANs as part of new fellowship program that Penn Hills and MSI created in partnership with Duquesne University's Palumbo-Donahue School of Business. The first two fellows began work in January 2022.



Building Partnerships

Internet technologies offer exciting opportunities to bring national and even international community partners into our schools. In 2020 and 2021, we began thinking through what a national partners program would look like and formed partnerships with:

Circle of Friends

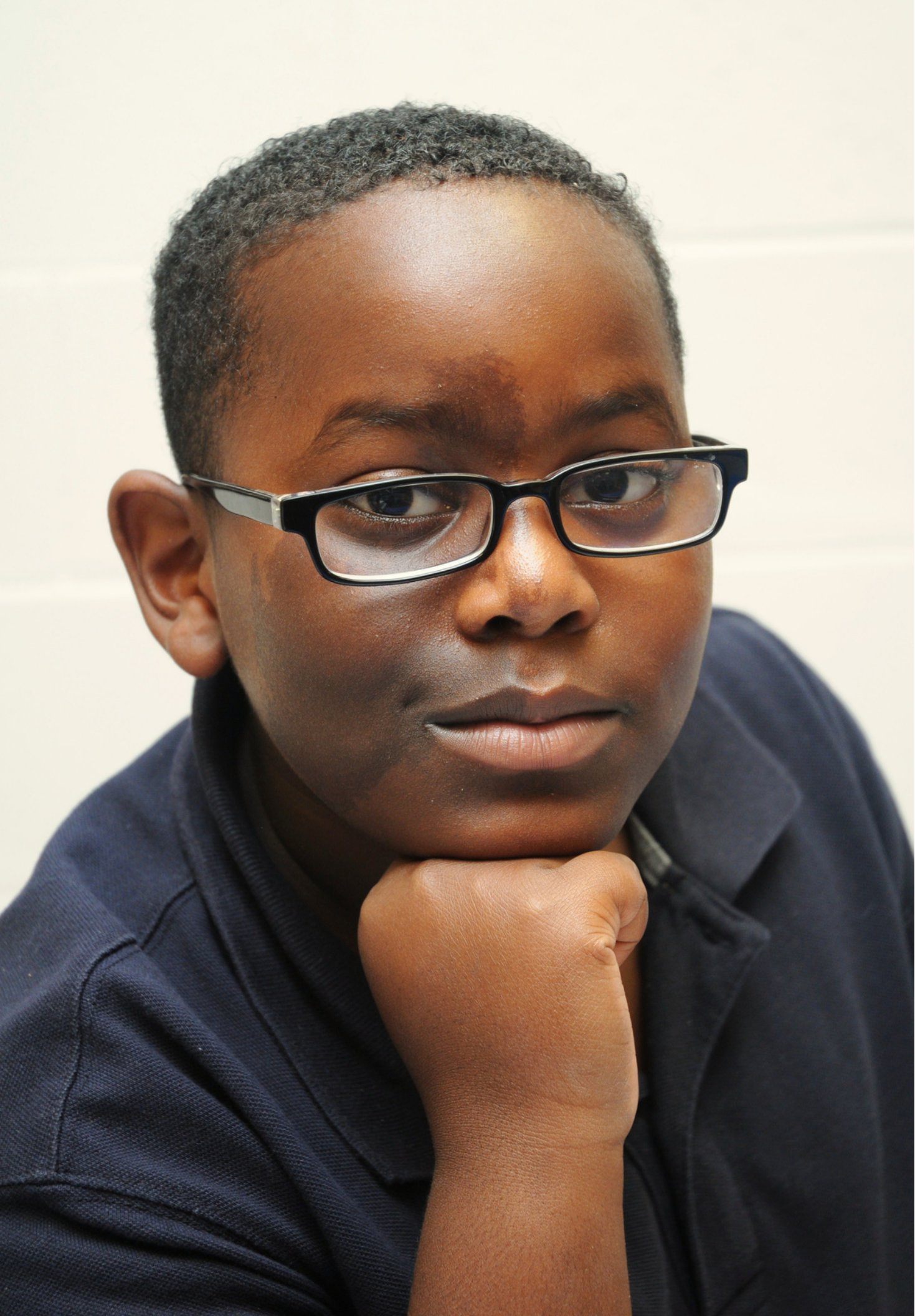
This New York City-based organization, created and run by high school students, provided online tutoring to younger students who were struggling with remote school during the pandemic lockdown. A handful of MicroSociety alumni joined Circle of Friends' corps of tutors and worked with students both inside and outside MicroSociety schools.

Take Care

Funded by the nonprofit, The Healthy US Collaborative Inc., TakeCare is a national initiative that invites people to take care of their Whole Health: Mind, Body, Spirit, and Community. TakeCare uses storytelling to showcase simple tools, like deep breathing and meditation, that are free, available to everyone, and have been scientifically proven to increase health and well-being. A selection of its inspirational short films are available on Micro 2.0.

Drexel Steinbright Career Development Center

MSI is part of Drexel's famed co-op program, providing on-the-job experience to university students who are studying 2D and 3D animation, game design, digital design, and video editing. In addition to working on projects in their fields of interest, 2021 co-ops participated in our online summer conference, moderating workshops, assisting speakers, troubleshooting technology issues, and contributing to workshop discussions.



Student Stories

We hear it time and again from our schools. MicroSociety transforms lives and alters trajectories.

Students learn how to solve complex problems, work together, and make decisions. They build horizon-expanding confidence and self-esteem. And they discover they are able to overcome obstacles and create their own success.

Here are three moving stories of students who grew and blossomed as leaders by embracing the authentic challenges and opportunities MicroSociety provides.



Niharika's Story

MicroSociety Academy Charter School, Nashua, New Hampshire

Niharika felt defeated when she wasn't elected as a government representative. She lost by only two votes and couldn't help thinking her classmates didn't see her as a "true leader."

She considered her options. In the past, Niharika had thought about launching a business, so she decided to take the Management 101 course and worked hard to pass the test.

Then, she wrote and submitted a formal proposal to open "Crafts From MACS" as one of Micro City's 2021-22 school year ventures. But sadly, her business was not chosen. Once again Niharika reflected on her loss, and, with humility, she understood why: Her business simply was not unique compared to other proposals.

Her teacher, Mrs. Taylor encouraged her to believe in herself and keep trying. "Life has its reasons," she said.

"It's okay to fail as long as you don't give up."

So Niharika submitted an application to be Government Treasurer, another highly regarded position within Micro City. Her peers knew that Niharika was honest, resilient, and strong in math, so she won the coveted position handily.

"I didn't know that they would choose me, since a lot of other kids were trying," she said. For the rest of the year, Niharika provided sound budgetary advice to the elected officials of Micro City. "I learned that it's okay to fail as long as you don't give up. I was destined to become Treasurer."



Nicolas

Nicolas's Story

Chula Vista Learning Community Charter School, Chula Vista, California

At five years old, Nicholas learned the importance of adapting.

He grew up in a Spanish-speaking household, and he learned most of his English from cartoons. But at Chula Vista, “I pushed myself out of my comfort zone, asked for help, and believed I could master a language that was new to me,” he says. Now, he is one of the highest-scoring students in English in his class.

“MicroSociety helped because I was very motivated to learn and involve myself in leadership,” he says.

Last year, Nicholas ran for United Nations Secretary General. “When I was writing down my vision, in my mind was the thought of a loving, kind, and respectful community,” he says.

A big success came in February, when students snapped up his government's “Valentine’s Day Grams” and wrote sweet messages to staff members, friends and family. “This enhanced school kindness by sending bits of love,” he says.

“Being part of such a wonderful team that takes care of one another and generates creative ideas for the community has truly been a blessing.”

“MicroSociety has transformed my life because of the new leadership opportunities I gained,” Nicholas adds. As Secretary General, he learned to delegate to UN Cabinet members and listen to elected classroom UN Ambassadors. “MicroSociety has taught me to meet student needs as best as possible by actively listening and making certain I act on their ideas.”

“*MicroSociety helped because I was very motivated to learn and involve myself in leadership.*”



Ella & Kaden's Story

Man Elementary School, Logan County, West Virginia

Ella and Kaden were both determined to be president of Pioneerville. Since 2nd grade when Kaden was elected class delegate, it was his dream. In 3rd grade, he became governor, so president in 4th grade seemed a natural next step. Meanwhile, Ella was practically born to run. Her father had been a campaign manager, and she knew politics. She, too, had been a 2nd-grade delegate and then 3rd-grade senator.

“If we don't run together, we'll divide the vote.”

The election would be different this year. Instead of the top vote getter becoming president and the runner up vice president, Pioneerville would have president/VP tickets. Candidates would need to strategize.

On the appointed day, Ella and Kaden entered the cafeteria to fill out their paperwork. Both had the good grades, behavior and attendance needed to run. Now, they had till Friday to choose running mates.

That Thursday, Kaden approached a government facilitator. Ella was dead set on president. “She’s not going to bend, so I'm going to have to,” he said. “We’re friends, and we have the same friends. If we don't run together, it's going to divide the vote and we’ll both lose.” As a ticket, he reasoned, they could both further their political careers.

The duo ran against four other teams. Their campaign promise? To meet with another MicroSociety school on Zoom to find ways to improve both their societies. Pioneerville's citizens stepped into their voting booths, drew the curtains, and scanned QR codes to vote by Google Form. When all was done and dusted, Ella and Kaden were victorious!

In office, they have worked well together. Ella sets the agenda and leads the meetings, while Kaden brings order. Now, they are preparing for their State of the Union address, gathering statistics and assessing Pioneerville's successes and challenges. Next up? That Zoom meeting!



Thank You to Our Supporters

Many thanks to the institutions and individuals who gave so generously of their time and resources in support of our work. Together, we are creating powerful real-world learning environments that truly prepare young people to succeed and lead in the world and workplace.

We are deeply grateful to all our supporters, board members, staff, consultants, Drexel University co-ops, volunteers and, of course, MicroSociety school faculties. You make everything we do possible!

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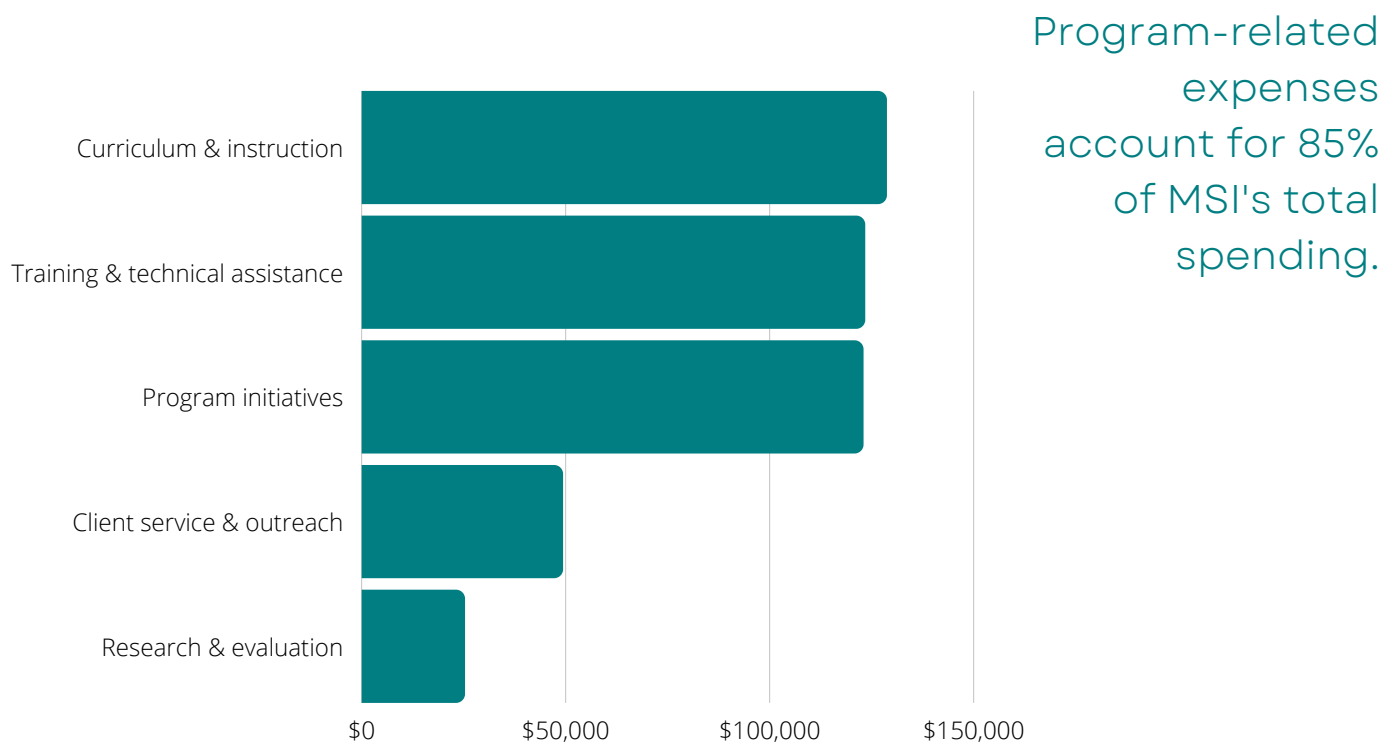
Financial Report

For the year ended December 31, 2020

Revenue	2019	2020 Total
Consulting & conference fees	\$ 287,926	\$ 219,754
Contributions	\$ 216,059	\$ 350,605
In-kind contributions	\$ 124,002	\$ 52,693
Other income		\$ 14,280
Interest Income		\$ 69
Total Revenue		\$ 637,401
Expenses		
Program services		\$ 449,278
Management & general		\$ 65,275
Fundraising		\$ 14,488
Total Expenses		\$ 529,041
Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions, end of year		(\$ 13,401)

All information from MicroSociety's independent audit report for the year ended December 31, 2020.

Program Services Expenses



Professional Services Revenue Sources

MicroSociety schools tap an array of funding sources to pay for MSI's professional services.

