

# SPIn Report

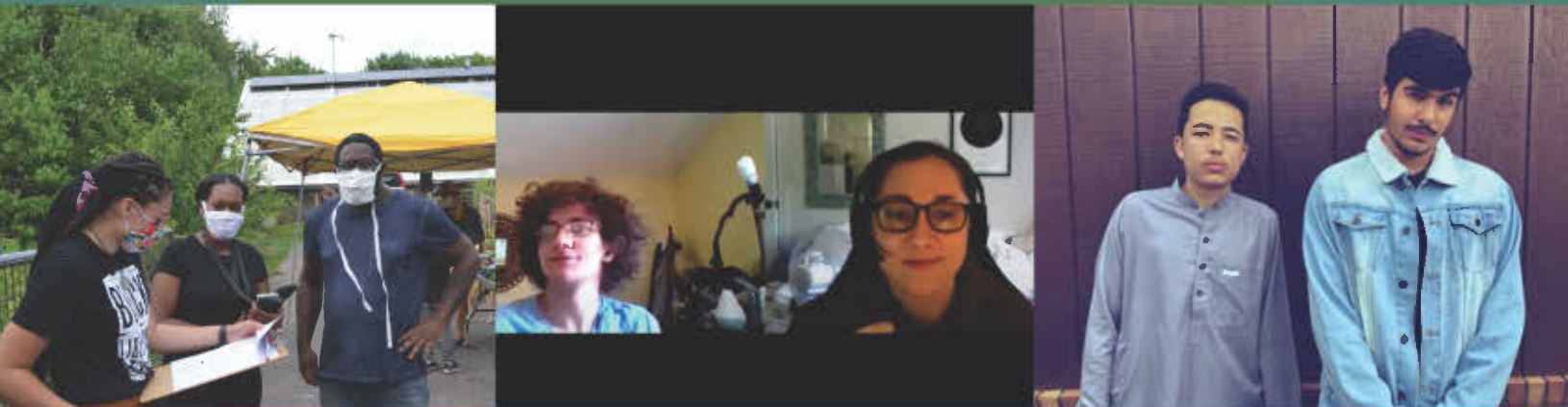
Siena College  
Summer 2020



SPIn (Siena Project Incubator) is a partnership between  
The Center for Academic Community Engagement  
and The Center for Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity

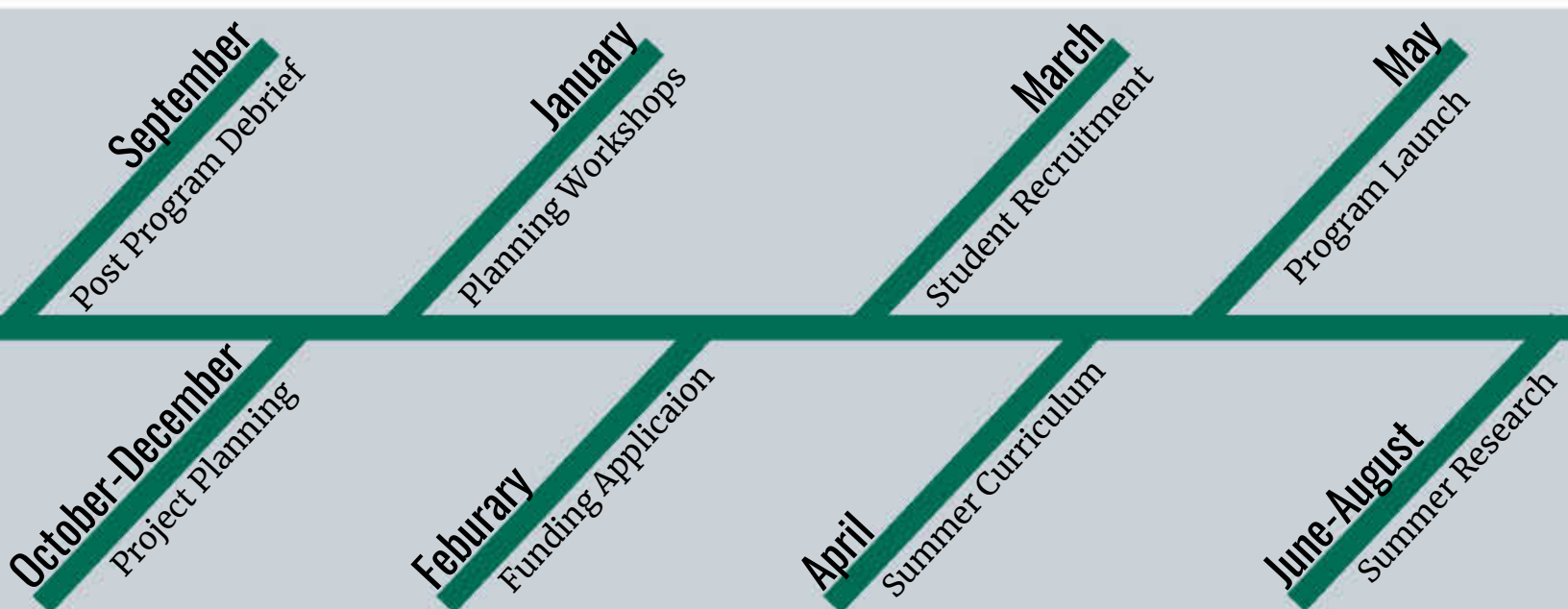
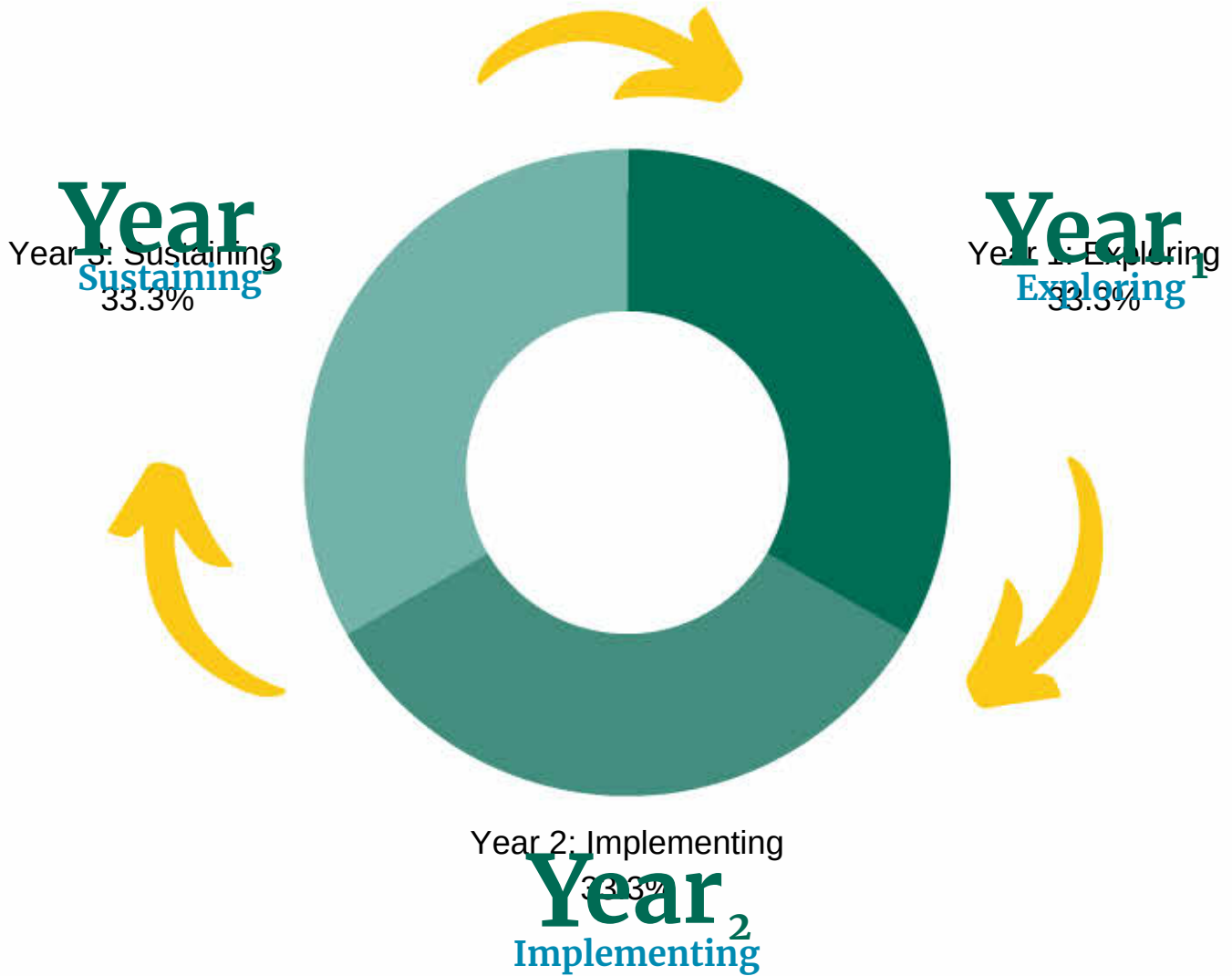
# SPIIn Overview

SPIIn is an intensive, 8-week summer program that connects faculty, students, and community organizations in multi-year participatory action research projects. SPIIn starts with the assumption that our region's most entrenched problems should be addressed through interdisciplinary and collective impact processes and that meaningful change requires a long-term approach. SPIIn's three-year model allows for projects to grow over time. In year one we explore issues, develop relationships, and celebrate small wins; in year two, we develop and support student and community leadership in implementing a targeted intervention; and in year three, we work collaboratively to ensure sustainable action.



While many summer internship and research programs were not able to happen this year due to COVID-19, we are very proud to have maintained the SPIIn program and continued to foster partnerships and collaborative work between our students, faculty, and community partners. SPIIn projects adapted to COVID-19 by working remotely or in a hybrid model while following all COVID-19 safety guidelines and regulations. Despite not being able to work traditionally, each project was able to build relationships within the community. The following report highlights each of the 2020 SPIIn projects.

# SPI by the Year(s)



# SPIIn 2020 Partners

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## South End Night Market

Provides the South End with access to healthy and affordable food options while connecting ambitious and aspiring entrepreneurs to the resources they need to succeed

## Radix Ecological Center

Promotes ecological literacy and environmental stewardship through educational programs that teach practical skills that can be applied to environmental and economic sustainability

## Refugee Welcome Center

Assists refugees with their long-term transition and location to Albany and strives to reduce local abandoned and vacant buildings while providing opportunities and resources for globally homeless people

## Urban Scholars

Pairs Siena students with local middle school students in Albany County to build students' critical thinking skills, build their teamwork skills, and encourage persistence

# Refugee Voice Project

**Y<sub>1</sub>**

## Community Partners

Refugee Welcome Center



"As a general program, SPIn is great in that it brings together a community of people who are interested in learning about the world around them and trying to make it a better place. The Refugee Voice Project specifically encouraged us as fellows to really engage with questions of allyship and justice. Our team, and the people already involved at the Refugee Welcome Center made for a wonderful community and a fun summer!"

-Conor Graham, Siena College 2021

### PROJECT DELIVERABLES:

- For Us, By Us social media series
- Newsletter for RWC
- Collaboration with Soul Fire Farm

### NEXT STEPS:

- Refugee Museum Exhibit
- Publication of summer research

# Pandemic Resilience and Climate Justice

Y<sub>1</sub>

## Community Partners Radix Ecological Center



"My summer at the Radix Ecological Sustainability Center enabled me to learn more about myself, my coworkers, urban agriculture, and the South End community. Directly working and interacting with neighbors and youth from the area was the best part of my experience. I learned a significant amount about sustainable agriculture and systems, community solution-building, and qualitative research in one summer."

-Kendra Beaver, Dickinson College 2020

### PROJECT DELIVERABLES:

- Built 5 community gardens
- Strengthened community relations
- Full IRB protocol

### NEXT STEPS:

- Keeping SPIn Fellows on as Radix Interns
- Continuing research when IRB gets approved

# Vibrant Communities: The South End

**Y**<sub>2</sub> Community Partners  
AVillage  
The South End Night Market



"My favorite part of this project has been maintaining a physical sense of togetherness in the midst of a pandemic through the farmer's market in addition to building relationships with Albany's black businesses and individuals in the community."

-A'Livija Mullins-Richard, Siena College 2022

## PROJECT DELIVERABLES:

- Growth of South End Night Market
- Built a sustainable structure for Night Market beyond SPIn

## NEXT STEPS:

- Build and develop online market
- Develop NASCENT Fellowship, a Black entrepreneurship program

# Summer Learning

## Y<sub>2</sub> Community Partner Urban Scholars



"Transitioning the framework of our research from a deficit to an asset based perspective of summer learning allowed us to move our project in a more constructive direction by broadening our definition of learning opportunities and emphasizing the importance of understanding community members' individual experiences."

-Alida Sceccitano, Boston College 2021

### PROJECT DELIVERABLES:

- Developed surveys, interview questions for research on summer learning
- Create searchable database of learning programs, summer learning research, develop an assessment tool to be used by summer learning sites

### NEXT STEPS:

- Submitting IRB to regional summer start interviews with parents and children
- To be used



# Living History Project

Y<sub>3</sub>

## Community Partners

Historic Cherry Hill



"I was a member of the theatre team working on the Living Museum Project, and the thing I loved most was learning about the five generations that lived there. There are hundreds of stories to read about."

-Emily Furlong

### PROJECT DELIVERABLES:

- First draft of original play written about local African American butler that lived in the 19th century
- Development of augmented reality scenes

Create searchable database of learning programs, summer research, develop an assessment by summer learning sites

### NEXT STEPS:

- Filming augmented reality scenes
- Producing play
- Creating virtual reality tour

# Community Results

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## Vibrant Communities

Assisted in the start-up of the weekly South End Night Market that: supported 13 local vendors, provided access to health and nutritious food options to the South End, and marketed the products and services of Black vendors.

## Summer Learning

Spent the summer talking with educators and summer education program directors on the effect of COVID-19 and students in Albany and different methods to keep students engaged while remote learning

## Refugee Voice

Created and implemented the For Us, By Us Instagram series that showcased refugee culture and fashion while conducting multiple participatory action research projects for the refugee community of Albany

## Pandemic Resilience

Successfully built five community gardens while spreading awareness about the availability and use of the gardens in the South End

# New to SPIn in 2020

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## Student Leadership

For the 2020 program, SPIn offered new programming opportunities led by a leadership team of three undergraduate students. These students were responsible for providing administrative assistance, micro-credential trainings for the SPIn program, and social media outreach to connect participants while working remotely

"The leadership team was a great experience and an amazing way to oversee all the projects and be involved in their activities. Since my interests aligned with a lot of the projects, I was thrilled that I would be able to work with them! The leadership team is a big responsibility, especially for a student leader in the program. "

-Joshua Perez, Rollins 2023

# New to SPIn in 2020

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## Flexible Trainings

Six micro-credential trainings were provided by the Leadership Team that focused on three areas: research and publication, professional development, and social justice. Students were able to gain skills and experience they could apply to their projects and beyond the SPIn Program.

## Social Media

The SPIn Leadership Team was successful in providing each project with the opportunity to participate in a Take Over Tuesday on the ACE Instagram team. Each project was able to show what a typical work day looked like and what they had accomplished as a project.

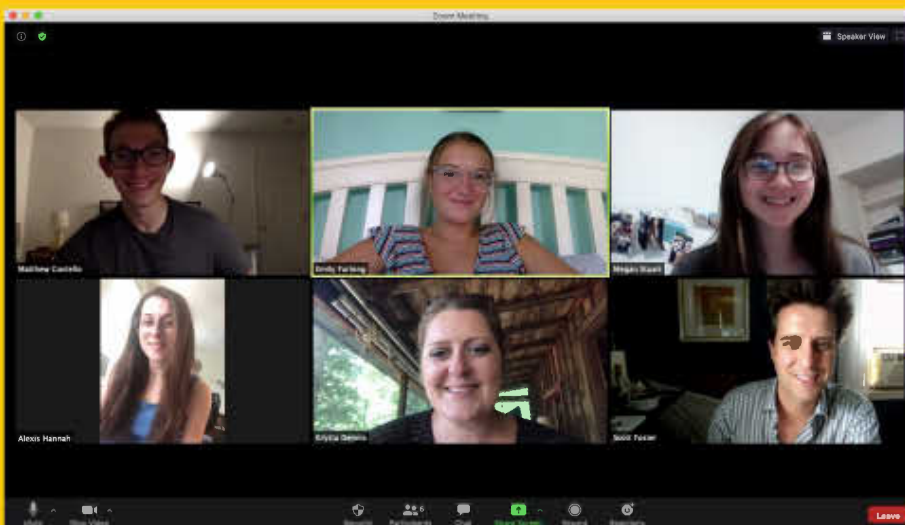
## Virtual Research Summit

Each project presented their research, work, and accomplishments via Zoom to the SPIn program, community partners, stakeholders, and local politicians. Projects were able to form new connections for community partners and start important discussions.

# COVID-19 and SPIn

When the spread of COVID-19 in March of 2020 began to cancel summer internships and research programs, SPIn faculty had to quickly shift gears and figure out how to continue their projects during the pandemic.

Each of the four projects was able to successfully adapt to the safety and health guidelines and complete their research and service.



# Looking forward to 2021

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**Y<sub>1</sub>**

Community Voice Project:  
Urban Farmers

**Y<sub>1</sub>**

Beverage Institute

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**Y<sub>2</sub>**

Pandemic Climate Justice:  
Radix Ecological Center

**Y<sub>2</sub>**

Refugee Voice Project:  
Refugee Welcome Center

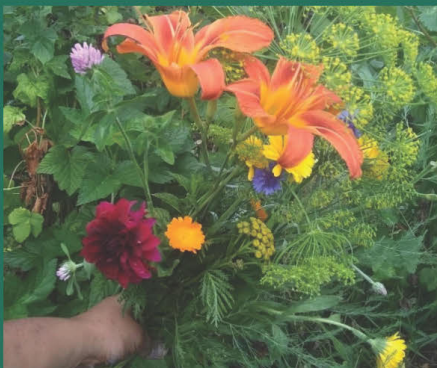
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**Y<sub>3</sub>**

Vibrant Communities:  
South End Night Market with AVillage

**Y<sub>3</sub>**

Summer Learning  
Urban Scholars



# Thank you to our Funders

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Seymour Fox Foundation  
AmeriCorps VISTA  
Center for Undergraduate  
Research at Siena College



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