



17 August 2022

slingshotmemphis.org

The first half of 2022 continued to accelerate the movement to revolutionize poverty-fighting. I am excited to share several highlights with you. Thank you for your support. We invite you to explore ways you can further participate in this revolution.

Executive summary

- Uncovered several insights that help us better understand what factors contribute to effective poverty-fighting efforts.
- Expanded to work alongside an additional 5 poverty-fighting organizations, bringing the total number of organizations we work with to 41.
- Completed an additional 13 impact studies and started 14 new impact studies.
- Published nearly [25 impact profile summary reports](#) on our website, making these insights available to help inform poverty-fighting decisions across the community.
- Welcomed 2 new Principal Investors to support Slingshot's expansion: FedEx and Power&Tel Family Giving Fund.

INSIGHTS

Effective reentry from the justice system. A conclusion from research on programs that try to help people reenter society from the criminal justice system is that most do not produce effective outcomes (e.g. reductions in recidivism, lasting improvements in income). One reason is that these programs typically have focused exclusively on helping people obtain a job upon reentry, but end once employment is obtained. Research on the reentry programs that have produced effective outcomes concludes that a more holistic approach is required. *Services associated with effective reentry programs include employment retention support, individualized mentoring, and mental health services.*

Variance in the value of professional certifications. Professional certifications (e.g. welding, information technology, automotive, etc.) can create meaningful improvements in income

for those experiencing poverty. The evidence, however, is clear that not all certifications provide the same value (with some providing virtually zero value). *The most valuable professional certifications tend to be offered by industry associations versus individual employers or educational institutions, include an experiential component versus being entirely classroom based, focus on specific industry skills versus generalized knowledge, and are associated with jobs that are prevalent in the area.*

Dearth of evidence about sex trafficking. In studying an organization that helps women exit the sex industry, it became clear that this topic has not been rigorously evaluated.

High-quality research is very limited on the severity of the challenge, the contributing factors, and the best practices to prevent entrance and enable exit & restoration. *This lack of an evidence base can inhibit the ability to develop effective policies and efforts to address sex trafficking.* Using data from the organization we studied, it appears there is limited choice about entering the sex trade as 70 percent of the women this organization worked with had entered the sex industry prior to the age of 18.

IMPACT STUDIES

New poverty-fighting organizations. We welcomed five additional poverty-fighting organizations to participate in the Impact Study process, bringing the total number of organizations we work alongside to 41. We celebrate their commitment to transparency and engagement in the movement to revolutionize poverty-fighting. These five organizations are:

1. [Families Matter](#)
2. [Knowledge Quest](#)
3. [Man Up Teacher Fellowship](#)
4. [Refugee Empowerment Program](#)
5. [Workforce Mid-South](#)

Our next round of impact study expansion opened on August 15th. If you know organizations that might be interested in working with us and participating in the poverty-fighting revolution, please invite them to learn more by registering for our [informational webinar](#) on August 18th at 1pm and viewing the details about our expansion process [on our website](#).

Impact Study progress. We worked on 27 impact studies during the first half of the year, completing 13 impact studies (3 baselines and 10 updates) and commencing another 14 impact studies. The reports from completed impact studies can be viewed at the links below:

- A Way Out Ministries (*report not yet available*)
- [Center for Employment Opportunities \(CEO\)](#)
- [City Year Memphis](#)
- [Communities In Schools Memphis](#)
- [Girls Inc.](#)
- Just City (*report not yet available*)
- [LIFeline to Success](#)
- [LITE Memphis](#)
- [Memphis Athletic Ministries \(MAM\)](#)
- [Memphis Inner City Rugby](#)
- [Moore Tech](#)
- [Neighborhood Christian Centers](#)
- [The Soulsville Charter School](#)

Thought partnership. In between the annual impact study with an organization, Slingshot offers thought partnership to help address opportunities that could lead to greater poverty-fighting impact. Below are a few exciting opportunities from the first half of 2022:

- Shared evidence-based best practices about staff performance management to help support Memphis Inner City Rugby's development of new performance management processes to further empower staff to deliver programming as intended.
- Worked with Su Casa Family Ministries to explore the staff and organizational structure implications associated with the desired expansion of its early childhood programming from a part-time to a full-time program.
- Developed a data dictionary with MyCityRides to help document the wealth of metrics it collects to further strengthen data quality assurance practices and its ability to use data in decision making processes.

MOVEMENT

Impact Study reports published on website. Nearly 25 two-page impact study reports have been [published on our website](#). We will continue to publish more reports and additional insights from our work as we expand. These concise reports synthesize a wealth of research, data, analysis, and evidence into a tool that can be used to understand the effectiveness of poverty-fighting organizations and provide objective evidence to identify which organizations can best help achieve poverty-fighting aspirations. Feel free to share these with others who would benefit from these previously unavailable insights.

Accelerate Impact Fund investors. We are grateful for the 125 individuals, families, and organizations who invested in the fund in the first half of the year. Below are a few examples of how organizations participated in revolutionizing poverty-fighting through the Accelerate Impact Fund. Slingshot welcomes opportunities to work with local businesses and organizations to help amplify poverty-fighting impact in the city.

- The Memphis office of [HUB International](#), an insurance brokerage, partnered with Slingshot in honor of Red Nose Day to support its efforts to help end the cycle of child poverty. Over 20 local HUB colleagues invested in Slingshot's Accelerate Impact Fund.
- [C.A.T. Global Inc. \(Memphis\)](#), a transportation solutions provider, committed to invest in Slingshot's Accelerate Impact Fund based on the number of loads it books each quarter. This innovative approach integrates poverty-fighting with their ongoing work.
- Matt Evans, President of [Armstrong Relocation](#), invited Slingshot to meet with his Vistage Worldwide, Inc. peer advisory group where we discussed how organizations can help revolutionize poverty-fighting with this group of 15 local business leaders.

Journey to Impact podcast series. Journey to Impact's Ed Gillentine and Slingshot's Jared Barnett recorded a series of mini-podcasts that are being released on the second Tuesday of each month. These 10-15 minute podcasts discuss thought-provoking aspects of poverty-fighting. Click the links below to listen to the released podcasts.

- [Episode 1: What is Poverty?](#) (April 2022)
- [Episode 2: Questions to Ask Before Funding an Impact Organization](#) (May 2022)
- [Episode 3: Data Driven Decision Making](#) (June 2022)
- [Episode 4: Why Heart Alone Is Not Enough to Alleviate Poverty](#) (July 2022)
- [Episode 5: How Can the Average Person Have Impact](#) (August 2022)
- Episode 6: Benefit-Cost Ratio & Monetizing Impact (releasing in September 2022)

ORGANIZATIONAL

Principal Investors. Slingshot's Principal Investors fuel the movement to revolutionize poverty-fighting by funding Slingshot's operations and expansion. We are excited to celebrate two new organizations that became Principal Investors at the Accelerator level (highest level): [FedEx](#) and [Power&Tel Family Giving Fund](#). This support will help Slingshot expand the insights we are able to share to help all Memphians, regardless of social or economic circumstances, have equitable opportunities for personal and economic success.

Enhancements to research infrastructure. We continue to refine our efforts in order to produce the most accurate and highest-quality work because we understand that it influences the quality of people's lives. In the first half of the year we made several enhancements to our research capabilities, including:

- Developed archetypes for various types of poverty-fighting programs to help streamline and improve the quality of best practices research.
- Implemented criteria to screen research articles to help identify and better ensure only sufficiently high-quality research is incorporated into our work.
- Gained access to several research databases to expand the breadth of research we are able to incorporate into the impact study work.

Sincerely,

Jared Barnett
CEO

About Slingshot Memphis

Slingshot Memphis is a poverty-fighting center of influence that's igniting a movement to revolutionize the way we fight poverty. To turn our mission into reality, we work alongside poverty-fighting organizations to study their effectiveness, identify opportunities to enhance their outcomes, and invest directly to amplify high-impact programs and services.

Slingshot cannot achieve this mission on its own. There are several ways you can participate in the movement to revolutionize poverty-fighting, including:

- Use the [reports and insights](#) on Slingshot's website in your poverty-fighting efforts and encourage others to do as well.
- Invest in Slingshot's [Accelerate Impact Fund](#) to support organizations based on their effectiveness.
- Invite poverty-fighting organizations to consider [working alongside](#) Slingshot.
- Follow Slingshot on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#), and sign up to receive [email updates](#).