I’d like to communicate with you all regarding the diversity and inclusion agenda that the Executive Committee has recently brought to the forefront of our work. For those of you who care about social justice and empowerment of disempowered groups in the US, it has been a very difficult last few years. It seems like the work is never ending. It is very disheartening and stressful to observe more overt violence and exclusionary tactics being enacted upon so many vulnerable groups in our communities, including undocumented individuals, people who are religious minorities, people who come from low-income backgrounds, people who are gender and sexual minorities, people of color, and people from indigenous groups. The rise of the ‘free speech’ on campus movement has also served a cover for an agenda to allow overtly racist speakers to have a loud and unquestioned voice on campus. I have been particularly alarmed by the resurgence of White nationalism and White supremacy, and all of their advocates and supporters in positions of power in the US who are seeking to normalize such dehumanizing views.

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As an organization, many of us have been working hard to try to counteract these extremely harmful forces that are seeking to take away people’s rights, opportunities, and resources, and to make them silent and invisible. If you are a member of such a group, there is nothing quite like the knowledge that others literally do not want you to exist, which is incredibly threatening and frightening. And, of course, this is all happening within a backdrop of ongoing environmental destruction and climate change that has reached crisis proportions, but which has received insufficient responses. This also disproportionately impacts people of color and people in economically challenged communities; and a second ongoing crisis of gun violence that is an additional threat to young people in schools and to our youth of color in particular.

I am really proud of the hard work of our members who are working to counteract these harmful and disempowering forces and movements. While the field works to address racial justice and many other types of injustices in our communities, it is also important to revisit how SCRA operates as an organization to ensure that our processes also support this larger agenda of diversity, inclusion, and liberation. In order to really address this, we need to ensure that we are living out our values, not just outside of our organization, but within our organization. Given that we have so many people doing the very difficult, challenging, and cognitively and emotionally draining work of advocacy and activism on behalf of the people we work with in our communities, it is especially important to ensure SCRA is and continues to be a safe space and supportive organization for everyone doing this courageous work. We need to ensure that harmful power differentials that we see all around us are not being inadvertently reproduced within our organization as well. In order to be successful, we need to have a positive and collaborative organizational climate for all of our members. Thus, when our members tell us that SCRA is falling short in some regards, as an organization we should take steps to ensure a fairer and more inclusive climate for all our members.
Diversity is a central value of the field, and fortunately, community psychology as a field has the theories, tools, and means to work for social justice both within and outside of the organization. We know from theories on power, privilege, and oppression that the people in a setting on who have less power or who are in subordinate groups will be the ones who have a clearer perspective and awareness on ‘ism’s’ and problems of injustice. It is very helpful to remember our own privileged and oppressed identities, and also to remember the lessons of social justice and power/privilege theories—that if we are in the dominant group, we just will not be able to really see where the problem lies in a way that someone who is in the subordinate group can see the problems, so we need to center the voices and feedback of our members who come from traditionally underrepresented groups and who have less power, including students. We know from power theory that power doesn’t have to be a zero-sum game, but we can also see power as a renewable resource, one that we can grow for everyone. Therefore, encouraging people to work together to have a positive climate where all members can speak up and have a chance to participate is a way to grow power in an inclusive and collaborative way.

We know from microaggression theory and critical perspectives that cultural slights, offensive comments, or marginalizing interactions towards less powerful people may sometimes be inadvertent, subtle, and not intentional. Despite the lack of intentionality, they can still have a significant and harmful effect on the person who perceives such racially-related slights. Thus, we need to focus on understanding outcomes of such experiences and providing support for people who have experienced microaggressions. We can do this by encouraging ways of interacting with each other that are culturally respective, to become more aware of when microaggressions might be occurring, to listen and understand people’s experiences around such microaggressions even when it is hard to hear and accept, and also be ready to recognize when we ourselves might behave in an insensitive manner towards others. I am most definitely including myself in that last recommendation! Racial justice is a key value that I work for, and I study racial microaggressions and their impact on the health and well-being of people of color in my own research. I also know that I am not immune from inadvertently making unfair, culturally insensitive, or hurtful statements towards others. When these ‘cultural ruptures’ in interpersonal relationships happens, it is hard to acknowledge that I have done something like this to someone else, but I know that I need to be aware that I am not perfect and that I make mistakes. I also know that I cannot let fear of saying the wrong or insensitive thing be an obstacle to engage in dialogue because engaging in these difficult dialogues to address injustice will, ultimately, help us to develop an action plan to address these difficult issues in a meaningful way. Also, I think that it helps to recognize that we are all working from different perspectives, but that each of us has a stake in and a desire for a more truly inclusive and justice-oriented organization.

Kelly’s ecological framework is also a helpful guide for our diversity and inclusion work. The principle of succession reminds us that we need to be cognizant of how well SCRA is working now, in our constantly changing community, societal, and global contexts. This helps me to remember that, perhaps the mentoring and advice that was helpful for me as a student and young professional in the field may not be the kind of mentoring, advice, and support that students and young professionals, especially those from traditionally underrepresented groups, need to function in their current academic, political, workplace, community and societal context. Thus, we need to make sure that the students and new professionals’ voices and needs are heard if we want SCRA to be an organization that is relevant to their careers and contributions moving forward. This is also why revisiting our goals and values, to ensure that this is how we want to move forward as a field, is important. Also, all of our wonderful empowerment theories and models, and the critiques of those theories, tell us that true empowerment comes from listening the
people with less power and who are more vulnerable in a given setting. Watts and others remind us that when we give up power, we have less power and control over the outcomes; this reminds us that we may disagree with what some of the less powerful people’s voices are telling us or what they want, but that is the nature of empowerment work.

SCRA has many strengths, theories, and principles, that will allow us to work towards the agenda of social justice and racial justice, and we have many diverse voices and perspectives that we see and celebrate at our conferences and events, through our awards, and that are visible on our websites. And, it is also true that we can do better in this respect, and there are problems that members have brought to our attention in relation to both racial justice and power differentials that have alienated or excluded some members, and this is something that we should address in a real and meaningful way. Focusing on diversity and inclusion and figuring out how we can address these problems is an important and exciting opportunity for us to continue to strengthen SCRA and work towards a more inclusive and supportive climate for all of us. I would greatly welcome your thoughts, ideas, and feedback on this agenda: storresharding@roosevelt.edu.

Susan Torres-Harding
Roosevelt University
storresharding@roosevelt.edu

From the Editors
Written by Dominique Thomas, University of Michigan and Susan M. Wolfe, Susan Wolfe and Associates

Happy New Year! We hope that everyone had a relaxing and refreshing holiday break! To start off the New Year, we’re bringing you a Winter issue full of great community psychology work being undertaken by many of our members. We thank everyone who submitted their work!

President Susan Torres-Harding discusses in her column the renewed focus on work addressing the systems of oppression and increased hate crimes affecting many marginalized communities. The Council on Education and the Public Policy Committee also attended to issues of racial justice in their columns. We reiterate the needs to attend to how community psychology can be a force for positive social change and how some of these harmful ideologies may be reproduced within the field. These interconnected issues are reaching breaking points in which the ramifications will be felt most by those most marginalized. With this in mind, we organized two special features on racial justice and community collaborations respectively. Each of the special features takes special attention to promoting equitable and just community-based research. Common across both special features are considerations of power, whether it is helping communities build their own power or addressing unjust power dynamics.

The combined work of councils, committees, individual community psychologists, and communities is needed to promote social justice and liberation for the many communities who are feeling threatened, unsafe, and targeted. Community psychology must truly embrace the
idea of community and cooperation to be the agent of social change we want it to be.

Susan and Dominique

Special Feature: Racial Justice
Edited by Dominique Thomas, TCP
Associate Editor

The current sociopolitical environment has many racially marginalized people who are left unheard, under resourced, and over surveilled. This exploitation renders many people as disposable according to dominant narratives and processes that reproduce coloniality such as mass incarceration, gentrification, and other forms of racial capitalism. The number of hate crimes has increased since the 2016 US Presidential Election and with the connections between racial capitalism and the ongoing climate crisis becoming clearer, it is crucial to discuss strategies of attaining racial justice. Recent conversations within the field demonstrate this urgency: both to provide our expertise in support and engaging in critical reflexivity regarding the field’s role perpetuating unequal power dynamics. In light of these conversations, we decided to organize this special feature around the theme of racial justice.

Critical race theory (CRT) can be a framework through which we engage with issues of racial justice. Five themes prevalent in CRT research are the centrality of race and racism, myth of meritocracy, interest convergence, White-washing of history, and counternarratives. It can also be a framework through which we conduct community psychology work. Common themes in critical race theory align with values and principles of community psychology; these connections are embodied by the pieces in this special feature. In Racial injustice and organizational leadership, organizational leaders have the opportunity to address racial injustice. Community psychologists can use community-based research and action to advocate for more just leadership and organization cultures. From Community-Based Research to a Movement – The Proclaiming Our Roots Project Case Study discusses the creation of a safe space for Indigenous-Black communities in Canada to confront their erasure and invisibility. Dually marginalized communities come together to share their stories and reclaim their histories. Resilience, Grit, Coping, and Justice discusses how CRT can focus attention to how concepts and issues are framed when working with marginalized communities.

Each of the issues discussed reflect larger epistemic and epistemological concerns. Power dynamics often come into play when determining expertise, often at the expense of marginalized groups. Epistemic violence erases, excludes, marginalizes, and delegitimizes the lived experiences of those deemed “Other.” Laws are an example of this; laws determine who is criminal, often coinciding with racialization. It becomes a basis for war by creating “Others” who violate laws and norms and become threats to “our” way of life. It takes on another form when it becomes legitimized through social scientific research; this is epistemological violence. The rhetoric of a “War on Drugs” was a justifying ideology to promote the mass incarceration of Black and brown communities: a backlash to the Black liberation and counterculture movements occurring in the 1960s and 1970s.

These concerns take on a greater importance when determining social change efforts. Given community psychology’s close relationship with the non-profit sector and SCRA’s status as a 503 non-profit, it is important to discuss how the non-profit industrial complex (NPIC) as a political epistemology (a way of knowing social change) also reproduces racial capitalism. The NPIC historically served a symbiotic relationship with the State’s attempt to suppress counterhegemonic struggles through mass incarceration and other forms of violent social control. Social movements were often steered toward adopting structures that mirror the State and capital. Energy for social change was redirected to bureaucratic structures
that promoted the status quo rather than grassroots structures that challenged dominant norms, structures, and institutions. This often legitimizes the racist fears of American civil society, forcing social movements into more “legitimate” methods of pushing for social change. Social movements are also pressured to conform to standards set by foundations that fund them, another example of how capital can co-opt social movements.

As a field of knowledge production, community psychology sits at the intersections of the academic industrial complex and the non-profit industrial complex. Unfortunately, this means many of the aforementioned issues merge within the field. Whose knowledge matters? Who decides what is social change? Where do we get our theories? How does a field develop when its founders are mostly White men?

NPIC epistemology promotes an insider/outside dynamic; this is no different in community psychology in which we talk about community psychologists and communities as inherently separate or when we have “community member” labels at our conferences. Often in works describing the ideal community psychologist such as Kelly’s (1974) qualities of a community psychologist, the community psychologist is implicitly understood to be a White man; most of theories that are broadly cited in the field come from these perspectives. Many of the methods we use are inherently Eurocentric; for example, ethnographic research originally served colonial purposes, being used to promote social control over colonized populations. Additionally, much peer reviewed research in social science broadly (and psychology specifically) is based on WEIRD (Western Educated Industrialized Rich Democratic) samples, further justifying norms that uphold racial capitalism. Although a range of epistemologies are practiced and promoted in CP, there is still an emphasis on US-centric post-positivist research.

Racial justice work that accounts for alternative and subaltern epistemologies remains on the margins of the field. This is especially problematic given CP’s quest to be legitimized by institutions such as schools, prisons, police, and non-profits rather than by communities. This need for acknowledgement and recognition from these institutions further justifies the status quo given the historical and contemporary ways these institutions oppress and dominate marginalized and minoritized peoples. Our discussions and conceptualizations of empowerment often have a neoliberal and masculine perspective. Riger (1993) talks about how empowerment is typically framed as mastery, control, and other individualistic constructs rather than ideas such as cooperation and communion. Such a framing of empowerment can lead to groups coming into conflict over one another, particularly in the context of racial capitalism in which racialized groups are often placed into conflict and competition over scarce resources or foundation funding. If we want our field to be a positive force for social change, we have to ensure that our work does not reproduce structures of racial injustice.

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**Racial Injustice and Organizational Leadership**

*Written by Vernita Perkins, PhD, Omnigi Research Lab*

Race discussions are emotionally charged and socially uncomfortable. Not much question why racial injustice persists, when even a conversation about race is so difficult. The ongoing national dialogue on racial injustice is energized in social sciences, social media, and in entertainment, loaded with socioeconomic and political agendas, and inundated with commentary across social identity groups from blatant denial, to acceptance but inaction, to community action addressing underrepresented narratives. These individual narratives offer a new level of awareness not sufficiently acknowledged or addressed in organizational climates to date. Despite resistance from the privileged identities in U.S. society, it is time for a final racial disparities awakening. Although clarifying the subtleties of racial injustice proves to be difficult (Matthew, 2017), stalling the necessary social changes only delays the
inevitable. This next process towards racial justice may be the hardest step for U.S. society to accept. The end of racial injustice begins with a united, uncomfortable global conversation and the subsequent acknowledgement of the depth of racial disparities by privileged social identity groups, threatened at the thought of losing the benefits of privilege (Smeda, 2018), but needing to move forward to cooperate in resolving racial injustice.

Organizational leaders have a unique opportunity now to build diverse, equitable, inclusive (DEI) and sustainable infrastructures, utilizing community psychology and interdisciplinary social sciences to achieve social change. The longer the denial and resistance persists, the more racial events will continue to shape and reveal the gross disparities between overrepresented, over-resourced group privilege, and the underrepresented groups that can no longer tolerate illegal racial inequities.

Organizational leaders can play an integral role in implementing DEI and applying racial justice in leadership-driven systems that recognize, manage, and deliver diversity through nonnormative processes (Berkman, 2018). The primary focus of organizational leaders centers on profit building and reducing their perceptions of external and internal threat. Yet, organizational effectiveness can increase as organizational leaders recognize the strategic value of diversity on organizational performance (Riaz, 2019) innovation, and resilience; and apply cultural competencies based in self-awareness, concern for others, and counterstereotypical thinking interventions (Randsley de Moura, Leicht, Leite, Crisp, & Gocłowska, 2018) in their organizational cultures. This lead-by-example practice prioritizes every employee’s value equally and equitably and encourages DEI, rather than denial, avoidance, and fear of legal liability.

When organizational leaders allow racial injustice, their influential behaviors impact organizational members (Okechukwu, Souza, Davis, & De Castro, 2014). Leaders influence how their organizational members, stakeholders, and consumer demographic views the organization and how the organization intends to represent DEI. Boldly challenging racial injustice positions organizational leaders to fully comprehend the underrepresented individual experience within the racial narratives expressed by the individuals and groups most affected. Too often the voices behind the fight against racial injustice have been the very individuals and groups that created the disparities, who can easily end or redirect the narrative when it becomes uncomfortable or inconvenient. The emerging underrepresented narrative delivers a new depth of social awareness that drives aware organizational leaders to introduce social cognitive processing styles and an improved praxis for creating collaborative, trusting and diverse organizations.

Leaders are influencers and decisionmakers, and as decisionmakers, they are accountable for the outcomes of their objectives and decisions. Leadership that, whether through implicit or unconscious bias, reinforces racial injustice can damage the bonds of trust necessary for effective leadership and organizational wellbeing. What can community psychologists and interdisciplinary social scientists do to restructure sustainable infrastructures in these institutionalized patterns of injustice? How can community psychologists advise organizational leaders to reroute their organizations towards DEI education and fresh ideation? First, organizational leaders’ recognition and acknowledgement of racial injustice. Second, the narrative and decision making must be driven by those social identities experiencing the racial injustice, not the privileged identities perpetrating the injustice. Third, developing and managing cultural and leadership competencies through communities of action. And fourth, evaluation of social change efforts and strategic planning for continued social change.

**Developing DEI Organizations**

As social science research continues to reveal the distance between racial disparities and racial equality, perpetuation of racial injustice is impossible to ignore. Consider an innovative DEI focus that sees an organization as an opportunity for diverse professionals to meritocratically
collaborate on meaningful product and service creation in a sustainable environment fertile with wellbeing and equitable wealth creation.

Homogenous senior organizational leaders may continue to avoid potential lawsuits by pacifying racial issues with normative diversity initiatives, fearing that diversity and inclusion means prioritizing and hiring underrepresented individuals, solely based on their social identity. These initiatives come in the form of forced attendance at harassment seminars that employees fail to take seriously because leadership fails to take the implementation of these seminars seriously. By revising diversity sections of the employee handbook, and promises on their website mission statements, job boards, recruiting materials, and investor presentations that offer their false commitment to diversity and inclusion. With each initiative only intensifying the disparities and exacerbating microaggressions, particularly among employees within the organization possessing greater power distance and homogeneity with leadership (Holvino, 2010). If an organizational leader is truly committed to DEI, the evidence will reside in their own self-awareness, accountability, business ethics, commitment to employee wellbeing, and most important, in their leadership decision making (Okechukwu, et al., 2014).

Held to new DEI standards, leaders cannot comply just to deflect liability or to quiet perceived discontent. Now the global expectation of leaders is actual commitment to diversity, resilience, innovation, and sustainability by investing in diverse organizational membership. Organizational leaders are advised to develop nonnormative competencies in self-awareness, concern for others, counterstereotypical thinking and decision making, and implementation of DEI, representative of architectural leadership, which centers on diffusing leadership influence in favor of improved infrastructures with evolving capabilities to address organizational issues (Kollenscher, Eden, Ronen, & Farjoun, 2017).

Organizational leadership is another rich area where community psychologists can utilize community and research action to advocate for improved leadership and organizational cultures for the communities and individuals they serve. For more information on diversity, equity and inclusion in organizational leadership, contact Dr. Vernita Perkins at vperkins@omnigi.com.

References
From Community-Based Research to a Movement: The Proclaiming our Roots Project Case Study
Written by Ciann L. Wilson and Ann Marie Beals, Wilfrid Laurier University

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The Proclaiming Our Roots (POR) Project
We are Ciann L. Wilson (of Afro-, Indo-, and Euro-Jamaican ancestry) and Ann Marie Beals (Indigenous-Black L’nuwey), and we are sharing with you a glimpse of the phenomenal work and community-based outcomes of phase one of the Proclaiming Our Roots: African Diasporic and Indigenous Digital Oral History Project. After many conversations from 2014-2015 with community partner, and mixed Black and Anishinaabe Kwe woman, Denise Baldwin, I (Ciann) conceptualized what would become the POR project. A primary objective of the study is to utilize arts- and digital media-based processes to center the voices of mixed Indigenous-Black people who, through various socio-historical and colonial processes, have been rendered invisible in the national discourse about Indigenous peoples in Canada. This is despite an over 500-year history of Indigenous-Black intermarriage and partnership in Canada, and the proliferation of well-known Indigenous-Black communities in the United States (U.S.) (Sturm, 2002; Smith, 1994), such as the Black Seminoles of Florida and Oklahoma. To date, Indigenous and Black unions are common within many communities (e.g., Cherokee, Creek, Lumbee, Creole, Seminole, Iroquois, and Mi’kmaw) (Jolivette, 2007; Mills-Proctor, 2010; Sturm, 2002), many of whom are the stewards of territories that span across the arbitrary Canada-US border.

The POR project is a community-based research project primarily led by Black, Indigenous-Black, and allied scholars and community leaders. The three overarching objectives of the POR project are: 1) To gain an understanding of the nuanced and distinct intersectional forms of (interpersonal, institutional, structural) violence and erasure faced by people of mixed Indigenous and African ancestry, and how these phenomena relate to health and social service access in Canada; 2) To locate lived experiences in current discussions around Truth and Reconciliation (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015) for Indigenous peoples within the Canadian nation-state; and 3) To create written, visual, and narrative archives of the histories, geographies, and realities of Indigenous-Black people in Canada (Wilson & Beals, 2019), in directly usurping white-settler hegemonic revisionist narratives about the history of relationships between Indigenous and African diasporic peoples (Wilson & Beals, 2019).

Towards this end, we held two workshops, one in Toronto, Ontario and one in Halifax, Nova Scotia, which are two cities in two different Canadian provinces where we know distinct and sizeable communities of Indigenous-Black people reside. We utilized qualitative and arts-based methods such as digital storytelling, community mapping, individual interviews, and group conversations. The digital storytelling process afforded participants the
opportunity to create personal videos where they could layer images, video, text, sound, music, etc. in expressing their lived realities and histories as Indigenous-Black people. The community map was generated by asking participants to pinpoint and provide short written narratives about the geographical locations across the globe where their family histories are rooted. The breakout group conversations throughout the workshops were audio-recorded, and post-workshop interviews were conducted individually with each participant, to garner their reflections on the workshop process and salient topics brought up throughout the workshops. The outputs of the POR project can be found on our project website: https://www.ProclaimingOurRoots.com. The intent is for the project website to become a digital repository for the community maps and digital stories of Indigenous-Black people across Canada. As such, the project team will continue to populate the website with articles, community reports, project related events, and associated resources and content produced from team members, collaborators, and community members.

Challenge: Confronting Anti-Blackness and Indigenous Erasure in Communities Rendered Invisible

Importantly, in stark contrast to the US, which centers conversations between White and African American communities, the nation-state of Canada has facilitated a dominant discourse between White and Indigenous peoples. White-settler society in Canada has intentionally divorced itself from its involvement in, benefits from, and promulgation of the transatlantic enslavement of Black-embodied people. Instead, Canada has re-imagined itself as the altruistic savior of the same said enslaved African peoples who sought refuge via the Underground Railroad from the US into Canada. Erased is the fact that Canada, being part of the British-North American Empire, was also a site of the enslavement of African peoples (i.e., Fortress of Louisbourg in Nova Scotia) and Indigenous peoples (i.e., members of the Pawnee Indian Tribe or as they were colloquially called – the Panis) for two centuries, starting in 1628 (Cooper, 2006; Historica Canada, n.d.). Despite an over 500-year presence in the territories now referred to as Canada, Black people continue to be homogeneously regarded as ‘just arriving’ to Canada from elsewhere - often thought to be from the Caribbean and the continent of Africa. Black people are never thought to rightfully ‘belong’ or have a place in Canada.

In Canada, Indigenous-Black communities are dispersed and hard-to-reach across the country. Further, Canada defines Indigeneity within its borders as comprised solely of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis (a distinct Nation of Indigenous and French ancestry) peoples. There has been a long and complex history of state-defined definitions of Indigeneity and the conflation between blood quantum, phenotype (people’s physical characteristics and traits), and Indigenous ancestry (Sturm, 2002). Amadahy and Lawrence (2009) write that Black- or ‘other-‘ looking Indigenous people are often deemed inauthentically Indigenous. This has been particularly problematic for Indigenous people who have ‘undesirable’ Black ancestry, and who are Black-passing. These individuals are often made to feel excluded from claims to Indigeneity, face lateral violence from within Indigenous communities and Black communities, and may be alienated from full participation in their cultures. As such, Indigenous-Black people may often be left to navigate not feeling “Black” enough or “Indigenous” enough, as their physical persons are confronted by the prevalence of Indigenous erasure and anti-Black racism (Beals & Wilson, in press).

As a result of the dual marginalization Indigenous-Black people face, these communities are often invisibilized in broader Canadian society, and are assumed to identify with whichever part of their ancestry they phenotypically “pass” for. Often, this has meant contending with Blackness due to the dominance of the one-drop rule ideology that is nested in colonial past and present. Indigenous-Black people are not permitted to occupy the dual space of being both African diasporic and Indigenous the way folks mixed with European and Indigenous ancestry are (Beals & Wilson, in press). That space of being both, as well as in between, of
finding oneself in and through complex identities and histories is seemingly forbidden in the same way Indigenous and Black unions were forbidden by white-settler society. These unions were forbidden out of fear of crossed and complex racial/colour lines, and the possibility of an Indigenous and Black revolt like that of the 30-year war waged by the Black Seminoles, starting in 1812 (Hill, 2009), or the Taino and Afro-Haitian army that fought and successfully defeated colonists, culminating in what we now refer to as the Haitian revolution (Beauvoir-Dominique, 2016).

**Solution: Cultivating a Space By and For Indigenous-Black People**

Indigenous-Black community members were involved in the POR project from the very conception of the project. Indigenous-Black community leaders were a part of the community advisory committee that met four times a year to inform the direction of the project. At both of the Toronto and Halifax sites, Indigenous-Black folks helped to organize the POR workshops, choosing accessible locations, organizing catering for the workshops, promoting the recruitment flyers throughout their communities, appointing local Elders for ceremony, guiding ethical research principles, reflecting on research outcomes, sharing the findings of the research, etc. This level of involvement from community members was important for cultivating a community-driven process that was transparent, respectful, open, empowering, and afforded community members opportunities for involvement on their terms. This effort was noticed by participants, as one participant stated:

“This space has been a very safe space … and I felt extremely comfortable… I appreciate the unity, and the sense of family that was established” (Workshop).

POR was the first community-based project in Canada that afforded Indigenous-Black people an opportunity to commune in a welcoming space to listen to each other’s stories and validate each other’s histories and realities. Storytelling, in all of the forms we engaged with in the POR project - be it digital storytelling or our group conversations - are important expressive decolonizing methodologies (Smith, 1999) that allow both Indigenous and African diasporic peoples the opportunity to engage in their oral traditions and cultures, as well as to heal from the collective and intergenerational traumas stemming from colonial processes. In cultivating this safe space, important connections were made and a community consciousness was fostered. One participant remarked that in bringing together Indigenous-Black people, they felt validated in knowing there are others like them, they are not alone. And this was one of the big messages from the gatherings, that there are many Indigenous-Black communities across Northern Turtle Island, with varying histories and interconnections.

One of the most transformative outcomes of this work is witnessing the upliftment of Indigenous-Black people who are naming and claiming their identities in a way they had felt shamed from doing so before. In centering the voices of Indigenous-Black people throughout the research process, participants rightfully felt a sense of ownership of the POR project, and have actively participated in sharing the research findings, and helping to shape the future directions of this work, by applying for funding resources to train community leaders to be able to facilitate the digital storytelling process in their own communities.

Participants have gone on to do tremendous things. One community member has gone on to document in various ways the history of his people, the Ojibwa of Anderdon, and is in the process of getting the necessary approvals to have his community acknowledged as a reserve, the first Indigenous-Black reserve in Canada. One community member whose digital story spoke to the racism he faced in the education system that was so violent it stumped his progress in school, has since gone back to pursue higher education. Another community member has written an article for the Huffington Post, where she acknowledges the POR project’s role in her own process of navigating her identity. Several community members incorporate their cultures in their arts-based practice and cultural productions. Many have
gone on to make important connections with Indigenous-Black people in the US and around the world. From this work, we now have a growing network of Indigenous-Black people who are mobilizing and carving out room for themselves in national and international discourse, and who are taking the work forward.

From thoughts and ideas, to a community-based research process and a social movement that is gaining momentum to write and speak into being Indigenous-Black history in Canada, the POR project feels very much like the ‘little engine that could.’ In the honouring of our ancestors, Elders, and community leaders, we recognize our gratefulness for those who have deconstructed, educated, and shown us the way. We continue to work in claiming our place as Indigenous-Black peoples on Turtle Island, and to have a say in the Truth and Reconciliation process to acknowledge and address the harms of the nation-state of Canada. Thus, our work has just begun.

“Write our stories. Draw our stories. Paint our stories. Sculpt our stories. Do so without reservation, without qualification, and without hesitation so we REMEMBER.”

--Dr. Jomo Mutegi, 2013

Author Contact: Ciann L. Wilson
ciwilson@wlu.ca and Ann Marie Beals
beal0950@mylaurier.ca

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Resilience, Grit, Coping, and Justice
Written by Kyle Hucke and Leonard A. Jason, DePaul University – Center for Community Research

Community Psychologists seek proactive approaches to preventing or alleviating suffering. One strategy using this proactive approach is to promote psychologically robust individuals by fostering those positive characteristics, coping strategies, and behaviors in individuals that have a positive impact. Over the years there have been many terms used to describe similar ideas [e.g. resilience (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000) and grit (Vela et al., 2018)] but their underlying potential value to society and individuals are best encapsulated by the quote “if we encourage and nurture these dispositions and competencies in our children as best we can, we have a basic survival kit for meeting adversities that tax the human spirit” (Werner & Smith, 1992, p. 204). Thus, we need scalable, cost effective, interventions that accomplish this. However, this framing places responsibility on the individual to build robust coping to adversity and does not critically assess the nature of the adversity itself. Not all adversities are created equal. Is it fair and just to require an individual or community to build robust coping in response to any type of adversity? For individuals and communities who have suffered from racism, violence, sexism, economic disinvestment or exploitation, religious bigotry, and/or other forms of discrimination, the answer is no. It is not fair or just to ask people to cope when the adversity is the direct result of structural and systemic forces that are now and always have been immoral.

As scientists we dissect phenomena leading to very detailed and nuanced descriptions. For instance, stress can be acute or chronic and it can be cognitive, interpersonal, physical, and many other iterations. These terms are important as they have very different implications for psychological well-being and how best to overcome the adversity (Compas et al., 2017). Terms like these provide clarity, often a basis for empiricism through quantification, but they are not objective and without connotations. Our conceptualizations of these phenomena are shaped by our culture as is the language we use to describe them. It is important to reiterate how the language we use to discuss adversities frames them and has deeper implications than we sometimes appreciate or intend. For instance, using the term chronic fatigue syndrome versus myalgic encephalomyelitis can have significant effects on individuals' well-being (Devendorf, McManimen, & Jason, 2018)

Critical Race Theory requires that we utilize race not as a variable within our analysis, but as a lens through which to examine and critique the practices of both ourselves and society. Applying a critical lens to all of our work, including those projects that may seem unrelated to race or class, is important for recognizing systemic injustices and blind spots in our thinking. For Community Psychologists who work in minority communities, it is important to be mindful of Critical Race Theory when we are framing our results. For instance, we must empirically validate interventions for individuals who need support today to cope with racism. We must also attest that racism, and similar adversities, are not acts of nature or chance. They are the result of our policies and cultural values, and it is incumbent on us to change them. Racial discrimination at the point of job entry is not the same as not being hired. One is an adversity that is reasonable to expect, and with which one needs to be able to effectively cope. The other is a result of a legacy of institutionalized oppression, current de facto oppression, and interconnected traumas that likely affects the majority of those you love. Thus, our discussion of the effect size of our intervention at reducing negative effect of racism on an individual's well-being needs to include a call for addressing second order change, or the systemic nature of the racism which makes the intervention necessary (Jason, 2013).
Framing complex challenges in terms of individual level changes and responsibility while omitting systemic change serves to sustain the existing system, and at times this is a purposeful act. We see it currently in the efforts to shift the focus of combating climate change to individual actions like using fewer plastic straws instead of public policy or industry level reforms. Likewise, framing racism as an individual challenge with individual level solutions reduces focus on changing the systems that produce racism. While often unintentional, for those of us who work with communities who are victims of racism and similar adversities, it can be a challenge not to fall into this framing. After all, often our programs are directed at helping the individual to cope more effectively, which may be necessary for their survival.

However, McIntyre (2000) warns that there is a potential pitfall here.

“Many scholars would interpret the participants’ responses to violence as survival strategies that are developed in order to stabilize one’s sense of self and gain a sense of control over one’s environment. That may be a realistic assessment, yet, labeling young people’s responses to violence, trauma, and ongoing oppression as “survival strategies” does more to assist us in “treating” the individual than it does to alter the social conditions that contribute to the development of behaviors necessary to live and function in one’s environment.” (p. 141)

It is therefore important that we remind ourselves and persuade our readers that those underlying social conditions can, and should, be changed. That these adversities are not accidents or anomalies, but the deliberate outcome of policies designed to harm or exploit those without power, and non-White communities in particular.

Clarity in nomenclature is very important for articulating complex results with subtle nuance, but when are we clarifying and when are we sanitizing? Sometimes when we sanitize our language, we also erase injustices. “Low-resourced urban neighborhoods” sounds rather unfortunate. It certainly sounds different than “neighborhoods that were created by racist, but legal, banking policies to isolate people by race, targeted for incarceration to disrupt community cohesion and political power, vilified on the nightly news for decades, and denied quality education or employment opportunities.” While the second description may be a bit too verbose, there is likely a compromise between the first and the second that better acknowledges historic injustices impact on current circumstances.

Researchers have voiced concerns of how findings are understood by the public and policy makers, and with good reason. For instance, Luthar and Cicchetti (2000) caution against using resilience in a manner that can be misinterpreted as a personality trait, which can lead to blaming the individual. We must be diligent in following their advice about clearly stating the limits of our own results and being very mindful of language and framing. The power structures that perpetuate inequalities are vigilant for counter examples and counter narratives to calls for justice and reform. Therefore, we must be equally vigilant that our framing of results in communities of color include addressing systemic, unjust, and man-made policies. We have demonstrated the value of second order changes in addressing homelessness (Nelson, 2013) and alcohol use (Wagenaar, 1999), and previous civil rights work shows it can for racism (Jason, 2013), but more is needed. For those who benefit from the status quo, if racism can be coped with, then the solution is to provide everyone with that ability. Thus, people of color remain disenfranchised, but better able to handle it. This is not justice.

Author Information:
Kyle Hucke Ph.D., khuckle@depaul.edu, DePaul University- Project Director, Center for Community Research
Leonard A. Jason, Ph.D., ljason@depaul.edu, DePaul University- Director, Center for Community Research

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core values and the inventiveness, tact, and connection with community needed to actualize the former in our work.

The Researcher is not the Expert: Negotiating Roles and Responsibilities in the Muslimah Project

Written by Brianna Hunt and Ciann L. Wilson, Wilfrid Laurier University; and Ghazala Fauzia, Fauzia Mazhar, and Usma Bhutto, Coalition of Muslim Women of Kitchener Waterloo

Background

From the first meeting of the research team, The Muslimah Project was a collaborative endeavor. Driven by the common goal of understanding the impacts of intersectional discrimination on the mental health and employment precarity of Muslim women, one MA student, her research supervisor, and a small group of remarkable community leaders began the day as strangers and ended as colleagues. During their first meeting, The Muslimah Project research team collaborated to draft a successful proposal for Toronto’s Women’s College Hospital 15k Challenge, a (recently discontinued) program that provided small grants to community-based research projects aimed at improving women’s health in Ontario, Canada. With a small budget in hand and ambitious goals in mind, the collaborative project was born.

At Wilfrid Laurier University, collaborative, community-based research drives the Community Psychology program. For a number of years, members of the Coalition of Muslim Women of KW (CMW) have been eager community partners on student internships and other community-university related research partnerships intended to improve the lives of Muslim women in Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. In collaboration with researchers, community leaders from the CMW drove the success of The Muslimah Project: Exploring Intersections of Belonging, Mental Health, and Wellbeing for Muslim Women in Waterloo Region. The central research objective of the project was to center the voices of Muslim women in a comprehensive investigation of their experiences of discrimination and sense of belonging, and the resulting impacts on their mental health, work, social, and family life. Towards this end, our team conducted five focus groups with Muslim women across Waterloo Region.

Challenges

University-community partnerships are often fraught with varied and complex tensions. Early in The Muslimah Project, the research team began the important process of negotiating roles and responsibilities of team members. Throughout this negotiation, many pertinent and challenging questions arose. Here, we will share some of the challenges that The Muslimah Project research team faced, and how we successfully navigated the landscape of collaborative, community-based research.

As a collaborative project, the meaningful involvement of both CMW members and academic researchers in all stages of the project was crucial. However, many aspects of the CMW’s role were undetermined at the commencement of The Muslimah Project, leading to ambiguous role definition. Negotiation of roles necessitated careful
consideration of a variety of factors, including how 
visible involvement would strengthen recruitment 
and data collection processes throughout the 
project, as well as limitations that CMW’s 
involvement may pose. In particular, the team had 
to consider the unique contributions that CMW 
members offered as registered clinicians, able to 
offer counselling support to participants, while 
recognizing the potential for the CMW’s position as 
a well-known, socio-politically involved community-
based organization to create barriers for 
participants in this study.

Given that two academic researchers on the 
project team identified as non-Muslim, cis-gendered 
women, a non-racialized MA student and a 
racialized research supervisor, it was also 
important that the roles of outsider 
researchers were clearly defined and 
communicated throughout each stage of the 
project. While defining these roles, the research 
team considered how the involvement of 
community outsiders may create barriers to honest 
information sharing among participants. Due to the 
prevalence of ongoing and historical exploitative 
research that harms marginalized communities, 
including religious minorities and people of colour, 
the research team understood the possibility that 
participants may not feel comfortable sharing their 
unique experiences with outsiders. As a 
community-centered project, the comfort and safety 
of participants was an essential aspect of The 
Muslimah Project, and the importance of 
addressing these questions was underscored 
throughout each step of the research process.

Other challenges that arose in the planning 
stages of The Muslimah Project involved specific 
desires and visions for the growth of research team 
members and the outcome of the project. As a 
team, we considered what strengths and capacities 
each member could harness and develop 
throughout the design of the study. For members of 
the CMW, developing strong skills in academic 
research, writing, and presentation was an 
important aspect of the collaborative project. As a 
team, we worked together to create a project that 
would provide opportunities for meaningful 
academic involvement for all researchers and 
community leaders involved in The Muslimah 
Project.

Finally, the harmonization of objectives and 
desired outcomes of The Muslimah Project was an 
important aspect of collaboration that the research 
team was careful to prioritize. In discussion, the 
team determined that project outputs should have 
scholarly impact as well as tangible impact within 
the community. As a team, we discussed project 
outputs regularly, speaking freely about the 
alignment of academic and community objectives.

Response

Successful navigation of role negotiation within 
The Muslimah Project was facilitated by the time 
commitment demonstrated by all members of the 
research team. Perhaps more than any other single 
factor, the willingness to share time in conversation 
contributed to the collaborative nature with which 
project decisions were made, standing out as an 
esSENTial aspect of the project’s success and each 
team member gaining experience and skills 
throughout the project process. Some concerns 
surrounding role negotiation of CMW members 
involved the extent to which the presence of CMW 
members during data collection may dissuade 
participants from sharing criticisms of CMW. When 
these concerns were raised within the team, we 
came together in conversation, and formulated an 
appropriate solution. During focus groups, CMW 
members remained on-call to offer counselling 
support to study participants when necessary but 
did not take a leadership role in the collection of 
data. Further, during data collection, researchers 
explained that the role of CMW members was to 
provide resources and support the project’s 
success, rather than evaluate any participant 
responses in advance of the results coming from 
the research data.

The process of role definition for non-Muslim 
researchers necessitated ongoing collaborative 
conversation with other research team members 
and was characterized by reflexive practices 
throughout each stage of the project. Along with 
personal reflexive practices, recruitment was 
conducted in partnership between academic
researchers and CMW leaders. In order to address the possibility of participant discomfort during recruitment, a Muslim community leader acted as the first point of contact for participants, who were then introduced personally to non-Muslim research team members. Prior to each focus group conversation, non-Muslim researchers named their status as community outsiders, acknowledging and sharing their own unique positionality as a white student researcher and a Black research supervisor, and their roles as learners (rather than experts) within the research process.

Shared goals between research team members were an essential aspect of effective collaboration throughout the project. Understanding that Muslim community members should not be represented in academic spheres solely by community outsiders, academic researchers on The Muslimah Project team had a genuine desire to support the involvement of CMW members within academic spaces. As such, we worked as a team to ensure the involvement of CMW members in publications, conference presentations, and other knowledge mobilization outputs from the project. Finally, we wanted to ensure that project outputs were meaningful within Muslim communities in Waterloo Region and beyond. To this end, we worked together to host a community forum that brought together local leaders from a variety of sectors, including local health care professionals, non-profit employees, and local planners and decision makers. Together, our efforts resulted in meaningful knowledge mobilization within Waterloo Region.

Reflection

As researchers and community leaders, it is incredibly important to remember that not all challenges facing collaborative research teams are the result of research partnerships and processes. Barriers to genuine and meaningful community-academic collaboration posed at the administrative and institutional levels are often cumbersome and obstructive. Throughout The Muslimah Project, we encountered a number of barriers that could potentially have a negative impact on community-based collaborative work. For example, when applying for research funds, many funding bodies require the submission of formal Curricula Vitae, an uncommon requirement outside of academia. When submitting an article for publication, formal affiliations are often required for all authors, disregarding the possibility that authors may be community members. Many academic conferences sport high registration fees that are inaccessible for community leaders and collaborators. These represent just a few institutional barriers facing community-based research collaboratives.

As The Muslimah Project team, we were fortunate to receive a small grant that prioritized community-level outputs, allowing us to invest in the creation of an accessible project video and the hosting of our community forum. The recent dissolution of this granting program marks the end of an important facilitator for Canadian community-based research focused on the health of vulnerable communities such as diverse women. As researchers, it is important that we continue to advocate for the accessibility of funding and programming that facilitates collaborative, community-driven research, understanding the value of community involvement in research.

Over the course of The Muslimah Project, we were able to create a flourishing academic-community partnership and establish meaningful relationships based on respect for the skills and contributions of each team member, greatly facilitating the project’s success in garnering important insights into the experiences of Muslim women in Waterloo Region. Community leaders’ enthusiasm and willingness to be involved throughout the research process, to help with recruitment, provide counseling support for participants, and spearhead knowledge dissemination worked together with academic researchers’ commitment to true collaboration through genuine and sustained engagement to create a successful research partnership. Our collaboration fostered mutual respect, power sharing, and a sharing of resources and expertise that made this project possible.

If you wish to contact members of the Muslimah team, feel free to contact Dr. Ciann L.
The Midwest Human Rights Consortium: Fostering a Transdisciplinary, Interinstitutional, Community-Engaged Collaborative for Forensic Asylum Assessments

Written by Minal Giri, Refugee Immigrant Child Health Initiative (RICHI) and Illinois Chapter of The American Academy of Pediatrics (ICAAP); Ida Salusky, DePaul University; Maria J. Ferrera, DePaul University and Coalition for Immigrant Mental Health; and Mary Elsner, Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (ICAAP) and Refugee Immigrant Child Health Initiative (RICHI)

Background

Unaccompanied immigrant children have accounted for an ever-increasing number of migrants entering the US. In 2014, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) apprehended and detained 68,000 such minors; these numbers soared from the previous year(s) due to the Central American child migrant crisis (Gramlich & Noe-Bustamante, 2019; O’Conner, Batalova & Bolter, 2019). In response, the government established detention camps along the border to act as a deterrent. Both child rights and human rights advocates have challenged the treatment of unaccompanied immigrant children within the US legal system. The U.S. government assumes responsibility and guardianship of unaccompanied immigrant children it takes into custody. After crossing the U.S. border, minors seeking asylum are often detained in less than optimal environments where the most basic needs (i.e., food, water, warmth, sanitation and physical safety) are not consistently met (Linthicum, 2019; Moore, 2019; Sanchez, Cohen & Eldeib, 2019). The more recent practices of separating children from their caregivers is traumatizing and associated with toxic stress (Shankoff et. al., 2011), which can lead to a host of lifelong health problems.

Medical and psychological forensic assessment of trauma and its impact on current functioning is critical evidence that can strongly affect the outcome of unaccompanied children’s asylum cases (Lustig, Kureshi, Delucchi, Iacopino & Morse, 2007; Scruggs, Guetterman, Meyer, VanArtsdalen & Heisler, 2016). Moreover, these professional assessments are often vital in obtaining necessary services for these children, including appropriate education, medical or psychological treatment, and suitable residential care; all of which can enable children to re-establish a sense of safety, security and healthy caregiver attachment when neurocognitive development has been impacted by the stress of repeated trauma (Ford, 2011; Ford, Chapman, Conner & Cruise, 2012; Carrion & Wong, 2012). In thinking about the needs of such highly vulnerable and traumatized children, there are then three priorities: 1) assisting unaccompanied minors seeking asylum through a complex justice system to facilitate their ability to establish legal status in this country; 2) placing them in stable homes with appropriate caregivers; and 3) connecting them to appropriate psychological and educational services. Healthcare providers can assist in the ongoing process of stabilization and trauma recovery by performing empirically based psychological and medical forensic evaluations to objectively corroborate trauma histories and abuse related to asylum claims. When medical and mental health providers are able to corroborate these findings through a forensic evaluation, applicants have a much greater chance of receiving asylum or other forms of legal relief (McKenzie et. al., 2018).

Challenge

Chicago is a major metropolitan area where unaccompanied minors are placed by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). Chicago is a center of legal, medical, and social service resources, and several legal nonprofits and for-profit law firms work with the children in asylum proceedings on a pro bono basis. Chicago has several shelters with an
approximate 500-bed total capacity for housing unaccompanied children. Currently, there are a small number of volunteers trained to perform trauma-informed psychological and medical forensic assessments that can be used to support minors in asylum and visa cases. Historically, when lawyers working with children and families in Chicago and its surrounding area ascertained that their client might benefit from an evaluation, no formal referral process existed to help identify a medical and/or mental health professional to address the need. Lawyers often rely on informal channels to identify qualified professionals. This places an undue burden on a small number of individuals. Children consequently may often end up not receiving a forensic evaluation that could help their asylum case. There is a need for training more professionals to perform evaluations and to refine a process for referral coordination. Further, there is an overarching need to educate the legal community about the impact of trauma on a child’s development. Often, attorneys representing immigrant children and families are themselves not aware of how a psychological or medical forensic evaluation and affidavit of support may greatly benefit their client’s asylum claim.

Response to Challenge

In response to the need for a coordinated referral network and increased training in medical and psychological forensic asylum assessments, a diverse group of practitioners, academics, and non-profit leaders and administrators recently formed the Chicago-based Midwest Human Rights Consortium (MHRC). Housed within the Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics, the founders conceptualized MHRC as an interinstitutional, interdisciplinary initiative aiming to develop a more formal process for both referrals for forensic assessments for immigrant children and families as well as a training center for practitioners committed to providing pro-bono medical and psychological forensic assessments. Engaging in a transdisciplinary approach, MHRC includes professionals who come from immigrant communities themselves and recognize the importance of inclusive, community-engaged and cross-disciplinary collaboration between clinical and community psychologists; pediatricians and other physicians; attorneys/legal advocates; social workers and other mental health practitioners; and community-based organizational staff and activists.

Key areas in the development of MHRC include: 1) Training and Mentorship—building a knowledgeable, professional workforce to perform forensic asylum assessments by training individual health care providers through formal conferences, close mentorship, ongoing case discussions and peer support. 2) Education and Asylum Clinic Building—developing and implementing best practices, cultivating partnerships with medical schools and clinical psychology programs who are working with students, interns, and residents in the creation of asylum clinics throughout the greater Chicago region. 3) Outreach and Support—actively reaching out to local legal, medical, and social service organizations as part of our Consortium to ensure that we align our goals with their clients’ needs. 4) Ongoing Partnership Development—on a national level, we are defining our relationship with Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) as a Midwest regional partner.

Early Challenges of Collaboration

One of the challenges we have confronted involves developing training guidelines for conducting medical and psychological forensic assessments. While broad guidelines do exist for the assessment of torture (e.g. Physicians for Human Rights Guidelines; Istanbul Protocols) there is no universal standard around specific assessment criteria when working with asylum seekers who may have experienced trauma that does not qualify as torture. Further complicating this, different disciplines have different standards for what constitutes a “valid” assessment. For example, clinical psychologists tend to use empirically validated and structured measures. Physicians receive varying degrees of training in abuse, neglect, and mental illness. Pediatricians, for example, are taught basic guidelines around recognizing and diagnosing child abuse and neglect in children during their residency training. Some general background in mental health
assessment and diagnosis is incorporated into all primary care residency training. As a network, we are collectively gathering best practices that would inform our own training guidelines.

We are in the early stages of establishing a formal referral network and developing a one stop shop for legal organizations who represent unaccompanied asylum seekers. While we have a growing volunteer network and database of mental health and medical practitioners who have indicated that they either have training and are willing to perform evaluations with mentorship, we are still in the process of developing systematic criteria to determine when a volunteer has the capacity to independently perform evaluations. It is imperative that individuals providing forensic evaluations understand ethical standards and guidelines that set these types of assessments apart from other types of biopsychosocial and medical evaluations. We are engaged in discussions regarding the ethics of privacy and consent as we build our referral system.

Reflection

We are growing as an organization as we add both working professionals and those in training to our roster of potential evaluators and identify those practitioners who are already skilled in conducting forensic evaluations. Our organizational structure is continuing to evolve as we slate working groups to address complex training and ethical issues and define the responsibilities of our member organizations through formal legal agreements. We are also navigating dissimilar models and approaches undertaken by our member organizations to deliver these evaluations. Further resources will contribute to the development of the Consortium as the first US centralized regional network comprising often competing institutions in this serious and important cooperative mission. We hope that our work contributes to creating more streamlined access to forensic asylum assessments through the MHRC referral network and our training and policy initiatives.

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Community Collaborations with Saving Lives, Inspiring Youth: A Community-Based Cross-Age Peer Mentoring Program

Written by Cynthia Onyeka, Kevin Miller, Chana Matthews, Amzie Moore, Katherine Tyson-McCrea, and Maryse Richards, Loyola University Chicago

Scholar-community collaborations offer an opportunity to conduct translational research that is both useful and respectful to the population of study (Foster-Fishman, Berkowitz, Lounsbury, Jacobson & Allen, 2001). When projects involve an intervention targeted towards a marginalized community, it is even more important to perform the research with such regard. Community-based interventions are more likely to find sustained success with community members as part of the service and research team. However, tensions between researchers and practitioners may present challenges with this work (e.g., researchers devaluing practitioner insights, practitioners and community members concerned about past histories of mistreatment of research subjects), particularly in marginalized communities experiencing systemic oppression. This case study aims to recognize community collaborator challenges, contributing factors, and solutions from Saving Lives, Inspiring Youth (SLIY), a community-based participatory cross-age peer mentoring program based in the south and west sides of Chicago. Specifically, we present challenges navigating a partnership with our community collaborators at a SLIY mentoring site on the west side of Chicago in 2017.

Background on the Collaboration Project

The SLIY mentoring program was part of a 4-year longitudinal project examining the effectiveness of community-based cross-age peer mentoring (continued relationships between a younger mentee and older youth from the same community) to reduce negative outcomes related to violence exposure among high-risk Black American and Latinx youth. The overarching aim of the study was to identify the risk and protective factors related to youth exposed to high levels of community violence while working to increase positive youth development and resilience outcomes. Research staff from Loyola University Chicago’s Risk & Resilience Lab and the Empowering Counseling Program (directed by Dr. Maryse Richards and Dr. Katherine Tyson-McCrea, respectively) helped direct, coordinate, and evaluate mentoring programming at each site. The program utilized community partnerships with neighborhood schools and community agencies to recruit high school mentors and elementary school mentees, host after-school mentoring programming, and supervise mentoring relationships (Richards et al., 2017). High school
mentors were trained by SLIY staff prior to being matched with their mentee(s).

**Description of Challenges Faced**

Although broadly fruitful and meaningful to our youth participants, one SLIY site in particular encountered a number of obstacles throughout its course given the contexts of high poverty and high community violence in which programming took place. SLIY operated a mentoring program on Chicago’s West side at Hickamore Elementary (school name changed to protect the confidentiality of all participants) between 2017 and 2018. The mentoring program at Hickamore consisted of teenage mentors from a neighboring high school traveling to the mentoring site to mentor their elementary student mentees. In comparison to other SLIY mentoring sites, Hickamore experienced a large amount of structural violence due to long-standing social inequalities evident in the city of Chicago. Structural violence describes the harming of people through unjust economic, political, and social institutions unable to meet persons’ basic needs for food, clothing, health care, education, inclusion, and safety (Koher & Alcock, 1976). This was evidenced through the fact that 43.1 percent of households in Hickamore’s community lived below the federal poverty line (which itself is not adequate for subsistence in Chicago) (City of Chicago Public Health Statistics, 2013). Additionally, the spike in Chicago’s homicide rate during the summer of 2016 ranged between 50-75 per 100,000 in Hickamore’s community, which is over ten times the national rate (4.9 per 100,000; Diebel, Norda, & Kretchmer, 2018). This phenomenon existed with concurrent increased media attention negatively targeting urban young people, thus creating a city-wide perception of black and brown adolescents as pathological and dangerous (Gallagher & Shapiro, 2017).

For the first three months of programming at Hickamore, SLIY staff found it was difficult to establish buy-in from our community collaborators (a teacher and the assistant principal) at Hickamore, due to the effects of the structural violence. They indicated a mistrust of research due to the reputation of exploitation research has in many low-income communities of color. Also, our community collaborators expressed hesitation about allowing high school students on campus after school because of their fear that the Black youth might cause more chaos and even violence in the school, particularly given the surge of violence in the city. The community collaborators reduced the weekly mentoring sessions by 25%, due to a scarcity of resources (i.e., classroom availability, funding for security guards after school). This push back was acknowledged by our high school mentors, many sharing that they felt as though they were not welcome at the mentoring site. As such, SLIY staff were presented with a dilemma: how to establish and maintain successful mentoring relationships between mentors and mentees with the limited support by our community collaborators in a context of high structural violence.

**SLIY Staff Response to the Challenge**

SLIY’s approach to remediate the community collaboration challenge was threefold. First, it was necessary for SLIY staff at Hickamore to consider the context in which our programming took place and how it impacted the community collaborators. SLIY staff recognized that community collaborators were highly stressed and experienced compassion fatigue and symptoms of secondary stress trauma. Specifically, community collaborators often had to cope with the chronic violence exposure while working with youth who were direct victims of such exposure (i.e., drastically reducing their concern or capacity to be empathetic to those impacted by traumatic events or experiences; Adams, Boscarino & Figley, 2006). Moreover, it became clear that as the public awareness of community violence increased, so did the distrust of black and brown teens, resulting in negative perceptions of SLIY high school mentors.

Second, while understanding the socio-ecological context surrounding the mentoring program was important, it was imperative for SLIY staff to also acknowledge and build on community strengths. SLIY staff sought to include participatory methods to center the youths’ voices and built a program framework that relied heavily on the youth
and community partnership. SLIY staff provided continuous trauma and leadership training to mentors, which allowed mentors to approach our community collaborators as youth leaders who have love and care for their mentees. The mentors formulated a plan to address the perception that they were not to be trusted within the mentoring site and facilitated discussions with school staff that demonstrated their commitment and compassion. With the support and training from SLIY staff, youth mentors were empowered to be leaders by a participatory framework, which allowed them to highlight their own strengths and address the effects of structural violence.

Finally, SLIY staff recognized that the mentoring site was severely under resourced and facilitated an open dialogue in which both parties were able to express their concerns and needs. For example, a SLIY staff member coordinated consistent meetings with the assistant principal to address concerns and collaborate on decisions. By forming empathic relationships with community collaborators within a highly stressed environment, SLIY staff flexibly balanced program needs with ecological challenges. This was exemplified by a negotiation between SLIY staff and community collaborators in which the daily programming time was increased by 25%, ensuring that the mentor and mentee needs were better addressed. Involving youth mentors in the direct design and implementation of the program, as well as using community collaborators and school staff as support liaisons and experts allowed SLIY to overcome and eradicate many of the aforementioned barriers.

**Reflection Response Effectiveness**

Critically considering community context while utilizing a participatory approach allowed SLIY staff to help build trust between community collaborators, mentors, and staff. SLIY staff at Hickamore were able to establish a partnership with community collaborators to not only assuage research stigma but amplify youth mentor voices in the process. By increasing transparency between community collaborators and youth mentors, SIY staff were able to ensure mentor decision-making capabilities were actualized, while empowering and securing a seat at the table for the high school mentors. By the second semester of the mentoring program, SLIY programming at Hickamore was met with increased approval by community collaborators. Mentors continued to develop leadership capacities and skills, and many of them later became youth co-researchers and co-presenters at conference presentations. In conclusion, it remains imperative to utilize a strengths-based approach to meet community collaborators’ fears and resistance with understanding, compassion, and willingness to compromise. Doing so can foster dialogue among participants, staff, and community collaborators so they can discover each other’s strengths and the benefits of productive teamwork.

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**Learning from Communities after Armed Conflicts: A Training Program on Community-Based Psychosocial Accompaniment in Ayacucho-Peru**

*Written by Miryam Rivera-Holguín and Tesania Velázquez, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (PUCP)*

Following our experience of strengthening capabilities at the community level (Rivera-Holguín, Velázquez, Custodio, Corveleyn, 2018), the PUCP Research Group of Community Psychology is taking part in a joint training program with grassroots social organization of human rights in Ayacucho. In this experience we are building on key aspects of linking research-theory to praxis. The module “Community based accompaniment during the search process for disappeared persons” will be delivered in Ayacucho and Huánuco in 2019-2020 as part of “Specialization Course in Participation Strategies for the Search for Missing Persons” organized by Instituto de Derechos Humanos (IDEHPUCP).

In this module, we are aiming for a bottom-up format of training, namely, starting from the expertise of the social leadership of ANFASEP (National Association of Relatives of Kidnapped, Detained and Disappeared Persons of Peru), to unfold their praxis of community base psychosocial accompaniment that they had when providing supports to women and families after the Peruvian internal armed conflict between 1980-2000. This conflict left devastating social effects: 69,000 dead, 600,000 displaced, more than four thousand burial sites, thousands of orphans, raped women, broken communities, etc. and especially affected families and communities that historically have been exposed to dynamics of inequality, exclusion and discrimination (TRC, 2003).

After the conflict, family and community organization were one of the first coping strategies that rose from the victims themselves (accompany...
and support each other in the different moments of their struggles). They started to draft strategies of self-organization and networking, forming grassroots organizations, and learned how to confront the political and military authorities to look for their disappeared parents, husbands, siblings, etc. These grassroots organizations have been looking for their disappeared family members during the last 35 years, at the same time they have been advocating for truth, justice, and reparation. Later, when transitional justice processes like TRC were put in place, social organizations were active throughout the process. Also, during judicial proceedings, they have proposed local practices to accompany the identification of burial sites, exhumations, identification of remains, delivery of human remains, burial ceremonies, and other mourning services.

The training project aims to build together with grassroots organizations on the identification of techniques, methods, and tools that they have been using during all these years in order to put them in dialog with Community Psychology approaches (theories and methods) and to disseminate this know-how with other grassroots organizations. This training program aims to highlight how local organizations use their values, traditions and cultural identifications as resources and main strengths to build their social support and networks. Moreover, how they activate inner process of empowering themselves to carry on participatory processes and community mobilization.

The training program will start in Ayacucho, where 20 participants from grassroots organizations affected by the armed conflict will participate, namely: Anfasep (National Association of Relatives of Kidnapped, Detained and Disappeared Persons of Peru), Aprohvip (Provincial Association of Orphans and Victims of Political Violence), Afavip (Association of Families Affected by Political Violence) and other family members of victims from Cayara and Acocro. The team of trainers include community psychologists with experience in handling sensitive cases of people exposed to collective violence and human rights abuses. A community-based approach will be considered along all the course, especially if dilemma situations or sensitive cases rise during the course.

The main selected topics are based in the community mental health model (Rivera-Holguín, Velázquez, Custodio, Corveleyn, 2018) and have been organized in five sessions, which includes participatory activities, dynamics, and ad hoc exercises. Main contents to be included are:

- **Session 1.** Introduction to psychosocial and community supports in the search of disappeared persons: Validating their own experiences and identifying the practices they have put into place (Beristain, 2012; Rivera-Holguín, Velázquez, & Morote, 2014).

- **Session 2.** Basic elements of the psychosocial and community accompaniment process: identify and strengthen the skills, resources and capacities that have been practiced (Velázquez, Rivera-Holguín, & Custodio, 2017).

- **Session 3.** Community mobilization in the search of disappeared persons: identify the different levels that have allowed the social, community and political process (Uprimny, 2009, Rivera-Holguín, Pérez, Hildenbrand, Custodio, Vargas, Baca, Corveleyn, De Haene, 2019).

- **Session 4.** Identification and acknowledgement of the emotional and social burden that involves their participation in organizations and actions in the processes of psychosocial and community accompaniment (Sánchez, 2015; Velázquez, Rivera-Holguín, & Custodio, 2015).
• Session 5. Lessons learned and challenges, policies and dialogues with the State and other organizations in the search for social justice (Jave, 2018; Prilleltensky, 2001).

Participatory concepts and methodologies will be included, as well as individual and group evaluation processes throughout the training process. The mainstreaming of experiential techniques, peer support, and lessons learned (systematization) will be considered as main training tools. Along with inviting participants to take leading roles in all the modules in order to keep their active involvement and to prevent the Peruvian tendency to prioritize academic knowledge over local knowledge.

Opposite to traditional training programs, facilitators will challenge their strategies to build on/from the community knowledge to the academia, and to match/translate the praxis used by Quechua people into concepts and methods that can be systematized as learnings and later on disseminated on different platforms. This training program aims to strengthen the community mobilization of social human rights organizations, and seeks to contribute not only to their recognition and welfare, but to the construction of public policies based on participation, that is to say, it is about building policies with the communities, which favors sustainability (Bishop, Vicary, Browne, & Guard, 2009).

We are happy to further discuss our proposal, if you had similar experiences before or have suggestions please contact us to share your thoughts, challenges or suggestions, for sure will enrich our experience. Feel free to write us: mriverah@pucp.pe and tvelazq@pucp.pe.

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Tensions and Rewards in Community-Engaged Scholarship: A Case Study
Written by Erin E. Toolis, State University of New York at Old Westbury and Heather E. Bullock, University of California Santa Cruz

Community-university partnerships can play a crucial role in promoting economic justice by leveraging the local expertise and relationships of community leaders, the knowledge of key stakeholders, and the research skills of students and faculty. We offer a case study of the challenges and strengths of such partnerships by examining a collaborative research project conducted by the Blum Center on Poverty, Social Enterprise, and Participatory Governance and the Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County. We focus specifically on some of the research hurdles we confronted.

Collaborating to Develop a New Community Needs Assessment
Across the United States, community action agencies were established as part of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. Community action agencies seek to alleviate poverty through a broad range of service and advocacy programs geared toward increasing low-income individuals' and families' access to housing, employment opportunities, immigration services, and other vital resources. "Maximum feasible participation" – the engagement of low-income people, themselves, in program decision making - is among the most unique, participatory features of community action agencies.

To gather input from people experiencing poverty, community action agencies routinely conduct community needs assessments. In Santa Cruz County and other counties across the country, this process often involves holding town-hall style "poverty hearings" in which individuals share their experiences at community events and staff members listen, record notes, and identify areas for action. For their 2017-18 assessment, however, the Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County (subsequently abbreviated as CAB) decided to try a new approach. Emphasizing equity and cultural humility, they sought to improve the breadth and depth of information gathered by engaging community members who often go unheard yet are deeply affected by poverty. To strengthen the capacity and rigor of their data collection efforts, CAB invited UCSC's Blum Center to serve as a consultant on their community needs assessment and assist with identifying key challenges and core community assets in the fight against economic injustice.

Rather than hold general "poverty hearings," eleven focus groups or "listening circles" were organized with targeted low-income groups, including unhoused community members, immigrants, youth, women, farmworkers, dayworkers, DACA youth, senior citizens, and LGBTQ+ community members. As researchers, our responsibilities included refining focus group questions, training CAB board members and volunteers in focus group facilitation, recruiting and training a team of bilingual, bicultural research assistants to take notes, developing a toolkit to provide to all participants, and data analysis.

We identified the following major needs in our community related to poverty: access to jobs and higher wages, housing insecurity and rent burden, barriers to accessing resources, discrimination and prejudice, and health challenges. The most
prominent assets voiced by participants included community and family support and pride, availability of social services, internal, spiritual, and relational wealth, and access to legal rights assistance. CAB drew on these findings to craft their county-wide community action plan (visit [https://cabinc.org/2018-2019-community-action-plan/](https://cabinc.org/2018-2019-community-action-plan/)).

**Research Challenges**

This process, while mutually rewarding, was not without challenges. Not surprisingly, differences between standard academic research practices and the realities of on-the-ground community work with marginalized populations was among our greatest challenges. The project timeline stands out as a prime example of these differences. The organization’s fast-paced timeline, necessitated by the community development block grant deadline, did not align with the university’s academic calendar or the competing obligations juggled by the research center’s limited staff. Some focus groups, for instance, had to be scheduled during the university’s spring break and finals week, making it difficult for student notetakers to attend. The timeline also limited our ability to seek external funding to aid with project expenses and to recruit and train research assistants. The accelerated process of designing a research plan and obtaining IRB approval also constrained our ability to work with certain groups. As a result, we were unable to collect or analyze data from two listening circles involving minors and incarcerated individuals.

Many listening circle participants were undocumented immigrants and there was considerable concern about the safety and protection of participants’ identities, however, this also created complexities with data collection. Informed consent, in particular, was a sticking point. With limited familiarity with research protocols, some members of our partner’s team regarded informed consent as intimidating and unnecessary. Similarly, audio-recording focus group discussions was viewed as problematic. Balancing our commitment to uphold ethical research guidelines with a sensitivity to confidentiality concerns, exacerbated by the national political climate around immigration and recent raids by Immigration and Customs Enforcement in the local community, required thoughtful consideration. When necessary, we obtained oral informed consent and refrained from audio-recording discussions, instead relying on trained research assistants to take notes on laptops.

Participant recruitment and focus group facilitation was largely carried out by volunteers with connections to CAB and the target communities (e.g., the LGBTQ+ community center). Likewise, the meetings were held at diverse venues that were contingent on CAB’s connections and the needs of the community. This strategy resulted in inconsistencies across facilitators, who differed in their levels of preparation and experience leading small group discussions, and inconsistencies across settings, some of which were well suited for focused, sensitive conversations and others which were not. Additionally, the project’s participation rate likely suffered due to limited participant incentives and the precarious living situations of potential informants, who had to weigh participation with other pressing demands on their time. One listening circle, which took place at a day worker center, lost all but one participant when a paid work opportunity arose right before the conversation. Another listening circle held at a community center with seniors had to be shortened because it intersected with their planned mealtime. These important practical considerations, driven by basic needs, financial limitations, and time constraints, sometimes resulted in trade-offs with procedural consistency.

**Drawing Upon Partnership Strengths to Navigate Research Challenges**

Frequent, honest, intentional dialogue between research partners was essential to successfully navigating these challenges. Both partners were also committed to learning from each other. For example, prior to data collection, a CAB member visited the university and trained the research team in cultural humility, a guiding principle of the community needs assessment, and participated in a team building activity modeled after an icebreaker.
from the focus group protocol. Members of the research team attended CAB’s day-long board retreat, meeting organizational staff from across the Board’s programs and gaining a historical understanding of the community action plan process. The research team also provided training in focus group facilitation for CAB’s leaders. These exchanges built mutual appreciation and deep respect for the expertise each partner brought to the collaboration and fostered a common understanding of the team’s shared values and goals.

Functioning flexibly and efficiently in a fast-paced project was also aided by a clear division of each partner’s responsibilities. The researchers were able to contribute their expertise in research methodology, data collection, and data analysis. A team of 25 trained bilingual undergraduate research assistants helped to make the task of collecting data possible, while a team of four graduate students worked quickly to analyze the data. Dedicated CAB staff and volunteers contributed their extensive knowledge of and connections in the community. This enabled recruitment and scheduling of participants and focus group facilitators and reservation of sites at which to hold listening circles. This division of responsibilities was informed by honest communication about each partner’s strengths and limitations.

Ultimately, our shared commitment to promoting equity and prioritizing the well-being and perspectives of marginalized community members enabled this project to remain on track. When asked to complete feedback forms on each focus group, student researchers enthusiastically expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to learn from community members. Due to their high level of investment, student research assistants were often open to accommodating evening and weekend commitments and last-minute scheduling changes. Despite the busy schedules of both partners, the team made time to express gratitude to one another, celebrate the project’s successes, and jointly share findings with the public. CAB and UCSC’s Blum Center co-presented insights gained from our approach to assessing community needs at the annual California Community Action Partnership Association conference. CAB also invited students to attend their open house and formally recognized the UCSC Blum Center at a public release of the findings.

Final Thoughts

For partnerships among university researchers, nonprofit organizations, and low-income community members to thrive, an understanding of the broader institutional, economic, and political affordances and constraints of each partner is crucial. In the context of rising economic inequality, anti-immigrant policies, and funding cuts to social services (including the federal budget’s proposal to eliminate Community Development Block Grants, which fund Community Action Agencies), researchers must be sensitive to the complex, ever-changing circumstances “on the ground.” Despite the research trade-offs we faced in terms of methodological control and precision, the ability to be flexible, communicate openly, and divide responsibilities clearly and efficiently resulted in a highly successful, impactful project that has been positively received by diverse stakeholders. Ultimately, this innovative community needs assessment was strengthened by our collaboration and each partner’s unique contributions, skills, and knowledge.

Improving Pathways to Safety for 2SLGBTQ Survivors of Gender-Based Violence

Written by Ellis Furman, Wilfrid Laurier University and Springtide Resources

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a term that encompasses forms of physical, psychological, or sexual violence perpetrated against an individual or group on the basis of gender or gender norms (Status of Women Canada, 2017; Reed, Raj, Miller, & Silverman, 2010). Forms of GBV include, but are not limited to economic violence, intimate partner violence, sexual abuse, sexual assault and rape,
sex trafficking, sexual harassment and intimidation, and bullying based on failure to conform to perceived gender roles (Status of Women Canada, 2017).

Research suggests that Two-Spirit (a term used by Indigenous communities to describe another gender role that is accepted within their societies), lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (2SLGBTQ) communities are disproportionately impacted by GBV compared to their heterosexual and cisgender counterparts (Barrett & St. Pierre, 2013; Dank, Lachman, Zweig, & Yahner, 2014; Langenderfer-Magruder et al., 2016). Higher rates of GBV among 2SLGBTQ communities can be attributed to unique layers of violence rooted in homophobia, transphobia, and sexism (Carvalho, 2011; Craig, Austin, & McInroy, 2014). As a result, 2SLGBTQ people experience higher rates of traumatic events and are at greater risk for developing symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and anxiety, as well as experiencing suicidality and isolation (Henry, Perrin, Coston, & Calton, 2018).

My past and ongoing research has examined the barriers experienced by 2SLGBTQ survivors of violence seeking to access services and support, and the glaring gaps in service provision to support this community (Furman, Barata, Wilson, & Fante-Coleman, 2017). I found that the current services offered to support those impacted by GBV are not designed to include and address the forms of oppression faced by the 2SLGBTQ community in general, and the situation is exacerbated by the omission of transgender people (Guadalupe-Diaz & Jasinski, 2017), people of colour (Meyer, Dietrich, & Schwartz, 2008), Two-Spirit, and Indigenous peoples who appear at the fringe of service access (Lehavot, Walters, & Simoni, 2009). In 2015, I was hired as a summer student to develop and deliver 2SLGBTQ inclusion trainings to GBV service providers in Toronto. I began working for Springtide Resources, a registered charity that develops and implements programs aimed at responding to the growing prevention, intervention, and educational needs of those working toward ending GBV. During the evaluation of the trainings, I realized that GBV organizations require more guidance and support to transform their services to meaningfully include 2SLGBTQ survivors of violence.

To examine the ways in which GBV organizations can reconfigure their services to be more inclusive, the Improving Pathways to Safety for 2SLGBTQ Survivors of Violence (ImPath) community-based research project was conceived. From 2018-2019, I was the research coordinator for the ImPath project, where we partnered with five violence against women (VAW) agencies that committed to an ongoing process of learning how to strengthen their approaches to effectively support 2SLGBTQ survivors. Each partnership involved Springtide Resources conducting an audit of 2SLGBTQ inclusion and accessibility of partner agencies. The underlying questions guiding this research were: a) what are VAW agencies’ strengths and barriers in serving 2SLGBTQ survivors? and b) what are the target areas that these agencies need support in strengthening to improve service provision for 2SLGBTQ survivors? Multiple methods were utilized to gather different types of data to answer the research questions. The data collection methods used in this research included an online anonymous survey, focus groups, and individual interviews at each of the partner agencies. Findings from this project revealed that the process of becoming more inclusive will look different for each agency committing to this process. Findings specific to each agency were shared in the form of a final report and presented to explain the recommendations that emerged, accompanied by additional training modules depending on agency availability.

**Description of the Challenge Faced**

An advisory committee was formed to involve community members in guiding and providing feedback on all aspects of the ImPath project. In August 2018, 10 individuals were recruited for an advisory committee comprised of 2SLGBTQ individuals who either identify as GBV survivors or who have supported 2SLGBTQ survivors in navigating service access. The initial advisory committee consisted of nine individuals all with
varying sexual orientations, gender identities, and intersecting social identities (including but not limited to Black, Indigenous, People of Colour, Disabled, Newcomers, Refugees, and people living in poverty). Advisory committee meetings were held once per month from September 2018 until June 2019. Meetings were originally planned to focus on different aspects of the research process, for example: determining which VAW agencies to recruit for participation and providing ongoing feedback on data collection materials such as the online survey and focus group questions.

It was realized early-on that despite targeted recruitment strategies, advisory committee members each had different ideas of what their participation would look like. After a few advisory committee meetings, I recognized that I never actually asked members what kind of role they would enjoy getting involved with based on their strengths and interests. By the time the project team conducted check-in meetings with each advisory committee member as a mid-project evaluation, members began to slowly drop-out of their roles, such that the final committee was comprised of only four individuals. It became clear that 1) most advisory committee members were not interested in providing feedback on research aspects of the project, and 2) I was likely not presenting very engaging opportunities for collaboration and feedback. Further, advisory committee members expressed being more interested in the knowledge mobilization activities that would be developed after the completion of the ImPath project.

An Explanation of the Team’s Response to Said Problem

From the mid-project evaluation of the advisory committee, I reflected on the reality that advisory committees have been romanticized in community-based research. I needed to reconfigure what the purpose of the advisory committee would be in order to retain and harness the strengths of remaining members. Two smaller groups were then formed for the remainder of the project. The first group involved committee members wanting to be part of the project because of the sense of community, honoraria, and food offered. While the second group was more interested in learning how to analyze qualitative data. The project coordinator continued to host monthly advisory committee meetings for group one, and I started facilitating data analysis sessions for group two. The monthly meetings continued to serve as a space to share a meal, talk about peoples’ experiences, and build community with other 2SLGBTQ young people. The collaborative data analysis sessions developed into a tremendous opportunity for skill-building. Sessions were so successful, that I was lucky enough to be able to hire two advisory committee members to assist me in data analysis for a separate community-based research project this past summer.

Reflection on the Effectiveness of the Response

My main learning from this solution is that the inclusion of an advisory committee comprised of individuals with lived experiences was critical to the success of this project. However, it is important to ensure that committee members feel they are respected by the project team and that they are contributing in meaningful ways. It is clear from this experience that participation can vary depending on project goals and community members’ interests and willingness to engage. In the evaluation of the advisory committee, members expressed that they were happy with the smaller working group structure and recommended this strategy for future research projects. In the context of GBV, it was difficult for most of the advisory committee members to participate beyond sharing their experiences with others. Thus, the solution of shifting the way advisory committee can look and operate became a refreshing way to meet the needs of marginalized community members within the context of a project driven by sensitive subject matter. Providing committee members with agency to participate in a way that felt good for them truly made this process more enjoyable.

Another key learning was the importance of building-in opportunities for ongoing reflection and evaluation. These components were imperative to identify and address the barriers to advisory
committee participation. Future projects must ensure that there is adequate funding to facilitate meaningful involvement of members, by compensating them for their time, transportation, and potential childcare needs, in addition to accommodating any accessibility requirements.

Overall, by including 2SLGBTQ survivors of GBV in the process of guiding this research project ensured that we were asking effective questions geared towards the enhancement of service provision. Based on the results from the ImPath project, I am continuing to work with three of the partner agencies to continually develop implementation and evaluation plans informed by site-specific recommendations.

References


Trust, Momentum, and Readiness: Trust-Building in Police-Community Partnerships

Written by Brittany S. Cook, Wandersman Center; Kassy Alia Ray, Serve & Connect; and Abraham Wandersman, Wandersman Center

Background
Established in 2018, Serve & Connect is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization based in South Carolina, with the mission to ignite positive change and strengthen communities through building positive police and community partnerships. Serve & Connect often focuses on communities with large disinvestment and with histories of mistrust and is currently functioning as a facilitator for the development of a coalition in the North Columbia community. The North Columbia community is primarily African American and is often recognized for many negative outcomes including high rates of violent crime, poverty. Two-thirds of adults report adverse childhood events including emotional abuse, parental separation/divorce, and parental substance use. Moreover, the community has a history of distrust of police, in part due to the frequent police presence because of violent crimes.

With Serve & Connect as a catalyst, members of police departments, local service organizations, educational institutions, state agencies, faith-based organizations, and community members have formed the North Columbia Youth Empowerment Initiative (NCYEI), a coalition centered on improving youth safety and empowerment in the community.

Description of the challenge faced
Serve & Connect has developed a comprehensive, evidence-informed, community-centered model for promoting safety, resilience, and well-being called COMPASS, to facilitate positive community level change through effective community collaboration. COMPASS is based on principles of empowerment evaluation (Fetterman & Wandersman, 2005), where community voice is paramount. The four phases of COMPASS are:

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<th>Cultivating Trust and Establishing Shared Community Vision</th>
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<td>Phase II</td>
<td>Stakeholder Engagement, Readiness &amp; Relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase III</td>
<td>Systematic Assessment, Implementation, Evaluation</td>
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<td>Phase IV</td>
<td>Sustainability</td>
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Using COMPASS, Serve & Connect is supporting the development of NCYEI and the processes used to understand and build relationships within the community, as well as the readiness of stakeholders at different levels of readiness to begin working together towards shared goals (Hajjar et al., 2020). However, fostering engagement in collaboration and moving towards action is a challenging and non-linear process, particularly in a community that has a history of distrust.

Team’s response
Wandersman (2009) outlined “four keys to success” when addressing social change interventions: theory, implementation, support, evaluation. Through the COMPASS work in North Columbia, Serve & Connect has identified challenges within each of the four keys and employed strategies to address those challenges.

Theory challenge. NCYEI identified a need for a unified vision, along with goals and an understanding of existing resources and relationships available to the community.

Theory solution. A community visioning day event was held during which community partners, community members, and police came together to discuss the vision for the initiative and resources and relationships that could be leveraged. This was an essential step for the theory of change within the COMPASS model.

Theory evidence of success. Out of conversations and activities at the community

Brittany S. Cook
visioning day, a community model for North Columbia was developed (see below).

Beyond development of a community model, participants in the visioning day event engaged in a mapping exercise that provided additional themes about the relationships and connections within the community. Networking was reported as a particularly valuable part of the event, and some community members reported that it was the first opportunity they had to really sit down and get to talk with a police officer on a personal level.

**Implementation challenge.** Trust in the NCYEI (and involved police) by the North Columbia community needed to be built. Community members voiced attitudes of “here today, gone tomorrow.”

**Implementation solution.** A summer series of events was held to provide fun and casual opportunities for police and community residents to interact. The summer series was strategically held each week for four weeks, alternating between two high need housing complexes in the community. This allowed the NCYEI and engaged police to meet residents where they lived and demonstrate consistency. These events involved fun activities including a water fight, cookout, and sports.

**Implementation evidence of success.** Attendance in NCYEI weekly meetings spiked directly following the summer series (time point 22 in the figure below) as several neighborhood leaders became engaged in NCYEI through the summer series and began regularly participating in meetings. The community leaders actively recruited other residents to come to meetings. This shift, towards an even more community-led coalition, resulted in the ability to move more strategically towards actions to address community needs.

**Support challenge.** Community conversations led to a recognition that NCYEI steering committee members needed to develop a shared understanding of the historical context regarding police and community partnerships and build internal trust.

**Support solution.** Serve & Connect facilitated the scheduling of the Welcome Table SC, hosted by the South Carolina Collaborative for Race & Reconciliation housed at the University of South Carolina. The Welcome Table is a process designed to help create relational trust, unity, teamwork, and cohesiveness through a group of community members who want to improve racial relations and other problems in their communities. Many of the formal steering committee members elected to participate.

**Support evidence of success.** Participants completed a survey about their experience in the Welcome Table. Positive changes in trust and perceived personal power of steering committee members through the Welcome Table process were reported. As one NCYEI steering committee members put it: “I have more power because of the connections I have made.”
**Evaluation challenge.** Serve & Connect intended to administer a survey to measure the readiness and existing relationships of community partners and residents in North Columbia to further understand the community’s needs and tailor supports. However, resident NCYEI members cautioned that a formal survey was culturally inappropriate and could inhibit trust building.

**Evaluation solution.** “Dot surveys” were conducted at community events. Questions were placed on large pieces of paper, and community members placed a sticker, or dot, next to the responses they most agreed with. Additionally, strategic listening sessions were held to provide residents and police opportunities to voice their concerns, needs, and hopes for the community and police-community relationships.

**Evaluation evidence of success.** Overall, the adapted method demonstrated good response rates and useful information about the community’s feelings of hope, trust, safety, and resource access. Qualitative feedback about a particular event garnered some of the most powerful support for the dot survey method. One community resident responded to the question *what did you like best about today’s event?* by stating that her favorite thing was that “Right away, you wanted to know what I thought [with the dot survey].”

**Reflection**

Building collaboration for social change takes time and is a complex process. By identifying and addressing challenges in theory, implementation, support, and evaluation through the COMPASS initiative, Serve & Connect has been able to begin building trust within the North Columbia community. The intentional focus on trust and relationships within each of the four keys has allowed increasing momentum in NCYEI to build. Residents are engaging with police, sharing their voice, and being empowered to take ownership of NCYEI.

For more information about Serve & Connect and the COMPASS initiative in North Columbia and other communities, please contact Brittany Cook at: Brittany.s.cook@wandersmancenter.org or Kassy Alia Ray at: kassy@serveandconnect.net.

**Reference**


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**Innovative Communication as a Panacea for Community-Based Research: A Case Study on the NoMa Plan**

*Written by Rubayat Jesmin, Binghamton University*

It is now generally accepted that community-based research (CBR) is a preferred approach for exploring social issue(s) related to a particular community especially when other traditional methods may fall short of identifying and assessing the push and pull of conflicting and competing agendas and perspectives (McIntyre, 2008; Hacker, 2013; Savin-Baden & Major 2013; Jason & Glenwick, 2016). Consequently, general purpose of any such community-based collaboration is to change at least an aspect of a prevalent social environment - the system or mechanism, social norms, community practices, and so on (McIntyre, 2008; Hacker, 2013; Savin-Baden & Major 2013; Jason & Glenwick, 2016).

This paper aims to assess the NoMa Plan as a case study of a CBR i.e., how a CBR is applied in the ground, challenges faced, and the strategies adopted to overcome those barriers.
The NoMa Plan: Setting the Base of a Meaningful Partnership

The North of Main Street (NoMa), Binghamton, Broome County, New York, USA is a traditionally working-class neighborhood. Although the majority of NoMa residents are white, it is considered as one of the most diverse and poorest communities in Broome County (US Census Bureau, 2017). The NoMa, like other neighborhoods with similar characteristics, has faced many challenges including unsuitable waste disposal and management, inadequate civic facilities (such as community center, park), illegal activities, and so on (Draft NoMa Plan, 2017; Safe Streets, n.d.). This degraded the image of the neighborhood in the past.

Within this context, in collaboration with Binghamton University’s “Neighborhood Heritage and Sustainability Project” and neighborhood organization Safe Streets, the NoMa Plan was developed with extensive involvement of residents, local business leaders, and city staff (NoMa, n.d.). The planning committee included representation from these diverse stakeholder groups. The goal of this neighborhood plan is to have improved integrity and environment (both social and natural) in the locality. The community-driven initiatives for the betterment of the locality started a couple of decades back in the NoMa area. The notable community-driven initiative evolved from the 1990s with the formation of the “Safe Streets” to protect the neighborhood from illegal activities (Safe Streets, n.d.).

For this study, data were collected from both primary sources (e.g., interviews and participant observations) and secondary sources (literature review and publicly available data). Participation was voluntary.

Embrace Challenges - Both Foreseen and Unexpected

One of the major challenges that a CBR usually faces is the longer time taken to build rapport (including trust and confidence) between the researcher and the community (Hacker, 2013; Savin-Baden & Major 2013; Jason & Glenwick, 2016). The framers of the NoMa Plan faced such a time-consuming issue in case of bringing all the stakeholders on board during the planning and designing processes. From the beginning, the project has opted for involving the residents and neighborhood organizations alongside concerned authorities, academics, and businesses. Thirty long interviews, twenty short, ad hoc interviews, discussions in the sideline of a series of public events (such as Fall Festival and community dinner) and numerous participant observations helped the planners to identify the neighborhood concerns and develop strategies for action.

On the other hand, a community development initiative has to balance the need for long-term, sustainable solutions with the day-to-day realities which may require prompt decision-making and/or short-term action (Ravitz, 1982). The goal of the NoMa Plan was to identify the priorities of residents. It, therefore, contains both the ‘landscape’ issues and some critical present-day concerns of the residents. The Plan incorporated means and ways to address the identified issues and concerns including how to improve the residents’ quality of life and create prospective scope mainly in terms of earning opportunities. Following this, it includes strategies that can be implemented immediately as well as longer-term strategies that need further analysis and discussion.

Furthermore, several CBR have identified inadequate responses from the participants to be another major challenge (McIntyre, 2008; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Initially, the NoMa project also faced slow responses from the grassroots participants - not everyone participated in all the meetings, nor many residents showed up in different activities as expected. The situation improved during the later phase of the drafting process once the framers managed to build the required inter- and intra-group trust and confidence.

Lessons Learned.

The Project has already accomplished some tangible achievements, such as obtaining the Mansion at Walnut Street as a dedicated community center; enhanced safety and image building of the Main Street by placing “Child-At-
Play”, “Stop for Pedestrians” and other necessary road signs; painting crosswalks; and ensuring regular surveillance for speeding and double parking; the greening of the streets by clearing the garbage, planting and replacing street trees; organizing more community-engaging events such as Fall Festival and Community Café; and, last but not the least, establishing a dedicated website. In brief, the NoMa Plan has helped the locality to advance in achieving social bonding and environmental protection. The other aim of the NoMa Plan is economic development, which is under process through discussions with local businesses.

The NoMa Plan is a strategic document to restore the neighborhood’s image and improve the quality of living. The formulation of the draft Plan is the outcome of collaborative aspiration and initiative, which followed a bottom-up approach. The framers of the Plan opted for inclusive participation from all stakeholders and they applied various methods for this purpose (Draft NoMa Plan, 2017). This inclusiveness was also ensured by adapting several innovative communication methods. The planning committee meetings, for example, were held on Saturday mornings within the neighborhood to accommodate residents’ work schedules, and their movement and other conveniences. During the initial phase, the Project also hosted two well-attended neighborhood lunch meetings to discuss the strengths and challenges facing the neighborhood as well as the participants’ aspirations on how to bring about necessary changes. Furthermore, the project organized a series of public events where people from the neighborhood and across the city came together. Alongside mingling and having fun during Fall Festivals, for example, people shared their concerns and aspirations about the locality. The project also organized a summer bike repair day and giveaway. This attracted the NoMa residents and some of them were then recruited to participate in the “Planning in the Park” forum. All of these helped the planning committee in data collection and analysis to develop the NoMa Plan containing both immediate-, medium-, and long-term actionable strategies. Later, the project organized two more public meetings to gather additional feedback on the draft plan. These meetings were held on weekends – one over lunch and another over dinner.

Both conventional and innovative methods were applied for the dissemination of information/notice on project activities. The neighborhood organization Safe Streets delivered information via their existing email list. Posters were placed in key sites with wider public appearances such as the Walnut Street Park and the USA Market. Another age-old technique that proved to be quite effective was placing flyers underneath the doors of every home in the neighborhood. This might appear to be a trivial attempt in this era of technological advancement, but it worked for the NoMa residents many of whom do not have access to technology because of their socio-economic status. Some marginalized residents admitted that they had felt being ‘a part of the process’.

Concluding Remarks
The formulation of the NoMa Plan followed the underlying tenets of a CBR. It adopted a collective commitment in investigating some common issues, engagement at both individual and collective levels to reflect on identified issues, a joint decision to take individual and/or collective actions for a useful solution that benefits the people involved, and the co-knowledge production (McIntyre, 2008; Hacker, 2013; Savin-Baden & Major 2013; Jason & Glenwick, 2016). In brief, the Draft NoMa Plan is an outcome of a concentrated, collaborative effort.

Like some other CBR, the NoMa Plan has taken a considerable amount of time to build a meaningful partnership. Nevertheless, the Plan is very much relevant to the local community and has community ownership. It has helped to build the trust required to conduct and implement such a CBR. And, both conventional and innovative communication tools and techniques have helped to shape that trust and confidence between the researchers and the community.

References
Inclusion and Collaborative Design:
School-Based Health Centers (SBHC)

Written by Christine Robinson, University of Pennsylvania

SBHCs, as outlined, are a policy and systems innovation that promotes inclusion. This model, open and accessible to all students in a school, sends a noticeable message of equity, everyone matters. This SBHC prototype intentionally integrates identity, culture, enhanced personal narratives, and a concrete approach to support positive adolescent development. High school graduation is a landmark, signifying one’s ability to navigate a complex institutional system and achieve a certain level of proficiency. It is a benchmark on the road to successful adulthood. The collaboration with community nonprofits and the emerging shared-staffing model provides organizational enhancement, assists in academic attainment, improves health outcomes, and affirms belonging, a crucial developmental attribute for historically marginalized youth.

The Challenge
Several of the health concerns adolescents address are grounded in the social determinants of health and driven by broader social and contextual inequities (Brindis, Loo, Adler, Bolan, & Wasserheit, 2005). In Massachusetts, thousands of students are immigrants and refugees from many countries and personally affected by traumatic transitions. During a tumultuous move to the US, interim education is often nonexistent. The ravages of war, refugee status, family displacement, racist stereotypes, foster care, abuse, neglect, and death, are too familiar in these young lives. After a year of negotiation with nonprofit leaders representing the various racial, ethnic, and linguistic groups in each city, we invited partnership to improve youth outcomes. Nonprofits agreed to help by assisting in the translation of a baseline survey to Haitian Creole, Khmer, Cape Verdean Creole, Spanish, Laotian, and Vietnamese. African American nonprofits were included acknowledging the importance of identity. Evidence from multiple disciplines indicates that inequality can signal to young people that they are unlikely to be able to attain parity with peers (Brownman, Destin, Carswell, & Svoboda, 2017).
Collaborative Response to the Challenge of Inclusion

In establishing the first cohort of clinics, we aligned services and staffing with physical and mental health needs, as shown by baseline student survey results. Data were collected from a customized CDC Youth Risk Behavior Survey, a recognized instrument with proven validity and reliability. Questions reflecting the specific interests and concerns of youth and families in the various cities were added. These customized surveys provided a means to collect data about cultural attitudes; all students in attendance on the days of administration were included. Lived experiences of youth on health and a range of health risk behaviors, including homelessness, tobacco, alcohol, and mental health concerns, were gathered. Data were analyzed separately for each school, yielding unique profiles. The analysis provided insight into student realities and perceptions and indicated the need for culturally inclusive staffing arrangements.

Community nonprofits were invaluable in gathering baseline data as many of the teens were not literate, and some languages are spoken and not written. Nonprofit staff assisted in the development of a response process for one-on-one administration with teens who needed help with reading, completing the answer sheet, and translation of various concepts. Through this iterative process, the staff of the nonprofits agreed to continue to work in SBHCs through a range of customized shared staffing agreements. For example, nonprofit staff from nearby agencies came to the schools to provide counseling, translation services, homework help, and support. Youth, mentored by people who shared their identity as exemplified by a shared language, culture, immigration experience, race/ethnicity, religion, and traditions in a time of significant transition, improved academic and health outcomes, and built social cohesion. The nonprofits agreed to participate in a complex referral network, providing a range of services and supports accessible to youth and their families. The staff of the same cultural, racial/ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds bring unique insights, credibility, expertise, and lived experience, easing a rough transition to an unfamiliar environment (Alegría, Ali, & Fuentes, 2019; Fuligni and Tsai, 2015).

Health conditions, anxieties, and behaviors are tightly aligned with cultural identities; re-location is an added stress amid the ongoing developmental tension of adolescence. For example, loss and grieving are treated differently in various cultures. Many youths had experienced the loss of their country of origin, family separation, family members who had been killed, tortured, or injured in war, or family members who struggled to cope with physical and psychological disabilities. These types of challenges compromise one’s ability to focus on academic matters, no matter how gifted a student is (Alegría, Green, McLaughlin, & Loder, 2015). The culturally informed SBHC model provided a familiar language and supportive adults, invaluable to these young scholars. Nonprofit staffs were both support providers and a bridge to families. Family engagement is essential throughout adolescence (National Academy of Sciences, 2019). Public schools are tested to add more culturally fluent staff; it is not unusual for schools to have more than 50 languages spoken, a conundrum for any school system. The knowledge of language and culture was a vital lifeline facilitating routine tasks such as homework completion with a highly nuanced understanding of family disruption and underlying struggles in some young lives.

Reflection on the Effectiveness of the Response

Effective SBHCs were able to move toward inclusion within a process of positive change incorporating the context of diversity (Trickett, 1996). Transformational leadership exemplifies skills of mediation, compromise, and pluralistic teambuilding, thereby creating a model of inclusive school culture, a template for all students to emulate (Day, Gu, & Sammons, 2016). Yet, the professional identities of health and education staffs in the SBHC, worldviews, power differentials, and community tensions are a factor.

1. **Mixed loyalties**: SBHC shared staff navigated allegiance to the SBHC, their home
organizations, and often to racial or ethnic communities.

2. **Model impacts school culture**: The collaboration with community nonprofits resulted in the inclusion of authentic perspectives, voice, and language in schools. Inclusion affirmed student culture and required a stretch of school culture.

3. **Diversity of models**: SBHCs varied across each district, bringing to the forefront diverse capacities, and models. The clinics are comparable but not identical.

4. **Limited resources and agility**: It was crucial to have staff familiar with languages, cultures, immigration, and refugee challenges to support high school completion as public schools generally lacked this capacity. The shared staffing model tested staff to become nimble, familiar with multiple organizational structures, including the SBHC, nonprofits, host school, and in cases, the partnering health care systems. Staff was compensated, but member organizations were asked to contribute to community wellbeing with no direct compensation.

5. **Power Inequity**: Real collaboration requires equal power. Yet, the power dynamics between educational institutions and health institutions are tense at times. Many emerging nonprofits representing historically marginalized populations provide invaluable service but have yet to attain equal respect in the civic space. Though revered by the local community, they lack prestige. The relegation to a contractual status evinces inequity.

6. **Culture of Collaboration**: The “culture of collaboration” within most SBHC skirts organizational and structural power dynamics. Redressing inequities in the broader community is a goal; however, the SBHC work is siloed, seen as a means of providing care, protection, and a vital bridge for vulnerable lives. The part-time nature of the staff renders them less powerful.

These findings support the necessity to expand inclusive culturally and linguistically appropriate school-based health services. Integrating health services into schools improves access to care that will enhance youth outcomes. However, the process of inclusion, which reflects the increasing diversity of the US, is challenging. This case study demonstrates that it is possible to build institutions premised on the bedrock that everyone matters.

Please feel free to contact the author: Christine Robinson: crrobinson624@gmail.com

**References**


In this column, we are highlighting community psychology practitioner Ramy Barhouche’s work on peace building and conflict transformation. For the last eight years, Ramy has worked with several local and international non-profit organizations focused on community empowerment and peace building through strategic planning and action. Four months ago, Ramy began his new job in Lebanon at Search for Common Ground, an international organization that focuses on peace building by bringing different groups of people in conflict to work towards a unified solution. To meet this goal, Ramy’s project focuses on three things: conflict and power dynamics analysis, strategic communication, and community-led initiatives and dialogue. Through the conflict and power dynamics analysis, the project aims to better understand the situation and tension between communities in Lebanon and see where it’s most likely to make a change. Through the strategic communication initiatives, the focus is on utilizing different forms of media (e.g., film, radio programs, music videos) to spread awareness of issues and elicit discussions about overcoming differences. Lastly, through community-led initiatives and dialogue, the project identifies community influencers, referred to as champions, and trains them in conflict resolution and dialogue facilitation, and funds them to implement initiatives in their communities.

As mentioned above, through his work, Ramy helps conduct a conflict analysis to identify problems across different groups of people in Lebanon. The second step is to identify key influencers in each community. These key influencers or what they call “champions,” are members of a community who do active work. They are identified through focus groups and interviews. After the champions are selected, they are trained in skills such as conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and facilitation as well as in communication, like storytelling narratives, and things related to the media. Other sessions may focus on topics such as economics, prejudice, community organizing, or working with individuals with various backgrounds. The two objectives are for the champions to become competent in activities that will bring about positive change to their communities and to share their narratives via the strategic communication media campaign.

The project uses a participatory approach to plan and design 10 dialogue sessions and community-led initiatives and the champions are partnered with coaches to mentor and support them throughout the process. They discuss the challenges that they are facing and possible ways to overcome them. In the process, the champions learn the necessary skills to manage and implement a project in their communities. For example, the champions are trained to write a proposal for a mini-grant of $1,000-$2,000 to fund their community-led initiatives and to report and monitor their progress. The long-term goal is for the trainees to acquire community organizing and development skills and be able to successfully work with nonprofits or in community.

At the same time, the champions help the organization identify focal points, individuals, and groups of people, such as those representing the local or national government or local nonprofits. Throughout the year, the champions then meet with people from the community to have dialogues about issues that they’ve been facing, whether it is...
about power dynamics, about economics, or any other situations that they and their community are going through. The meeting attendees are usually people with various social and economic backgrounds. This allows the participants to learn to work with diverse groups in a more productive and positive way while identifying potential issues of concern to the community members as well as possible solutions to these issues. The idea is that the organization will not continue doing the work, but rather the community members will take over in the future.

The other part of the project focuses on strategic communication. One part includes having videos and recordings of the work that champions are doing to share on new media and mass media campaigns such as billboards. One of the goals of this initiative is to create a more accepting perspective of multiple narratives. This is especially important in a country such as Lebanon with its multiple religious, ethnic, social, and economic groups. The point of this is to reduce tension and create collaborative kind of behavior that help reduce prejudice towards refugees, as well as other groups.

This is a crucial time to talk about these issues in light of the current political situation. The demonstrations that are happening have put a pause on some of the organization’s work to readjust the vision and to create a real justice strategy to match what's happening in the country. So the organization is taking a step back and broaden the focus instead of focusing mainly on Syrian refugees and Lebanese host community. Thus, while their target still includes Syrian refugees, it also includes more inter and intra conflicts across the region. This means that the goal is a more positive narrative concerning Lebanon in general.

The Search for Common Ground does something called the common ground approach and its focus is on peacebuilding rather than on social justice and social change. This means that they need to always take a nonpartisan kind of approach to things and to be “neutral.” Their approach is different from those of human rights organizations. This process involves trying to work with both sides equally and learning more about the different perspectives.

While, Ramy thinks the work that his organization is doing is much needed, he wishes that they would expand to include a societal perspective such as looking at the resource distribution and power dynamics. Ramy reflects on the same limited approach in his previous work with Syrian and Lebanese youth. They would create a camp for one week. In it, the youth would have access to different kinds of instruments for arts such as music, theater, or film editing or drawing. Working with one another, the youth could see each other as human beings and potential friends. This helped break the barriers and reduce the prejudices that they may have originally had toward each other. Again, this was a great way to see the first-order change as the youth involved in this project had changed their own attitudes about the others they worked with. However, as a community psychologist, Ramy still wished his organization would get involved with a more national, transformational, second-order change. In his opinion, the organization is not dealing with power dynamics. It ignores the different kind of power between these two groups, Lebanese being much more powerful and experiencing many more privileges than their Syrian counterparts. To him, having Syrian and Lebanese youth who went to camps together become friends and collaborating with each other is fantastic. However, only a small percentage of the youth attend such camps. He does have hope that those who have gone through the art camps and the trainings will become the future leaders and help change the national discourse.

There is no denying that organizations such as those Ramy has worked with have a positive impact in the region. Community Psychology principles and tools are evident in Ramy’s work on peace promotion and conflict transformation in Lebanon. Perhaps one day, he will be able to use his training to create the kind of interventions that will bring long-lasting, transformational change to the region that he envisions.
Can SCRA Live Up To Its Diversity and Social Justice Values With Regard To Race?

Written by Mason G. Haber, Harvard Medical School; Dawn Henderson, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Simón Coulombe, Wilfrid Laurier University; and Laura Kohn-Wood, University of Miami

Recent discussions of the Council on Education (COE) – echoing similar recent discussions in SCRA as a whole – have focused on whether the Council and SCRA more broadly may be unintentionally excluding minority groups within the organization, especially with regard to race, ethnicity, cultural and national origin. These conversations were first initiated in the context of a review by SCRA members of a recently disseminated guide to community psychology (CP) training programs (https://www.scra27.org/what-we-do/education/academic-programs/), which seemed to lack representation from programs reflecting these dimensions of diversity. Directly related to the topic of this issue, some of this discussion focused on whether the guide failed to include education and training opportunities available at Minority-serving institutions, especially HBCUs. Failing to represent these opportunities appropriately in efforts to promote CP education such as the brochure would clearly be a detriment to the field in terms of missed opportunities for contributions from these institutions, whose interests and values tend to be well aligned with those of SCRA. Even more importantly, such exclusion would be directly at odds with core values of CP and SCRA of diversity and social justice, undermining through our own institutional practice efforts to champion these values in working with communities, especially with community members of color.

In this issue, the Education Connection reflects on the extent to which the COE and SCRA appear to be making sufficient efforts to live up to our diversity and social justice values with regard to race, and if not, what we can do to remedy the situation. We hope these reflections help to initiate a broader dialogue in SCRA about this important question. Our first section focuses on whether the strategies that SCRA is currently using toward the priorities of interest to the COE are consistent with diversity and social justice values as they intersect with race. In examining this question, we first critically review how diversity and social justice are currently represented in the SCRA strategic plan. Following this, we summarize findings of a recent report by SCRA member Dr. Dawn Henderson, on the ways in which SCRA could promote education and training in Minority-serving Institutions (MSIs) – including HBCUs and Hispanic serving institutions (Henderson, 2017). We end this section by reflecting on the extent to which issues of racial justice are or are not being addressed in the COE’s work. The second section considers possible barriers that might explain a lack of alignment between our diversity and social justice values in regard to race and the education promotion strategies we have been using in the COE and in SCRA to promote the field. We then close by considering some next steps to address the issues rising from our reflections.

Diversity, Social Justice, and SCRA Priorities

Organizations of all kinds focus resources on their priorities – areas that are seen as essential to their survival and growth and to achieving their mission and vision. Typically, these priorities include increasing and better engaging individuals and programs. The more numerous and engaged the membership, the more resources are available
to contribute to other priorities. However, increasing resources alone will not necessarily lead to achieving an organization’s mission and vision. For these to be achieved, resources need to be deployed in a manner that is consistent with an organization’s values. The values provide the bedrock for the organizational enterprise – the mission and vision cannot be understood (much less achieved) without them.

SCRA’s strategic plan includes both individual-level ("Membership") and program-level ("Educational Programs") priorities (https://www.scra27.org/who-we-are/scra-strategic-plan/). Several objectives are listed for each level, which to some extent parallel one another. Table 1, below, identifies objectives by common theme. Briefly, each priority contains objectives focusing on improving capacity, increasing participation, increasing opportunities for participation, and enhancing benefits of these opportunities. But is the manner in which SCRA is focusing its resources toward these priorities consistent with its diversity and social justice values, especially with regard to racial justice?

**Diversity and Social Justice Values in the Strategic Plan**

The strategic plan references diversity and social justice as two of the seven “SCRA Values” that provide the plan’s foundation (Figure 1). These values appear again in the Vision, at least implicitly – social justice is explicitly referenced, and “fostering collaboration where there is division and empowerment where there is oppression” would seem to connote inclusion of diversity.

What appears to be missing in the Strategic Plan material available on the SCRA website is how the organization gets from A to B, as the values seem to stand alone and do not connect explicitly to objectives related to membership or educational programs. As shown in Table 1, none of the objectives related to membership or educational programs focus on diversity or social justice. In fact, by omitting these values in this context, the objectives appear to be at odds with diversity and social justice values. One might ask, increase participation, opportunities, value, and the capacity to support these *for whom*?

It would not necessarily have been difficult to attend to this question in the Membership and Education Program objectives. For example, a possible re-write of Objective 4.2 (under the Education Priority) might be: “Increase the number of undergraduate and graduate students, especially those who self-identify as a member of a historically oppressed and marginalized community who learn about, engage with, and

Table 1. SCRA Strategic Plan Membership and Educational Priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>Priority 3. Membership</th>
<th>Goal: A growing, vibrant membership actively benefiting from belonging to SCRA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve organizational capacity</td>
<td>Objective 3.1. Enhance organizational capacity to improve membership growth, engagement and value</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase participation</td>
<td>Objective 3.2. Increase the number of members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase opportunities</td>
<td>Objective 3.3. Engage more members in SCRA activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance benefits</td>
<td>Objective 3.4. Build the value of belonging to SCRA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRIORITY</th>
<th>Priority 4. Education</th>
<th>Goal: Community psychology educational programs are robust and growing in number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve organizational capacity</td>
<td>Objective 4.1. Establish a system of data collection, management and analysis that supports education in community psychology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase participation</td>
<td>Objective 4.2. Increase the number of undergraduate and graduate students who learn about and engage with the field of community psychology via higher education opportunities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase opportunities</td>
<td>Objective 4.3. Strengthen existing undergraduate and graduate programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance benefits</td>
<td>Objective 4.4. Foster/support efforts to create new programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. SCRA Strategic Framework

What appears to be missing in the Strategic Plan material available on the SCRA website is how the organization gets from A to B, as the values seem to stand alone and do not connect explicitly to objectives related to membership or educational programs. As shown in Table 1, none of the objectives related to membership or educational programs focus on diversity or social justice. In fact, by omitting these values in this context, the objectives appear to be at odds with diversity and social justice values. One might ask, increase participation, opportunities, value, and the capacity to support these *for whom*?

It would not necessarily have been difficult to attend to this question in the Membership and Education Program objectives. For example, a possible re-write of Objective 4.2 (under the Education Priority) might be: “Increase the number of undergraduate and graduate students, especially those who self-identify as a member of a historically oppressed and marginalized community who learn about, engage with, and
join the field of community psychology." This example of a potential re-write acknowledges a need for better representation and inclusion of individuals from these communities. Naturally, appropriate resources would need to follow for such a reframed objective to be achieved.

**Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) and their Engagement with SCRA**

Training in CP, whether at the graduate or undergraduate level, requires exposure and engagement with the field. Perceived barriers that limit engagement in SCRA can influence whether individuals from these institutions see SCRA as an organization of value for them. A facilitated roundtable at the 2017 Biennial and a survey administered to SCRA members sought to understand barriers to engagement among members affiliated with HBCUs and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs). The report on these activities (Henderson, 2017) revealed practical barriers such as a lack of funding or schedule flexibility prevents members from attending SCRA events such as the Biennial, as well as perceptions of more subtle types of lack of inclusivity. With regard to practical barriers, the survey found that conflict with work and school priorities (44%) is the primary barrier to attending a SCRA regional or biennial conference.

Another finding from the survey indicated that financial challenges (27%) are one of the top barriers to attending conferences for those who identified as faculty, administrators, and students. Related to these challenges, survey respondents and session participants indicated that the small size or focus on undergraduates in programs at HBCUs and HSIs excluded them from some types of support from SCRA that are focused on graduate training. These types of barriers were identified alongside perceptions of a lack of interest in engaging students from HBCUs and HSIs in SCRA, and a perceived lack of intentional outreach by SCRA to HBCUs and HSIs. In general, findings suggest that key activities for creating a sense of community in SCRA are inaccessible for a substantial proportion of its members at HBCUs and HBIs. In turn, failing to create opportunities to engage with the SCRA community, along with the lack of intentional outreach to HBCUs and HSIs, may be contributing to the sense of not being valued that was expressed by some participants.

**COE Discussions of Racial and Other Diversity**

The topic of promoting ethnic and cultural diversity institutionally in SCRA has come up recently in the COE in multiple ways. First, when some of our COE members were reviewing a new brochure on CP programs a little over a month ago, just prior to its posting on the SCRA website, we noted that certain HBCUs as well as international programs seemed to be missing. We looked back at records used to contact programs to collect information for the brochure and found that some of the programs were not included because they did not respond, although there were still a number of others that were simply not on the list. Apparently, some of these programs had been added to the COE website at one point, but then not included in the brochure.

In reviewing websites for programs not included in the brochure during a recent COE meeting, members were impressed with both the thoroughness and distinctiveness of the curriculum of some programs like the Florida A & M training in CP with a black psychology and multicultural mental health emphasis. We all seemed to agree that any exclusion of training programs was an unfortunate mistake that should have been avoided. In other cases, HBCU-based training programs may not have been included in the brochure due to being delivered through individual courses rather than programs.

Regardless of what happens in the specific cases of the programs identified as having been omitted, the lack of representation of HBCUs in the current version of the brochure indicates a need for SCRA to find ways to more consistently recognize CP training at HBCUs and other institutions that are international or serve majority racially and ethnically diverse populations. In follow-up conversation online about this issue, a suggestion was made to
conduct outreach to HBCUs and HSIs such as sending representatives to “Psychology Research Days” or other such forums at those institutions to introduce their students to SCRA and to CP (notably, this suggestion had also been made previously, in Henderson's 2017 report to SCRA).

The issue of promoting diversity more generally was raised during the pre-conference “Clarifying our Vision” that the COE hosted at the 2019 SCRA Biennial. The pre-conference, attended by 25 program directors and representatives, faculty, and students, was designed to help identify strategies for the COE, SCRA and broader field to promote the sustainability, growth, and vitality of CP education and training. Through a series of goal setting and planning activities, we established an initial action plan organized by five broad themes. Diversity was included as part of one of these (the theme was entitled “Diversity/Identity”). Although we might have liked diversity to be more prominent – its own theme – we ended up collapsing diversity with a broader range of identity-related issues due to the fact that there were relatively few, concrete, practical suggestions from our group on how to increase ethnic and racial diversity among students, faculty and practitioners in the CP field.

Given, we covered a broad range of topics – and so we were limited in the extent to which any one type of issue could be considered in depth during the event. Still, the lack of specific suggestions for promoting diversity was somewhat surprising. During the event, working in small groups, participants developed a list of goal statements for the COE related to each theme. They were then asked to rate for each theme the importance and feasibility of each goal statement. Figure 2 shows the frequency of identification of any, important, and feasible goal statements by theme (Diversity and Identity thematic content are disaggregated for purposes of illustration). Notably, almost all the suggestions related to diversity were rated as “important” by participants; however, only a minority of these were rated by participants as “feasible.” Also, only one of the suggested goal statements explicitly addressed racial diversity (“Increasing racial diversity of students and faculty”).

Why are Racial Diversity and Justice Not Higher Priorities in SCRA?

At minimum, it should be clear based on our discussion to this point that racial diversity and justice could – and should – be higher priorities. As previously asserted, organizations will direct resources to those priorities they see as essential to their survival, mission, and vision. Identifying that issues exist is important, but to be successful, efforts to address racial diversity in SCRA require committing to specific strategies. Certain recommendations have been made but not implemented (e.g., Henderson, 2017). For this to happen, we need to consider a question that is seldom posed in these discussions because of its sensitivity – in a word, why. There are many reasons why an issue may fail to be given adequate priority by an organization; some are resource-related, but not all. As a starting point for discussing the “why,” question, we would like to propose three possible reasons in turn.

1. Everyone is busy and inadequately incentivized to contribute to positive change in the SCRA community on a sustained basis. While many of us commit some resources for periods of time toward SCRA’s goals, there are very few people available who are able to pay consistent attention to the same set of goals over the long-term. Those individuals are spread too thin to steward efforts...
2. **There is a tension between issues of diversity and identity in a field like CP that tends to resolve at the expense of diversity.** Promoting racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity in SCRA is valuable in its own right, given that diversity and social justice are recognized values of the organization. Further, it is likely that efforts to promote diversity could improve the capacity of SCRA to address priorities related to the overall sustainability of the organization – recruiting new members, new programs, and retaining those members that are already a part of the organization but may not feel included or valued. Unfortunately, threats to identity – especially existential ones, which all identity threats are to some degree, – tend to provoke impulses to exclude rather than diversity (e.g., Greenberg, Solomon, & Pyszczynski, 1997). Further, organizations experiencing identity threats – some of those characterizing our field would be difficulties in self-definition, or a perceived lack of acknowledgement of CP contributions to other fields – may try to find what looks to be the shortest, most direct path to promoting sustainability. They may be prone to revert to strategies that have worked in the past, a conservative impulse that inevitably excludes groups that have historically been less represented. One example of this phenomenon would be privileging graduate over undergraduate and master’s programs. Undergraduate and master’s programs – and certainly undergraduate and master’s courses – are often seen as less prestigious, less likely to produce future faculty members (at least in isolation) and thus, may be seen as less important.

3. **In the context of a history of racial injustice, working across racial and ethnic boundaries is an inherently fraught, effortful process.** Members of both majority and minority racial and ethnic groups are reluctant to speak freely about ways to further inclusion, for fear that they will offend or be offended. An article in the American Psychologist’s recent special issue on racial trauma addressed this discomfort from the perspective of minority group members and majority group allies, identified multiple sources of discomfort, and provided recommendations for overcoming it and achieving mutual healing (Liu, Garrison, Kim, Chan, Ho, & Yeung, 2019). Clearly this article is only one recent, prominent example from a vast literature in psychology and other fields to guide more intentional efforts to address racial injustice.

**A Call to Intentional, Systematic Action**

Although there appears to be relatively little focused discussion of concrete actions to improve racial and other diversity in SCRA generally, outside of specific contexts (e.g., the Council on Ethnic and Racial Affairs [CERA]: http://www.scra27.org/who-we-are/committees-and-interest-groups/cultural-ethnic-and-racial-affairs/), and still less on how to do so systematically, some specific strategies have been suggested that are worthy of further consideration. We suspect based on the considerations raised in this article that none of these ideas will have an enduring impact if pursued in isolated ways rather than through a
sustainable, systematic strategy receiving support from the organization as a whole. The discussion of how to arrive at such a strategy involves recognizing the extent and complexity of the problem – which we hope this piece has begun to do – and the barriers that interfere with responding to it, particularly barriers that can be difficult to acknowledge. Clearly, the idea that there could be a tension between CP’s sustainability and diversity efforts is a potentially uncomfortable and controversial one. This possibility, however, needs to be considered, its validity and specific manifestations identified, and where identified, the tension needs to be addressed. Because efforts to achieve greater diversity may compete (or be perceived to compete) with sustainability goals, they also cannot be considered in isolation, but rather should be discussed in the broader context of the SCRA’s overall priorities, strategies, and resources.

As a starting point, we would like to suggest the following types of actions as critical to systematic, intentional, sustained efforts to improve racial and ethnic diversity in the organization. These are deliberately process-oriented, and need to be further developed through participatory discussion, informed by diverse perspectives, and the best available theory and data – in short, the best of what our field may have to offer.

- **Identify possible barriers to achieving greater racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity and justice in SCRA and investigate these systematically.** There has been at least some attempt to do this – but further efforts are clearly needed.

- **Discuss possible changes to the SCRA strategic framework that better encompass diversity and social justice values.** Diversity and social justice are largely not represented in an actionable manner in SCRA’s current strategic plan. More explicitly and elaborately acknowledging their importance in actionable ways would be an important step in guiding impactful efforts to improve diversity.

- **Confront and test ideas about how to best sustain, grow, and achieve the mission of SCRA.** Foremost among these would be ideas of “prestige” as traditionally defined in academia. As discussed earlier, these can undermine efforts at greater inclusivity generally and outreach to HBCUs, HSIs, and international universities in particular. They may undermine sustainability as well.

- **Empower a representative group to accomplish the actions listed above and pursue greater diversity and justice in the organization on an ongoing basis.** Currently, the existing group in SCRA that would seem to be best aligned with this mission would be the Council on Cultural, Ethnic and Racial Affairs (CERA), but to be effective, an empowered group likely needs to involve a wider range of perspectives and resources than CERA alone could provide. As a starting point, we would suggest CERA and the COE collaborate and through support from both councils advocate for changes in SCRA.

- **Be willing to have difficult, humbling discussions.** The sensitivity of issues of racial and other types of diversity naturally discourages candid, genuine participation – there is too much to lose. Unfortunately, there is more to be lost by not having these discussions. Members of both majority and historically marginalized racial, ethnic, and cultural groups in SCRA need to take risks for these discussions to happen. Majority groups, in particular, need to be willing to get things wrong in order to learn to get them right. Marginalized groups can then allow majority group allies to learn from well-deserved criticism, admit where they have been wrong, and rally with them around solutions. To the extent such discussions are meaningful, they may be uncomfortable for all involved, but a willingness to address them head on nonetheless creates possibilities for progress.

We are extremely interested in reactions to this article. We know that there much work to do and that ample guidance is needed to do it. If you would like to help us advance our discussion, please let us know, either by participating in our regularly scheduled meetings (publicized on the listserve), or by emailing the corresponding author. We welcome
your collaboration in finding the best forums and methods for making such discussions successful

References


Author Contact
Mason G. Haber, mhaber@jbcc.harvard.edu

Environment and Justice
Edited by Manuel Riemer, Wilfrid Laurier University

Greetings from New Environment and Justice Interest Group Co-Chairs
Written by Carlie D. Trott, University of Cincinnati and Kai Reimer-Watts, Wilfrid Laurier University

On September 25th, 2019, the Environment and Justice (E+J) Interest Group convened online: Sixteen members joined from around the globe, including from New Zealand, Hungary, Brazil, Canada, and the U.S., including Puerto Rico. Thanks to the efforts of Manuel Riemer, interim Chair, we were able to come together to think about new leadership and new directions for the interest group. During the call, we — Carlie Trott from the University of Cincinnati and Kai Reimer-Watts from Wilfrid Laurier University — emerged as co-Chairs for the 2019-2020 year. In this, our first contribution to the TCP column, we wanted to take a moment and introduce ourselves as co-Chairs and talk a bit about what we envision for the future of the E+J Interest Group.

Carlie D. Trott, Ph.D. is an assistant professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Cincinnati where she heads the Collaborative Sustainability lab. Her work emphasizes university-community partnerships for collaborative research and action to advance social justice and environmental sustainability. Themes in her current research include: (1) Climate Change and Environmental Justice: Developing community-based, participatory, and arts-based methodologies to promote agency and action on environmental problems in local settings; (2) Community Partnerships: Employing community-engaged research methods (e.g., participatory action research) to strengthen community resilience, foster interdisciplinary collaboration, and enhance undergraduate higher education; and (3) STEM Engagement: Applying interdisciplinary and action-based educational approaches to support STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) engagement by marginalized groups. Dr. Trott also teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in social and community psychology at the University of Cincinnati where she advises students in the Community and Organizational Research for Action (CORA) doctoral program.
Dr. Trott received her B.A. from Columbia College Chicago and her M.S. and Ph.D. in Applied Social Psychology from Colorado State University (CSU). Prior to being at UC, she completed a postdoctoral research fellowship with CSU’s STEM Center where she conducted research and evaluation around NSF-funded STEM education and outreach initiatives in the areas of climate science and sustainability. Dr. Trott’s research has been funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI), and the Society for Community Research and Action (SCRA), specifically the Public Policy small grants program. Her work has been published in the journals *Science Education*, *Action Research*, *Environmental Education Research*, *Studies in Higher Education*, the *Journal of Social and Political Psychology*, and *Journal of Geoscience Education*. She currently serves on the editorial board of the *Journal of Social Issues*. As co-Chair of the E+J Interest Group, she hopes to raise visibility of the interest group and its activities, while facilitating the progress of action teams (see below).

**Kai Reimer-Watts** is a 2nd-year PhD student in Community Psychology at Wilfrid Laurier University, with a Master of Climate Change from the University of Waterloo. His research focuses on the intersections and community impact of art-activism and climate justice, as embodied by the ongoing climate organizing work he continues to play a leadership role in within the broader Waterloo Region. Currently, Kai is co-leading a participatory action project using the arts-based method Photovoice, to stimulate powerful conversations on social and environmental well-being within the context of the high-performance green building (HPGB) evolv1, in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. Previous community-engaged climate projects include co-leading the creation of a “Climate is Life” mural for climate justice at the heart of Laurier campus; producing the feature film *Beyond Crisis* to support community dialogue and ongoing action on climate change; co-leading community art builds for the Global Climate Strikes; co-leading climate emergency and carbon budget declarations being passed through the Region of Waterloo; and organizing for ongoing climate strikes here in Waterloo Region. Kai believes strongly in the power of the arts and arts-based practice to help evolve new narratives and collective “signposts” that are critical for grappling with super-wicked problems including the

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*Kai Reimer-Watts speaking at the Laurier Climate Strike, September 27th, 2019. From left to right: Pamela Rojas, Kai Reimer-Watts, Ann Marie Beals. The banner behind, in full, reads “We Are All in this Together”, and was carried in front of the Laurier march which several hundred students, staff, and faculty at Laurier attended.*
intersections of climate change and justice, opening dialogue, hearts and minds while activating communities toward building a far more caring and sustainable future.

Over the coming year, we expect to launch these new action teams, so please look out for emails to the SCRA listserv. Once action teams are formed, additional communication will take place on the E+J listserv, so please email Jean Hill (jeanhill@scra27.org) if you would like to be added. Finally, to say hello, ask questions, or to join the E+J Interest Group, please feel free to reach out to Carlie Trott at carlie.trott@uc.edu or Kai Reimer-Watts at reim0490@mylaurier.ca. Wishing everyone a productive and painless end of semester!

There is an increase in xenophobic rhetoric, United We Dream seeks to change the narrative in communities regarding immigrants. They asked us, in the face of the Supreme Court case on DACA and the Dream and Promise Act in Congress, to share our expertise and support immigration policies that further justice and challenge unjust policies. Specifically, they invited us to engage the public through op-eds, as op-eds can support narrative shift and call people to action. In this column, we highlight DACA and provide tips on writing media so that you can follow United We Dream’s call to action. We hope community psychologists around the country will join us in writing op-eds and letters to the editor to their local news outlets to inform the public on DACA, its benefits, and the injustice that will be created should DACA be rescinded.

What is DACA and Why is DACA in the News?

DACA provides qualifying undocumented young people work authorization and temporary relief from deportation. DACA was announced by the Obama administration in June 2012. The Trump administration announced its termination in September 2017. Multiple states challenged the decision, and in June 2019, the Supreme Court agreed to hear the case. In November 2019, the Supreme Court heard oral arguments on whether the termination of DACA is unlawful, and they are expected to make their ruling by Summer 2020. To qualify for DACA, undocumented young people must have been under age 31 when the program was announced, have entered the U.S. as children and resided for at least 5 years, meet educational criteria, have not been convicted of a felony offense or significant misdemeanor, and have not posed a threat to national security. DACA recipients are granted temporary relief from deportation and entitled to work in the U.S. for two years, but they cannot travel outside of the U.S. without advance parole. DACA is not a path to lawful permanent residence or citizenship in the U.S.

Immigrant Justice
Edited by Sara L. Buckingham, University of Alaska Anchorage and Kevin Ferreira, California State University-Sacramento

Leveraging our Role as Community Psychologists through Op-Eds and Letters to the Editors to Advocate for Immigrant Justice
Written by Sara Buckingham, Kevin Ferreira van Leer, Co-Chairs of the Immigrant Justice Interest Group

As community psychologists, we aim to address social inequities by working with people who are being oppressed. To align our interest group’s work more closely with the concerns of migrant communities, we invited a member of United We Dream, the largest youth-led immigrant rights organization in the U.S., to help us identify how we can support their work. Their campaign centers on protecting the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. In the face of
What Do We Know About the Impact of DACA?

In 2016, it was estimated that there were 1.3 million undocumented youth eligible for DACA (Caps et al., 2017). Approximately 800,000 youths are DACA recipients (USCIS, 2017). Surveys of eligible youth have found that most DACA recipients have found new jobs, and often jobs that better match their education and training (Wong et al., 2019; Gonzales et al., 2014). A longitudinal, national study found that DACA provided greater educational and economic opportunities for these young people, resulting in access to higher wages and more meaningful employment (Gonzales et al., 2019). Access to temporary protection and work authorization has been associated with a greater sense of safety and security as well as positive future orientation (Gonzales et al., 2019). Depending on their state residence, DACA recipients have greater access to driver’s licenses, financial institutions, in-state tuition and state financial aid for postsecondary education, and occupational licenses. Research has shown that DACA is a vehicle for upward social mobility. These benefits have cascaded past individual DACA recipients to greater support for the families of DACA beneficiaries and their community (Gonzales et al., 2019).

The termination of DACA has increased anxiety for many recipients regarding their future. A national survey of DACA recipients found that over three-fourths of respondents were concerned with their safety, quality of healthcare, and education if deported to their country of their birth (Wong et al., 2019). Over half of those surveyed reported thinking of being detained or deported once a day. Nonetheless, DACA recipients continue to build community and become politically active to both defend the DACA program and advocate for immigrant justice.

We recognize that undocumented youth have long asked for the narrative regarding “dreamers” to shift to messages that lift up all immigrant youth and their parents. While DACA is important, it has limitations (Gonzale et al., 2019). The court cases exemplify its temporary nature and illuminate the need for greater legislative change. Please see a recent policy statement by SCRA (2018) on the effects of deportation and forced separation for a review of the empirical research on the consequences of deportation and detention, and related policy recommendations.

Why Should You Write an Op-Ed or Letter to the Editor? How Do You Write Them?

Op-eds and letters to the editor (LTEs) are powerful ways of communicating with the public and people in positions of power. We can share what we know and believe via media to draw attention, educate, and influence. Op-eds are typically 500 to 800 words and LTEs are typically less than 200 words. They are most likely to be published if they are about current issues, they are comprehensible and engaging, opinions offered are backed up by evidence, and the author has authority on the topic – from study or first-hand experience. Here are some tips:

Step 1: Choose the issue and the ask. First, choose an issue you care about, like DACA. Ask yourself, “What do I want the reader to do after they read this?” That’s the basis of your opinion, and what your op-ed or LTE should be about. Don’t lose focus. Keep on message.

Step 2: Choose an outlet. Op-eds should be treated like manuscripts submissions; that is, they should only be submitted to one newspaper at a time and not submitted to another unless they are rejected. LTEs, on the other hand, (usually) don’t require this exclusivity; you could submit virtually the same LTE to multiple newspapers. You should check newspapers’ guidelines for their expectations. National papers like The New York Times, USA Today, and The Washington Post draw large audiences and allow for a large reach; local newspapers draw smaller audiences but allow you to more readily connect with your community (and they are more likely to publish your piece). When writing for a national paper, be sure to keep your focus national; if writing for a local paper, hone in on how the issue impacts the local community.

Step 3: Construct your piece. We are drawn to the “EPIC” format of writing these opinion pieces:
First, **Engage** the reader – use a hook. In the words of Margot Friedman, “Activate the heart before you activate the head.” Your op-ed hook can be your personal story, local information, or catchy statistics. Your LTE hook can be the newspaper article you are responding to. Then, **state the Problem** and **Inform** on a solution to alleviate the issue. You should cite literature, but don’t confuse evidence with academic jargon. Your writing should be in active voice, succinct, and clear. Anticipate objections and respond to them in your piece. Bret Stephens at *The New York Times* advocates for 80% information, 20% opinion. Finally, make a **Call to action** – tell the reader what you want them to do. Be direct, and feel free to respectfully name people who have the power to act (e.g., “I call on Senator XX to pass XX”). For an LTE, each piece might be one sentence; for an op-ed, each piece could be a paragraph.

**Step 4: Edit, edit, edit.** Make sure you have non-academics read your work. Is it easy to follow? Is it interesting? Is it to the point? Are all of your sources cited accurately?

**Step 5: Submit.** Most newspapers allow you to submit your op-ed and LTE via an online form; others prefer email. Read instructions and follow them carefully. Include your name, location, contact information, and your relationship to the issue you wrote about. Read your newspaper; many will publish LTEs without letting you know they have accepted them. Be responsive via phone; many will call you to confirm who you are and request a picture before publishing an op-ed. Haven’t heard back for 72 hours? Consider following up via phone.

**Step 6: Multiply your effort!** Did you publish an op-ed? Reach out to people who can write LTEs in response! Did you ask a policymaker to take action? Send the piece to their office.

**Want to Learn More?**
- The Op-Ed Project: [https://www.theopedproject.org/](https://www.theopedproject.org/)

**We Invite You to Join Us: Virtual Op-Ed Writing Session on January 27, 2020**
This column is an invitation for you to bring your expertise and voice as a community psychologist to local and national conversations regarding immigration policy. In response to the call from United We Dream, we will host a virtual op-ed writing session on **January 27, 2020 from 2-5pm Eastern time.** This will be an opportunity for you to join other SCRA members to engage in a discussion about writing op-eds, spend dedicated time drafting one, and get peer editing and feedback. We hope you join! We also invite you to join the Immigrant Justice Interest Group and join our meetings on the second Friday of every month at 3pm Eastern time. Please contact Sara at sbuckingham@alaska.edu or Kevin at k.ferreiravanleer@csus.edu for more information.

**References**


International Transitions and Global Contributions to the 2019 Biennial Conference on Community Research and Action

Written by Olga Oliveira Cunha, NOVA University, Lisbon Portugal and Douglas D. Perkins, Vanderbilt University

After many years in the most capable hands of Irma Serrano-Garcia as editor, the International Column of The Community Psychologist will be co-edited by Olga Oliveira Cunha and Douglas D. Perkins. We deeply appreciate Irma’s leadership not just in editing this recurring column, but for all her years publishing her own community psychological ideas and research and effectively mentoring so many community psychologists in Puerto Rico and across the Americas, both North and South. Her 2018 SCRA Award for Distinguished Contributions to Theory and Research in Community Psychology was very well-deserved and long overdue. Through her work as an editor and advisor, not just of this column, but even more importantly of the Inter-American Journal of Psychology, of multiple books, including the latest Handbook of Community Psychology, and special issues and every International Community Psychology Conference from the first one at her own campus of the University of Puerto Rico in Río Piedras to the last one in Santiago, Chile, and the next one in Melbourne, Australia, Irma has played an especially crucial role connecting and influencing community psychologists from Puerto Rico to the United States and all of Latin America, as well as publicizing Puerto Rican community psychology throughout the Western Hemisphere and beyond. So to Irma from the entire SCRA International Committee, muchas gracias!

To introduce ourselves, Olga Oliveira Cunha received her degrees in educational and community psychology at ISPA-IU (University Institute Psychology, in Lisbon, Portugal, and currently is the coordinator of the Psychology and Counseling Office at Faculty of Social Sciences and
Humanities, NOVA University in Lisbon. She is also a member of the APPsyCI- Applied Psychology Research Center Capabilities & Inclusion (ISPA-IU). Her current research focuses on sense of community within kindergarten and nonprofit and religious organizations, volunteering (sense of community of volunteers, motivations) and integration of people with mental illness in higher education.

Douglas D. Perkins received his degrees in community psychology at New York University, taught at Temple University and the University of Utah, is a professor of Human and Organizational Development at Vanderbilt University, teaches in its B.S. track in Community Leadership and Development and M.Ed. in Community Development and Action, and was founding director of the interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program in Community Research and Action. His current research focuses on the global development of Community Psychology and 11 other applied community studies disciplines, especially in regions challenged by political oppression, poverty, conflict, and the legacy of colonization. He studies and works with voluntary associations, non-profit organizations, and government agencies responding to development challenges, at all levels but especially locally.

The rest of this column provides an overview of the international contributions and meetings at the 2019 Biennial Conference on Community Research and Action in Chicago. The international representation at the Conference was truly impressive. There were sessions on Residential Stability Among Homeless Subpopulations and on Teaching Community Psychology in Class-based Settings by researchers from Canada; Diverse Intervention Initiatives to Create Change in Cairo, Egypt; Reflections of a Polish Social Psychologist and Human Rights Activist (for the Global Alliance Marion Langer Award); Lessons Learned from an Ecosystem-Based Youth Leadership Program in India; Neoliberal Influences on Community Psychology From Australia and the United States; the Future of Community Psychology as a Discipline in Australia, Canada, Italy, Japan, South Africa and the U.S.; Case Studies in Creating Cultures of Sustainability Through Community and Organizational Partnerships in Canada, the U.S., and New Zealand; Ecological Praxis and the Natural World on Islands of the Pacific-Asia Region; globally focused studies by researchers based at both National Louis University and Vanderbilt University in the United States; Ignite presentations by scholars from Australia, Bulgaria, Canada, Italy, Korea, Portugal, U.K., Uruguay, Zimbabwe; not to mention dozens of excellent international poster presentations and many other fascinating sessions too numerous to review here.

We also held our International Committee meeting at the Biennial. In all, 21 persons attended with seven being first-time attendees to the Committee's meeting. There was a brief overview of activities of the Chair and Committee for the last two years and there were some debate and proposals for the next two years. This discussion resulted in the following ideas within two main topics: Establishing resources for members and projects to help promote and grow the Committee:

a) Access to international datasets, such as through the National Academy of Sciences and Civic Leads (available through the University of Michigan)

b) Creation of a repository of international community psychology literature

c) Arrange for conversations via the listserv on creating an online course

d) Identifying editor[s] for the International Column in The Community Psychologist and planning future columns and authors

e) Establish connections with other groups within the SCRA family

f) Organize one or more sessions (symposia) produced by the International Committee at the 8th International Conference in Melbourne

g) Create a podcast where different members will talk about their experience/work in Community Psychology

We would now like to invite you to share ideas for future TCP columns. You are welcome to submit a brief description of a proposed column either about one of the topics from the meeting or some interesting example of international community
psychology work. Send your column ideas and who would write it (yourself or someone else) to both cunhaolgaoliveira@gmail.com and d.perkins@vanderbilt.edu!

Finally, we hope as many readers as possible will attend the 8th International Community Psychology Conference in Melbourne, Australia, June 26-28, 2020, and the next SCRA Biennial Conference at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, in 2021!

Prevention and Promotion
Edited by Susana Helm, University of Hawai‘i at Manoa, Toshi Sasao, International Christian University, and Kayla DeCant, Rape Advocacy, Counseling & Education Services

The Prevention and Promotion Interest Group (PP-IG) endeavors “To enhance the development of prevention and promotion research, foster active dialogue about critical conceptual and methodological action and implementation issues, and promote the rapid dissemination and discussion of new developments and findings in the field” as stated on the SCRA website (http://www.scra27.org/who-we-are/interest-groups/). To achieve this goal, the PP-IG co-chairs agreed during our interest group business meeting at the June 2019 SCRA biennial to resurrect the Prevention & Promotion IG column in *The Community Psychologist* after a decade hiatus. In this column, we will highlight prevention and promotion resources at the local and global level as well as the work of community psychologists and allied professionals engaged in Community Psychology (CP) prevention and promotion. We invite submissions from current and new PP-IG members, from people who present on CP prevention and promotion topics during SCRA biennial and other conferences; and from leading and emergent scholars publishing in prevention and promotion-focused journals. Please refer your colleagues and friends in academia and beyond to our interest group and column. Please email Susana at HelmS@dop.hawaii.edu if you would like to submit an article for our column or if you have resources we may list here.

**Toshi Sasao (2014–present).** I am more than delighted that this interest group survived over the years, and now that both Kayla and Susana have joined the group, we are in good hands with many exciting opportunities and activities planned now for the future. I moved to Tokyo way back in 1997 at International Christian University and believe it or not, I am still here. I am currently Professor and Chair, Department of Education and Language Education, and Director of the University’s Peace Research Institute. In my initial postdoctoral work, I directed a series of evaluation projects for California’s immigrant youth and communities for substance abuse and violence prevention for almost a decade at UCLA. I was funded by CSAP, NIDA, and CDC Minority Health. My focus of research has shifted slightly toward promoting the well-being of hidden or forgotten communities in Japan (viz., Zainichi Koreans and foreign workers). The approach taken here is based on a social justice perspective. An APA fellow and SCRA fellow (since 2007), I have formerly and currently worked with many SCRA committees including (former) the Ethnic and Racial Affairs Committee, the Award Nominations Committee, the Council of Education Programs, the Publications Committee, the International Committee, etc. Like I said, I am very much encouraged by this group of new co-chairs.
Kayla DeCan (2019-present). I am optimistic about the future of PP-IG and I am honored to be able to work with Susana and Toshi in my capacity as co-chair. As an early-career practitioner I am excited to grow with and learn from this group. I am a recent graduate of Vanderbilt’s Community Development & Action (CDA) Master’s program (2018) where I learned about the intersections of research and practice, about translational work, and where I solidified my involvement with SCRA by becoming the Editor of the Practice Council’s Community Practice Bulletin (https://www.scra27.org/what-we-do/practice-council-initiatives/community-practice-bulletin/). I am currently the Prevention Education Coordinator at a local sexual violence resource center in Urbana, Illinois where we provide sexual violence prevention to students, staff, parents, and community members. Here’s to a great year for the PP-IG!

Susana Helm (2019-present). I am eager to serve as PP-IG co-chair with Toshi and Kayla in the upcoming years. The majority of my career has been devoted to youth prevention and health promotion with families, schools, and in neighborhoods. Early on I worked in urban public housing neighborhoods and rural schools and communities across Hawai’i. Currently, I am a professor at the University of Hawai’i, John A. Burns School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry Research Division where we have developed teen dating violence prevention and youth substance use prevention interventions (Helm et al. 2013; Helm & Davis, 2017; Okamoto, Helm et al. 2019). My previous roles with SCRA have included co-chair of the School Intervention IG (2005-2009) and the Rural IG (2011-2018). Through both the School and Rural IGs, I edited their TCP columns, and will do so for this interest group, too. As can be seen in our photo from SCRA Chicago Biennial 2019, we brainstormed a number of ideas for increasing exposure of prevention and promotion in immediate and proximal ways that may benefit the knowledge-skill base and professional development of community psychologists – by reviving this column, pursuing collaborations with other CP conferences/meetings in our respective regions, and other ideas.

References

Public Policy
Edited by August Hoffman, Metropolitan State University

Updates from the Public Policy Committee
Written by Megan Renner, Co-Chair

The mission of the Public Policy Committee comprises a broad range of activities, from communication with policymakers and collaboration with partner organizations, to the provision of educational opportunities and practice experiences for SCRA’s diverse member base. Recent activity highlights have included:

- Sign-on to a letter from the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) to the Senate Appropriations Committee, in support of the historic levels of
federal funding for social and emotional learning passed in the House

- Creation of a virtual toolkit for in-district Congressional visits on gun violence prevention, cross-published in the newsletter of SPSSI, the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (APA Division 9);
- Co-sponsorship of a grant application to support a Policy Workshop & Advocacy Day on Climate Justice at the 2020 APA Convention, in partnership with the APA Divisions for Social Justice.

Other ongoing initiatives are highlighted below.

**Committee Self-Assessment**

During this committee year (starting/ending each August), and in tandem with the Executive Committee’s in-progress review (and moratorium) on the mini-grants and awards programs, the Public Policy Committee is undertaking a self-assessment initiative. The planned process will engage committee members, other SCRA groups, and the membership at large to evaluate past and present committee activities and assess needs and interests around possible future activities. Project aims include enhancing collaboration with other SCRA committees, councils, and interest groups; informing prioritization of where to apply our valuable (yet limited) staff and volunteer capacity; and gathering information to guide procedural improvements. We anticipate that the assessment process and a final report will distinguish between three different action areas for the committee:

- **Individual interests** – supporting members’ policy-related research, education, and practice efforts
- **CP influence on APA’s advocacy agenda** – applying our lens to inform the policy priorities being defined for all psychologists by the new APA Advocacy Coordinating Committee
- **The collective voice of Community Psychologists to policymakers** – identifying top priorities and spreading the unique messages of our field

Action will start in December with invitations for interviews with SCRA committee, council, and interest group leaders, as well as other identified key stakeholders. All members will be invited to respond to a needs assessment and policy priority survey in the spring, with a final report to share learnings and recommendations planned for summer 2020.

**Committee Efforts to Advance Racial Equity and Justice: Lens & Mirror Approaches**

Committee leaders began to explore policy-related applications of a new and fast-growing racial equity approach within the Biennial workshop planning task force last winter. The workshop’s skill-building agenda included presentations and interactive breakout groups on Racial Equity Impact Assessments (REIAs). These “lens” tools facilitate systematic examination of how different racial and ethnic groups will likely be affected by a proposed action or decision. REIAs are used in a variety of contexts, including the analysis of proposed policies, institutional practices, programs, plans, and budgetary decisions. They can be a vital tool for preventing or counteracting institutional racism as well as identifying new approaches to remedy longstanding inequities. The expanding use of REIAs in the U.S. nonprofit and public sectors is grounded in the premise that when racial equity is not consciously addressed, inequity and injustice is often unconsciously replicated. As the committee considers improvements to the review process for SCRA Rapid Response actions and Position Statements, steps for conducting equity impact assessments will be prioritized for inclusion. To learn more and explore links to several REIA tools, download the 2019 Biennial Workshop slides. Have you witnessed or participated in implementation of an REIA tool within an institution or community you know? We’d love to hear about your experience, and possibly share learnings in a future TCP column: contact mrenner22@outlook.com if interested.

REIA “lens” tools support a crucial step to inform and guide the design of externally focused strategies and activities. Yet the application of any given tool is only as effective as the readiness of its users: it is thus equally important to intentionally embed a racial equity “mirror” within an
organization’s internal operations. To this end, we are excited to share a new resource designed to support this “mirror” function: to examine nonprofit organizations’ structures, norms, policies, and procedures, as well as the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of its individual leaders and members. “Awake to Woke to Work: Building a Race Equity Culture” is published by Equity in the Center, a project of ProInspire. Grounded in primary and secondary research in collaboration with over 120 practitioners, thought leaders, and subject matter experts, the tool theorizes a typical cycle of change that all organizations go through as they transform from a white dominant culture to a Race Equity Culture. Seven levers for change are then delineated across the cycle as strategic elements to build momentum: Senior Leadership, Management, Board of Directors, Community, Learning Environment, Data, and Organizational Culture. Given that the second recommended “get started” step calls to “Identify race equity champions at the board and senior leadership levels,” we look forward to ongoing dialogue with the Executive Committee and our fellow committee/council/IG chairs about how we can work together to advance a race equity culture within SCRA. Another related resource article might prove helpful for internal SCRA work as well as for those of us involved in these topics with other institutions: see “Paying Attention to White Culture and Privilege: A Missing Link to Advancing Racial Equity.”

These updates reflect just a sampling of activities happening within and/or in partnership with the PPC. Members interested in learning more about our work are encouraged to visit the Policy section of the SCRA website. To share ideas, feedback, and questions, or to be added to the committee list serv to receive meeting notices, please reach out to us at publicpolicy@scra27.org.

Regional Network News
Edited by Christina Smith, University of Chicago and National Louis University – Regional Network Coordinator

Greetings SCRA Members! The report reflects an exciting diversity of Regional activities, planning, and ECO conferences, which occurred during the fall of 2019. This issues also includes an exciting call for Solidarity, conference presentations, and collaboration opportunities for the The 8th International Conference of Community Psychology. Thank you for the support of the Regional, International, and Student Coordinators for all of your wonderful work and thoughtful reflections on your conference planning and convening experiences. I look forward to an exciting year ahead!

Community Research and Action in the West (CRA-W)
WEST REGIONAL COORDINATORS
Greg Townley, Portland State University; and Rachel Hershberg, University of Washington-Tacoma

This year’s Community Research and Action in the West (CRA-W) Conference was a wonderful experience! We were honored as Portland State graduate students to be able to host this meaningful opportunity for connection on our campus. Beyond our campus, the 90 attendees represented five different states, and 19 institutions. We had presenters from as far away as Georgia! Our theme, Building Bridges, Not encompassed how we consider the process of sharing research and experiences, both at this conference and as budding Community Psychologists.
One of the highlights of our conference was the decision to have a keynote speaker, Dr. Brett Coleman. His keynote address, regarding engaging epistemological contradictions and varying meanings of “truth,” was deeply relevant both to our field and to the world that we live in today. We loved seeing Dr. Coleman’s words and ideas referenced throughout the day in different breakout sessions. Having such a strong beginning to our conference provided a sense of cohesion that fortified our goals for the day.

Another goal of the CRA-W conference is providing space for many different voices, including students (undergraduate and graduate), faculty, and community partners. A variety of presentations were submitted, ranging from examining whiteness to stigmatized sexualities (i.e., BDSM). This richness required flexibility in combining sessions, as to maximize how many different voices could be represented throughout the day. Though the combination process was challenging for some presenters, we were thrilled to see the creativity sparked in combining sessions, making connections across topics of interest that fostered a greater sense of community in our organization. We are thankful to our presenters for their accommodating attitudes.

One point of feedback received was that having simultaneous sessions was difficult, because it was difficult for attendees to choose which sessions to attend. We take this as a compliment to the great work presented at CRA-W. What a great problem to have! We have discussed making this conference a two-day event, which would allow for fewer conflicting presentations, more community building, and perhaps an easier conference for out-of-towners to attend.

Building on issues of community and networking, we received feedback about how to make the conference a more inclusive and communal space. First, our conference was located at the Native American Student and Community Center, which we were proud to support. However, this facility did not have all-gender restrooms. We provided directions and a map for all-gender campus restrooms but understand that this scenario was not as inclusive as we hoped to be as a community. Second, we provided a sliding scale for students and faculty, but upon reflection believe that offering this conference free to all PSU students would not only bolster attendance, but also would serve our Portland community to a greater degree. We recommend advertising this conference as explicitly free for undergraduates at the host institution.

One final piece of feedback received was that attendees longed for more opportunities for networking and connection. We believe that hosting a structured lunch, with the explicit goal of making professional connections, could be successful in the future. Additionally, we saw the closing session
as a missed opportunity for intellectual culmination and community building. With the weight of the day, this task may be difficult to execute. We recommend facilitating the end of the day as a ceremony, rather than simply a feedback session.

Overall, we are proud of all the labor that went into making this conference a huge success. Based on our feedback forms, participants were overwhelmingly satisfied with a conference environment that they felt fostered rich discussion and sense of community. We look forward to participating in the Western region for many conferences to come.

Links of interest:
Conference Website: https://sites.google.com/view/cra-w2019
Dr. Coleman’s Speech: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Ph-iX2XciYk3s-VCVWfM3lh280xqDn9a/view

Regional Coordinators: Greg Townley, PhD, gtownley@pdx.edu and Rachel Hersberg, PhD, rmhersh@uw.edu
Student Coordinator: David Gordon, dalegord@ucsc.edu

News from the Midwest Region U.S.

MIDWEST REGIONAL COORDINATORS
Melissa Ponce Rodas, Andrews University; and Tonya Hall, Chicago State University

Enhancing a Sense of Community in the Midwest
Written by Tonya Hall, Chicago State University; and Vanessa Goodar and Moshood Olanrewaju, National Louis University

Updates regarding SCRA-related activities in the Midwest are presented in this article. It features information regarding the upcoming Midwest Psychological Association (MPA)/SCRA affiliated conference 2020. This article also highlights the SCRA Midwest ECO Conference 2019. Moreover, useful information from this year’s ECO student conference planners, Vanessa Goodar and Moshood Olanrewaju, are included.

92nd Annual Midwestern Psychological Association (MPA) Conference
The 92nd annual MPA conference will be held on April 23-25, 2020 at the Palmer House Hilton in Chicago, Illinois. The MPA/SCRA affiliated day of the conference is Friday, April 24th. Dinner is tentatively scheduled to be held at the Exchequer Restaurant following the conference on Friday. Additional information may be found at http://midwesternpsych.org/. Please mark your calendars.

43rd Annual Midwest ECO Conference
The event took place at the National Louis University campus in the city of Lisle, Illinois. It was encouraging to see and hear from so many diverse leaders, students and community members in the field of Community Psychology. The theme of the 2019 conference was “Strengthening the Village: Global Implications of Social Solidarity”.

The chief host, being an international student, was particularly attracted to this topic of social-global connectedness. Together the two hosts, the keynote panel on international issues, and a land acknowledgement reminded us of the historic displacement that continues to happen everywhere today.
The idea was to focus on community psychology ideals to bridge the gaps in our respective communities. The ECO 2019 keynote speakers, Leonard Jason, Olya Glantsman, Jack O'Brien and Kaitlyn Ramian presented their free online Community Psychology textbook, *Introduction to Community Psychology: Becoming an Agent of Change*, in which at least 20 instructors from 18 institutions in the US, Australia, Bulgaria, Canada, Spain, and Japan are actively using the text in their classrooms. The turnout and the discussion among the conference attendees confirmed the importance of “connection” in this student-run conference.

The 44th Midwest ECO conference will be held at Metropolitan State University in St. Paul Minnesota on Saturday, October 24, 2020. Mark your calendars today. August Hoffman will serve as the faculty advisor. All students interested in organizing and hosting ECO 2020 may email Professor Hoffman at august.hoffman@metrostate.edu.

**Poster Presentation**

**Round Table Discussion**

**Pre-Planning Logistics**

In an attempt to be of assistance to the next generation of ECO organizers, we offer some points here to consider for next year. Every ECO Conference might consider beginning with building a village of hosts, faculty, and volunteers. Although this is a student-led conference, funding is not student-driven. Make sure to connect with your university’s department to secure help with the budget, hotel space, social event space, and conference location. Ask your professors and volunteers about what has worked for building the conference website, social media pages, and collecting electronic registration fees.

Google Docs was a fabulous tool that kept us organized with volunteer commitments, program scheduling, dietary preferences, budgeting, and other important details. Communicate with the committee via email, Zoom, cell phones and in person about what is wanted and needed early to anticipate any issues before the conference begins. Lean on your ECO team to help with everything from selecting student proposals, scouting conference locations, and taking photos. Team building and bonding is inevitable.

**Conference Formatting**

It was essential for us to do a Native-American land acknowledgement at our conference to honor...
the fact that our very gathering was taking place in Lisle, Illinois near the beautiful Morton Arboretum, and on Potawatomi villages in DuPage County. This land was once home to more than 40 tribes throughout Lisle, Chicago, and all of Illinois for at least 9,000 years before Europeans arrived. Remains were identified at the Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory in Batavia, Illinois in the 1970s. It was very important to make a commitment to using less materials, refill our water bottles, use compostable plates, knives, forks, and plates, serve family-style meals, print minimal materials, compost, and recycle. Wouldn’t it be great if we could remember this respect for the land and continue to find ways to make our community spaces become more ECO-efficient when we get together?

When in the planning process, balancing tradition with innovation is critical. The pressure is on to meet expectations and bring back traditions while also presenting research in new ways – yet always rooted in traditional community concepts. The committee decided on an Interactive Fire Chat for the keynote speaker panel. Students may want to get help from professors to get some suggestions for a dynamic keynote panel. Students should also reach out to their personal network for speaker recommendations.

**Keynote Panels**

The Co-Host facilitated a Fire Chat but added some strategies learned in Chicago’s urban education community. A Fire Chat is a guided discussion where audience members write down their burning questions about your selected conference themes on sticky notes (for us, Indigenous Resources, The Sharing of Power, Social Justice/Activism, etc.). Next, individuals placed the notes on large sticky chart paper labeled with each conference theme. After questions are collected, the panel host allowed the panelist to choose their theme and the host chose the questions. In the world of elementary education this strategy is called a parking lot and it was a lot of fun learning across education and Community Psychology. After selecting “parking lot” questions the host can pose the question to be answered collectively or individually. This method was engaging for the audience and created connection with the speakers.

**Breakout Sessions**

Conference breakout sessions were in two formats; the village dialogue circles and ignite poster sessions. Village dialogue circles were an opportunity for conference attendees to discuss research concepts facilitated by students at various universities; concepts attendees otherwise wouldn’t have thought about. The ignite poster sessions required researchers to create traditional, large display posters and present the posted research findings. However, with Ignite, students were given 4 minutes (based on the total session length and the amount of posters) for discussion. A Q & A session was initiated at completion for all researchers to respond. This method allowed for ALL posters to be recognized and explained and not looked over based on the audience members’ preferences.

**Conference Day**

Be prepared to be flexible! Go over scheduling with a fine-tooth comb to be sure sessions are not double-booked. Volunteers are needed most of the day for registration, food set-up/clean-up, helping people find their sessions and any other details. Stay close to campus as urgencies do arise and use a communication tool like Remind to stay in touch. Stay calm and know that all the planning you did will be evident. Lean on each other and be a team player.

**Food and Socializing**

So, the best part of ECO Conference is community, tradition and the multi-cultural connections among students, professionals, and professors. Setting the tone for informal conversations and ideas is key. Our opening ceremony was an interactive African drumming performance. It was a wonderful way to smile, unwind and have a lot of fun learning something new together. Always quadruple check the conference hotel policy for noise levels, food, and alcohol consumption rules as they vary from hotel to hotel.
For Conference Day meals, we chose a local, family-owned small business called Ellie’s Deli. They understood the importance of talking and togetherness. Utilizing Yelp was very instrumental in finding a caterer that fit our needs, aligned with our values, and could meet the demand of all our dietary preferences. Choose your caterer and quantity wisely! We were able to minimize waste and maximize cost efficiency by taking our lunch leftovers to our bonfire closing ceremony.

The bonfire is a tradition of ECO Conference and is our last chance to exchange information, pitch that idea or add a new Facebook friend. Live music was added by two very unique musicians to express our cultural interests and taste in music. S’mores and informal conversation with many kids present around the fire increased our fun and celebration. Overall this was an amazing day of fellowship, reflection, connection, and comradery. I never plan to miss ECO now that I know the amount of planning that goes into it.

A Final Thought
Kudos and thanks to the many students and faculty who presented their research during the 2019 Midwest ECO Conference at National-Louis University. It was encouraging to see and hear from so many diverse leaders in the field of Community Psychology-Susan McMahon, Brad Olson, August Hoffman, and Yolanda Suarez-Balcazar. We learned so much about our village and ourselves. This opportunity is a catalyst preparing us for the next steps in academia and our careers. We hope that each year the conference has great success and propels student-leaders into community action!

Submitted by Midwest SCRA Regional Coordinator: Tonya Hall, PhD, thall26@csu.edu

International Regions and Upcoming Conference Highlights

International Regional Coordinator
Katie Thomas, Antony Street Specialist Centre

SCRA welcomes SUNKARA NAGENDRA KISHORE as our newest International Coordinator in Rajahmundry River City, AP, India! SUNKARA writes in her acceptance statement:

“Attending SCRA’s biennial conference helped me to refresh, recharge and rejuvenate, and enhance my knowledge of community psychology. I had the opportunity to interact with experts in this field. I am glad to inform you that I am working in this direction. I recently addressed Adikavi nannaya university, Rajahmundry, AP, India, psychology post graduate students elaborating the need, scope, and importance of community psychology and the role of practitioners of C.P. (as the president of SPRUHA Psychology Alumni Assn.). I am also taking up community activities as the president of Rotary Club of Rajahmundry River City, AP, India, and other associations, with collaborative programmes.”

Welcome SUNKARA, we look forward to your future work and leadership!

Australia/New Zealand and the Pacific
In Solidarity 2020: The 8th International Conference of Community Psychology
June 26-28, 2020 Melbourne Australia

The 8th International Conference of Community Psychology will be held June 26-28 at Victoria University in Melbourne Australia. If you’ve always wanted to come Down Under this is the opportunity to do so! It will be a wonderful opportunity to develop global links with international colleagues. The Conference theme is: Fostering and sustaining solidarities – communities, activism, knowledges & environment.

Conference conveners have invited speakers to focus on local expressions of global dynamics and to examine the unique localised impacts of broader, socio-political, economic and migration
dynamics and ideologies that are giving rise to new and renewed local expressions of (dis) advantage and privilege.

The conference sub-theme of “knowledges for sustainable futures” invites participants to engage with critical theories and ways of working that have been produced in various countries and contexts, often referred to as the global south. Participants will have the opportunity to seek to understand how to advance community research and action towards its goals of liberation, community and wellness.

Other powerful sub-themes ensure the conference will celebrate and interrogate the ways solidarities are fostered and sustained within community contexts, across borders and boundaries and through processes of knowledge production.

The conference promises to be a fantastic opportunity to look at diverse critical epistemological and methodological tools and critical reflexivity. Hosts for the conference include Victoria University in partnership, Moondani Balluk Academic Unit, College of Community Psychologists of the Australian Psychological Society and Melbourne Convention Bureau.

For further information please visit the conference website at https://communitypsychologyaustralia.com.au/.

Member Support
If you are a current SCRA member and would be willing to maintain a collegial support system in your region please forward your name and contact details Katie Thomas at mothercarematters@gmail.com. This will be a great opportunity to set up some support and mentoring networks across the regions and will help us gain direction and momentum for the year ahead.

International Regional Coordinator
Dr. Katie Thomas: mothercarematters@gmail.com, Antony Street Specialist Centre

Student Regional Coordinator
Megan Johnson
megan.johnson@connect.qut.edu.au Queensland University of Technology
Nathan Medford limewave@yandex.com Murdoch University

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School Intervention Interest Group
Edited by Adam Voight, Cleveland State University

Re-Launched of the SCRA School Intervention Interest Group
Written by Sara Stacy, Michigan State University and Adam Voight, Cleveland State University

Background on the School Intervention IG and current role and mission
We are very excited to announce the “relaunch” of the SCRA School Intervention Interest Group. The current mission of the group is to promote interchange about the theories, methods, knowledge base, and setting factors pertaining to prevention and health promotion programs in schools; to discuss the role of community psychology interventions in the context of current issues facing schools and education. The group has been somewhat dormant the past few years, but the 2019 Biennial has breathed some new life into the group.

Meet the Co-Chairs
Sara T. Stacy is a doctoral student at Michigan State University in the Ecological-Community Psychology program and focuses on community and youth mobilization in pursuit of educational justice. She uses Community Psychology theory, methods, and approaches for bridging relationships between schools, community organizations, and the communities they serve. A core feature of this work is to establish participatory processes for equitable decision-making within schools to develop educational systems that meet the needs of the community. She currently serves as an external evaluator for a district-wide implementation
of Full-Service Community Schools and co-chairs a community coalition of health and human service organizations focused on partnering with the local school district to address education and youth issues. Her dissertation will identify strategies for enhancing youth voice in decision-making within Full-Service Community Schools.

Adam Voight is an associate professor at Cleveland State University where he also directs the Center for Urban Education. He earned his Ph.D. in Community Research and Action from Vanderbilt University. Adam has been a Leadership Development Fellow in SCRA and has been active in SCRA for over ten years. His research is fundamentally interested in K-12 schools’ roles in perpetuating, exacerbating, and remediating social, economic, and political inequities. He has conducted a range of community-collaborative research on school climate and youth civic engagement, including youth participatory action research.

Relaunching the Interest Group

Given their relevant interests and experience in school-based research, intervention, and practice, both Sara and Adam want to support collaboration and connections among like-minded individuals within SCRA. At the 2019 SCRA Biennial, Sara hosted a roundtable to gather individuals working in, with, and for schools to discuss common challenges and directions for the future. Within this roundtable, many attendees expressed interest and excitement for re-launching the School Intervention Interest Group. Following this roundtable, Sara began to explore how this group could be relaunched within SCRA. This led her to connect with Adam, who had expressed interest in re-establishing this group to SCRA Leadership. Together, they worked with Jean to officially relaunch the group as co-chairs!

Since the relaunch, the School Intervention Interest Group has hosted two Zoom calls. In our first call, we introduced the relaunch and discussed the possibilities and future of this group. In this call, we determined that hosting regular meetings for our group would be a helpful way to get started. Dr. Mariah Kornbluh from University of South Carolina graciously offered to lead our second call, in which she led a discussion on establishing relationships and partnerships with schools.

Another critical component of our Interest Group relaunch was to establish a pathway for connecting with individuals interested in school-based work within SCRA. To do so, we have developed an email listserv and a website page within SCRA. We aim to use both online tools for growing our network, sharing relevant resources, and promoting collaboration among SCRA members.

Where we might go from here

In our initial discussions this summer and fall, we have imagined several ways forward for the work of group in the short and long term. These include organizing a journal special issue, either in a community psychology journal or in an education research journal. If the latter, we have discussed articulating and demonstrating the value of community psychological theory and methods to the larger field of education research. There have also been discussions about writing policy briefs, infographics, and other products to highlight education issues through a community psychology lens. In addition to writing tasks, we have discussed how the group might contribute to programming at the 2021 SCRA Biennial and how the group might curate resources related to school focused research.

Get involved!

The School Intervention Interest Group would be delighted to have you join our community of individuals conducting school-based work from a Community Psychology perspective. We hope to use the Interest Group to promote collaboration, resource sharing, networking, knowledge exchange to inform the future of school-based work in our field. We invite you to join our group and help us create a space that is meaningful and supportive to many.

To get involved there are several steps you can take today, including:

1. **Sign up for the School Intervention Listserv**: Contact Jean Hill (jeanhill@scra.org) to join our email listserv. This will keep you updated on
future calls, events, and resources. Additionally, we invite our members to use the listserv to spark email conversations as necessary or desired.

2. **Join our Monthly Calls:** We will be hosting monthly Zoom calls to build and grow our Interest Group community. We intend to use these calls to explore cross-cutting issues and themes in school-based work, troubleshoot challenges, brainstorm solutions, and develop relationships and collaboration. If you have a topic you’d like to explore in a future call, please contact the co-chairs or present your ideas in our next call.

3. **Join the School Intervention Interest Group Executive Committee:** By growing our Executive Committee, we can increase our capacity to accomplish activities as an Interest Group. If you’d like an opportunity to be involved in a leadership position within our Interest Group, please contact the co-chairs to let us know how your skills and interests might be well suited within a leadership position.

For additional information, please contact the School Intervention co-chairs, Sara Stacy (stacysar@msu.edu) and Adam Voight (a.voight@csuohio.edu).

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**SCRA Member Spotlight**

*Edited by Dominique Thomas, University of Michigan*

The SCRA Member Spotlight lets us engage our members and highlight great work! Each issue we solicit submissions of accomplishments. We especially would like students, early career scholars, and practitioners to submit their accomplishments and work. Submissions can include but are certainly not limited to:

- New jobs
- Post-docs
- Promotions
- Thesis/Dissertation Defenses
- Newly published journal articles, books, chapters
- Podcasts, blogs, news items that are by or about you
- Certifications or other credentials
- Retirement
- Grants
- Awards
- Successful/ongoing projects
- New projects or community initiatives

If you are interested in submitting for the next issue, please click this [link](#) and fill out the form. We hope to hear from you!

**B. Thomas Miller (Ashford University)**

discusses their work, *Consulting Psychology*. The purpose of this work is to create a positive change in life. People at times will feel a sense of hopelessness and anxiety because the person wants to make a change but for some reason likes the tools in life to make the change. This book offers a guide to help those who may some support in this endeavor. The text of love created because this psychologist observes people who seem to be on a proverbial gerbil wheel of life and seem not to be going and where but wasting energy and wasting time here on earth. This book based on a three-step approach which is subjective to the reader interpretations and the path which works best for her/him. This psychologist believes the best method in this short life makes the best of each day. People look at the past and have an eye on the future, but this psychologist affirmation is people need to live in the present. The goal in life as well as to make the best of each day and live the day as it is your last.

**David T. Lardier (The University of New Mexico)** is a third-year junior faculty. He published several articles in 2019 related to community wellness, health, and youth empowerment, including: (1) A Spatial Analysis of Alcohol Outlet Density and Abandoned Properties on Violent Crime in Paterson New Jersey. Journal of Community Health; (2) Locating disconnected minoritized youth within urban community-based
educational programs in an Era of Neoliberalism, International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education; and (4) A latent class analysis of cognitive empowerment and ethnic identity: An examination of heterogeneity between profile groups on dimensions of emotional psychological empowerment and social justice orientation among urban youth of color. Journal of Community Psychology.

August Hoffman (Metropolitan State University) took part in the development of Green Space and Community Gardening programs for Community Residents.


From Our Members
Edited by Susan M. Wolfe, Susan Wolfe and Associates

Serdar Değirmencioğlu Acquitted!
News shared by Serdar Değirmencioğlu

Public statement in support of academic freedom for psychologists and others in Turkey
October 22, 2019, American Psychological Association

APA strongly upholds the principles of free and open discussion and free circulation of scientists and academics.

The American Psychological Association supports psychologists and other academics in Turkey who signed the Academics for Peace petition, and reiterates its commitment to academic freedom, the free and responsible practice of science, and freedom of speech.

We fear these rights are at risk because of what appear to be prosecutions of academic signatories that are motivated by political efforts to stifle free expression, scholarly research and critical inquiry.

The Academics for Peace petition, published in January 2016, opposes a decision by the Turkish president to stop peace talks and begin a military campaign against ethnic Kurds in Turkey. Hundreds of academics, including psychologists, have faced criminal charges associated with being signatories of the petition, including “propagandizing for a terrorist organization.” APA welcomes the recent acquittal of Serdar Değirmencioğlu, the president of APA’s Div. 48: The Society for the Study of Peace, Conflict and Violence. However, many other academics face the very real threat of imprisonment, leading some to seek refuge in other nations. Others do not have this option, as their passports have been canceled or seized, leaving them to face unemployment, underemployment and continued political threats in Turkey.

Based on APA’s resolutions on the free and responsible practice of science, freedom of movement of scientists, and APA international engagement (2016), along with APA’s earlier policy on support for the rights of psychologists in other countries (1980), we strongly uphold the principles of free and open discussion and free circulation of scientists and academics. We believe that psychologists and other scholars have the right to express their viewpoints peacefully, without being subject to sanction.

We hope that academic freedom and freedom of speech will prevail, and that academics in Turkey will be able to carry out their scholarship and
teaching in an environment conducive to constructive dialogue and the advancement of knowledge.

https://www.apa.org/international/global-insights/academic-freedom

Public Statement in Support of Persecuted Psychologists in Turkey

Maria Joao Vargaz Moniz, Psychologist, Professor of Community Psychology and President of the European Community Psychology Association, ISPA – Lisboa, Portugal

Editor’s Note: This statement was released just before Dr. Değirmencioğlu’s hearing.

We write on behalf of the European Community Psychology Association (ECPA) to express our concern about the prosecution of scholars who signed the declaration “We will not be a party to this crime”—commonly referred to as the “Academics for Peace Petition.” Since the Academics for Peace Petition was published in January 2016, 610 academics have been required to appear in court on various charges associated with being signatories of the petition. Of this group, a large number have been given suspended sentences for a duration of less than two years, most have been sentenced to 15 months in prison. The remainder who have been sentenced have received prison terms of longer than two years. Sentences exceeding 24 months may not be suspended so this latter category face the real possibility of imprisonment.

Among those academics being tried in court is Dr. Serdar M. Değirmencioğlu, with the charge of “propagandizing for a terrorist organization.” Dr. Değirmencioğlu has been in exile since July 2016 and his trial is continuing in his absence at the 30th Heavy Penal Court in Istanbul. Dr. Değirmencioğlu was a professor of psychology in Istanbul when he was fired in April 2016 for having signed the Academics for Peace Petition. In February 2017, he was banned from public service for life. His passport was revoked in December 2017. Dr. Değirmencioğlu is a well-known community psychologist and a founding member of ECPA. He has served as president of our organization and is currently president of the Society for the Study of Peace, Conflict & Violence (Peace Psychology).

On September 11, the fourth hearing in Dr. Değirmencioğlu’s trial will be held. In a recent decision, the Constitutional Court of Turkey has ruled that the “Academics for Peace Petition” should be considered under freedom of expression. It has, therefore, become clear that the charges against him are baseless and should be dropped immediately. We urge the authorities to drop the charges against Dr. Değirmencioğlu and all other psychologists on trial with similar charges immediately. We urge the government of Turkey to desist from repressing academic freedom and freedom of expression for scholars, researchers, and both undergraduate and graduate students in Turkey. In particular, we call on the government of Turkey to desist from the prosecution of petition signatories and abandon the expansive interpretation of anti-terrorism provisions—extending to many forms of peaceful advocacy—that stifles critical inquiry, scholarly research and political dissent in Turkey.

SCRA Membership

If you are not currently a member of the Society for Community Research and Action (SCRA) and would like to be, please visit http://scra27.org/ to learn more about the organization. If you would like to become a member, the membership form can be accessed at: http://scra27.org/members1/membership/

If you would like to learn more about community psychology, visit www.communitypsychology.com.
TCP Submission Guidelines

TCP is published four times a year. Articles, columns, features, and announcements should be submitted as Word attachments in an e-mail message to Susan Wolfe and Dominique Thomas at TCP@scra27.org. Submission deadlines are: February 15th – Spring issue; May 15th – Summer issue; August 15th – Fall issue; November 15th – Winter issue

Authors should adhere to the following guidelines when submitting materials:

- Length: Five pages, double-spaced
- No cover sheet or title page. Please be sure to put the article title and author names and organizational affiliations at the top of the article.
- Images: Images are highly recommended, but please limit to two images per article. Images should be higher than 300 dpi. If images need to be scanned, please scan them at 300 dpi and save them as JPEGs. Submit the image(s) as a separate file.
- Margins: 1” margins on all four sides
- Text: Times New Roman, 12-point font – this includes headings and titles and subheadings.
- Alignment: All text should be aligned to the left (including titles) with a 5 space paragraph indentation.
- Punctuation Spacing: Per APA guidelines, make sure that there is only one space after periods, question marks, etc.
- Graphs & Tables: These should be converted and saved as pictures in JPEG files. Please note where they should be placed in the article.
- Do NOT include footnotes or endnotes.
- References: Follow APA guidelines. These should also be justified to the left with a hanging indent of .25”.

PAST TCP EDITORS