Paritosh Joshi, USA, Teachers College, Columbia, **Sponsoring Institution:** International House, NYC  
**Project Leader:** Paritosh Joshi, Student Team Members: Aradhana Srinagesh, University of Rhode Island & Emily Turner, Bowling Green State University  
**Title:** Psych For Peace and Justice  

**Background:**  
The field of psychology has both contributed to inequalities against minority communities and continues to insufficiently address mental health-related disparities. For instance, psychology researchers and scholars have unfortunately implemented studies that have caused harm to individuals belonging to historically disadvantaged identities, and also have insufficiently deployed their acumen as social scientists to challenge the causes of psychosocial inequities. Despite a formal apology for its role in amplifying racism and racial discrimination, the American Psychological Association (APA) omitted its role in causing harm to countries outside the United States (American Psychological Association, 2021; Auguste et al., 2021). Hence, psychologists and psychological organizations continue to grapple with the discipline’s history of injustice. In turn, psychology has a duty to acknowledge its role in perpetuating violence at an institutional level, the sociopolitical factors that have contributed to continuing harm against various communities, and the actions that can be taken to ensure freedom from future suffering. This proposal defines peace through a reparative perspective, discusses the project that will be carried out to tackle systemic psychological inequities, articulates the expected results and goals, and highlights indicators of success. In doing so, it strives to achieve greater parity and equitable opportunities for achievement within psychology, as well as transformative shifts in the field’s attitudes towards advocacy.  

**Definition of Peace:**  
Peace is defined as liberty from societal structures causing systematic oppression of underserved communities and the permanent elimination of these unjust disparities. Because this event is intended to target historical injustices and the institutionalized inhumane treatment experienced by certain groups, the standard of peace used for this project proposal is for achieving freedom through social means.  

**Project Description:**  
Due to the need to repair these inequities that have been perpetuated, a virtual conference, organized by Psychin’ Out, a group of aspiring and current psychological researchers and practitioners, will examine how psychologists can use their resources and skill set to promote peace and end institutionalized brutality against marginalized groups. More specifically, it will create a space for underrepresented individuals in the field to discuss the projects and broader mental health activism they engage in while also examining the invisible barriers that have remained over time. By providing attendees with the tools to be innovative and seek resolution on these long-established issues, such as racial inequalities in mental health and the existing shortage of child psychotherapists, the event will help ultimately create a roadmap on how to reconcile and ameliorate preventable discrepancies in access to mental health care between different communities. Furthermore, by removing all costs and eliminating any possible financial barriers that might prevent socioeconomically disadvantaged individuals from attending psychology conferences, the maximum number of participants can attend and feel heard.  

This conference is especially pertinent to Psychin’ Out given its purpose of empowering voices which have typically been ignored from discourse about inequities in psychology. Being a global resource hub, it is aimed at dismantling barriers that presently make psychology training programs and the profession exclusive and inaccessible. Moreover, as a grassroots, nonprofit organization, Psychin’ Out strives to create a community to unite and inspire psychological scholars, reform the pipeline that exists for prospective and current psychological students to obtain graduate level training, and achieve substantial policy reform through coordinated and effective activism. In turn, it will use the Davis Projects for Peace Grant to further this mission and uplift people of all backgrounds to achieve their potential.  

**Proposed Activities and Objectives:**  
Psychin’ Out will organize a virtual conference for psychological students, researchers, and professionals centered around tackling structural violence and promoting peace through activism. The theme of the conference will be centered around ensuring that tangible solutions are formulated to best meet the psychological needs of marginalized communities and that psychologists engage in projects outside of their traditionally established roles to benefit the public good. Scholars will be able to display their research, lead workshops, and hold dialogues on critical conversations. There will also be time for networking for those interested in developing connections within the field of psychology and other social science fields. The conference will be held sometime between June and August 2023. A call for submissions will go out in early April, and will be collected via Google Form and reviewed by a committee of five panelists. After sessions are accepted or denied, and then confirmed, calendar invites with Zoom links and a program schedule will be sent to attendees.  

Furthermore, Psychin’ Out will be hiring ten individuals and compensating them $500 each to
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complete several conference-related tasks, such as structuring the conference documents and handling any scheduling or technical problems. Two conference speakers will be invited to give opening remarks and a keynote speech, respectively, and be given $1,000 stipends each for their efforts. Regarding other items in the event’s proposed budget, $149.90 will be allotted for a Zoom Pro subscription since Zoom will be used to host conference sessions. $700 will be utilized for the Conference’s marketing materials, namely flyers or social media ads. $1,000 will be utilized to cover souvenirs for attendees, such as mugs and T-shirts. $425.05 will be set aside for Emily Turner and Aradhana Srinagesh, the co-founders of Psychin’ Out, given the time they will devote to this event and the extensive work they do for the organization despite not earning compensation. Lastly, $300 will be allotted for participants who complete the first post-conference survey, as they will be entered into a raffle to win one of three $100 gift cards.

**Results & Goals:**

The anticipated aims of this Conference concentrate on the need to bring dynamic groups of people to propel the discipline of psychology in a direction that maximizes diversity, inclusion, and justice for all communities. In particular, the goal is to create a space to have difficult conversations and bridge the gap between multiple groups of thought, such as professors who might not ascribe to a scholar-activist paradigm among psychologists and psychological researchers, and those who want psychological scholars to be more engaged in bold policy reform. Moreover, in line with the goals of International House, whose purpose is to have individuals from unique backgrounds coexist harmoniously, this Conference hopes to compel all attendees to engage in vigorous discourse on the role of psychological professionals in society through a broad range of sessions, while reconciling differences in opinions and generating social peace. Hence, this event will create a connection across individuals of different beliefs and foster communion between individuals or groups with conflicting viewpoints.

In the immediate future, the aims of the Conference are to assure that there is a mobilization of attendees to both brainstorm methods for psychological professionals to be more effective advocates and to ensure that professionals from historically underrepresented groups are given the opportunity to share their experiences and knowledge. It will ideally spur innovation and force people to enter into a less comfortable dynamic, and confront their biases. In the long term, it hopes to form strong, sustainable coalitions between groups of individuals who collectively strive to include more activism within the field of psychology and other social science disciplines. Furthermore, it will allow marginalized communities to build on their projects and grow their influence, thus ensuring that psychology becomes a more inclusive field that truly lives up to its mission of understanding human behavior across different contexts.

**Indicators of Success:**

There are multiple measures that we plan to utilize to gauge the event’s effectiveness. The final Conference session will be kept as a debriefing session for all attendees to dive deeper into topics that they desire to explore and discuss any feedback or concerns they may have. My team members and I will also send out a survey after the event to measure how participants felt about the Conference overall, assess whether they would attend a future conference on a similar topic, and mention ideas they plan to implement in their own professional endeavors. If it is found that the Conference participants deemed the event to be overall beneficial, informative, and inspiring, the event will be considered successful. Finally, after several months, there will be a follow-up survey sent to participants in order to examine whether the ideas expressed in the post-conference survey were carried out. The structure of this survey will be similar to the first questionnaire, and the findings will be compared in order to better understand the actions of conference attendees. Indicators of noteworthy accomplishments among attendees would include reports of successful initiatives that have been implemented, or changes in social policy at a local or national level due to advocacy efforts that began or continued from the Conference. Finally, in both forms, attendees will be asked if they wish to donate any amount to Psychin’ Out.

**References:**
