



# The Community Psychologist

A PUBLICATION OF THE SOCIETY FOR COMMUNITY RESEARCH AND ACTION  
Division 27 of the American Psychological Association

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## From the Editor

*Written by Dominique Thomas, Central New Mexico Community College*



Hello everyone! We are excited to bring you the Fall 2025 issue of The Community Psychologist!

This issue features articles on both new and ongoing work within the field of community psychology. **The Community Psychologist Podcast** has a new episode! Please listen to our [episode](#) featuring Robin Lin Miller discussing her SCRA Book Series entry, [Breaking Barriers: Sexual and Gender Minority Led Advocacy to End AIDS in Africa and the Caribbean](#).

Much of this issue addresses the ongoing conflicts and recurring issues rooted in global systems of imperialism and settler colonialism. In the **President's Column**, incoming president Moshood Olanrewaju offers a new vision for the organization and presents awards for service and contributions to community psychology. **From Our Members** features two submissions. The first submission discusses the use of community psychology and social entrepreneurship in Egypt. The second submission focuses on the lessons learned from living in Italy, particularly what it can teach about community, psychology, and

community psychology. A key theme is unlearning colonial/neo-liberal ways of being. Keeping with the international relevance of community psychology, the **International Committee** focuses heavily on the issue of linguistic justice. As said by James Baldwin, “language is a political instrument.” The column addresses the many ways in which language becomes another barrier and mechanism of hierarchy as well as the ways in which the International Committee has attempted to address these issues. For additional context on their work, please listen to the previous episodes of *The Community Psychologist Podcast* on [Ibrahim Makkawi](#) and [Sudan](#). The **Student Issues** column introduces new co-chair, Michael Pandu Patria. Pandu describes his background, research and his experiences discovering parts of Indonesia’s history. Student Issues also features the dissertation award winners. The column includes a call for proposals to submit for the upcoming column *Courage and Fear in Oppressive Conditions: From Social Movements to Individual Acts of Resistance*. The soft deadline for the Student Issues column of the Winter issue is October 15<sup>th</sup>.

### Book Review Submissions

TCP is soliciting submissions for book reviews! If anyone is interested in having their book being reviewed and wants a review published, please send an email to [TCP@scra27.org](mailto:TCP@scra27.org). If you have a potential reviewer in mind, please send their name and contact information along with the book to be reviewed. Please include the title Book Review Submission in the subject line of the email.

### Editors’ Note

Opinions expressed in The Community Psychologist are those of individual authors and do not necessarily reflect official position taken by SCRA or the Editor of The Community Psychologist. We hope you enjoy this issue!

Dominique  
TCP Editor

## President’s Council

*Written by Moshood Olanrewaju*

### Radical Belonging and Bold Reimagining: My Vision for SCRA

#### Greetings and Acknowledgments

It is with deep humility and gratitude that I step into the role of President of the Society for Community Research and Action (SCRA). I begin by honoring the past presidents who have guided us with vision, courage, and wisdom — leaders such as Leonard Jason, Yolanda Suarez-Balcazar, Brad Olson, Kwesi Brookins, and the many others whose service has strengthened our collective foundation.

I extend my appreciation to the Executive Committee, whose leadership shapes our direction; to our Interest Groups and Councils, whose work keeps SCRA responsive and relevant; to our Council Representative to APA, who ensures our voice is present in APA decision-making; to the Strategic Planning teams, who chart our path forward; to our affiliate partner organizations, who broaden our reach and deepen our partnerships; and most of all, to SCRA members across the globe — scholars, practitioners, students, and community partners — whose daily work embodies the heart of community psychology.

#### Framing the Vision

My vision for SCRA is one of *radical belonging and bold reimagining*. As Isaac Prilleltensky (2001) reminds us, community psychology is most powerful when it integrates values of wellness, liberation, and social justice into both theory and practice. The current moment demands that we not only respond to the crises before us — ecological collapse, structural racism, global displacement, mass incarceration — but also model new ways of knowing, healing, and organizing.

Under my leadership, I envision SCRA as both a **sanctuary** and a **catalyst**:

- **A sanctuary** where scholars, practitioners, and communities co-create liberatory

knowledge across disciplines and geographies.

- **A catalyst** that amplifies ancestral wisdom alongside empirical insight, equipping members to challenge structural violence in all its forms.

This aligns with Ed Trickett's (2009) call to ground our work in authentic cultural contexts and to form partnerships that are genuinely reciprocal. It also echoes Nelson and Evans' (2014) framing of community psychology as a field that must "simultaneously hold the mirror of reflection and the torch of action."

### **Commitments to Action**

We will expand our investment in early-career and community-based members, especially those historically excluded from the academy. We will elevate international perspectives without reproducing extractive global hierarchies. We will deepen our commitment to Indigenous, Black, queer, disabled, and refugee-centered approaches — not as topics for discussion, but as foundational ways of working.

In doing so, I want SCRA to embody the values not just of our *teaching*, but of our *praxis* — the living, breathing work of community psychology:

1. **Collaboration without co-optation** — Working *with*, not *on* communities; honoring autonomy and resisting extraction.
2. **Rigor with soul** — Holding complexity, data, and nuance without severing them from spirit, emotion, or lived experience.
3. **Advocacy that listens before it leads** — Practicing humility, centering those most affected, and making space before making statements.

As Kloos et al. (2021) remind us, our practice must be both evidence-based and deeply relational if we are to remain relevant and impactful.

### **Immediate Strategic Priorities**

To ensure this vision is not just aspirational, but actionable, I will begin with four immediate priorities:

1. **Build a Direct Engagement Platform (SCRA Commons, built in the strategic planning)**

- Launch a dynamic, member-driven hub on our website where members can connect across interest groups, share resources, organize meetups, and collaborate in real time. This moves us beyond static communication toward an interactive, community-governed space.

### **2. Conduct a Transparent Relational Audit with APA**

- Host a town hall and publish a clear brief — "*Where We Stand with APA*" — outlining what our current affiliation offers, where it limits us, and how members want to shape this relationship going forward.

### **3. Operationalize Strategic Pillars: Membership Growth Drive**

- Conduct a demographic and engagement audit, expand outreach to underrepresented communities, and build partnerships with HBCUs, tribal colleges, institutions in the Global South, and grassroots organizations to ensure SCRA reflects the diversity of those we serve.

### **4. Elders Council**

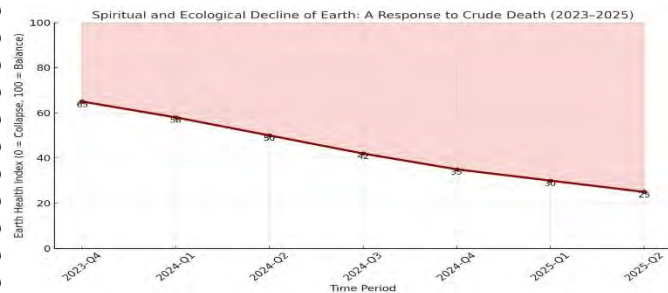
- Establish a council of past presidents, senior scholars, and veteran community leaders who can offer historical grounding, moral guidance, and intergenerational mentorship. This body will:
  1. Serve as keepers of institutional memory to guide major decisions.
  2. Lead "Wisdom Dialogues" connecting members across generations.
  3. Provide culturally grounded mediation in times of conflict.
  4. Support strategic visioning, ensuring new initiatives are rooted in SCRA's values and history.



## Closing

Together, we can make SCRA not only a professional home — but a political and spiritual one. A place where transformation is not merely theorized but practiced daily. As Paulo Freire (1970) taught us, hope is not a passive feeling but a disciplined practice. In SCRA, that practice lives in our relationships, our commitments, and our courage to reimagine the possible. I look forward to building this future with each of you — side by side, across disciplines, borders, and generations.

All of this is necessary because, as *reflective community psychologists*, we cannot continue to ignore that the health of our Earth is bound to the health of its peoples. The visual below represents the Earth's declining spiritual and ecological health from the onset of the Gaza genocide in late 2023 through mid-2025.



In Yorùbá cosmology, *ìkú ọ̀fọ̀*, or “crude death,” speaks to a form of death that robs both the living and the land of dignity—through mass killings, improper burials, and the violence we do to our ecosystems.

Gaza Genocide and other issues listed below are not only a humanitarian crisis but an ecological and spiritual one. Each act of violence sends shockwaves through the web of life, eroding the sacred balance that sustains us all. Let this image not merely alarm us, but compel us toward bold, collective action—toward restoring the dignity of the living, honoring the dead, and healing the Earth. Those who call out these atrocities will always find sanctuary within SCRA. Here, we are rooted in the earth sciences and grounded in community wisdom, ready to support every sojourner who joins us in the pursuit of justice and healing.

Country / Region	Targeted Group(s)	Status/Concerns
Sudan (Darfur – Masalit)	Non-Arab Masalit population	Recognized or flagged as genocide
Myanmar (Rohingya)	Rohingya Muslims	Ongoing attacks and displacement = genocide dynamics
Ethiopia (Tigray region)	Tigrayans	Crimes against humanity; potential genocidal intent
Gaza / Occupied Palestinian Territories	Palestinians	ICJ case and UN warnings flag genocide risk
Nagorno-Karabakh (Armenians)	Armenians in Artsakh	Forced displacement, cultural destruction flagged
Amazon Basin (Indigenous groups)	Yanomami, Guajajara, Asháninka etc.	Cultural genocide through environmental violence
Nigeria (Southern Kaduna)	Atyap and other communities	Documented killings and displacement; genocide claim
DRC (Eastern region)	Ethnic groups like Hema, Lendu, etc.	Mass atrocities; early warning of genocide potential
Chad, Myanmar, India, Yemen (others)	Various groups	Elevated risk of new mass atrocities

It is my intention to further develop this piece into a full scholarly work that both calls attention to the current moment and proposes future directions for our field. Throughout my presidency, I aim to shape it into a contribution that can ultimately be housed in the American Journal of Community Psychology, as is customary for presidential writings.



### SCRA Person of the Year – Mr. Sunkara,

I'm thrilled to honor you as *SCRA Person of the Year*—a recognition of your unwavering dedication to community psychology and your visionary work empowering young girls in the Rajam region of India through the transformative power of sport. You have built more than a program; you have built a *sanctuary*—where girls find safety, courage, and voice. Where each leap, sprint, and goal scored becomes an act of self-belief. Where the lessons of the field—teamwork, discipline, resilience—spill into life itself, dismantling barriers and opening doors that tradition once kept shut.

In a place where opportunities for girls can be scarce, you have lit a beacon. A light that guides not just the girls you mentor, but the communities that watch them rise. A light that says, *Yes, your dreams belong to you—and the world will make room.*

Your impact is the kind that ripples across time—seen in every confident stride, every fearless choice, every young leader who dares to imagine more. Despite the evident risks, you have carried out this mission with steadfast dedication as the SCRA South Asia Regional Coordinator, upholding the banner of SCRA with professionalism, integrity, and courage. Congratulations, Mr. Sunkara. May the field you have nurtured continue to bloom for generations to come.



### SCRA Person of the Year – Prof. Patrizia Meringolo

I am very proud to honor Prof. Patrizia Meringolo as *SCRA Person of the Year* for her extraordinary dedication to our Society. Through your many roles—presenter, organizer, mentor, connector—you have given SCRA not just your time, but your vision. You have brought people together across continents, languages, and traditions, reminding us that community psychology is as much about relationships as it is about research.

You have stood as a bridge between generations of scholars, opening doors, fostering dialogue, and nurturing a spirit of mutual learning. Your presence in SCRA is not just valued—it is woven into the very fabric of who we are.

May this recognition be a small reflection of the countless ways you have shaped us. And may your journey continue to ripple outward—like a stone cast into still water—creating waves of connection, courage, and care.



**SCRA Person  
of the Year –  
Prof. Judah  
Viola**

I'm thrilled  
to honor you  
as "SCRA  
Person of the  
Year" for your  
incredible  
dedication to  
community  
psychology.  
Your work as a



scholar,  
educator, and mentor—through both your  
publications and hands-on guidance—has inspired  
so many in our field.

You rise like a tower—tall in height, taller still in  
spirit, a living pillar of strength and grace. Your  
leadership bridges theory and practice,  
empowering others to create meaningful, equity-  
centered impact. Thank you for sharing your  
expertise and for lifting up emerging scholars.

Congratulations on this well-deserved  
recognition! I'm excited to see all that your  
continued leadership will bring.



**Special Thanks – Tiffeny Jimenez**

Tiffany, from the very first day I walked into your  
class, I knew our connection was no accident—it  
*was a calling*—it was the universe tapping me on  
the shoulder saying, 'Pay attention to this one!' You  
were the first person to open my eyes to SCRA,  
and you've kept inspiring me ever since. You work  
with such heart, wisdom, and laughter that even the

heaviest topics feel lighter in your presence.  
Whatever's next for you, I know you'll rock it—and  
I'll be cheering you on the whole way.



**Special Thanks – Brad Olson**

I'm honored to recognize you for the  
remarkable mentor, graduate supervisor, and  
community advocate you have been. Your  
guidance has shaped not only my journey but the  
paths of countless others who have been fortunate  
to learn under your care.

You lead with both intellect and heart—always  
willing to listen, challenge, and nurture. Your  
tireless work to empower multiple communities, to  
stand boldly for human and civil rights, and to  
create spaces where equity and justice are more  
than ideals but living practices has left an indelible  
mark on those you serve.

Thank you for the generosity of your time, your  
belief in people's potential, and the example you  
set as both a scholar and a human being. The  
seeds you plant in minds and communities will  
continue to grow long after the moment has  
passed.

## Posthumous Recognition:

### In Loving Memory of Adiyatu Saka Hassan: I honor Adiyatu Saka Hassan (née

Fayemi)—the first community psychologist I ever knew, though her title was not written in books or on certificates.

Her classroom was the

marketplace, the family compound, the village square; her research was the lives of the people she served. My grandmother's praxis shows up through her use of traditional medicine to heal others, with a vision far ahead of her time, applying the very principles of community psychology—long before I had a name for them—to confront health disparities and foster well-being. She built trust where systems had failed, created belonging where isolation had taken root, and championed care as a shared responsibility.

Adiyatu's life was a living example of what it means to be deeply community-focused: to see each person's dignity, to listen without hurry, and to respond with both courage and compassion.

Though she is no longer with us, her legacy moves through me via every life I touched. She taught me that true change begins in the heart but must always reach out to hold the hands of others. Today, I celebrate her as a posthumous honoree—not only for what she did, but for the generations she continues to inspire – her Morenikaji!

**In Loving Memory of Sakaru Ajani:** I honor the life and legacy of **Sakaru Ajani**, a true pioneer in community organizing and advocacy. As my first guide in community psychology competence, Ajani taught me how systems could shape lives—and



how to humanize those systems to address real human needs.

Beyond his humanistic insight, he was a spiritual leader and healer, using natural herbs and wisdom to nurture community well-being. He empowered marginalized groups, mediated land and marital disputes, and worked tirelessly to create spaces where justice, care, and

equity could flourish. Ajani's life reminds me that the heart of community work is both practical and spiritual, both grounded in action and illuminated by humanity.



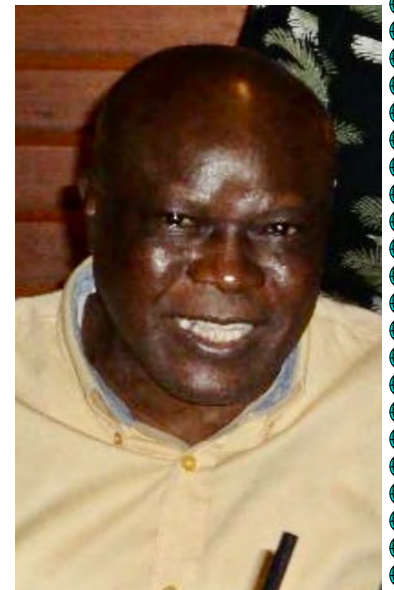
### In Loving Memory of Sheu Akinbiyi: I honor

Sheu Akinbiyi, a rare soul whose life was a tapestry of wisdom, curiosity, and fearless exploration. A proud technologist, a seeker of sacred texts, and a traveler of the world, Sheu was also one of those rare individuals

who, though unschooled in CP competencies, lived and breathed the principles of community psychology.

Through his experiential practice, he nurtured, empowered, and guided those around him, embodying the discipline in action—listening, organizing, and fostering connection.

Sheu's vision of education and life was expansive—humanistic, social, scholastic, and systemic—turning learning into a liberating journey





for himself and those he touched. His intellect, generosity, and unwavering belief in knowledge as a force for equity leave a legacy that transcends formal titles. Sheu reminds me that true community practice is not only learned, but lived, and that a life devoted to exploration, compassion, and empowerment shapes the world in ways both profound and enduring.

With deep gratitude and admiration,  
Moshood Olanrewaju  
President, Society for Community Research & Action (SCRA)

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## From Our Members

*Edited by Dominique Thomas, Central New Mexico Community College*

### Blending Critical Community Psychology and Social Entrepreneurship: Pathways to Systemic, Transformative, and Regenerative Impacts

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This paper explores the connections between the somewhat disconnected fields of community psychology and social entrepreneurship. It calls for more practitioners and thought leaders within the community psychology field to actively engage with and foster alternative settings for change-making and community mobilization; pathways deeply rooted in local realities and social dynamics.

#### Community Psychology in Alternative Settings

I started my career by working with both local and international grant-makers. Early on, I quickly realized the problematic and often unhealthy dynamics between donors, grantees, and the community members they are meant to serve. These dynamics predominantly reflect colonial legacies, perpetuating neo-colonial values and hierarchical control structures (Fentahun, 2023). Manifestations of this problematic reality include restrictive donor conditionalities engineered primarily to preserve donors' interests, constantly shifting and fragmented funding priorities that lead to short-lived interventions, and participation that is often tokenistic rather than genuinely empowering (Fentahun, 2023; Furness, 2020).

Grounded in ecological systems thinking and committed to collaborative, lasting social change (Rappaport & Seidman, 2000), I have often felt constrained by the limitations of traditional development and aid systems. I was frustrated by



witnessing the ineffective foreign aid framework in producing transformative or real change in a country like Egypt (Elakkad & Hussein, 2021). To put it more simply, I saw too many civil society organizations adhere to donor-driven priorities rather than those innovations genuinely emerging from local communities. These donor agendas frequently shift from year to year. Too often, funder partnerships with community practitioners exist too briefly to address the root causes necessary for systemic transformation. Moreover, civil society organizations reduce community participation to superficial consultation or tokenistic endorsement in this process, leaving community members with little power to influence resource allocation or become active agents in shaping the desired change (Piffero, 2009). They reduce their focus to topics set forth by donors, often international, instead of priorities designed and determined by local communities. Top-down donor agendas often shift from year to year. Rather than true partnerships, the funders treat participation as secondary or tertiary goals, leaving little room for community members to determine how the most active local agents should mobilize resources to bring about the desired change (Piffero, 2009).

After two years in non-profits and international aid, my community psychology lens, rooted in holism, systems thinking, participation, and transformation, made clear that a new paradigm is essential in contexts ravaged by colonial legacies. In any context where political oppression undermines, suppresses, and limits our ability to mobilize the capacity of civil society, we must discover alternative avenues. Highly restricted civic and non-profit sectors create a host of obstacles to achieving any form of transformative change through community activism and development (Zayed, 2023). Ameliorative change is also unsustainable. We must therefore locate in the past, present, and future the seen and unseen regularities to build structures that, in their nature, resist neo-liberal, neo-colonial, and extractive frameworks.

Social entrepreneurship and specifically regeneration theory can help guide us on this not simply desirable but urgent necessity in contexts

like Egypt and other countries where social and environmental issues are rife, and where the once vibrant civil society has dwindled. Much like the Nile's annual floods once regenerated the soil with life-giving nutrients, regeneration theory seeks to restore and sustain the social, economic, and ecological systems on which communities depend. In Egypt, this approach counters traditional aid models by fostering locally driven, financially viable solutions that renew community capacity and resilience over time.

We cannot confine our community psychology to critical activism when changing today's neoliberal, capitalist-dominated global order necessitates such a long-term and challenging set of projects. While we seek to transform such systems and mindsets, operating ethically both from within and beyond these structures, we must collectively build on and enhance grassroots forms of local economic systems and development, ones run by community members themselves. I have only realized recently that this balancing of activism and a locally decolonized economy is a complex, challenging paradox for any community psychologist. The systems have been so misaligned with our values for so long they have often become invisible to us. We community practitioners frequently find ourselves either working in alternative settings or gravitating out of our current systems and creating resources and structures from scratch (Norris, 2019; Rappaport, *Tales of Terror and Joy*).

### **What can Social Entrepreneurs learn from Community Psychology?**

A key distinction between social entrepreneurship and traditional development models is the focus on financial viability and sustainability. Unlike nonprofits subject to shifting foreign agendas and operating within complex legal landscapes, including Egypt's (Zayed, 2023), social enterprises are positioned as innovative entities that address pressing social challenges through financially self-sustaining models (Saebi et al., 2019). Achieving this balance is anything but simple. Social enterprises face complex ethical dilemmas from competing interests and stakeholders, requiring nuanced strategies to avoid

trade-offs that perpetuate the inequities of traditional entrepreneurial or development models.

The key to overcoming these tensions is authentic participation and an unwavering focus on social change (Bhatt, 2022). Bhatt argues that social enterprises would benefit from weaving together principles-based and practice-based ethics grounded in an in-depth understanding of the systemic context within which they operate, including its prevailing values, underlying assumptions, entrenched inequalities, and the roots of those inequalities, while remaining adaptable in their strategies to achieve social transformation. Such a holistic process demands a sophisticated grasp of “the social” side of social entrepreneurship (Kimmitt & Muñoz, 2018), an area where Community Psychology’s theories, methodologies, and tools excel. This includes expertise in participatory praxis and sustained community engagement. This is especially true since a recent systematic review of social enterprises’ legitimacy within ecosystems points to the challenges social enterprises can face in gaining community support and legitimacy; an intricate process that we as Community Psychology practitioners know requires sustained, mindful, and intentional efforts of meaningful participation.

Another vital contribution of community psychology to social entrepreneurship lies in our nuanced understanding of transformation and empowerment. Social entrepreneurship is often criticized for oversimplifying empowerment or assuming that social innovations automatically result in genuinely empowered actors. In reality, my dissertation research has uncovered many risks of social enterprises as such initiatives replacing previous dependency relationships with new forms of dependence or failing altogether to dismantle existing power imbalances (Avelino et al., 2019). Addressing this problem calls for the critical lens of community psychology; its rigorous understanding of transformative processes, systemic change, power dynamics, and empowerment strategies is essential in avoiding simplistic narratives or the unintentional reproduction of disempowering dynamics.

It is worth noting that social entrepreneurship can manifest in two modes: the first compensates for the failures of capitalism while maintaining market dynamics (i.e., first-order, ameliorative or compensatory), and the second (i.e., second-order, transformative) aims to transform the system of capitalism (Newey, 2018). Using the compensation–transformation framework with community psychology’s focus on power, systems, and participation can help direct social entrepreneurship toward systemic, emancipatory, regenerative change.

Finally, a review of a decade of literature in the *Journal of Social Entrepreneurship* revealed gaps in research about evaluating the performance of social enterprises, assessing their contributions to systems-level change, and better understanding the dynamics and mechanisms by which they contribute to social change (Weerakoon, 2024). Another gap in social entrepreneurship literature is insights and contributions from the field of psychology (Weerakoon, 2024). Community Psychologists can play an instrumental role in filling these gaps and amplifying the impact and understanding of social entrepreneurship.

#### **A Note on Acceptance and Mentorship from Salma**

I am writing to express my gratitude to my mentor, Brad Olson, who immediately understood the connection between these seemingly disconnected fields. Brad understood that, as a context-sensitive, decolonial, and emancipatory field, trying to change the face and means of capitalism is nothing but sensible for an Egyptian Community Psychologist like myself. More importantly, he guided me through the process of understanding, accepting, and navigating the tensions within the alternative setting and pathway I am leading. I want to end with a call for more thought leaders to follow this path of openness to alternative pathways; only then will we open ourselves as a field to more possibilities for affecting transformative change.

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## **What Italy Taught Me About Community (and) Psychology**

*Written by Jesica Siham Fernández, Santa Clara University [jsfernandez@scu.edu](mailto:jsfernandez@scu.edu)*

Community psychology is fundamentally the pursuit of understanding relationality. People's relationships with their environments, settings and experiences, along with the living beings found within them is a key feature of the discipline (Dutta, 2021; Garcini et al., 2023; Jiménez et al., 2023; Neal & Christens, 2014; Prilleltensky, 2001). The relational elements of people's lives to other people, places and perspectives, as well as the past, present and prospective future are also other ways of approaching community psychology. Community has the root word "to commune," or to be relational. Psychology, quite distinctly, can also be characterized in that way if we consider reflection as a process or practice of communing with the self. Doing so can be beneficial to understanding the relationship between the mind, body and systems that shape us as people. By systems I am referring to the social, cultural, political, economic, historic, and even spiritual institutions that structure how and where we are, and why we live as we do. Reflecting on how, where and why we live as we do were questions that cycled through my mind as I embraced a Fulbright Research Fellowship in Florence, Italy from April to August at the European University

Institute's Historical Archives of the European Union.

### Opening Intention

During my time away I had the privileged opportunity to reflect, research and rewire – or try to – my relationship to systems that felt unsustainable. Neoliberalism, while some may argue is a framework, I purport is an amalgamation of political and economic ideologies that combine to make it a system of hegemonic power. One where imperialism, capitalism, individualism and dualism are concocted to push institutions and people into hyperproducing, competing and extracting resources or obscuring truths often at a great expense to what is just or democratically rooted in wholeness, wellness and integrity (Adams et al., 2019; Blustein et al., 2024). Academia in the United States, as in most Westernized countries, is inherently neoliberal given its orientation toward competition, along with shifts toward privatization and managerialism.

Adapting, easing into and embracing a new experience, indeed a temporary life abroad led me to observe how the neoliberal system was implicitly embedded in my life and how I resist it. Specifically, how and why I relate to people, places and stories as I do, and what I learn as an outcome of those relationships. Living in Italy, in the outskirts of Florence on the hilly olive covered village of Settignano where church bells told time, I had to learn to how ponder rather than produce, slowdown rather than rush from one meeting, place or project to the next, and humbly ask for forgiveness and help when my limited Italian would only go so far.

With the intention to broaden our experiential understanding of community psychology as community psychologists, I offer this short reflection of three moments during my fellowship where community, psychology and community psychology were present. Each of these examples offer insights into how we can resist the ticking of the neoliberal system that wants us to remain on the assembly line of competition, silence and academic exceptionalism, especially during these deeply unsettling moments of global conflict, widening economic and social inequities, border imperialism, Palestinian genocide, and climate change.

### Casa del Popolo: Festa della Liberazione

April 25 is Italy's national liberation holiday. The date honors the Italian resistance's victory against fascism, and liberation from Nazi Germany's occupation of northern and central Italy. It is a day that commemorates a history of struggle where, as a spoken by a woman in her sixties with a bright red foulard wrapped around her neck, "*giustizia e libertà vanno di pari passo perché senza di esse non può esserci vera liberazione*" (justice and freedom go hand in hand for without them there can be no true liberation). During one of my evening walks along the curvy cobblestone streets of Settignano I came across a communal dinner at Casa del Popolo. I was first drawn to its facade displaying the hammer and sickle, Circle-A symbol, and creative Banksy-like graffiti, as well as its enlarged Palestinian and Italian flags, along with posters of Che Guevarra, Antonio Gramsci, Frida Kahlo and Frantz Fanon. Upon walking in I was warmly greeted by cheerful elderly people inviting me to join them at their wall-to-wall communal table. I listened to testimonies of people who were on the frontlines of the resistance over pitchers of vino rosso della casa (house red wine) followed by a four-course meal. What I thought was a one-time event on the occasion of the Festa della Liberazione, I later realized was a Friday evening tradition of intergenerational communing where food and conversation were abundant. Community was certainly present at Casa del Popolo, and psychology manifested itself in the generosity, warmth, and storytelling that came with every meal in our gathering.





FIGURE 1. *Resistance Flyer at Casa del Popolo*  
**Salute Mentale e Liberazione: Appuntamenti con Samah Jabr**

“How we are responding to the violence and trauma in Palestine tells us something about our social condition of internalized colonization and oppression. When we are either too fearful or too reluctant to acknowledge what is happening and do something about it, merely even care and talk about it, or stand by the struggle. How can we solidarize ourselves with the movement?” - Samah Jabr, May 2025

On a rainy Wednesday evening I walked into The Recovery Plan just 800 meters away from the Piazza del Duomo in the heart of Firenze. Established in 2021 as a community resource and education center to connect Afrodescent people in Italy with local institutions, universities and transnational organizations, The Recovery Plan was hosting a dialogue between Palestinian psychotherapist, writer and activist-scholar, Samah Jabr and Murphy Tomadin, an Italian psychologist. Samah’s visit in Italy was organized by a collective of psychologists and activists, among them comrades-colleagues Dr. Francesca Esposito at the Università di Bologna and Dr. Patrizia Meringolo at the Università di Firenze.



FIGURE 2. *Samah Jabr*

Centered on themes of colonial violence, Palestinian genocide, and la cura come atto di resistenza (care as an act of resistance), the entire floorspace of The Recovery Plan’s main room was occupied by people attentively listening to the unfolding conversation. Community, psychology and community psychology were clearly present as Samah challenged the audience – and the world — to take accountability for what is violently occurring in Palestine. Reflecting on the event, and Samah’s words, no one can claim that they did not take a role in what is happening in Palestine. We are all complicit in what is happening, and how it is happening, and why it continues to happen. The first genocide was the erasure of the truth, the silencing of Palestinaian people’s voices and experiences. “How do we know what we know?” That is at the heart of epistemology.

We must never be too certain of what we know, nor should we ever be arrogant in assuming an absolute truth. Turning the other way, shying or shielding ourselves because of the discomfort, fear or paralyzing uncertainty of what to do or how to respond upholds the hegemony of violence in all forms. So, how do we know what we know is a question all community psychologists, especially those of us situated in the U.S. should be asking ourselves consistently because often what we know is only partially being revealed by the sources of information, relationship and experiences to which we give our time. We must reach beyond the echo

chambers of our sheltered selves — remove the earbuds and screens that blur our heart's capacity to listen and see in real time what we know and what we do not.

### **XV SIPCO: Psicologia per l'emancipazione di Persona e Collettività**

The value of collectively gathering to share and co-create knowledge through dialogue, inquiry, witnessing and active listening is best exemplified at the XV Convegno Nazionale di Società Italiana di Psicologia di Comunità (SIPCO). Organized by Italian community psychologist among them Dr. Alessia Rochira and Dr. Terri Mannarini at the Università del Salento, I was invited by them to deliver a keynote speech. The conference engaged themes of liberation, emancipation, wellbeing and solidarity with marginalized peoples. SIPCO provided a space to both reflect on the limits and possibilities of community psychology, especially in relation to Italy's shifting sociocultural, political, and economic contexts. Offering a presentation on the importance of engaging in decolonial praxes, I drew upon examples from my research with youth engaged in environmental justice centered art advocacy projects. As a community psychologist trained in the U.S. yet heavily grounded in Latin American community and liberation psychologies, I was an outsider desiring to connect — to commune, reflect, and dialogue — with the community of Italian community psychologists seeking to facilitate conditions toward the promotion of health, wellness and liberation for all people. At SIPCO, similar to my experience at Casa del Popolo and The Recovery Plan, I experienced a resistance to neoliberalism's pull to hold people hostage around time, production and profit. The conference offered a space for Italian psychologists and practitioners to listen, disagree, and call all into actively contributing to an emancipatory psychology; a psychology of non-violence where we can honor stories and histories of revolution, resistance and struggle as we stand with those on the frontlines whilst leveraging whatever power, privilege, and time within our reach to make freedom ring.



**FIGURE 3. XV SIPCO Organizers and Presenters Closing Reflection**

What did Italy teach me about community (and) psychology? First, as these reflexive moments describe, I experienced a different conception of time not as quantity but quality. Time was held in the comfort, as well as discomfort of community spaces that were open to all who were willing to gather — to pause the clock of doing in order to be with others over a meal, a story, or emergent decolonial praxes. Second, I learned that slowing down for contemplation as reflexive inquiry, creative action and collectivized care are sustainable strategies against neoliberalism. A community of everyone whom I encountered during my time away helped me see the importance of opening doors, and leaving empty seats at the table for those who wander in. Third, I reflected on my relationships — where, how, when and why I've been out of alignment with values of abolition, liberation and decoloniality. Cognizant of my silences, fears and hesitations to speak up, I am intent on clearing the floors and walls for art and stories to emerge, and of sharing time with presumed outsiders where renewal and relationality may emerge. And finally, I believe as the history of Italy testifies that *"verrà un giorno che tutte quante lavoreremo in libertà"* (a day will come when we will all work in freedom). May we continue to insist on the pursuit of liberation. I am here, open and in community with you.



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## International Committee

### Column Editors and new Co-chairs of the International Committee

*Edited by Noha Emam Hassanin, Egypt, [nhassanin90@gmail.com](mailto:nhassanin90@gmail.com), Azza Osman, Sudan, [Aaosman@aucegypt.edu](mailto:Aaosman@aucegypt.edu), & Michihiko Bando, Japan, [bandou@atomi.ac.jp](mailto:bandou@atomi.ac.jp)*

Based on the last International Committee meeting which took place on July 15<sup>th</sup> led by Mazna Patka (former International Committee Co-chair), the meeting participants agreed to contribute to this column as follows:

- 1) Ask the new Co-chairs what they would like to do with their role
- 2) Explore and discuss the role of “international” in the world of SCRA
- 3) Examine linguistic justice

We also received contributions from the former international committee Co-chairs:

- 4) reflecting on their role as Co-chairs, sharing their disappointments with SCRA for its silence and neutrality amidst the genocide in Gaza, and ending by a call to action for SCRA to be the organization it claims to be, an organization driven by social justice,

The current Co-chairs shared pieces on the current atrocities taking place in Palestine and Sudan:

- 5) how Israel is using starvation as a weapon of war in Gaza, and finally,
- 6) a piece on the proxy war in Sudan and its implications on women from the eyes of a Sudanese women’s rights activist.

### (1) What the new Co-chairs would like to do with their role?

(1a) Noha Hassanin & Azza Osman, Co-chairs of the International Committee,

For us, taking on the role of co-chairs of the International Committee is an act of resistance against mainstream psychology. In our role, we intend to amplify authentic voices, and share authentic stories, to dismantle systems of

oppression and epistemic violence (Mignolo, 2010). We intend to use this space to document and acknowledge the power of indigenous knowledge and practices (Atallah & Dutta, 2021). In the next two years, we hope to disrupt the silence around structural injustices and the horrific atrocities that the world is witnessing in **shameful silence!** We will focus on Palestine, Sudan, Congo, Kashmir, Guatemala, Okinawa, and other systematically neglected locations. We hereby invite our fellow colleagues to submit contributions to the International Section of TCP – contributions that authentically represent their experience, their people, their land, their history, their frustrations and disappointments. We hereby invite fellow community psychologists to resist and disrupt the colonial structures in mainstream community psychology no matter how established and powerful these might be.

As two Muslim African Arab female community psychologists (Azza & Noha), we are committed to advocating for justice, equity, and truth in our field and beyond. During our term with the International Committee, we take on the responsibility to raise awareness, challenge, and dismantle the excuses of Western practitioners and academics regarding the realities of the Global South—particularly the ongoing atrocities in Gaza. Our commitment extends beyond this moment, addressing the deep and lasting consequences that many African countries continue to endure since colonization, consequences that the world purposefully ignores while readily benefiting from the continent's resources.

As community psychologists, our professional ethics, moral responsibility, and human conscience compel us to speak out against these injustices. We see it as our duty to create spaces for honest reflection, to amplify the voices of those most affected, and demand concrete action and accountability from those in positions of influence and power. We are equally committed to creating an open space for fellow community psychologists to join this momentum—sharing their knowledge, teaching us more about the realities in their contexts, and offering ideas for support,

interventions, and other actions that can help those who are suffering.

We shall also address linguistic justice, as English is the second language for the three of us. We have witnessed through our practice the forced domination of the English language and the limitations that non-English speakers face. We shall discuss language shaming and its relation to colonization and systemic oppression, as Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) puts it; *“So, if you want to really hurt me, talk badly about my language. Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity - I am my language. Until I can take pride in my language, I cannot take pride in myself”*.

**Noha Emam Hassanin**, MA Community Psychologist, Resilience Practitioner & Researcher

I'm a community psychologist and resilience practitioner and researcher. I have been working in the alternative care sector in Egypt since 2017, through this time my practice was grounded in community praxis. I worked in collaboration with researchers in different universities in Egypt to ensure that research is guided by lived experiences and the results of the research informed decisions that would promote resilience and empower communities. I worked systemically with care experienced youth in program design, monitoring & evaluation and policy change. I have learned from them and with them what it means to be a resilience practitioner. I use a strength based, trauma informed and resilience focused approach while intervening with care experienced youth. My approach involves ongoing reflections and learning with the care experienced youth, organization's team and community members, which have taught me what resilience really means—far more than I ever learned from mainstream journals and scholars.

Through my role I have shared the lessons learned and reflections locally (within Egypt), regionally (within the MENA region) and internationally through conferences, workshops, seminars, newsletters and journals. My master's thesis explored the factors that promote resilience in care experienced youth and have been utilized as one of the main building blocks of the current nationwide mandated curriculum for promoting life



skills and well-being for children and youth in alternative care in Egypt.

I have also been involved in promoting the mental health and resilience of community practitioners from different African and Mediterranean countries.

With the brutality of the current genocides taking place, I have become active in using community psychology approaches to bring attention to the hypocrisy and injustice taking place in the world and take steps in the journey of dismantling systems of oppression and colonial legacies.

**Azza Osman**, MA, Community Psychologist, Researcher, and Advocate

I am a Sudanese community psychologist and researcher dedicated to advancing the mental health and resilience of displaced and marginalized communities. I hold a master's degree in Community Psychology, with my thesis evaluating the impact of community-based learning programs on fostering civic responsibility and intercultural sensitivity among female university students in Sudan. Over the years, I have served in multiple roles within the humanitarian and development sector, most recently as a Project Manager at an NGO, where I led psychosocial and economic empowerment interventions for youth without parental care. I also contributed to a regional study on the impact of war and displacement on youth mental health in the Arab region, conducted under UNESCO's Youth as Researchers program.

With a strong commitment to supporting vulnerable populations, my work focuses on addressing mental health challenges through practical, inclusive, and culturally sensitive approaches. As a Sudanese community psychologist, I feel a profound responsibility to raise global awareness about the ongoing war in Sudan- currently the world's largest displacement crisis- yet one that remains largely overlooked. I am committed to advocating for meaningful support for Sudanese people and amplifying the struggles of other African nations, including the Democratic Republic of Congo, to ensure Africa's humanitarian crises receive the attention and action they urgently deserve.

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**(1b) Michihiko Bando**, Co-chair of the International Committee

In the recent meeting with Noha and Azza, I mentioned "I feel like a baby just emerging from the womb (Japan) into the outside world."

I have been working in Japan for a long time, but I have come to realize that I should learn more about community psychology and peace psychology, and I need to read more papers written in English and take part in discussions with people in English-speaking countries. Finally, my long-held dream came true, and I was able to participate in the SCRA Biennial 2025 for the first time. However, my English skills were still poor, and to be honest, I felt more anxious and nervous than excited about my first visit to the U.S. But there were several unforgettable experiences and encounters during the conference, and I'm really glad I brought the courage to participate.

There are currently two types of qualifications for psychological practitioners in Japan: a private qualification of "clinical psychologist" (by Japanese Certification Board) and a national qualification of "licensed psychologist." However, there is no qualification or training program for community psychologists. But many therapists, including myself, are engaged in a community approach in their work. The Japanese Society for Community Psychology was established in 1998 and has over 400 members as of 2025. The society publishes a journal twice a year, and both practice and research are actively conducted. However, despite all this practical experience and research, many

Japanese people still struggle with English, and only a limited number can participate in international conferences such as SCRA or ICCP.

When I discussed this with Mazna, she replied, "That's called Linguistic Justice (Catala, 2022; Soler and Morales-Gálvez, 2022), and it's also an important topic in community psychology." "I'll reach out to researchers from various countries. Let's create a practical community to discuss language barriers." "Yes, Linguistic Justice is an important theme, so why don't you become the co-chair of the International Committee?" After a few days' consideration, I had agreed to take on the role of co-chair. Having just made my SCRA debut at the 2025 SCRA Biennial, I feel as if I was born into this world through a cesarean section rather than a natural birth...

We co-chairs are currently talking with various members to confirm the direction SCRA should take and the role the International Committee should play. Based on the vision and mission of the International Committee, I will maintain close communication with Noha and Azza. Additionally, I will keep an eye on various global challenges and consider how community psychology and SCRA can contribute to addressing them.

I am deeply concerned about the current political situation around the world. I firmly believe that clinical psychology and community psychology have significant untapped potential and can make a greater contribution to world peace. Through the International Committee, I aim to promote academic exchange through practice and research in diverse regions, thereby contributing to the advancement of community psychology.

To learn the knowledge accumulated in Western countries, English proficiency is necessary. However, to understand what is happening in various regions of the world and the practical knowledge and theories accumulated in those regions, it may be essential to learn through the local language rather than English. Recently, AI translation has made remarkable progress, and we would like to explore its practical applications to activate international exchange.

I look forward to working with you all as a co-chair over the next two years.

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**(1c) Michihiko Bando**, PhD, Professor, Department of Psychology, Atomi University, Japan

I have worked as a clinical psychologist in various fields such as healthcare, education, and industry in Japan for over 20 years. The topic of my doctoral dissertation was a practical study based on 14 years of organizing a support group for the social withdrawals (Hikikomori) in the community, as well as collaborating with leaders of self-help groups. In 2022, I published my book, "Engaging with Hikikomori: Psychological Support Between the Ordinary and the Extraordinary" (Bando, 2022).

I have served as a board member of the Japanese Society of Community Psychology since 2021, and as of 2024, I have served as the International Relationship Committee Chair. In 2024, I co-authored the paper "Assessment and Intervention Techniques in Community Psychology Practice" (Bando & Iida, 2024) following a year of discussions with practitioners.

I am also a member of APA Division 48, the Society for the Study of Peace, Conflict, and Violence. I would like to make practical research on the contribution of clinical psychology and community psychology to world peace in my life's work.

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## (2) The Role of “international” in the World of SCRA

This is a fundamental and difficult question. What does the word “international” mean in the context of SCRA, and in the context of the planet we live on? What should we aim for with this word?

### (2a) The Role of “International” In and Within SCRA by Vernita Perkins, PhD, Omnigi Research

Community psychology serves as a pivotal discipline within psychology, emphasizing the importance of following the lead of the communities it serves, selflessly “giving psychology away” i.e. disseminating community psychology without bias or restrictions, and ultimately working towards a point where its practitioners are no longer needed, i.e. working ourselves out of a career. However, many community psychologists (and frankly professionals across all social science disciplines) fall short in achieving the necessary self-awareness and reflexivity to fulfill these goals, often engaging in performative social justice while neglecting the deeper implications of their work. This situation is further complicated by factions within the Society that may attempt to constrain the discipline, particularly as it evolves from its colonial origins towards a more globally engaging framework. In contrast, some practitioners in the United States and Canada risk reintroducing colonial, imperial, supremacist, and capitalist ideologies into community psychology, which undermines its foundational objective to move towards liberation. The irony lies in the potential exclusion of an internationally centered position, which inherently includes Turtle Island (an Indigenous name for the North American continent) as one of all the continents, not the United States as separate and apart from the world. This ideological separation contradicts the Society’s commitment to community

engagement. In order to embody this international focus, practical measures need to be implemented, such as 1) naming multiple time zones on meeting notices, 2) offering the same content at least two different times to ensure all global locations have options to attend, 3) ensuring events and activities are presented in multiple languages including utilizing accessibility features to improve information delivery, and 4) being mindful of the socioeconomic conditions worldwide when pricing biennials, membership, and other professional expenses. While some members may resist these adjustments/recommendations, opting out, intimidating, or expressing dissent only serves to undermine the core tenets of community psychology.

The absence of ongoing international advocacy is notably concerning. It is crucial for community psychologists to stay updated on global events, and when colleagues bring attention to significant issues, having a mobilization committee or task force prepared to address these matters within our non-profit community psychology society is essential. Genuinely embodying the role of a community psychologist means it is vital to embrace an internationally oriented practice and pedagogy that transcends the confines of the United States and North America. Engaging with the broader world necessitates a reflexive practice, a truly open mind, substantive dominance reduction and the elimination of supremacist ideologies, and intentionally increasing empathy. Being enthusiastically committed to engaging with the broader world should be its own inherently satisfying and empowering path.

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## (3) Linguistic justice

The International Committee, which has a mission to promote international exchange, has always considered addressing language barriers to be an important issue. We have confirmed that we will continue to address this issue this term. Language is essential for social and academic communication, but it takes a great deal of time and energy to master a certain language, and participation in discussions is limited by the degree



of proficiency in the main language used in the communication setting. To revitalize international discussions, we aim to address language-related challenges with “linguistic justice” as a key concept. Below, Vernita Perkins, Lead Researcher at Omnigi Research and Michihiko Bando, Co-chair, will present their respective perspectives on the issue.

**(3a) Linguistic Justice** by Vernita Perkins, PhD, Omnigi Research

The early education system in the United States frequently lacks a comprehensive global outlook, predominantly focusing on British and white European history and selective events that reinforce an American exceptionalism narrative. This curriculum often highlights white male dominance while overlooking the grim realities of colonialism, which involved land dispossession and brutal forced labor enslavement reminiscent of contemporary human trafficking. Such omissions, coupled with performative advocacy from those who benefit from this selective historical narrative, result in a limited worldview for United States schoolchildren. The binary of success or failure is typically portrayed as either attaining massive wealth comparable to that of a western European monarch or being forced to endure uncertain conditions historically aligned with indentured servitude or the nightmare of enslavement. This restricted perspective may have subliminally contributed to a preference for the transactional nature of American English and an embedded reluctance to embrace non-European languages, often viewed as inferior. In contrast, my upbringing emphasized the importance of multilingualism, promoting an appreciation for different cultures, and acknowledging that certain concepts are best articulated in their original languages, thereby enriching the tapestry of human communication.

My approach involves learning and respecting the native languages of those I engage with. I advocate for community psychologists, practitioners, educators, and researchers to present and disseminate their work in their preferred languages, utilizing technology and skilled translators to ensure accurate representation of their ideas when translated into other languages. Just as English often requires contextual

clarification, similar explanations should be embraced in the authors’ native languages. Furthermore, the existence of concepts unique to specific languages underscores the necessity of recognizing these contextual subtleties. This exploration of linguistic differences not only deepens our understanding but also fosters new avenues for dialogue, research, and community engagement. The same principle applies to our approach to global contexts; in the absence of direct experience in a particular location, we must appreciate the insights and expertise of colleagues who are deeply familiar with that environment.

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**(3b) For Worldwide Discussion** by Michihiko Bando, PhD, Professor, Department of Psychology, Atomi University, Japan

This section is written in Japanese and English.

<Japanese> このテーマに関して私が考えていることはシンプルで、「より多くの人たちとコミュニティ心理学に関する議論をしたい」ということである。私がこう言うと、周囲からは「では、英語を勉強しましょうね」と言われ、私は「はい。そうですね。すみません」と平身低頭で答えるのみであろう。

しかし、コミュニティ・アプローチを志向するセラピストとしては、「英語が苦手な研究者・実践家がもっと国際会議の舞台に参加できるよう、コミュニティ心理学的支援としてもっと実践上の工夫ができるのではないかと回答することができ

たとえば、英語のネイティブ・スピーカーをポイント10、「こんにちは」「はじめまして」程度の英語話者をポイント1とすれば、私は現在、ポイント3か4くらいであろう。語学学習には時間がかかる。ポイント7くらいにならないと国際会議の議論に参加できないなら、非英語話者にとっては遠い道のりとなる。

そこで、「ポイント2~4の人たちが主な話題提供者になるような会を多く持てないだろうか」と考えた。たとえば、「英語が苦手な人たちのセルフヘルプ・グループ」のように心理的障壁を下げる、冒頭に自分の英語のスキルポイントを伝

えてから会を始める、Zoom等のスクリプトや翻訳機能を最大限活用する等の工夫をすることはできる。経験は宝である。「英語が苦手でもディスカッションができた！ 楽しい！」という経験は、非英語話者の国際会議への参加意欲を促進する。参加者が国際会議に多く参加するようになれば、議論が活性化する。

2025年6月開催の国際委員会資料には、委員会のビジョンとミッションとして次の点が記載されている。「SCRAが国際的および地域的にどのように活動していくかを再考する」「よりグローバルに考える方法を学ぶ、...世界の他の地域の歴史、実践、理論など、集合的なグローバルコミュニティの強みを活かす方法を模索することで、他者から学ぶ」。そのためには言語の壁を超えた議論が必須であり、その実践はまさにコミュニティ心理学者としてのスキルが発揮される現場であろう。

話はさらに一歩前進し、2025年7月開催の国際委員会でも「言語的正義」が話題となった。端的に言う「学問の習得と展開において英語のネイティブ・スピーカーは特権を有しており、非ネイティブ・スピーカーは不利益を被っているのではないか」ということである。

SCRAは英語話者がマジョリティの国（アメリカ）の団体であり、英語で議論をするのは当然のことである。ここにおいて、英語ネイティブではない人々との議論を活性化させる意義はどこにあるのだろうか。この点をよく議論することが重要であろう。そして恐らく、この議論は簡単ではない。なぜなら、SCRAはアメリカのために存在するのか、世界のために存在するのか、コミュニティ心理学はどこでどのように発展していくことを志向するのか、という大きな論点と地続きだからである。

私はSCRAの「国際会員」枠の会員である。果たして、国際会員はSCRAの「外部の者」なのか「内部の者」なのか。会員だからもちろん内部の者だ、と言いたいところだが、やはり外部の者なのかもしれない。言語的正義というテーマを考えると、私たちは一体誰とコミュニケーションを取り、誰とともに生きていきたいのか、という切実な問題に行き当たる。だからこそ、私は議論を急

ぐつもりはない。ゆっくり議論を重ねたいし、国際委員会はその可能にする場の一つであってほしいと思う。

私自身の現在地に戻ると、英語の学習が課題になっていることに変わりはない。ただし、徒に劣等感を抱く必要はない。より多くの人たちと議論をするために必要な実践をコツコツと続けることで、大事なテーマを検討していくことができるだろう。

<English> My thought on this topic is simple: I want to discuss community psychology with more people. When I express this desire, people around me may say, "Then, study English more." And I only respond with a humble "Yes, I'm sorry."

However, as a therapist doing community approach, I can respond from the more objective standpoint: "There must be ways to help researchers and practitioners who are not proficient in English participate more in international conferences. Shouldn't the community psychological approach be implemented more in practice?"

For example, if we rate native English speakers as points 10 and those who can say 'Hello' and "Nice to meet you" as point 1, I am currently at around points 3 or 4. Language learning takes time. If one cannot participate in international conference discussions until reaching point 7, that is a long way to go.

Therefore, I considered, "Could we hold more meetings where those at points 2 to 4 are the main contributors?" This would require effort to achieve. However, it is possible to lower psychological barriers by creating a "self-help group for those who struggle with English," starting meetings by sharing one's English proficiency level, and maximizing the use of scripts and translation features on platforms like Zoom. Experience is a treasure. "Even though I'm not good at English, I was able to participate in the discussion! It was fun!" This kind of experience can motivate people to participate in international conferences. As more participants attend international conferences, discussions become more active.

The following points are stated as the vision and mission of IC, in the materials of the IC

meeting in June 2025: “To reconsider how SCRA engages internationally and regionally”, “To learn how to think more globally, ...to learn from others by seeking ways to build on the strengths of the collective global community, including histories, praxes, and theories of other regions around the world.” To achieve this, discussions that transcend language barriers are essential, and it is precisely in such situations that community psychologists must provide practical methodologies for this purpose.

Moving forward, the topic of “linguistic justice” was also discussed at the International Committee Meeting held in July 2025. To put it simply, “English native speakers have a privilege in the acquisition and development of academic knowledge, while non-native speakers are at a disadvantage.”

SCRA is an organization based in the U.S., where English is the majority language, so it is natural to conduct discussions in English. In this context, what is the significance of activating discussions with non-native English speakers? It is important to thoroughly discuss this point. And this discussion will likely not be easy, as it is closely tied to the larger issues of whether SCRA exists for the U. S. or for the world, and where and how community psychology should develop.

I am a member of SCRA's “International Member” category. Are international members considered ‘external’ or “internal” to SCRA? I would like to say that I am an insider since I am a member, but I may be an outsider after all. When considering the theme of linguistic justice, we inevitably confront the critical question of who we wish to communicate and live with. For this reason, I don't intend to rush the discussion. I would like to have continuous deliberation, and hope that the IC will be able to provide such a place.

Returning to my current situation, the challenge of learning English remains unchanged. However, there is no need to feel inferior. By consistently practicing what is necessary to engage in worldwide discussions with more people, I believe we can explore important themes.

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#### **(4) On Leadership, Silence, and Our Collective Failure, written by former Co-Chairs: Mazna Patka & Tiffeny R. Jiménez**

Serving as co-chairs of the International Committee has been an instructive experience. We came into this work beginning in 2023 believing in the possibility of meaningful, values-driven leadership within SCRA. We believed in what community psychology says it stands for: liberation, justice, equity. We believed that our role mattered. And it does, but not in the way we had hoped.

As co-chairs of the International Committee, we learned a great deal about SCRA's structure and the boundaries of its commitments. We met with a past president to advocate for funding to support our international work, and the message was clear. The “international” is not a priority. It is seen as something extra, peripheral. A curiosity, maybe. But not real. This was not said with hostility. It was said with a calm, matter-of-fact tone that made it all the more disturbing.

This view, one in which the United States (US) is somehow separate from the rest of the world, is part of the problem. The US is not outside of the international landscape. It is embedded in it. It shapes it. And it benefits from it. Pretending otherwise is not only delusional, it is dangerous. And we are seeing the consequences now, in real time, with unbearable clarity.

As we write this, there is a genocide in Gaza. We are watching people starve. We are watching entire families be erased. We are hearing the screams of people who know the world is watching and doing nothing. And what has SCRA said? Nothing: <https://scra27.org/resources/policy-resources/responding-to-the-current-aggression-on-gaza-palestine/>

There is no justice without accountability. There is no liberation without solidarity. Community psychology cannot claim to be values-based and remain silent in the face of genocide, or many other ongoing atrocities happening simultaneously. It cannot cling to its North American scope while ignoring the global pain in which the US is directly complicit. The field does not get to hide under the



blanket of “we are an American organization” while babies are being buried under rubble from US-made bombs.

This silence is not neutrality. It is complicity. And we are ashamed.

We are ashamed that an organization built around justice has nothing to say when the people of Gaza are being systematically destroyed. We are ashamed that while Palestinian psychologists are working in impossible conditions, trying to keep their communities alive, our field has not reached out. Has not made space. Has not stood up. To be clear, this is not about issuing a statement for the sake of optics. It is about reckoning with what our values actually demand. It is about remembering that we do not get to choose when justice matters. It either matters always or it never did.

If community psychology wants to matter, it must show up when it is hardest to do so. And right now, it is hard. But it is not nearly as hard as living under siege.

We owe it to the people of Gaza. We owe it to ourselves. And we owe it to the field we say we are building.

I (Tiffany) support the message above and wanted to add a few additional points on organizational structure and capacity for international work given the perspective I bring being located within the US. Being in this co-chair role for the IC has placed me in more of a “feet-on-the-ground” advocate for the needs of the international network because I have the relationships in place, speak the language, and am functioning within the same time zone. It has been easier for me to be the main connector within the US when we needed a voice on our initiative (e.g., liaison with the Council on Education).

Given the history of the IC, I was initially hesitant to take on this co-chair role, but I was driven to address inadequacies in how CP Education addresses epistemic injustice. Before now, I was unable to see how our relationship with our international colleagues was hindering our ability to address our inadequacies regarding epistemic justice. Being in the main role of advocate for the network has made it clear to me just how marginalized the international perspective

is within the overall structure and functioning of the organization. This needs to change.

If we are to ever claim to be an organization that seeks to truly engage social justice, then we need to be in much better alignment with the realities of our international partners, including how knowledge systems shape contexts. We have four main ways SCRA might integrate some of our lessons learned into the strategic planning process so we can begin to address these larger structural issues.

1. While the history of the SCRA organization is based within the development of the field, within the discipline of Psychology, primarily focused on issues within the US, our understanding of the root causes of social issues has expanded. We can no longer ignore the vast interdependencies shaping our shared destinies (e.g., world knowledge systems, neoliberalism, imperialism, etc.). Addressing the roots of our shared realities will require more of a transdisciplinary, critical, and liberation-oriented approach to the focus and content of our work, which would include addressing power dynamics.
2. Truly engaging with this broader perspective that can address the needs across regions, the organization needs to build the capacity to attend to the basics of international relations. We have learned of the severe lack of resources available to honor and support the communication needs of people from around the world and we believe this needs to be addressed. We can begin by grounding our communications and relationships with our colleagues in full respect for the ways of being, knowing, and speaking the truth of and from their contexts (i.e., linguistic justice, interpretation supports, agenda sharing, etc.).
3. SCRA has struggled with centering “action”, and this has been a point of contention for the field. The way we have addressed taking action, to date, is via the structure of the policy processes (i.e., writing position or rapid policy statements). As noted above, we could be doing much more as an

organization that claims to be about social justice. Currently we exist within a culture of impunity - a lack of accountability for actions not taken, even when it makes sense for us to do so. We could be much more proactive in speaking our social justice values by taking action, like many other organizations do. This might include examples like: documenting violations, supporting survivors, protecting vulnerable populations, pursuing legal actions against crimes of humanity, as well as advocating for policy change. However, this would require much more explicit structures and processes to do so.

4. SCRA must use its influence to push the American Psychological Association to stand for the values we claim to uphold. The American Psychological Association has lobbying power and if we are serious about the issues we say matter, we must ensure that power is leveraged in ways that align with liberation, justice, and equity. Our advocacy should extend beyond our own organization so that our collective voice has a greater impact on national and international policy.

What we share here is not simply critique for critique's sake. It is a call to action grounded in the very values that SCRA claims to uphold. Our time as co-chairs has shown us the depth of the gap between our stated commitments and our actual practices. That gap has consequences. It enables silence in the face of atrocity. It perpetuates a culture of impunity. And it leaves our international colleagues, and the communities they serve, without the solidarity they deserve.

We are in a moment when the stakes could not be clearer. If we, as a field, cannot confront genocide while it is happening, if we cannot stand with those who are resisting oppression at the risk of their own lives, then we must question whether our values mean anything at all.

SCRA must decide whether it will remain an insular, US-centered organization that speaks the language of justice without practicing it, or whether it will become a truly global community psychology

network—one that listens, acts, and stands in solidarity without hesitation.

This choice will define not only the organization's legacy but the integrity of our field. There is still time to choose differently, but not much. History will not remember our good intentions. It will remember what we did, or failed to do, when the world was burning.

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## **(5) Using Starvation as a Weapon of War in Gaza Palestine, written by Co-chair Noha Hassanin**

Humanitarian agencies and social media platforms have been expressing concerns about the devastating starvation situation in Gaza. Yet the unimaginable suffering behind these words is often hidden from those distant from the crisis. The true extent of this humanitarian catastrophe can only be genuinely understood through the testimonies of individuals who have directly witnessed and endured its devastating consequences. In the words of Aqsa Durrani, a pediatric doctor and board member of Doctors Without Borders:

*When I entered Gaza, the Israeli military had a rule: I was only allowed to bring in seven pounds of food. As I was weighing out protein bars, trying to get under the limit, I said to my husband: 'How sinister is this?' I'm a humanitarian aid worker. Why would there even be a limit on food? I've worked in many places with extreme hunger, but what's so jarring in this context is how cruel it is, how deliberate. I was in Gaza for two months; there's no way to describe the horror of what's happening. And I say this as a pediatric ICU doctor who sees children die as part of my work. Among our own staff we have doctors and nurses who are trying to treat patients while hungry, exhausted. They're living in tents. Some of them have lost fifteen, twenty members of their families. In the hospital there are kids maimed by airstrikes: missing arms, missing legs, third degree burns. Often there's not*

enough pain medication. But the children are not screaming about the pain, they're screaming: 'I'm hungry! I'm hungry!' I hate to only focus on the kids, because nobody should be starving. But the kids, it just haunts you in a different way. When my two months were finished, I didn't want to leave. It's a feeling I haven't experienced in nearly twenty years of humanitarian assignments. But I felt ashamed. Ashamed to leave my Palestinian colleagues, who were some of the most beautiful and compassionate people that I've ever met. I was ashamed as an American, as a human being, that we've been unable to stop something that is so clearly a genocide. I remember when our bus pulled out of the buffer zone. Out the window on one side I could see Rafah, which was nothing but rubble. On the other side was lush, green Israel. When we exited the gate, the first thing I saw was a group of Israeli soldiers, sitting at a table, eating lunch. I've never felt so nauseous seeing a table full of food. (Humans of New York, 2025)

Israel is using starvation as a weapon of war in a blatant shameless violation of international humanitarian law; Israel is completely blocking aid from entering Gaza since March 2025. You could imagine the exacerbation of the humanitarian conditions of a densely populated area (almost half of its population are children) that has been constantly bombed for almost two years, while 80% of the Gazan population rely on humanitarian aid for basic supplies, due to the 17-year-old siege on Gaza. "No one should have to suffer the humiliation of being forced to beg for food, and especially not when there are ample supplies waiting to be provided," as stated by Alice Jill Edwards, the Special Rapporteur on torture United Nations Human Rights Council, (OHCHR, 2025). Palestinians are not only dying of starvation, but they are also getting shot and bombed while getting aid. "This devastating daily loss of life as desperate Palestinians try to collect aid is the consequence of their deliberate targeting by Israeli forces and the foreseeable consequence of irresponsible and lethal methods of distribution". Agnès Callamard, Secretary General of Amnesty International (Amnesty International, 2025).

The scale of starvation among infants and children in Gaza has reached catastrophic proportions. Due to their heightened physiological vulnerability, children face severe risks of acute malnutrition, infections, nutritional edema, marasmus, life-threatening dehydration and are unable to recover from bombing related injuries. With Gaza's near-total collapse of medical infrastructure, merely eighteen healthcare facilities in Gaza maintained limited operational capacity (Abuelaish & Musani, 2025) infants and children are left to die with no access to critical medical intervention. Gaza's daily death rate is higher than any conflict in the 21st century (Oxfam international, 2024). Israel has been killing a child EVERY HOUR for the past 22 months in Gaza. Children die from bombing, malnutrition and starvation (Al Jazeera, 2025).

According to the International Criminal Court, "intentionally using starvation of civilians as a method of warfare" in international armed conflicts is considered a war crime. The list of war crimes Israel is committing in Palestine surging! Adding using starvation as a weapon of war to the genocide, and the 77-year-old apartheid. There's ample evidence that Israel is committing these war crimes. What is confusing is how the world can stay silent in front of this, and how Israel can commit this number of atrocities with impunity?

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## **(6) Hope Wears Heels, written & transcribed by Co-chair Azza Osman**

On April 15, 2023, Sudan descended into what has become the world's worst humanitarian crisis (UNICEF, 2025). The conflict, fought between Sudan's national army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), has been marked by widespread atrocities against civilians. Women have borne a disproportionate share of the violence. The RSF's actions have been classified as genocidal, with documented evidence of systematic sexual violence (Oslo Freedom Forum, 2025).

For psychologist Sulaima Elkhailifa, horrors of the past regime have come rushing back.

In 2003 she traveled to Darfur to support genocide survivors. Over 20 years later, the same horrors have been weaponized to fuel the current conflict. While Sulaima continues documenting systematic sexual violence in Khartoum. Guided by her parents' memories of peaceful revolution,

Sulaima hopes to one day, live in a safe and democratic Sudan.

## **Speech transcript of Sulaima Ishaq Elkhailifa, a Sudanese women's rights activist & head of the unit for combating violence against women, at Oslo Freedom Forum, May 2025**

Hello everyone, today I woke up to the sound of an alarm in Norway. Back in Sudan, every morning we wake up to the sound of drone attacks. Every morning, I become worried about my children and whether they will make it safely to school or not. It's become a part of the daily lives of the people there. Even coming here was not easy, because it's become known that drone attacks could hit you on your way to the airport or even attack the airport itself, so all airplanes will be suspended. But this trip is worth it — even crossing three countries to come here is worth it — because the people and the world have become silent about Sudan. Nobody talks about what's happening over there. It's not fair, it's not just another war, and it is not just another displacement and refugee issue. We've had enough of war. We need to break this kind of mutual agreement to be silent, because it's gone on far too long.

In my life, I've witnessed coups, revolutions, transitional governments, and attempts at democracy. And I've seen atrocities. I've witnessed a lot, and I feel like I am a walking memory of Sudan's pain and history. I've been wondering if this is a blessing or a curse, knowing all this information and seeing all this bloodshed, while trying to lead a normal life, being active in your community, being a wife, a mother, a daughter. That's why I'm here with you today, to share a glimpse of my endeavors, my homeland, and why Sudan necessitates your solidarity and compassion.

I thank my father for the person that I am. His passing in 1993 completely and profoundly impacted me. He was a man of culture, spoke many languages, my idol, my friend, and he believed in women. He said that when men befriend women, they become better men, and I agree with him. Don't you? Honoring his legacy, I was provided a scholarship to Ahfad University, which is a private, nonprofit educational institution

in Sudan that empowers women. Its philosophy, to engage academic achievement with civic engagement, made us, as graduates, much more attached to our nation's problems, challenges, and even opportunities.

At Ahfad, I was a top student, and on the other hand, I was one of the top actresses in the drama club. I love imitating people and making people laugh. During the revolution, I used to say that if the revolution succeeded, I might do some kind of drama work entertaining people, because my work was always difficult. But they always say that revolutions never give you that kind of satisfaction, there is always something missing at the end, lurking behind and depriving you of the feeling of victory.

Anyway, I have never given up on Sudan. It is a great country, very beautiful, yet sometimes people, including Sudanese people, never envision Sudan beyond poverty, conflict, and lack of resources. They don't see the lush greenery, the purple mountains, and the red forests. That's why I dedicated my life to this country.

I started my career working with War Child Holland, providing psychosocial support using art as a medium. This knowledge became invaluable when the Darfur conflict broke out, and we worked with UNICEF to try and teach social workers and service providers working with children impacted by the fresh war and conflict at that time.

In the stunning region of Darfur, in comparison to its beauty, you hear many tales about atrocities, sexual violence, and genocide. When I got back to Khartoum, no one was talking about anything happening there. That's when I got vicarious trauma. Then I returned to Darfur and was embraced by the same women who had faced these atrocities, the same resilient, brave women who supported me and gradually healed my spirit. That's why I always believe Sudanese people deserve better; they deserve peace, justice, and freedom. This inspired us all, particularly women and girls, to participate in the 2019 protests, demonstrations, and revolution against the dictatorship of Omar al-Bashir. We had this kind of quality participation as women; it's not about quantity. We used our own skills as women to

overcome failures and open new chapters of success and creativity.

You see us protest with this attire (pointing to the Sudanese costume she is wearing- a Sudanese tobe), could you imagine, six years ago I could run with those heels? I doubt if I can do it now. But all this was to disguise myself as just an innocent housewife going to the market so no one would suspect.

On the 6th of April 2019, we made this big march, and we occupied the military headquarters. We made the sit-in. We were very happy at that time. And then, on the 3rd of June, the sit-in ended with a massacre, a heinous act of killing everybody. I survived the whole ordeal, as I was among the last to be evacuated from there. I witnessed all these kinds of things, and I always carry this guilt for surviving.

The aftermath of the massacre was all about recounting stories, testimonies, journalists — everybody wanted to know what happened. We were also providing psychosocial support and mental health care to people who survived the massacre, a survivor providing for another survivor, alongside my colleagues from Ahfad Trauma Center. I was focusing on survivors of sexual assault; I was never given the easy job. Then there was a political agreement, everybody was happy, and there was a transitional government. I was appointed by that government to head the Unit for Combating Violence Against Women. I reluctantly accepted, driven by survivor's guilt and the responsibility to honor the bloodshed, in an effort to create an entity affiliated to the state rather than the regime, because the regime will go, but the state will remain.

On April 14th, 2023, we woke up to war, a darkening in Sudan's history, reopening past wounds, déjà vu of the painful history of many conflicts in this country. And it is very important to say it's not merely two generals fighting overpower as it has been portrayed. You have to understand the narrative in this war: it's all about reshaping Sudan, changing the demographic setup of the country, moving populations so others can take their place, erasing every legacy of Sudan.

This war is financed by regional powers, with international actors who place their own interests above Sudanese lives.

The RSF are abusing the word “democracy” by saying they are bringing us democracy, by looting houses, killing people, killing people with disabilities by saying they are not useful to the community, raping women and children, destroying even the museums. Did you know that our Nubian heritage is being sold on the internet for thousands of dollars or less? They are poisoning genetics labs, destroying genetic banks of very rare plants, and using sexual violence as a weapon of war, because it’s cheap, silent, and effective. It leaves no visible wounds but creates generations of scars.

This war is about creating a new Sudan upon the bodies of people, women’s bodies as battlefields, and the destruction of civilian infrastructure, hospitals, schools, and houses. People’s savings are looted, and they say they want to save us and bring us democracy.

In Sudan, even in the worst times of dictatorship and oppression, we always had this spirit of uncontrollable freedom. They are doing all this under the pretense that they are fighting the Muslim Brotherhood, the same ones we already fought and defeated in the 2019 revolution.

I have always been on this fine line between being an activist and a civil servant. That’s why I have connections with people, NGOs, community-based protections, survivors, people in the diaspora, everybody. The demands from us are tedious, and the work is actually impossible. But we have been documenting conflict-related sexual violence and coordinating support for survivors.

We have seen incidents of women my age, who felt they were immune to any unwanted sexual encounters, being gang raped and left on the ground. Or women of 85 years old refusing support because they felt they were denied their right to be respected as grandmothers.

This work brought us many things, direct threats, smear campaigns, character assassination, and attacks on our personal and professional integrity. But all this goes away when you see the endurance of what Sudanese women and girls have been enduring.

These women want to be helpful; they want to actively do something for their communities and their families. They want to be happy and immaculate. They want to wear their best toubes (Sudanese traditional garment), decorate their hands with henna (Sudanese tattoo), wear their high heels, celebrate life, weddings, festivities, and have hope for the future.

Despite the heinous acts of sexual violence against them, their strength and endurance cannot be understood, it is beyond understanding, because they carry on protecting community cohesion in spite of everything they’ve been through. They don’t have the luxury of feeling depressed, angry, or even fearful, there is so much they want to do for their families and communities.

This war will end, but the women will need to rebuild. Give them small foundations, microfinance, and access to health, and they will do the rest.

Stop the silence and the compliance with that silence. Call things by their name, because today, I wake up to the sound of an alarm clock, but the people in Sudan wake up to the sound of war every day. Even my children are sleeping now in a war zone.

With all your privileges, with all your power, with all your connections, I ask you to stand with us. Don’t look away.

Sudanese women don’t need your sympathy; they need your empathy and understanding. They need to be appreciated, understood, and always remembered. And believe me, as I believe in them, they will do miracles, if ever miracles could happen.

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## Prevention and Promotion Interest Group

*Edited by Susana Helm, University of Hawai'i, Honolulu, HI*

**Prevention & Promotion IG Co-Chairs:** [Toshi Sasao](#), [Aomi Kuwayama](#), [Shizuka Yanagii](#), and [Susana Helm](#) (Interim column editor).

The Prevention & Promotion IG column of *The Community Psychologist* highlights P&P resources as well as the P&P work of community psychologist and allied professionals, including students and community members. Please email [Susana](#) if you would like to submit a brief report for this column or if you have resources we may list.

### **BRIEF REPORT from the 2025 SCRA Biennial at Michigan State University**

*Submitted by: Shizuka Yanagii, PP.IG co-chair.*



*Prevention & Promotion IG members at SCRA Biennial.*

At the [June 2025 SCRA Biennial Conference](#), the Prevention and Promotion Interest Group (PP.IG) held a vibrant gathering that brought together early-career scholars, practitioners, and senior members to explore how prevention and promotion efforts can inform—and be informed by—policy at multiple ecological levels. The session featured presentations from PP.IG co-chairs and members highlighting current challenges and opportunities related to teacher and faculty well-being in Japan and China, community-school collaboration, and the implementation gaps between national policy and local realities. These presentations sparked lively group discussions about how community psychologists can act as bridges between research, practice, and policy advocacy across diverse cultural contexts. In

addition to the presentations, the meeting provided an opportunity to revisit and revitalize the identity of PP.IG itself. After thoughtful discussion and a vote among participants, we collectively selected a new PP.IG logo that reflects the group's commitment to inclusivity, global dialogue, and multi-level systems thinking. The updated logo will be used in future PP.IG communications and events to visually represent our shared values and evolving vision.



## Student Issues

### **New Faces to Celebrate: Student Representative and 2025 Grantees**

*Edited by Michael Pandu Patria, Sanata Dharma University; Emmanuel-Sathya Gray, University of Cincinnati*

For this Fall issue, please join us in welcoming new faces to SCRA! First, we have a new student representative, Michael Pandu Patria, studying at Sanata Dharma University in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. We welcome him warmly to the two-year position, serving alongside Emmanuel-Sathya Gray (2nd year representative) on SCRA's executive committee. Pandu fills the vacancy left by Annalise Tolley's dynamic completion of her wonderful term. We will miss Annalise's dedication and strategic approach towards student representation, and look forward to the energy and spirit that Pandu brings!

We also celebrate six students whose thesis/dissertation work we are excited to support with our SCRA Student Research Grants. For our next issue, we will be looking for submissions on the theme *Courage and Fear in Oppressive Conditions: From Social Movements to Individual Acts of Resistance*. The soft deadline for the Student Issues column of the Winter issue is October 15th. If you have a paper/piece you would like to share, we strongly encourage you to submit it to [StudentReps@scra27.org](mailto:StudentReps@scra27.org) and feel free to check <https://scra27.org/who-we-are/students/publications/> for full details.

## Michal Pandu Patria: Student Representative Introduction

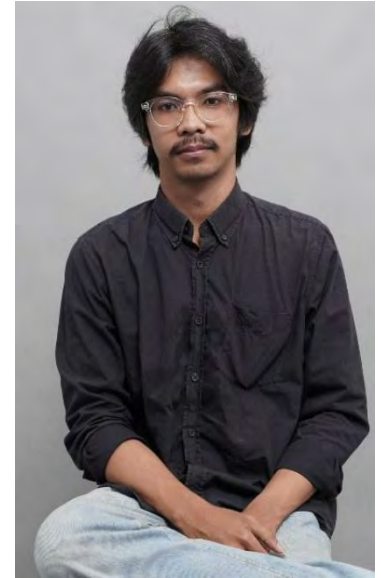
*Written by Michael Pandu Patria, Sanata Dharma University*

I am Michael Pandu Patria, also known as Pandu. I am a postgraduate student of Critical Psychology at Sanata Dharma University in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, and an alumnus of the university's undergraduate Psychology program. My encounter with critical psychology essentially began during the process of writing my undergraduate thesis. My thesis, titled "Identification and Separation: A Narration of Postmemory and Identity Formation on the Third Generation of '65 Tragedy Survivors," explored how an individual's sense of self is intertwined with specific socio-historical contexts, particularly in relation to a chapter of Indonesian history that has been obscured by the government. The socio-historical context I focused on was the mass killings and forced arrests of left-wing groups that occurred in 1965-1966. This period not only marks a historic genocide in Indonesia but also signifies the transition of power from President Sukarno's rule to Suharto's New Order.

My initial exposure to this historical context can be traced back to my high school years, when I encountered the discourse surrounding the Holocaust through a film. The film was "Freedom Writers," directed by Richard LaGravenese (2007) which tells the story of Erin Gruwell, an idealistic and passionate English teacher at Woodrow Wilson

High School in Long Beach, California, in 1994.

There, she faced the significant challenge of teaching Class 203, a group of students labeled as "unteachable." Her students, of various races and ethnicities, harbored mutual hatred stemming from gang trauma, poverty, and violence in their



lives outside of school. They lacked motivation for learning and were more concerned with survival than with education. Initially, Erin struggled to gain her students' attention and respect. However, upon realizing that their animosity was rooted in tragic personal experiences, she changed her teaching methods. She asked each student to write a daily journal about their lives, including the violence, loss, and fears they faced. Through this writing exercise, the students began to find their voices and realized they were not alone in their suffering. They built emotional bonds and gradually learned to respect one another, transforming their perspectives on the world and each other. Through Erin's perseverance, dedication, and sacrifice, she succeeded in turning a class full of hatred into a supportive "family" that achieved remarkable academic success.

One of the most impactful scenes for me in the film was when Erin's students visited the Holocaust museum and met with a Holocaust survivor. This experience prompted me to learn more about the Holocaust. In my search, I discovered that a similar mass killing had also occurred in Indonesia, yet it has never been officially acknowledged as part of the country's history, even to this day. Although my psychology studies provided very little historical context, my curiosity, disappointment, and a sense of anger drove me to explore the Indonesian mass killings further. I was compelled to question: Why is it necessary to sacrifice so many lives for the sake



of a nation's existence, especially when those sacrificed are fellow human beings? It was during this exploration that I found the spirit of critical psychology, which upholds the values of justice and humanity. Subsequently, I came to believe that the notion of science as a neutral discipline is no longer relevant. I now see that knowledge must take a side, particularly the side of those who are marginalized and oppressed in an unjust world. In my studies within the framework of critical psychology, I have learned that the idea of scientific neutrality has, in fact, often served as a justification to maintain the status quo and, by extension, perpetuate injustice.

### References

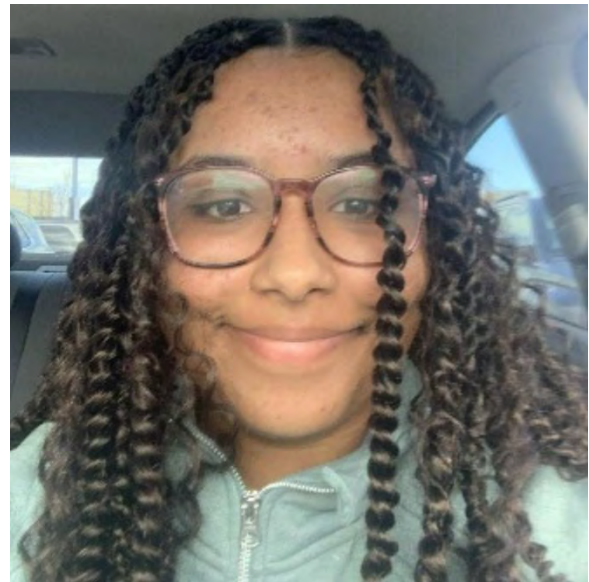
LaGravenese, R. (Director). (2007). *Freedom Writers* [Film]. Paramount Pictures.

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## 2025 SCRA Thesis/Dissertation Research Grantees

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Every year, SCRA student representatives award Thesis/Dissertation grants, generally in the amounts of \$500-\$1,000. This year we formed a review committee made up of seven students, allowing each proposal to be reviewed by two people. Those in the final running were further discussed collectively by the whole committee. We are pleased to announce the six student grantees for 2025! Descriptions are taken from student project summaries. For more information about the SCRA Student Research Grant please visit: <https://scra27.org/who-we-are/students/student-research-grant/>



**Adelaide Swanston, Wilfred Laurier University**  
*The Experience of Postpartum Depression for Black Women*

This project is an opportunity to bring attention to how being subjected to social systems historically based upon anti-Black racism and misogyny have impacted how Black women express and manage their postpartum depression.



**Fariha Hasan, University of Illinois - Chicago**  
*Navigating Recovery: The Role of Social Support Among Women of Color*

This research addresses a critical gap in the field by centering the lived experiences of women of color and challenging one-size-fits-all recovery



paradigms. It contributes to more inclusive, equity-oriented approaches to substance use recovery.



**Noelle Martin, Michigan State University**  
*Exploring Sibling Support for Trans and Nonbinary Youth*

These findings can be useful to future researchers seeking to understand family dynamics and the role of protective factors in trans and non-binary people's health and well-being. Furthermore, this work could pave the way for future interventions to promote healthy and affirming sibling relationships.



**Gueriana Thelomar, University of Miami**  
*Where Do We Go From Here? Black Women's Well-Being At PWIs in A Post-Covid-19 Context*

This study investigates how coping and resilience manifest for Black women attending predominantly white institutions (PWIs). This constructivist study centers on Black women and their narratives and is rooted in the Black feminist tradition of storytelling.



**Erin Vines, University of Florida**  
*Rebuilding Bonds: Family Communication and Parent-Child Connection During Reentry*

Rooted in community psychology principles of social justice, strengths-based approaches, and prevention, this research challenges adult-dominated narratives of reentry by amplifying youth voices. Findings will be used to inform youth-centered, strengths-based supports to promote thriving for families impacted by incarceration.



**Margaret Port, National Louis University**  
*Migration Factors and Wellbeing Among Venezuelan Migrants in Chicago*

The purpose of this study is to understand the impacts of the migration experience on the psychological wellbeing of Venezuelan migrants who recently arrived in Chicago, to know how to support the community and help them thrive in their new home.

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## SCRA News

*Edited by Dominique Thomas, Central New Mexico Community College*

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### **Congratulations to our new president-elect 2025-2026, David Lounsbury!**

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Here are some brief highlights of David's presidential vision

SCRA is well positioned to play an important role in mobilizing members in efforts to promote non-violent direct action and community-engaged research and for constructive political, social, and economic change.

SCRA can do so by building trusted partnerships with diverse community psychologists all over the world, and by clarifying individual and collective

roles that its members can play in restoring and strengthening a commitment to a pluralistic, multiracial representative democracy.

SCRA can target systemic issues in governance, electoral processes, and institutional accountability, but also support dissemination of evidence-based interventions and policies in peer-reviewed publications and other vetted academic and community educational sources. We can also explore ways to learn how to use AI and other information innovations to enhance civic engagement, community empowerment, and government responsiveness.

I would endeavor to support these aims, which align with SCRA's core vision and mission to advance community psychology and promote social justice through research, practice, and education. I would focus on guiding implementation of the Society's current strategic plan for 2025 through 2027, which emphasizes strengthening SCRA's impact on the field of community psychology research and practice, enhancing member engagement, and fostering inclusive and equitable community partnerships across the nation and the globe.

SCRA members, let's send David a warm welcome to the SCRA Executive Committee!

In community,  
Amber

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### **Strategic Plan Implementation Taskforce Updates**

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Hello, SCRA!

I am pleased to be writing to you with updates regarding the current Strategic Plan process. As many of you know, the most recent Strategic Plan spanned 2016 through 2018 with a focus on 5 strategic priorities—membership, educational programs, visibility, operations, and finance. Since then, these strategic priorities have continued to guide the operations and programs of SCRA; however, in 2022, an effort to renew SCRA's



strategic efforts emerged. As such, the Strategic Planning Committee was convened under then-President Dr. Yvette Flores. In collaboration with the Executive Committee over the course of 1.5 years, the Strategic Planning Committee recommended engaging with strategic planning consultants with experience working with non-profit member organizations. In May 2024, the Executive Committee approved this recommendation, resulting in IOTA Impact being recommended and approved as the Strategic Planning Consultant group in July 2024.

IOTA Impact led efforts to help SCRA through the Strategic Planning Committee best understand the non-profit member organization landscape, trends, and best practices as well as the perspectives of current and former SCRA members. IOTA Impact reviewed organizational documents and collected data through 2 workshops at the 2024 annual American Psychological Association convention in Seattle, United States, 37 interviews, 6 focus groups, and a survey. The interviews and focus groups aimed to engage different types of members including officers, executive committee members, members of councils, committees, and interest groups, student members, international members, members reconsidering their membership, and former members. The intention of the survey was to continue reaching current members and former members in order to assess perceptions, sentiments, and agreement on themes that had emerged throughout the process. IOTA Impact and the Strategic Planning Committee at the time had a goal of 300 total responses, which seems low but appropriate given the rapidly waning membership base. At the end of the survey period, we received 193 valid responses, representing 64.3% of our goal.

Through these data collection and member engagement activities, insights into the organization emerged which resulted in IOTA Impact recommending the following Strategic Plan:

**Strategic Plan:** Advancing toward a network-driven model

**Strategic Pillars and their Priorities:**

*Build:* Establish a vibrant community of changemakers through collaboration, digital platforms, partnerships, and outreach

- Build a strong, diverse community network
- Institutionalize anti-oppression and anti-racism practices

*Enable:* Empower changemakers by providing training, mentorship, and fostering collaboration

- Build capacity and empowerment
- Measure and amplify impact

*Scale:* Grow our impact by expanding engagement, securing funding, and sharing success stories

- Foster interdisciplinary and international collaborations
- Mobilize resources and achieve sustainability

Upon referral from the Strategic Planning Committee, the Executive Committee voted in November 2024 to adopt this recommended strategic plan and its pillars and priorities to be implemented over a period of 3 years. IOTA Impact had recommended strategic initiatives and key action items that supported the strategic pillars and their priorities; however, in order to allow for the implementation process to remain nimble and responsive to our membership and context, these items were not referred to the Executive Committee for approval. Instead, these recommended strategic initiatives and key action items have been used as reference material in the development of a project plan for the strategic plan implementation. Both the Recommended Strategic Plan and the Recommended Implementation Plan from IOTA Impact can be found on the SCRA Strategic Plan page: <https://scra27.org/strategic-plan-2025-2027/>.

In January 2025, the Executive Committee voted to establish the Strategic Plan Implementation (SPI) Taskforce to address the strategic plan's pillars and priorities. The SPI Taskforce is made up of a team for each of the Strategic Pillars (Build, Enable, and Scale), led by SCRA members serving in the role of 'Steward'. Members of SCRA are able to participate on these teams at the 'Partner' (active participation such as attends meetings, provides feedback and ideas, takes on and completes tasks, etc.) or 'Follow' (receives updates on a mailing list, may



occasionally provide feedback through email or forms when requested) levels. The form to sign-up to participate in the Taskforce at the Steward, Partner, or Follow levels can be found on the SCRA website: <https://scra27.org/strategic-plan-2025-2027/>. Although these Pillar Teams will be attending to Key Tasks in support of the Strategic Pillars and Priorities, any items requiring decisions will ultimately be brought to the Executive Committee for consideration. Additionally, even though some members were engaged during the development of the Strategic Plan by IOTA Impact, the Pillar Teams may reach out to members to get feedback, perspectives, and ideas throughout the implementation process.

In addition to the Pillar Teams, the SPI Taskforce also includes a Core Team, made up of a Chair, the Stewards of the Pillar Teams, and the current SCRA officers (President, Past President, President-Elect, Secretary, and Treasurer) and is supported by Amber Kelly, Executive Management Consultant. The Executive Committee also voted to appoint me, Aaron S. Baker Cervantes, as chair of the SPI Taskforce in their January 2025 meeting. Once the SPI Taskforce was established, I worked to develop a project plan based on the approved strategic plan and recommended implementation plan, which debuted at the SCRA Mid-Winter Meeting (MWM) in February 2025. Also, in February 2025, I worked to recruit and onboard Stewards for the Pillar Teams. Currently, Sharon Wasco and Leo Wilton serve as Stewards for the Build Pillar Team, Jack Vertovec serves as a Steward for the Enable Pillar Team with Annalise Tolley providing some significant support as a de facto Assistant Steward, and Patrizia Meringolo serves as a Steward for the Scale Pillar Team. We continue to recruit Stewards for the Enable and Scale Pillar Teams. In March 2025, the Stewards worked to get oriented to the project plan and begin meeting with their teams building on some initial work conducted at the MWM. The strategic plan implementation efforts officially launched April 1, 2025, with a planned completion of March 31, 2028. Launching the Pillar Teams was a critical step in this project as the Pillar Teams will be

handling the bulk of the key action items in support of the strategic plan.

I hope to improve communication about the strategic plan implementation as we continue moving forward. Admittedly, I struggled with balancing this work while also finishing out my one-year appointment as Secretary. As a result, less communication has happened about the SPI Taskforce and its progress, contributing to a sense of a lack of transparency about the strategic plan. Our aspirations are to engage in continuous practices throughout this project to instill and maintain a sense of transparency that hopefully motivates and inspires members to be engaged in the implementation process. Some of these efforts include updating the Strategic Plan page on the SCRA Website, creating a dashboard that provides data around the progress of the strategic plan's implementation (which is a work in progress as of the submission of this column), contributing quarterly to The Community Psychologist, meeting frequently and providing updates to the Executive Committee, and hosting periodic opportunities to engage online or in person. So far, we have hosted a virtual Town Hall in March 2025 and an in-person Town Hall at the 2025 Biennial Conference at Michigan State University in East Lansing, United States in June 2025.

Currently, we are in the second quarter of the strategic plan implementation. The Pillar Teams have been busy working on various strategic initiatives and key action items. The Build Pillar Team is examining how to further integrate anti-racism and anti-oppression into our organizational culture, structures, and policies, including looking at how SCRA manages developing rapid responses to various issues and concerns. The Enable Pillar Team is investigating network and member engagement platforms that can help bring members of SCRA together in a more dynamic and engaging way than the email listservs. This includes looking for technology solutions that are accessible in many different regional contexts and have the capacity for multiple languages. The Scale Pillar Team is exploring potential interdisciplinary partnerships and collaboration with individuals, organizations, communities, and institutions across the globe who

are doing work aligned with the values and principles of SCRA.

Momentum on these initiatives is steadily building. Each Pillar Team is working on two Strategic Priorities which each have two to three recommended Strategic Initiatives. We continue to recruit Partners for each of the Pillar Teams, so please consider joining us in this effort (see the Strategic Plan Implementation Engagement Form at <https://scra27.org/strategic-plan-2025-2027/>), so we can maximize the momentum of the implementation as much as possible. These are the updates we have so far for the Strategic Plan Implementation Taskforce, and hopefully, by the time this issue of The Community Psychologist is published, we will have already made significant progress. If you have any questions, comments, or ideas, feel free to contact me by email ([asbakercervantes@gmail.com](mailto:asbakercervantes@gmail.com)).

Until next time,  
Aaron S. Baker Cervantes  
Chair, Strategic Plan Implementation Taskforce



# MAPPING ANTI-PALESTINIAN DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND MISINFORMATION IN U.S. HIGHER EDUCATION

A FIVE-PART CAHE-AAUP LOCAL 6741 SERIES



REGISTER HERE



**10/27** 5:30-7:30PM ET

## **1. THE RIGHT-WING ATTACK ON HIGHER EDUCATION: PALESTINE AS CRUCIBLE**

Isaac Kamola, Heather Ferguson, Judith Butler, Lara Deeb, Sherene Seikaly

**11/06** 5:30-7:30PM ET

## **2. THE ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE: PALESTINE AND THE INTERSECTIONS OF RACE, "THE HATE FRAMEWORK," AND POWER**

Emmaia Gelman, Amira Jarmakani, Nora Lester Murad, Merrie Najimy, Anna Feder



**11/13** 1-3PM ET

## **3. THE ART OF DOUBLESPEAK DURING A GENOCIDE: HIGHER EDUCATION LAW AND POLICY SINCE OCTOBER 2023**

Jennifer Ruth, Maura Finkelstein, Meira Gold, Jonah Rubin, Donna Nevel



**11/17** 5:30-7:30PM ET

## **4. THE OBLIGATIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY IN RESPONSE TO GENOCIDE AND SCHOLASTICIDE**

Shahinaz Geneid, Maya Wind, Dylan Saba, MB



**12/03** 5:30-7:30PM ET

## **5. WHY PALESTINE IS A UNION ISSUE**

Bill Mullen, Michael Letwin, Sherena Razek, Jeff Schuhrke, Olivia Katbi



FALL 2025

Mapping Anti-Palestinian Discrimination, Harassment, and Misinformation in U.S. Higher Education is a five-part series of events that brings together educators, activists, and organizations representing them to fight back against the bad-faith misuse of the "antisemitism" accusation to stifle speech on Palestine in America's colleges and universities. The series is comprised of five webinars in October to December 2025 featuring experts in antisemitism, Zionism, Palestine, higher education, and domestic and international law. It seeks to critically dismantle the use of the "antisemitism" accusation for political purposes; to power-map the individuals and organizations responsible for its implementation in U.S. higher education; and to chart a path towards solidarity and resistance for responsible higher education workers, administrators, and organizations.



## Member Mondays

SCRA is excited to use our social media platforms to highlight and celebrate our members on Mondays!

Nominate yourself or another SCRA member!

<https://redcap.link/scramembermondays>



## 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](http://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 the TCP Editor at [TCP@scra27.org](mailto:TCP@scra27.org). Submission deadlines are:

- **February 15<sup>th</sup>** – Spring issue
- **May 15<sup>th</sup>** – Summer issue
- **August 15<sup>th</sup>** – Fall issue
- **November 15<sup>th</sup>** – 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.
- **Graphs & Tables:** These should be **converted and saved as pictures** in JPEG files. Please note where they should be placed in the article. Submit the image(s) as a separate file.

**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" paragraph indentation.
- Punctuation Spacing: Per APA guidelines, make sure that there is only one space after periods, question marks, etc.
- Do NOT include footnotes or endnotes.
- References: **Follow APA guidelines. These should also be justified to the left with a hanging indent of .25".**
- Headers/Footers: Do not use headers and footers.
- Long quotes: Follow APA guidelines for quoted materials.
- Please put your email information and an invitation to contact you into the article.

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