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Race and Social Justice Initiative Proposal
12/10/2018

<div align="center">Combatting Negative Stigma in Vulnerable Communities</div>

Abstract

Subconscious bias is one of the largest invisible obstacles to peace and prosperity. Various domains of activity and events happen as action to preexisting logics or principles from within respective organizations or institutions. These 'logics' provide not only entire social groups but also individuals with a set of assumptions, rules, and beliefs to situate themselves in the world and orientate themselves with the relationships they possess with those around them. This is what cements an individual cultural realm and provides solidification for collective memories and societal logics. From these larger philosophical ideals, one may get a sense of the dangers introduced to society from subconscious bias, the preconceived notion that an individual may implicitly harbor against different individuals or social group. This project will seek to acknowledge the implications of subconscious bias and negative stigma in its relation to vulnerable community. Specifically, this project aims to: A) explore the lived experiences of members in vulnerable communities stained by negative stigma and how said stigma can inhibit sustainable progress, and B) explore intersections of economic and social stability within a vulnerable community with physical security and safety considerations. I hypothesize that the findings of this project will reveal safety and security as a large concern. This may result in policy recommendations to change the way that our society, both locally and nationally, handle safety, security, law and order in vulnerable communities. These concepts will be explored through a series of three focus groups to include individuals living in a vulnerable community.

Statement of Need

Each of 10 participant will receive a $50 honorarium upon completion of participating in all three focus groups. In addition, $100 will be used to cover snacks and travel expenses for said focus groups.

Detailed Description

This will be a social science research project utilizing qualitative methodology focusing on the Chicora/Cherokee community in North Charleston, South Carolina. This community was chosen because I have had extensive experience in varying full-time capacities with Metanoia, an asset-based community development cooperation tasked with investing in neighborly assets to build leaders, establish quality housing and generate economic development in the Chicora/ Cherokee community. Participants will be self-selected through open-invitations sent to all participating parents of the Metanoia Youth Leadership Program. Furthermore, those parents will be encouraged to further distribute 3 invitations to community members who do not participate with Metanoia. During December and January, proposals will be submitted seeking approval by the Institutional Review Board. Towards the end of January, participants will be required to confirm their participation with a maximum of 10 participants. These 10 participants will meet once in January, February and March for a total of three focused group discussions hosted by Metanoia. The first focused group discussion will be oriented at identifying negative and positive changes they had experienced over the past years in Chicora, followed by a ranking exercise of the issues identified. This will provide the ability to get a glimpse of problems faced by specifically the Chicora/Cherokee community. The following focus group will evaluate how problems identified by participants may impact a communities economic, social and

environmental sustainability. The third focus group will reflect on these findings and brainstorm ways for participants to bring the information discovered into local discourse.

Envisioning Connections

The State of Racial Disparities in Charleston County, South Carolina 2000-2015 provides real empirical evidence that illustrates a very real pattern of police malpractice in North Charleston, SC. This research will attempt at providing objective evidence to present to the city, suggesting a restructuring of policing practices, specifically when dealing with marginalized and vulnerable communities. This will stem from findings of the focus groups. Ideally, over the course of all three sessions, participants will explore A) what experiences (positive and negative) residents face and how they interact, B) how interactions of these experiences affect vulnerabilities or ability to live in an extreme community, and C) what are implications for building or increasing economic or social stability and physical safety and security in a way that reduces vulnerabilities or extremities of said environment. Stemming from this discourse, recommendations may include imposing variations of policing or multicultural training to prepare officers to serve and protect communities from some of the identified issues presented by study participants. Without this necessary reevaluation, it is possible that police tasked with securing vulnerable communities may unintentional exacerbate said vulnerabilities.