

To: SSSP Board of Directors and the Budget, Finance, and Audit Committee

Cc: Elroi Windsor and Michele Koontz

From: Morena Tartari, PhD, Chair of the Transnational Initiatives Committee

Date: July 5, 2024

**Re: Report from the Transnational Initiatives Committee (TIC)**

TIC Members:

The following members comprised this year's Transnational Initiatives Committee (TIC):

- \*Morena Tartari, Northumbria University, UK, and University Babeş-Bolyai, Romania, Chair (2023-2024)
- \*Tani Nguyen, Van Lang University, Vietnam, Chair-Elect (2023-2024)
- \*Henry Parada, Ryerson University, Canada (2021-2024)
- Debadatta Chakraborty, University of Massachusetts Amherst (2023-2026)
- Jamella N. Gow, Bowdoin College (2023-2026)
- \*Francisco Longa, Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento (2023-2026)
- Elroi J. Windsor, University of West Georgia, Voting, Ex-Officio, Executive Officer (2023-2024)

\* Denotes Non-U.S.-based members

**Annual Meeting of the Transnational Initiatives Committee**

The TIC had its official Annual Meeting on Thursday, June 27<sup>th</sup>, before the SSSP Annual Meeting, as requested by the Board of Directors.

Throughout the year, we met 3 times online because our members lived or worked in distant time zones with a maximum of 13h difference.

**About the TIC**

According to the TIC's by-laws, the TIC will need a new Chair-Elect for 2023-2024, and replacements for members who will step down. These new TIC members shall be nominated by the President-Elect in consultation with the Committee on Committees and appointed by the Board of Directors.

We have provided the relevant indications from the by-laws below:

*The Transnational Initiatives Committee shall consist of a Chairperson, a Chairperson-elect, and four members, of whom at least two must be international members, each serving three-year staggered terms and a graduate student member. In addition to the appointed members, the Executive Officer shall serve as an ex officio member.*

*Following criteria stipulated in the by-laws governing standing committees, the Transnational Initiatives Committee shall be reconstituted each year with a turnover membership of at least one-third, and no member may serve on the same committee of the Society, whether by election or appointment, for more than three consecutive years.*

The 2024-25 Transnational Initiatives Committee shall consist of the following members:

- \*Tani Nguyen, Van Lang University, Vietnam, Chair (2024-2025)
- Jamella N. Gow, Bowdoin College, Chair Elect (2023-2026)
- Debadatta Chakraborty, University of Massachusetts Amherst (2023-2026)
- \*Francisco Longa, Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento (2023-2026)  
[New members for the 2024-25 TIC are still to be indicated by the Board]
- Elroi J. Windsor, University of West Georgia, Voting, Ex-Officio, Executive Officer (2024-2025)

\* Denotes Non-U.S.-based members

### **Goals achieved by TIC in 2023-24**

Most of the efforts of the committee during this year concentrated on organizing sessions and activities for the 2024 Annual Meeting and to give financial support to members based in the Global South to attend the 2024 Annual Meeting.

The committee did achieve three goals this year:

#### **Goal 1). Extended financial support for participants of the 2024 Annual Meeting**

TIC funding for travel expenses for scholars from the Global South, as well as economically disadvantaged countries and nation-states, and politically, economically, and culturally subjugated regions of all countries is available.

The committee received twelve requests, one of which was disqualified because coming from a student that should have applied for the Lee Student Support Fund.

The available funding of \$6,000 allowed the committee to fund the 11 requests with only partial funding for each applicant. Many of the applicants declined the funds because it did not cover all the expenses.

Before the deadline for the application for funding, the Committee received a request from an applicant about which countries were considered eligible as Global South countries by the Committee. This request was discussed by email by the Committee members who reached the decision that this aspect would need further discussion in a specific meeting. At that time there was no sufficient time to organize a meeting because the deadline for the applications was imminent. This aspect was then discussed in the TIC Annual Meeting and decided to include an Action Item on this topic in this Report.

In the same way, the criteria for the distribution of funding among the participants were discussed by email, then discussed in the Annual Meeting and it was decided to include an Action Item on this aspect in this Report.

Since the number of applications received this year, it seems fundamental that the fund of \$6,000 will remain intact for future funding under this program or could be expanded to better support scholars from the Global South.

The Committee considers an important aim for SSSP to provide sufficient funding to all the applicants and carefully consider all the barriers that exist for scholars in the Global South and other regions outside the US and Canada.

We hope our discussion and actions this year set a precedent for such considerations of future TIC members.

More information about TIC Support Funds at <https://www.sssp1.org/index.cfm/pageid/2469/>

## **Goal 2). Co-sponsorship of 3 sessions proposed for the 2024 Annual Meeting**

This year, the TIC organized three sessions for the 2024 Annual Meeting. One of them was then cancelled.

**Session #017:** Research Under Neoliberal Regimes: Peace, Human Rights, and Social Justice,

Co-sponsored with the Program Committee

Organized by Ligaya Lindio McGovern, Emeritus Professor of Sociology, Indiana University Kokomo

[canceled]

**Session #034:** Teaching Social Problems with a Transnational Perspective

Co-sponsored with the Teaching Social Problems Division

Organized by Jinsun Yang, University of Oregon and Morena Tartari, Babes-Bolyai University

**Session #066:** Doing Fieldwork in the Global South

Co-sponsored with the Program Committee Transnational Initiatives Committee

Organized by Debadatta Chakraborty, University of Massachusetts Amherst

Sessions #034 and #066 received enough papers.

A request from members was raised about the possibility for the TIC to organize sessions without co-sponsoring them with Divisions or the Program Committee and a specific Action Item will be indicated at the end of this report.

## **Goal 3). Discussing specific activities hosted by the TIC for the next year.**

Members explored SSSP internal resources to organize sessions and webinars for the 2023-2024. However, as the number of members participants in our meetings and in the

conversations by email was very low (we had three members that have never replied to an email or an invitation in a whole year), we had limited resources within the TIC to organize events at no cost. About this specific point of the members' non-responsiveness this Chair has raised a specific Action Item listed among other at the end of this Report.

Among the activities proposed for the next year, Jamella N. Gow proposed the organization of a webinar series on academic writing and Debadatta Chakraborty proposed the organization of a webinar on conducting fieldwork in the Global South. Members who were present at the meetings agreed with the fact that these activities could be organized for next year upon request for additional funding to the Board of Directors or funded by participants' fees.

The TIC discussed also how to continue the mentoring activities already proposed in the last years. However, since the last session of mentoring organized by the 2022-23 Chair was deserted, we decided to not invest energies in this specific activity, but to reach out to the SSSP Mentoring Program and offer our support for activities organized by them.

### **Recommendations – Action Items for the SSSP Board**

The work of this 2023-24 TI Committee is inspired by the experience, accumulated over the years, of the previous TI Committees and by the fruitful joint experience of the TIC and TVIC.

The discussion between the active members of this year Committee (Morena Tartari, Debadatta Chakraborty, Jamella N. Gow, and Elroi J. Windsor) and the observation and consideration of the different issues and requests raised by the SSSP members who applied for the TI Support Funds contributed to finalize the following Action Items.

#### **Action Item #1 – Global South countries and eligible applicants for the TI Support Funds**

Several issues were brought to the attention of the TIC by applicants for the TI funds. Among them, one concerns providing more clarity to the list of countries that can be considered as Global South countries. After a discussion of the pros and cons of the different categorizations, the TIC decided that a practical solution would be to adopt the ASA list of GS countries because many members attend at the same time the ASA meeting and offering different criteria would be confusing.

Therefore, we ask the Board of Directors to consider our request to offer a more detailed list of GS countries in the form for the application for the TI Support Funds and adopt the same list utilized by ASA.

## **Action Item #2 – Criteria to evaluate applications for the TI Support Funds**

Following this year experience, in which many awardees declined the grant due to insufficient funds, the TIC suggests to develop a more articulate strategy to evaluate the applications for the TI Support Funds starting from next year.

We ask the Board of Directors to indicate to add the request for additional details to the form for applicants by asking more details in term of career stage and use of funds. In particular, we ask to include the following questions:

What do you need to prioritize in terms of funding (i.e., the flight cost, the hotel cost, etc.)?

Please provide a short CV and explain how this funding would help you to support your career development.

Furthermore, we ask to introduce a point system that considers each of the response to the form. This point system should be drafted at the beginning of the TIC new mandate (September 2024) in order to be implemented in the next evaluation of applicants for the 2025 TIC Support Funds, and revised each year in September if necessary.

## **Action Item #3 – Actions to ensure an inclusive participation of applicants who are disadvantaged in terms of funds and visa process**

The experience of this Committee highlighted how many issues are met by TI Funds applicants who come from Global South countries in term of visa process even when they receive funds from us. A typical example of barriers concerns the fact that some countries require up to several months to process a visa application. When the applicant receives the grant, needs to book the hotel and the flight by anticipating these expenses but they do not have guarantees to be able to attend the Annual Meeting until they receive the visa approval. If the visa approval arrives after the Annual Meeting, they will not be able to attend the meeting, so they need to return the grant, but, at the same time, they lose all the money already anticipated to buy the flight ticket and to book the hotel.

The TIC aims to ensure inclusiveness and protect SSSP members from situations that would have a negative economic impact on their life because often they are already disadvantaged scholars. Therefore, we recommend allowing these applicants to participate virtually in the Annual Meeting when they can't join in person but have received the grant. They could participate with pre-recorded presentations or online synchronous presentations and have access to the session in which they should present their papers.

We recommend highlighting this option in the form for applicants with the following question: Do you prefer a virtual option to present your paper in case of visa delays? Moreover, we recommend anticipating the deadline for applications. This would allow to gain time useful for the visa application.

Moreover, we recommend funding at least their membership/registration if they cannot travel and ensure their online participation. For instance, this is the case of applicants from Iran who meet severe issues in getting the visa approved.

#### **Action Item #4 – TIC sessions at the Annual Meeting**

Over the years TIC Members have expressed interest in organizing sessions sponsored only by the TIC that currently can have sessions only if co-sponsored with other Divisions or the Program Committee.

This year we have met some issues in finding Divisions willing to co-sponsor our sessions for the simple reason that the time for sessions organization starts at the Annual Meeting while the first meeting of the TIC is usually in September/October when the deadline to submit session is already expired. This aspect was discussed also with the Program Committee Chair this year who suggested to raise a request to the Board. Having TIC sessions would allow discussing their organization before the Annual Meeting. Moreover, this would allow a better representation and visibility of the transnational approach to social problems.

Therefore, we recommend allowing at least two sessions sponsored only by the TIC for each Annual Meeting. Members already expressed ideas about sessions to organize for the next year (2025) Annual Meeting.

Moreover, once again, TIC members warmly recommend considering the implementation of virtual components at least in sessions organized or sponsored or co-sponsored by the TIC in order to allow a more inclusive participation of members from other countries and from the Global South who often can't have the possibility to come in person to the Annual Meeting.

#### **Action Item #5 – TIC members responsiveness and participation**

This Action Item is raised by the Chair. The Chair has been involved in the TIC and TVIC activities for several years, so she has witnessed the welcoming environment of the TIC, members participation, and active involvement.

The willingness to serve is an important value for the TIC members (and also for any role in SSSP) because without that value we can't make social change and safeguard SSSP activities.

This has been a particular year for the TIC in which half of the members have never participated in any meeting and never replied to any email. The TIC can't be based only on the energies of half of the members while registering a complete unresponsiveness from the other half of the members. We have waited for weeks for reply for members who have never replied about time sensitive issues and fundamental issues for TIC goals. The Chair also asked the Administrative Officer to send emails to these members in order to understand if the unresponsiveness was due to email spam filters. However, even the emails from the Administrative Officer have been ignored.

For this reason, the Chair, with the active members, warmly ask to consider removing from the TIC members who are not active or responsive for more than two months, and to replace them with members who are willing to serve. This replacement should be done over the year without expecting the end of the term.