# Liberation Psychology Network

# Discussion Paper:  Proposals for Developing the Network

This discussion paper sets out some issues and ideas for building our network under four headings:  *content, interchange, governance* and *resources*.

## 1.  Content

- Provide access to the key ideas and works of Latin American liberation psychology and kindred approaches.  This could include sharing English language works on the tradition and also potentially making available translations (although this requires significant work and dedication.  Network members with knowledge of Spanish and/or Portuguese would be a key bridging resource.
- Explore what Liberation Psychology means in contexts other than Latin America.
- Produce new work that addresses problems of exclusion, exploitation and oppression and the roles, complicit or resistant, of organised psychology in relation to oppression, producing a new kind of critical psychology.
- Develop strategies for sharing liberation psychology with people who resist its insights and practices, so we can be part of a social project that makes the insights of liberation psychology part of the taken for granted assumptions of psychological work and of sociopolitical action.
- Make the ideas of liberation psychology a resource for social movements working for principled social, economic and political transformation and resisting the dominant system (currently capitalism in its neoliberal globalised version).

## 2.  Interchange

- Connect like minded workers, who are often isolated, to share their understandings and practical experience of liberatory approaches in psychology and to offer mutual support.
- Offer a bridge between workers in Latin America and other regions of the global South, with the aim of it being sustained in the longer term without any mediation from Western Europe and North America.
- Collectively Building connections with other networks in psychology and outside of psychology for a better world.
- The network has a web portal with facilities for member blogs, groups and fora, collective writing.  There is an email list (hosted on googlegroups – registration is possible from http://libpsy.org).

- Our first events and meetings are at the International Congress of Community Psychology, Barcelona, June 2012. We can also organise fringe events, symposia or workshops at other events.
- As an international network there are significant barriers to meting face to face. We therefore need to develop virtual ways of meeting and conferring:-
  - -**Social networking integration**. If people can keep track of what's happening here through facebook, linkedin or twitter, we won't be another login for them to keep track of and another interface to learn. The key question here is do we wantto persevere with the networking options on libpsy.org or do we use one of these other social networking tools.
  - **Teleconferences** using *Voice Over Internet* (e.g. skype or googletalk). These could be conducted say monthly with a network member leading discussion on a particular topic.
  - Alternatively these could be conducted through *instant messaging*.
  - For both the above our differing time-zones would be an obstacle, but not an insuperable one.
  - **Making a master database of liberation psychology citations** would help with the fragmentation and repetitiveness of the discourse along with drawing attention to libpsy.org. We could do this using the Zotero integration wordpress module (Zotero is an open-source reference manager – a bit like Endnote but free). Note that there is already a page on the blog with some key links and Mary Watkins has offered to make her bibliography available.
  - A **journal on liberation psychology**. It doesn't take much to do a basic journal, then we can develop it further as the network grows. People are always looking for somewhere to publish. There should be quality standards on the content (and we would need to consider how to do this in a way consistent with the values of liberation psychology – the peer-reviewed model does not always work well with this kind of content).
  - **Maintain regular postings to the blog and mailing list** to build commitment and regular commentary – but there has to be worthwhile content.
  - **Connection to community partners**. We want them in the discourse more, so how do we plug them in to libpsy.org? Greg Pool says he has considered "starting a blog for teaching "psychology for social movements" through the Seattle Free School. I'll move that up on the to do list if people say they want to see it happen. That and things like it-resources for activist groups-could get the network moving".
  - Encourage people to **meet and connect off-line** – the social networking dimension of the network is meant to facilitate this but so far people have been slow to take this up.

➢ Try **thinking of libpsy.org first** when sharing things with colleagues with a similar outlook!


## 3. Governance

So far most of the work on the network has been done by one person. That's OK in that things happen when someone assumes responsibility but it is important to ensure succession (I might not be around for ever!), and ensure that the content and style of the network is consistent with the ideals of liberation psychology. This latter question implies some kind of governance arrangements.

- Governance should be facilitative and not something to get in the way of doing and sharing things.
- Governance should involve stakeholders from across the world.
- Governance should be based on a basic set of shared and agreed principles.

I suggest we do some further work on this, drafting a proposal for implementation over the rest of 2012.


## 4. Resources

### Money

I have so far paid for the website (domain registration for 2 years) myself. Everything else has been free / open-source except for the banner produced for Barcelona. I am not seeking reimbursement for anything spent to date but if the network is to become more ambitious there will be some costs and we will need a simple way of contributing. Given the lack of formal structure and the international spread of participants I suggest we keep this to a simple way of collecting donations electronically with accounts available to registered network members.

### Time

Time to build, manage and monitor the network so far has been provided by Mark Burton and Greg Pool. This has been manageable so far. If the network is to grow then additional people will be needed (for example to help with an open-access journal or to arrange virtual conferences). There are also the points about resilience and governance to bear in mind – the network should not be dependant on one or two people.

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