



To the AERA ESRP Committee,

I write to you from Prism Youth Community. Prism is a youth-led inclusive social group for youth celebrating all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions. Any person between 12 and 20 years old is welcome to join. We host two weekly meetings, many special events and field trips, and have a youth leadership council and four youth-led committees.

One such committee is the Education and Training Committee (E&T). E&T comprises of 10 youth who create and deliver cultural competency training – in particular with regard to sexual and gender diversity that affects youth’s education and daily lives – to local youth-serving professionals, including teachers, counselors, therapists, and health professionals.

Prism is program under Bloomington PRIDE, which is a non-profit organization (501c3) funded through individual and company donations, grants, and profits from a yearly film festival and pride festival.

Prism is seeking funding for research experience and expertise because our youth have begun to focus on improving these trainings and expanding their potential audience. Prism E&T currently educates youth-serving professionals about LGBTQ+ youth and their experiences in education. These presentations are entirely youth-created and delivered, which we believe makes them particularly effective and unusual educational experiences for attendees. At these presentations, there has been increased request for resources regarding race, class, intersectionality, homelessness, and how educators can think about particular subgroups of queer youth. However, our youth prefer not to speak on behalf of subgroups to which they do not belong, so they are particularly cautious about addressing issues that affect the queer youth community at large but have not affected our particular youth directly. These issues include foster care, homelessness, poverty, queer youth of color, undocumented queer youth, etc.

Prism is hoping to leverage the experience of educational research experts to help us think through how we might best fill a community demand for training around these topics while fairly representing the experiences of a diversity of youth. In particular, we hope to (a) learn how to reach out to underrepresented queer youth, (b) conduct research in the form of interviews and focus groups that will allow us to understand their experiences and (c) consider how to create resources that address these youth’s experiences and needs fairly while critically evaluating and considering what it means to speak “on behalf” of others’ experiences. For all of these steps, we believe educational researchers will be very helpful. They can help us identify participants by learning about how to sample and guide us in how we could understand their experiences.

Furthermore, their expertise on ethics in research is critical for helping us create these resources that our community is looking for but have yet to be created.

Our youth in general have gotten to know Barbara and Suraj well and we think the funds provided here will keep our youth empowered in the research process and help educate others while educating ourselves. We would really benefit from their guidance.

Thank you for considering our application!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'LI' or a stylized 'Laura'.

Laura Ingram
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