2024

A Charter for Co-Production Through an Anti-Racist Lens

The 'Three-Legged RACE' Approach

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"Co-production is about building trust [and] working together... that kind of three-legged race approach. We literally have to move together..."

Collaborator from the visioning sessions

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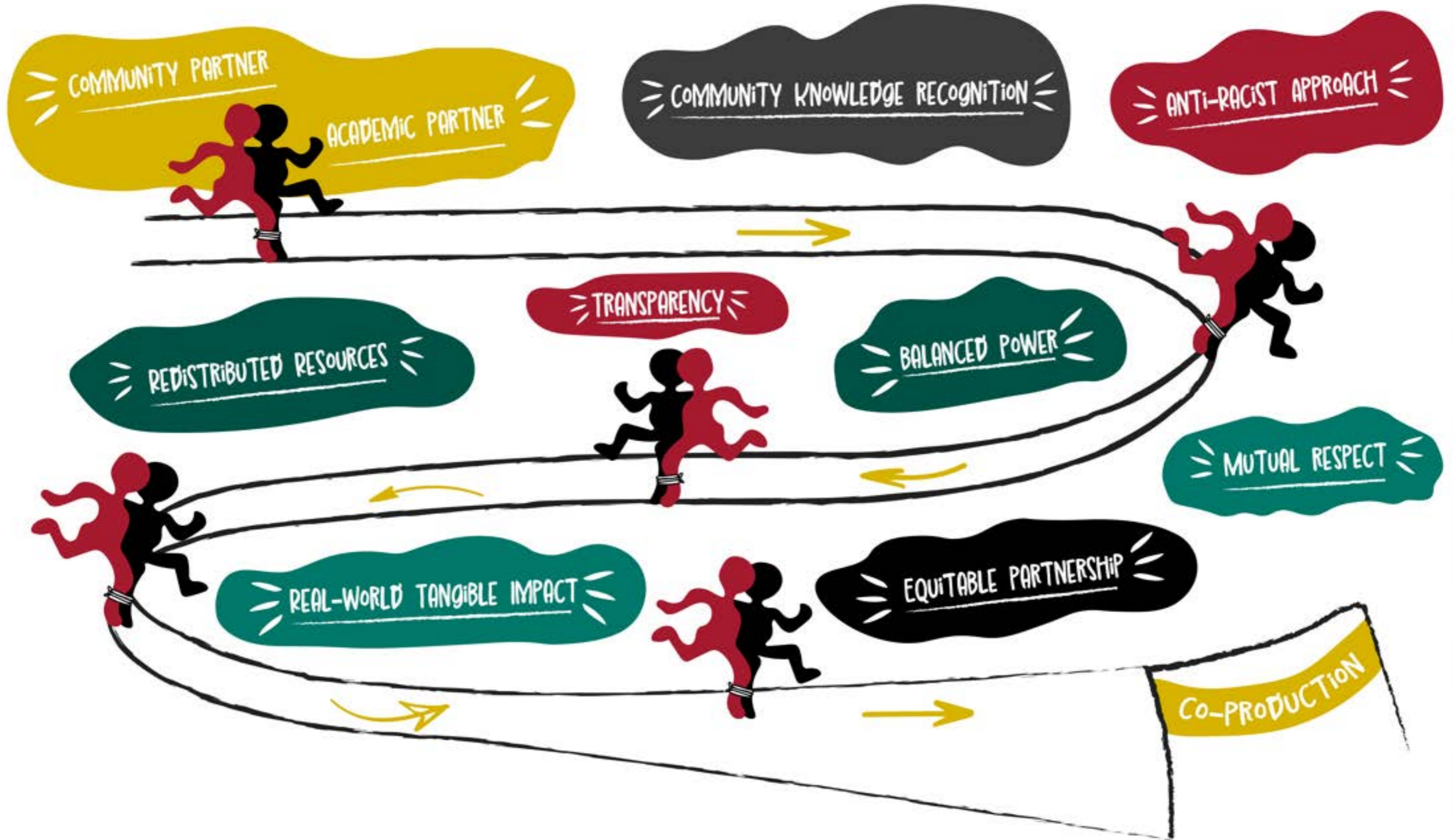
Terminology Disclaimer

We have moved away from the acronym "B.A.M.E." in early 2020 as communities across the South West and nationally deemed it inadequate and limiting in identifying the variety of identities and cultures facing racial discrimination. Therefore, you may only find BME or BAME present in this report where it is an integral part of a direct quote which we do not have permission to edit or change.

This report will be using 'Black and Minoritised' or 'racially minoritised' people as a synonym to 'people who are racialised as a non-white minority in the UK society' and therefore it can refer to people from African, Asian, and Middle Eastern and a multitude of other backgrounds, heritage and/or descents, including mixed-race individuals.

BSWN is also committed to using specific terminology for each group whenever possible. However, please understand that individuals have the freedom to request for all identifiable information to be removed from the report and select the highest level of anonymity. Within a limited sample, any demographic information – including ethnicity – can be considered identifiable information.

In this report, we will also be utilising 'Global South academics' to refer to Black and Minoritised scholars who are not from predominantly white Western academic institutions and/or countries. This term is widely utilised in academic contexts to highlight the unequal distribution of socio-economic and political power in research-production across the globe. We acknowledge this term may not be the most appropriate and/or accurate to define all geographical contexts where various groups of scholars are subject to racial discrimination at international level.

Please understand that the terminology and data capturing discussions are always evolving and there is currently no fixed term accepted equally by all communities who experience racial discrimination. BSWN will keep engaging with the discussion led by communities and operate to ensure our terminology and data-capturing methodology is developed as the discussion evolves.

INTRODUCTION: An Exercise in Addressing Power Imbalances

Context: The Research Action Coalition for Race Equality

> *"Nothing about us, without us."*
>
> *- Collaborator on the Charter*

On the 8th of July 2021, the Research Action Coalition for Race Equality (hereby RACE) invited prominent community representatives, academics, and other relevant stakeholders to its launch night. One overarching message persevered among the various discussions: co-production – as a research practice – must be re-evaluated, reformed, and reframed through an anti-racist equitable lens.

From sharing personal experiences to critically analysing existing approaches, all attendees of the RACE launch contributed from their own diverse perspectives to express dissatisfaction with the current systemic trends of academic research interactions with Black and Minoritised communities. In fact, the invitees agreed that these interactions frequently manifest as extractive in nature and result in an unequal distribution of benefits stemming from the research outcomes, where members of communities are consistently on the losing end.

On that day, RACE was formally born as an equal partnership between Black South West Network (hereby BSWN) and the University of Bristol to precisely address these concerns in a manner that is informed specifically by anti-racist and equitable co-production practices.

After building a 10+ years long partnership and establishing a common objective towards racial equity, BSWN and the University of Bristol came together to formalise this alignment in the formation of RACE, intended to be a bridge between community members/organisations with interest in actively engaging in research and the formal academic ecosystem, where research-production has historically been located.

This intention of meaningfully connect Black and Minoritised communities' experiences and voices with the formal knowledge-production ecosystem through an anti-racist equitable lens has informed the sub-objectives of RACE. These have included, whilst not being limited, to improving communities' access to racial justice data, uplifting alternative perspectives and community-based forms of knowledge, and ensuring practical learning and reflexivity of collaborative equitable practices.

Among the various notable achievements that have been made possible by the RACE partnership, we find this Charter.

Who are the key Partners in 'RACE'?

With its 19 years of experience as a leading racial justice community organisation in the South West of England, BSWN has built an extensive portfolio of anti-racist solutions to drive racial equity in the United Kingdom's societal dimensions of research, policy, innovation, socioeconomics, housing, and health, through a meaningful community-led approach.

On the academic side, the University of Bristol is not only a world-leading university in innovative research approaches, but it also houses the Brigstow Institute, i.e., a 'hub pioneering collaborative investigations and nurturing vibrant research communities.'[1]

Methodology: The Charter Co-production Process

Funded by the Brigstow Institute, the process of creating the Charter was in itself an example of equitable co-production. Two community researchers were funded by the University of Bristol and based at the BSWN offices to undertake desk research and primary data collection in the form of collaborative visioning sessions. The researchers received guidance and their work was overseen by both the community partner and the academic partner with an equal level of power shared between the two parties.

The Charter came after the completion of multiple RACE projects with the objective to collate all the knowledge built up until that point around effective co-production and anti-racist equitable practices. It was agreed by the RACE partners that the establishment of such practices would require a uniformly agreed-upon standard that would be enshrined within the Charter to ensure external dissemination of learning and provide a toolkit for any stakeholder interested in equitable, anti-racist research co-production with Black and Minoritised community organisations and individuals.

The starting point for primary data collection was the RACE Launch Night recording; from which the research team extrapolated three primary themes that seemingly recurred more often than any other: Power, Truth, and Authority. These recurring themes seemed to vindicate the previous desk-based analysis of secondary sources. Oliver, Kothari and Mays[2] refer to co-production as being "a significant shift of power from researchers or decision-makers to service users, implying deeply embedded collaborative practices." Moreover, Howard and Thomas-Hughes similarly recognise that contemporary academic literature finds transparency (which the RACE researchers termed as 'truth') to be an essential aspect of good-quality co-produced research[3].

Subsequently, the RACE team used the recurring themes in the literature review and in the original RACE Launch discussion to inform a number of visioning sessions with the aim to expand on the conceptual themes to develop a practical framework and eventually a toolkit. These visioning Sessions brought together key community representatives from a wide range of Black and Minoritised groups, both local community researchers and Global South academics, and community sector activists as equal Collaborators in a neutral and safe space.

Having considered the fluid nature of the topics, the RACE researchers used a semi-structured format, whereby the Collaborators were encouraged to lead the discussion and follow the natural flow of spontaneously emerging themes, rather than a previously set direction given by the appointed researchers. The work of the RACE community researchers was restricted to simply facilitating open conversations, rather than taking a direct lead in the process.

Collaborators to the Charter were invited (and encouraged) to actively read through the Charter initial draft and make comments in line with the principles of this equitable and collaborative partnership. These changes were then reviewed by the RACE team and integrated into the Charter accordingly. In this sense, the co-production approach was implemented from the beginning of the project up until the very end. In fact, the wording 'Three-Legged Race approach' that titles this Charter refers to the collaborative effort required from all dimensions involved – ranging from formal academic partners who will need to step out of their comfort zone to include the community sector, who will in turn need to step up and claim their space within the research ecosystem. Such work comes to nought if either camp refuses to collaborate towards the shared goal of equitable anti-racist knowledge co-production.

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[1]Definition from the University of Bristol website: https://www.bristol.ac.uk/brigstow/.

[2]Kathryn Oliver, Anita Kothari and Nicholas Mays, 'The dark side of coproduction: do the costs outweigh the benefits for health research' (2019) 17 *Health Research Policy and Systems*, 3.

[3]Marilyn Howard and Helen Thomas-Hughes, 'Conceptualising quality in co-produced research' 21 Qualitative Research', 788.

Approach: Addressing Power Imbalances

It is a core objective of this Charter to provide a better understanding of power imbalances present within mainstream research dynamics and illustrate how these negatively affect Black and Minoritised community organisations and individuals' engagement in research.

1. In order to achieve this, we need first and foremost collective recognition that these power dynamics work at different levels: individually – for example between a 'researcher' and a 'participant'; at organisational level – between smaller and often less resourced community organisations and bigger more powerful academic institutions; and even at international level, e.g., between Global South scholars and Global North academics.
2. Furthermore, we need recognition that these power dynamics are located within specific socio-economic and political contexts, hence they are strictly intertwined with other societal manifestations of power, such as racial discrimination, class discrimination, gender discrimination and so on.
3. Finally, we need recognition of the direct consequences of these power imbalances, such as the limitation of Black and Minoritised communities' autonomy during research engagement and the consequent impact on research integrity.

These points will be explored more in-depth in the later sections of this Charter, where evidence of power imbalances manifesting in practice is provided.

Our exercise in addressing power imbalances in research starts at the very beginning with the selection of terminology that needs to reflect roles and responsibilities in an equitable anti-racist manner:

Collaborator: as previously mentioned, everyone who accepted the responsibility to be a co-author of this report has been acknowledged as an equal partner or better yet a 'Collaborator' in this co-produced project. With this choice of terminology, partners from the community sector and academic sectors, as well as individuals representing themselves (e.g., activists) are all located on the same level of responsibility and power.

Contributor: where an individual or an organisation does not want to accept the responsibility to be mentioned as a co-author in the final report but is still willing to contribute to the overall research project under a selected degree of anonymity, we move away from the widely utilised passive term 'participant' and prefer 'Contributor' to focus on the active role that even unnamed Contributors can play in a co-produced project. Contributors need to be reasonably compensated and acknowledged in all research outcomes according to their level of contribution and the degree of anonymity selected.

Community Researcher: whilst a widely established definition for 'Community Researchers' has not been agreed upon, in this Charter we refer to them as the bridge between the community space and the academic space. For example, on individual level a researcher might be considered a Community Researcher when their demographic characteristics reflect those of the community of interest for the research project (e.g., in this case Black and Minoritised communities). Alternatively, from an organisational standpoint, a researcher might be considered a Community Researcher when they are employed by a community organisation and defend the interests of the community sector, in particular the interests of the community of interest in the given project. It is also possible – and desirable - for these two characteristics to overlap, having a Community Researcher who is from the community of interest that is at the centre of the project's focus and also working within the community sector.

Academic Researcher from the Global South: it is also important to remember that power dynamics exist and work differently at an international level. For example, a renown academic from the Global South can experience discrimination and power imbalances when asked to contribute to the context of a white-led university. Black and Minoritised scholars that are based in Western academic institutions might also intentionally position themselves to defend Black and Minoritised communities' interests in research-production and face systemic discrimination and challenges due to the unequal nature of the ecosystem. These positions and experiences will be expanded on extensively in the following sections.
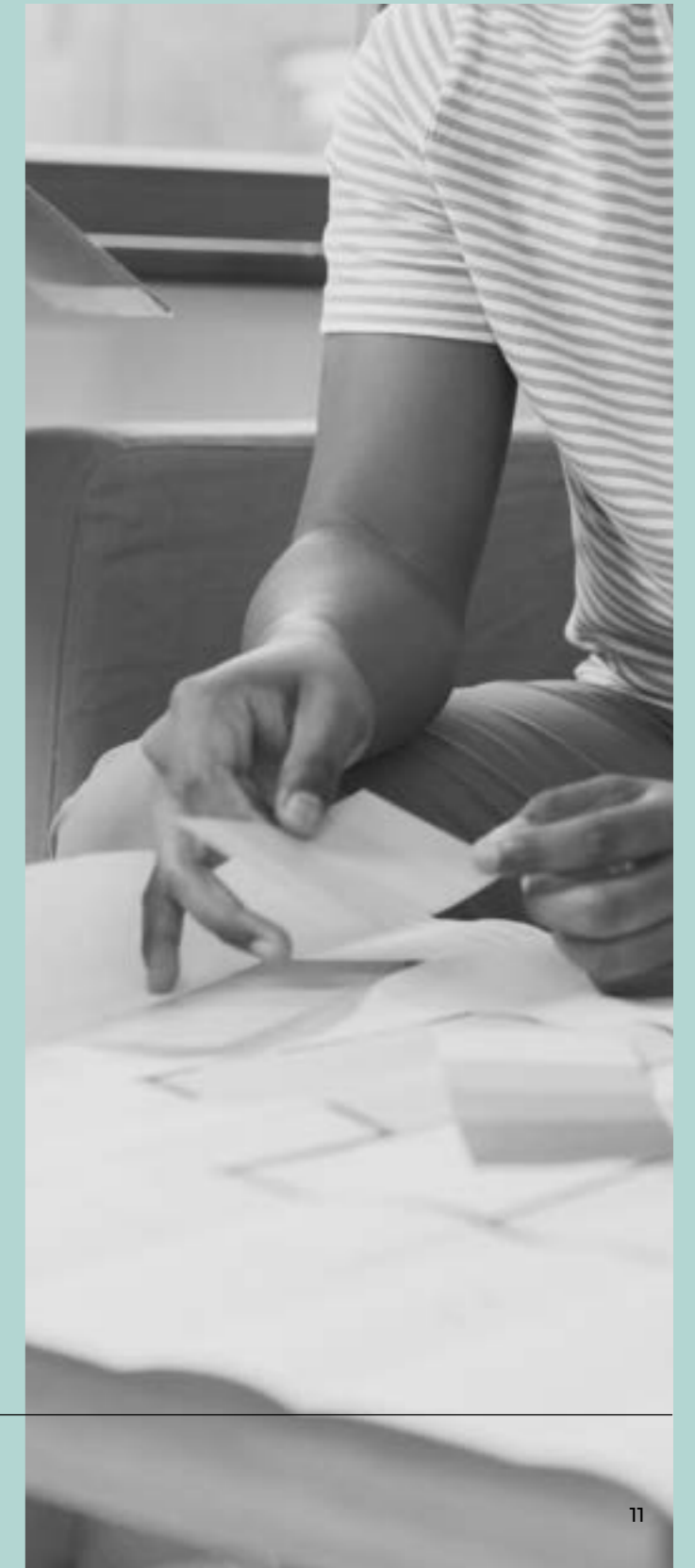
> *"And so we're talking about academia here now, but academia is an extension of the dominant culture … [it] is an expression of the extension of the dominant culture that we live in (Eurocentrism)."*
>
> *- Collaborator from the visioning sessions*

On Values: Encouraging Autonomy & Maintaining Research Integrity

The Charter is designed to provide a valuable opportunity to redress these imbalances through an equitable redistribution of power within and across the research process, via greater transparency and shifts in recognition of who holds formally and conventionally valued knowledge.

Underpinning the 'toolkit' of the Charter are values espoused by the Collaborators that are deemed necessary for anti-racist co-produced research; that is, values such as 'encouraging autonomy' and 'maintaining research integrity' which directly address the fundamental inequity within the research ecosystem.

First, the value of '**encouraging autonomy'** takes aim at pervasive issues of unequally distributed authority and resources within the research process.

During the third visioning session, Collaborators addressed the worldwide-recognised devaluing of Black and Minoritised communities' knowledge in formal academic spaces, simply due to the fact that it is not seen as 'credible' in the eyes of the

predominantly white-led academic institutions[4]. This fundamentally impacts the power of **authority** of Black and Minoritised researchers - particularly those who focus on the theories and approaches of the Global South - as well as feeding into the assumption that community knowledge is somehow 'inferior' to formal academic knowledge.

At organisational and institutional level, the value of 'encouraging autonomy' addresses the power-imbalances created by institutional and structural racism between Black and Minoritised led community organisations and formal academic institutions. This should commence with the recognition of the **imbalance of resources** (e.g., monetary, technical expertise, influence) often present between the two sectors. In the light of this, community organisations and community members seeking to fulfil a role in knowledge-production need to be provided with appropriate and equitable resources and influence to meaningfully contribute and – where appropriate – even lead the research process.

In other words, the conditions for meaningful Black and Minoritised autonomy in research-production need to be actively created, after the formal acknowledgement that the current research ecosystem is not a levelled playing field for Black and Minoritised academic researchers, community researchers and organisations.

The issue of authority or more widely, the hierarchical systems embedded in traditional academic institutions' research implementation is present throughout the entire process, starting from the choice of vocabulary. The preliminary literature review, as well as discussions amongst the Charter Collaborators, found that even the identification of an individual as a 'subject' to research establishes an implicit hierarchy in terms of power[5]. 'Encouraging autonomy' thus acts to make both the academic partner and the community partner aware of their equal standing within a co-produced research paradigm.
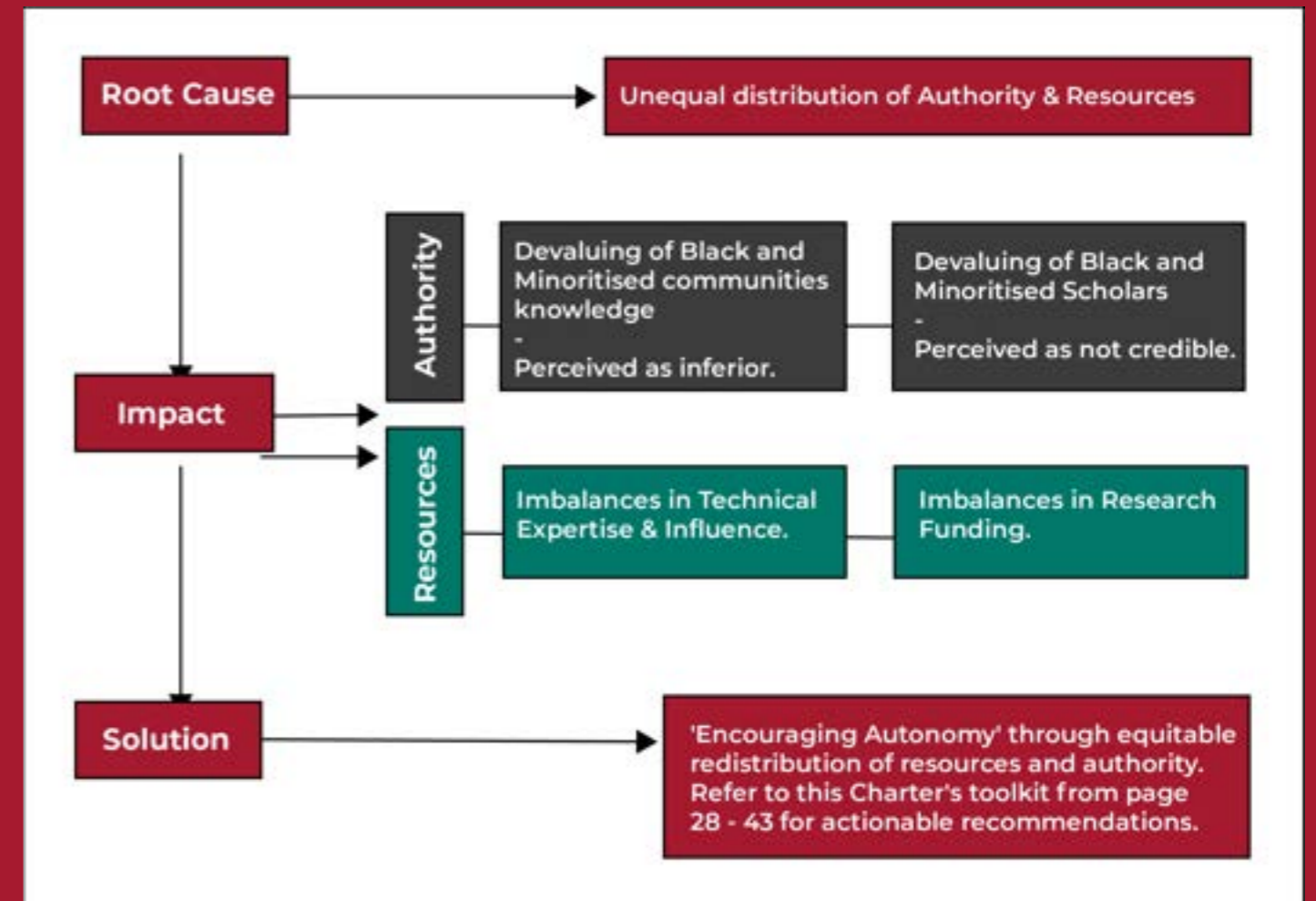

[4]Collins, Patricia Hill, Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment, (Hyman 1990).
[5]Ibid

The value of **'maintaining research integrity'** acts to address the issues surrounding transparency and truth within co-produced research.

Collaborators mentioned that **transparency** is required for community partners to effectively partake in the research process, from its incipiency to its publication. In order to 'maintain integrity', the academic partners are encouraged to provide all relevant information - such as funding origins, the chosen methodology and the type and number of research outputs emerging from the project – to community partners as well as adhere to the orthodox ethical guidelines provided by regulatory research bodies.

In fact, it was stressed by community partners that any research outputs should always be shared with all members of community who contributed to the research process before being published, to provide space for feedback and ensure that the message remains authentic to that of the communities' voices who originally contributed to building the raw data-pool.

Truth is also about respecting the original community-based source of knowledge that feeds into the research, by establishing an equitable system for accreditation where the academic partners explicitly acknowledge the contributions of Black and Minoritised organisations and community researchers in relation to the specific type of skillset and contribution they have provided (e.g., a community researcher who contributed to data collection, analysis and/or writing of papers should be included as an author, beyond simply being mentioned in the general acknowledgements section).

The values of transparency and truth also entail a movement towards greater accessibility within academic institutions. Collaborators of the RACE Visioning Sessions noted that transparency from researchers to the community can only go so far as the suitability and accessibility of such information.

Therefore, academic and community researchers should work to make sure that information provided to the community partners and their members is accessible. The same line of thought can be applied to the overall research outputs of co-produced projects. It is important that the knowledge produced in collaboration remains widely accessible for community members to utilise after the project has been concluded.

Ultimately the research process needs to be equally beneficial for both academic spaces and community spaces, and it needs to equally benefit academic partners and community partners. Part of the 'maintaining integrity' requirement of co-produced research is ensuring from inception that the research project is responding to community needs directly relevant and raised by community members. On this note, the added value that community partners can bring is in ensuring that the positive outcomes will reach and benefit community members at the end of the research project. Vice versa, the active involvement of community partners and researchers will bring value to the academic sphere by ensuring that the research produced is localised within a real-world socio-economic context and it is positioned to produce positive tangible impact on society.

Following these values, a unified 'toolkit' was created which pays closer attention to the practices and work that could be done by the academic partners and community partners, and by both parties in a collaborative fashion. The structure of the toolkit arose from the visioning sessions and, whilst it is underpinned by the above-mentioned principles, it looks at the application of those values across the entire co-production process in practice.
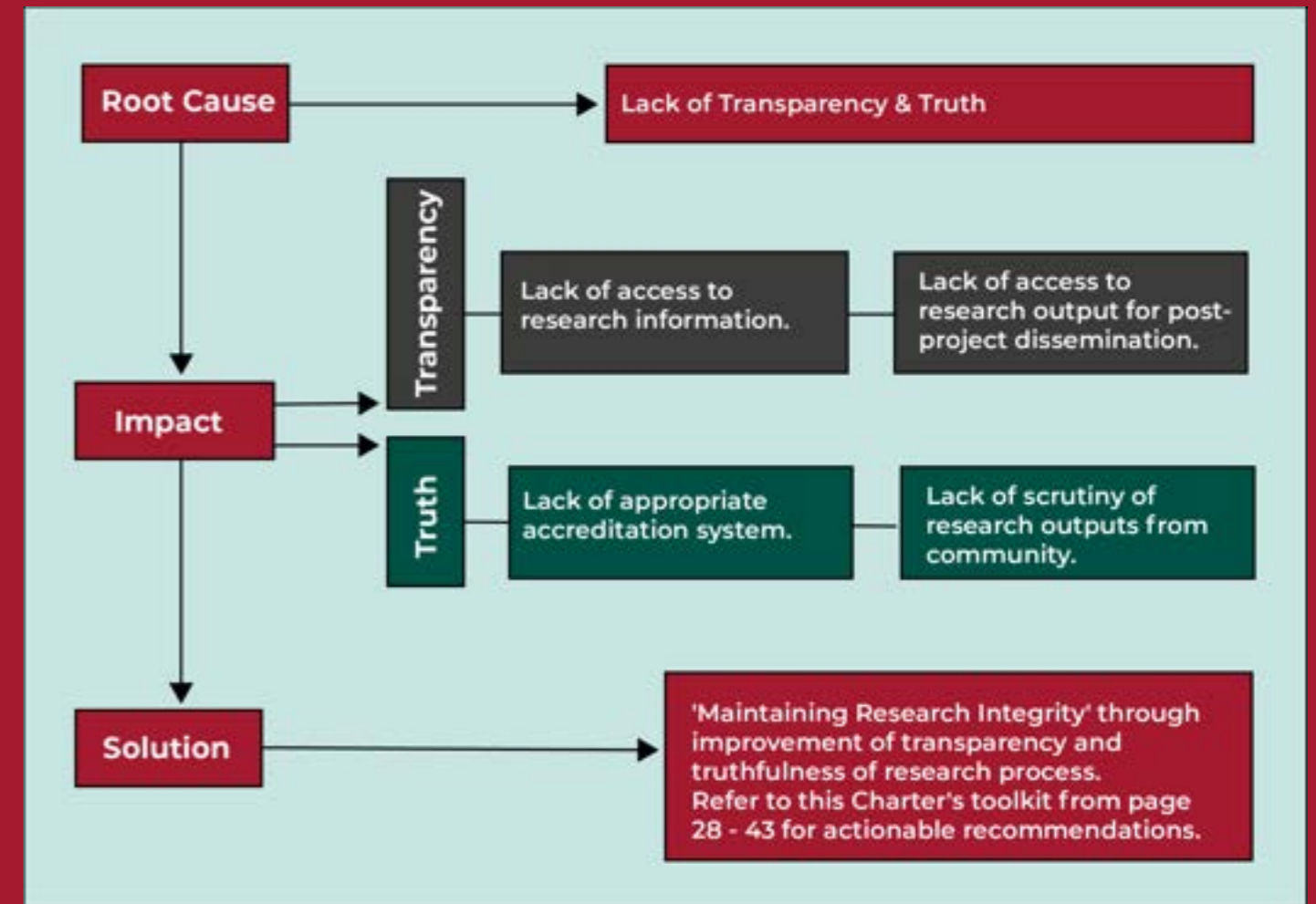
Primary Findings: Learnings from The Visioning Sessions

1. Co-productive research has become systemically extractive in nature. The Charter's Collaborators emphasise that co-produced research must be emancipatory, by prioritising the needs of the community before the professional advancement agenda of academic researchers and institutions.

2. Hierarchies of power are salient in co-produced research between research institutions and Black and Minoritised organisations and communities.

3. These hierarchies of power are also present in micro-interactions (e.g. passive labels such as 'subject' and 'participant').

4. Academic researchers often lack sufficient transparency in their projects, obscuring their objectives, information on funding and the number and types of research outcomes from the community members they are working with.

5. The research ecosystem is prone to hierarchising the types of knowledge – disregarding the merits of knowledge gained from lived experience.

6. Academic and community partnerships should be guided by the principles of transparency and integrity, as well as encouraging autonomous thought – free (as much as can be possible) from the pressure of power dynamics.

7. Due to the inaccessible format of academic knowledge, community partners often cannot advocate for their own interests as they may lack 'technical' research expertise – here intended as the type of expertise required to navigate the current mainstream academic framework (e.g., access research funding, write research proposals for traditional funders and stakeholders, etc.).

8. Whilst work must be done on the academic partner's side to ensure that they are consistently advocating for the interests of the community (e.g., in terms of rightful accreditation, compensation, and access and ownership of knowledge), community partners must also work towards building infrastructure that enable meaningful community engagement and ensure that community Collaborators and Contributors are not taken advantage of.

9. Co-produced research must emphasise working with, collaborating, and co-producing with each other. Resultantly, the toolkit aims to unify the work of the academic partners and the work of the community to achieve a genuine collaborative equitable anti-racist effort.

Power & Resources: Encouraging Autonomy within Black & Minoritised Communities

> *"Is there enough thinking going into the principles by which [the research] is operating? The consequences that it may have [on society]? What impact that it may have? What's in it for us [the community] as opposed to you [the academic institution]?"*
>
> *– Collaborator from the visioning sessions*

Researchers must prioritise the interests of Black and Minoritised communities in an effort to combat the systemic discrimination that works against their interests, which may include but are not limited to financial interests in the form of appropriate monetary compensation, cultural interests which align with the cultural norms and values of a community, religious interests which respect the religious and spiritual beliefs of members of a community, and interests that come with the recognition of contributions made by a given community and individuals.

The current landscape of collaborative research that focuses on Black and Minoritised communities is considered systemically extractive in nature, often leaving the same people who have been researched structurally and systemically disadvantaged. Research that focuses on the lived experience of Black and Minoritised communities should aim to work towards the interests of these communities – building such communities into their own institutions with an interest in the information they have already shared in the past.

Collaborators to this Charter have, however, noted that the onus to 'start' building towards a solution to the currently extractive and institutionally racist practices of mainstream Western academic research should be on the researchers themselves, as sufficient work on understanding the nature of institutional racism has already been conducted by those communities that have experienced (and are currently experiencing) it.

This, however, does not exclude the possibility of consulting Black and Minoritised communities on certain aspects of co-productive research. Indeed, certain aspects regarding culture and identity are, naturally, areas of knowledge a non-member researcher may not be privy to. As a result (and in order to prevent misrepresentation of the interests of a community), the researchers and community members are encouraged to collaborate towards the researchers' better understanding of a community.

The power inherent in a position of representing a community of people with varying values, beliefs, and opinions can come – if not exercised with caution – with a misuse of power. As such, community partners and community contributors should also ensure to be acting in the interests of the community at large, with the aim of protecting and advancing the interests of the community. Collaborators to this Charter paid close attention to the concept of 'gatekeeping' amongst particular communities with representatives.

> *"[Academic researchers] then... extract information that they can potentially use to build their careers, having their names under flashing lights. On the back of that, the same people they've researched remain structurally and systemically disadvantaged, marginalised, and disenfranchised. How are you going to change these dynamics?"*
>
> *– Collaborator from the visioning sessions*

Consolidating the power of representation amongst a select few individuals – with the consequences being more acute when the representatives are homogenous in their background – may risk the misuse of power for the benefit of a certain subset of people within the community in question, either by misrepresenting the interests of the community or limiting researchers' access to specific aspects of the community. Therefore, the Charter emphasised the value of collaboration within the community to select a group of representatives whose interests are aligned with all relevant members – not just a sub-group limited to certain ages, genders, or beliefs. This highlights the importance of heterogeneity in the process of co-production.

Such obstacles may be encountered in the process of encouraging autonomy within Black and Minoritised communities. However, this should not deter researchers and community partners from striving towards an anti-racist, decolonial, and equitable co-produced outcome.

In order to start working toward a truly equitable form of co-production – between the academic and the community sector – both parties must actively value the act of embedding the stories and experiences of Black and Minoritised individuals into spaces where they are seldom spoken by the Black and Minoritised nor heard by the institutions that claim to validate knowledge. 'To embed' the stories of Black and Minoritised communities involves more than the act of speaking and listening, but also entails the acknowledgement of such experiences as valuable and insightful.

It may also entail the archiving of these stories as a manner of preserving knowledge normally relegated to oral tradition and collective community memory. This is not to say that the archiving of information in written or recorded forms is the only valid form of presenting information, but that the knowledge of Black and Minoritised people deserves to be respectfully memorialised as much as traditional Western forms of knowledge are. These initiatives are to be community-led, community-centred, and community-controlled in their propagation – with researchers acting to support communities in accessing resources normally considered unattainable.

> *"There is a fine line between advocating for your community and protecting your community, versus misusing that position to have power within your community."*
>
> *– Collaborator from the visioning sessions*

The academic sector and its institutions must begin to value the process of learning the histories, cultural traditions, and underpinning ideologies that accompany a given community. The Collaborators to this Charter encourage researchers to endeavour with this process of substantial learning before they seek to engage with Black and Minoritised communities. The Collaborators have expressed discontent with the current climate of formal research, particularly the dangers of being 'boxed in' to discrete categories of what is considered 'proper research' and 'credible data'.

> *"This is something that has been divorced from the African heritage community's understanding of dealing with us and us dealing with ourselves. Because it's divorced from history, culture, and ideology. We're kind of boxed into this way of solving our problems, which is not actually defined by us."*
>
> *– Collaborator from the visioning sessions*

In being boxed in, one's worldview is limited to a select few methodologies, epistemologies, and research paradigms that effectively disregard the long-standing intellectual traditions of Black and Minoritised communities. A superficial understanding of a community's history and culture may also lead to certain communities' collective identities and interests becoming misrepresented, reconfigured, and filtered through a specifically white and Eurocentric perspective. In misrepresenting the communities' perspectives (and homogenising the communities), the researcher may engage in harmful stereotyping predicated on racist ideals that could lead to

research conclusions that act contrary to the interests of Black and Minoritised communities. This Charter emphasises the value of engaging in a substantive learning process that equips the researcher with the knowledge to respectfully engage with the lived experiences of Black and Minoritised communities – with the particular goal of putting the interests of that community first.

The Collaborators to this Charter have also considered the perspectives of Black and Minoritised researchers who often engage in balancing adhering to and breaking away from Western academic traditions. From the perspectives of Collaborators who are members of global Black and Minoritised diasporas, working within a predominantly Eurocentric intellectual paradigm holds the risk of universalising Western academic traditions and forgoing the importance of scholarship sourced from their communities.

Collaborators to this Charter who, in their own personal capacity, act as professional researchers have noted the challenge that comes with being a Black and Minoritised academic:

> *"It's hard being a Black academic, right? At the same time, you're trying to do this kind of work that is 'foreign' to the academic space. It's like you're working against the current, but one needs to be committed to the cause. We sacrifice our lives and careers for the sake of co-production. There's a price to pay for things to change."*
>
> *– Collaborator from the visioning sessions*

Authority: Valuing the Perspectives and Knowledge of Black & Minoritised Communities

This Charter recognises that the contemporary academic milieu has practiced a tradition of devaluing the knowledge and perspectives of the Black and Minoritised communities that they seek to interact with. In circumstances where Global North academic institutions recognise the utility of Black and Minoritised scholarship, they also display a tendency of attributing such a discovery as novel and pioneering – essentially erasing the substantial historical contributions made by those in Black and Minoritised communities.

Collaborators of this Charter have provided evidence that academic institutional racism not only leads to the de-prioritisation of Black, Minoritised and Indigenous perspectives and epistemologies, but also to the relegation of Black and Minoritised expertise as secondary to white expertise.

> **" You hear about so many of our scholars whose PhDs have come into question... how dare they? I remember being a student at university, having my own work challenged when I'm using the works of Chinua Achebe and Jawanza Kunjufu and others that [Western academics] have never heard of."**
>
> *– Collaborator from the visioning sessions*

These aforementioned factors play a larger role in the overall ineffective practice of

co-production, due in large part to the erasure of acts of intellectual collaboration from Global South researchers and Black and Minoritised communities. As a result, this Charter encourages research institutions to actively acknowledge and value the rich and storied tradition of scholarship and knowledge held by Black and Minoritised communities, with an overt emphasis on the rightful attribution of these forms of knowledge to Black and Minoritised people.

In doing so, Global North academics have a duty to inform themselves of existing forms of knowledge that have already been developed, shared, and utilised within the communities they seek to research in an effort to combat the notion that Black and Minoritised forms of knowledge are 'novel' to academic environments. These forms of knowledge must be learnt in their cultural and historical context.

On the other side, Black and Minoritised scholars and communities should:

> **" ...built our own things, write our own books, develop our own toolkits, develop our own methods, our own research processes. We need to raise the voices of Black researchers and Black academics in the existing academic discourse."**
>
> *– Collaborator from the visioning sessions*

This Charter also emphasises the importance of the practical implementation ('embedding') of Black and Minoritised knowledge into published academic scholarship in the Global North. Collaborators have noted that academic processes – namely the biased selection of sources in

literature reviews – act to replicate racial biases at the onset of research by solely relying on the scholarship of Eurocentric academics. The active inclusion of Black and Minoritised forms of knowledge aids in combating these pervasive and ubiquitous forms of institutional racism.

> **"They take advantage of us because they didn't ask themselves these difficult questions. They come to us with ideas, they ask us to get involved, to recruit people, and then they disappear. This is research tourism and leaves us with fatigue."**
>
> *– Collaborator from the visioning sessions*

This Charter encourages researchers to take it upon themselves to be informed of the breadth of existing knowledge originating from Black and Minoritised communities. Collaborators have noted that the onus of informing researchers is often placed on Black and Minoritised communities themselves.

Moreover, the process towards an anti-racist and equitable form of co-production involves an awareness on the part of researchers of the particular sensitivities that can accompany an over-reliance upon Black and Minoritised communities. Collaborators to this Charter have spoken collectively on the frequent practice of over-relying upon community partners to provide information and explanation with little to no compensation. This, as noted by community representatives that have collaborated in this Charter, can lead to research fatigue and disinterest in engaging with future research.

" I've spent decades telling people, if you want to understand certain things about people, you have to understand yourself, you've got to check yourself. You have got to understand the culture and climate you seek to develop your project within. Don't come to us and expect us to solve your problem."

– Collaborator from the visioning sessions

In the context of this Charter, 'research tourism' may be defined as extractive practices conducted by academic researchers – either knowingly or unknowingly – that benefit the researcher's own interests or that of the academic institution they work for whilst leaving little to no beneficial impact to the communities that the information is sourced from. 'Research fatigue' may be defined as mental, physical, or emotional exhaustion that stems from the extractive nature of current co-productive research practices such as deliberate, accidental, and repetitive misquotation, unfair compensation, media bombardment, and a lack of tangible outcomes that truly benefit the wellbeing of Black and Minoritised communities after the publication of research.

Truth & Transparency: Maintaining Research Integrity Through the Active Inclusion of Black & Minoritised Community Partners

The Charter urges researchers to go above and beyond the current ethical standards for research. Researchers are required to take a critical eye towards concepts of inclusion, transparency, and accessibility by considering the implications they may have on Black and Minoritised communities. The standard ethical codes of conduct for research intend to prevent exploitative practices but fail to consider the intricate power dynamics present in interactions between the less resources and more resourced parties.

Without a critical analysis of ethical codes of conduct – namely the issues of inclusion throughout the research process, transparency of the research's usage, and accessibility to the published papers – researchers may be perpetuating exploitative practices rather than preventing them. The Collaborators of this Charter have raised issues with the nature of 'inclusion' in academic environments, particularly the instrumentalism inherent in policies of inclusion:

"EDI has become part of the progression politics for a lot of white colleagues and universities. It's become a way for them to progress their careers. A lot of them get involved in projects with the Black community or Black and Minoritised communities to get promoted."

– Collaborator from the visioning sessions

This Charter calls for research institutions to re-evaluate the meaning of 'allyship' towards an active push for the transformation of the status quo and the repairing of damage caused to communities disproportionately impacted by institutional racism. This, particularly, looks towards the empowerment of Black and Minoritised communities into their own bases of authority (e.g., community organisations and infrastructures that are led by the communities of interest) independent from the validation of Western academic institutions. The transformation of the status quo will involve a re-assessment of the ethical conduct of academics and the funding of Black and Minoritised community-led research organisations to enable community-owned research spaces to develop as well as the cultural work within which they operate.

Collaborators of this Charter emphasise that true inclusion entails the inclusion of Black and Minoritised community partners and their Contributors in all aspects of the research process – from its incipiency to its conclusion. In limiting community partners' engagement only to certain parts of the research, anti-racist co-production is not achieved. For example, for the research to be responding to genuine community needs and questions that are relevant to the community sphere, the initial questions and objectives of the research project need to be defined in co-production with the community representatives and members.

" The question [an academic researcher asks] is almost how the research will come out. A lot of researchers work backwards, they've got an idea of what they want to have, and they do it that way rather than coming up with the issues that communities actually want them to [address]."

– Collaborator from the visioning sessions

This 'institutional priority' (as the Collaborator termed it) perpetuates a cycle of exploitation and extraction from Black and Minoritised communities and is partly motivated by the pressure from funding bodies for academic researchers to meet strict and inflexible application deadlines. As a Collaborator stated:

"The Catch-22 is then: the grant term is ending, and I have all these timelines to manage. I feel pressured to decide whether we're able to conduct research at all because I won't meet the grant deadline… and the groundwork is not yet complete."

– Collaborator from the visioning sessions

The Charter urges academic institutions, funders, and individual researchers to develop a deeper and less transactional connection with communities in an effort to discern what their interests are and to develop, together, the research objective.

On the other hand, the Charter also urges researchers to maintain engagement with community partners, even after the publication of the research to ensure the benefits of the research outcomes are shared with them, both in terms of ensuring the learning is disseminated in accessible forms and ensuring that tangible outcomes and action-oriented solutions are following the research process. Collaborators to this Charter have raised issues with the inaccessibility of published research papers, particularly amongst the Black and Minoritised communities the research was originally concerned with.

"Anyone collaborating should have access to see the libraries. I've also found that just seems so obvious and basic, but it's not a given that although you're being brought in for projects, you have access to resources like libraries."

– Collaborator from the visioning sessions

The Charter demands that Black and Minoritised communities have a say in how the research is used and how it is published. The dangers of unregulated use of research may lead to detrimental consequences for the Black and Minoritised community in question. By providing the community with control of the research (specifically its use), the community can ensure that it works towards their interests – for the betterment of the wellbeing of community.

TOOLKIT: The Charter for Co-Production Through an Anti-Racist Lens

The Collaborators of the visioning sessions noted that the first step towards anti-racist and equitable co-production must be taken by those who possess the biggest resources, power, and authority in the current socio-economic and political landscape, e.g., research institutions, university administrative bodies and funding bodies.

Communities expect those who hold greater power in terms of authoritative knowledge to begin to take a 'view-from-below', willingly sharing in their consolidated power with community members who they wish to work with. This can entail the use of explicitly co-productive research methods such as 'sousveillance' as mentioned by an attendee during the RACE Launch night, but it can also warrant a greater inclusion of community members throughout the entire research process as equal partners to the project.

The toolkit also emphasises the need for all researchers to be aware of implicit mechanisms that perpetuate power imbalances (such as terminology), the need to reflect upon the ownership of knowledge, as well as the exercise of due diligence to locate pre-existing community knowledge related to the research topic at hand.

Whilst research institutions must take large strides to open their purview to other perspectives, Black and Minoritised researchers, individuals and organisations also need to step up and actively work towards achieving anti-racist co-production of research.

Collaborators of the visioning sessions made note of the hierarchies of power inherent in cultural communities. The Collaborators paid particular attention to the lack of support within communities that would, otherwise, enable long-term advocacy for the rights of research Contributors who interact with researchers in Higher Education institutions.

As a result, the toolkit also intends to provide guidance for community members to organise their own bodies of cultural authority as a bridge mechanism between community members and academic institutions and funders, to work as a guarantee to ensure that the community members are not taken advantage of throughout the research process. These community-led bodies can also work to facilitate research capacity-building programmes, e.g., via increasing community members' opportunities for equitable research co-production, via providing technical research and data management training for community members interested in becoming Community Researchers, or via advocating for the allocation of appropriate compensation/credits for community members interested in contributing to research.

The final aspect of the toolkit aims to reflect the vital requirement of equitable collaboration between academic institutions and community partners. Indeed, the 'Three Legged-Approach' recommended by this toolkit refers to the recognition that independent steps towards the achievement of the Charter's values and practice can only go so far until steps need to be taken collectively towards the common goal of anti-racist, co-produced research, complete with all the recommendations laid out in this Charter.

> **" I concluded that whilst there is an onus on the institution to figure out how they can interface with our communities, there is still work to be done... You have to have both parties learning."**
>
> *– Collaborator from the visioning sessions*

What Can the Academic Partner Do?

An equitable, anti-racist co-produced research project:

1. Acknowledges the structural epistemic violence and systemic racism that permeates academic research and its institutions, but also seeks to take action against it.

> *"We're not [just] saying racism, we're saying institutional white supremacy because that's how institutions have been set up to function in terms of their values, their language, [and the] status that they claim as validators of other people's knowledge."*
>
> *– Collaborator from the visioning sessions*

The Charter calls on academic institutions to acknowledge the existence of systemic racism permeating all levels of academia which is a root cause of the exclusion of Black and Minoritised communities' voices from mainstream knowledge-production spaces, as well as of the devaluing of knowledge pioneered by Black and Minoritised scholars.

Furthermore, Collaborators of this Charter call on academic institutions to go beyond mere acknowledgement and make an active effort to work against systemic racism in all its forms. Indeed, passive platitudes are meaningless if the status quo remains the same. Action is necessary for an equitable and anti-racist co-productive practice.

Examples of recommended actions against epistemic violence and systemic racism are:

- *Providing due merit and authority to the scholarship and knowledge that originates within Black and Minoritised communities.*

In order to address the concerns of this Charter's Collaborators over the devaluing of Black and Minoritised expertise, the Charter calls for academic institutions and their researchers to deconstruct the biases that prevent them from recognising scholarship that has already been widely acknowledged as authoritative amongst Black and Minoritised communities. Researchers and academic institutions must understand that their acknowledgement of Black and Minoritised

expertise does not make it valid, but that such expertise is already deemed authoritative by Black and Minoritised communities and is only dismissed by white led hegemonic culture.

Academic institutions must 'catch up' with the progress of knowledge pioneered by those who have historically been disregarded and silenced. This action may include the conscious inclusion of Black and Minoritised scholars in literary reviews, purposeful collaboration with Black and Minoritised communities to uplift their communities' experts, taking an intentionally passive position when implementing indigenous methodologies into research (thereby letting the indigenous community partners lead in respectfully conducting their customary traditions) or advocating for the recognition of Black and Minoritised experts in predominantly white spaces.

- *Uplifting and valuing the lived experiences of Black and Minoritised community partners.*

The Charter recognises that lived experiences and anecdotal evidence – as data in research – are placed as secondary to mainstream forms of qualitative and quantitative data. Collaborators of this Charter also recognise that this is partly driven by the dominant positivist approach in Western academic research that views subjectivity as negative, that is erroneously deemed to be left out of the research or it will impair the 'robustness' of data. Moreover, Collaborators recognise that the devaluing of lived experience is driven by an instrumentalist approach to interacting with community.

Therefore, the Charter calls for researchers to develop deeper and more meaningful relationships with community partners. In doing so, the researcher may be warier in reducing the lived experience of individuals into quantifiable data. The Charter encourages researchers to embrace the subjectivities laden in accounts of lived experience as meaningful information that

could lead to a more holistic understanding of the co-produced research project.

This could be done in a variety of ways, with particular examples being placing the interests of the community before one's career progression, working closely and frequently with community partners, and/or listening to a wide variety of lived experiences in order to highlight their uniqueness.

- *Supporting Black and Minoritised community members in occupying historically colonial knowledge-production spaces and in openly reclaiming their right to be in said spaces and actively contribute to the knowledge-production exercise.*

Charter visioning sessions shined a light on the subtle impact that the environment has on power dynamics. University buildings with a history of imperialism - sometimes funded by the forced labour of enslaved peoples - can be perceived as intimidating to those who have been affected by colonialism and imperial ambitions.

However, being physically distant from the spaces where most research analysis and production is undertaken hinders communities' ability to meaningfully engage with the exercise of knowledge-production as part of the wider ecosystem.

Therefore, researchers must also act as facilitators in creating space for Black and Minoritised individuals within historically white institutions such as academic buildings. For example, by:

- *Extending an open invitation to Black and Minoritised communities to visit research facilities.*

- *Accompanying Black and Minoritised community partners in their visit; providing a guided tour of all relevant research facilities.*

- *Advocating for greater access to academic buildings for local Black and Minoritised communities.*

- *Calling for university administration to recognise the potential colonial histories of their architecture and pressuring universities to take a reparatory approach in this regard.*

- *Organising events and occasions where community members can interact with data & research in semi-informal spaces to familiarise themselves with the benefits of research and the power that knowledge can bring to them and to the wider society.*

2. Involves researchers taking a genuine approach towards learning the histories, ideologies, and cultures that underpin communities – in an effort to better understand how to approach them and work with them in a respectful manner that both acknowledges their authority and values their experiences.

> *"Before you even begin your work, begin to understand the community, the underpinning ideology, culture, and history of that community, because these things always play into the present."*
>
> *– Collaborator from the visioning sessions*

The Charter calls for researchers to go beyond the ordinary expectations of preliminary research. In order to effectively work with Black and Minoritised communities, academic researchers must understand the historical, social, and cultural contexts within which they operate.

In this sense, some recommended actions are:

- *Taking appropriate time to learn and understand histories, ideologies and cultures in relation to the communities that are at the heart of the research project. In this instance, employing researchers directly from the community of interest is a strongly recommended action.*

- *Having direct conversations with the community members, as community histories are often recorded through collective oral tradition; as such, literary sources may only reveal a fraction of the wider picture.*

- *Developing a meaningful relationship with community partners as individuals as well as professionals may allow the researcher to avoid viewing community partners and their community Contributors as merely 'participants', but as full equal partners in the project.*

- *Engaging in frank discussions with the community about the motivations, biases, and aspirations that are held by each party. With a genuine understanding of each other's biases and motivations, the researcher can avoid devaluing Black and Minoritised expertise or filtering Black and Minoritised experiences through a Eurocentric lens and keep in check their own personal professional ambitions in order for them not to damage the relationship with the community partners. Indeed, this exercise may also help build trust between the academic partner and communities.*

- *Being familiar with the work done by previous researchers – both from academic institutions and from the community itself. In knowing what preceding researchers have discovered, one may be able to learn from their mistakes. In knowing what community scholars have previously learnt, one can give proper credit for the work they have pioneered also in community knowledge-production spaces.*

3. Utilises appropriate data collection methodology to reflect that Black and Minoritised communities are not monoliths, homogeneous nor one-dimensional, but are made up of disparate groups of people who are, in themselves, constituted of unique configurations of intersecting characteristics and beliefs.

In addition to a general understanding of communities' culture, the researcher needs specialised expertise around racism and its manifestations in society to be able to select appropriate methodology for data collection, which is sensitive to the nuances of racial and cultural identity.

In this instance, the recommended action is:

- *Where possible, data involving Black and Minoritised communities should always be disaggregated into specific categories that account for ethnicity, but also its intersection with other characteristics that affect the expression of their racialised identity.*

The dangers of disaggregated data that are insensitive to the nuances of racial and cultural identity lends to the misdirection of resources and/or the perpetuation of systemic disadvantages of unsupported communities.

An example of such insensitive research practices could, hypothetically, involve the conflation of two distinct cultural religious linguistic groups within a unified minoritised community – e.g. conflating East Asian individuals with Han ancestry with East Asian individuals with Miao ancestry – which ignores the complex historical relationship between such groups, a historical relationship that may, in itself, involve disproportionate power dynamics, discrimination, and unique struggles.

Therefore, whilst co-production within disaggregated data requires an anti-racist and reparatory perspective, an explicitly historical and intersectional perspective must also be adopted.

4. Includes community partners in as many phases of research as possible – from its incipiency to its conclusion - and embeds equity into every stage of the process.

> *"Come along to our community centre, come and sit down with our elders, come and sit down with our community. Let's get to know you. Let's hear more about the project."*
>
> *– Collaborator from the visioning sessions*

The Charter calls for researchers to embed equity throughout the research process via the following recommended practices:

- *Approaching the community before a research objective is decided upon to enable joint decision-making in selecting research questions with community partners. This is to ensure that the research project is directly responding to community research needs and/ or aspirations that – if fulfilled – would positively impact communities in the form of tangible outcomes. Setting aside funds specifically for the development co-productive phase in order to be able to adequately compensate the community partners for their input into the project inception and design is also a recommended practice.*

- *'Meeting the community where they already are' both figuratively and physically. In fact, a researcher is recommended to approach Black and Minoritised communities in their own cultural spaces – with their express consent. Redressing power imbalances by setting discussions in spaces where the community*

feels comfortable can empower Black and Minoritised communities to exercise their autonomous decision-making whilst also fostering a relationship built on trust.

- *A join decision-making approach should be extended to all parts of the research process, including the more technical elements. Where there is a lack of understanding around technicalities - for example, around mainstream research methodologies - the academic partner has the responsibility to make the information accessible for all community partners. (***Note:*** as per mentioned above, there is also a declared objective to include and explore methodologies beyond traditional Western options, e.g., indigenous methodologies, highly qualitative-focused alternative methodologies and creative outputs will sometimes be more appropriate for specific research projects. The decision is, once again, to be made jointly.)*

- *Community partners must also have equal control and access to the research outputs – allowing community partners to ensure that the research remains faithful to the jointly-arrived- upon purpose and that it is respectful of the lived experiences, beliefs, and cultures of the community as a whole. In other words, community partners should have an active role also in the phases of analysis and report-writing, to ensure that the findings are an authentic representation of the originally included communities' voices. In fact, no research output should be published without the explicit approval of all community partners involved.*

- *Community partners engagement must not cease in the post-project phase, where the outputs are disseminated, and the fruits of labour are collected. In fact, community partner should be rightfully credited and invited to contribute to all activities that*

follow on from the publication of research outputs, such as conference presentations or celebratory events.

> *"If you're going to make research, you've got to let people know how they can access it…"*
>
> *– Collaborator from the visioning sessions*

Collaborators of this Charter also want to emphasise the power of words throughout the entire research process. As such, the Charter urges

researchers to leave behind the use of terms like 'participant', 'interviewer', or 'interviewee' in the written research report. The use of these terms automatically places all Collaborators to the co-produced research – whether academic researcher, community partner, or the ordinary Contributor from a community – into a defined hierarchy.

The researcher is also responsible for maintaining communication with community partners throughout the research project in search for constant feedback, insights, and ideas. Emphasising the joint aspect of the research, the community partners are to be enabled to exercise full autonomy.

The Charter discourages researchers from disregarding works and individuals that the community considers reputable. This is to ensure that the intellectual, epistemological, and ontological traditions of the respective Black and Minoritised community is respected.

The Charter also strongly discourages researchers from disregarding changes made by community partners that ensures a truly equitable and co-produced research project; researchers are expected to engage in open dialogue with their community partners, providing carefully considered rationales for and/or against the implementation of changes. This is to ensure that the expertise of the community is observed as valid and there is constant mutual learning on both sides.

5. Is transparent in the equitable redistribution of access to resources and authority, to ensure that all Collaborators are enabled to contribute meaningfully, receive appropriate compensation for their work and are rightfully acknowledged/credited for their valuable input.

> *"Transparency can be tricky at times in terms of, say, fees and that sort of stuff. I don't think that people would know [how much they should be compensated] or even what the budget is being spent on. I mean, even with the project I reflected upon last night, I thought 'Well, I don't know how this has been funded!' That's not transparent..."*
>
> *– Collaborator from the visioning sessions*

Resources here is to be intended as an all-encompassing word for all the assets that create systemic advantages for academic institutions engaging in research alongside one or more community partners. For example, the numerous academic papers, online journals, university libraries and databases that can be accessed for free by academic researchers are often locked behind a paywall for community partners and community researchers.

At the same time, financial resources are also inequitably distributed across the two sectors, as the majority of research funders do not consider funding directly Black and Minoritised community organisations and groups to undertake research since they are often not big enough to be eligible for research institution accreditation.

Once again, the hierarchies of power and knowledge often play a role in how budgets are distributed with senior academic researchers receiving the highest compensation, then junior academic researchers and lastly community partners and community researchers receiving a limited previously set amount that does not accurately reflects the hours of work, nor the level of expertise provided.

> *"Quite often they'd be fobbed off with a lesser fee than what they were [worth]. In my particular circumstance... I was quite adamant on what I thought I deserved to be paid. At that time, I was told 'No, not possible."*
>
> *– Collaborator from the visioning sessions*

In addition, community partners and community researchers are often left out of credits and/or not acknowledged as co-authors of research outputs even when they have contributed to the collection, analysis and/or writing of reports.

As equal partners to the project, community partners must have access to the same resources that are normally available to academic researchers. Recommended actions are:

- *Properly including Community Partners within the creation of budgets. Researchers should take active steps to include community partners within the process of creating draft budgets. This includes engaging in conversations with the community prior to the creation of a draft budget to ensure that all actions and decisions are agreed upon by all parties involved in the co-produced research process. In creating the budget for the research, community partners' time to be spent in co-conducting the research should be taken into account to ensure that they are properly compensated.*

- *Involving a stalwart dedication to transparency, which addresses both issues of 'truth' and issues of 'power'. The Charter acknowledges that a lack of transparency can lead to community partners having insufficient knowledge to advocate for their rights as equal partners to the project. Transparency and accessible information provided by academic institutions will allow the community partner to understand the motivations that drive funding bodies, researchers, and academics in conducting research and provides them with the collective bargaining power to advocate for the interests of the community.*

- *Collaborators of this Charter have also voiced that researchers should pre-empt the needs of the community in terms of information; community partners who have not engaged in research previously should be advised on the amount of compensation that would be fair in proportion to their and their community members' contributions. The onus is on the researcher to help the community to advocate for equitable compensation as well as complete transparency throughout the research process. This may also involve adjusting for the sake of accessibility.*

- *Ensuring the compensation to community partners is in relation to the amount of time, type of expertise and degrees of experience provided to the project. This should facilitate the proper and equitable compensation of community partners based on their degree of contribution to the research project, as opposed to providing the same amount of "symbolic" compensation to all community partners regardless of their varying degrees of involvement and contribution to the research.*

- *Advocating for community partners' rights to be included in credits and outputs acknowledgement, as well as for innovative models for collective intellectual ownership. Researchers are encouraged to challenge the 'default' position in contractual arrangements. This allows for space to be made for the community partners who should, rightly, be credited as full and equal partners to the research project – including joint ownership of the intellectual property. Concurrently, research institutions are encouraged to reconsider their default position.*

6. Works to place communities as the primary beneficiaries of tangible research outcomes, to repair the damage inflicted from historically extractive racist and colonial research practices and bring communities to a newfound appreciation for the power of research.

> *"[Our stories] should be everywhere. How can our contributions be valued beyond someone's individual research paper and a 'nice-to-do'. It can't just be a nice-to-do for [Black and Minoritised communities], it has to be something tangible."*
>
> *– Collaborator from the visioning sessions*

The Charter aims to transform the everyday practices of academic researchers just as much as it aims to bring long-term institutional and systemic change in the knowledge-production ecosystem.

For decades, Black and Minoritised communities have been over-researched to the point of developing persistent research fatigue, whilst constantly being trapped in the passive role of the research subject and never in control of their own narratives. The constant investigations and consultations have not brought any tangible positive impact, whilst indicators for racial disparities keep worsening. After years of forceful disempowerment and constant disenfranchisement, Black and Minoritised communities have lost trust in research institutions and the potential that research can have for bringing positive impact on communities.

The most important focus is, therefore, rebuilding trust in the power of research by ensuring that all research done in partnership with communities is strategically positioned to produce tangible positive impact on communities and that these benefits are communicated widely at the end of each research project.

Recommended actions are:
- *Preparing the policy-influencing landscape for your research project through building strategic connections with relevant stakeholders across public and private sectors.*

- *Designing the research with a practical approach in mind and including the investigation of potential feasible solutions that could be explored at community level at the end of the research piece.*

- *Ensuring that there are collective ownership models in place from the inception of the research project in order to enable dissemination of research outputs at community level.*

7. Builds long-term community capacity for Black and Minoritised people's meaningful involvement in research as well as for building their autonomy in independent community-led knowledge-production and archiving.

> *"We need to do [work] in our communities. [We need to] change the way we think to understand how much power, knowledge, and everything else that we have... We can't expect institutions to do that for us. We need to have a list of things that we want to know about our community, what's useful for our community in terms of research?"*
>
> *– Collaborator from the visioning sessions*

The Charter emphasises the need for action in supporting Black and Minoritised communities' capacity-building towards all research dimensions, including independent community research. It emphasises the importance of academic researchers' role in building communities' confidence on how to access resources, information, and data.

Furthermore, the Charter encourages researchers to act by aiding Black and Minoritised communities in building their own foundations of collective knowledge – distinctly independent from the influence of Western academic bodies.

The purpose of this action is to ensure that Black and Minoritised communities have repositories of their community-owned knowledge, which they can control and disseminate at their own discretion. The role of the researcher is to facilitate such a creation by providing an avenue to resources not normally available to the systemically disadvantaged.

The collaborators to this Charter emphasise that such support – on the part of the researcher – is provided without stipulation but is premised on altruism and the interests of the community.

It was also emphasised by the Collaborators to this Charter that partnerships between Black and Minoritised communities and academic institutions should not merely be for short-term purposes. In other words, the process of building up Black and Minoritised communities to becoming research institutions of their own is a long-term project that requires the building of longer-term capacity – through training, advocating for continued access to funding, and continuous collaboration – and most importantly requires commitment to institutional change.
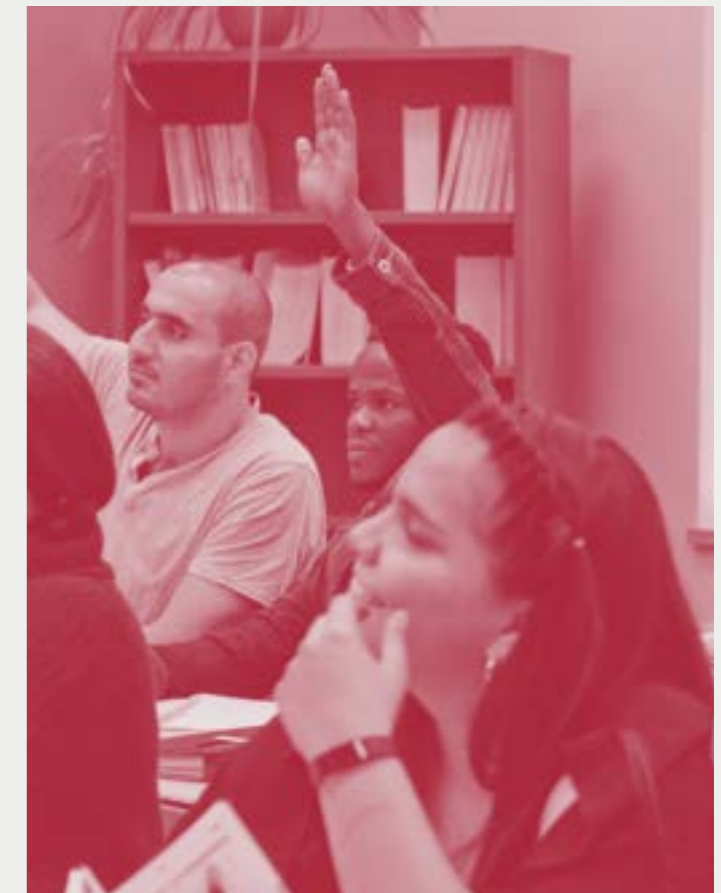
What Can the Community Partner Do?

Equitable, anti-racist co-produced research:

8. Involves advocating on behalf of the entire community.

> *"It's a cause for communities to come together and look at what efficient, consistent and representative advocacy looks like for them."*
>
> *– Collaborator from the visioning sessions*

Charter Collaborators observed that imbalanced power dynamics also exist within Black and Minoritised communities, as such that the interests of a selected few with cultural authority could be presented as the interests of the entire community. The danger of 'speaking for others' entails the assumption that one's personal interests are shared by others, regardless of differences in personal circumstances e.g. cultures that traditionally value the opinion of elders, whereby the voices of Black and Minoritised youths are silenced due to their opinion being relegated as secondary to that of older individuals.

Due to the heterogeneity of Black and Minoritised communities, the Charter emphasises that there is no uniform way to approach equal representation of all individuals within a community, but the approach should rather be tailored to respond to the challenges present in each unique community.

Recommended actions are:

• *In an effort to prevent gatekeeping, communities must decide on ways to 'open up' representation to different people in the community, whether it be a randomised selection process, a rotating roster of potential representatives, or limitations on how long an individual community member could serve as a representative.*

• *Community partners representing communities in a research need to be held accountable for the great responsibility they are accepting to take. In fact, they are acting in the capacity of community consultants to a project with the primary objective to ensure that boundaries are defined in conjunction with the community. In the instance where community representatives fail to achieve this, boundaries will be defined by institutions who are non-members to a particular Black and Minoritised community.*

• *The selection of representation needs to be intersectional; not only including the diversity of cultures, nationalities, and ethnicities, but also the other aspects concerned with protected characteristics, e.g., the perspectives of disabled people, women, young people, LGBTQ+ people and so on.*

> *"The Community should have a certain degree of responsibility in coming up with boundaries as well. A community panel of people [or representatives] … could be part of that, enabling them to go back to researchers and say: We will only operate under these parameters."*
>
> *– Collaborator from the visioning sessions*

9. Involves Black and Minoritised communities recognising and claiming their rightful place within the knowledge-production wider ecosystem, also as researchers themselves, and advocating for ownership of their own knowledge, skills and data.

> *"It's important to build capacity within communities to be able to hold knowledge themselves, build their own, and have things on their own terms, instead of having universities and research institutions tell you what to do and tell you how much you're worth."*
>
> *– Collaborator from the visioning sessions*

Whilst Black and Minoritised communities have the knowledge and agency to advocate for their own interests – through their collective knowledge and lived experience – it would be unrealistic to expect each individual member of Black and Minoritised communities to expertly navigate the complexities of academic research frameworks, which are often challenging and demanding even for the most experienced academic partners.

As a result, guidance, programmes, and development opportunities - by Black and Minoritised organisations and researchers for Black and Minoritised individuals - must be made readily available in order to facilitate the self-advocacy of Black and Minoritised communities in research.

The formation of community-led infrastructure and bodies - e.g., a steering committee that researchers can consult and work closely with, made specifically with equitable and intersectional representation from all communities - can facilitate the research capacity-building process that is needed for individual members of Black and Minoritised communities to be able to equitably engage with research.

In addition, it is fundamental to formally acknowledge the figure of the Community Researcher. In fact, Black and Minoritised communities can also find themselves in the role of professional researchers, working from different positions of power or disadvantage. For example, members of communities are often employed within academic research projects as 'outreach officers' to increase the number of survey respondents or general engagement. Whilst they are performing a research task, they are often not recognised as being part of the research team, nor are they compensated accordingly to their research input. They are not considered as equal partners and colleagues of academic researchers, although they are providing the raw data that will be processed by academics to produce formal research outcomes.

Black and Minoritised individuals are also employed in the community sector as researchers and/or data management and evaluation staff. Once again, this particular category of community workers performs research tasks for research projects funded by higher institutions and funding bodies without being acknowledged as a researcher and/or credited in research papers for their contribution to the data collection and analysis they provided.

Finally, Black and Minoritised researchers formally employed in the higher education sector who have built an academic career following a traditional journey still find themselves to be seen as less credible than their white counterparts due

to institutional racism as per discussed in the previous section.

Recommended actions are:

- *Working towards building long-term research capacity and infrastructure for Black and Minoritised community members to be equipped to engage equitably with the research academic institutions and the wider research ecosystem. This can entail strengthening community-led bodies and organisations that can function as middle man between communities and academic institutions and be guarantee that the interactions reflect the principles and practices illustrated in this Charter (e.g., equitable distribution of resources, knowledge, and recognition).*

- *These community-led infrastructure bodies should be working collaboratively with academic institution to co-produce programmes for community members to develop their knowledge around formal research ecosystems and potentially take the role of Community Researcher to advocate for the interests of Black and Minoritised communities in research-production.*

- *Moreover, this Charter calls for a collective effort amongst all community members in building infrastructure that could be used to advocate for the intellectual ownership of community knowledge (e.g. community archiving projects such as the Cultural Heritage Project's UnMuseum, or the formation of community research steering groups).*

The Three-Legged RACE Approach

10. This Charter calls on all groups party to the research project to work together towards the shared goal – equitable redistribution of resources and power.

> ***"Let's talk about equity… we can see if we arrive at a different answer."***
>
> *– Collaborator from the visioning sessions*

Arguably the most important aspect of the Charter's 'Three-Legged Approach' is the aspect of equity and collaboration – for anti-racist co-production cannot exist without either. Parties are to focus on the simple goal of equity, of the equitable sharing of power, together.

The Charter reminds Collaborators - of the community, such as partners and ordinary members of the wider community, and academia - that the aim of anti-racist co-production is to arrive at a different 'answer' to what has been produced for centuries. Continuation of co-productive practices predicated on traditionally Eurocentric methodologies only works to perpetuate inequality between the systemically powerful and the systematically disadvantaged.

Focusing upon addressing the core issues of power imbalances, lack of transparency, and unequal distribution of authority should be the unifying goal for Collaborators when setting out to conduct co-produced research.
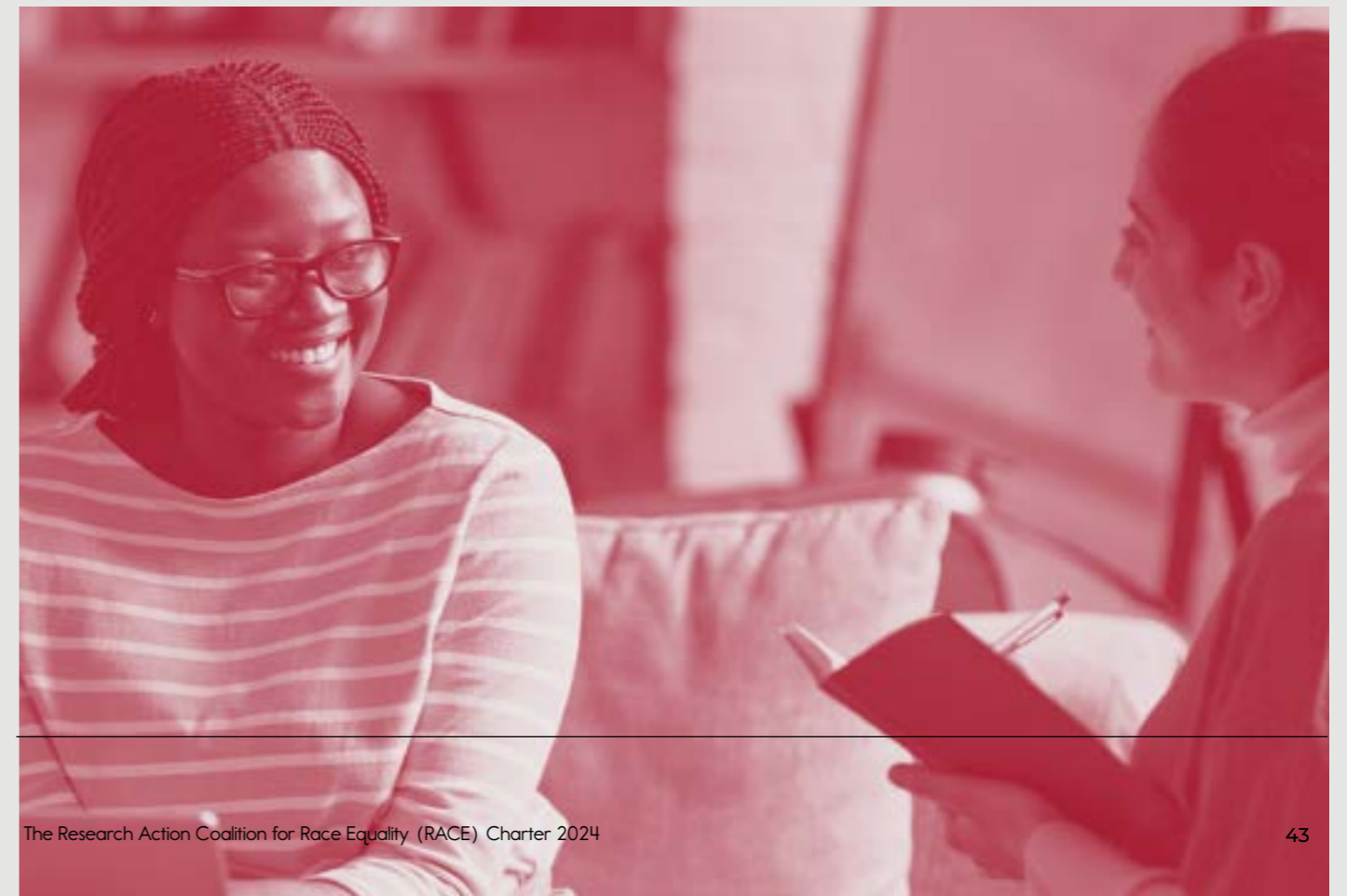
The process of devising the Charter for Co-Production through an Anti-Racist Lens was not without its unique difficulties. Prior to the creation of the visioning sessions, it was clear that a unified framework for the practice of anti-racist co-production had not yet been created. Guidance on how to conduct the research itself in a manner that is equitable and anti-racist – specifically in a co-produced manner – were gathered from disparate research reports from varying disciplines.

As a result, pitfalls were recognised whereby Collaborators were brought in at different phases of the Charter's creation, visioning session prompts had inherent implications of power dynamics, and – whilst a Charter for Anti-Racist Co-Production was of the interest of many of the collaborators – the inception of this project partially originated from a research institution itself (the University of Bristol) in conjunction with a local Black-led organisation (The Black South West Network).

However, recognition of these pitfalls served to inform Collaborators of the common mistakes that could be made in an ordinary research project. It further served to show the possibility of what can be achieved once an individual researcher is aware of these pitfalls that could work against a truly equitable co-produced research project. This Charter serves as an example that a perfect solution to the ailments of co-produced research does not exist, that mistakes can and will be made. However, these are not reasons to capitulate.

On the contrary, these are reasons to continue to strive towards a fairer framework of co-produced research, predicated on anti-racism, a dedication to the restitution of Black and Minoritised communities, and a passion in reshaping the very landscape of academic research. Indeed, one may despair in the seemingly futile efforts of changing an entire system as an individual. But one must remember: working towards a shared goal, together, in recognition of each other's valid expertise, epistemes, identities, and experience, we may achieve what is needed to be done.

The publication of this Charter is merely the first step in a larger scheme for anti-racist research. Collaborators aspire to instate the Charter's ideas into communities that are often exploited for their research potential, providing them with information and power to advocate for their rights as individuals. The Collaborators also aspire for the Charter to be proliferated throughout the academic sphere, amongst all researchers who seek to work with communities that are Black and Minoritised, in hopes that an anti-racist method of co-production becomes common practice, at least in circles that aspire towards it.

However, institutions must also seek to implement the Charter's ideas. It should be recognised that the system, ultimately, cannot change unless those who regulate its rule are to adopt the changes. Therefore, we hope to seek the implementation of anti-racist co-productive principles into the research guidelines of institutions, beginning with the University of Bristol, then to other UK research institutes, and then research-adjacent bodies such as funding bodies and ethics boards. In achieving this, we aspire to a future where knowledge is indeed power not of the few... but for all.

> *"There is never going to be a perfect solution... That is not a reason not to do something. But there is every reason to start."*
>
> *– Collaborator from the visioning sessions*