

2021

QUIVOLVE
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POWER
BEYOND
MEASURE

RESHAPING THE RESEARCH AND EVALUATION
LANDSCAPE FOR BOYS AND MEN OF COLOR



2020 QUARANTINE KILLINGS

BY PLAYON PATRICK

And they ask how do black boys write about their city?
How do we know street if we don't know Uncracked sidewalk?
They ask how do these black boys know anything about their city?
How the buildings are sitting on corners where brothers' bodies are still
learning how to rot,
there are small crosses placed in the grass where families
could not afford to bury their loved ones,
Reminds my brothers and I that we are early graves
before we are anything else,
we call those corners playgrounds,
we call those corners the killing fields,
we call our bodies bullets even if we were never aimed
in the right direction,
we call the remnants of our mothers' family the diaspora tree, we make
a catalogue of prayers out of broken hands, we pray for our family tree to
make its way back home to this soil, we use our hands to dig the graves we
cannot afford,
we are farmers of broken black bodies,
we have never known city,
known comfort,
never known safe street in any city

In June 2020, as millions across the nation spoke out and mobilized against state and vigilante violence against Black people, poet and youth leader Playon Patrick was invited by President Obama to recite his original poem entitled "2020 Quarantine Killings." Playon's powerful performance expressed the pain, anger, and fear so often experienced by boys and men of color, and attracted widespread public and media attention. Read an excerpt of Playon's words.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For three years, the Research, Evaluation, and Data for Boys and Men of Color Funder Workgroup partnered with Equivolve to co-design a convening and a process that resulted in this research agenda. We are abundantly grateful for the way you showed up and look forward to the work that is before us. These beautiful people brought their full selves to this work, so instead of offering a generic acknowledgement of their contribution, we asked each funder: "As you reflect on our time together, how would you describe your experience as a committee member?" Here are their unfiltered responses:



"During my participation, I felt understood, seen, and inspired. **Our meetings always brought us together not only as professionals but also as people that care about BYMOC** [boys and young men of color]. One of the most fulfilling experiences in my professional career working with all of you on this. This report sends a powerful message to the field. I'm confident many will find it transformational as they explore how to improve their practice to better support and uplift young men of color."

- **Efraín Gutierrez**



"Engaging with funders around research, evaluation, and data for boys and men and color created much-needed space for us to learn how to be better grantmakers, partners, and evaluators. The most impactful moments were those opportunities to bring into the space the voices of those on the ground working directly with boys and men of color, and learning how they are leveraging research and data to build more effective programs. Unlike other spaces where the funders show up as experts with solutions, our posture in this group was very much that we wanted to hear from the field and learn. **Power Beyond Measure is a reflection of those voices we've heard on this journey and the learning we've done along the way.**"

- **Howard Walters**



"I became a member after the committee had been working together for some time. I immediately felt welcomed as an individual rather than simply as the new Casey representative. It was clear that the committee was a space where each of us could lean into our values in an authentic way. I appreciate that in our meetings, there are always one or more components that center us in the why of the work, tapping into the heart and the spirit. These words come to mind when I think of the committee: teamwork, energy, zeal, and commitment. Finally, I'll say **this committee is a great example of what it looks like for a foundation collaborative to partner with a talented grantee partner with cooperative thought partnership, compassion, and humility.**"

- **Kantahyane Murray**



"**Each of us responded to this calling as individual representatives of philanthropic institutions. We emerged as a community forged by a shared sense of linked destiny across races, gender, and geography.** This experience fortified my commitment that we can and must do better to support improved research, evaluation, and data approaches that never lose sight of advancing the wellbeing and unlimited potential of our boys and men of color as the end goal."

- **Hanh Cao Yu**

Power Beyond Measure: Reshaping the Research and Evaluation Landscape for Boys and Men of Color is truly a collective effort. The work would not have been possible without the generosity and passion of leaders in the non-profit, research, and philanthropy fields. Equivolve Consulting is grateful to everyone who brought their energy to make *Power Beyond Measure* a force to change research and evaluation so it better serves boys and men of color in our communities and our country.

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We are especially indebted to those leaders in the boys and men of color field who participated in Equivolve's research, evaluation, and data for boys and men of color surveys and interviews in 2019-2020.



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“

I am a Black man and the founder and CEO of Equivolve, but no role is more important to me than being Jordan’s dad (shown here). This is personal. It is who I am and my every day. In this moment, I both vulnerably and willingly share that my son is the reason any of this matters. We talk about the issues presented in this report and he understands that I do this work for him.

”

Glenn

GLENN R. LOVE

A MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERSHIP



GLENN R. LOVE

John Wooden, the legendary UCLA basketball coach, once remarked that one should “never mistake activity for achievement.” He said this in reference to how he designed, implemented, and evaluated practices throughout his career.

Today, Coach Wooden’s words take on a profound new meaning as I reflect on the critical work many of us have undertaken to improve the lives of boys and men of color and our communities. We can all learn a thing or two from this Hall of Fame coach as we strive for greater impact and, most importantly, equity and justice. This is not a question of our commitment. But it does require a deeper reflection about what we fundamentally believe is possible.

It is amazing to consider all that young people are facing as they mature in our 21st Century United States. While opportunities appear to be greater, so is their exposure to the social, economic and political ills that can distract, if not derail, the most driven and grounded young person. All youth need present and visible systems of support on the road to becoming productive and proficient adults. For many boys and young men, this road can be wrought with bumps and potholes as they explore and test boundaries in an effort to define their identity on their own terms.

Yet, both quantitative and qualitative data show that for young men of color, those actions—considered youthful indiscretions for others—are likely to be judged far more harshly and punished with lasting consequences that will affect their ability to attain quality education and employment, and become positive contributors to their families, communities, and society. Thus, guiding and nurturing young men of color through the formative years of their youth is crucial to helping them reach their full potential. And perhaps more important is the need to recalibrate local, state, and federal policies and systems in a manner that assumes our youth will succeed in becoming their best selves. That is OUR call and why we must be great.

We find ourselves at a most unique moment in history, one that presents new possibilities to dig deeper and serve better on behalf of boys and men of color. Over the years, I have met so many incredible leaders that have given me a greater sense of community and a heightened commitment to be an asset and a resource in advancing this work. Now I must ask: What does this moment demand of us? How far will we push ourselves and those in power to rise beyond emotion and rhetoric to make positive, significant, and lasting impact on the lives of boys and young men of color? And ultimately, what are the steps and strategies we must employ to spur achievement and not just activity? *Power Beyond Measure* endeavors to begin answering some of these questions.

This is not an academic exercise. Contained within and between the pages that follow is an abundance of pain and possibility. An unyielding belief that if we give ourselves permission to dream, we can create a world where our deepest hopes are fully realized.

With anticipation,

Glenn R. Love
CEO, Equivolve Consulting

Dear Colleagues,

We are a group of funders who care deeply about the lives and livelihood of boys and men of color, and who recognize that we stand at a critical moment of reckoning in the United States.

The repeated killings of Black people by those who are tasked to serve and protect raise questions about the fundamental tenets and values of this nation. The present report, *Power Beyond Measure: Reshaping the Research and Evaluation Landscape for Boys and Men of Color*, is intended as a clarion call to our peers in philanthropy, to consider and take responsibility for confronting the historical and systemic forces that harm boys and men of color and undermine their ability to thrive. Similarly, we must reexamine the research, evaluation, and data on boys and men of color.

To create a more effective agenda for research and evaluation in service of a more equitable society, Schwandt and Gates (2016) have suggested that we interrogate sources of power, knowledge and expertise, and legitimation by asking the following questions:

- **Power:** Who are (or ought to be) the decision-makers? Who is (or should be) in command of our resources and in a position to change our measures of improvement? What conditions are (or ought to be) part of the decision environment?
- **Knowledge and expertise:** Who is (or ought to be) considered a professional, or an expert? What expertise is consulted? What counts (or should count) as relevant knowledge?
- **Legitimation:** What secures (or ought to secure) the emancipation of people affected by the premises and promises of those involved? Where does (or should) legitimacy lie? What worldview does (or should) underlie the creation and maintenance of the system in question? What different visions or meanings of improvement are (or ought to be) considered and reconciled?

To that end, we invite you to read and reflect on this report. We hope you will consider how you invest in, commission, and consume research and evaluation with boys and men of color. Given the current state of the boys and men of color field and the surge of attention brought to issues affecting boys and men of color in this critical year, we urge funders first and foremost, but also researchers and evaluators, to (1) center boys and men of color; (2) promote community power- and capacity-building; (3) learn and use diverse research approaches; (4) research, support, and engage in systems-level change; (5) disseminate and translate results with and for boys and men of color; and (6) practice equity to advance equity.

Over the next 12 months, we plan to engage boys and men of color, researchers, evaluators, and funders in a dialogue about a sustainable infrastructure that will support the recommendations and vision of *Power Beyond Measure*. Together, we will harness the momentum spurred by this year of racial reckoning to push the field forward.

Sincerely,

**The Research, Evaluation, & Data
for Boys and Men of Color Funder Workgroup**

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WHY POWER BEYOND MEASURE? WHY NOW?

For nearly 30 years, philanthropy has worked in partnership with communities across the country to develop a field explicitly focused on improving life outcomes for boys and men of color (BMOC). The BMOC field has successfully developed in some ways—as in the growing volume of actors, organizations, and public will—and struggled to develop in others—as in the development of evidence- and asset-based solutions for the challenges BMOC face.¹

Power Beyond Measure: Reshaping the Research and Evaluation Landscape for Boys and Men of Color is one addition to the ongoing dialogue on how to best support BMOC, considering the systemic and historical forces working against them and their often-overlooked contributions to society. In the pages of this research agenda, **we offer strategies for researchers, evaluators, and funders** to contribute to people of color thriving in their lives, families, and communities; specifically, we focus on BMOC living in the United States. In doing so, we also recommend ways to shift power in the practice of research and evaluation—fields that have historically oppressed people of color.

Researchers, evaluators, and funders are only a fraction of those who have a stake in and influence the use of research, evaluation, and data to advance equity for BMOC. However, we start here with the intention to offer steps that these actors can take to help break research and evaluation away from white-supremacist, traditionally Western roots, and restructure the field through lenses of anti-racism and community ownership.

Leaders in the nonprofit sector, policy-makers, advocates, and organizers in communities serving people of color will also see themselves in this research agenda. Indeed, these are many of the people who contributed to *Power Beyond Measure*, sharing knowledge and stories from their deep experience working alongside and on behalf of BMOC all over the country. We are incredibly grateful to every person who took time and energy to share their perspectives on how research, evaluation, and data can be strengthened and reimagined to better serve BMOC. It is our hope that this research agenda will spark contemplation and serious conversations about what is needed for BMOC in the U.S. to thrive, and how research and evaluation, in particular, can contribute.

WHY A CONTINUED FOCUS ON BOYS AND MEN OF COLOR?

We define BMOC as boys and men who belong to Asian, Black, Indigenous or Native, Latinx, Pacific Islander, and other communities of color. In the U.S., BMOC who are thriving do so despite widespread and systemic racism that seeks to stereotype, distort, and dehumanize them. It must be emphasized that this is not just the work of our country's racist history; it is also actively maintained in modern systems and institutions built by and for white people, coded to relegate BMOC to an under-caste. The U.S. criminal justice system may be among the first examples that come to mind, but the field and institutions of research and evaluation are no exception, as we will highlight throughout this report.

BMOC are the ones who should be defining and telling their own narratives of success—not largely white-constructed and controlled media, political, commercial, and research institutions, to name only some of the systems that create narrow public images of and assumptions about BMOC. Interview respondents with whom we spoke—all leaders in the BMOC field, including policy-makers, practitioners, researchers, evaluators, and funders—shared a number of perspectives on what thriving looks like for this diverse group. Their responses ranged from feeling like they belong, are included, and are rooted in community; to experiencing healing and respect; to having spaces designed by and for them, where they can show up exactly as themselves. We also look to the Alliance for Boys and Men of Color's The People's Platform in considering what thriving looks like for BMOC. The Platform lays out both a vision, shared here, and a set of rights for thriving BMOC and their communities.²

We are grounded in our shared dreams for the world we want to live in. We are building a world:

- *Rooted in unity, equity, equality, freedom, and justice*
- *Based on mutual support, strength, leadership, and love*
- *Where our whole selves are valued*
- *That is safe and fosters courage*

Research and evaluation can help us to better understand, articulate, and support BMOC-defined narratives of success. In order to do so, we must challenge comparisons to notions of thriving that are white-centered and primarily favor individualist values. The strategies and actions put forth in subsequent sections help to address this objective.

BMOC are not a monolith. The experiences of Pacific Islanders are different and unique from those of Latinx communities, just as the experiences of Sri Lankan communities in the U.S. are distinct from Indian communities. This research agenda uses the term *boys and men of color* (BMOC) to locate research, evaluation, and related funding strategies that, uniquely applied, should support advancing equity for each group. We do not intend for BMOC to be bunched into a single category or treated as such by researchers, evaluators, and funders. We will continue to remind readers of this throughout.

Finally, this research agenda should not be considered at the expense of girls, women, transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming members of the community. While we primarily discuss cis-male and male-identifying people of color in these pages, individually defined gender identity and intersectionality must have space in this research. Too often, BMOC identities have been treated as two-dimensional, focusing only on race and binary gender. If intersectionality is to be truly addressed in research and evaluation, recognition must be given to BMOC's range of identities: gay, queer, and other sexual orientations and gender identities; ethnicity; ability; spirituality; nationality; and socioeconomic identities.³ Additionally, we are compelled by the ways communities and people are impacted—including marked positive familial and economic effects⁴—when BMOC, specifically, are thriving. Researchers, evaluators, and funders should be inclusive of BMOC's multiple and intersectional identities, and consider the influences in their environments.

THE PEOPLE'S PLATFORM VISION

ALLIANCE FOR BOYS AND MEN OF COLOR

We are grounded in our shared dreams for the world we want to live in.

We are building a world...

Rooted in unity, equity, equality, freedom, and justice

Based on mutual support, strength, leadership, and love

Where our whole selves are valued

That is safe and fosters courage

WHY POWER BEYOND MEASURE? WHY NOW?

POWER BEYOND MEASURE ORIGINS

Power Beyond Measure has its origins in a 2013 convening of funders affiliated with the Executives' Alliance for Boys and Men of Color.⁵ These funders came together to identify a path forward to create better alignment between research and practice, and to articulate programmatic and systems-level solutions for the issues facing BMOC today. The group of funders later launched Research, Integration, Strategies, and Evaluation for Boys and Men of Color (RISE for BMOC), which sought to harness the tools of convening and strategic grant-making to build knowledge and shift the ways research and evaluation for BMOC are conducted. Overall, RISE for BMOC surfaced eight areas for attention:⁶

1. A popularity of deficit-based frameworks
2. A lack of interdisciplinary knowledge-sharing
3. Inaccessibility of appropriately translated research and evaluation
4. Limited availability of culturally responsive evaluation resources
5. The misidentification of expertise
6. Racial imbalance in published research and evaluation on BMOC
7. Inattentiveness to inter- and intra-racial gender dynamics
8. Methodological lopsidedness within and between disciplines

The RISE initiative sunsetted in 2018, having generated renewed energy among researchers, evaluators, and practitioners to advance solutions for issues facing BMOC.

To build on RISE's momentum, in October 2018, The California Endowment funded the Executives' Alliance for Boys and Men of Color to co-sponsor a convening focused on research, evaluation, and data about BMOC. This convening brought together funders and practitioners working in all regions of the U.S. Based on recommendations from that convening, representatives from The California Endowment, Annie E. Casey Foundation, and W.K. Kellogg Foundation saw a need to co-design next steps that encouraged the production of research, evaluation, and data useful for those practitioners and organizations serving BMOC and that continued to address the gaps identified by RISE. The three initial funders, as well as the Executives' Alliance for Boys and Men of Color and the Obama Foundation, later formed a funders committee and formally engaged Equivolve to complete this work.

Between Fall 2019 and Spring 2020, Equivolve conducted a survey and stakeholder interviews with leaders and practitioners serving BMOC. Either directly or indirectly, survey respondents worked on issues affecting BMOC, in any of the following roles:

- Leader of an initiative or network
- Practitioner or program administrator
- Public administrator or policy professional
- Funder of programs or initiatives
- Funder of research or evaluation
- Researcher/evaluator

The intent of the survey was to understand the extent to which respondents had participated in or funded research or evaluation for BMOC; learn about their experiences with research or evaluation; and ascertain key questions or studies that have helped or could help to advance the field. We conducted interviews with additional stakeholders who held known experience working on issues related to BMOC, either in research focused on a BMOC population or in direct or capacity-building work for organizations with a BMOC-focused mission. We designed our data-collection process to explore current research, evaluation, data, and policy-related efforts underway; and to identify issues and priorities that, if addressed through research and evaluation, could help to advance solutions for BMOC. Accordingly, this work would provide strategies to funders for supporting research, evaluation, and data efforts for BMOC, as well as recommendations to researchers and evaluators working in the field. *Power Beyond Measure* is the result of these data-collection efforts. More information on methodology and survey/interview participants can be found in the Methodology Appendix.

WHAT DO WE MEAN WHEN WE SAY "RESEARCH, EVALUATION, AND DATA"?

This research agenda is by no means the first to invite research and evaluation to both be equitable and serve the pursuit of equity. The Equitable Evaluation Initiative and RISE for BMOC have led the way in modeling why and how research, evaluation, and philanthropy can advance equity and benefit BMOC.^{7,8} Chicago Beyond's *Why Am I Always Being Researched?*—a guidebook for community organizations, researchers, and funders—offers detailed strategies for shifting power in community-based research.⁹ *Power Beyond Measure* is both informed by and a complement to these and others' work, and is meant to continue the conversation. As such, it should be considered a living document. While the underlying values of bringing equity and justice to research, evaluation, and data remain the same, the strategies and actions to realize those values will surely evolve over time.

For the purposes of this agenda, research, evaluation, and data have overlapping definitions. While there may be examples of research and evaluation that are not fully encapsulated by our definitions, we find this orientation helpful for defining the domains in which *Power Beyond Measure* asks researchers, evaluators, and funders to implement strategies that help advance equity for BMOC.

Research

Research includes studies that explore or seek to confirm specific issues or phenomena that are not explicitly related to implementation, outcomes, or effectiveness of a program, policy, or initiative. Example research studies might include those identifying factors that facilitate college graduation for Black males, exploring characteristics of community cohesion in specific Native communities, or examining the landscape or scope of an issue that may inform policy or program development. Research studies may produce new qualitative or quantitative data or may analyze existing data to understand phenomena.

Evaluation

Evaluation examines the implementation, outcomes, or effectiveness of specific programs, policies, interventions, or initiatives. For example, an evaluation may gather qualitative and/or quantitative information to document the process of implementing a program, with the goal of improving future implementation at new sites. Evaluations might also collect information before and after a policy is enacted to measure community or population-level changes. Similar to research studies, evaluations may both produce new data and analyze existing data to understand program, policy, intervention, or initiative implementation and outcomes.

Data

Data are simply quantitative and qualitative pieces of information. They may be shared or observed. As indicated above, research studies and evaluations may both produce new data and analyze existing data. Data may be collected and used for purposes such as policy advocacy, quality improvement, performance measurement, and grant reporting. A well-known example of data is produced by the U.S. Census, which collects and stores vast amounts of demographic, economic, and social information. Another example includes administrative data collected by public systems and programs to document information such as system interaction, services received, cost of services, and outcomes. Personal, familial, and cultural stories and histories may also be forms of data. We are careful to note that when those stories and histories are only shared between and among loved ones, friends, and generations of families, they are not data. Stories and histories should only become data once those who own them choose to share to inform research, evaluation, or other efforts.

“Research and evaluation can help us to better understand, articulate, and support BMOC-defined narratives of success. In order to do so, we must challenge comparisons to notions of thriving that are white-centered and primarily favor individualist values.”

WHY POWER BEYOND MEASURE? WHY NOW?

RESEARCH, EVALUATION, AND DATA STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS TO ADVANCE EQUITY FOR BOYS AND MEN OF COLOR

Power Beyond Measure lays out six strategies and supporting actions that we believe will advance equity for BMOG. These strategies and actions are derived from Equivolve's interviews and surveys conducted with leaders in the BMOG field, as well as a literature review. They challenge dominant paradigms and aim to flip the research, evaluation, and funding status quo to one that not only serves BMOG but actively supports their thriving.

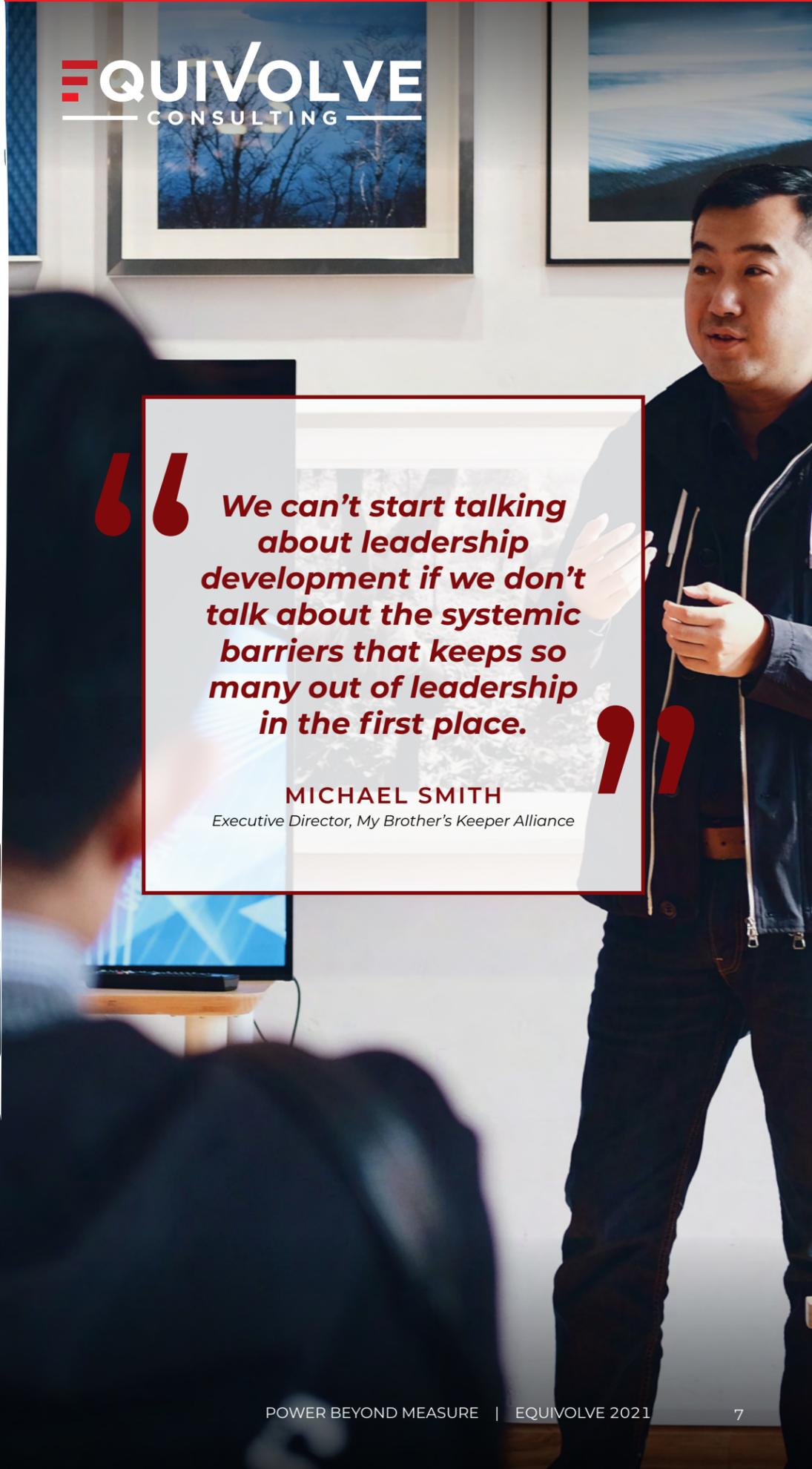
The most popular research paradigms and perspectives draw from positivist and post-positivist frameworks, which focus on efforts to verify (positivism) or falsify (post-positivism) propositions and express functional relationships.¹⁰ Positivism assumes that there is an absolute truth about a subject of study that can be understood without being influenced by a researcher. Post-positivism, created as a critique of positivism, also assumes that there is an absolute truth about a subject, but that this truth is subject to the researcher's bias. Therefore, instead of assuming that a truth is singly identifiable, post-positivism asks scientists to keep working to improve and find methods that will better uncover that truth.¹¹ Made popular by Western and often white thinkers, these research paradigms privilege quantitative methods and ask that researchers remain distant toward the subject of their research to find "truth." The researcher is thought to be "capable of studying the object without influencing it or being influenced by it."¹² When conducting research in communities of color, however, objectivity dehumanizes people by asking researchers to prioritize thinking about communities and people as research subjects from a supposedly unbiased perspective. Consequently, in these paradigms, "truth" is arrived at without the need for community input or consideration of a community's history or knowledge.

By treating communities as subjects of study, researchers are neither obligated to conduct research that can help communities nor to consider those communities an audience for research findings. They are not obligated to build relationships with communities, and their research may have little to no meaning for the individuals or groups being studied.¹³ Noted Indigenous scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith discusses how "the West can desire, extract and claim ownership of our ways of knowing, our imagery, and the things we create and produce"¹⁴ and that

"Western researchers and intellectuals can assume to know all that is possible to know of us, on the basis of their brief encounters with some of us."¹⁵ It is only when researchers show care for the communities in which they conduct research; understand community members as partners in research; and take the time to collectively design research that builds on community history, knowledge, and strengths that both researchers and communities will benefit from research and evaluation.

The presumption that societal benefit is a primary outcome of research often leads researchers and evaluators to assume they are naturally embodying beneficence, rather than intentionally instituting methodologies and research approaches that help put this ideal into action.¹⁶ It is important that researchers and evaluators acknowledge that personal and implicit biases are present and difficult, even impossible, to remove. Making changes to how research and evaluation are designed and conducted can help address bias; improve trust between researchers, evaluators, and communities; and produce more robust data. Assuming that good intentions are all that is needed from researchers to do equitable research perpetuates harm and ignores the history of research being used to disenfranchise communities of color.¹⁷⁻²⁰ As quoted by legendary basketball coach John Wooden and referenced by Glenn Love, CEO of Equivolve, in his opening letter, "let us not mistake activity for achievement" when it comes to doing research and evaluation with communities of color.

The strategies and actions put forth in *Power Beyond Measure* are not discrete, complete, or exhaustive; they overlap and influence each other. They are both a mandate and an invitation to continued creativity, scholarship, action, and advocacy as to how research, evaluation, and data can and must advance equity for BMOG. We believe that if researchers, evaluators, and funders begin with these strategies and actions, and integrate supporting practices into their work, we will rightly challenge the status quo and make critical field advancements. Simultaneously and in so doing, we must follow and walk alongside BMOG to bring even better strategies and critical partners to the table. The goal is not only to challenge the status quo, but break it down and rebuild the research and evaluation field until and beyond the time when BMOG are thriving in every single community in the U.S.



We can't start talking about leadership development if we don't talk about the systemic barriers that keeps so many out of leadership in the first place.

MICHAEL SMITH

Executive Director, My Brother's Keeper Alliance

STRATEGY 1: CENTER BOYS AND MEN OF COLOR

BMOC must be central to work that includes them. Centering BMOC means designing and funding research and evaluation that fully engages them, their skills, and their knowledge, and that explores their experiences as distinct and independent from white-defined expectations and ideals. We look here to the phrase, “Nothing about us without us.”

RESEARCHERS & EVALUATORS

Co-construct studies.

It is not enough to simply study BMOC; they should be engaged as authentic partners in research and evaluation throughout every stage of the work. Authentic partnership happens when BMOC are included not only for educational or consultative purposes, but when they have power to make decisions about what and how studies take place.²¹ Inviting BMOC to participate in the process once it has already been designed does not help to identify potentially harmful research structures or methodologies, a step crucial to preventing the continued use of studies that center white ideas and understandings. Further, if BMOC are excluded from research planning, implementation, and interpreting results, there is no guarantee that data will be accurate or meaningful for their communities. One stakeholder we interviewed described what it took to work in partnership to gather robust data from Pacific Islander communities:

It was asking elders for permission. What do you want? What do you need? Because we need to do research that's not extractive, that is accurate . . . there's no such thing as objective data.

Meaningful engagement of BMOC in research and evaluation can take many and multiple forms, including staffed research team positions, research advisory or working groups, community forums and polling, community-action boards, and community-based data collection and analysis teams. By engaging communities from the beginning, researchers and evaluators can better prevent harm and ensure that the purpose of the study benefits not only the researchers, but also the partnered communities.

Compensate BMOC.

Collaborating with BMOC and their communities is the first step, but if BMOC are to be full partners in research and evaluation, they should be accordingly compensated for their time, participation, and expertise. Not only is there a wealth of knowledge in communities of color, but also research skills and mindsets that are generally overlooked and

undervalued. Not compensating community members who are engaging in the work is exploitative and perpetuates racist research methodologies and funding strategies. We ask researchers and evaluators to not only include budget lines for stipends and/or salaries that compensate BMOC for their various contributions, but also to consult community members and obtain approval regarding the manner and type of compensation. In the majority of cases, financial compensation will likely be appropriate. However, individual monetary payment may be viewed as insufficient or unacceptable for some communities of color.

Decenter whiteness.

Researchers using methodologies that draw heavily from Western and white understandings of communities of color can result in assumptions that perpetuate harm. This type of research has historically been used against communities of color to support their conquest, colonization, and systematic oppression. Due to this history, we cannot assume that good intentions alone will lead to equitable research.²²

As stated by Guba and Lincoln (1994), “human behavior . . . cannot be understood without reference to the meanings and purposes attached by human actors to their activities.”²³ To decenter whiteness and center BMOC, researchers and evaluators should seek to understand data through the meanings and purposes that BMOC and their communities attach to their own behavior, rather than the assumptions that white and Western views have attached throughout history. By engaging in study co-design, co-developing data-collection instruments, co-interpreting data, and including cultural traditions, researchers and evaluators can begin to decenter whiteness and collect data that are accurate, useful, and less likely to perpetuate harmful stereotypes and assumptions.

Eliminate extractive research practices.

A researcher or evaluator who recognizes and is not restricted by the limitations of Western understandings of “impartiality” is better equipped to effectively engage with communities and identify root causes of phenomena. This contrasts with extractive research, or research centering only on the needs, interests, and priorities of researchers instead of BMOC and their communities. Research and evaluation that veil extraction in the name of equity cause additional burdens for under-resourced communities while reinforcing “expert” credentials for researchers and evaluators.²⁴ Researchers can work to eliminate extractive practices by building a genuine relationship with the community, wherein power is shared and studies are truly for the community's benefit. This can also result in collection, community interpretation, and community ownership of richer data that include cultural understandings of researched phenomena. As one stakeholder put it, relationship-building can begin when a researcher shares more of their self:

[Relationship-building is] saying things that . . . put pieces of myself out in front of you, and then seeing how you react to them and finding the pieces that we are connected on . . . I'm giving you bits of information. You're giving me bits of information. I'm sharing more things with you. You're showing, sharing more things with me.

Research and evaluate programs that celebrate elders, community knowledge, and history.

Researchers and evaluators can offer a platform for programs that recognize community knowledge and strengths. There are various programs that engage youth of color and elders to explore traditional practices and facilitate healing in their communities. These programs may also emphasize continuity of oral traditions that have served as a crucial mechanism for transferring histories, values, and customs in communities of color. One stakeholder described Fresh Tracks,²⁵ a program that brings youth of color from different communities together with each other and with their elders:

It started with a pilot program that brought a group . . . from native villages in Alaska together with boys and young men in Compton . . . and they did two weeks of cross-cultural leadership development and power-building with the outdoors as a healing platform. In the next round of that evaluation . . . youth of color are going to be working on directing their own wellbeing measures. So, there's going to be a lot of rich strengths-based data coming out that I think will be really important for BMOC work in general.

Researchers and evaluators should respect the contribution of youth and elders, and understand that these traditions are their expertise and their property. To the extent that communities believe their traditions can help illuminate research and evaluation projects, or would like those traditions to be explored through research, researchers and evaluators should follow their lead and be certain community members are in control of that process and its results.

**WE CANNOT ASSUME THAT
GOOD INTENTIONS ALONE WILL LEAD
TO EQUITABLE RESEARCH**



FRESH TRACKS

Fresh Tracks provides young Indigenous, rural, and urban leaders with traditional and experiential activities that help give participants a first-hand understanding of their respective communities, tools to identify and confront marginalizing and deficit perceptions, and the knowledge of their collective power to bring about social change.

The Wellbeing Measure Project, a project of Fresh Tracks, supports development of innovative wellbeing and healing measures created by youth and young adults of color through a participatory action research process. The goal is to provide youth-led and neighborhood advocacy groups, tribal councils, community-based organization, schools, funders, and more with an open-source, app-based tool to gather information about the strengths and needs of youth and young adults of color in their communities.

The Wellbeing Measure Project centers around the Youth and Young Adult Design Team. Members are between 18 and 24 years old and self-identify as American Indian/Alaskan Native, African American/Black, or Latinx. They first engage in a workshop series that centers culture through youth-led participatory action research and a series of research camps, then make a research plan and complete data collection to develop a wellness measure for their cultural identity group. Youth and young adults all receive a stipend for their work.

You can learn more about Fresh Tracks and the Wellbeing Measure Project at aspencommunitysolutions.org/fresh-tracks.

STRATEGY 1: CENTER BOYS AND MEN OF COLOR

FUNDERS

Support research and evaluation conducted by BMOC and researchers of color.

One path to more diversity in the fields of research and evaluation is the pipeline—those institutions that train, employ, and fund researchers and evaluators—supporting scientists who represent a range of races, ethnicities, and genders.²⁶ A study examining the rates of Black or African American researchers funded by the National Institutes of Health compared to white researchers showed disparities in awards even after controlling for educational background, country of origin, training, previous research awards, and employer characteristics.²⁷ Topics studied by these researchers of color accounted for over 20% of that funding gap. Black or African American researchers tended to request funding for studies that include human subjects and topics that may directly affect communities and populations, such as healthcare, psychosocial issues, disease prevention, and adolescence.²⁸ By intentionally funding researchers and evaluators of color, and challenging proposals that exclude them, funders can help to shift funding disparities, combat the pipeline issue, make BMOC inclusion a part of research methodology, and ensure that more research is done on those topics directly affecting their communities.

It is not enough, however, to simply fund researchers and evaluators of color. Diversifying the pipeline should be coupled with strategies and actions described in this research agenda to create an evaluation ecosystem²⁹ that shifts the relationship and power balance between research/evaluation and communities of color.

Fully realizing this action may mean that funders who typically use invite-only processes change their request for proposals (RFP) process. Invite-only RFP processes (or not using an RFP process at all) can result in the same, often white-led, organizations that have long-standing funder relationships being selected to conduct research on communities of color. The following are some ways to help support research and evaluation conducted by BMOC and researchers of color:

- **Publicly list RFPs** on the websites of those foundations, professional organizations, historically Black colleges and universities, culturally based organizations, and with other educational institutions that serve researchers and evaluators of color.
- **Disseminate RFPs** to networks and institutions where researchers and evaluators of color work and collaborate—for example, the Advancing Culturally-responsive and Equitable Evaluation Network (ACE)³⁰ and BIPOC-led evaluation firms.
- **Score proposals** in a way that emphasizes the inclusion of researchers and evaluators of color, especially as principal investigators or in other leadership roles.

Require research and evaluation proposals to be co-designed with BMOC, and adequately resource projects.

Funding requirements can present formidable challenges to developing and employing innovative, culturally appropriate research methods. These requirements also too often accept the absence of researchers and research co-designers of color on project proposals. We ask funders to explicitly fund research and evaluation projects co-designed by BMOC, while challenging or rejecting those projects that are not.

Funding studies that are co-designed with BMOC gives them more control over narratives about their communities and may create more opportunities for new methodologies, perspectives, and discovery practices. As one stakeholder stated, “If we rely too heavily on texts, and books, and academia . . . that’s also a reproduction of colonial ways and means of developing folks.” Instead, funders should support researchers who are from and are collaborating with communities of color in “thinking about how ancestral wisdom can also guide us. Because there’s a lot of ways.”

Time for building authentic relationships with BMOC and their communities should be built into funders’ project budgets. Developing rapport, relationship-building, learning and incorporating cultural traditions, co-designing studies, and co-interpreting data require time and effort from researchers and evaluators. When funders do not adequately resource these efforts, even the most responsive researchers and evaluators will be challenged with effectively engaging BMOC and their communities.

Require budget lines that equitably compensate BMOC and their communities.

If BMOC are to be full partners in research and evaluation work conducted in their communities, they must be equitably compensated for their work, insight, time, and participation. Work on research advisory groups, on community-action boards, as data collectors and analyzers, as community-based project leads or research staff, and as participants in focus groups and interviews are just some examples of paid roles and contributions that funders should look for in project proposal budgets.

Equitable compensation and BMOC-informed community investment help keep people engaged in research and evaluation, which can help change research norms, center BMOC experiences, and shift power back to communities. One stakeholder illustrated how involving youth and investing in their development and priorities contributes to successful programming:

We invest money in their community projects together and then [provide] ongoing . . . technical assistance and leadership work. So, I bring up the context because the evaluation was really rich from the beginning, and that’s what really sold me on [why we’ve] got to scale this program out.

By requiring research and evaluation projects to budget for compensating every active participant and supporting those programs that matter to BMOC, funders promote work that BMOC are invested in and care about, and help advance equitable research that also serves the pursuit of equity.



STRATEGY 2: PROMOTE COMMUNITY POWER- & CAPACITY-BUILDING

Promoting community power and capacity means increasing efforts to help communities “identify priorities and opportunities to foster and sustain positive neighborhood change.”³¹ When community capacity is high, communities can identify needs and assets, and direct resources to support thriving accordingly.

RESEARCHERS & EVALUATORS

Research and evaluate power- and capacity-building efforts.

There is a need for more power-building programs and programs that build the capacity of organizations working in BMOC communities, but the data needed to validate efforts are limited. Researching and evaluating these programs can strengthen the data foundation and allow them to be better funded and scaled. One of the stakeholders shared:

We care very much about... supporting the building of power among populations who have been marginalized and have just been disenfranchised and disempowered. And so we care that the center of that is community organizing, so we invest quite a bit in community organizing and advocacy... We also believe that culturally rooted healing practices are really important [and] that's infused across everything.

Power- and capacity-building efforts like community organizing, advocacy, culturally based healing efforts, and more can have large and long-lasting impacts on BMOC and their communities. Researching and evaluating these efforts and programs will help their impact, reach, and sustainability.

Incorporate power-building frameworks into research and evaluation design.

It is not necessary for researchers and evaluators to create new power-building frameworks. Entering a project with the intent and desire to share power but a perception that a new framework will need to be created can feel overwhelming. Promoting the use of existing approaches such as community-based participatory research, participatory action research, community-based systems dynamics, and equitable evaluation can help researchers build on existing strengths, center communities, and contribute to communities developing their own evaluation capacity. Frameworks like the Ladder of Citizen Participation can help inform power-sharing and power-building within the context of research and evaluation.³²

Researchers and evaluators should explicitly focus on building community power in research design. As one stakeholder described, “We have to start with [community] healing and confidence-building, and I think [that's one of the things] in the BMOC world that's been super powerful.” This stakeholder went on to describe how much communities can accomplish when they have the power to influence programs and address their own needs. Incorporating power-building into research and evaluation design will help better identify what those needs are and contribute to sustained program improvement and community thriving.

Reframe inquiry from deficit-based to strength-based.

Deficit-based research does not highlight what a community is doing well; rather, it propagates negative stereotypes about communities of color. According to one stakeholder:

Oftentimes... research is very deficit-based. I think that there are lots of assets within our communities, as well, that don't get talked about a lot or don't get researched a lot, when there are huge opportunities to do that.

Researchers are generally trained to develop questions that ask about the nature and causes of a problem rather than of an asset. This is not to say that research and evaluation should not seek to identify a community's needs or challenges, but that it should also frame inquiry to focus on strengths and successes. Deficit-based approaches “have not been very successful, with most reviews indicating modest or null results, especially for behaviors (versus knowledge and attitudes) and especially for replications or usual practices.”³³ Approaches such as appreciative inquiry can help researchers and evaluators to focus on individual and community strengths.³⁴ Shifting to a strengths-based approach can highlight what a community is doing well and help to better understand the strengths and leadership within communities of color. Strengths-based research and evaluation also have better community buy-in and less backlash.³⁵

Integrate and study narrative-building frameworks and transformational narratives about BMOC.

For so long, dominant narratives about communities of color have been shaped by how white people and Western societies view them. One stakeholder described how Pacific Islander youth understand the narrative about their futures, stating, “When we have conversations, [I'll ask] ‘Well, what does that even mean? What is PI?’ And for a lot of them, the story is, ‘Well, PIs don't go to school, and PIs don't vote, and PIs play football.’” The stakeholder then inquired about how that narrative was formed, and the youth could not locate when or where they'd first heard these ideas. When challenging those narratives, this stakeholder also emphasized “wanting to empower [the youth] to dictate what PI is.” This example highlights that while BMOC do not always know where narratives about their community come from, they can still shape how they see themselves, their peers, and their futures.

We ask researchers and evaluators to flip from deficit frames to strength and transformational frames—usually focusing on the assets and aspirations of BMOC—in research design and products.³⁶ This means designing studies and framing results that go past reporting on disparities, for example—and that instead spread an evidence-based understanding of the diverse narratives within communities of color, what BMOC are achieving, what helps them do well, and their many contributions to communities and society more broadly. We also invite researchers and evaluators to evaluate existing and emerging narratives for their effectiveness in changing perceptions. The latter is critical to building truer, more representative, and expanded pictures of thriving BMOC.



As highlighted by the Executives' Alliance for Boys and Men of Color and the Perception Institute's *His Story: Shifting Narratives for Boys and Men of Color*, our existing frames, even those that have been helpful in fighting racism, are incomplete. Narratives told through frames of history, structural racism, white privilege, shared values, and bias alone are not sufficient to achieve full narrative change. By working with BMOC to create, integrate, and evaluate new narrative-building frameworks and transformational narratives into research and evaluation studies, researchers and evaluators help expand and spread narratives that change prevailing limiting perceptions of BMOC.



ABFE

Strengthening Black Communities
SINCE 1971

BEYOND PLIGHT

Commissioned by the Association of Black Foundation Executives' (ABFE) and its Black Male Funders Learning and Action Network (LAN), *Beyond Plight: Defining Pathways to Optimal Development for Black Men and Boys Across the Life Course* is an evidence-based outcomes and indicators framework to help measure progress in Black male achievement. **Beyond Plight** gives philanthropies a framework to guide targeted, responsive investments and to measure the impact of those investments in the Black men and boys field. The framework aims to reframe the debate on Black men and boys to focus more deliberately on achievement and optimal development, encourage accurate narratives, and share protective factors and success indicators across the life course.

In the framework, ABFE lays out how philanthropy can inform research and local action in advancing a collective agenda for Black men and boys. Namely, philanthropy can invest in and test interventions that focus on the optimal development and protective factors provided in *Beyond Plight*. They can also practice responsive instead of "reactive" philanthropy and step out of funding silos that fund singular issues and cause competition instead of collaboration that can lead to sustainable solutions. To learn more about how *Beyond Plight* flips the frame on measuring outcomes with and for Black men and boys visit tinyurl.com/ABFEBeyondPlight.

STRATEGY 2: PROMOTE COMMUNITY POWER- & CAPACITY-BUILDING

FUNDERS

Fund research and evaluation positions within grassroots organizations and programs.

Two barriers to grassroots organizations participating in more evaluation work is a lack of trust between funders and those organizations, as well as uncertainty on the organizations' behalf about how evaluation results will be interpreted by funders.³⁷ Funders need to work harder to remove these barriers. Ways to begin include supporting community evaluation capacity and funding innovative research and evaluation designs that reflect community views and cultural knowledge. Providing resources that allow organizations to hire in-house evaluation staff will allow them to collect and interpret data; assess and document program implementation and outcomes in a way that is responsive to the communities being served; and, ultimately, get additional funding from private and/or public sources. It also can enable organizations to tell their own stories, in addition to responding to standard grant reporting requirements. One stakeholder described the importance of empowering communities through research and evaluation at their organization:

Ultimately, what we're trying to do is really empower and center communities in all facets of this work, including the research, the data collection, understanding what it is, what they're doing, how are young people and communities better off.

However, just funding evaluation roles will be insufficient for building trust between funders and grassroots organizations. We recommend having open conversations during which funders learn about the goals these organizations have for themselves. Funders can ask the organizations what types of data might be meaningful for their work, not just for funding purposes, and in what ways these data can be shared to further build community assets. Rather than serving only as a program officer, the funder can serve as a learning partner.

Reframe funding priorities to focus on community assets, power-building, and narrative-building.

Power- and narrative-building efforts need to be continuously funded, as they are crucial to building community capacity and sustaining equitable outcomes. By changing how funding calls are framed, funders can lead the way in normalizing strengths-based, asset-focused research and evaluation. This framing shift can improve BMOC buy-in and promote more equitable research and evaluation practices in communities of color.

Additionally, funders can specifically support studies that aim to evaluate and expand current and emerging narrative frames about BMOC. Research and evaluation that help us understand the effectiveness and impact of transformational and new narrative frames that might be most promising for advancing equity, as well as how to best spread those narratives to the U.S. public, will result in more tools to change public perceptions that limit BMOC.³⁸

I do believe in the work and the power of people to be able to be the agents of change, and I believe in people who have the greatest proximity to these issues and problems to be the experts.

MARC PHILPART

Managing Director, PolicyLink; Principal Coordinator, Alliance for Boys and Men of Color

BROTHERS @

Brothers@ elevates the power of young men of color (YMOC) by recruiting, training, and hiring collegiate men of color to serve as positive male role models to their high-school peers and by creating pathways to full-time employment as professional mentors on college campuses, within local communities, and in nonprofits. Brothers@'s innovative Our Space facilitation methodology is the key to the program's success—providing a nonjudgmental space where they can learn, unlearn, heal, and grow, and where their individual experiences are elevated to a form of authority.

In collaboration with high schools, colleges, corporations, and nonprofits, Brothers@ uses their Our Space methodology to create spaces of ownership and develop curriculum that taps into the deep, authentic knowledge that YMOC possess—ultimately creating blueprints for persistence and achievement.

Brothers@ has shown positive outcomes in their early program years. To capitalize on that potential and serve more YMOC, Brothers@ has received funds to create and implement a process and outcomes evaluation system to further demonstrate their impact and identify program elements core to successful replication. With a strong evaluation system in place and the data that comes with it, Brothers@ will be even better prepared to communicate their success and effectively scale their model to new sites across the U.S. To learn more about Brothers@ visit brothers@.org.



Photo credit:
Jordan Hiraldo

STRATEGY 3: LEARN & USE DIVERSE RESEARCH APPROACHES

Because BMOC have largely not had a seat at the table when making decisions about what should be studied and how it should be studied, dominant research methodologies do not reflect or serve their communities. When research approaches are built to consider the diverse cultural traditions and ways of knowing that exist in communities of color, what does it look like? There already exists a rich body of work to guide our answer. We encourage researchers, evaluators, and funders to embrace diverse research approaches, and question why and whether white-centered, so-called “normative” methodologies should be placed on such a high pedestal in the research and evaluation fields.³⁹⁻⁴²

Simultaneously, we caution readers against superficial notions of “expertise” in knowing and applying these approaches. If they are new or unfamiliar, educating oneself and then advocating that colleagues and institutions do the same should be the first steps.

RESEARCHERS & EVALUATORS

Build knowledge of diverse research approaches.

Researchers and evaluators are traditionally educated in research methodologies that marginalize people of color. Interrogating conventional notions of validity, categorization, and data extraction is necessary to conduct research equitably. Researchers and evaluators can build their knowledge base in frameworks and scientific methods grounded outside of traditionally Western assumptions, and begin to add to and seek solutions that come from communities of color.

Given varying levels of familiarity with these approaches, we invite researchers and evaluators in partnership with colleagues to learn, apprentice, teach, and mentor culturally based, gender-inclusive, intersectional, and other methodologies that are different from those most commonly taught and utilized in traditional academic and research institutions. Research institutions should require professional development in these methodologies, coupled with examination of how traditional methods do and do not serve BMOC. Organizations like the Center for Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Assessment offer related professional-development opportunities.⁴³ Researchers can also start with this short list to explore some theories, approaches, and methodologies that can bring diverse and inclusive perspectives to research and evaluation.

- **Intersectional theory:** Coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in the late 1980s,⁴⁴ a theory that examines how individual characteristics like race, class, gender, ability, and more intersect and overlap to produce unique experiences and systems of oppression.

- **Critical race theory:** The study and transformation of the relationship between race, racism, and power.⁴⁵
- **Decolonizing research:** Research that aims to remove and undo colonial elements and reclaim Indigenous thoughts, practices, and understandings. This includes the removal of Eurocentric or white-centered understandings of knowledge, and the promotion of methods of knowledge-gathering and truth-seeking that are rooted in communities of color in which research is being conducted.⁴⁶
- **Queer theory:** A theory that rejects heteronormative and binary definitions of sexuality and gender, and incorporates intersectional identity formations.⁴⁷
- **Collectivist frameworks:** A cultural framework whereby individuals exist for the good and progress of the group or greater community.
- **Appreciative inquiry:** An approach to change that starts by asking what is working (strengths) instead of what is not (deficits).^{48,49}
- **Community-based participatory action research:** A research approach that engages those community members most impacted by the research topic—from research design through data analysis and dissemination—in understanding and creating solutions for an issue.
- **Anti-oppression frameworks:** A category that includes many distinct approaches, including anti-racist, anti-ableist, and anti-ageist frameworks.⁵⁰

Create innovative research approaches and methodologies based in the traditions of communities of color.

Researchers and evaluators do not only use research methodologies—they create them. Through validating instruments, building theoretical models, and proposing explanatory frameworks, the work of researchers and evaluators can support or challenge existing research orthodoxies. Researchers and evaluators can create and contribute evidence for innovative research approaches and methodologies that are based in the traditions of communities of color. New and strengthened methodologies can assist in building BMOC narratives of thriving that do not rely on comparisons to or assumptions of success defined by white culture.

While working with BMOC to create research methodologies, researchers and evaluators can also question the prevailing concept of validity. Research methodologies that privilege quantitative data and rely on traditionally Western notions of knowledge-gathering are more easily created and spread by highly resourced, largely white-controlled research institutions and those working within them. However, as the Equitable Evaluation Initiative reminds us,

... the current evaluation paradigm includes definitions and expectations around validity, rigor, bias, and objectivity that honors particular types of knowledge, evidence, and truth. This paradigm looks for generalizable and scaled data and findings that often feel disconnected and not reflective of the values of the nonprofit/community partner, particularly those engaged in equity, inequality, or social justice work.⁵¹

Researchers are in a unique position to challenge the status quo, and they can use the sources and evidence cited in this research agenda to justify the importance of using and creating diverse, specifically anti-Western or anti-Eurocentric approaches in their work.

Integrate ancestral, traditional, and emerging gender ideas into research and evaluation.

BMOC subgroups each experience stereotyping of their “maleness,” and strict male and female categories assist in our narrow mental schemas about BMOC.⁵² They also ignore ancestral gender identities outside of this binary, and these identities can enlighten traditions and values specific to origin communities. One stakeholder shared about gender in relationship to the community they serve:

Folks who could do the roles of both genders were prized because they were twice as useful than any other human, [and] we actually come from matriarchies, [so we have to] remind folks—actually, we’ve always . . . trusted women. That where we are, and how we are, and who we are as a community . . . patriarchy, and homophobia, transphobia—we inherited that from colonization as much as we did smallpox and monotheism.

Thinking outside the gender binary and considering cultural gender roles in designing research and evaluation is one means to narrate the diverse and intersectional identities of people of color. Researchers and evaluators should check assumptions and schemas of BMOC gender identity before engaging in research, as well as actively challenge those schemas to contribute to a more inclusive evidence base.⁵³ Studies and other data-collection efforts can make space for self-identification in service of building richer and more accurate images of BMOC and their individual gender identities. Learning and incorporating anti-oppression theory and frameworks such as feminist and queer theory into research and evaluation designs can help to strengthen these efforts.



Since 1988, **National Compadres Network** (NCN) has empowered service providers, decision-makers, and movement leaders as they help Chicano, Latino, Native, African American, and other communities of color face the challenges of everyday life by regrounding themselves in their rooted cultural assets. They base their work on La Cultura Cura (LCC) Model, a transformative health and healing philosophy that recognizes that within every individual, family, and community, there are authentic, Indigenous values, practices, and traditions that provide a path toward healthy development, restoration, and life-long wellbeing.

NCN uses a culture-based evaluation approach that values what is objectively verifiable but also acknowledges the story of people's subjective cultural experience, including the spiritual reality that guides behavior. Formulation of research questions, methods, instruments, data interpretation, and data application follow five culture-based principles:

Seeks to understand success in measures that are **Meaningful** to the participant.

Honors the **Holistic** nature of experience, acknowledging rational and intuitive sources of evidence.

Strives for **Reciprocity** between those that tell the story and the people living it.

Respects the values, healing practices, and ceremonies of all people.

Compassionately seeks to understand and support the purpose of individuals, family, community, and systems.

For more information about NCN and their approach to evaluation, visit nationalcompadresnetwork.org.

STRATEGY 3: LEARN & USE DIVERSE RESEARCH APPROACHES

FUNDERS

Build institutional knowledge of diverse research approaches.

Foundations cannot support research approaches that challenge traditional orthodoxies if they do not know, understand, or recognize opportunities to use them. Funders can employ staff and select grantees who have particular expertise in those existing and emerging methodologies that decenter whiteness and advance narratives of thriving for BMOC. Funders may also incorporate professional development opportunities for existing staff and grantees to learn about culturally based, gender-inclusive, intersectional, and other methodologies, and to explore ways they can be applied in their work and in service of advancing equity for BMOC.

Create a funding priority area centered on culturally based methodologies.

Funders can support growing the evidence base for culturally based methodologies by funding researchers and projects explicitly using these approaches in work with BMOC. Similarly, funds can be committed to highlighting existing or developing new research approaches that are grounded in the cultures and traditions of various communities of color and, simultaneously, create space for narrative-building with BMOC.

Importantly, funders should acknowledge and treat BMOC not as a singular community but as a collection of many diverse communities, targeting funding to projects that respect and explore these differences. Funding projects that help build distinct methodologies and narratives for each of these communities is crucial to advancing equity and the unique visions of thriving that communities of color have for themselves. One stakeholder highlighted the importance of this in relation to gender justice:

Oftentimes, we're asked to join these spaces that already have a pretty long-standing analysis or assumptions around what gender justice means in communities of color. We realized that type of in-depth analysis doesn't really exist yet within our own communities, and [we're] wanting to start there.

Funders should seek out the expertise of those with experience in culturally based methodologies and those closest to the traditions and cultures of various BMOC communities to help create new priorities and review future proposals that incorporate methodological innovation and narrative-building. We also encourage funders to invest in externally facing products, webinars, or other opportunities that bring these methodologies to life by sharing example investments and case studies, projects in which community leaders apply these methods, and practical guides for incorporating culturally based methodologies into research and evaluation work.

Integrate culturally based methodologies into existing funding priorities.

Existing priority areas may also present opportunities to bring culturally based methodologies into funding portfolios. In particular, where foundations prioritize research focused on BMOC and their communities, these methodologies and supporting research approaches should be strongly recommended or required in successful funding proposals. Potential grantees committed to challenging research and evaluation orthodoxy, like prevailing notions of validity or the “gold-standard” randomized control trial, can be rewarded for honoring and integrating community-based ways of knowing. Funders should employ and/or collaborate with those experienced in these methodologies and closest to BMOC and their respective communities to review research and evaluation proposals.

... for too long, our field has been trying to make young Black men and boys something else than who they really are ... how do we actually change the game to be more about what we need compared to what the world says we're supposed to be?

ANTHONY SMITH
Executive Director, Cities United

EVALUATION WITH ALOHA

Evaluation with Aloha: *A Framework for Working in Native Hawaiian Contexts* guides evaluation practice to respect and promote the cultural values and rights to perpetuation and self-determination of Native Hawaiians and other Indigenous peoples. Most importantly, *Evaluation with Aloha* is grounded in profound respect for the mana (loosely translated as spiritual energy) that permeates all creation. Published by the Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Assessment-Hawai'i (CREA-HI) hui (partnership) in 2019, the framework arose out of several years of dialogue with practitioners, elders, and evaluation users, and millennia of traditional knowledge and practice.

Evaluation with Aloha relies on the wisdom of Hawaiian kupuna (elder) Auntie Pilahi Paki (n.d.), who defined Aloha as:

A	Represents Akahai, which means kindness, to act and to speak with kindness
L	Represents Lōkahi, which means unity, to bring about harmony in spite of differences
O	Represents 'Olu'olu, which means pleasantness, internal peacefulness
H	Represents Ha'aha'a, which means modesty, humility, openness
A	Represents Ahonui, which means patience, waiting for the ripe moment—to persevere



The framework describes evaluation as an integration of the value of Aloha and includes the four iterative and overlapping stages of Pilina Ho'ohana a me ka Hana Hilina'i (building relationships and creating trust), Ho'okahua (design and instrumentation), Mo'olelo (data collection and analysis), and Hō'ike (reporting and use). Each stage offers an approach and questions that encourage evaluators to reflect on how the value of Aloha guides the evaluation. For example, "Who establishes the 'why' of the evaluation?"; "How is the 'voice' of the community heard, processed, and reported?"; "To what extent do the benefits and lessons learned promote ea, or self-determination?"; and "Who shares in the credit for the evaluation study and reporting?"

To learn more about CREA-HI and *Evaluation with Aloha*, or reach out to core members for consultation, visit creahawaii.com.

STRATEGY 4: RESEARCH, SUPPORT, & ENGAGE IN SYSTEMS-LEVEL CHANGE

Research and evaluation can play an important role in uncovering, monitoring, and finding solutions to racism in institutions and systems. Researchers, evaluators, and funders can conduct, support, and engage in systems-level change and research with the purpose of building sustainable anti-racist systems and datasets that truly serve BMOOC.

RESEARCHERS & EVALUATORS

In addition to documenting systemic racial disparities, study solutions for addressing those disparities.

Researchers and evaluators should include research questions that examine the root causes of systemic racism, as highlighted in one principle of the Equitable Evaluation Framework™:

Evaluative work can and should answer critical questions about the effect of a strategy on different populations and on the underlying systemic drivers of inequity, and the ways in which history and cultural context are tangled up in the structural conditions and the change initiative itself.⁵⁴

When conducting data collection to address research questions, interview or focus-group methods should incorporate data collection that asks key informants about perceived contributions to racial and ethnic disparities, and ways to change practice and policies that could address them. This line of inquiry might provide an opportunity for key informants, especially administrators and other staff within public systems, to share ideas and recommendations that may otherwise be uncomfortable or difficult to share in their everyday work. The process of identifying solutions can be aided by the inclusion of open-ended or closed questions in quantitative data-collection instruments that ask BMOOC how practices could be strengthened to better support their success and wellbeing.

In both qualitative and quantitative data analysis, studies should examine differences in experiences and outcomes between and among people of color (disaggregated by racial and ethnic groups) and white people. Depending on the sampling approach and the focus of the study, analysis of how various racial and ethnic groups describe their experiences interacting with a system can help identify qualitative differences. In quantitative analysis, using control variables like age, educational attainment, type or number of infractions or crimes, frequency of participation in programming or services (e.g., school attendance for educational research or adherence to treatment/service plans for health and human-services research) can help identify differential treatment or outcomes by race and ethnicity.

To continue making progress toward identifying systemic racism and developing solutions, researchers and evaluators should also continue to recommend future research in this area and pilot new solution-focused data-collection methods and analysis techniques.

Use more specific and representative categories when collecting demographic data.

While the 2020 U.S. Census incorporated more options for race, ethnicity, and origin, those categories have always been driven by political and scientific trends that marginalize or code people of color as inferior.⁵⁵ Commonly used demographic categories may also be restrictive, inaccurate, and simply not applicable to BMOOC. These categories can result in lower response rates or force individuals into identity boxes they have not defined for themselves. They can also force diverse groups into single categories like “Other” or “Mixed Race.” All of these potential consequences limit opportunities for meaningful data collection and disaggregation. One stakeholder highlighted how this way of thinking about demographics excludes certain populations:

We’re serving the “Other” population, and the “Other” can encompass . . . Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, but it also encompasses people from South America, Dominican Republic, Jamaica. There’s all these things that can categorize people as Other . . . but there really isn’t research available on this particular population about their childhood experiences, about intergenerational trauma, about mental health, about exposure to violence, those types of factors.

Researchers and evaluators can work with and listen to BMOOC to create space for nuanced self-identification. Grant reporting requirements and the emphasis on matching demographics to large databases like the U.S. Census may create barriers to shifting demographic categories. However, BMOOC can only be served by data that accurately represent and reflect their own images of themselves.

Check language, provide context, and avoid blaming narratives.

Researchers and evaluators can be complicit in suggesting that the people they are studying, rather than systems and systemic racism, are to blame for observed disparate outcomes. Calling out systems and providing context when describing study results is an essential step in challenging blaming narratives. Peer-reviewed publications, grant applications, and research questions should be framed with context up front, rather than as an afterthought. A peer-reviewed paper might begin, “In 2015–2016, 28% of Latino boys aged 2 to 19 were obese, which was nearly twice the rate of white boys at 14.7%.⁵⁶ This wording at best presents a clear health inequity without context. At worst, it suggests to some readers that there may be something inherently wrong with Latino boys that accounts for unusually high obesity rates. Researchers and evaluators can instead introduce disparities data with the social-justice evidence base. The sentence above might be changed to: “The food and beverage

industry’s targeted marketing of unhealthy foods and drinks to Latinx children, along with overrepresentation of food swamps in largely Latinx neighborhoods due to discriminatory zoning practices, contribute to an inequitable 28% obesity rate for Latino boys in the U.S.”⁵⁷ In this manner, the content orients readers to the social-justice determinants of inequitable outcomes for BMOOC, and suggests areas for research and advocacy that can lead to more sustainable, upstream solutions for BMOOC and their communities.

Researchers and evaluators should also make conscious and intentional decisions about how to order demographic and other descriptive data when describing a community. When characterizing the socioeconomic status of a neighborhood or community, rather than simply listing statistics on poverty, they can lead by describing how the neighborhood or community may have historically experienced disinvestment. Listing various deficit-based statistics and preceding or following those with racial or ethnic demographic data that indicate the community is largely composed of people of color may lead those who lack a systems view to believe that people of color themselves are at fault for community disinvestment.

Finally, researchers and evaluators should use people-first language to help reinforce systems or structural issues rather than blaming individuals. Some examples of people-first language in the context of systems research and evaluation include: *children living in foster care, people experiencing homelessness, and young people involved in the justice system.* Terms such as *foster youth, homeless people, and juveniles* define individuals by the system or systemic issue with which they have interacted and minimize their humanness.

STRATEGY 4: RESEARCH, SUPPORT, & ENGAGE
IN SYSTEMS-LEVEL CHANGE

FUNDERS

Fund anti-racist and solution-focused systems research and evaluation.

While many funders, both public and private, have supported systems research, systems studies that seek to uncover differential treatment or outcomes by race and ethnicity are limited. Those that seek development of solutions to systemic challenges, especially racism within systems, are even more rare. One stakeholder pointed out how the lack of investment in systems solutions is perpetuated:

There's always additional research and digging to be done . . . an almost investigative side or a budget-analysis side and measuring of impact. In our county, they're trying to invest all this money into reopening a juvenile-camp jail facility, rather than using those funds for youth-development work and prevention.

Funders can support systems studies that examine both racist practices and structures within systems, as well as studies that seek to identify solutions or approaches that can strengthen systems—such as the youth-development approaches and prevention programs called out by the aforementioned stakeholder. This might involve including specific systems-oriented research questions in requests for proposals that cover these topics. Funders might also consider commissioning follow-up projects to systems studies already underway. Those follow-up studies can be focused on examining implementation and processes to develop solutions-focused research projects.

Fund creation, strengthening, and hosting of subgroup-focused databases and data systems.

Funders should also support the creation or improvement of datasets and databases that include BMOC, especially underrepresented groups, such as Indigenous and Pacific Islander communities. First, for the creation of new datasets, funders can hire teams well versed in data collection with specific underrepresented communities and/or share resources that provide teams with insight on how best to do so. Second, in the strengthening of datasets, more representative and specific demographic categories should be included, and efforts should be made to support higher response rates for these communities. As one stakeholder put it:

Data collection has always been such a need in this work—just where are people at, how many are impacted, who are the people? Even disaggregating Asian American and Pacific Islander data, I think, is really necessary.

By combining these two steps, response rates for BMOC communities that are often not represented in large datasets can be increased, and data can be analyzed in a way that helps community members, grassroots organizations, and others make decisions about how best to support their own communities. This latter point also requires data to be democratized—to be made financially, linguistically, visually, and systematically accessible to those who can use it to support their own community-based and grassroots efforts with BMOC.



Data [should] be democratized—be made financially, linguistically, visually, and systematically accessible to those who can use it to support their own community-based and grassroots efforts with BMOC.

Cohado®

Cohado is a transformation game.

Instead of competing against each other, players participate as “co-ponents” to create as many assets for the community, as represented by the circle of players, and eliminate waste by leaving nothing hanging. This is achieved by collectively creating an elegant solution to the problem of how to put game pieces together. Cohado represents a transformational way to build our communities and systems, where we see each other not as adversaries but as responsible for each other's wellbeing, as evident in Cohado's core principle: the Zulu Ubuntu concept.

Cohado is a game and a tool that teaches people how to collaborate. It has been used to support facilitation of workshops and training programs, team and organizational development, and to support large-scale “connective impact” efforts within ecosystems. In the research, evaluation, and data space, Cohado can teach research teams about building true relationships with communities, helping to set aside objective frames and embrace the cognitive-emotional reality of real collaboration. It can frame data as a resource that has tremendous value and is not to be wasted or hoarded. Rather, data should be community-owned, with great potential to give power when communities are acknowledged and generously compensated for their intellectual capital. To learn more about Cohado and how researchers, evaluators, and funders can apply it to their work, visit cohado.com.

STRATEGY 5: DISSEMINATE & TRANSLATE RESULTS WITH & FOR BOYS AND MEN OF COLOR

Dissemination and translation of research and evaluation results is an essential component of advancing equity for BMO. Too often, results of studies are kept only among the researchers and evaluators who conducted the study or the funders who supported the study. If BMO are to be true partners in the work, results of those studies to which they contributed should be treated with shared ownership. Further, BMO cannot have control over their own narratives if they do not have access to the written or verbal products in which they are described and presented. Researchers, evaluators, and funders can facilitate dissemination and translation processes that are in partnership with and in service to BMO and their communities.

RESEARCHERS & EVALUATORS

Include dissemination and translation plans that are developed with and for BMO.

Researchers and evaluators should include dissemination and translation plans in all studies including BMO. Ownership of study results should be shared with BMO, whether they are engaged only as study participants or, as we have recommended throughout, engaged as research partners.

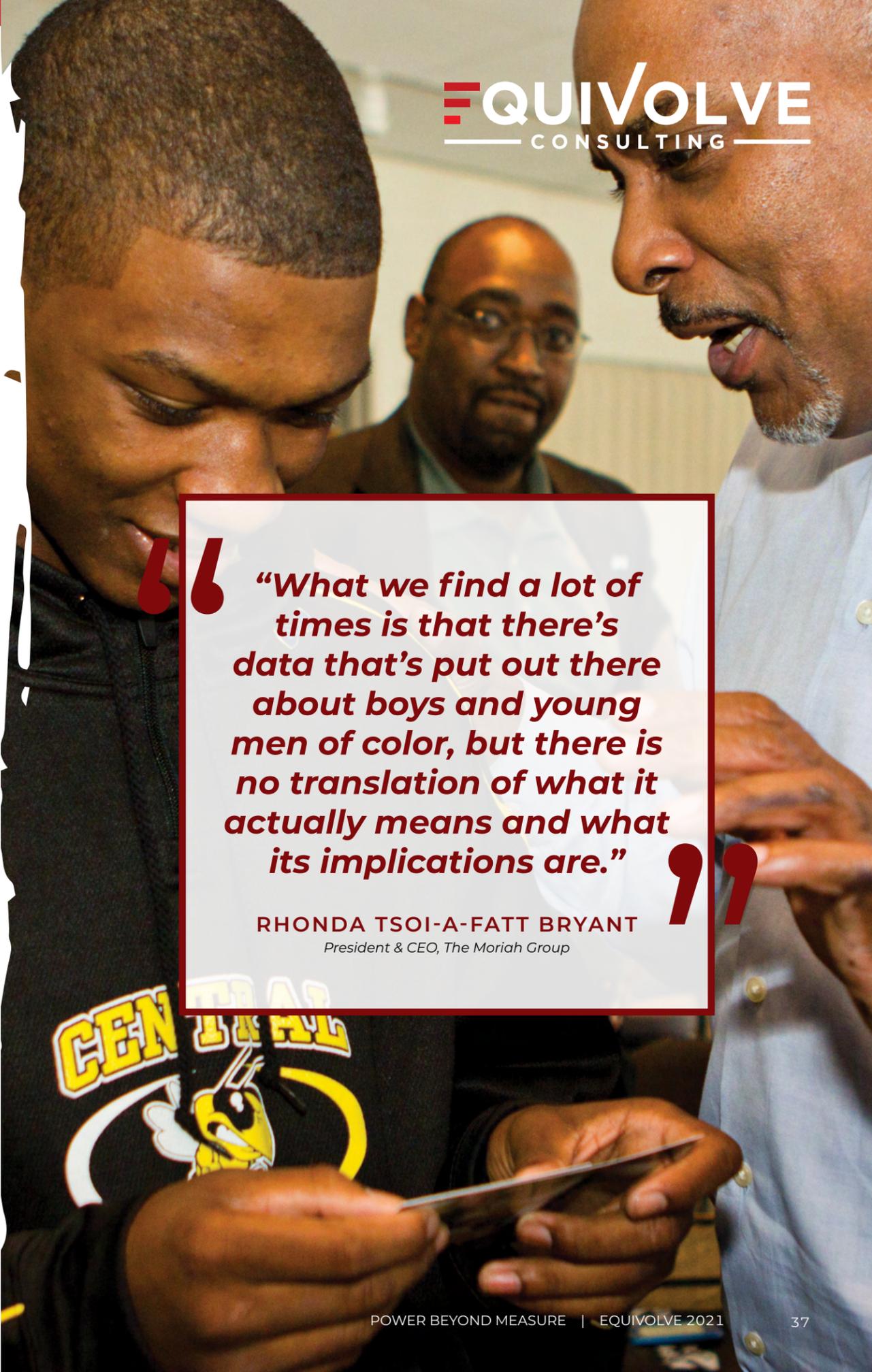
It is not uncommon for shared dissemination plans to be included as a component of community-based participatory studies.⁵⁸ However, promoting power-building among BMO means that even those studies that are not applying community-based participatory approach should engage BMO in decisions about dissemination. It is also important to note that dissemination and translation of research and evaluation results should be a dialogue between researchers/evaluators and BMO and their communities. Given the history of distrust between communities of color and researchers, it is key to provide opportunities whereby BMO are able to discuss results, translate and make meaning of them, and then participate in decisions about how they are shared and used.⁵⁹ If a dissemination and translation plan is unfeasible for any reason, researchers and evaluators should critically question the value and true beneficiaries of the research.

FUNDERS

Fund dissemination, translation, and transparency.

Many of the stakeholders with whom we spoke mentioned challenges in accessing results from research or evaluation studies, and if they could access results, understanding how the results could be useful for their work. Further, the researchers, evaluators, and funders of research and evaluation who participated in our interviews and survey often indicated that reports produced from studies were not shared externally.

Keeping reports in-house prevents communities and organizations serving BMO from accessing them and using them to inform decisions about services or quality improvement, community or policy advocacy, or other related efforts. When research is transparent and accessible, dissemination can also happen more naturally. Funding efforts for reports to be translated into accessible language—stripped of technical jargon—and developed into actionable tools could help address this challenge of accessibility. Some tools or methods of sharing study results that are accessible include data walks,⁶⁰ graphic recording,⁶¹ and visual or performing arts.⁶²



“What we find a lot of times is that there’s data that’s put out there about boys and young men of color, but there is no translation of what it actually means and what its implications are.”

RHONDA TSOI-A-FATT BRYANT
President & CEO, The Moriah Group

STRATEGY 6: PRACTICE EQUITY TO ADVANCE EQUITY

The Equitable Evaluation Initiative teaches us that research and evaluation should both be equitable and work to advance equity. Certainly, research and evaluation cannot be part of the equity solution for BMOC if it is itself part of the problem. Throughout this document, we have offered strategies to work toward both equitable means and ends in research and evaluation. We conclude here with actions for researchers, evaluators, and funders to further examine their personal and institutional roles in the BMOC field.⁶³

RESEARCHERS & EVALUATORS

Work against white supremacist-supporting structures in academic research institutions.

Research and evaluation institutions—including universities, peer-reviewed journals, and federal funding bodies—are part of the system that controls resources and hinders equitable research for BMOC. Researchers and evaluators can advocate for uprooting those mechanisms that marginalize researchers of color, and for research that breaks from orthodoxy. For example, researchers can challenge tenure-track evaluation criteria, which place high value on factors whereby researchers of color experience systemic inequities, including publication in high-impact journals and receipt of federal and other grant funding. The criteria also place low value on factors whereby researchers of color shoulder the most burden, such as mentorship and service work.⁶⁴ The latter brings compounded labor for faculty of color, who are often expected to serve on equity and inclusion committees or mentor rising numbers of doctoral and other students of color in institutions seeking to diversify their student body.⁶⁵ This work is important; however, cornering faculty of color in these roles while both devaluing their resulting contribution and leaving less time for high-valued research and publication is one of many examples of systemic racism in research and evaluation institutions.

Implement an anti-racist, equity-centric research review process.

Researchers and evaluators, as well as the institutions where they work, should implement equity reviews—from research question formulation and research design, to implementation and writing up results. Research-team composition, incorporated methodologies and frameworks, data-collection materials, involvement and compensation of BMOC on a project, and language used in reports and publications are just a handful of areas that can be subject to review. This could be assessed by a checklist or independent committee, and be carefully incorporated into Institutional Review Board processes. The objective should be to identify and course-correct research practices and products that are not equitable.

Question who is best to do the work.

Research and evaluation imply continual learning and exploration, and should be treated that way. Researchers and evaluators should practice critical reflection and honesty in pursuing projects. Uncertainty about one's fit or qualifications to lead a project does not have to be considered a weakness; rather, it is an opportunity to form a stronger team. We encourage researchers and evaluators to honestly locate themselves and their biases, and to accordingly pursue projects and formulate research teams that best serve the BMOC community.

FUNDERS

Consider increasing overhead rates.

Philanthropic institutions generally have more flexibility in giving compared to federal agencies, so foundation grantees can often be nimbler and more nuanced in their research and evaluation. This flexibility could be used as a force for advancing equity in research and evaluation for BMOC. To assist researchers and evaluators working toward equity, funders may consider increasing overhead rates. Increased overhead can help support core organizational needs and functions—for example, administration, fundraising, utilities, and supplies—as well as create competition with federal grantmakers, challenging traditional ideas of which awards are the most valued and prestigious.

Community-based program evaluation does not occur in the lab. Conditions are not controlled, nor should they be, as this would be an artificial representation of program and people dynamics. To account for changes in the real world, funders can provide more unrestricted funds to BMOC programs. This helps community organizations be flexible in highly dynamic environments, shifting research and evaluation efforts to capture real-time phenomena in their communities.

“Uncertainty about one’s fit or qualifications to lead a project does not have to be considered a weakness; rather, it is an opportunity to form a stronger team.”

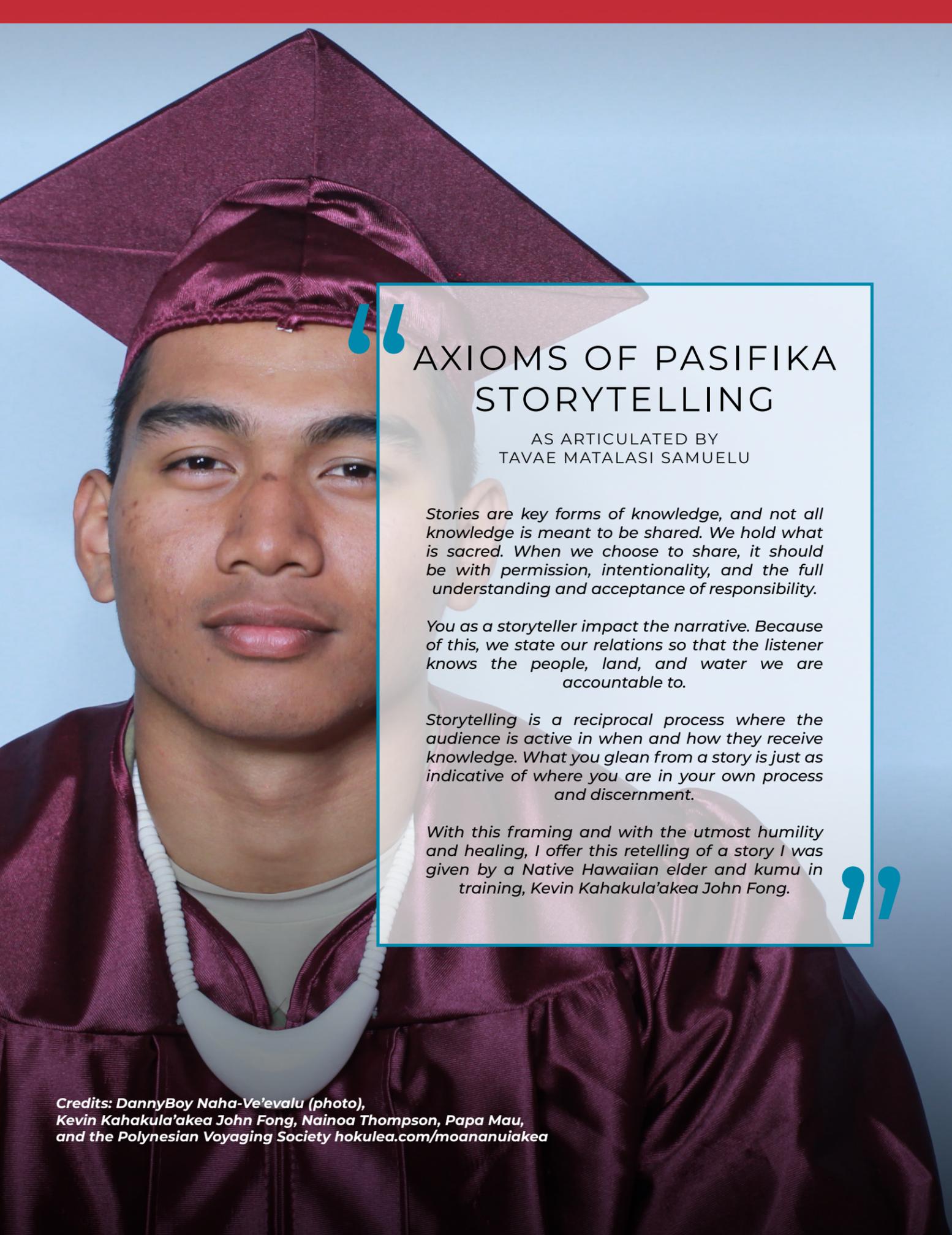
Fund sustainable research and evaluation efforts in organizations led by people of color.

Committing funds to organizations led by people of color must be an intentional and targeted activity, in addition to supporting efforts to increase funder networks for these organizations, build rapport and trust between funders and grantees, encourage innovative research and evaluation efforts, and plan for sustainability.⁶⁶ Limited or expiring funding can hinder long-term research and evaluation planning, sustained community-research engagement, and program innovation. One stakeholder shared how shorter-term funding periods limit their ability to engage with researchers who might be interested in studying their program.

It’s definitely been a challenge to get sustainable funding . . . we’ve never had a three-year grant period, which is always better, and you can achieve more . . . So we do have some opportunities with some research partners, but it’s all in addition to the other programmatic work, which we want to come first.

Granting more funds and unrestricted funds to organizations led by people of color can help them be nimbler and shift resources for research and evaluation as needed. Funders can help to relieve uncertainty and internal competition between equally important organizational functions, such as data collection and program operations, through longer-term funding for research, evaluation, and data collection efforts led by and in collaboration with BMOC and BMOC-serving organizations. Funding should also focus on building organizational evaluation capacity so research and evaluation can be carried on sustainably in-house. For some organizations, funders may support capacity-building and technical assistance that can help build infrastructure for research, evaluation, and data collection.

We encourage funders to ask their grantees about other creative ways they can reduce uncertainty, make more space to focus on the vision and realization of thriving BMOC as it applies to their work, and spend less time focusing on fundraising to stay afloat.



AXIOMS OF PASIFIKA STORYTELLING

AS ARTICULATED BY
TAVAE MATALASI SAMUELU

Stories are key forms of knowledge, and not all knowledge is meant to be shared. We hold what is sacred. When we choose to share, it should be with permission, intentionality, and the full understanding and acceptance of responsibility.

You as a storyteller impact the narrative. Because of this, we state our relations so that the listener knows the people, land, and water we are accountable to.

Storytelling is a reciprocal process where the audience is active in when and how they receive knowledge. What you glean from a story is just as indicative of where you are in your own process and discernment.

With this framing and with the utmost humility and healing, I offer this retelling of a story I was given by a Native Hawaiian elder and kumu in training, Kevin Kahakula'akea John Fong.



VOYAGING STORY

THIS TRANSCRIPT IS FROM A CONVERSATION WITH GLENN R. LOVE AND TAVAE SAMUELU AND HAS BEEN EDITED FOR CLARITY AND CONTINUITY.

The Polynesian Voyaging Society (PVS), when it was first started by Nainoa Thompson and many other young Native Hawaiians, sought to challenge the notion that our people came to be on our islands by accident, without an intention. Our own stories talked about navigation by reading the waves and stars, a deep understanding of and relationship to our environment. Kanaka youth scoured the world looking for a master navigator, seeking someone who knew our traditional wayfinding. And they found this Carolinian elder, Papa Mau

The founders of PVS brought Papa Mau out to Hawai'i. They say, "Uncle, teach us the master navigation ways, ancient ways of voyaging. We want to go from Hawai'i to Tahiti using only the waves, the stars, and the Sun."

Papa Mau says, "Any of you ever been to Tahiti?" No one—no one had been to Tahiti. Papa Mau continues, "In that vast ocean of tens of thousands of islands, how will you know which is Tahiti. How will you know you've gotten there if you don't know what it looks like?"

Papa Mau takes these youth to the highest summit in Hawai'i, and he has them look out over the water and vision for days at a time about what Tahiti looks like. They say, "Oh, Papa, that looks like these green hills. Papa, it looks like these birds over the land. It looks like..."

And so, for me, this is the metaphor for our work. If none of us have seen liberation before, how will we know when we get there? We'll know because a healthy, thriving PI community is rooted in that Indigenous voyaging practice of a collective vision of Tahiti. And everybody has their role in the canoe. That person who sits at the back of the canoe and watches the pathway and memorizes where we came from. The person who sits at the front and looks out for what's to come. Those who are rowing driving the movement.

What's your role in the canoe?

Credits: DannyBoy Naha-Ve'evalu (photo), Kevin Kahakula'akea John Fong, Nainoa Thompson, Papa Mau, and the Polynesian Voyaging Society hokulea.com/moananuiakea

WILD PACIFIC TRIPTYCH

ARTIST: JASON PEREIRA/JP ©2019
MEDIUM: ACRYLIC & SPRAY PAINT ON CANVAS

This commissioned work was exhibited at the Asian Pacific Islander Civic Engagement Fund Convening in Los Angeles in January 2019. The pieces depict motifs drawn from the natural world, the various phases of seafaring canoes and ancient concepts of wayfinding and navigation. The abstract background pattern represents the wildness and unpredictability of the ocean, contrasted by the orderliness and repetition of the cultural motifs - perhaps the way Pacific Islander ancestors made sense of the world around them in order to navigate through it, and find islands of destination along their journeys. The piece poses the eternal question - WHERE ARE WE GOING?



WITH POWER BEYOND MEASURE, WE OFFER RESEARCHERS, EVALUATORS, AND FUNDERS A SET OF STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS TO ADVANCE EQUITY FOR BMOC LIVING IN THE U.S.

We hope to have sparked new ideas and underscored the importance of ideas you may have already considered for research and evaluation that advances the knowledge base and supports thriving lives for BMOC. The specific strategies and actions highlighted throughout are not exhaustive. We encourage you to learn more about these strategies and actions, but also not to limit yourself to those shared here. Indeed, continued learning and reflection are essential to conducting anti-racist, culturally appropriate, and responsive research and evaluation. We invite you to embark on this lifelong journey with us, applying these and other approaches to the BMOC research and evaluation you conduct or fund, advocating for their broader application, and continuing to reflect on how you, in your role, contribute to a society in which BMOC thrive.

OUR STRATEGIES:

STRATEGY 1:
Center Boys and Men of Color

STRATEGY 2:
Promote Community Power- & Capacity-Building

STRATEGY 3:
Learn & Use Diverse Research Approaches

STRATEGY 4:
Research, Support, & Engage in Systems-Level Change

STRATEGY 5:
Disseminate & Translate Results with & for Boys and Men of Color

STRATEGY 6:
Practice Equity to Advance Equity

The purpose of this project was to develop a research, evaluation, and data agenda for boys and men of color (BMOC). Surveys and interviews conducted with stakeholders were designed to explore current research, evaluation, data, and administrative efforts. They were also designed to describe gaps in the field that, if addressed, could help to advance solutions for issues facing BMOC, as well as outline funders' and practitioners' priorities in these areas going forward. Accordingly, this work provides direct recommendations to funders supporting research, evaluation, and data efforts focused on BMOC, as well as recommendations to researchers, evaluators, and policy practitioners working on issues affecting these populations.

Survey

In Fall 2019, drawing from existing resources including a list of Research, Integration, Strategies, and Evaluation (RISE) for BMOC network members, Equivolve worked with the Research, Evaluation, and Data (RED) for BMOC Funder Workgroup to develop a targeted list of prospective BMOC stakeholder survey respondents. Either directly or indirectly, survey respondents worked on issues affecting BMOC, in any of the following roles:

- Leader of an initiative or network (n = 2)
- Practitioner or program administrator (10)
- Public administrator or policy professional (2)
- Funder of programs or initiatives (5)
- Funder of research or evaluation (3)
- Researcher/evaluator (15)

The intent of the survey was to understand the extent to which respondents had participated in or funded research or evaluation for BMOC; learn about their experiences with research or evaluation; and ascertain key questions or studies that have helped or could help to advance the field. The survey was web-based and shared with prospective respondents by email, sent by a member of the Funder Workgroup. A total of 37 individuals responded to the survey.

Interviews

Equivolve designed four semi-structured interview guides to explore current gaps, efforts, and opportunities in research, evaluation, and data for BMOC. Stakeholders were selected because of their known experience working on issues related to BMOC, either 1) in research focused on a BMOC population, or 2) in work directly for or related to providing capacity-building support to organizations with a BMOC-focused mission. The four identified stakeholder groups were:

- Policy-makers and practitioners working directly with or otherwise engaging in work directly affecting BMOC
- Researchers, evaluators, and policy-makers contributing scholarly work and policies that primarily affect BMOC
- Funders of initiatives, programs, or organizations working with BMOC
- Funders of research, evaluation, and data-development efforts focused on BMOC

Interviews were conducted between Winter 2019 and Spring 2020. We identified stakeholders by utilizing a purposive sampling technique—from the list of those invited to participate in the survey and as recommended by members of the Funder Workgroup. Thirty stakeholders were invited to participate, with sixteen ultimately interviewed. Interviewed stakeholders have worked in the field from anywhere between 6 and 40 years, with boys and men from Black, Asian, Pacific Islander, Latinx, and Indigenous communities. The majority of interviewees spend at least half their time working with BMOC, serving primarily youth and young-adult populations, but also some older adults. Each interview lasted between 30 and 60 minutes and was conducted by phone. Stakeholders were asked questions about the type of work they do; data that would help advance their work; and the experiences, assets, and needs of BMOC.

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