

**NOTES: Summary of Breakout Group Findings from September 15 webinar:**  
***Equity & Evaluation Practice in Cultural Organizations***

**Exploratorium report**

- Hyper-local nature of the project allowed for community partners to come together and share assets.
- Positioned the project within pressures toward gentrification and displacement in local neighborhoods.
- Took stock of diversity within communities of color throughout evaluation.
- Considered different organizational styles, timelines and expectations of project partners.
- Accessible language in exhibits a key to community participation.
- Participants appreciated Spanish language versions of labels appearing first.
- Question posed: How was the report shared with community members?
- Lots of information on methodologies--the report can function as a very useful guide to evaluation practice.
- The evaluation also demonstrated how to conduct an evaluation of a trans-disciplinary project.
- This report was funded by the National Science Foundation--How do we bring funding resources to smaller projects pursuing equity in evaluation?

**Room to Rise**

- Equity agenda was not forefronted in this project, nor did its evaluation start with a racial equity lens.
- Influenced most deeply by youth development literature on how programs can help students to find their voices.
- Started initiative with focus on underserved students of color, but found stronger impacts within diversified spectrum of participating students.
- Intentionally allowed for critical feedback from outliers
- Opted for approach in which evaluator, artists, and project facilitators worked closely together--rather than at a distance--to broaden perspectives
- Groundbreaking, visionary methodology - investigated commonalities across multiple sites, and aggregated findings

- Journey maps and visualizations provided a richness that you don't find in traditional methods--they were key to understanding students' lives.
- The project successfully investigated short-term, mid-term, and long-term outcome of project, on students, teachers, museums, and communities.
- Investigated a type of impact new to museums--public value.
- Question posed: How was *Room to Rise* shared with community members?
- Art museums having difficulty with teen audiences would find the report very useful.

### **Practices from Both Reports**

- Interrogate whether evaluation and program partners are committed to equity.
- Do initial assessment to see if the project treats equity as an afterthought, source of tension, or a source of value only for some.
- As evaluator, be a thought partner and provide a safe space for negotiation among partners.
- Account for history, structures, and inequitable systems that shape the institution(s) whose program(s) are being evaluated.
- Be aware of power dynamics among partners and within the community.
- Build community ownership of evaluation--from project design to defining success to sharing stories.
- Human component/lived experience: talk "with" vs. "at" stakeholder.
- Minimize pre-determined categories of impact--have patience and wait for the emergence of outcomes.
- Question: How do we find out about participants' experience before they became involved with the program?
- Beware oversampling of white community members and underrepresentation of people of color.
- Question: What are the equity implications of integrating qualitative methods with quantitative methods?
- How are timelines of complex, equity-focused evaluations established?
- In reporting, communicate with those participants who were involved in the project.
- Engaging audiences with evaluation reports can take many new forms these days with the explosion of social media capabilities.

- Engage people where they are, and where they are gathered.
- With participant observation methods, how are you thinking about what you are seeing?
- Utilize mixed methods to bolster understanding of the perspectives of program participants and multiple stakeholders.
- Webinar participants are very interested in critical friends groups and an evaluation Boot Camp.