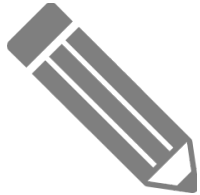# Equity Inquiry for Education Networks - Events Worksheet

Events can foster a sense of belonging and forge connections that help networks become more inclusive. But they can also make participants feel unwelcome and perpetuate inequities. This worksheet is designed to help education networks and organizations examine events from an equity lens. It can be used as a reflection tool past and current practices. It can also be used as a checklist for planning future events and changing how they are executed. The tool examines four key areas: **Access and Participation; Space and Belonging; Planning, Execution, and Leadership.** (See additional notes at the end of the sheet.)

Directions:

1. **Center your inquiry in the needs, assets, and stakeholders of your community.** Revisit and use the *Understanding Your Community* worksheet as a starting point. The questions in this worksheet refer to "marginalized voices," but your reflection should be more specific. Consider the people and perspectives who are disenfranchised, under-resourced, and under-represented in your work and community. Note how Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities are affected.

2. **Seek additional resources.** Before reflecting on the state of *events* in your network and ideating on ways to make them more equitable, review resources that highlight common problems and suggest strategies for addressing them.

3. **Respond to questions candidly and specifically**. You might choose to focus on some more than others. Taken together, they are starting points for discussion and greater interrogation. Record additional questions as you go.

4. **Surface and discuss differences.** Answers to these questions will vary across individuals and network members, reflecting their perspectives and experiences. Use this worksheet to identify and understand those differences. Participants can respond to questions independently and then come together to discuss. They might also answer questions together as a group. Be sure discussion is facilitated in ways that mitigate power dynamics and amplify marginalized voices. You may also want to seek additional perspectives of those who can speak directly to *events* in the network.

5. **In the "Points of Progress" section**, list specific practices, policies, examples, outputs, or work that help the network's *events* to be more equitable and inclusive.

6. **In "Work to Advance,"** note specific practices, policies, behaviors, outputs, initiatives, or projects you and the network can put in place to support more equitable *events*. Some of these may refer to or push on items listed as "Points of Progress." Focus group discussion in this area. Seek resources and elevate a range of ideas.

7. **Plan for next steps.** Based on your discussion and the ideas generated in the "Work to Advance" section, identify specific changes that will be made to your *events*. Specify actions, commit to timelines for implementing them, and assign people to work on them. Design the work to ensure that marginalized voices are informing and leading it.

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Areas of Inquiry	Points of Progress	Work to Advance

Access and Participation
 	
● How are **event information or invitations shared** and promoted? In what ways are they accessible to marginalized communities?
 	
● How does the event **support equitable participation**, especially from marginalized communities?
 	
● How are participants' **practical needs anticipated and met equitably**? How are the needs of marginalized communities centered? Consider:
  ○ Lactation spaces, bathrooms, free Wifi, secure places for storing belongings
  ○ Parking, transportation, childcare
  ○ Physical comfort: seating, space, temperature, walking distances
  ○ Location, time, and day of event
  ○ Access to food and water (without cost) in line with expectations for meal-times or durations; dietary needs and preferences
  ○ Language translation, prior knowledge
  ○ Supplies (pens, notebooks) or required devices for access (self-printed materials, smartphone)
  ○ Accessibility accommodations for those who are differently abled (e.g. wheelchair access, ASL interpreter, closed captioning, voice amplification/microphones, lighting)
 	
● To what extent are we **aware of and working to address barriers** to marginalized communities access, participating in, and fully benefiting from our event? Are there financial or opportunity costs we do not see?		

Areas of Inquiry	Points of Progress	Work to Advance
Space and Belonging ● How does the **culture of the event foster inclusion**? How does it create **brave spaces**? ● How will marginalized communities **see themselves represented**? Will they feel "in the minority"? Who is working behind the scenes vs. visibly leading? ● How are marginalized communities, voices, and **cultures, affirmed, celebrated, and credited**? How are they represented? (Consider: music, food, photos, decor) ● How will you work to make marginalized communities **feel welcome and affirmed** during the event? (How will you foster introductions, assign seating, etc.?) ● How will the event **establish norms** for inclusion? (Consider: name tags with pronoun preferences, setting community agreements, time for setting intentions) ● How will the event **mitigate against harmful powerful dynamics**, especially in informal or breakout spaces? (Consider: rules for note-taker assignments—not a woman or person of color; ways for leaders to model inclusive practices; who speaks and reports out) ● How will the event **identify and address harm** done—in the moment and after? (Consider: moderators trained in equitable facilitation, ways to publicly name learning moments, designated support people among host staff) ● How will the event **allow time and spaces for reflection**, healing, restoration—especially for marginalized communities? Breaks? Joy? How will it mitigate the harmful urgency of white dominant culture?		

Areas of Inquiry	Points of Progress	Work to Advance
Planning, Execution, and Leadership ● To what extent are **marginalized communities co-planning and co-leading events**? In what ways is that **leadership visible, credited, and celebrated**, before, during, and after the event? ● How will the event be **planned, designed, and executed based on known needs and desires** of marginalized communities? How will participants be given choice, voice, and agency? ● How will you **represent voices from marginalized communities in programming and attendance**? Will there be student voice? How will you avoid tokenizing? ● Do events provide **benefit, opportunity, and value for co-leaders**? Are they supported with resources, capacity, and funding? ● What **benefit** might marginalized communities gain from the event? Credentials, skills, opportunities, allies? ● What **roles will people from marginalized groups play** during the event? Will they be "support" or thought leaders? (Consider: comparison of panels, speakers, who works registration, who hands out post-its.) ● How are **vendors chosen** to benefit and amplify marginalized communities? Are they Black and brown-led? Are they equitably compensated? ● Who **controls the narrative and pace** of the meeting? How will adjustments be made in the moment? How will decisions be informed and made? ● How will the event be **evaluated**? How will you seek **feedback in equity-centered ways** from marginalized communities? How will you follow-up?		

Reflect and Commit

How did network members' and inquiry participants' responses to these questions differ? What do those differences reveal?
 	
What patterns and shared observations emerge?
 	
What areas require particular work or further inquiry?
 	
What commitments will you make to advance more equitable *events* in the network? Consider planning around these questions:
    ● ***What*** *work will be done (be specific)?* ***Why*** *is it important to prioritize?*
    ● ***Who*** *will work on this? How will marginalized voices inform and lead?*
    ● ***How*** *will the work be done? How will you reflect on and redirect the work as needed? How will the work be evaluated?*
    ● ***When*** *will the work be done?*

Note: Events take many forms: meet-ups, design-thinking sessions, conferences, project meetings, etc. They may be virtual or in-person, small or large, formal or informal. Two aspects remain the same: these events create "space" and they bring people together. "Space" is defined by much more than where the place, location, or virtual setting where an event is held, though they may be part of it. Space is how the energy, values, people, activities, and culture of an event merge to create an experience for those attending it—intended or unintended. And not everyone will experience it in the same way. Too often people from marginalized communities experience event spaces in ways that are harmful and inaccessible. So even events deemed "fun" or informal are creating either exclusive or inclusive spaces that will critically impact network health and impact. In that regard, there are not trivial or superfluous events. And event-planning is of the utmost importance.