Programs and initiatives are at the heart of what an education network and its organizations do—why they exist, what they build partnerships around, and how they seek to effect change in education. But too often programs are designed for—not with—the communities they are intended to serve. This is especially true for those at the margins. To what extent are those programs designed, led, and informed by marginalized communities? The questions on this worksheet examine equity Programs and Initiatives around three key areas: **Strategy and Alignment; Design, Leadership, and Participation; and Impact and Evaluation.**

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 *programs and initiatives* 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 *programs and initiatives* in the network.
5. **In the "Points of Progress" section**, list specific practices, policies, examples, outputs, or work that help the network's *programs and initiatives* 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 *programs and initiatives*. 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 *programs and initiatives*. 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
Strategy and Alignment ● **How are decisions made** on what projects to pursue, prioritize, fund, and staff—and in what ways, how much? ● How equitably are these decisions made? What is the process? Who has input? Who decides? **Whose voices are listened to?** To what extent do marginalized communities inform and make those decisions? ● How do programs and priorities **reflect a network's strategy and values**? ● Do program budgets, staffing, resources, and prioritization **reflect the needs, desires, and values of marginalized communities**? ● How do equity-centered **programs and initiatives change and influence strategy**? ● How do marginalized **voices change and influence strategy**? ● How does the network **use its reach to change and influence strategy with funders**, other networks, leaders, or organizations? ● How does it **amplify marginalized voices to these entities**? How does it forge connections for them? How does it cede power to them?		

Areas of Inquiry	Points of Progress	Work to Advance
Design, Leadership, and Participation ***Design and Leadership*** ● How is the program's design **informed by the needs and desires of marginalized communities**? ● How are they centered, amplified, and listened to? How are their **voices heard and acted on**? ● How do programs **support, resource, and amplify current work in marginalized communities**? Done by marginalized communities? How do they support, resource, or amplify work that is planned or hoped for? How does the network **join and promote other efforts** vs. pushing its own? ● How do marginalized communities **co-lead and co-design** programs and initiatives? What **roles** do they play? How are they making decisions about what to change and create? ● How do programs How are **inequitable, harmful power dynamics recognized**, mitigated, and addressed? ● How are new partnerships formed? What **opportunities and benefits do marginalized groups gain** from them? ● How are programs **culturally and historically relevant** to marginalized communities?		

- What are **programs staffed to reflect leadership and representation** from those with lived experience, understanding, and proximity to marginalized communities?
- How are **opportunities for leadership and advancement** prioritized for people from marginalized communities?
- To what extent are **programs managed equitably**, and by whom?

Participation

- To what extent are programs and initiatives **"designed for the margins"**?
- How do marginalized communities **access and participate** in initiatives? How **full and beneficial is that participation**—and how do you know?
- How are **barriers around things like cost, capacity, resources, knowledge, culture, transporating, time, and location** identified and mitigated for marginalized communities?
- How, where, and with whom are **programs offered, promoted, and located**? To what extent is this done to **specifically reach and benefit marginalized communities**?
- How are **under-represented voices centered** in programming? Consider: teacher voice, parent voice, student voice, community parent voice.
- How do programs **value the voice and experience** of marginalized participants?

Areas of Inquiry	Points of Progress	Work to Advance
Impact and Evaluation ● How do **marginalized voices define and determine** program impact? ● How is impact defined? Do the **outcomes measured reflect the desires** and goals of marginalized communities? ● **Whose agenda is centered** and evaluated in programs? ● How is **data defined, collected, and analyzed from an equity-centered** lens? By whom? How are decisions made about **what constitutes evidence**? ● How does **evaluation center the perspectives, agency, and expertise** of marginalized groups? ● How do sources of **evidence and methods of evaluation honor the cultures, learnings, and wisdom** of marginalized communities? What role do stories play? ● How are **deeper answers sought around trends** and evidence? ● How are programs **evaluated specifically for their benefit to marginalized communities**? ● How are **feedback and reflections incorporated throughout** a program? ● How are **learnings shared and acted on**? How is **feedback from marginalized communities used to inform changes**, ends, or priorities in programming?		

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 equity in Programs and Initiatives 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?