



# BROTHERHOOD

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER SACRAMENTO  
YOUTH ENGAGEMENT  
EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT REPORT  
2021



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# Introduction

Boys and men of color throughout Sacramento County are vibrant, brilliant, diverse, resilient, and deserving of a life filled with opportunities, access, and people that only seek to ensure they thrive in a just and equitable society. The My Brother's Keeper Sacramento Collaborative represents a cross-sector of partners committed to addressing the opportunity gaps by redesigning the practices, procedures, and policies that exist within systems to produce improved outcomes for boys and men of color in the areas of health, education, workforce, and justice systems. Through a collaboration with The Center at Sierra Health Foundation, Innovation Bridge, conducted an evaluation and assessment of the My Brother's Keeper Sacramento (MBK) youth engagement strategies with data collected from September 2020 through January 2021. Innovation Bridge is committed to a social learning approach to bring data-informed best practices that align efforts toward achieving the MBK Sacramento Collaborative's intended outcome goals.

This report reflects the MBK Sacramento evaluation and assessment results from a landscape assessment, youth survey, and virtual youth autoethnographies. The results affirmed the importance of investing in the Collaborative's leaders, particularly the young people who have sustained relationships, connections, performance accountability, and have advocated through a shared voice that boys and men of color have a right to reach their fullest potential in Sacramento. We hope that this report helps inform the MBK Sacramento Collaborative and its partners as they co-design ongoing youth engagement strategies with, for, and by boys and men of color.

## Background

In February 2014, President Barack Obama established the My Brother's Keeper (MBK) Task Force to increase opportunities for boys and young men of color.<sup>1</sup> This monumental initiative acknowledged that despite advancements over the past 50+ years, the experiences of boys and young men of color (BMoC) in the United States include disparities in critical outcomes such as high school graduation and employment rates. Additionally, according to the My Brother's Keeper Task Force Report to President Obama (Johnson & Shelton, 2014), BMoC in the US are disproportionately represented among those living in poverty, engaged with justice systems, and those who are victims of murder. Subsequently, the National My Brother's Keeper Task Force uplifted the following milestones necessary for young people's overall well-being to and through adulthood.<sup>2</sup>

## **MBK Six Milestones**

1. Getting a healthy start and entering school ready to learn
2. Reading at grade level by third grade
3. Graduating from high school ready for college and career
4. Completing postsecondary education or training
5. Successfully entering the workforce
6. Keeping kids on track and giving them second chances

Sacramento was among the first cities to respond to President Obama’s national MBK call to action, under the leadership of then Mayor Kevin Johnson, and in collaboration with the Sierra Health Foundation, various community leaders and local organizations. Building on existing efforts toward systems improvement, advocacy and meaningful engagement of boys and young men of color, a regional **My Brother’s Keeper (MBK) Sacramento Initiative** was established.

To better understand regional disparities for young men of color, the MBK Sacramento Initiative began by conducting countywide research and data collection. In 2015, MBK Sacramento hosted two summits, bringing together members of the public sector, community-based organizations, academic experts, and youth to identify priority areas of focus, review the existing landscape of resources and opportunity, and make recommendations to strengthen systems of support. City, County, and community leaders reconvened in January 2017 to establish the **MBK Sacramento Collaborative**, employing a collective impact framework to guide a countywide approach toward creating systems change for Sacramento boys and men of color.

## **Sacramento Regional Data**

Regional data collected as part of MBK Sacramento’s initial efforts was aligned with the National MBK milestones, including educational outcomes and justice involvement for young men of color. As further context to disparities experienced by young men of color in the Sacramento region, the following infographic reflects regional data sets that specifically align to select MBK Sacramento impact areas. Recognizing the uniqueness of circumstances during the timeframe in which this study was conducted, we felt it important to note that outcomes for children, youth, and adults alike have been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to COVID-19, communities of color were disproportionately affected by long standing racial and systemic inequities in areas such as health and education, which the COVID-19 crisis has only exacerbated.<sup>3</sup> While the data sets included here may not explicitly indicate COVID-19 related impact, we acknowledge that this pandemic adds yet another layer to these disparities.

## Regional Data for Boys and Men of Color

### POVERTY

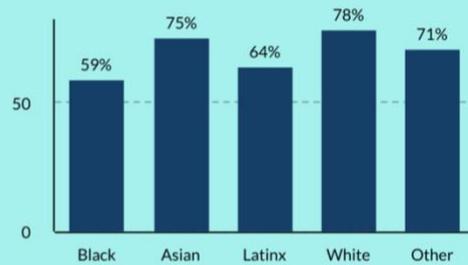
Percentage of Children in Sacramento County Living at or Below 2x the Poverty Level



Source: United States Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, Retrieved October 2020, as cited in Children Now 2020-21 California Scorecard of Children's Well-being, January 2021

### 3RD GRADE LITERACY

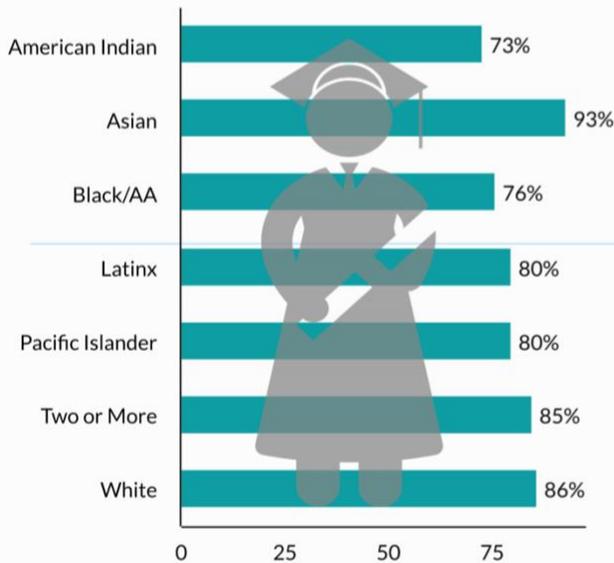
Percentage of 3rd Grade Students Reading Near or Above Standards, by Subgroup (Sacramento County)



Children Now 2020-21 California Scorecard of Children's Well-being, January 2021

### HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

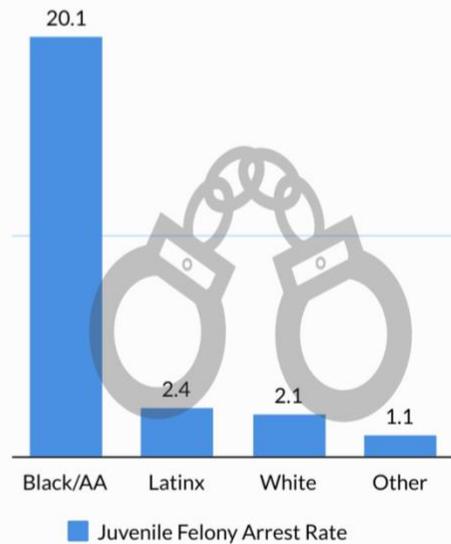
2019-20 High School Graduate Rate, by Subgroup (Sacramento County)



California Department of Education Dataquest, Sacramento County. 2019-20 Four Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate

### JUSTICE INVOLVEMENT

Juvenile Felony Arrest Rate, 2018 (Sacramento County)



Kidsdata.org- Juvenile Felony Arrest Rate, by Race/Ethnicity- Rate per 1000. Sacramento County, 2018

# **MBK Sacramento Collaborative Impact Framework**

The impact framework of the MBK Sacramento Collaborative seeks to facilitate cross-sector results through collaborative engagement of partners supported by a centralized backbone organization with a shared agenda. Since 2015, The Center at Sierra Health Foundation has served as the backbone organization of the MBK Sacramento Collaborative. The primary functions of the MBK Sacramento Collaborative according to the My Brother's Keeper Sacramento Guide to Action (2018) are to:

- Inform priorities and policy regarding boys and men of color in Sacramento;
- Implement strategies that support coordinated measurable results;
- Align resources and efforts toward collaborative MBK Sacramento targeted outcomes; and
- Impact systems change to operate more equitably and justly for boys and men of color living in Sacramento.

## **MBK Sacramento Impact Areas**

The MBK Sacramento Collaborative includes groups that serve to inform and implement various levels of the MBK Sacramento efforts. The MBK Sacramento Coordinating Committee is inclusive of local leaders in healthy development, education, workforce development, and justice systems that inform policy and practice change efforts to improve outcomes for boys and men of color. Led by select organizational partner members from the Coordinating Committee, Strategy Leads focus on mobilizing community resources, informing existing efforts centered around improving outcomes for boys and men of color in Sacramento. Specifically, the MBK Strategy Leads are responsible for implementing system change actions aligned with the MBK Sacramento impact areas toward a more collective, citywide approach of being My Brother's Keeper. The four impact areas that guide the work of MBK in Sacramento are healthy development, education, workforce development, and justice systems. The following is a brief overview of each impact area, followed by an in-depth description of this study's focus and youth engagement strategies within the MBK Sacramento Network.

### **Strategy: Healthy Development**

**Lead Partner Agency: Public Health Advocates**

**Previously: Wellspace Health**

Strategic Objective: All children have a safe and healthy start to develop cognitively, physically, socially and emotionally. Children and youth grow up protected from trauma, in communities that are safe from violence and crime. Families have resources and support needed for a healthy child.

Initial efforts of the Healthy Development Strategy team have centered around promoting trauma-informed or *healing-centered* practices and procedures within institutions that serve youth and young men of color within our region. Through the design and facilitation of the MBK Trauma and Healing Learning Series, regional and national experts have offered a critical lens to historical challenges and obstacles within systems, and highlighted best practices from the field. Offered at no cost to participants, the MBK Trauma and Healing Learning Series has engaged hundreds of participants across the Sacramento region, representing various sectors including health and medical institutions, counseling and social work, K-12 and post-secondary education, probation and justice systems, and various other sectors.

**Strategy: Education**

**Lead Partner Agency: Improve Your Tomorrow (IYT)**

**Previously: Sacramento City Unified School District**

Strategic Objective: Disparities for BMOC in school systems are eliminated through responsive approaches, increased accountability and increased transparency, so that all children meet key educational milestones (including reading at grade level by age 8), graduate high school and have multiple postsecondary education options

The Education Strategy team is currently focused around increasing college access and completion for young men of color in the Sacramento region. With the support of local K-12 districts and post-secondary institutions, in 2020, the 1300 Campaign was launched, designed to disrupt harmful practices that have historically limited access to higher education for boys and young men of color within educational systems, and to transform those systems for permanent change. The 1300 Campaign seeks to send an additional 1300 young men of color to two local universities (California State University, Sacramento and the University of California at Davis) by 2025.

**Strategy: Workforce Development**

**Lead Partner Agency: Urban Strategies, Inc.**

**Previously: Greater Sacramento Urban League**

Strategic Objective: Youth and young adults have access to employment opportunities to support themselves and their families. Youth and young adults receive the education and training preparation needed for quality jobs of today and tomorrow.

The Workforce Development Strategy team engages local workforce agencies and job-preparedness organizations to establish practices that support entry into the workforce and job-retention , particularly building on the robust health and public sector employment opportunities available in Sacramento. Strategies for the Workforce Development team include development of a job-based mentoring model, where young men of color could be paired with workplace mentors to aid in navigation and job-specific support, and establishing guidance for local companies to increase recruitment, hiring and retention of young men of color.

## **Strategy: Justice Systems**

### **Lead Partner Agency: Sacramento All Congregations Together (Sac ACT)**

Strategic Objective: Justice systems are fair, equitable, and restorative. Youth, adults, and families engaged in justice systems have a second chance. Access to necessary resources, support services, and meaningful civic engagement opportunities is available to all.

The Justice Systems Strategy team adopts the approach that disruption of the pipeline to prison for boys and men of color is most effective when we can prevent justice system involvement in the first place. Based on this idea, this strategy team has established collaboration between Sacramento County law enforcement and community-based partners toward the design of a Youth Diversion referral system model, directing youth to trusted community-based organizations for services as an alternative to arrests for low-level, non-violent offenses. Justice Systems strategy team member organizations also include direct service support for successful re-entry and anti-recidivism for youth and young adults.

## **MBK Sacramento Youth Engagement Strategies**

Launched in 2017, the MBK Sacramento Youth Fellowship has served as a youth engagement strategy with outreach across Sacramento County by closely working with MBK partners to recruit young men of color, ages 16-20 years old, to become agents of change in their community. The MBK Sacramento Youth Fellowship was designed to provide MBK Sacramento Youth Fellows with an opportunity to develop new skills, build knowledge and understanding around issues impacting boys and men of color in the Sacramento region, and advocate for social justice within the region and beyond. Led by a team of trusted adult Facilitator-Mentors of color, the Youth Fellowship program model focuses on healing, empowerment and advocacy, and includes group mentorship, engagement in bi-monthly workshops or meetings, participation in leadership conferences, fun outings, and most importantly, establishing brotherhood among young men from different neighborhoods across the city. Through participatory action research, the MBK Sacramento Fellows have developed two policy briefs to inform local policy, offering insight and recommendations toward improvements in the areas of mental health support and single-parent families. Between 2017 and 2020, three cohorts have successfully completed the MBK Sacramento Fellowship Program, totaling 43 Fellowship alumni. During the 2019-2020 Fellowship Cohort, six former Youth Fellows returned to the program to serve as Peer Mentors, providing additional touchpoints and brotherly support to a new cohort of Fellows, informing program implementation, and serving as ambassadors for the program.

However, the MBK Sacramento Youth Fellowship is not the sole youth engagement strategy that offers opportunities for young boys and men of color in Sacramento. In January 2020, The Center awarded mentoring grants to 10 youth-focused organizations reshaping conditions for boys and men of color through mentorship-centered strategies. In addition, many of the MBK Sacramento Collaborative partners have notable youth programs with various youth engagement strategies and similarly aligned outcomes goals as the MBK Sacramento Collaborative, embedded as part of their organizational infrastructure. While there are too many to indicate here, we note a few MBK Sacramento Collaborative partner organizations with a history of support services, policy advocacy, and youth engagement that were among the first to organize around Sacramento MBK efforts. Building Healthy Communities - The HUB, Always Knocking, Inc., Anti-Recidivism Coalition, Office of Councilmember Rick Jennings, City of Sacramento, East Bay Asian Youth Center, Roberts Family Development Center, Sacramento City Unified School District's Men's Leadership Academy, Sacramento Area Congregations Together, and Voice of the Youth.

## Methodology

The purpose of the MBK evaluation and assessment of youth engagement strategies was to learn and explore engagement experiences of youth involved in MBK Sacramento related activities and programs through the various touch points offered by the MBK Sacramento Network. Several data collection strategies were used to examine the youth engagement efforts aligned with the MBK Sacramento strategic objectives. The data collection strategies included, a youth survey, youth autoethnography, and a landscape assessment. The following research questions guided the evaluation and assessment process:

1. How does participation in MBK Sacramento activities influence the perceptions of youth experiences?
2. How does participation in MBK Sacramento programs impact the needs of youth?
3. What does engagement mean to youth living in neighborhoods served by MBK Sacramento programming?
4. What is the relationship between the multiple touchpoints of organizational engagement?
5. What impact do the relationships between the multiple touchpoints of organizational engagement have on youth outcomes?

In alignment with MBK Community Challenge, the values and principles that guided the evaluation and assessment of MBK Sacramento youth engagement strategies are (a) center the experiences of young men of color and neighbor-community through a holistic approach, (b) equity-driven, (c) collaborative intersection (formal and informal), and (d) enhance cross-sector capacities.

### *Evaluation and Assessment Design*

The evaluation and assessment employed a mixed methods design. Quantitative components come from the surveys and secondary community data. Qualitative data come from the participatory youth autoethnographies, and landscape assessment conducted. A mixed-methods approach provided the research team with the in-depth and complex data needed to inform the MBK Sacramento evaluation and assessment of youth engagement strategies.

### *Virtual Youth Autoethnography*

Virtual interviews were conducted with 10 youth using an *auto-ethnography model* to understand the experiences and perspectives of youth previously or currently (at time of the study) involved in MBK Sacramento youth engagement programs. “Autoethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze personal experience in order to understand cultural experience. This approach challenges canonical ways of doing research and representing others and treats research as a political, socially-just and socially-conscious act. A researcher uses tenets of autobiography and ethnography to do and write autoethnography. Thus, as a method, autoethnography is both process and product” (Ellis, Adams, Bochner, 2010).

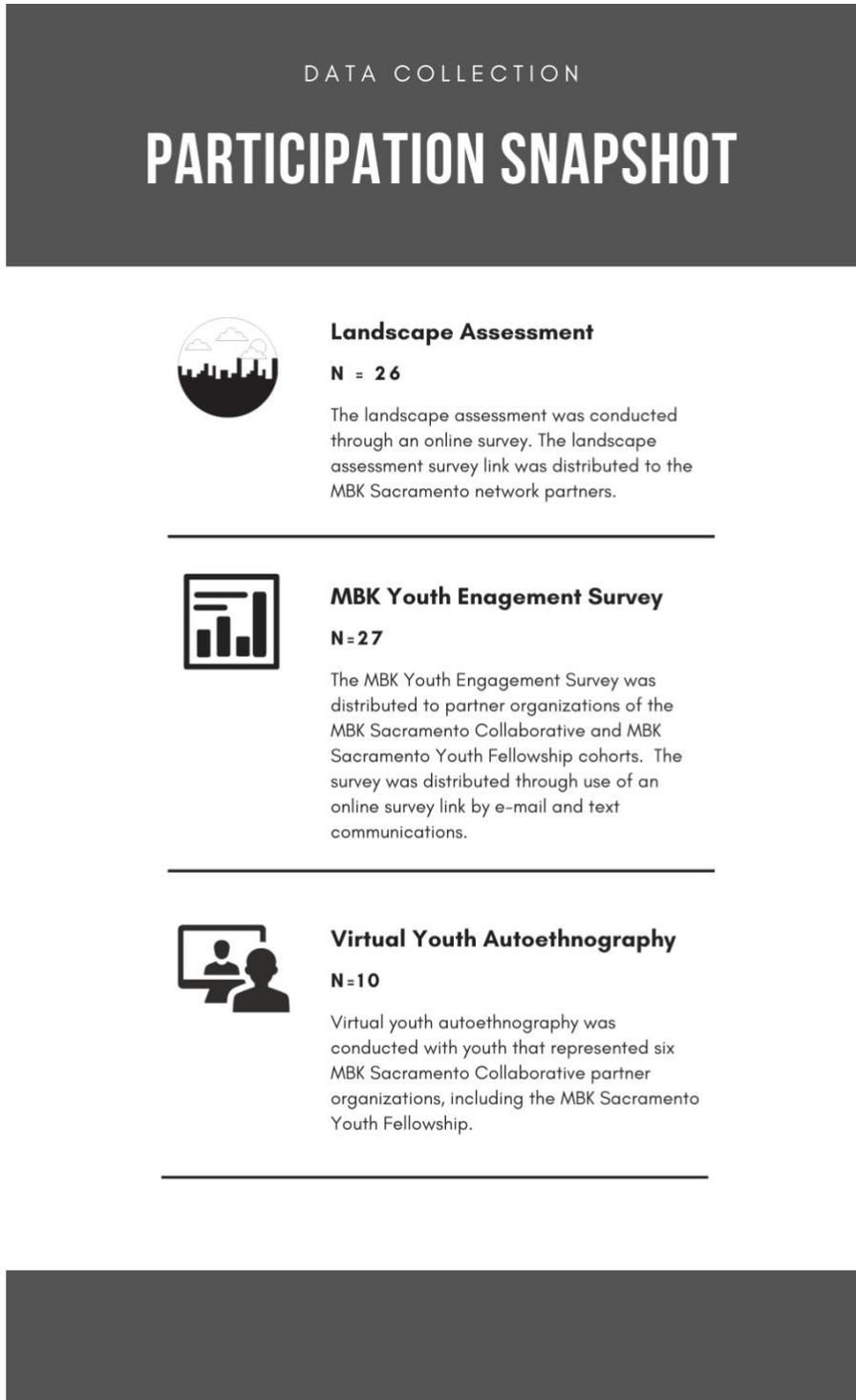
### *Landscape Assessment*

Our research design incorporated the principles of critical place inquiry (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015). Critical place inquiry understands place as interactive and dynamic as a function of space and time, provides that place influences culture and social practices on a localized level, recognizes that disparate realities impact the way people understand and experience place, and is accountable to both people and place (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015). The landscape assessment was conducted at two different levels, the dyad and the actor levels. At the dyad level, we looked at the ties between pairs of MBK Sacramento Network partner organization, particularly focusing on the strength of those connections. The actor level looked at how the different partner organizations are positioned within the MBK Sacramento Network, examining the size and possible gaps within the network.

### *Participant Population*

Participants, age 15-22, were recruited from the MBK Sacramento Network youth programs or service support partners that reported their level of involvement ranging from mentees, mentors, and interns for organizations linked to the MBK collaborative. The research team worked closely with The Center at Sierra Health Foundation, MBK Sacramento Coordinator, and MBK collaborative partners to reach the targeted participant population. Figure 1 below presents a snapshot of the number of participants for each data collection method.

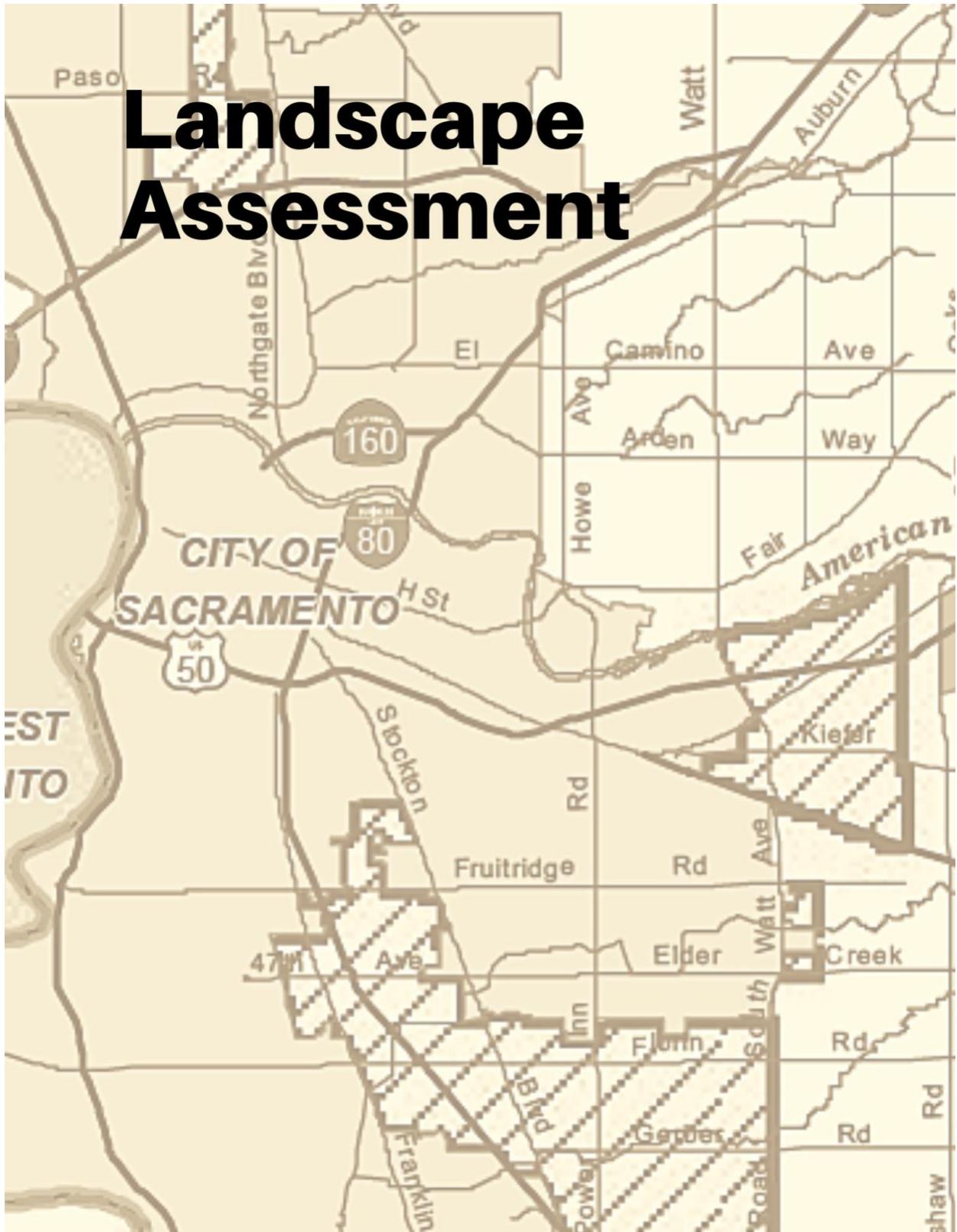
Figure 1  
*Participation Snapshot*





# FINDINGS

# Landscape Assessment



The landscape assessment conducted included 26 of the Sacramento MBK network partners. These partners represented the core group of actors across mentoring, education, workforce development, and healthy development. The purpose of the landscape assessment is to determine, in part, the relationships among the partners that make up the MBK network. Furthermore, the landscape assessment will help understand how a partner's position in the network determines the constraints and opportunities they – and, more importantly, the client base they serve – will encounter. Therefore, identifying the position in the network, relationships, and the strength of those relationships is essential for predicting outcomes.

The evaluation team administered an online survey to the at-large Sacramento MBK Network to conduct the landscape assessment. The survey questions were designed to assess the frequency of interaction between network partners and assess the type of interaction with the MBK strategy lead partners. The focus areas for the strategy lead partners included education (Improve Your Tomorrow), workforce development (Urban Strategies), juvenile justice (Sacramento Area Congregations Together), and healthy development (Public Health Advocates). As it relates to the frequency of interactions, the 10 MBK mentoring-focused partners were assessed in a separate question from the other partners to determine the impact on the relationships among the subgroup of partners who were a part of the Sacramento MBK Mentoring initiative.

An exploration of the rate of interactions between organizations and other service providers within the MBK Sacramento Network or what our study refers to as the Regular Interaction Rate (RIR) guided the analysis of data collected from the landscape survey. The RIR helps to examine and better understand the access to resources and services for youth within or across organizations. Analysis of the landscape survey showed that while there are few strong relationships between current partners, many have begun exploring cooperative and collaborative relationships with each other, with extreme optimism for working with additional partners in the future. Starting with the frequency of interaction, greater than 50% of the survey respondents indicated that they have never interacted with 14 of the 26 partners listed on the survey. This trend continued, when examining the responses for the nine mentoring grantee partners. Four of the mentoring grantee partners had no respondents report that they interacted with them at any frequency above *rarely*, while only 2 of the partners – Roberts Family Development Center (RFDC) and the Anti-Recidivism Coalition (ARC) – had more than 30% of respondents indicate their frequency of interaction to be *sometimes, often or very often*. Refer to Figure 3 for respondents indicated rate of frequency of interaction with each of the MBK mentoring focused partners.

Most respondents indicated that they never or rarely interacted with the majority of the MBK partners listed on the survey, with the exception of Sacramento Area Congregations Together (SacACT) and Public Health Advocates (PHA). For both SacACT and PHA, more than 70% of respondents indicated that they interacted with those organizations sometimes, often or very often. Refer to Figure 2 for respondents indicated rate of frequency of interaction with each of the MBK network partners. Both organizations also serve as lead strategy partners for juvenile justice and healthy development, respectively.

While focusing on the frequency of interaction is limited based on the survey respondents, it provides insight into the strength and pervasiveness of relationships among partners. Understanding these relationships sheds light on the particular opportunities or constraints individuals have in accessing resources between partners. For example, if I am a youth connected to organization A, the more respondents who indicate that their frequency of interaction with my organization is more than rarely, then that information can provide insight into the access I have to opportunities and resources located in another organization. It can also signal that there are constraints that inhibit me from accessing those opportunities. Therefore, as the percentage of responses that indicate sometimes, often and very often approaches 100%, it indicates how extensive an organization's relationships are within the network. Conversely, as the percentage of those responses approach 0%, it is an indicator of how limited an organization's relationships are within the network. With the exception of SacACT and PHA – whose responses suggest extensive influence within the network – findings show that most organization's influence is limited within the network due to a lack of interactions with other organizations.

To understand the relationships between organizations, we focus on the level of frequency, however, to measure level of engagement, we look at the percentage of respondents who classified their interactions with an organization as either *often* or *very often*. Five of the 26 organizations had at least 5% of survey respondents indicate that their interactions were *very often*. In comparison, 9 of the 26 organizations had at least 10% of respondents indicate that their interactions were *often* to *very often*. These data points are meaningful in that they show that within the MBK network, it was far more common to have a strong relationship with a few partners than extensive connections throughout the network.

While the interaction measures look at the relationships and strength of ties between partners, they do not measure the impact that the MBK network has had on developing relationships between partners. To measure this, the survey inquired about the development of relationships resulting from the MBK network.. Thirty percent (30%) of respondents indicated that they developed at least one relationship with another partner due to the network. Twenty percent (20%) of respondents stated that they developed at least two connections, while 42% indicated that they had developed three or more relationships as a result of the MBK network. Moreover, 100% of survey respondents identified at least two partners they do not currently have a relationship with, that they would like to work with in the future, and 50% identified five or more partners they would like to work with in the future.

As part of the assessment, ten neighborhoods of interest were identified. One aspect of the assessment was to look at network partners' pervasiveness and the relationships throughout the neighborhoods of interest. On average, respondents indicated that they worked across 4 of the 10 neighborhoods. Additionally, when looking at the relationships between partners, on average, partners had at least one relationship with another partner who serviced a neighborhood beyond the organizations' reach of service. This particular finding is significant because it points to the opportunities for service across a geographical area that partner's clients have as a result of MBK network relationships. For those transient clients, having

relationships with partners who service other neighborhoods reduces the risk of interruption of services, as warm-handoffs between MBK network partners can be facilitated.

However, a full analysis of the data is incomplete without also taking into consideration the impact of COVID-19. While the RIR for the majority of the partners was low – .235 on average – there was an indication that the relationships that exist are strong and that there is a significant desire for partners to coordinate, collaborate or develop formal partnerships in the future. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the opportunities to develop more partnerships, increase the frequency of interactions with new partners, or even strengthen relationships with existing partners. Another study is needed to capture the full impact of the pandemic on Sacramento's MBK network. Still, within the time period that this assessment conducted, it was evident that the pandemic did impact the network partners' ability to interact with each other in a more meaningful way.

Lastly, this assessment results may have been influenced by a lack of participation from some of the network partners, particularly the mentoring grantee partners. There was 22% survey participation from the MBK mentoring partners; because of the age groups and the nature of work these partners engage in, the lack of data collected from this group may have adversely impacted partners' strength of position and relationships within the network. For instance, Urban Strategies, which serves as the strategy lead for workforce development, had a very low indication of coordination and collaboration across the network. However, considering that their services would benefit many of the mentoring partners, lack of participation in the landscape survey from mentoring grantee partners may have unintentionally skewed the data negatively for Urban Strategies. Figure 2 below presents respondents indicated rate of frequency of interaction with each of the MBK network partners while Figure 3 presents respondents indicated rate of frequency of interaction with each of the MBK mentoring focused partners.

Figure 2  
*Frequency of Interaction with MBK Network Partners*

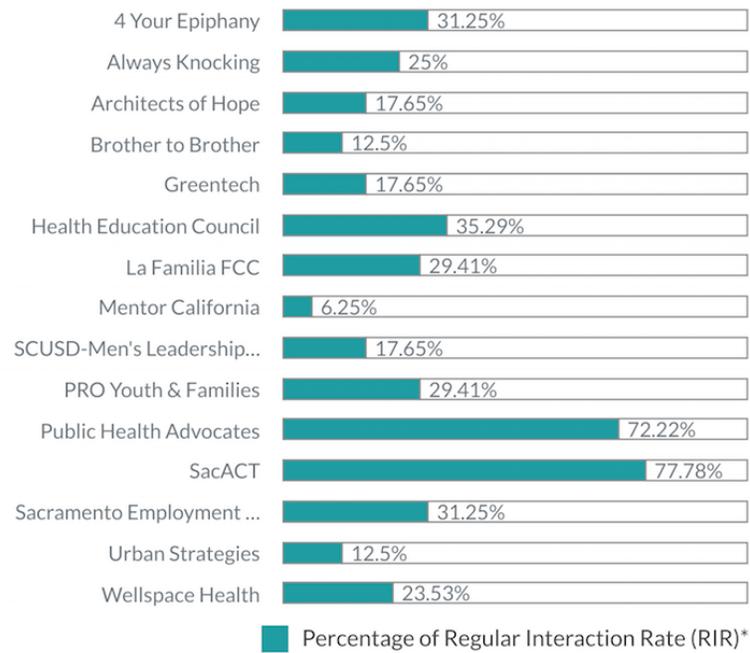
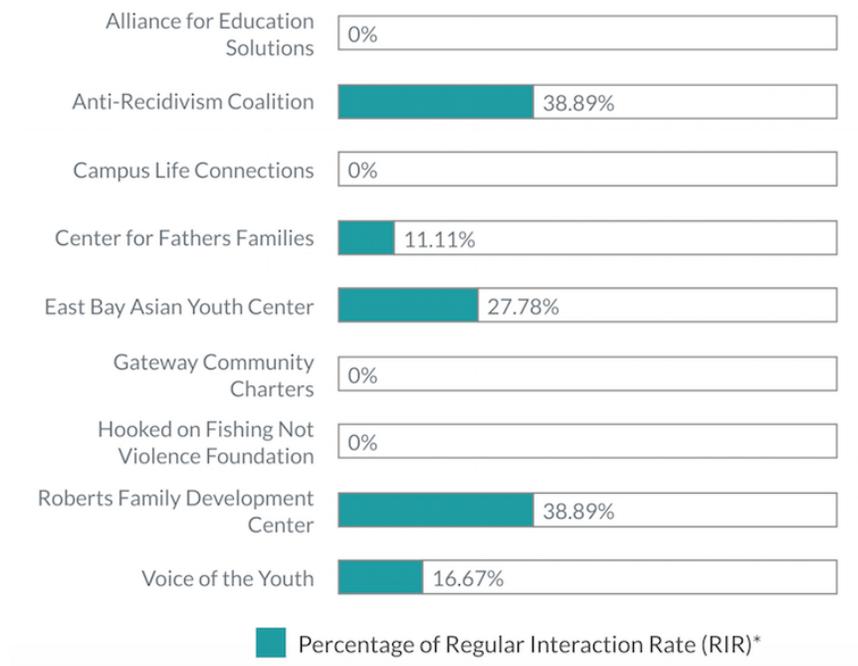
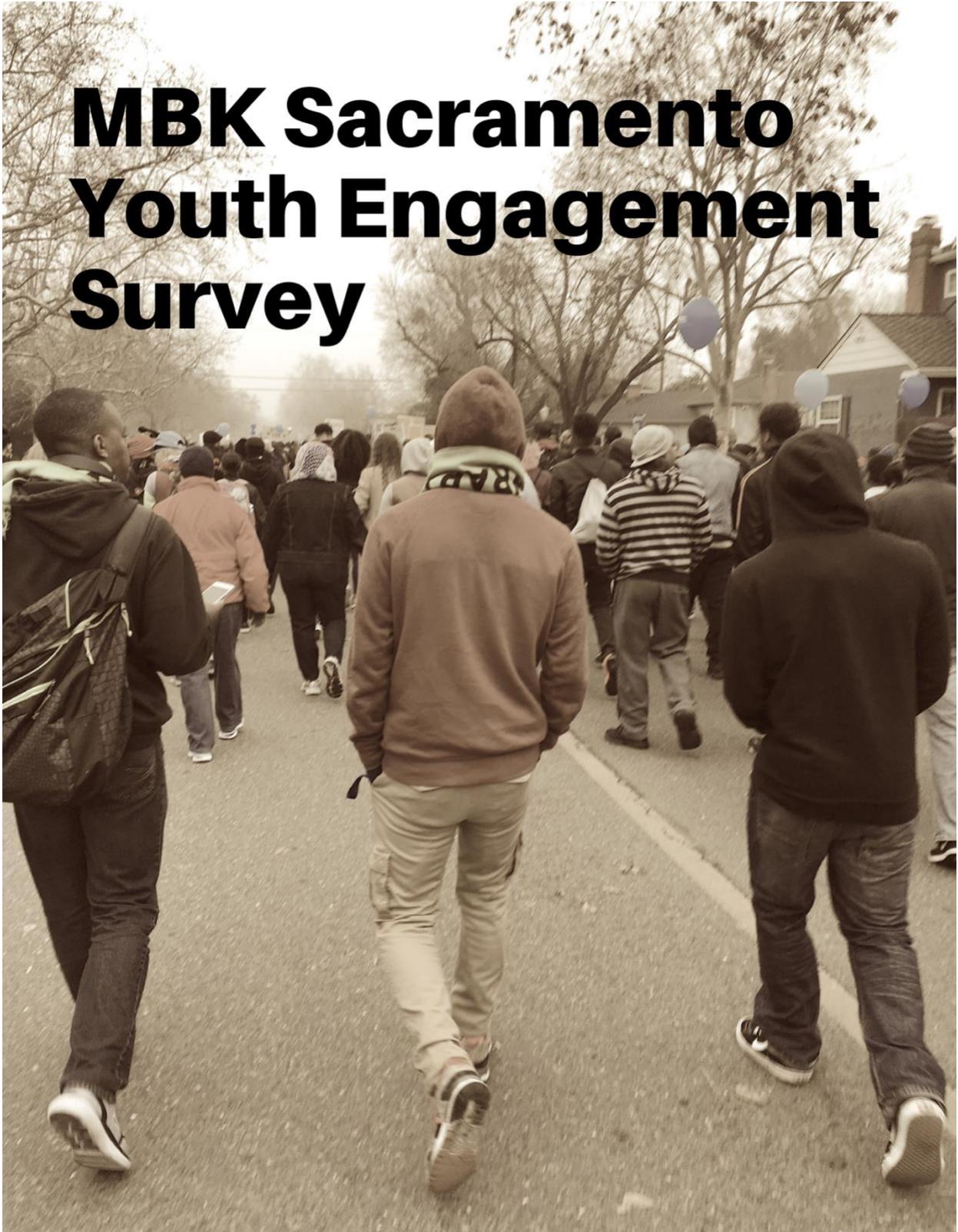


Figure 3  
*Frequency of Interaction with MBK Mentoring-focused Partners*



\* Regular Interaction Rate (RIR): Percentage of respondents who indicated their interaction frequency with a partner organization as sometimes, often, or very often.

# **MBK Sacramento Youth Engagement Survey**



As part of the MBK evaluation of youth engagement strategies, we asked youth to complete a survey to better understand their experiences. Data reported here comes from youth respondents to the MBK Sacramento Youth Engagement Survey. The survey was voluntary and responses were anonymous. Based on participant data from the MBK Youth Engagement Survey, Figure 4 indicates youth participants by racial and ethnic identification, while Figure 5 indicates youth participants by grade.

### Total Youth Survey Participants

27

### Age Range of Youth Survey Participants

Ten years of age to 26 years of age

### Preferred Pronouns of Youth Survey Participants

92% He/him/his  
 4% They/them/theirs  
 4% indicated use of name as preferred pronoun

Figure 4  
 Youth Participants Identification by Race and Ethnicity

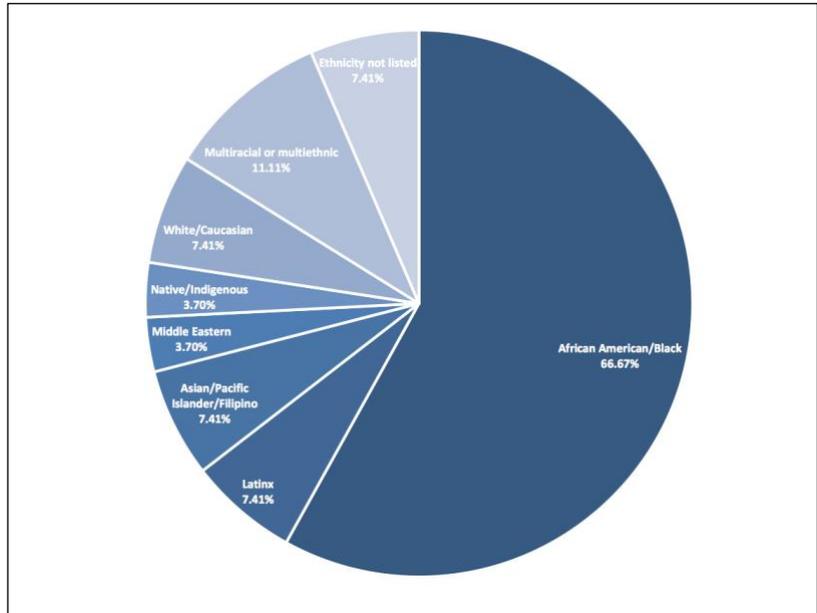
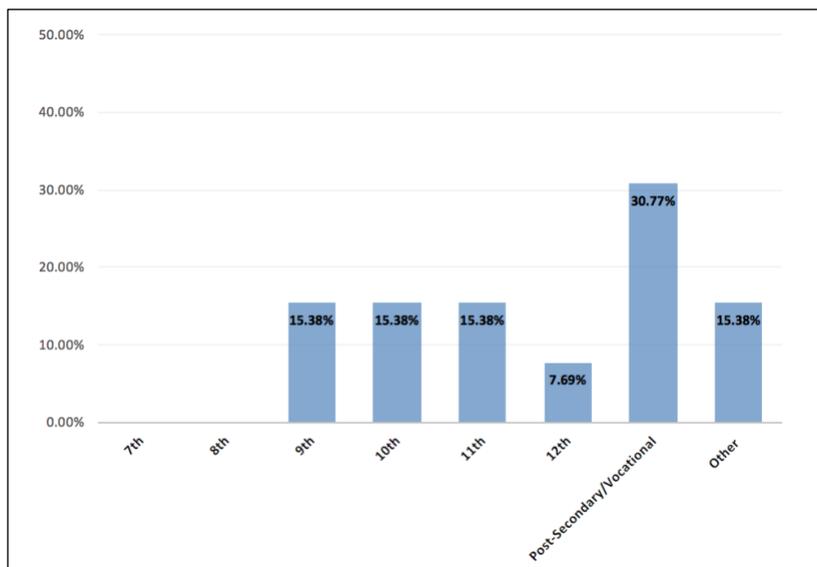


Figure 5  
 Youth Participants by Grade



The survey required youth to reflect on their specific experiences related to MBK. The MBK Sacramento impact areas strategic objectives shaped the items in the survey. Youth responses to these items were overwhelmingly positive and indicated that youth had a high degree of interest and involvement in their programs connected to MBK Sacramento, as presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1  
*Youth Perceptions of MBK Sacramento Engagement Experiences*

Indicators	% Agree or Strongly Agree
<b><i>My MBK Sacramento Experience</i></b>	
I feel like I have a say in creating youth-led MBK programs and activities.	96.3
I feel like my opinion is valued by adults in MBK.	88.9
As a result of my engagement in MBK, I have experience working with other youth to solve problems negatively impacting boys and men of color in my community.	85.2
As a result of my engagement in MBK, I have a better understanding of healing strategies to support my social and emotional well-being.	96.3
As a result of my engagement in MBK, I have worked with youth that live in neighborhoods or communities beyond mine.	92.6
As a result of my engagement in MBK, I have a trusted mentor in my life that cares about me.	92.6
I can always be my true self in MBK.	96.3
<b><i>Advocacy</i></b>	
As a result of my engagement in MBK, I feel like I have a better understanding of issues impacting boys and men of color in my community.	96.2
As a result of my engagement in MBK, I have spoken out about the impact of community violence on boys and men of color.	92.6
I know how to advocate to change policies that affect my community.	81.5
<b><i>My Community</i></b>	
I am familiar with organizations that are part of the My Brother's Keeper efforts in Sacramento.	81.5
As a result of my engagement in MBK, I am aware of support services available in my community.	88.9
<b><i>School and Workforce Connections</i></b>	
I have been exposed to career opportunities through work experiences, internships, or other MBK-related workforce development activities.	85.2
MBK has helped me develop the leadership skills and knowledge to pursue educational opportunities beyond high school.	85.2
MBK has helped me develop the leadership skills I need to pursue workforce opportunities.	92.6
<b><i>My Future</i></b>	
I am committed to working on issues related to boys and men of color now and later in life.	81.5
As a result of my engagement in MBK, I am better able to confront challenges in my life.	81.5
I will use what I learned in MBK in other areas of my life.	92.6

As shown in Table 1, most youth responses to the survey items indicated high levels of agreement. The responses for items reflecting on school and workforce connections, specifically around schoolwork and services needed for school engagement, indicate significant variation in agreement. When asked to indicate a response to the statement, “I work harder on my schoolwork than I did before as a result of my engagement in MBK,” 33.3% of youth indicated *strongly agree*, 33.3% indicated *agree*, 25.9% indicated *no opinion*, and 7.4% indicated *disagree*. Similarly aligned, when asked if, as a result of their engagement in MBK, they “have received services needed to keep me engaged in school,” 37.0% of youth indicated *strongly agree*, 29.6% indicated *agree*, 25.9% had no opinion, and 7.4% disagreed.

Youth participants answered some open-ended questions as part of the survey. When asked what they like most about their engagement in MBK, many used the word **community**, **brotherhood**, and a few used the word **family** to describe what they liked most about their engagement in MBK. Additionally, several youth stated that they like that different opinions are valued and matter, and that an ability to feel safe is what they liked most about their engagement in MBK. The following excerpts of youth responses demonstrate this pattern:

- “That our opinion (is) valued and that we have a safe space to express our feelings”
- “The brotherhood we built within the program”
- “How we are all family”
- “That anything we said to the mentors you guys keep us safe and make sure anything we said is secure”
- “I am proud to say that MBK has placed a part in my life for me to do better so I won’t fail MBK is like a second home/family”

Conversely, when asked, what they like the least about their engagement in MBK, many simply stated, **nothing** while several other youth indicated the impact resulting from **COVID-19**. The following are some of the youth responses:

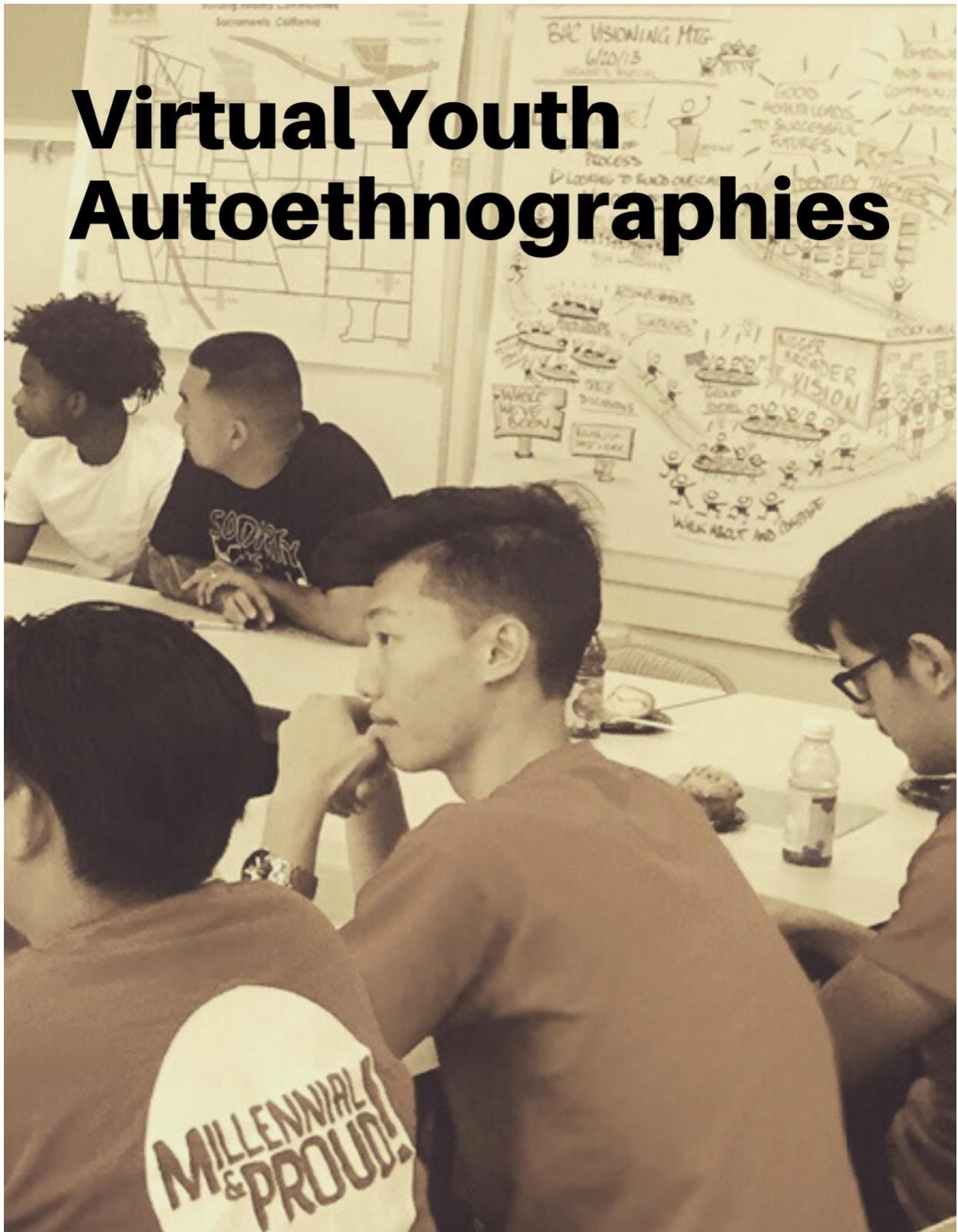
- “We are not seeing each other in person right now”
- “Nothing comes to mind, everything was cool in MBK”
- “I feel like I got cheated with Covid 19 we had our meetings on zoom I look forward to in person on Wednesday after school”
- “COVID limitations”
- “Nothing everything is perfect just the way it is other than I didn’t get to meet Barack Obama because of Covid”

Because the voice of all boys and men of color involved with MBK Sacramento matter, and is equally important, we felt the need to uplift all the youth responses when asked about the main things they have learned through their involvement with MBK. Table 2 represents the youth responses to the survey question, “What are the main things that you have learned through your involvement with MBK?”

Table 2  
 Youth Individual Response to Learning through MBK

<i>Advocacy leadership and teamwork</i>	<i>Becoming more aware of issues that affect people of color</i>	<i>We have the power and ability to pass laws and policies that impact the voiceless</i>
<i>How to interact on a more impactful level with fellow youth and leadership</i>	<i>Helping is very simple</i>	<i>Respect for others</i>
<i>To respect my parents and I am my brothers keeper</i>	<i>To never give up when things get hard because it can always be worse I am not alone. Whether its from family issues to my insecurities. Someone is always feeling what I am</i>	<i>Leadership and communication skills</i>
<i>The way to respect other and always be true to yourself</i>	<i>That boys and men of color matter and have value</i>	<i>I learned how to network</i>
<i>How to overcome different situations in life</i>	<i>How to build relationships</i>	<i>I've learned that there are other people who've been in similar situations as me, and can provide the help needed. Whether it's someone to talk to, or basic materials like snacks, backpacks, school materials etc.</i>
<i>I've learned that even though we are from different parts of Sacramento all of MBK peers experience similar struggles</i>	<i>That I wasn't alone in my upbringing, a lot of similarities are present in MBK</i>	<i>Leadership confidence</i>
<i>I have learned how to network with a lot of business owners they help me go hard to become a business owner</i>	<i>I've learned about problems people of color are facing and ways to try and help them</i>	<i>I can be myself and don't have to hide anything about myself or my life</i>
<i>Teaching and learning as well as being taught and unlearning is a powerful tool if used properly</i>	<i>I learned how to be an entrepreneur</i>	<i>School stuff</i>
<i>Leadership</i>	<i>How to take care of people</i>	<i>About a lot of respect and me and my [brothers of color]</i>

# Virtual Youth Autoethnographies



The youth autoethnography focus was to better understand the experiences and perspectives of youth before, during, and following (if applicable) their engagement in MBK Sacramento youth engagement programs. Participants included MBK Sacramento Youth Fellows, mentees from the MBK mentoring grantee partners, and program participants from organizations within the MBK Sacramento network.

In the following section we focus on the major themes that emerged when youth autoethnography participants were asked to describe their life story up to now.

### *Life Transitions*

Many young men explained that their lives before reaching their respective MBK programs were marked by many events of change. Some life events were expected, things like birthdays, grade changes, and physical growth. In many cases, these life events were celebratory and treated like rites of passage. For others, the events were more sporadic, unexpected, and in many cases traumatic. The young men used words like “rollercoaster,” “my dots weren’t connecting,” “suspenseful” and “iffy” to describe these unpredictable circumstances. These events often served as the impetus to directional changes in the young person’s life trajectory.

### *Migrant Narratives*

For some of the young men, the path before reaching MBK required crossing international borders. The young men who experienced this process explained that the “journey” transported them through two completely “different worlds.” Interestingly, their immigrant stories span from the middle of their childhood adolescent years into the middle of their teen years. This tumultuous passage created much uncertainty throughout the already complicated teenage experience. The young men expressed the difficulty of “starting all over,” “learning a new language,” “changing schools,” and in some cases “being placed in the wrong grade.” As difficult as these situations were, the young men reflected back on these periods as time that forced tremendous growth.

### *Mental Growth*

Young men in this study also described the positive mental changes that accompanied the life events that marked their youth. Many of the young men described being on distinctly “different paths” mentally before reaching their MBK program. One young man stated that in comparison to his former self, that he “wouldn’t recognize that individual” because of the exponential growth he had experienced mentally. Some young men explained that joining their MBK program was the clear transition point where they experienced the distinct change, this idea is highlighted in the following quote “Before I got to MBK I didn’t really know much...I was kinda stuck in a box...but I feel like MBK was kinda an outlet to get out the box and get more connections and see different things around the world and see what ‘s going on...it opened my eyes...”

### *Critical Consciousness*

As the young men in the study described the mental changes they experienced, they used phrases like “seeing things differently” or “opened my eyes” or “connecting” to explain their growth in their personal and societal awareness. As all of the youth serving MBK programs have intentional components of integrated social justice curricula, these programs often catalyzed their awareness of social issues that surrounded them. The critical analysis of these social issues would come during “talks,” “lessons,” and “deep conversations with MBK cohort members and adult facilitators.

In many cases, the young men were able to see “common issues,” and “common problems” between their own narratives and their cohort member’s narratives. These moments would often serve as the spark to investigate deeper into their own lived experience as well as the societal stories that surrounded them. This idea is showcased in the following quote: “getting to know people and hearing their stories...it’s a reality check how the system is set up...”. Importantly this development of critical consciousness was paired with a push towards social action as one young man stated “it also helped me learn how to stand up to things that aren’t right...”

When asked to describe what they have enjoyed most about being a part of MBK Sacramento, two reoccurring themes emerged around new experiences and meaningful connections and communication.

### *New Experiences*

For many of the young men, participation in MBK programming offered them a world of first-time events. For some young men it was the new idea of having catered food regularly and in abundance. For others, it was the various field trip opportunities to locations within their same city, as seen here in this quote: “before MBK I’d never been to a Kings game.” Some of the young men also reflected on the importance of leaving the city for MBK sponsored events like the MBK Rising! gathering in Oakland, CA. Reflecting on this moment, one of the young men said, “my parents work, they don’t do vacations and things like that... Oakland event was the first time I’d ever been in a hotel..”

The event in Oakland was heavily regarded as a life changing moment for many of the young men because of their meeting with former President Obama. One young man explains this feeling with this quote:

“The time we met Obama...that was the best moment of my life...It made me feel like I could become something or do something beyond my standards...or what other people in TJ (Tijuana) believes is possible...whenever I go back home my friends tell me that I’m a role model...but nothing can compare with gaining good moments with your friends in events you couldn’t even imagine.”

### *Meaningful Connections and Communication*

The young men stated that the regular dialogue they had with their cohort members was highly important to them and their experience. Many of the young men stated that they were happy to just have “regular conversations with friends” especially during the global pandemic. The young men spoke to the importance of “conversations.” This idea is shown through the following excerpt: “Talking during the zoom calls...we get down talking about deep conversations and a lot of people can relate...talking about how our lives are the same...letting stuff off your chest...” Other students reiterated this idea by saying that they valued “the bonding experiences between mentors and students and between students...that relationship.”

For many of them, sustaining these relationships and dialogue helped to foster deeper more genuine friendships. One of young men restates this by saying: “...when we meet up we’re not strangers...it’s a family atmosphere where we can be ourselves.” Another student elaborated on this same idea saying, “being able to be myself in any space helped me out a lot...it’s made me content with what I have and being able to impact others’ lives...and just being able to do this work where you get to interact with people and watch them grow over a 9 month period...it brings a lot of joy to my heart.”

Youth were similarly asked to describe what they thought are the biggest challenges that boys and men of color experience in their neighborhoods or communities, school, work, or at home. The most prevalent challenges from the perspective of the youth are detailed below.

### *Prejudice*

Young men in this study argued that their identities are oftentimes stereotyped by the broader community. Their intersectional experiences of race, ethnicity, immigration status, socio-economic status, language, neighborhood, and age create nuanced relationships with the types of stereotypes they encounter. Many young men reported feeling “judged” when walking into locations or spaces that were “unwelcoming” or of different socio-economic status, specifically described as “rich areas.” Some young men reported feeling like outsiders, as highlighted in this quote: “people look at you some type of way because the color you are...”

### *Discrimination*

The majority of young men in this study concluded that different forms of discrimination were prevalent and pronounced in the lives of their community members. Many argued that just by being a person of color, things were “more difficult” or “harder.” One young man explains this idea by saying “every person of color in this footrace has to start off with their shoelaces tied...everyone who isn’t a person color doesn’t have those constraints...”

Discrimination was described by some as “being looked at,” “being treated different,” and “not having the same opportunities” as others. For some of the young men who immigrated to the U.S., they cited language as a major obstacle to fair treatment. These forms of discrimination often times occurred in multiple institutions and environments that the young men inhabited.

Specifically, the young men mentioned “schools,” “work,” “neighborhoods,” and “community” as hubs for both overt and covert discrimination. This idea of experiencing discrimination in multiple spaces is highlighted here in this quote: “There’s not a thing that person of color won’t face...people are constantly being targeted, hurt and harmed...whether you’re going down the street to protest in a black lives matter protest or going to school.”

### *Schools*

The idea of under-resourced schools was mentioned repeatedly when discussing the hardships that boys and young men of color experience. Young men mentioned that sometimes the resource disparity was highlighted through a lack of upkeep on facilities as stated here: “some areas need fixing...the faucets, the bathrooms are out of condition, things like that...” In other cases, the resource disparity was pronounced through a lack of access to education as highlighted here in this quote: “once I graduated (and went to college) my writing skills were terrible and my math skills I had to start over from the lowest one.”

Complicating this idea further, some young men spoke to the issues that the global pandemic created with specific regard to schooling. Even though schools were under-resourced, they still provided an “outlet” or “community” and location for “friends.” With the mandated national and state quarantine, many students felt like they lost a lot of those inherent benefits that school offered. In addition, some students reported that these schools offered safety nets that guarded them from neighborhood-based discrimination from peers, community members, and violence. This ongoing loss undoubtedly became another source of sustained and continuing trauma that the young men experienced.

### *Cycle of Poverty*

One of the young men clearly elaborated the complicated relationship that some young men of color experience with poverty. His full quote is highlighted here:

“everything keeps coming and circling back around...your parents are poor, have to work multiple jobs...that leads to neglect or unable to fully experience family in a home...not because of their parenting style but because they have to...they can't help you with college or do your school work or take you to class...so you come home and you have to apply yourself and overcompensate for things you were born into...and your school is usually underfunded or under resourced...you have guidance counselors or teachers that discriminate you...so you go out to the streets that have vocational school that you lead you to a different path...there’s nothing wrong with that but you’re presented a distorted image of what you can achieve...that leads to disproportionate outcomes...and if you are lucky enough to go to college...you're presented with an entire system that was dedicated to benefiting others...this impacts your future earnings...then you enter a labor force that’s discriminatory against your color or your name and then you end up working multiple jobs...and you repeat the cycle...”

### *Suggestions for Improvement*

When asked to think critically about MBK Sacramento, and describe what they would change about the program they were or are involved in, most of the young men declared that they would not change anything. The young men stated that their respective programs were “already good,” “good the way they are,” and “perfect how it is.”

One of the young men elaborated on his experience in his program, stating: “I wouldn’t change anything in IYT...I don’t see anything wrong with the program...if anything I want more student to participate in IYT...these people are going out of their way to make sure that young men are getting to and thru college...giving us all the resources that we need to get there...more people need to join.”

Some students had specific feedback regarding protocols within their program. For example MBK Fellowship participants said that there should be “more consequences for attendance and days without excuses absences.” In addition, others stated that there should be encouragement for “more participation” reiterating that “more students should join the programs.” Building on this idea of increased engagement, one of the young men added that facilitators should increase the hours of operation by “having the place open before and after meeting so we can hang out and talk to each other.”

Some of the young men thought that the MBK experience could be more valuable if there was more exposure to the workforce and possible career development. The young men added that there should be more opportunity for “career exploration...internships at other organizations...and job exposure...” and “field trips to explore areas of interest to what they might want to do...” This idea is again highlighted here through another quote: “A better pathway to the work field or just more help to search for jobs and careers.” One of the young men argued that there should be more integration between the youth organizations and career pipelines through the “joining the (MBK) youth steering committee.”

### *Becoming My Brother’s Keeper*

Many of the young men explain that sustained involvement in their programs helped them to mature. This maturity and growth process happened through engaging with their peers and sometimes with elders in their community. This idea is highlighted here in the following quotes:

- “I’ve seen the bigger picture...through the talks they’ve given us...all the folks who been through prison helped me to see the bigger picture about life...”
- “Helping me to mature and helping me to be more considerate of all the things that are happening in the world around me”
- “it makes me see life different...it makes me appreciate different perspectives...I talk to people who have been in jail and it helps me see from a different perspective if I made decisions that would put there...I see life different than how I used to”
- “it helped me to mature...and helped me to know what I’m capable to do for others”

For some of the young men, involvement in their programs helped them in their own personal development. This personal development helped to build new connections, friendships, and in some cases mend broken relationships. The cultivation of these relationships helped the young men develop important characteristics like empathy, gratitude, and forgiveness. This idea is shown through the following quotes:

- “hearing peoples stories, knowing my own story...getting more information...those are the things that helped me to bring my brothers here from Mexico...knowing how I can help them, knowing that everyone can make it out no matter where they came from..”
- “IYT has helped me to become more of an outgoing and outspoken person...when we do our brotherly love things, walking around and saying wassup to people...it’s good to see that there’s a bunch of other people who’ve been where you were and who look like you...it’s just easier to communicate with people like that...they’ve really provided that home loving environment...”
- “I’m able to put myself in others shoes...We can play a lot of different roles...outside of being a student...we can be teachers...mentors...our role always changes and can change...young person to adult, to elder...”
- “It made me a better person...we’d talk about anger issues...and approaching things differently...if you approach things with anger, something bad can happen and you could end up in jail or something worse...”
- “through all the conversations, I was even able to work out my anger towards my dad...”

### *Seeing A Possible Future*

For many of the young men, being involved in their MBK program positively affected their thoughts towards future careers. Many noted wanting to “help others” more, or wanting to “serve the community.” This idea of reciprocity, giving back what was given to them was made evident in multiple quotes:

- “MBK has changed my outlook by showing me a better way of thinking and a better way of being of service to my community/communities I operate in.”
- “I want to get involved more with the community, I want to help people who are stuck in this community, who don’t have the benefits that other people may have”
- “Before programs like IYT or MBK it was just about going to school and making money...through MBK and IYT and has helped me realize that helping others and mentoring others is a lot better than just making money...it’s joy...watching your students graduate and go to the same school as you...that’s the best part for me.”

As mentioned in previous sections, personal growth was highly evident with all of the young men. This growth was especially noticeable in how the young men spoke about themselves and what they believed they were capable of in the future. Many shifted from a cynicism and pessimistic attitudes to mindsets rooted in hope and positivity. These ideas are highlighted in the following quotes:

- “being comfortable in my own skin...being able to be myself in any space helped me out a lot...it’s made me content with what I have and being able to impact others’ lives...and just being able to do this work where you get to interact with people and watch them grow over a 9 month period...it brings a lot of joy to my heart”
- “It made me see the bigger picture...back then I was doing hecka bad stuff, not giving an F about anything, doing what I gotta do...but because of this program I can see the bigger picture...”
- “Honestly it made me want to become better and have a life and not go down a bad road...”
- “Its made me a lot more confident and a lot more comfortable...because before I always wanted to go college right after high school but I never really knew how to approach it because there's some many factors to it...but IYT helped simplify the process and made it a lot easier to understand what to do when I get there...”
- “It made me want to do bigger things in life...before being in the program I’d probably say something like I want to be a football player...now I’d probably say something like I want to be my own boss and I want to own my own business”
- “it changed my whole perspective, I remember in my junior year...my Spanish teacher asked me what I want to be...how do you see yourself in 5 years? My answer was prison or jail...that was my response in Junior year...my teacher asked me why?...I said not everybody makes it out the hood...all you do is go home and go to school...no one tells you can become this or do that...MBK taught me that I could become something out of nothing...it gave me a purpose and a goal...it taught me how to be mature...how to build my own character...how to stop pretending to be somebody that I’m not...It gave me a space and it gave me a voice...”

#### *Our Advice for Anyone Entering the Mentoring Field*

- “The person you’re talking to now is completely different than one in high school and middle school that used to raise trouble...that transition I’ve made is what we’re trying to replicate with somebody else...it takes intention to help youth make that transition.”
- “It’s not as easy as reading a name on an application that’s it...getting to know someone ... mentoring takes time and consistency”
- “it takes time, it takes trust...for a person that has trust issues it’s hard to talk about your life...it takes time to dedicate to a person”

Young men looked inward, thinking about the multiple changes they have gone through and experienced overtime. Through introspection and reflection the young men offered ideas summarized the spectrum of experiences they have had. Some of these reflective afterthoughts are shown here in the following quotes:

- “I would want a new adult to know that I ask a lot questions and overthink”
- “I was going down the wrong path...but after I got with SOAR, I started changing...I improved in a lot of stuff”

- “Before all this I was an angry person and I was mad at a lot of stuff.. but talking on zoom really helped me...it helped me change my perspective.”
- “I am an open minded optimist...if I set my mind to it, I’ll work hard to get what I want...”
- “I’m a leader”
- “We grew up without benefits, without resources but I feel like...and we benefit from the resources that MBK provides...it helps us better ourselves.”

If given a magic wand, the youth indicated several things that they would make sure exists for boys and men of color in their neighborhood or community. All of the young men agreed that boys and men of color needed vast amounts of resources, ranging widely between societal institutions. Some of these items are listed below:

- “Clean drinking water, three meals a day...that goes a long way...being food secure allows you to think straight and have your energy in school...not having to worry about what you’re going to eat goes a long way”
- “Access to funds, access to resources, health insurance...stuff that will help us to improve our lives as individuals and community.”
- “A good education”
- “Every kid needs someone to guide them the right way...especially in the transition from middle school to high school.”

Many of the young men that participated in the study argued that safety was a top priority. In discussing their own personal narratives and experiences, safety was often stated as missing from their daily lives. The lack of safety was sometimes long lasting because of housing instability, immigration issues, and police, while at other times these experiences happened more abruptly through violent encounters, sudden job loss of parents, or deaths of loved ones. Reflecting on this, the young men offered the following ideas of what was needed for all boys and men of color:

- Financial, judicial, medical and societal safety.
- A place that you can be free and safe without someone trying to shoot outside or around the corner.
- A safe space to hoop and engage in activities where you can just be a kid.

Other young men in this study discussed their ongoing struggles with racial profiling, prejudices, and systemic discrimination. Encounters at school, walking on streets or throughout different neighborhoods, and shopping plazas were mentioned as sites of racism. The young men asserted that this feeling was something shared with most if not all boys and men of color. With this understanding, some of the young men offered the following suggestions.

- “Stop the discrimination.”
- “No more judgement...or stereotyping...Don’t judge a book by its cover...you never know who they are.”

- “Equal opportunity despite your skin color...there wouldn’t be any discrimination based on their appearance and they’d be equally qualified.”

When asked what three words would describe their experience in MBK, the youth stated:

Pursuit of **Brotherhood**

**Brotherhood** family, mentors  
someone you can rely on, safe place,  
purpose, goal, dream

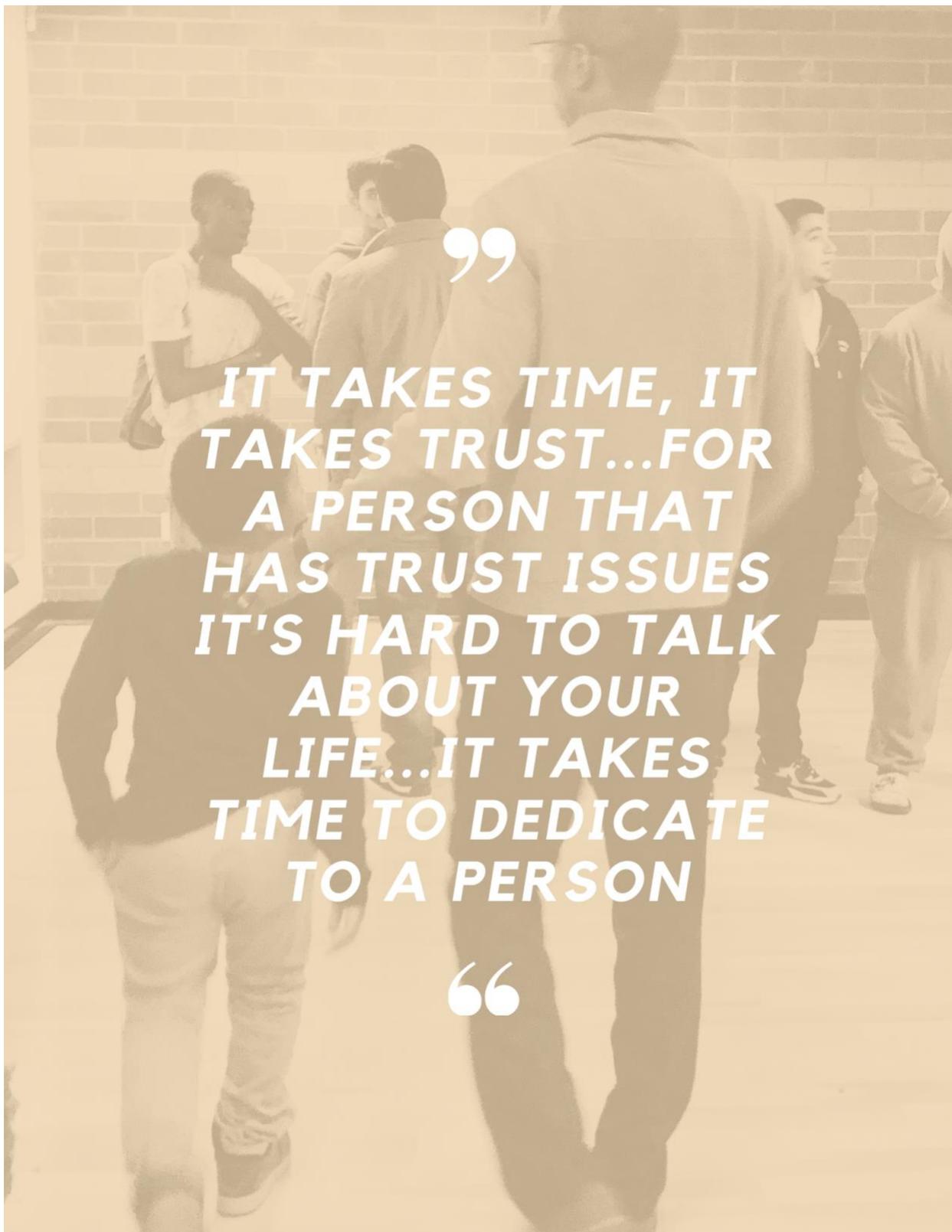
Adventure, great program, **Brotherhood**

Eye opening, receptive, constructive

**Fun** good and motivational  
Good, experience, reliable

**Fun** loving, educational

**Fun** helpful, good environment



”

**IT TAKES TIME, IT  
TAKES TRUST...FOR  
A PERSON THAT  
HAS TRUST ISSUES  
IT'S HARD TO TALK  
ABOUT YOUR  
LIFE...IT TAKES  
TIME TO DEDICATE  
TO A PERSON**

“

# Recommendations

The findings from the evaluation and assessments of youth engagement strategies produced several recommendations that have been categorized for MBK Sacramento to consider. Rooted in each recommendation is acknowledgement that the efforts of MBK Sacramento has resulted in transformative experiences for boys and men of color based on their reflections, perspectives and learning from this study. Furthermore, we were conscious to let the voice of the youth be truth, give guidance to the learning, and inform how we shaped the recommendations to operationalize every aspect of what it means to be *My Brother's Keeper*.

Recognizing that long-term sustainable systems change does not result from isolated work, each recommendation on the subsequent page is categorized and intended to serve as an opportunity for critical discussion among all MBK Sacramento Collaborative members. However, we provide a bulleted outline of each recommendation below.

- Restructure the MBK Network infrastructure to include measures of shared accountability, connectivity across organizations, and data-sharing.
- Design spaces, opportunities, and strategies for new and eye-opening experiences for youth engaged in MBK Sacramento programs or activities.
- Sustain practices of disruption (prejudice, discrimination, disparities, trauma, community violence, and intergenerational poverty), wellness, and healing by integrating into the policies, procedures, and overall fundamental work of the MBK Sacramento.
- Operationalize MBK Sacramento as a practice and approach to addressing the persistent opportunity gaps for boys and young men of color.

## Network Connectivity

*"If you're a youth male and you're going through any problems MBK can help you in anyway possible"*

Youth indicated overall positive experiences from their involvement in MBK. Their stories of impact reflected program-specific engagement, suggesting a quality of practice among MBK Sacramento partners providing youth development programs. However, the landscape assessment revealed gaps in connectivity of MBK involved partners in the network, leaving one to imagine the impact possible in the lives of BMoC in Sacramento if a focus on **reconstructing the MBK network infrastructure** was to include measures of shared accountability, connectivity across organizations, and data-sharing.

Furthermore, to permanently change harmful conditions that threaten the wellbeing of BMoC in Sacramento, we must **focus on improving the systematic coordination across strategy teams toward an increased culturally responsive wraparound support** during and beyond BMoC's involvement within the MBK network.

## Disruption and Healing

*"This is a great program its helps you mentally physically and spiritually"*

The challenges experienced by BMoC were explicitly indicated by the youth who participated in this study. We must disrupt prejudice, discrimination, disparities in education, repeated trauma, community violence, and intergenerational poverty. To address the social needs of the whole child includes addressing the needs of the heart, mind, and spirit. To sustain, we must determine how to **make the acts of disruption, wellness, and healing inherent to Sacramento's fabric by way of the policy, procedural, and fundamental work of MBK.**

## Intentionality and Design

*"MBK really help me graduate high school and kept me out of the streets"*

Youth participants described new experiences as something they have enjoyed most about MBK. To produce greater outcomes for BMoC in Sacramento, we must operate with enhanced intentionality to engage our youth in opportunities outside of the norm. To keep our youth out of the streets, motivated to be in school, optimistic about workforce career options, and avoid vulnerability to unhealthy behaviors, we must **intentionally design spaces, opportunities, and strategies for new and eye-opening experiences of continued youth engagement.** As an MBK Sacramento Collaborative, how can we expect our youth to know experiences beyond their neighborhood or street if we never expose them to the possibilities of the world?

## Brotherhood

*"I've really enjoyed that the mentors have reached out even after my time with them"*

The voices of the BMoC that participated in this study were loud with conviction, clear with purpose, and felt with certainty - brotherhood is not a moment or program; brotherhood is *family* and a *community* that does not end because a program does, particularly in times of crisis. If we operationalize MBK Sacramento as a program, then we risk MBK becoming a monumental moment in all our memories. However, suppose we **operationalize MBK Sacramento as a practice and approach to addressing the persistent opportunity gaps for boys and young men of color.** In that case, our BMoC will likely reach their fullest potential surrounded by a community of care and a family of brotherhood.

# Acknowledgements

There are several individuals and partners to thank for making this report possible.

We would like to thank The Center at Sierra Health Foundation for their continued investment and commitment toward improving outcomes for boys and men of color.

We would like to thank all the partners highlighted in this report and those additional partners that comprise the MBK Sacramento Network.

We extend our deepest gratitude to the youth that made this report possible. We will forever be our brother's keepers.

A special *thank you* to President Barack Obama for seeing our young people as all your children, valuing their lives and experiences as equally as others, and recognizing a need to mobilize cities across the nation as part of a collective call to action to support boys and men of color. You *are* My Brother's Keeper.

# Evaluation and Assessment Team

## **bel Reyes, Executive Director, Innovation Bridge**

Ms. Reyes has well over a decade of experience working in close partnership with multidisciplinary sectors, particularly within communities of color. She brings a host of leadership skills in designing, developing, and facilitating community-school partnerships, numerous quantitative and qualitative research projects, and various system building initiatives regionally, statewide, and nationally with proven results. She is a current Doctorate in Education candidate at the University of Southern California, School of Education Rossier program in Organizational Change and Leadership. Born to immigrant parents from Guanajuato, México, and a mother herself, bel values the contributions that culture, language, and identity have on education and community.

## **Bilal Shakeel, Youth Research Intern, Innovation Bridge**

Bilal Shakeel is a current undergraduate student at the California State University, Sacramento. He is a proud graduate of Natomas High School, and an alumnus of Improve Your Tomorrow, a community-based organization focused on getting young men of color to and through college, and the My Brother's Keeper Sacramento Youth Fellowship cohort two. He is a co-author of the MBK Sacramento Youth Fellowship's 2019 policy brief titled, *Understanding Single-Parent Homes*. Bilal's leadership skills include strong communication skills that have been essential to the various engagement spaces that he has served. As a current youth research intern at Innovation Bridge, Bilal has been a critical designer, planner, and contributor to the MBK Sacramento youth engagement strategies evaluation and assessment. He is a beloved son, brother, and currently lives in Sacramento, CA.

## **Brit Irby, Associate Director, Innovation Bridge**

Ms. Irby has been instrumental in leading nationally recognized youth programs, with extensive leadership in expanded learning and youth leadership. She has served the needs of youth, families, and communities for more than 20 years in various capacities, including serving as Coordinator of Youth Development Support Services for Sacramento City Unified School District and Resource Coordinator for the City of Sacramento's Office of Youth Development. Her career experience also includes program design and evaluation, improving access and support in post-secondary education systems, and community engagement.

## **Deveon Smith, Youth Research Intern, Innovation Bridge**

Deveon Smith is a proud graduate of the Sacramento Accelerated Academy through Hiram Johnson High School. He is a creatively talented photographer and community youth advocate previously working with Sol Collective, a community-based organization focused on providing educational programming, promoting social justice, and empowerment of youth through various levels of artistic experiences. Deveon is an alumnus of the My Brother's Keeper Sacramento Youth Fellowship cohort three. He

continues his commitment to community service as a current youth research intern at Innovation Bridge. Currently, Deveon serves as a youth research intern at Innovation Bridge and was a key contributor in the design, planning, and development of the MBK Sacramento youth engagement strategies evaluation and assessment. He is a beloved son, brother, and currently lives in Sacramento, CA.

### **Ijeoma Ononuju, Ph.D., Partner Associate, Innovation Bridge**

Dr. Ononuju holds a Ph.D. in Education with an emphasis in Language, Literacy, and Culture. A 2010-2011 McNair cohort scholar, Dr. Ononuju has a devotion to youth, families, and community. Born and raised in Vallejo, California, Dr. Ononuju continues to positively impact and inform educational experiences of young people through his research and service. Dr. Ononuju is currently the Coordinator of Equity, Diversity & Inclusive Education Program in the Graduate School of Education at Touro University, California. Dr. Ononuju is also currently a student at McGeorge School of Law, California and serves as one of several community hub leads for the Black Child Legacy Campaign.

### **Mark Carnero, Ed.D., Partner Associate, Innovation Bridge**

Dr. Mark Carnero is a social justice educator, youth organizer, and community advocate. His early years of mentoring first generation, Filipino youth, had a formative effect on his consciousness, pushing him to pursue a bachelor's and master's degree in Sociology, researching the Filipino-American identity at the intersections of race, gender, class, immigration, and colonization. Dr. Carnero fueled his passion for youth development by working for a local non-profit agency, teaching community organizing strategies, policy advocacy, and youth participatory action research to youth throughout multiple K-12 systems. He earned a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership at Sacramento State University. In 2017, Dr. Carnero earned the "Outstanding Dissertation for K-12 Award" for his study entitled "Upset the Setup: Exploring the Curricula, Pedagogy, and Student Empowerment Strategies of Critical Social Justice Educators." Currently, Dr. Carnero is the lead implementation strategist for Ethnic Studies at SCUSD and teaches multiple courses at Sacramento City College and Sacramento State University.

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# Endnotes

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