

Equity and Interdependence

Spring & Summer 2020

Executive Summary

- [Expansion of Collaborative Leadership \(CL\)](#) - iBme is deepening the implementation of its [collaborative leadership system](#) within the administrative staff, retreat staff, and board. A new position is being created as co-founder Jessica Morey transitions from staff leadership, and power is being redistributed among staff and committees with equity as the driving force.
- [Launch of Equity and Interdependence Dashboard](#) - This web portal is [live on our website](#) and includes our current equity commitments and future goals, with details on our demographics, accessibility policy, partnerships, and staff training. It also provides a list of community resources from our teachers and participants.
- [Completion of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion \(DEI\) Assessment](#) - iBme's administrative team participated in the [DEI Spectrum Tool](#) analysis developed by the [Center for Equity and Inclusion](#). During this assessment, admin staff participated in 1-1 discussions with our new equity consultant.
- [Learnings with Retreat Staff](#) - Our mandatory [justice-based resource list](#) was renewed and distributed to all retreat staff. Additionally, a new 2020 [retreat staff training](#) was developed and underwent several revisions with support of retreat staff from all regions. This months-long process highlighted several key areas of improvement in iBme's equity training strategy.
- [Recommendations from Equity Consultant](#) - iBme partnered with our newly hired equity consultant, Raquel Castro-Corazzini, to raise accountability and solidify our commitment to our values organization-wide. In this section, Raquel will present recommendations to achieve the short term goals identified through assessment and discussion with admin and retreat staff.
- [Notable Achievements](#) - As an organization, we are advocating for institutional change and we know this starts with our own internal policies and the way we use our platform to engage with the issues that impact our community members and the world at large. In our June 2020 Call to Action, we identified several future goals. In this section we will report on the outcomes of these goals.
- [Looking Ahead Together](#) - In this section we will share our upcoming initiatives for the Fall and Winter. As our personnel evolves and we continue to fine tune our collaborative leadership model, we expect to provide timely updates on our progress and remain responsive to the needs of our community.

The following report details all the activities that have been carried out since March of 2020, including key successes, new insights, and areas of future growth.

Collaborative Leadership Update

Over the past three years iBme has invested a great deal in transitioning the organization towards a [collaborative leadership model](#) (CL) to achieve deeper goals for equity. Historically, the administrative team, which has been primarily made up of dominant identity groups (white, able-bodied, middle-class), has held significant decision making power for the organization. The aim of CL is to better distribute power across the organization's many stakeholders and embed efficient and transformative feedback and resource sharing mechanisms.

2020 marks a critical year in this process with the Executive Director role being dissolved and former Executive Director and co-founder, Jessica Morey, transitioning out of staff leadership. Other personnel changes related to this transition include the hiring of David Macek in development and the soon-to-be hiring of a new role focused on program, equity, and community engagement strategy. Increased development support created greater capacity for Arielle Pierre, previously focused only on development and communications, to initiate and lead new Equity and Interdependence (EI) work which had been lacking direct leadership for the past year. Arielle's leadership during the spring and the projects that were carried out was very influential in the design of the new program, equity, and community engagement strategy role. The other members of the staff team include Tom Rocco (marketing), Amanda Ferrari (operations), and Sarah Wrean (programs).

The administrative staff completed a feedback training program, which will be rolled out to retreat staff and board, and created a recurring schedule for giving and receiving feedback. The team also made all salaries transparent and created a criteria for determining them collaboratively in the future. The criteria includes personal financial needs, historical disadvantage/privilege, and sets a 150% maximum range from lowest to highest salaries.

Another notable addition to iBme decision making includes the Teacher Advisory Council (TAC), which is currently comprised of 7 of iBme's retreat teaching staff, whose purpose to assist the program team in holding the history and lineage of teen retreats and a deep teaching perspective. Historically this voice has been held by the Executive Director, and the intention of the TAC is to diversify/broaden the voice of the teachers within program decision making for iBme. The TAC will be the lead decision maker for determining retreat teaching teams, and updating manuals and curriculum, as well as supporting the program team on new programming, supporting resolution of any conflict that arises on retreat, and caring for the culture of iBme. These 7 teachers represent diverse geographic locations, as well as gender, sex, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

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Equity and Interdependence Dashboard



The first phase of reinvigorating equity and interdependence (EI) work in 2020 included the formation of an EI staff and board working group. The request to join this committee was made to board members and staff, as its original intention was to determine what the eventual committee's goals might be.

A few members of the staff and board, including Arielle Pierre, Taeya Boi-Doku, David Macek, Khalila Archer, and Jessica Morey, launched its first project - the [Equity and Interdependence Dashboard](#) - in July of 2020. This web portal was completed and includes our current equity commitments and future goals, with details on our demographics, accessibility policy, partnerships, and staff training. It also provides a list of community resources from our teachers and participants.

The development of this portal is a significant celebration for the iBme community, as it is essentially putting its stake in the ground and declaring our values, processes, and practices as it relates to equity and interdependence. This webportal is also a great reference to share with various stakeholders and community members when engaging with the topic of equity and what this looks like at iBme.

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Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Assessment

Achieving our vision requires that we recognize the reality of our interdependence, and that our sense of interdependence inspires us to work for equity in the unjust systems that shape most aspects of our society; our communities, our schools, our institutions. Through our programming, we work towards these goals through our personal mindfulness practices and through relational practices that bring us into deeper connection with one another. Internally - assessment, policy, and responsibility that is commonly housed under the umbrella of 'diversity, equity, and inclusion' has evolved into what iBme has deemed more custom terminology: equity and interdependence. iBme leadership is involved in ongoing discussion regarding the expansiveness and resonance of the language 'equity and interdependence' to ensure it captures the essence of topics such as inclusion, and access that are traditionally associated with the phrase 'diversity, equity and inclusion'.

iBme cultivates interdependence by valuing staff and serving participants from a wide variety of communities. At the same time, iBme fosters equity within our practices, culture, and curriculum in order to be a more welcoming space for all of our teens and staff. We nurture equity and interdependence in two arenas: through our teen programs and with the adults who support them. We intentionally welcome all participants and staff — regardless of culture, abilities, ethnic origin, gender, gender identity, nationality, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status.

In April of 2020, David Macek introduced the idea to survey admin staff as an initial step to raise accountability towards our values. The admin staff participated in an internal [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion assessment](#) with the goals of: **(1)** deepening awareness of our own biases in order to bring more Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI) into our work and lives, **(2)** developing a shared understanding of how iBme is and is not living our values of equity and interdependence, **(3)** identifying concrete next steps to advance iBme towards fuller expression of equity throughout all levels of interaction and access within our leadership.

The DEI Spectrum Tool developed by the [Center for Equity and Inclusion](#) in Portland, OR seeks to assess where an organization is on its DEI journey and identify potential areas for future work or growth. Through this tool, users are encouraged to identify their perception of the organization on the continuum in relation to the guideposts which focus on five points along the DEI continuum: "1 - Not Yet Started," "2 - Ready to Start," "3 - Launched," "4 - Well on the Way," and "5 - Exemplary/Leading." It is important to note that few organizations' DEI experiences will fit neatly into these stages. The descriptions of organizational characteristics at each point in the process are intended to serve as guideposts rather than fixed stages. To gather more precise information on where the organization is, midpoint options have also been added between each main point.

The categories of assessment are as follows:

- Commitment

- DEI Vision
- Leadership
- Policies
- Infrastructure
- Training
- Diversity
- Data
- Community
- Decision
- Accountability
- Inclusion

Upon completing the survey, the staff team participated in nearly ten hours of discussion facilitated by iBme’s newly hired equity consultant, Raquel Castro-Corazzini. In May of 2020, Raquel joined iBme to start an organizational assessment of its Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) policies and practices. In collaboration with key stakeholders from the organization, Raquel has developed DEI recommendations outlined in this report for iBme to roll out in the fall of 2020.

Below, each of the DEI focus areas have been categorized into two different groupings: “institutional alignment” and “institutional disconnect.” Focus areas were categorized as “institutional alignment” if there was less than a one-point difference in the plot and as “institutional disconnect” if there was more than a one-point difference.

Staff had the most amount of alignment in the areas of Data and Decisions and the least amount of alignment in the areas of Diversity and Accountability. In the analysis of the results, the following themes were identified:

- Staff had a disparate amount of experience in their understanding of what DEI meant. Many staff communicated that their responses were based on limited understanding on the topic.
- Shame and guilt played an instrumental role on how staff experienced the gaps in the “institutional disconnect” focus areas.
- The sole staff of color had the largest gaps in responses compared to their counterpart white colleagues.

Institutional Disconnect

Institutional Alignment

Commitment	Policy
DEI Vision	Training

Leadership	Data
Infrastructure	Decision
Diversity	Inclusion
Community	
Accountability	

To provide greater context, many of these discussions were held during the onset of mass protests in the United States and beyond. Together, iBme grieved in community following the killings of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd. The global conversation brought heightened awareness to issues of injustice and several discussions around equity, justice, and inclusion seeped into the forefront of our collective consciousness during meetings and day-to-day interactions greater than ever before. We firmly believe that designing and implementing policies rooted in inclusive and shared power paradigms will prepare us to serve more youth from vulnerable communities and to work with more diverse teachers and staff. As we continue to reflect, identify, and divest from heteronormative systems of power within our own internal structures, we expect to better serve a greater number of teen participants and staff from low-income, POC, and LGBTQ+ communities. The question we face now is not only how do we welcome these groups, but also how do we retain them? Furthermore, how do we include conversations around ableism, ageism, etc.? Recently as a core staff team we are beginning to ask the question of what it would mean for iBme to be led by those identifying within these groups and if this is an organizational priority.

One-to-One with Admin Staff

In the midst of the months-long deep dive into the results of this survey, Raquel conducted one-on-one interviews with each admin staff and created a [critical analysis](#) of the survey results. Some of the themes that came from those conversations are summarized below.

In an effort to be responsive to DEI needs, the organization identified challenges and wished to implement broad stroke interventions that would quickly achieve progress.

- A regular challenge of implementing organizational change was that individual employees did not always feel empowered, protected, or ready to challenge their peers and their overall organization in ways that would produce that desired change. While it

was unclear if this reticence was a cautious reasoning or based on prior experience, it was an important component of organizational change worth addressing and supporting.

- As much as we may wish otherwise, in reality, advancing DEI is hard. The challenge needs to be met with not just a training, but a model designed to support organizational change.
- Increasing knowledge was a priority for many staff. A common strategy to achieve this was setting the intention to collect, share, and in some cases even require DEI focused readings for staff.

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Retreat Staff Engagement

Committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and at the same time recognizing that leading change toward diversity is an area of expertise with its own knowledge base and professional practice, Arielle Pierre and Raquel Castro-Corazzini developed a new [justice-based resource list](#) to share with all retreat staff to reflect upon before retreat. This resource list covers a wide array of topics such as: white privilege, sex, sexuality, womanism, race, equity literacy, ableism, adultism, power and teaching, and oppression.

In addition to reviewing the resource list, the goal of our staff training is to create opportunities for our leadership to reflect on our social identities, further develop cultural resilience, and institutionalize anti-oppression policies and commitments. We focus not on educating people on the history of oppression, but rather bringing sensitivity and awareness to the places we may be blind. The development and implementation of the new retreat staff training offered new insights and opportunities for growth. Despite its intention, the lack of time made available for retreat staff to be trained ahead of retreat posed the biggest concern. Most of the retreat staff who were to lead the proposed training agreed that they were on board for these discussions to take place, however, only if it were to be done in a way that felt authentic and non-performative. To do so, it became clear that more trust needs to be built between our equity consultant and retreat staff, our admin staff and retreat staff, and multiple levels of leadership at iBme. Additionally, much more transparency is needed around how the retreat staff training fits into iBme's overall equity and interdependence strategy.

By the end of the months long retreat season, several teachers were able to modify the training so that it can be facilitated for their retreat teams. Others came up with something entirely different and still relevant and effective. The key learnings from this process were: **(1)** trust is an essential component of any relationship. We hope this report helps to give a transparent update on our intention behind developing the material, and in a later section, we will share about what happens next. **(2)** Working collaboratively, for as many steps along the way as possible, can help align action with purpose and culture. We realize that the voice of teachers and mentors should be central in developing training material for retreat teams, and so our plan is to make sure this happens as we prepare for next retreat season. **(3)** Developing feedback structures so that information can flow from where it is to where it needs to be is critical to creating high-trust environments where collaborative leadership can truly thrive. Engaging with structural feedback and making a plan to address the feedback requires awareness of how power and access can lead to reproduction of old paradigms of decision-making.

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Equity Consultant Recommendations

DEI work is imperative, and there is much more to accomplish for all organizations. Racism is interwoven in our citywide structures, organizations, and cognition. Learning about racism and unlearning previously held notions and biases is a continuous process. Every individual has more learning to do, despite their backgrounds and experiences. This is work that all nonprofits can and should engage in, whether their staff are predominantly White or racially diverse. Internal DEI work is central to a nonprofit's success and impact.

Change is slow and incremental - DEI cannot be achieved by a list of "do's" and "don'ts" or by one-time trainings. Organizations are better served by setting incremental goals that can build on foundational work to ensure that change is both effective and sustainable. Progress towards shared organizational goals requires acknowledging, and often shifting power. It also requires the deconstructing and rebuilding of ideologies, behaviors, and systems that have been constructed over hundreds of years. This important and achievable work will take time. Understanding and communicating the time expectations to staff, funders, board members, and invested stakeholders will help set iBme up for long-term success.

Below are some recommended actions to help advance DEI work. These recommendations are not instant fixes, but rather components of a long-term commitment to advancing DEI within the organization:

- Ensure that participants from across different identities and organizational roles participate in DEI work
- Consider DEI in every opportunity, challenge, and process
- Carve out consistent, protected time for staff to engage in DEI work
- Communicate, communicate, communicate—and document
- Set incremental goals and acknowledge that progress will take time

While iBme's action plan needs to be further customized to meet the particular needs of the organization, there are five themes that have emerged from this early assessment: Anti-Racist Organizational Change (AROC) Council, affinity groups, ongoing learning, policy and practice review, and communication and transparency.

Anti-Racist Organizational Change Council

The Anti-Racist Organizational Change (AROC) Council is rooted in a consultative process that seeks to center the voices of those most impacted by institutional and organizational racism within iBme, while providing opportunities for all interested members of the organization to participate and be informed. The AROC Council should be convened to collaboratively develop a process for anti-racist organizational change that involves the staff, board, and community of iBme.

The work of the AROC Council is to unlearn racism while facilitating organizational change together. Organizational change is about reviewing and modifying management structures and procedures. For example, making changes to policy, hiring practices, and governance. The AROC Council's role will be to make changes in a way that intentionally addresses structural racism and creates greater diversity, inclusion, and equity. The AROC Council will work collaboratively to identify challenges and opportunities, design recommendations for organizational change (e.g., policies), and assist with dissemination of deliverables.

Affinity Groups

Affinity groups typically form around a key identity with which individuals self-identify. Several action plans aimed to establish affinity groups (typically one for White staff, and one for staff of color) as a way to invest time and resources around DEI learning. Organizations plan to operate affinity groups monthly, bi-monthly, or quarterly as a way to protect time for organization-wide conversations specific to each affinity and aligned to organizational context. The iBme organization has the potential to use their affinity group(s) as a space to do some internal information seeking around organizational culture. My recommendation is for a survey to be designed, disseminated, collected, and analyzed by a cross sector representation of the organization.

Ongoing Learning

Increasing knowledge was a priority for all members of the collaborative leadership team. A strategy that the organization has been using to achieve this, is collecting, sharing, and in some cases even requiring DEI focused readings for employees. Recommended next steps is for the organization to incorporate this content into new employee orientation, affinity group meetings, formal or informal "lunch and learn" opportunities, and an internal library comprised of books and/or digital resources. Other options are to initiate storytelling projects to create space for often overlooked voices within the organization.

Policy and Practice Review

Through collaborative leadership staff interviews and conversations with iBme teachers, the importance of examining, revising, and implementing policies that would help them both hire and retain staff of color was identified. In one conversation, a staff member explained that the leadership team was examining promotion plans through a lens of race and gender inequities for the first time. More broadly, several collaborative leadership members stated interest in designing, revising, and implementing policies that would codify the organizations' goals of attracting and maintaining a diverse workforce. So far, iBme has identified creating and establishing an equity steering committee as a priority goal. This strategy can allow them to have a structured, cross-organizational group dedicated to the incorporation of equity throughout the fabric of the entire organization.

Communication and Transparency

Development of communication plans to coincide with strategic plans will both help with transparency, a core tenet of DEI work, motivation, and trust. Staff and community members may see the decisions of leadership from a very different vantage point. Often communication of decisions and actions does not exist or is not clear. Ensuring that the communication is accessible to all stakeholders will help to sustain and support the implemented DEI initiatives and practices.

Finally, DEI work has to be considered in every opportunity, challenge, and process. Organizations must consistently ask who will be most impacted by the decisions they are making and work to include these voices into the process. A report done by the Annie E. Casey Foundation on [Organizational Change Processes](#) reminds organizations that regardless of the starting place, individual participants should be influencers within the organization. While people with formal authority should participate, it's important to remember that the biggest cultural influencers may not have authority. Development and execution of any kind of organizational plan should center all people and focus on what the impact will be for different groups to mitigate the overall challenges. This is the root of true diversity, equity, and inclusion work.

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Notable Achievements Towards Equity

iBme embodied leadership in the the mindfulness community and modeled a swift programmatic response to the George Floyd murder and wave of racial justice action in 2020. As a response to the global uprising of June 2020, we published a blog entitled [We Stand for Racial Justice: Call to Action](#). This message is guided by the testimonials and policy proposals of black-led organizations on the frontlines of today's crisis. As an organization, we are advocating for institutional change, and we know this starts with our own internal policies and the way we use our platform to engage with the issues that impact our community members and the world at large. In it, we identified several future goals. In this section, we will share about the outcomes of these goals.

In addition to this call to action and after receiving questions and concerns from individuals in our community (including major donors), Arielle Pierre and Jessica Morey published this article, [Why Defund Police](#).

Diversifying Paid Consultants

Our organization will prioritize recruiting and hiring more diverse consultants and retreat staff teams in order to do the work of redistribution of resources and retain diverse participants and staff over time. We've worked with Aneesa Khan to develop all graphics for our 2020 Contemplative Summer Course (see below left). Aneesa is the Executive Director at [SustainUs](#), a youth-led organization advancing justice and sustainability by empowering young people to engage in advocacy at the domestic and international levels.

As for our retreat graphics, we worked with [Sakina Saidi](#). Sakina writes on their website, “[M]y work focuses on the beauty and diversity of womanhood. I love to represent the world around me using a cheerful palette with a positive and motivational message.” See Sakina’s wonderful retreat graphics below (right). PS - Sakina also curated our Equity and Interdependence banner!



Justice-Centered Programming

We will offer three courses related to equity during our Contemplative Summer School: Meditation as a Support for White Anti-Racist Action; Celebration and Restoration of Communities of Color; and Embodied Sacred Activism: Mindfulness and Social Justice. Our justice-centered courses have had tremendous success, and attracted the three largest course cohorts of the summer, pointing to the desire for our community to engage with these complex topics. With a total enrollment of 99 participants, we are thrilled to support teens, young adults, and adults in using mindfulness to anchor exploration of the critical issues of their awareness and resilience as we live into the time of transformation in a tumultuous political climate.

Affinity Space Retreat

Our People of Color affinity programming ([Teens of Color retreats](#)) will expand this summer to include a month-long online multi-generational space for teens, young adults, and adults of color. The 2020 Communities of Color programming this summer represented a shift in decision-making from the core program staff to the BIPOC retreat/regional leadership. Historically, programs have been decided by the core team, and then regional staff/teachers have executed on programs decided by the core team. Instead, the BIPOC programming was entirely directed by this affinity group, a pilot model we will be hoping to continue in the future. This programming included a dynamic series of 4 workshops, and a three-night retreat. These two programs together welcomed 59 participants from across the country, spanning three time zones. Several of the teens involved in the program were alumni and worked to market peer-to-peer via social media, representing a new model in teen leadership. The programming covered a wide range of topics, using a lens of mindfulness and identity to explore: Love and Rage; Joy, Victory, and Contemplation; Health and Wellness; and Cultural Expression/Rights Speech.

Retreat Staff Engagement

We will continue our retreat staff equity training this summer with nearly 100 teachers and mentors deepening their lens of equity and interdependence within their role. We will continue to send required justice-based readings and video lists to staff and teachers to reflect upon before retreat. Our 2020 resource list was distributed to all retreat staff. We will continue to engage with this list in the coming months as we participate in trainings and discussions community wide.

Our retreat staff training was developed and is still a work in progress based on feedback from teachers and mentors. We are thrilled to welcome and retain more involvement from our retreat staff. Additionally, the future development of an equity and interdependence committee will help to inform these retreat trainings in the coming years.

Admin Staff Engagement

Our office staff of six will complete the third part of our Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) deep dive with our Equity consultant. Our admin team engaged in approximately 10 hours of facilitated discussion, led by our equity consultant.

Out of this work, we will identify at least 5 areas of improvement as it relates to DEI and establish a plan and commitment to address these concerns going into 2021.

(1) To begin each staff meeting, we review and discuss a [basic principle of equity literacy](#). These discussions help ground our meetings in a framework of equity.

(2) [We are hiring](#) a new member of the team to create greater capacity around our program, equity, and community engagement efforts. This new hire will center their work using an equity lens to grow our existing regional grassroots communities through thoughtful partnerships and engage with diverse communities to respond to their needs. This new position will oversee iBme's Regional Community Organizers (RCOs) in building partnerships that are supportive of the needs of each individual community, while ensuring that partnerships have a keen lens of equity. In other words, new partnerships will focus on integrating mindfulness programming for communities who have largely been excluded from traditional mindfulness meditation circles. This position will work closely with Sarah Wrean and members of the Teachers Advisory Council (TAC)

(3) In June 2020, we created full transparency and collaboration in determining compensation levels among staff. Despite the challenges of addressing this topic given how countercultural it is, we have supported each other in moving through the discomfort into deeper connection. Our current salaries range from \$55,000 to \$90,000 and will be adjusted over time (both annually and responsively as needed). To read more about the process we use to determine admin staff salaries, [visit our EI dashboard](#) - resource allocation.

(4) When we started to realize that the pandemic would threaten our spring and summer in-person retreats, we had tremendous concern because the program fees from those retreats was more than \$400K, roughly 30% of our annual revenue. At that point, we quickly reached out to all of our restricted retreat funders (about 20 foundations and individuals including our teens of color retreat funder) to see if they would redesignate their gifts to general operating so that we could have the flexibility to shift programming as needed in response to COVID and have the support we needed to cover our baseline overhead for this year.

The TOC retreat funder, along with almost every other funder agreed, which was the trend throughout the sector. We did have to return \$20K to one funder. We were also unsure of how successful our upcoming Commit to Sit fundraising campaign would do, given the circumstances. That also ended up about \$25K under budget.

After several planning meetings held by 15 iBme retreat staff of color and a transparent update on our financial standing for the year, there was a request to redesignate the original grant

amount back to TOC programming to cover additional costs for the 2020 Communities of Color course and retreat, as well as invest in outreach and organizing work for future programs.

Led by TOC lead teacher Charisse Minerva Spencer and Retreat Manager Jylani Ma'at Brown, the group also requested that they have full autonomy over the management of the budget. Given our prioritizing of equity and collaborative leadership, financial outlook for the fiscal year, and current and future relationship with the funder, we agreed with this request.

The key learning for admin staff was that this 'request' still needed to be made, which reflects the power we still hold and the lack of upfront collaboration and information flow. Another perspective to consider is that this is a rare opportunity to incubate some new ways of distributing power and program development that's radically different from how iBme budgeting has historically been managed as a dominant culture organization.

(5) We are thrilled to renew our contract with Raquel Castro-Corazinni and begin phase 2 of our work together. Over the last 6 months, Raquel has worked with retreat teams and admin staff, and so far the feedback received is indicative of how pivotal her skillset is in partnering with iBme to achieve our key equity goals and live our values. The next phase of this work will be discussed in the section below.

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Next Phase of Work

Focusing the role of Regional Community Organizers

A few of the key responsibilities of the new Programs, Equity, and Community Engagement role are to:

- Lead on community organizing in our regional model:
 - Identify equity goals related to community organizing – with whom and how do we want to be partnering
 - Create new partnerships with the goal of bridging gaps in access as they currently exist
 - Work with existing community members, teachers and staff, teacher trainees, and donors to tighten and build regional networks
- Establish and lead youth leadership strategy for iBme's programs
- Identify, guide, and support Regional Community Organizers (RCOs)
 - RCOs are responsible for local community and partnership building, and engaging new and existing community members including staff, teens, families, and alumni
 - Envision and evolve the roles and responsibilities of RCOs

The intention of these responsibilities is to build deep community alliances with local communities and organizations to improve teen recruitment and retention for our programs. Through these partnerships, for example, we will remove barriers to registration beyond just financial resources. In order to accomplish this, we envision strengthening the capacity of our Regional Community Organizers (RCOs). We believe that if we make a greater investment in the RCO role and their capacity to recruit youth, maintain sustainable relationships with community leaders, and be a bridge between our headquarters and the local community, iBme will be better equipped to support the unique needs of local groups, particularly as it relates to supporting historically marginalized participants.

Resource Allocation to Retreat Staff

Our next step in resource allocation is to extend this transparency and collaboration out to contracted staff. We are taking steps to weave in feedback and be responsive to varying needs. We are constantly brainstorming how to authentically integrate resource allocation, as we are still figuring out what this means in practice as an admin staff.

For example, we have initiated a process to compensate retreat staff for lost income due to COVID-19 pandemic related cancellations. The development team received a \$10K grant from the Hemera Foundation to offer this support, and the development and program teams are working together to distribute these funds with the values of resource allocation in mind.

Reestablishment of Equity and Interdependence Committee

In 2016, iBme institutionalized its first committee dedicated fully to diversity and equity, the Equity and Interdependence Committee (EIC). The EIC is premised on the understanding that our lives are interdependent with one another, which inspires us to work towards an equitable society. It was established to support iBme in fulfilling the commitment to social justice and inclusion that is central to our mission: To guide young adults in developing self-awareness, compassion, and ethical decision making, and empower them to apply these skills in improving their lives and communities.

In 2020, we plan to redevelop this committee and invite participants, retreat staff, admin, and board members to participate in developing its mission, vision, framework, strategy, and articulated goals for the coming year. In the meantime, Raquel and Arielle are leading on surveying the iBme community in order to gather relevant data to help identify where the work of the committee is needed most. Based on what we have learned so far, there is a clear need for an organization-wide equity training curriculum throughout the year and regular caucusing. The initial work of this committee will ensure that these training opportunities are a top priority.

Community Wide Meetings

As an outcome of the work led by Jylani Ma'at Brown and Charisse Minerva Spencer this summer, we are planning to host community wide meetings in order to engage with the topics of equity and interdependence, hear from our community on how iBme is living out these values, and gain greater awareness of ways we can better weave these values into our programs, retreat teams, board, committees, and administration.

The first community meeting welcomed leaders within our Communities of Color (COC) 2020 programming team. This group, consisting of this year's retreat staff and course instructors shared feedback on the program, brainstormed ideas for continued people of color programming, and discussed developing a process to make budgetary decisions around COC specific programs going forward.

The second community wide meeting will welcome all retreat staff, admin, and board members who identify as a person of color. There will be a report on the outcomes of the summer programming (including sharing key learnings and areas of growth) and a chance to opt into a working group to decide upon a decision-making structure regarding COC programming going forward. This decision-making structure will clarify the process to make decisions regarding budgeting, marketing, and other COC program related decisions. The key decision makers thus far have been Jylani Ma'at Brown, Charisse Minerva Spencer, and Arielle Pierre in partnership with Sarah Wrean and David Macek. The intention is to draw upon iBme's administrative decision making process and implement it within the COC programming leadership, further building upon the model of collaborative leadership. We see this as a powerful step to more inclusive stewardship of funds and towards greater systems of feedback, decision making,

information flow, and resource allocation. Additionally, the group will meet to brainstorm potential monthly program offerings for communities of color.

The third community wide meeting will welcome all retreat staff, admin, and board members. The purpose of this meeting is to integrate the learnings from the spring and summer, including but not limited to: **(1)** COC resource allocation **(2)** launch of equity and interdependence webpage, **(3)** DEI assessment outcomes, **(4)** retreat staff feedback, and **(5)** community wide survey results.

Restructuring our Board, Committees, and Working Groups

Over the past 2-3 years, iBme has been engaged in a process of restructuring the organization in order to equitably distribute power and make decision-making more collaborative and transparent. We've looked at many different facets of the organization, including staffing roles and structure, project management and workflow, program/retreat delivery, and salary and compensation.

We are currently exploring ways to restructure the board to meet these goals, and more broadly, the organization's core governance mechanisms, committees, and working groups with the hope of implementing a new structure in 2021.

Training Development and Surveying

Our next phase of work includes one-to-one and group interviews with Raquel and cross organizational surveys. This data will help to inform our upcoming training curriculum. The groups that will be surveyed are admin and retreat staff, board members, and teens. Our goal is to develop an annual training and learning curriculum tailored to retreat staff, administrators, and the board. An example of this curriculum may be 2 required trainings per year, caucusing, and community gatherings. The newly established Teachers Advisory Council will also be involved in the development of training materials.

Additionally, there has been discussion around developing an Equity and Interdependence retreat for all retreat staff, board, and administrators to attend. Ultimately, working collectively with a subset of individuals from each sector of the organization will help tailor this training experience so that it is useful and authentic to our goal of creating and living in diverse, equitable, and beloved community.

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It is with great pleasure that we share with you this Equity and Interdependence Spring/Summer update. The voices narrating this update are: Arielle Pierre, Raquel Castro-Corazinni, David Macek, Sarah Wrean, and Amanda Ferrari. Information gathered in this report has been sourced from: **(1)** discussions with admin and retreat staff, board members, funders, participants, and community members; **(2)** iBme's Call to Action; **(3)** assessments within admin staff; **(4)** consultations with equity professionals; and more.

We believe that sharing timely, accurate, and transparent information is a celebration of collaborative leadership. Our plan is to continue in this spirit of information flow bi-annually so that all levels of leadership have awareness of how iBme is contributing to a liberatory, restorative, and contemplative ecosystem of mindful leaders. We welcome any thoughts, questions, or feedback on this update. Please forward inquiries to arielle@ibme.com