

# Widening the Lens on Boys and Men of Color

CALIFORNIA AAPI & AMEMSA PERSPECTIVES



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Introduction

Only ten years from now, by 2023, it is projected that the majority of children in the United States will be non-white. As they are our future workforce, it is in the best interest of our nation that young people of all backgrounds have an equal chance to become healthy, contributing members of society. But rather than being supported to become a diverse, educated American workforce, over the past 30 years young people of color have found themselves on a sinking playing field as a result of deepening economic inequality, racism, failing public education systems, increasingly punitive and intolerant criminal justice laws, and insufficient culturally competent health services and prevention. In recent years, a growing body of research has focused the attention of funders and policymakers on how these trends have more seriously and disproportionately harmed the life chances of boys and young men.

Efforts to improve the life chances of young people of color must not overlook Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) and Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim and



South Asian (AMEMSA)<sup>1</sup> communities, especially in California which is home to the largest Asian American populations and the second largest Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander populations in the country. In California, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are the fastest growing racial groups. AAPIs now make up 15% of the California's total population, and roughly one out of four people of color in California.

## Why This Report?

Founded in 1990, Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy is a national member-supported philanthropic advocacy organization dedicated to advancing philanthropy and Asian American/Pacific Islander communities. Our members include foundations, staff, and trustees of grantmaking institutions, and nonprofit organizations in ten regional chapters in the United States. AAPIP engages communities and philanthropy to address unmet needs; serves as a resource for and about AAPI communities; supports and facilitates giving by and to our communities; and incubates new ideas and approaches for building democratic philanthropy.

For years, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) have been rendered largely invisible within philanthropy – both within organized philanthropy, and in recognition of AAPI communities' distinct philanthropic traditions. In 1992, AAPIP published *Invisible and In Need*, which found, among other things, that investment in AAPI communities from 1984-1990 amounted to no more than 0.2% of all philanthropic giving by foundations. Fifteen years later, in 2007 AAPIP followed that seminal report with *Growing Opportunities: Will Funding Follow the Rise in Foundation Assets and Growth of AAPI Populations?*, revisiting the same core analysis, finding that foundation funding to AAPI communities from

1990–2002 amounted to no more than 0.4% of all foundation funding although the AAPI population had doubled between 1990 and 2004. In 2012, foundation investments in AAPI communities had dropped to 0.3%. Lack of investment in AAPI communities remains an enduring challenge to philanthropy.

While aggregated data on AAPI and AMEMSA communities show higher indicators of income and education than the general population, the available disaggregated data makes it clear that certain subgroups have high rates of poverty and linguistic isolation, and low levels of educational attainment. Youth in these communities are rendered invisible with the prevalence of the “model minority” myth, which holds that Asian Americans are more successful than other racial and ethnic groups.

With respect to current philanthropic initiatives on boys and men of color, most of the research used to develop these initiatives did not disaggregate the “Asian” category, and disadvantaged AAPI and AMEMSA boys and men are often not included in these funding initiatives. In response to AAPI and AMEMSA organizations’ concerns about the lack of attention to boys and men in their communities, AAPIP undertook a community-based research effort as an initial step towards building knowledge within philanthropy about AAPI and AMEMSA boys and men of color.

In the context of the growing “majority minority” population in California, the limited engagement of AAPI and AMEMSA communities in foundation-led strategies to advance social change is a missed opportunity. The growth of AAPI and AMEMSA populations has many implications for social change efforts in California. With respect to including impacted voices in strategies to address disparities, Census data reveals that the number of poor Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in

California increased 50% and 138%, respectively, between 2007 and 2011. State projections reveal that as the white baby-boomer population continues to age into retirement over the next two decades, a lower percentage of the working-age population will be white and a larger percentage will be Latino and Asian. These younger populations will help maintain the potential for growth of the labor force and the economy in California. And as the 2012 elections demonstrated, AAPIs are a growing force in the electorate.

To align our inquiry with the current discourse on the social determinants of health disparities most affecting boys and men of color, we chose to frame this inquiry around issues of education, law enforcement/criminal justice, immigration and discrimination in the lives of AAPI and AMEMSA boys and young men. The study methodology consisted of:

- A total of six focus groups involving over 40 community-based organization leaders and affected young men from the Bay Area, the Central Valley and Long Beach/Los Angeles (see Appendix A).
- One-on-one interviews with 12 key informants working on AAPI and AMEMSA boys and young men’s issues in California (see Appendix B).
- Literature review encompassing poverty, discrimination, education systems, policing, criminal and juvenile justice systems, immigration enforcement, national security policies, and LGBTQ issues as they relate to AAPI and AMEMSA communities and boys and men of color.

This report begins with an overview of issues of poverty, immigration, gender, sexual orientation and culture as experienced by marginalized AAPI and AMEMSA boys and young men, before focusing more specifically on challenges they face with respect to the criminal justice and education systems.

## Context of Poverty, Immigration and Culture Among AAPI and AMEMSA Boys and Young Men

### **Some AAPI subgroups have high rates of poverty.**

Some AAPI ethnic groups have poverty rates exceeding or similar to African Americans and Latinos, and far exceeding those of whites. For example, Southeast Asian (Cambodian, Hmong, Lao and Mien) children of refugees who faced hardships of war, displacement and expulsion from their native countries are among the poorest communities in the nation. AAPI and AMEMSA boys and young men who are undocumented or part of mixed status families also face poverty and financial instability.

### **For low-income AAPI and AMEMSA youth, poverty and language barriers continue to be a major barrier to educational attainment.**

In California, Southeast Asians have similar rates of high school/GED completion as Latinos – around 40%. Low-income AAPI and AMEMSA boys are invisible and neglected in schools, left on their own to struggle with language barriers, illiteracy, bullying, misrepresentation of history and culture in curricula, lack of culturally competent teachers, and lack of support in accessing higher education. AAPI and AMEMSA immigrant families, particularly refugee and undocumented families, have high rates of linguistic isolation that severely limit their educational opportunities.

### **Trauma and mental health issues are both a cause and a consequence of many of the challenges facing AAPI and AMEMSA boys and young men.**

This was a particularly strong theme among AAPI and AMEMSA refugee communities. Researchers have demonstrated a strong response connection between exposure to violence and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in AAPI youth, particularly in Southeast and Central Asian

refugee communities. Migrants coming from experiences of war and massive social upheaval are at particular risk for PTSD, which can be chronic and persistent. While many of the younger generation have not directly experienced the same trauma as their parents and extended family members, the PTSD in the family may affect the home environment and create tensions.

### **Definitions of masculinity in AAPI and AMEMSA communities often reflect patriarchal norms.**

Most of the study participants described the cultures of immigrant parents in their communities as reinforcing male power in the family and in the leadership of the community. In immigrant families, young AAPI and AMEMSA men were described as confused about masculinity or identity in part because family structures and the roles of men and women in the U.S. are dramatically different in comparison to the family's homeland.

### **Cultural stigmas associated with LGBTQ identities can lead to negative health outcomes.**

Within most AAPI and AMEMSA cultures, masculinity is rigidly defined as heterosexual. AAPI and AMEMSA young men and boys face cultural stigmas that can associate being “out” with shaming their families. Study participants who have experience working with AAPI LGBTQ populations shared that experiencing racism and homophobia across varying environments can lead to risky sexual behaviors with negative health outcomes.

AAPIs now make up 15% of California's total population, and roughly one out of four people of color in California is AAPI.



## Criminal Justice System Impacts

**Southeast Asian and Pacific Islander boys and young men are routinely profiled by police.** In communities with larger concentrations of Pacific Islander and Southeast Asian youth, young men and boys are routinely stopped and searched by police in their cars and on foot, and questioned in public places. They are often assumed to be gang members even if they are not. Gang databases were identified as a problem particularly for Southeast Asian boys and young men, with serious consequences including enhanced criminal charges for minor offenses. Also, anecdotal information from our study participants suggests that LGBTQ boys and young men are at high risk of encountering or ending up in the criminal justice system because painful family situations lead them to become homeless.

**Certain AAPI subgroups have high rates of juvenile arrests and incarceration.** The few local studies of California AAPI youth and the criminal justice system show high rates of arrest and incarceration for Cambodians, Chinese, Laotians, Samoans and Vietnamese. Attorneys and researchers participating in this study shared that some AAPI boys are at high risk of being tried as an adult or for out-of-home placement. An important factor in arrests and incarceration on AAPI boys and men is gang stereotypes, which can lead to enhancements of criminal charges. Without strong advocacy by parents and/or community legal advocates, AAPI boys can easily fall through the cracks and into the criminal justice system. AAPI parents, especially immigrant parents, often do not know how to maneuver the juvenile justice system.

**Re-entry challenges.** For AAPI and AMEMSA boys and young men, returning to home communities after prison comes with numerous challenges. As in other communities, incarceration shapes and alters young men's sense of self and ways of navigating in the world, and brings with it the potential for serious trauma and mental health issues. Youth who exit after turning 18 are not eligible for a range of child-focused social services, alienated from school settings, and stigmatized from employment if they have felony convictions. Returning to communities was described by study participants as

very painful for many AAPI and AMEMSA ex-offenders, who are viewed as having shamed their families and communities, and are often shunned. Without adequate and culturally competent support for ex-offenders and their families, formerly incarcerated youth can easily return to criminal activities and gang involvement.

**AMEMSA boys and young men are often specifically targeted for national security-related profiling.** Since the events of September 11, 2001 (9/11), AMEMSA people have faced a range of challenges restricting their ability to live full and healthy lives, including racial profiling, government surveillance and hate crimes. Young men and boys in AMEMSA communities have faced particular scrutiny, stereotyped as at risk for "radicalization" and treated as a threat within U.S. borders. Federal and state policies following 9/11, such as Special Registration, have targeted immigrant AMEMSA young men age 16–35 in particular. The questioning of thousands of AMEMSA residents by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) directly following 9/11 and in the years since has been focused on young AMEMSA men ages 18–33, and FBI informants target young Muslim men for entrapment. Although Sikhs are not Muslims, Sikh boys and men who wear turbans are routinely profiled in airports by the TSA.

**Laws and policies criminalize AAPI and AMEMSA immigrants.** The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 made it harder for undocumented immigrants to adjust their status or apply for asylum, and easier to deport documented immigrants for legal violations both great and small. Over 1,500 Cambodian Americans now face deportation and more than 500 have already been deported to Cambodia. More recently, policies like 287(g) and "Secure Communities" that leverage local law enforcement have pushed the number of deportations to historic highs under the Obama Administration. With a direct line between police and immigration, AAPI and AMEMSA individuals get picked up for minor things such as traffic violations, and put into deportation proceedings. For low-income immigrants, deportation pushes their families further into poverty.

## Education System Impacts

**AAPI and AMEMSA youth are the most frequent targets of bullying in schools.** A 2009 study by the U.S. Justice and Education departments found that more than half of Asian American teenagers are bullied in school – 54%. This rate of harassment far exceeds their white, African American and Latino peers. In California, a survey of over 500 Sikh children from across the Bay Area conducted by Sikh Coalition revealed that 65% of all Sikh boys in middle school with or without turbans suffer some form of racial or religious bullying. The rate is higher for turbaned boys, 74% of whom suffer bias-based harassment. Since 9/11, there have been increasing reports of bullying and exclusion of Muslim students in schools.

**Homophobia and transphobia are compounded by racism in schools.** Among LGBTQ youth, sexual orientation harassment is compounded by racist harassment. When gender expectations of boys mesh with the model minority stereotype, AAPI and AMEMSA boys can be especially at risk. Bullying and an unwelcoming school environment have negative effects on GPA and test performance, and may lead LGBTQ youth in particular to want to drop out of school. Harassment and bullying of AAPI and AMEMSA youth, including LGBTQ youth, can lead to them being suspended or pushed out of schools even though they were victimized. Transgender youth are particularly at risk, because they are most likely to be labeled by school personnel as disruptive simply for being transgender or for how they look.

**The school climate is unwelcoming of many AAPI and AMEMSA youth.** Curriculum and school climate can either alienate students from school or keep them engaged. Students' feelings that curriculum is irrelevant to their life histories – or even blatantly racist – negatively impacts their involvement in school. Teachers and administrators can reinforce negative stereotypes or fears of AAPI and AMEMSA boys. The authority they wield can contribute to suspensions and dropouts among AAPI and AMEMSA youth.



**Language and immigration status are major barriers.** One in ten English Language Learner (ELL) students in California is AAPI. When their own parents cannot access or interface with the school, young people become further isolated from school environments. Few schools provide or have resources to help with translation for immigrant parents, thus limiting parents' contact with administrators and families. In addition, undocumented parents are often afraid to engage with schools due to their status and the culture of fear that has been created by the post 9/11 climate and the rise in deportations.

**Growing up undocumented severely hampers the aspirations and trajectories of youth.** Youth without immigration status are barred from federal financial aid.



Though laws exist in California to provide some undocumented students with access to in-state tuition and scholarships, many eligible students and their parents are unaware of these laws or face barriers navigating the system. While President Obama's 2012 Executive Order allowing some undocumented youth

to receive a two-year work permit has been an important victory for the undocumented youth movement, it is not a long-term solution. Even if they do graduate from college, they do so in a world where their job opportunities are extremely limited.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

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In many respects, the challenges discussed in this report are challenges AAPI and AMEMSA boys and young men share with their African American, Latino and Native American counterparts. Across many of the social determinants of health, the AAPI and AMEMSA youth described in this report have common cause and a shared destiny with other youth of color.

As with all communities of color and immigrant communities, culturally competent and language-accessible approaches will be necessary to provide the supports AAPI and AMEMSA youth need to live healthy lives. In spite of the tremendous challenges discussed in this report, our research uncovered many community-based programs around the state that are addressing the issues faced by marginalized AAPI boys and young men, some of which are featured in the report.

As the numbers of AAPI and AMEMSA communities grow, they are important constituencies to include in efforts to build the political will necessary to reform large-scale systems like public education and criminal justice. As younger populations, they will be critical to the future growth of the labor force and the economy in California. These communities have a stake in leveling the playing field so that all youth have an equal chance at living healthy and productive lives.

Funders are in a unique position to help grow the community capital and potential of AAPI and AMEMSA communities so that all youth can thrive. AAPI's recommendations to funders include:

- 1. Ensure that culturally competent AAPI and AMEMSA organizations and programs are included in efforts to improve the lives of boys and men of color.** We urge funders to include organizations and youth working in AAPI and AMEMSA communities when designing funding strategies to tackle the issues faced by disadvantaged youth of color. They are often part of the at-risk youth population in California cities and counties, but can't be adequately reached with "one-size-fits-all" strategies.
- 2. Support subgroup research and disaggregation of major data sets.** Funders can support advocacy for policy changes related to data disaggregation, for example at the levels of school districts, criminal justice systems and other public agencies in order to better understand disparities in marginalized AAPI and AMEMSA communities. To directly address research gaps, funders can also support deeper research within specific AAPI and AMEMSA communities.
- 3. Help build the civic engagement capacity of AAPI and AMEMSA organizations.** As the populations they serve grow, it is critical that funders invest in AAPI and AMEMSA community organizations so that they can engage more deeply in leadership development, community organizing and policy advocacy. Given the low level of foundation investment in AAPI and AMEMSA communities, there is an enormous opportunity to engage and build the capacity of these organizations to be part of solutions to the complex issues described in this report.

# I. INTRODUCTION

“I have a 14 year old son. I lived a long life. I know what happens. I tried to raise him well. I hope that he goes to college. But things happen in life. If he ever goes to prison, I hope someone cares about him.” – *Loa Niumeitolu, Community Health for Asian Americans*

Only ten years from now, by 2023, it is projected that the majority of children in the United States will be non-white.<sup>2</sup> As they are our future workforce, it is in the best interest of our nation that young people of all backgrounds have an equal chance to become healthy, contributing members of society. But rather than being supported to become a diverse, educated American workforce, over the past 30 years young people of color have found themselves on a sinking playing field as a result of deepening economic inequality, racism, failing public education systems, increasingly punitive and intolerant criminal justice laws, and insufficient culturally competent health services and prevention.

In recent years, a growing body of research has focused the attention of funders and policymakers on how these trends have more seriously and disproportionately harmed the life chances of boys and young men.<sup>3</sup> Efforts to improve the life chances of young people of color must not overlook Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) and Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim and South Asian (AMEMSA) communities, especially in California which is home to the largest Asian American populations and the second largest Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander populations in the country. In California, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are the fastest growing racial groups – growing 34% and 29% respectively between 2000 and 2010.<sup>4</sup> AAPIs now make up 15% of California’s total population,<sup>5</sup> and roughly one out of four people of color in California is AAPI.<sup>6</sup>

## Why This Report?

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While aggregated data on AAPI and AMEMSA communities show higher indicators of income and higher education than the general population, the available disaggregated data makes it clear that certain subgroups have very low levels of income and educational attainment, and that some groups are very linguistically isolated. Youth in these communities are rendered invisible with the prevalence of the “model minority” myth, which holds that Asian Americans are more successful, financially and educationally, than other racial and ethnic groups. The Census Bureau has made progress in including more AAPI subgroups as Census categories, but data on “Asians” at the levels of school districts, criminal justice systems and other public agencies is often not sufficiently disaggregated to

understand the challenges faced by youth in more marginalized AAPI and AMEMSA communities.

With respect to current philanthropic initiatives on boys and men of color, most of the research used to develop these initiatives did not disaggregate the “Asian” category,<sup>7</sup> and disadvantaged AAPI and AMEMSA boys and men are often not included in these funding initiatives. Other philanthropic trends that use data-driven strategies for identifying funding priorities may also result in AAPI and AMEMSA community organizations being ineligible for funding. For example, “place-based” funding reinforces the lack of attention to AAPI and AMEMSA communities because these communities tend to be more geographically dispersed than Black and Latino communities.<sup>8</sup>

## **Why AMEMSA Communities Are Included in This Report**

*In the post 9/11 era, Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim and South Asian (AMEMSA) communities in the U.S. continue to bear the brunt of discriminatory national security policies and selective immigration enforcement, some of which have specifically targeted boys and men. Hate crimes, surveillance activities, desecration of places of worship, and employment discrimination constantly reinforce their unequal status in American society.*

*The U.S. Census Bureau's "Asian" category now reports data on 23 distinct Asian groups, including South Asian groups such as Asian Indians, Bangladeshis and Pakistanis. One of the largest Asian/South Asian subgroups is Asian Indians. There is considerable overlap in AAPIP's definitions of "AAPI" and "AMEMSA" because South Asians are included in both.*

Significant challenges faced by South Asians are shared by Americans of Arab, Middle Eastern and Muslim backgrounds, especially in the post 9/11 era. South Asian groups include people of Muslim backgrounds and people who are inaccurately perceived to be Muslim (such as Sikhs). These realities

have led AAPIP and other organizations to group AMEMSA communities together in order to more effectively address national security-related racial and religious profiling.

In response to AAPI and AMEMSA organizations' concerns about the lack of funder attention to boys and men in their communities, AAPIP undertook a community-based research effort as an initial step towards building knowledge within philanthropy about AAPI and AMEMSA boys and men of color. As an affinity group, one of AAPIP's strategies is to increase the visibility of AAPI and AMEMSA issues within philanthropy through research, briefings and capacity building efforts. Research conducted by AAPIP shows that foundation funding to AAPI communities from 1990-2002 amounted to no more than 0.4% of all foundation funding, despite the fact that the AAPI population had doubled.<sup>9</sup> While some funders have made efforts to include AAPI communities in their funding portfolios, as of 2012, foundation investments in AAPI communities had dropped to 0.3%. Lack of investment in AAPI communities remains an enduring challenge to philanthropy.

The growth of AAPI and AMEMSA populations has many implications for social change efforts in California. With respect to including impacted voices in strategies to address disparities, Census data reveals that the number of poor Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California increased 50% and 138%, respectively, between 2007 and 2011.<sup>10</sup> And as the 2012 elections demonstrated, AAPIs are a growing force in the electorate. State projections reveal that as the

**In the context of the growing "majority minority" in California, the limited engagement of AAPI and AMEMSA communities in foundation-led strategies to advance social change is a missed opportunity.**

white baby-boomer population continues to age into retirement over the next two decades, a lower percentage of the working-age population will be white and a larger percentage will be Latino and

Asian.<sup>11</sup> These younger populations will help maintain the potential for growth of the labor force and the economy in California.

## Research and Methodology

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Producing quantitative data and analysis given the tremendous gaps in data on boys and young men in AAPI and AMEMSA communities is beyond AAPIP's resources and expertise. AAPIP chose to take a qualitative approach by convening and listening to California organizations that serve and develop the leadership of at-risk AAPI and AMEMSA boys and young men. The study methodology consisted of:

- A total of six focus groups involving over 40 community-based organization leaders and affected young men from the Bay Area, the Central Valley and Long Beach/Los Angeles (see Appendix A).
- One-on-one interviews with 12 key informants working on AAPI and AMEMSA boys and young men's issues in California (see Appendix B).
- Literature review encompassing poverty, discrimination, education systems, policing, criminal and juvenile justice systems, immigration enforcement, national security policies, and LGBTQ issues as they relate to AAPI and AMEMSA communities and boys and men of color.

Our research design had many limitations, and the information documented in this report is not meant to be generalized to all AAPI and AMEMSA communities. First, AAPIP prioritized breadth over depth – including many diverse subgroups in the inquiry. This reflects AAPIP's broad mission as well as a desire to highlight the challenges faced by different sub-communities that receive very little visibility in philanthropy. With such a broad range of AAPI and AMEMSA communities participating in this inquiry, discussions in focus groups and interviews also surfaced a broad range of experiences, barriers and types of discrimination.

Second, focus group and interview participants were not randomly chosen. AAPIP reached out through our community networks to identify AAPI organizations and leaders working with boys and young men in the context of poverty and discrimination based on race, class, immigration status, language, sexual orientation, religion and post 9/11 national security policies. Given our focus in these issue areas, certain ethnic and immigrants communities were prioritized in our outreach to organizations: Southeast Asian refugees, Pacific Islanders, Koreans, AMEMSA communities, LGBTQ AAPIs and undocumented youth.

Third, given that health disparity ratios relative to other racial groups have not been calculated for AAPI and AMEMSA subpopulations, AAPIP chose to focus this research on better understanding some of the social determinants of health in these communities rather than taking a deep dive into specific health issues. With very limited resources, it was not possible to address all the social determinants of health in this study. To align our inquiry with the current discourse on the social determinants of health disparities most affecting boys and men of color, we chose to frame this inquiry around issues of education, law enforcement/criminal justice, immigration and discrimination in the lives of AAPI and AMEMSA boys and young men. It should also be noted that almost all the study participants were nonprofit community workers or community members, so connections they suggest between these factors and health impacts are anecdotal or observational.

Fourth, because many of those involved in the study work with families, AAPIP did not specifically define an age range for "boys and young men" and also allowed



for discussion of boys and men's issues in the broader context of communities, families, and girls and women.<sup>12</sup>

Finally, an extensive literature review was conducted as part of this research. However, the studies used a variety of definitions of "Asian" or "API," or focused on particular sub-communities, or used aggregated data

for Asians, or included broader populations. Rather than "mixing apples with oranges," in this report we have only included data and findings from certain studies that are relevant to the themes and subgroups that emerged from AAPIP's outreach and qualitative research. (A bibliography of all works reviewed and cited is provided at the end of this publication.)

## Report Structure

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The next section provides an overview of issues of poverty, immigration, gender, sexual orientation and culture as experienced by marginalized AAPI and AMEMSA boys and young men. It is intended to provide context on AAPI and AMEMSA communities and some of the challenges they experience more generally, before focusing more specifically on the systemic challenges they face with respect to law enforcement/criminal justice and education.

When presenting what we learned about these systems' impacts on AAPI and AMEMSA boys and young men,

AAPIP included and integrated experiences that are compounded by being LGBTQ, from an immigrant background and/or undocumented. While we have divided the learnings into two topical areas in order to provide sufficient detail on each, it is important to recognize that experiences of structural discrimination in these systems overlap with and reinforce one another.

The final section offers concluding observations and recommendations to funders and policy makers for addressing the barriers faced by marginalized AAPI and AMEMSA boys and young men.

# II. CONTEXT OF POVERTY, IMMIGRATION AND CULTURE AMONG AAPI AND AMEMSA BOYS AND YOUNG MEN

## Poverty and Educational Attainment


In contrast to aggregated data on Asians that show higher indicators of income and educational attainment than the general population, recently released analyses of Census 2010 data reveal that some AAPI subgroups have rates of poverty similar to African Americans and Latinos, and far exceeding those of whites. For example, Southeast Asian (Cambodian, Hmong, Lao and Mien) children of refugees who faced hardships of war, displacement and expulsion from their native countries are among the poorest communities in the nation. In California, Hmong and Cambodians have higher poverty rates than African Americans, Latinos, the total population and non-Hispanic whites. Among Pacific Islanders, the rate of poverty among Tongans is similar to the poverty rate for African Americans and Latinos and exceeds the poverty rate for the general population.


Among AMEMSA groups, with the exception of some South Asian groups, there is very little disaggregated data on AMEMSA communities. Asian Indians have some of the highest income and education indicators of all racial and ethnic groups. But other South Asian communities are not as well-off. For example, in California, almost half of (44%) of Bangladeshis and almost one-third (31%) of Pakistanis are low-income, compared with 16% of Asian Indians.<sup>14</sup> These are the top two fastest growing ethnic groups among the Asian subgroups.<sup>15</sup> Comparable data on smaller Arab and Middle Eastern communities groups is limited or unreliable,<sup>16</sup> but AMEMSA community organizations participating in this study work with low-income youth and families around the state – particularly Iraqis and Yemenis.

Overall Poverty Rates <sup>13</sup>	
Hmong	34%
Cambodian	25%
African American	20%
Latino	20%
Tongan	20%
Total Population	14%
Non-Hispanic Whites	8%

Poverty Rates in Youth <sup>13</sup>	
Hmong	42%
Cambodian	31%
African American	27%
Latino	26%

For low-income AAPI and AMEMSA youth, poverty continues to be a major barrier to educational attainment, especially when young people feel unsafe in their neighborhoods and schools. In California, Southeast Asians have similar rates of high school/ GED completion as Latinos – around 40%.

Lack High School Degree or GED <sup>17</sup> 	
Latino	43%
Hmong	42%
Laotian	41%
Cambodian	40%
Total Population	19%
African American	13%
Non-Hispanic Whites	7%

College Degree in California <sup>18</sup> 	
Non Hispanic Whites	39%
Total Population	30%
African American	22%
Hmong	15%
Tongans	15%
Cambodians	14%
Laotians	12%
Fijians	12%
Samoans	11%
Latinos	10%

With respect to higher education, in California, Asian American adults as an aggregated group are 49% more likely than other racial groups to have a college degree. But when the data is disaggregated, we find that several Southeast Asian and Pacific Islander subgroups are among the least likely to have a college degree.

Low-income AAPI and AMEMSA boys are invisible and neglected in schools, left on their own to struggle with language barriers, illiteracy, bullying, misrepresentation of history and culture in curricula, lack of culturally competent teachers, and lack of support in accessing higher education. Focus group and interview participants described underfunded and underperforming school districts in areas like Fresno, Oakland and Long Beach, where teachers are overwhelmed and focused on test

scores. School counselors were described as inaccessible with some counselors having caseloads in the hundreds. In these environments, struggling students can be singled out as causing trouble in the classroom and tracked into special education or continuation schools, where they fall behind their peers educationally.

When schools are not supporting their ability to become educated, dropping out and taking low wage jobs or earning money through illegal activities may be seen as a better option – especially in low-income families where young people face great pressure to contribute financially.

“For boys, they’re either having to work or support their families because their families have lost jobs. Some of them have to actually drop out of school because their parents have lost jobs and their homes are going into foreclosure. Once they quit school, it’s hard for them to go back into school, especially if their family members are unemployed. The incentive also to go to college when there are no job opportunities, when tuition is high, and financial aid is limited gives them doubt to go to college even though it is valued within the community.”

– MaiKa Yang, Stone Soup Fresno



One in four Koreans (200,000) and one in six Filipinos (270,000) in the U.S. is undocumented.<sup>20</sup>

## Additional Barriers Faced by the Undocumented

Though the largest numbers of undocumented individuals in the U.S. are from Mexico, the top ten sending countries include Asian countries: the Philippines, India, South Korea and China. There were nearly 290,000 undocumented Chinese immigrants in 2007.<sup>19</sup>

The Asian Indian population has one of the fastest growing groups of undocumented immigrants in the U.S., growing from 120,000 in 2000 to 200,000 in 2009, at a rate of 40%.<sup>20</sup>

A recent report by the Center for American Progress and the Williams Institute found that of the 11 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S., 267,000 are LGBT, with 15% of that number as Asian or Pacific Islander. This report notes that “LGBT adult undocumented immigrants are more likely to be male, younger, and...more likely to be Asian.”<sup>21</sup>

As in the Latino community, AAPI and AMEMSA boys and young men who are undocumented or part of mixed status families also face poverty and financial instability. As focus group participants and interviewees described, AAPI and AMEMSA immigrant families, particularly refugee families and undocumented

families, have very high rates of linguistic isolation that severely limit their economic and educational opportunities. Undocumented people in general are blocked from accessing many of the public services that can help mitigate health disparities, such as public health insurance programs, welfare assistance, public mental health care and other social services.<sup>22</sup> Where they are not legally blocked, many undocumented immigrants fear using the services and do not seek assistance, because of the possibility of being reported to immigration officials.

Young people growing up undocumented are also more likely to experience a more stressful and constraining family and community environment. In a climate of fear, immigrants are not only less likely to access services, they are also less likely to make claims when their rights have been violated or they face violence – whether by employers, police, or other residents. Within AAPI and AMEMSA communities, a culture of silence and shame reinforces invisibility of undocumented and mixed status families. These cultural dynamics reinforce stigmas in the larger society and discourage undocumented young people from political and civic participation.

“The constant pressure from your family not to talk about it. It’s like, ‘oh it’s a secret, don’t let anyone know.’ And so, you’re getting it enough from outside – the system itself – but then in addition, you have your own family oppressing you in terms of speaking out and what really needs to be done because of that internalized fear.”

– Undocumented young focus group participant



## Trauma and Mental Health

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Study participants from both AAPI and AMEMSA communities often discussed trauma and mental health issues as both a cause and a consequence of many of the challenges they face. This was a particularly strong theme among AAPI and AMEMSA refugee communities, and also in reviews of studies on AAPI communities and mental health.

Refugees are more likely than other immigrants to have had traumatic experiences and subsequent mental health problems.<sup>23</sup> Parental stress can affect the development of an unborn child, and can continue to affect children as they grow up facing the adversities of poverty, racism, and violence. These same traumas span and affect all the members of the family, and the lack of

care for parents or guardians and children can only compound the effects of trauma.<sup>24</sup>

AAPI refugees are more likely than other immigrants to have had traumatic experiences and subsequent mental health problems. Numerous researchers have demonstrated a strong response connection between exposure to violence and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in AAPI youth, particularly in Southeast and Central Asian refugee communities. Migrants coming from experiences of war and massive social upheaval are at particular risk for PTSD. While many of the younger generation have not directly experienced the same trauma as their parents and extended family members, the PTSD in the family may affect the home environment and create tensions.<sup>25</sup>

*“In the Iraqi refugee community in the Bay Area, their immigration pattern is different from other Arab immigrants in that the women came first and the husbands are still in Syria or Jordan struggling with visas and paperwork. These young moms are experiencing PTSD, isolation, and depression. They put pressure on the boys to just deal with their situation, to protect themselves and take care of themselves, but not to create unnecessary drama because they’ve already been through enough. School bullying compared to war in Iraq is not a conversation that will be acceptable in the household.”*

*– Loubna Qutami, Arab Cultural and Community Center*

## Cultural Dynamics and Gender Norms Within Communities

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Definitions of masculinity in AAPI and AMEMSA communities often reflect patriarchal norms. Most of the study participants described the cultures of immigrant parents in their communities as reinforcing male power in the family and in the leadership of the community. Across AAPI and AMEMSA cultures, masculinity is associated with being “strong,” “tough” and “hard,” and not showing emotions. Young people shared that these traits are often defined in opposition to being female, and that displays of emotion are considered effeminate or weak.

Study participants across AAPI and AMEMSA communities described boys as lacking positive adult male role models. In some cases parents may both be at work most of the time, or boys may be raised in female-headed households or by grandparents. In other cases, fathers may be in the household but emotionally distant or abusive. For some boys, the lack of adult male role models or lack of communication with fathers may reinforce the tough male image they internalize in the U.S.

In immigrant families, young AAPI and AMEMSA men were described as confused about masculinity or identity in part because family structures and the roles of men and women in the U.S. are dramatically different

in comparison to the family's homeland. Shifting gender roles in immigrant communities were sometimes described as a factor in domestic violence in AAPI and AMEMSA communities.

## A Journey of Gifts

Four years ago this month, my daughter fearfully looked across a table at me and said the words that would forever change my life: "I want to transition to be a boy." When I initially heard her request, I remember thinking how the first 20 years of my daughter's

life began to make sense: the toddler who pouted at wearing dresses and bows, the elementary school tomboy who only wore pants and T-shirts, the middle school student who didn't seem to fit in anywhere, and the high school cutter who refused to return to school and was diagnosed with agoraphobia, an anxiety disorder in which an individual does not feel safe in the world.

But then fear set in. How would I keep my child safe in this world that targets those who are different? More fear overwhelmed me. What will my family think? What will my friends think? How could I have been so blind, not to see this coming? Finally, shame rushed through me. I will bring dishonor to my family when others find out. I worked too much and didn't pay enough attention to my child. I failed in my duties as a mother. I am a terrible mother.

There were times I cried for my child, and there were times I cried for myself. I was so ashamed. Then a rush of sadness would wash through me. I was losing my daughter, a daughter I loved, and the loss felt deep and never-ending. But most of the time, I cried because I was afraid for my child and her future. At the beginning of this journey, I saw only darkness, and it held so many unanswered questions.

But I decided to follow my heart. And my heart said that no matter what the journey looked like, this was my child, and I needed to stand by my child's side.

Four years later I see that the courage my son pulled up that night would take me and our family on an amazing journey of love and acceptance, a journey that would provide me with gifts far beyond what I could imagine or comprehend. Today I have more courage, compassion and joy in my life. My family is closer than ever before. We are bonded by the experiences that have forged a tighter connection between us because of the truth that we have had to speak and the gratitude that we have recognized and expressed. My commitment to my child has evolved into a commitment to the LGBT community. Thank you, Aiden, for trusting that I would love you no matter what. And thank you for taking me on this amazing journey. I am a better human being today because of you, my son.

*Excerpts from a blog post by Marsha Aizumi, Huffington Post's Gay Voices, 12/21/12*



PHOTO COURTESY BECK STARR

## Cultural Stigmas and LGBTQ People

Within most AAPI and AMEMSA cultures, masculinity is rigidly defined as heterosexual. While most study participants' experience working with gay, bisexual, transgender and queer boys and men in AAPI and AMEMSA communities ranged from "limited" to "some,"

the impact of homophobia was flagged as an important set of issues to bring to light. Research on LGBTQ AAPI and AMEMSA people is very limited, but the findings of a few studies are highlighted below.

A recent study of LGBTQ youth of color found that AAPIs were least likely to have told their parents they are LGBTQ compared to Latinos and African Americans. LGBTQ AAPI youth often feel ashamed that they have not followed cultural expectations, and are pressured to choose between their sexual identity and ethnic/racial identity. AAPI and AMEMSA young men and boys face cultural stigmas that can associate being “out” with shaming their families.<sup>26</sup> A survey of South Asian LGBTQ community members in Southern California found that when asked how many people in various social circles know of their sexual identity, respondents were most likely to be “out” to their friends, followed by health care providers and immediate family, and least likely to be “out” in their ethnic, religious or spiritual community and extended family.<sup>27</sup>

Language is also a key challenge in these coming out experiences. LGTBQ Southeast Asians have reported struggling to communicate with their parents in their native language, as there are no words within Hmong, Khmer, Lao or Vietnamese languages for LGBTQ identities. Other social and cultural histories complicate the coming out experience, and youth reported a generational and gender gap in who they believe they receive acceptance from. In particular, they confide in and receive more support from the younger generations in their family, and female members of the family.<sup>28</sup>

Study participants who have experience working with AAPI LGBTQ populations also shared that experiencing racism and homophobia across varying environments can lead to risky sexual behaviors with negative health outcomes.

“I have seen it translate to high rates of HIV infection for GBTQ youth. I have seen it lead to drug abuse. I have seen it lead to mental health problems, depression, anxiety, all these kinds of things. More on the mental health side, I think that this is a pretty clear result of some of the factors of poverty and discrimination and immigration status and how it’s played out.”

– Christopher Punongbayan

## Poverty, Immigration and Cultural Barriers: How Funders Can Help

- » *Support immigrant youth leadership and organizing efforts.*
- » *Support discussion circles, support groups and leadership development programs for youth of color that are gender-specific and/or LGBTQ specific.*
- » *Support programs that promote more fluid gender roles, healthy relationships and LGBTQ cultural acceptance within communities of color.*
- » *Support culturally competent strategies to improve access to mental health and family violence services that respond to the trauma and chronic adversity experienced in specific AAPI and AMEMSA communities.*

# III. CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM IMPACTS

## Racial Profiling by Local Law Enforcement

In communities with larger concentrations of Pacific Islander and Southeast Asian youth, young men and boys are routinely stopped and searched by police in their cars and on foot, and questioned in public places. In addition, study participants reported that Southeast Asian and Pacific Islander youth are often assumed to be gang members even if they are not. Gang databases were identified as a problem particularly for Southeast Asian boys and young men, as they are often arbitrarily added to the gang database and there is little or no oversight or recourse. Being designated as a gang member has serious consequences for boys and young men, including enhanced criminal charges for minor offenses.

Anecdotal information from our study participants suggests that LGBTQ boys and young men are also at high risk of encountering police and the criminal justice system due to homophobia. According to study participants, many LGBTQ kids end up in the criminal justice system because they are running away from painful situations at home. Few AAPI and AMEMSA-specific prevention programs exist in general, and LGBTQ youth in these communities are particularly isolated because they are reluctant to seek help from community-based organizations for fear of their sexual orientation being revealed in the community.

“I got pulled over in front of my cousin’s house. He was from a gang. We are just hanging out in front of his house when someone came into the house. When he pulled us over, he looked up my cousin’s name who was under ‘Asian Boyz.’ He put my name under ‘gang violence.’ I didn’t know about it until I got pulled over again. It cost me a job because they looked at my personal record.”

– Focus group participant from *Khmer Girls in Action’s Young Men’s Empowerment Program*

## Arrest Rates, Adjudication and Incarceration

Like all populations of incarcerated youth, AAPI boys far outpace girls in terms of arrest and imprisonment. The few local studies of California AAPI youth and the criminal justice system show high rates of arrest and incarceration for certain AAPI subgroups: Cambodians, Chinese, Laotians, Samoans and Vietnamese. In 2001 and 2006, the National Center on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) examined the arrests and incarceration of API young men and boys in Alameda and San Francisco Counties and in the city of Richmond.<sup>29</sup> These reports found:

- Samoan and Vietnamese youth have some of the highest rates of arrest of any ethnic group in San Francisco County. Chinese were the most represented in terms of the number of AAPI arrests.
- In the year 2006 in Oakland, CA, several API groups had very high arrest rates, including Samoans (who had the highest arrest rate of any racial/ethnic group in the city, 140 per 1,000), Cambodians (63 per 1,000), Laotians (52 per 1,000) and Vietnamese (28 per 1,000).

“The stigma of being an ex-con is definitely a big challenge for any population [but] especially for the API population where culturally it’s a shame when you go into the system. People actually disown people when they go inside the prison from certain cultures. We can see more and more of that when we’re talking about Asians and Pacific Islanders, even people from Punjab, people from different Middle Eastern countries... You bring the family shame. That’s a lot to carry as an individual.”

– Eddy Zheng, Community Youth Center of San Francisco

- Southeast Asian and Samoan youth in Alameda County also experienced high rates of recidivism, with over 40% of Southeast Asians arrested in Oakland committing crimes of “greater seriousness” within two years.
- Vietnamese and Laotian youth had the second and third highest rates of arrest in Richmond in 2000, with 6 per 100 and 5 per 100 respectively. (African Americans had a rate of 8 per 100.)
- From 1990 to 2006, Laotian youth had among the greatest increases in arrest rates, at times jumping almost 50% in one year (1997 to 1998). Laotian youth represented almost half of AAPI arrests in Oakland, yet only 22% of the AAPI population.

Attorneys and researchers participating in this study shared that some AAPI boys are at high risk of being tried as an adult or for out-of-home placement. An important factor in arrests and incarceration on AAPI boys and men is gang stereotypes, which can lead to enhancements of criminal charges. Without strong advocacy by parents and/or community legal advocates, AAPI boys can easily fall through the cracks and into the criminal justice system. AAPI parents, especially immigrant parents, often do not know how to maneuver within the juvenile justice system.

An additional factor contributing to high out-of-home placements is cultural and generational gaps between AAPI parents and boys that lead to conflicts. Parents may not understand the long-term negative consequences of expressing their frustration about their sons in front of judges. In many cases, advocacy at the beginning of the adjudication process would have prevented boys from being tried as an adult because of prosecutorial discretion. For undocumented and mixed status families, particularly those who live in neighborhoods where there is a constant and hostile presence of law enforcement, parents’ fear of deportation completely marginalizes them from advocating for their children within juvenile and criminal justice systems.

### **Promising Practices: Restorative Justice**

*Restorative justice was highlighted by study participants as a promising alternative to the criminal justice system. Rooted in indigenous traditions, restorative justice is a framework that addresses victim needs and community responsibility in repairing the harm done by crime. This approach gives equal attention to community safety, victims’ needs and offender accountability and growth. Restorative justice practices can be applied to address conflict in families, communities, schools and in the criminal justice system. They can be transformative for individuals and communities to speak and share their stories and facilitate healing of trauma in culturally relevant modes. Studies show that the restorative justice approach significantly reduces recidivism rates for violent offenses.*

## Promising Practices: Creating Safe Spaces for AAPI Boys

**LONG BEACH:** “T”, a Cambodian American young man, grew up in Long Beach, California. Despite not belonging to a gang, he was constantly harassed by the police and entered into its gang database, which resulted in increased targeting and intimidation. “T” also lived in an unstable household and eventually moved out of his parents’ home while still a teenager. He struggled academically in high school and eventually dropped out. It was during this critical phase of his life that “T” joined the Young Men’s Empowerment Program supported by Khmer Girls in Action (KGA). KGA provided a safe space to talk about important community issues such as lack of access to education, violence in the community, and criminalization of young men. Like “T,” most of the young men KGA works with have been impacted by violence, police harassment, deportation, and the school-to-prison pipeline. KGA’s unique model also tackles issues of patriarchy and homophobia in order to cultivate a learning space about masculinity and what it means to grow up as a healthy young Cambodian man. Through its model of culturally competent leadership development and political education, KGA excels in empowering young men like “T,” who recently attained his G.E.D., is enrolled in college, and works part-time.

**FRESNO:** Prior to 2008, there were no programs that specifically targeted Hmong male youth in Fresno, which is home to the largest concentration of Hmong refugees in the state. In response to this glaring lack of services, Stone Soup started its Brothers of Hmong Empowerment (BHE) program in order to build a strong foundation of positive Hmong male role models and support young Hmong men in the Central Valley region of California. BHE addresses community challenges such as staying in school and cultural differences by increasing opportunities for youth leadership development activities. Similarly to KGA, **Stone Soup** emphasizes a social justice model and engages in civic engagement campaigns. BHE young men recently participated in a Fresno City Council forum to address issues of public safety, employment, transportation, and recreation with an audience of over 130 community members. Peter Xiong, age 15, says, “Since joining BHE, I have become more confident in myself and my abilities.”

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Founded in 1970 to address gang violence in San Francisco’s Chinatown, the **Community Youth Center** (CYC) continues to provide innovative violence prevention services for the AAPI community. CYC is a collaborative member of San Francisco’s Community Response Network, which works to reduce street level violence by providing street outreach, family support, and 24-hour crisis responders. CYC has hired a team of mostly formerly incarcerated AAPI men to serve as outreach workers, mediators, and mentors for AAPI youth. CYC is one of the only AAPI community-based organizations to utilize the skills and experiences of formerly incarcerated AAPI men to reduce violence and racial tensions in California communities. Two CYC staff who are formerly incarcerated AAPI men sit on San Francisco’s Reentry Council, a model initiative that coordinates services and advocates for resources to reduce recidivism.

## Re-Entry Challenges

For AAPI and AMEMSA boys and young men, returning to home communities after prison comes with numerous challenges. As in other communities, incarceration shapes and alters young men’s sense of self and ways of navigating in the world, and brings with it the potential of serious trauma and mental health issues. Study participants described returning to communities as very painful for many AAPI and AMEMSA ex-offenders, who are viewed as having shamed their families and communities and often

shunned. Youth who exit after turning 18 are not eligible for a range of child-focused social services, alienated from school settings, and stigmatized from employment if they have felony convictions.<sup>30</sup> If a prisoner was unable to participate in any of the educational programs offered, such as GED courses or job training, then re-entry will be even more difficult.

AAPI families also suffer dislocations when young men and boys are incarcerated. Incarceration can be a severe stressor on the family, causing anxiety,

“Many times the family and the people that are involved with the person’s life are ignored and yet they have the biggest impact on this person. We always talk about respite for the family as well because the family has taken on this person’s children and their family while they were incarcerated. There’s a breakdown because there was no healing. There was no communication in the suffering that we had as a family outside during this time of incarceration... That’s why we see them leave the home. They leave and fall back into the life that they had prior to being incarcerated.”

– *Manufou Liaiga-Anoa’i, Pacific Islander Community Partnership*

depression, and other health issues. Families must also navigate prison visitation rules, court dates, and other facets of the legal and bureaucratic maze around the prison system.<sup>31</sup> Longer-term prison facilities, including the California Youth Authority facilities, are located far from the urban areas of California, making it difficult for families to visit youth, especially given the burdens of work and income restrictions.

Many study participants noted that without adequate and culturally competent support for ex-offenders and their families, formerly incarcerated youth easily return to criminal activities and gang involvement. Aftercare programs for ex-offenders that offer wraparound social and emotional support for youth leaving prison are an important factor in reducing recidivism. Yet there are very few culturally specific programs for AAPI and AMEMSA re-entrants or their family members.

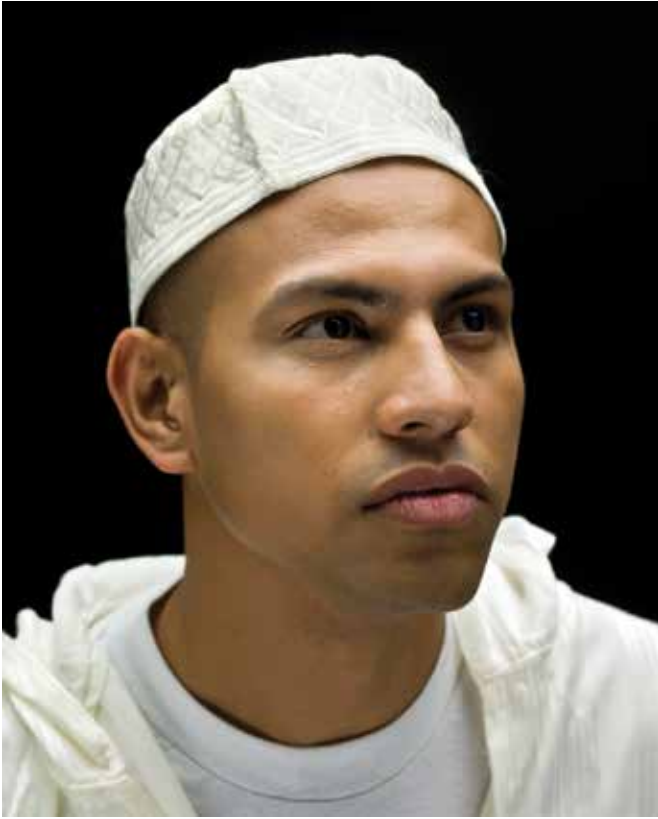
Pacific Islanders are one of the largest AAPI groups in California’s prison system and many

remain disconnected from the rich traditions of healing and restorative justice practices of their ancestors. In 2010, a group of Pacific Islander men incarcerated at a state prison in Solano successfully petitioned the prison to start a Pacific Islander spiritual and cultural group by using their Native Hawaiian statehood status.

Three years later, 90% of prisoners who identify as Pacific Islander in Level 2 and Level 3 of the prison attend and actively participate in this group. It is one of the only prison programs in the nation where Pacific Islanders can practice their spiritual and cultural traditions, while building tools for successful re-entry and the support to heal from trauma. The group is facilitated by outside Pacific Islander volunteers, alongside the male prisoners. Traditional cultural practices are used and learned, like chants, songs, dance, traditional prayers in native languages, and are used alongside with contemporary Pacific Islander literature, songs, and essays. The group also employs other practices like meditation, somatic exercises, and tools from organizations like Alternatives to Violence Project and Healing for Change.

## Promising Practices: Pacific Islander Spiritual and Cultural Men’s Support Group in Solano Prison

## National Security-Related Profiling and Discrimination



Since the events of September 11, 2001 (9/11), AMEMSA people have faced a range of challenges restricting their ability to live full and healthy lives, including racial profiling, government surveillance and hate crimes. Young men and boys in AMEMSA communities have faced particular scrutiny, stereotyped as at risk for “radicalization” and treated as a perpetual threat within U.S. borders.<sup>32</sup> Federal and state policies following 9/11 have targeted immigrant AMEMSA young men age 16–35 in particular. At least 1,200 immigrant men were held in detention centers across the United States

immediately following 9/11. The National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS, or “Special Registration”), launched in 2002, required young men from Arab and South Asian countries with “non-immigrant” visas (i.e., temporary or work visas) to register annually with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. All but one of the countries of origin in this program had large Muslim populations. This process turned out to be a large-scale dragnet, placing nearly 14,000 AMEMSA men in deportation proceedings. Special Registration was the most visible and systematic government-instituted program to detain members of specific ethnic groups in the United States since the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II.

Muslim men find themselves ensnared in government processes aimed at catching terrorists. No-Fly lists and anti-terrorism watch lists and databases contain common Arabic/Muslim names that result in many innocent individuals being barred from flying or getting consumer loans.<sup>35</sup>

In Los Angeles in 2007, the LAPD attempted to implement a program to “map” Muslim communities through surveillance of houses of worship, ethnic stores, ethnic media, activists and community organizations. This plan was scrapped due to community resistance, but the LAPD went on to implement a program called iWatch that actively encourages residents to report a variety of ordinary activities it identifies as “suspicious activity or behavior” – from people wearing clothes that are too big, to people drawing pictures of buildings, to large gatherings of people at religious centers and other benign activities.

“Programs such as the I-WATCH program in LA create an environment in which we are all potential suspects, especially our young men. We are not to be trusted. We are not American. It sets up the dynamic that people are brought in front of law enforcement for various reasons, many of which include non-criminal activity.”

– Manjusha P. Kulkarni, South Asian Network



The questioning of thousands of AMEMSA residents by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) directly following 9/11 and in the years since has been focused on young AMEMSA men ages 18–33. FBI surveillance of mosques has become commonplace, and FBI informants target young Muslim men for entrapment.<sup>34</sup> Although Sikhs are not Muslims, Sikh boys and men who wear turbans are routinely profiled and questioned in airports by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). One in five Bay Area Sikhs report being unfairly stopped by a police officer, airport employee, security guard, or TSA employee.<sup>35</sup>

Following 9/11, the government’s immigration functions have been folded into the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Whereas immigration enforcement had

long been under the purview of the federal government, 9/11 has been utilized to justify closer cooperation between immigration agents and local law enforcement – and most recently the addition of the FBI. These combined forces, formalized into Joint Terrorism Task Forces and Fusion Centers, single out AMEMSA populations for detention and deportation. In court cases and immigration proceedings, the threat of charges with terrorism – in which prosecutors do not have to show evidence – have been used to force AMEMSA defendants to “self-deport,” to give up their rights, or to accept unfair plea bargains. Because many AMEMSA families and communities include both immigrants and American-born, these practices impact and create fear among all community members.

## Ali’s Story

My name is “Ali.” I am from Pakistan and used to work in restaurants. On the evening of May 13th, 2008, I was driving in Norwalk, CA when I was pulled over by the Norwalk police. The police told me that I was being pulled over because my back license plate was missing. After running my driver’s license, the police told me there was a warrant out for my arrest and that they were taking me in. The police asked me what country I am from, what my religion is, where I worked, where I lived and who I lived with. I answered all their questions.

At the police station, the officers showed me my cousin’s photo on the computer and said that it was me. I tried to explain that it was not me, but the officers would not listen. I was fingerprinted, photographed, and put in a cell. Later, officers without uniforms took me outside and pointed their guns at me. They asked me whether I worked for Al Queda, whether I knew Osama bin Laden and where Bin Laden was. The officers threatened to put me in jail unless I told the truth. The officers asked me personal questions about my sex life and whether I was gay.

After eight hours in custody, the police did not charge me with any crime but they transferred me to an immigration detention center. I got very sick there – I was vomiting, had chest pains and headaches, and couldn’t breathe.

The Immigration officers kept asking me many questions in a very rude way. They asked me about my prayer routine and my religious customs. They offered me a job if I would give up names. When I asked for an attorney, they continued to push me, saying that I had to tell the truth. I told them that I already told the truth to the police officers.

I told Immigration that I was afraid to go back to Pakistan. I told them I had been attacked twice by enemies of my family. After two days, I was released from immigration detention with a monitoring ankle bracelet. Even though I have family in the U.S. and have worked here for many years, Immigration is still forcing me to wear the ankle bracelet. People from the ankle bracelet monitoring program visit me at home once a month, and I have to check-in in person twice a month. I have lost several jobs because my bosses will not let me miss three days of work each month. Everything that has happened has left me traumatized – I cannot sleep and I worry everyday whether I will be deported.

– Reprinted from South Asian Network’s report *From Displacement to Internment: A Report of Human Rights Violations Experienced by L.A.’s South Asian Immigrant Communities* (2010).

## Other Patterns of Criminalization of Immigrants

Immigration laws increasingly have an enforcement focus that extends the reach of criminal justice systems into the lives of immigrants. These laws have replaced a discretionary system with mandatory detention and deportation, and expanded the grounds of deportation to include minor offenses.

In particular, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 strengthened the role of law enforcement while simultaneously eroding immigrants' civil rights. It made it harder for undocumented immigrants to adjust their status or apply for asylum, and easier to deport documented immigrants for legal violations both great and small. It also limited many due process guarantees for immigrants. Cambodians are one of the communities most impacted by the 1996 law. Over 1,500 Cambodian Americans now face deportation and more than 500 have already been deported back to Cambodia since the U.S. signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Cambodia.<sup>36</sup> Many Cambodians and other AAPIs are in limbo as they wait for deportation. They have already served prison time and have since established themselves as workers and family men, but the retroactive nature of these laws puts them into deportation proceedings. For low-income immigrants, deportation pushes their families further into poverty.

Increasingly, it is law enforcement and other officers – rather than government attorneys – who initiate immigration court proceedings. Deportations have increased to historic highs under the Obama administration – over 400,000 deportations per year. This is almost 10 percent more than the Bush



administration's 2008 total, and 25 percent more than were deported in 2007. DHS officials have credited policies known as 287(g) and "Secure Communities," (S-COMM) both of which leverage the reach of local law enforcement officials, for the stepped-up deportations. S-COMM mandates fingerprint-sharing between local police and ICE.

“Once someone is turned over because of Secure Communities or by law enforcement, if the person is Asian American, there’s going to be a close look by ICE to see if the person has committed crimes. There’s a stereotype that many of these young guys are part of gangs.”

– Bill Ong Hing, University of San Francisco School of Law

With this direct line between police and immigration, focus group and interview participants reported that AAPI and AMEMSA individuals get picked up through the criminal system for minor things such as traffic violations, and put into deportation proceedings. Focus group participants also shared that in this context, for

undocumented people who are LGBTQ, interfacing with the criminal justice system can lead to deportation. For example, LGBTQ Iranians or South Asians who came to the U.S. from Africa can be deported to countries where homosexuality is a criminal offense or their lives can be in danger.

## Criminal Justice System Impacts: How Funders Can Help

- » *Support programs that develop the leadership capacity of boys and young men of color who have been impacted by criminal justice, immigration and national security systems.*
- » *Support efforts to establish restorative justice as an option for police officers, judges and district attorneys.*
- » *Support expanded legal aid services and court interpretation and advocacy for immigrant families.*
- » *Support culturally competent re-entry programs and support groups for both re-entrants and their families in AAPI and AMEMSA communities.*
- » *Support advocacy to reform laws and practices that over-criminalize youth of color, such as “zero tolerance” policies in schools, “three strikes,” charging juveniles as adults and deportation of immigrant ex-offenders.*
- » *Support advocacy for federal policy reforms including comprehensive immigration reform that provides pathways to legalization; legislation prohibiting racial and religious profiling by all levels of law enforcement; ending collaboration between Immigration and Customs Enforcement, state and local law enforcement agencies, and the FBI; and restricting the use of FBI informants.*

# IV. EDUCATION SYSTEM IMPACTS

## Racism and Bullying in Schools

In 2009, the U.S. Justice and Education departments released data on bullying, finding that more than half of Asian American teenagers are bullied in school – 54%. This rate of harassment far exceeds their white peers (31.3%), African American peers (38.4%) and Hispanic peers (34.3%). The study also found that 62% of Asian American youth are harassed online (“cyber-bullied”) at least once or twice a month, compared to 18.1% of white teenagers. Youth rarely report such incidences, fearing reprisals, facing language barriers, and seeing their parents’ mistrust of or lack of access to school officials.<sup>37</sup>

In AMEMSA communities, public policies and pervasive media stereotypes that treat AMEMSA young men as a threat correlate with harassment in their daily lives. For youth, this often occurs in school contexts, with thousands of incidents of anti-AMEMSA bullying reported over the last decade, and with no sign of abatement over a decade after 9/11.

Although both Sikh boys and girls are harassed because of their religious and ethnic identity, research by the Sikh Coalition shows that Bay Area Sikh boys experience higher rates of harassment. For example, a survey of over 500 Sikh children from across the Bay



Area conducted by Sikh Coalition revealed that 65% of all Sikh boys in middle school with or without turbans suffer some form of racial or religious bullying. The rate is higher for turbaned boys, 74% of whom suffer bias-based harassment.<sup>38</sup>

AMEMSA children are frequently called terrorists in schools by other students and even teachers. Since 9/11, there have been increasing reports of discrimination, bullying, and exclusion of Muslim students in schools. Given the scrutiny on AMEMSA populations by government officials, youth report that they do not feel safe reporting such crimes for fear of reprisal.

## Homophobia, Transphobia and Racism in Schools

Among LGBTQ youth, sexual orientation harassment is compounded by racist harassment. In a recent California study, AAPI LGBT youth reported the highest instances of racial harassment amongst LGBTQ students of color. Among LGBT students in the study, 31% of Asian LGBTQ students reported harassment based on race, compared with 24% of African American

students, 24% of Latino students, 20% of multiracial students and 18% of white students.<sup>39</sup>

In schools where boys of color must act tough or be victimized, boys who do not conform to gender norms are at risk of being bullied whether or not they identify as LGBTQ. As a recent report by the Brown Boi Project explains, “They have to simultaneously navigate racial and cultural notions of success, being too white or

## Promising Practices: The Jakara Movement

The Central Valley is home to one of California's largest Sikh populations, largely comprised of both professionals and working class immigrants working in agricultural, small business, and other blue collar professions. Post-9/11, many Sikh young men have been targeted for bullying, violence, and hate crimes, particularly for those who keep their Kes (uncut long hair). Despite the growing Sikh population in the region, there have been few culturally competent programs or services available for young Sikh men. To address these issues, Sikh college students held a conference in Fresno and founded the Jakara Movement in 2000. The Jakara Movement has evolved into a holistic youth development program throughout Sikh communities in California focused on issues of education, health, sexism, and social justice.

The Jakara Movement empowers young Sikh men such as Sehajpal, a participant in the Bhujangi Youth Academy. Sehajpal struggled in school academically and faced anxiety, asthma, and bullying, while also working long hours in his parents' store. In 2011, Jakara Movement held its first Bhujangi Youth Academy for at-risk Punjabi Sikh young males in the Sierra Nevada Mountains outside of Fresno. Sehajpal and other Sikh young men were referred to the program by siblings, parents, school counselors, and probation officers. They participated in a rites-of-passage program that included mentoring, life skills development, emotional growth, and education on Sikh culture and history. Through the 10-day intensive camp, Sehajpal mastered Gurmukhi (the Punjabi alphabet), performed the closing Ardas (prayer), and completed a 10-mile hike with support from his Bhujangi brothers. While fostering cultural pride, the Bhujangi program also provides a safe space to discuss topics that are often taboo in the Sikh community such as domestic violence, generational conflict, patriarchy and sexism. In addition to the Bhujangi camp, Jakara Movement provides year-round mentorship, social justice organizing, and service-learning opportunities for Sikh young men and women.

'square' carries perils that also mark them as soft, illegitimate, or weak. Boys that step outside the norm, exhibiting gender non-conformity, become a target for ridicule. The result is not only a downplay of their intellectualism but a reinforcement of femininity and queerness as weak."<sup>40</sup>

When gender expectations of boys mesh with the model minority stereotype, boys can be especially at risk. Bullying and an unwelcoming school environment have negative effects on GPA and test performance, and may

lead LGBTQ youth in particular to want to drop out of school. Harassment and bullying of AAPI and AMEMSA youth, including LGBTQ youth, can lead to them being suspended or pushed out of schools if they try to protect themselves. Zero tolerance and other punitive policies can have many negative consequences, including suspension, expulsion, being sent to continuation or alternative schools and dropping out. Transgender youth are particularly at risk, because they are most likely to be labeled by school personnel as disruptive simply for being transgender or for how they look.

"For LGBT youth, if they're just really holding their hand out to block their face of getting hit, it can be interpreted as participating in this fight or participating in bullying or creating an unsafe learning environment. The way that it plays out is that both students end up getting suspended... There's a possibility of you being outed by your school to parents....When this situation happens and it's not on the terms of the young person and not on the terms of the family, we can see that young people are statistically rejected at a rate of 50% initially. Their family rejects them or part of their identity. Of that 50%, a further 30% end up getting kicked out of their home."

— Geoffrey Winder, *Gay-Straight Alliance Network*

## School Curriculum and Climate

A frequent theme in our focus groups was that curriculum and school climate can either alienate students from school or keep them engaged. Students' feelings that curriculum is irrelevant to their life histories — or even blatantly racist — negatively impacts their involvement in school. This point was also emphasized in another recent study of Southeast Asian boys in Fresno, in which focus groups with Southeast Asian boys found that institutional racism and cultural devaluation in the school is an issue affecting psychological and social-emotional health.<sup>41</sup>

Focus group participants described how teachers and administrators sometimes reinforce negative stereotypes or fears of AAPI boys. The authority they

wield can contribute to suspensions and dropouts among AAPI and AMEMSA youth, and have calamitous effects on their lives.

Those working with AMEMSA youth described incidents where teachers and administrators have publicly targeted them for their identities or for speaking out against inaccuracies about their religion or national background. Harassment and exclusion also makes some AMEMSA youth and their families less likely to seek help in the school setting, such as when they need additional help with language services, leading to less parent and student engagement. At the same time, school curricula have not adjusted to increase public understanding of this targeted population.

“Teachers automatically see Pacific Islander students as a problem, I think because they’re intimidated by their size. A lot of times I see teachers get defensive with our Pacific Islander male students... when in fact another student that was much smaller that acted out the same way didn’t suffer consequences... this person gets called into the counselor’s office, ends up in juvie, and that’s [how] their track starts where they continue to see themselves revolving through the juvenile system.” — *Manufou Liaiga-Anoa’i, Pacific Islander Community Partnership*

### Majed’s Story

On March 21, 2009, Majed, an Egyptian American teenager and four of his Arab American friends were stopped by San Francisco Police, threatened with racial slurs, and arrested on felony charges of conspiracy to commit terrorism, despite a lack of evidence. With the support and legal defense organized by the Arab Resource and Organizing Center (AROC), eventually all charges against him were dismissed. Following this experience with racial profiling, Majed emerged as a leader within AROC’s Arab Youth Organization (AYO).

Majed had also struggled for a sense of belonging in a society often hostile to Arabs and Muslims. School was especially challenging for him where he found his history and culture marginalized and misrepresented. Getting involved in AROC provided him with a space to celebrate his identity and feel empowered to participate in social justice efforts in the Arab community. Majed helped spearhead the TURATH campaign (Teaching Understanding and Representing Arabs Through History), which seeks to incorporate Arab history and curriculum into local school systems in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The campaign included a youth-led research project to identify experiences and needs of young Arab Americans that has now been published in a report. Majed has co-presented workshops for educators and community members to raise awareness about the criminalization of Arabs, help dispel cultural stereotypes, and teach educators about ways to address these issues in the classroom. Through AROC, Majed has been able to empower other Arab youth and prevent feelings of social isolation that may prevent students’ abilities to excel in an educational setting. In his own words, “AROC gives me a place to express myself and my culture. And now I realize the power of community to make real changes.”

### **Research Findings: Language Barriers in AAPI and AMEMSA Communities**

Recent analysis of Census data shows that the number of limited English proficient (LEP) Asians is growing in California – increasing by 11% between 2000 and 2010. Other key findings include:

- Over one-third of Asian Americans in California are LEP (almost 1.7 million people).
- Among Asian subgroups, about half of Burmese, Vietnamese and Koreans are LEP.
- Between 2000 and 2010, the number of South Asians who are LEP increased dramatically, with a 119% increase in LEP among Sri Lankans, 76% among Bangladeshis, 47% among Pakistanis and 41% among Asian Indians.
- Over 23% of Asian American households in California are linguistically isolated (in which everyone over the age of 14 is LEP), a rate similar to Latinos. The highest rates of linguistic isolation among Asian groups are found among Koreans (40%), Vietnamese (37%), Burmese (36%), Mongolian (33%), Taiwanese (33%) and Nepalese (31%).

## **Language Barriers to Education and Immigrant Parent Involvement in Schools**

The general focus on standardized testing in many public schools – particularly underperforming schools with fewer resources – can be detrimental for AAPI ELL students. They must fit into a particular environment where English literacy and writing is the only key to success. Young men and boys who are limited English proficient are dropped in the deep end to learn English and to somehow perform on standardized testing. Study participants shared how they are seen as the “model minority,” and not offered any specialized programming or attention.

Parent engagement improves student attitudes towards school and attendance, is a predictor of

student success, and reduces the dropout rate. Yet few public schools have addressed bridging the needs of minority parents. When their own parents cannot access or interface with the school, young people become further isolated from school environments. Language is one of the major barriers in this respect, as few schools provide or have resources to help with translation for parents with Limited English Proficiency, thus limiting parents’ contact with administrators and families. In addition, undocumented parents are often afraid to engage with schools due to their status and the culture of fear that has been created by the post 9/11 climate and the rise in deportations.



One in ten English Language Learner (ELL) students in California is AAPI (about 165,000 students). The top five AAPI languages spoken by ELL students are Vietnamese, Tagalog, Cantonese, Hmong and Korean.<sup>42</sup>

## Ju's Story

“I didn't know about my immigration status until my senior year in high school.... When I was filling out college applications.... That's when I finally learned about my immigration status. Even then, I didn't know what “undocumented” means.... Later on I learned I couldn't get a driver's license, get a job, get internships, apply for financial aid. After I learned about these limitations and the possible risk of deportation, I was isolated. I was psychologically stressed. I was emotionally depressed on many different levels to the point where I wanted to commit suicide. Even in conversations with friends, guys talk about cars, driving, getting new jobs. I didn't fit in. I was always excluded from guy talk.

Education-wise, it's difficult because there's no aid, limited financial aid and limited scholarships. In Latino communities, there are resources available. In the Korean American community, it's limited scholarship opportunities and they don't really want to talk about it. It's discouraging for Korean American undocumented students. For Korean American undocumented students, it's hard to achieve higher education.

Many undocumented Asian students don't find out about their status until their adult life. Once they find out, it's hard to be motivated to go into higher education because there are no resources in the community, specifically the Korean American community. What's the point of going on to college if you can't get a job anyway? They're very discouraged by the lack of resources. Many students aren't motivated to go to college but instead go into a short-term route. These short-term fixes like drugs and gangs or working under the table... rather than going to college because there's no future.”

## Limited Educational and Work Opportunities for Undocumented Youth



Youth without immigration status see their opportunities to receive higher education deeply curtailed by being barred from federal financial aid. California is one of the more progressive states when it comes to educational opportunities for undocumented students, many of whom are low-income or first generation college students. AB540 was passed in 2001 and allows undocumented students who have attended a California high school for at least three years and have been accepted by a college or university in California to be eligible for in-state tuition rates. In a major policy victory for undocumented youth, the “California DREAM Act” was recently passed and allows students who meet AB 540 criteria to apply for and receive non-state funded scholarships for public colleges and universities and state-funded financial aid. However, many eligible students are unaware of these laws or face barriers navigating the system.

Recently momentum has grown around these issues as undocumented youth have “come out” to push for the passage of the federal DREAM Act, which would grant legal status to undocumented students who were



brought to the United States as children. The “Dream” movement includes many leaders who are LGBTQ, with many facing challenges coming out with their sexual identity as well as their undocumented status. While the federal DREAM Act has yet to pass, in 2012 the Dreamers’ activism prompted President Obama to take action and with a federal order known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). DACA allows undocumented youth to receive a two-year work permit if they successfully complete high school. The Asian Pacific American Legal Center estimates that over 37,000 AAPI youth in California are eligible for DACA.

While there is no doubt that winning DACA is a very important step and a victory for the undocumented youth movement, it is not a long-term solution, nor does it address the broader need for legalization and comprehensive immigration reform. Undocumented students often see no purpose in continuing towards high school graduation. Even if they do graduate from college, they do so in a world where their status is limited and their job opportunities are bound by the exploitation that undocumented immigrants face in the labor market. Growing up undocumented severely hampers the aspirations and trajectories of youth.

## Education System Impacts: How Funders Can Help

- » *Support efforts to reduce school absenteeism and dropout rates through college outreach efforts beginning in middle school; culturally competent prevention, mentoring and male role model programs; cultural or ethnic student leadership development clubs; Gay-Straight Alliance clubs; academic counseling and after school tutoring; and relevant, accurate and inclusive curriculum.*
- » *Support culturally competent efforts to engage immigrant parents in schools and help them become more involved in their children’s education, including providing easy access to interpreters in more AAPI and AMEMSA languages.*
- » *Support and resource cross-community collaboration and school-community partnerships to reduce interracial tensions and violence in schools.*
- » *Support efforts to educate immigrant communities about opportunities for higher education, financial aid and work permits available to eligible undocumented youth in California.*
- » *Support community organizations to ensure that California school districts are implementing existing laws (such as Seth’s Law and the Fair Education Act) to combat bullying and make school curricula more reflective of diversity.*

# V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In many respects, the challenges discussed in this report are challenges AAPI and AMEMSA boys and young men share with their African American, Latino and Native American counterparts. Across many of the social determinants of health, the AAPI and AMEMSA youth described in this report have common cause and a shared destiny with other youth of color.

As with all communities of color and immigrant communities, culturally competent and language-accessible approaches will be necessary to provide the support AAPI and AMEMSA youth need to live healthy lives. In spite of the tremendous challenges discussed in this report, our research uncovered many community-based programs around the state that are addressing the issues faced by marginalized AAPI boys and young men, some of which are featured in the report.

As the numbers of AAPI and AMEMSA communities grow, they are important constituencies to include in efforts to build the political will necessary to reform large-scale systems like public education and criminal justice. As younger populations, they will be critical to the future growth of the labor force and the economy in California. These communities have a stake in leveling the playing field so that all youth have an equal chance at living healthy and productive lives.

Funders are in a unique position to help grow the community capital and potential of AAPI and AMEMSA communities so that all youth can thrive. AAPI's recommendations to funders include:

- 1. Ensure that culturally competent AAPI and AMEMSA organizations and programs are included in efforts to improve the lives of boys and men of color.** The previous sections of this report contain programmatic recommendations that can help funders focused on particular issue areas identify where their portfolios intersect with the issues faced by low-income and otherwise marginalized AAPI and AMEMSA populations. We urge funders to include organizations and youth working in AAPI and AMEMSA communities when designing funding strategies to tackle the issues faced by disadvantaged youth of color. They are often part of the at-risk youth population in diverse California cities and counties, but can't be adequately reached with "one-size-fits-all" strategies. Study participants emphasized over and over that programs that validate AAPI and AMEMSA cultural and homeland identities are key to positive youth development.
- 2. Support subgroup research and disaggregation of major data sets.** While aggregated data on AAPI and AMEMSA communities show high indicators of income and education, the available disaggregated data makes it clear that certain subgroups have high rates of poverty and linguistic isolation, and low levels of educational attainment. The 2010 Census categories and a new California data disaggregation law passed in 2011 (AB 1088) are major steps forward. Funders can support advocacy for policy changes related to data disaggregation, for example at the levels of school districts, criminal justice systems and other public agencies in order to better understand disparities and challenges faced by youth in more marginalized AAPI and AMEMSA communities. To directly address research gaps, funders can also support deeper research on the social determinants of health within specific AAPI and AMEMSA communities at a scale that will meet rigorous methodological standards.
- 3. Help build the civic engagement capacity of AAPI and AMEMSA organizations.** Many of the challenges described in this report cannot be addressed solely at the cultural or behavioral level, or without involving families and communities. As the populations they serve grow, it is critical that funders invest in AAPI and AMEMSA community organizations so that they can engage more deeply in leadership development, community organizing and policy advocacy. Given the low level of foundation investment in AAPI and AMEMSA communities, there is an enormous opportunity to engage and build the capacity of these organizations to be part of solutions to the complex issues described in this report.

# APPENDIX A: FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

AAPIP extends our deepest appreciation to the individuals affiliated with the following organizations who participated in the six focus groups conducted for this study.

**APAIT Health Center  
VIBE Support Group**  
Los Angeles

**API Equality**  
Northern California & Los Angeles

**ASPIRE** (Asian Students Promoting Immigrant Rights through Education)  
SF Bay Area & Los Angeles

**AYPAL**  
Oakland

**Arab Cultural and Community Center**  
San Francisco

**Arab Resource and Organizing Center**  
San Francisco

**Asian Law Caucus**  
San Francisco

**Asian Prisoner Support Committee**  
SF Bay Area

**The Cambodian Family**  
Santa Ana

**Community Health for Asian Americans**  
East SF Bay Area

**Community Youth Center of San Francisco**  
San Francisco

**Council on American Islamic Relations**  
SF Bay Area

**Filipino Advocates for Justice**  
Oakland

**The Jakara Movement**  
Fresno

**Khmer Girls in Action**  
Long Beach

**Korean Resource Center**  
Los Angeles

**The kNOw Youth Media**  
Fresno

**Muslim Public Affairs Council**  
Los Angeles

**Muslim Spiritual Care Services**  
Fresno

**Pacific Islander Community Partnership**  
San Mateo

**Sikh Coalition**  
Fremont

**South Asian Network**  
Artesia

**Southeast Asian Resource Action Center**  
National & Sacramento

**Stone Soup**  
Fresno

## APPENDIX B: INTERVIEWEES

**Jeff Adachi**, Public Defender of San Francisco

**Isami Arifuku**, Senior Researcher, National Council on Crime & Delinquency

**Mike Eng**, California State Assembly (D-Monterey Park)

**Lian Cheun**, Executive Director, Khmer Girls in Action

**Tony Duongviseth**, Collaborative Director, Skyline High School

**Bill Ong Hing**, Professor of Law, University of San Francisco

**Dr. Cassandra Joubert**, Director, Central California Children's Institute and Professor, California State University Fresno

**Hamid Khan**, Campaign Coordinator, Stop LAPD Spying Coalition

**Lara Kiswani**, Executive Director, Arab Resource & Organizing Center

**Loa Niumeitolu**, Community Health for Asian Americans

**Christopher Punongbayan**, Deputy Director, Asian Law Caucus

**Nancy Wada-McKee**, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs, California State University Los Angeles (AAPI Initiative)

**Geoffrey Winder**, Senior Manager, Racial & Economic Justice Programs, Gay-Straight Alliance Network

**Kent Wong**, Director, UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education

**Soua Xiong**, Research Assistant, Central California Children's Institute, California State University Fresno

**MaiKa Yang**, Executive Director, Stone Soup Fresno

**Eddy Zheng**, Project Manager, Community Youth Center

## APPENDIX C: MORE CALIFORNIA ORGANIZATIONS AND MODELS

*In addition to those listed in the previous Appendices, the following is a list of other organizations, programs and models addressing AAPI and AMEMSA boys and men's issues that surfaced in AAPIP's research for this report. Some were contacted by AAPIP but could not participate in the study for various reasons. Others were recommended to AAPIP by study participants or colleagues. We apologize for any inadvertent omissions or inaccuracies in this list.*

*AAPIP did not have the resources to feature all these important organizations and programs, but they are listed here for informational purposes. This is a partial list and the Appendices should not be taken as a comprehensive accounting of organizations or projects engaged in BYMOC work for AAPI & AMEMSA communities in California.*

Asian Pacific Islander Dream Summer

Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach (APILO)

Asian & Pacific Islander Wellness Center

Asian Health Services

Brown Boi Project

Chinatown Community Development Center

Chinatown Youth Center Initiative/The Spot

East Bay Asian Youth Center

Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC)

Forward Together/Young Men's Program

Laotian Organizing Project

Muslim Students Association

San Gabriel Valley Asian Pacific Islander Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (SGV API PFLAG)

Satrang

Sikh American Legal Defense & Education Fund

Southeast Asian Young Leaders (SEAYL)

St. Mary Medical Center/Educated Men with Meaningful Messages (EM3)

TOA Institute

Trikone San Francisco Bay Area

United Territories of Pacific Islanders Alliance, San Diego (U.T.O.P.I.A.)

# ENDNOTES

- 1 South Asian (AMEMSA) communities were included in this report. There is considerable overlap in AAPIP's definitions of "AAPI" and "AMEMSA" because South Asians are included in both. Significant challenges faced by South Asians are shared by Americans of Arab, Middle Eastern and Muslim backgrounds. In the post 9/11 era, AMEMSA communities continue to bear the brunt of discriminatory national security policies and selective immigration enforcement, some of which have specifically targeted boys and men. Hate crimes, surveillance activities, desecration of places of worship, and employment discrimination constantly reinforce their unequal status in American society. South Asian groups include people of Muslim backgrounds and people who are inaccurately perceived to be Muslim (such as Sikhs). These realities have led AAPIP and other organizations to group AMEMSA communities together in order to more effectively address national security-related racial and religious profiling.
- 2 Davis et al (2009).
- 3 A summary of reports funded by The California Endowment on boys and men of color is available at <http://www1.calendow.org/uploadedFiles/Publications/BMOC/The%20California%20Endowment%20-%20Healthy%20Communities%20Matter%20-%20Overview.pdf>
- 4 Asian American Center for Advancing Justice (2013), p.8.
- 5 Ramakrishnan and Lee (2012).
- 6 *State of California, Department of Finance (2013)*.
- 7 For example, the RAND Corporation's extensive study on boys and men of color commissioned by The California Endowment "did not include odds ratios for Asian children. This reflects the scarcity of available data for this group and the fact that the category of 'Asian' captures a very diverse set of groups." The researchers have acknowledged the data gap and called upon policymakers to fund research on trends for the Asian youth population to provide more accurate comparisons. Source: RAND Corporation, 2009. <http://www.rand.org/congress/newsletters/child/2009/01.html>
- 8 As explained in a 2011 public hearing on place-based funding initiatives convened by the California Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus and Asian and Pacific Islanders California Action Network, "In general, AAPIs do not register statistical significance within a predefined place-based area or service planning boundary." Source: California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs (2011).
- 9 AAPIP (2007).
- 10 Asian American Center for Advancing Justice (2013).
- 11 *State of California, Department of Finance (2013)*.
- 12 AAPIP works in partnership with other members of the Joint Affinity Groups – Association of Black Foundation Executives, Funders for LGBTQ Issues, Hispanics in Philanthropy, Native Americans in Philanthropy and Women's Funding Network – with whom we share a common framework and approach to men and boys work in philanthropy. The JAG framework states: "Disparities facing men and boys of color exist within a deeper historical context of structural inequality. Because inequity has impacted entire communities, work to improve life outcomes for men and boys of color cannot function in isolation. It must also focus on equity more broadly within diverse communities. This work cannot thrive without healthy communities that cultivate and sustain the opportunities created by philanthropic initiatives. This means that initiatives should consider the interests of other populations that intersect with the work. Women and girls live alongside and in community with men and boys of color. Further, men and boys of color are interwoven with families and can be found within LGBTQ, immigrant, and indigenous communities."
- 13 Asian American Center for Advancing Justice (2013).
- 14 Asian American Center for Advancing Justice (2013).
- 15 APALC and AAJC (2011).
- 16 See Dade (2012). "Middle Eastern and North African origin is an ancestry, which is no longer captured in the census form. The government racially defines the ancestry as white. Advocates say the methodology has led to severe undercounts of people of Arab descent."
- 17 Asian American Center for Advancing Justice (2013).
- 18 Asian American Center for Advancing Justice (2013).
- 19 Hoefler et al. (2010).
- 20 Hoefler et al. (2010).
- 21 Gates. (2013)
- 22 Gonzales and Chavez (2012); Rincon (2008).
- 23 Choi (2008).
- 24 Drexel Institute (2009).
- 25 Choi (2008).
- 26 Diaz and Kosciw (2009).
- 27 Satrang and South Asian Network (2006).
- 28 Ishihara (2012).
- 29 Le et al. (2001a, b); Juneja (2006).
- 30 CJRP (2007).
- 31 Austin et al. (2001).
- 32 CHRJ (2011).
- 33 Sinnar (2007).
- 34 CHRJ (2011) and Gerstein (2013).
- 35 Sikh Coalition (2011).
- 36 Hing (2005).
- 37 De Voe and Murphy (2011).
- 38 Sikh Coalition (2010).
- 39 Russell, Clarke and Laub (2009).
- 40 Brown Boi Project (2012).
- 41 Xiong and Joubert (2012).
- 42 Asian American Center for Advancing Justice (2013).

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## **ABOUT AAPIP**

Founded in 1990, Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy is a national member-supported philanthropic advocacy organization dedicated to advancing philanthropy and Asian American/Pacific Islander communities. Our members include foundations, staff, and trustees of grantmaking institutions, and nonprofit organizations in ten regional chapters in the United States.

AAPIP engages communities and philanthropy to address unmet needs; serves as a resource for and about AAPI communities; supports and facilitates giving by and to our communities; and incubates new ideas and approaches for democratic philanthropy.



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