



## Questions for Grantmakers: Understanding How Structural Racism Affects Grantees<sup>1</sup>

**CASE STUDY: The Providence Youth Student Movement (PrYSM)** works to "confront and end state, street and interpersonal violence affecting the Southeast Asian American community in Rhode Island." Rooted in youth development and community organizing strategies, its programs include a GED preparatory course, a women's support group, an organizing program for high school students (and related campaigns), a regional and national network, and a program for LGBTQ youth named seaQueel. The examples used in this diagram are based on, or draw from, analysis and ideas offered by PrYSM. For more information, please visit [www.prysm.us](http://www.prysm.us).

	ASPECTS OF STRUCTURAL RACISM <sup>2</sup>	QUESTIONS FOR FUNDERS	STRUCTURAL RACISM...	...AS IT AFFECTS LGBTQ YOUTH
CONTEXT	<b>Meaning of Race</b> • Race as social construct (not biological) that shifts over time. "Race" also reveals "an unequal relationship between social groups based on the privileged access to power and resources by one group over another"	How is race understood? Which populations are affected? And how?	Southeast Asian youth, age 14-28, low-income and poor, largely Cambodian, Laotian, Hmong, multiracial; many first-generation, immigrant/refugee families	LGBTQ youth struggling with issues of identity and isolation, as well as racism, poverty, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, and ageism, among others
	<b>Intersectionality</b> • How various categories (race, class, gender, sexuality, age, etc.) interact, on multiple levels, to manifest inequality <sup>3</sup>	What's the relationship between racial inequities and other forms of inequity?	Entrenched poverty; racism and prejudice from established communities	LGBTQ youth financially interdependent with families; lack of ways to communicate in Southeast Asian languages about sexuality/gender; homophobic youth culture (chauvinistic male gangs)
CURRENT MANIFESTATIONS	<b>Historical Advantage</b> • History of racism affords advantages (wealth, power well-being) that accumulate over time. For others: disadvantage	What's the history of accumulated advantage and disadvantage?	Agrarian backgrounds can mean less "skills" and, thus, low-wage employment; anti-immigrant sentiment; cutbacks in "welfare," affordable housing, public benefits; language barriers between generations; cost of war and genocide on families in the long-term; trend of refugee resettlement in impoverished areas	Lack of many queer Southeast Asian role models; language barriers can affect parenting practices; material and psychological cost of poverty, racism, homophobia, transphobia; gang culture
OUTCOMES	<b>National Values</b> • Deeply embedded national values—personal responsibility and individualism, meritocracy and equal opportunity—obscures the disadvantages associated with certain groups	How do national values (personal responsibility, individualism, meritocracy and equal opportunity) shape the context for the grantee?	Southeast Asian and "American" values clash or coincide; working-class, immigrant families asked to work hard, thrive on low-wage jobs while scrutinized and criminalized for residing in the US	Tension between allegiance to family ("family ties") and LGBTQ youth; heterosexist traditions in Southeast Asian families (arranged marriage, etc); familial obligation and financial incentive to marry friends and family in homelands
	<b>Contemporary Culture</b> • Negative stereotypes become default cultural representations that inform discourse, public policies, institutional practices and widespread attitudes	What are the associated negative stereotypes and cultural representations?	Harsh, conflicting attitudes about immigrants of color and immigration "reform"	Media portrayals criminalize Southeast Asians as violent, in gangs, which compels local gang legislation; hyper-violent stereotypes encourage discrimination (Southeast Asian communities struggle with accessing venues for social events)
ONGOING RACIAL INEQUALITIES	<b>Maintaining Social Hierarchies</b> • Racial/ethnic groups are often segregated, physically and psychologically. Further, progress in one area is lessened by regression in another	How has the segregation of racial/ethnic groups shaped the grantee? Where has progress been counterbalanced by regression—and vice-versa?	Southeast Asian Communities (Hmong, Cambodian, Laotian) generally grouped in separate neighborhoods with high poverty rates; high schools with Southeast Asians typically least resourced	Repatriation agreement with Cambodia in 2001 allowed for deportation of Cambodian refugees; gubernatorial layoff of Southeast Asian interpreters
	<b>Racialized Public Policies &amp; Institutional Practices</b> • Structural racism embedded within opportunity arenas—health care, education, the labor market, etc—which produce and reproduce racial disparities	Within the relevant opportunity arenas, what are the overt and subtle policies, as well as institutional practices, that produce and reproduce racial disparities?	Marginal institutional support for SEA communities (most government funding for policing gangs); aggregated API data masks needs among SEA communities; lack of cultural awareness in opportunity arenas about SEA realities; services neither culturally nor linguistically sensitive	Lack of cultural awareness and diversity among Rhode Island's LGBTQ community; drugs/alcohol in youth culture and dance clubs; predominance of school-based GSA models that may be culturally insensitive and ignore dropout rate trend
	<b>Racial Disparities</b> • Racial disparities show up in virtually every indicator of well-being	What are those racial disparities?	Education (59%-32% Southeast Asian youth drop out of high school; 74% skip school) and mental health (70% Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, 75% clinical depression)	

<sup>1</sup> © Funders for LGBTQ Issues, 2009.

<sup>2</sup> The framework in this section borrows largely from The Aspen Institute's report on structural racism and community building. See The Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change, *Structural Racism and Community Building* (Washington, DC: The Aspen Institute, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 2001)