

EIB Blueprint: Itambi at Morehouse

MOREHOUSE COLLEGE-CONTEXT
SPECIFIC EIB VISION, CONCEPTS,
AND GOALS



This blueprint provides a conceptual framework of equity, inclusion, and belonging (EIB) at Morehouse College while articulating operational goals for the Office of Equity, Inclusion and Belonging.

The EIB efforts at Morehouse College aim at intentionally examining the systemic impact of equitable policies and inclusive practices, which cultivate a sense of belonging for all stakeholders - students, faculty, and staff.

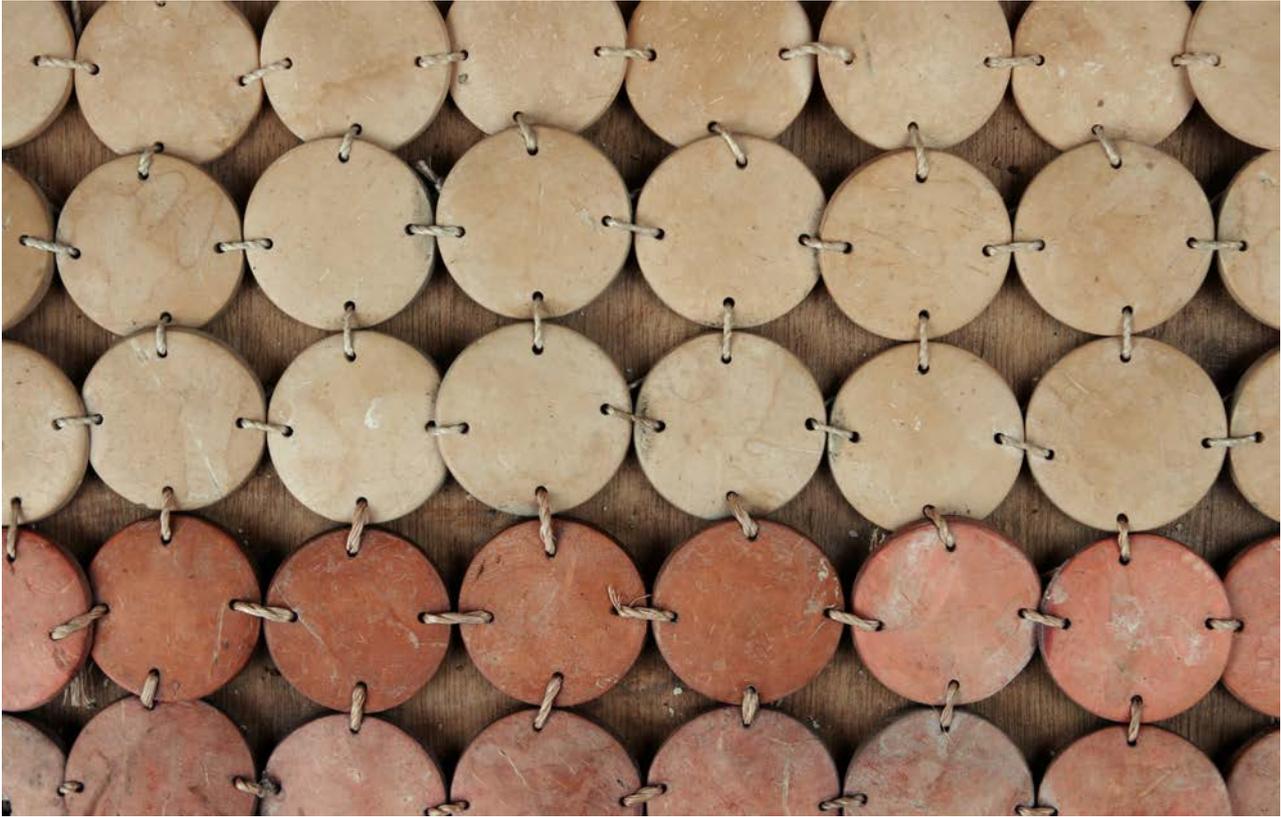
This blueprint also shows that the EIB framework at Morehouse College is context-specific to:

- ideologies of HBCUs,
- liberal arts education for Black men and men of color who will become leaders, and
- the College's spiritual commitment to respect all people.

Morehouse College is the only HBCU liberal arts college for Black men and men of color. Its distinctive position and identity provide an institutional opportunity to elevate contextualized engagements with equity, inclusion, and belonging in higher education.

HIDEKO SERA, PSYD

DIRECTOR OF EQUITY, INCLUSION AND BELONGING



Vision

At Morehouse College, we cultivate equitable policies and inclusive practices which lead to a sense of belonging for all. We champion Equity, Inclusion and Belonging/EIB as essential qualities of the College for building and advancing an empathic and respectful campus that fosters pathways to individual and collective successes. From people's daily experiences to operational decisions, EIB at Morehouse College must be infused throughout the College's decisions and operations.

"Focusing on diversity at an HBCU creates an 'us vs. them' dynamic, highlighting our differences when we should be unified."

In early 2021, numerous listening tours were conducted to hear students' thoughts on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Students noted that the traditional concept of "diversity" often quantified their unique differences without appreciating life experiences associated with their diversities. Instead, students hoped that the College would become a space where ALL people would be respected and valued regardless of and, more importantly, because of their differences. The term "belonging" was added to establish the Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (EIB) framework at Morehouse College, which builds upon respect, understanding, and appreciation for the "diversity-within" that exists in Black identities, experiences, and spaces.

EIB Mission Statement

No person should be reduced to one identity. At Morehouse College, we strive to honor each person's unique intersectionality while promoting a sense of belonging for all. Morehouse College strives to recognize, accept, promote, and intentionally embrace equity, inclusion, and belonging for all people at the College regardless of individual differences. Equity and inclusion lead to a sense of belonging, and belonging is a critical component of ensuring wellbeing and wellness. Morehouse College aspires to be a leading voice that elevates the contextualized dialogues and actions about belonging in higher education.

(reviewed and approved by the AY21-22 EIB Advisory Board on 9/17/21; reviewed and approved by the Senior Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer on 9/22/21)



22%

out of 107 HBCUs, 22% have offices that address diversity, equity, and/or inclusion

75%

out of HBCUs that have offices addressing diversity, equity, and/or inclusion 75% are housed in HR, Student Affairs, and/or Compliance Office (often combined with Title IX)

17%

out of HBCUs that have offices addressing diversity, equity, and/or inclusion 17% are without a designated person who oversees the operation

3

out of 107 HBCUs that have offices addressing diversity, equity, and/or inclusion only 3 have a systemic/institutional-wide approach

MOREHOUSE WITH AN INNOVATIVE FRAMEWORK

1

out of 107 HBCUs, only 2 have
offices addressing "belonging"

**Morehouse College is the only
HBCU with an institutional
and operational commitment
to BELONGING**



Glossary of Terms

There are various definitions for terminologies such as equity, inclusion, and belonging. It is also important to provide the difference between similar words/terminologies such as "equality" as opposed to equity. For this document and the EIB conceptualization at Morehouse College, we are using the following definitions.

Belonging: The universal feeling of security and support when there is a sense of acceptance and inclusion, which provides an individual a sense of being a natural part or member of their chosen surroundings.

Inclusion: An environment that offers affirmation, celebration, and appreciation of different approaches, styles, perspectives, and experiences. This allows all individuals to bring their whole selves (and all of their identities) and demonstrate their strengths and capabilities.

Intersectionality: The ways that multiple identities, which make a person whole, are recognized. It is also the ways in which forms of oppression (e.g., racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, xenophobia, classism, etc.) are interconnected and cannot be examined separately from one another.

Equity: A systemic approach of providing resources according to the need to help diverse populations achieve their sense of fairness, belonging, wellbeing, and other functioning. Equity is an ongoing process of assessing needs, correcting systemic inequities, and creating conditions for optimal outcomes for members of all identity groups.

(Where **equality** gives everyone access to the same opportunities, equity means that there is proportional representation in those same opportunities. In other words, equity levels the playing field.)

Guiding Principles Founded on Context-Specific Approaches:

Whereas DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) goals at many Predominantly White Institutions/PWIs focus on quantifying representations of diverse and minoritized individuals to measure successes of DEI initiatives, at Morehouse College, we intentionally reject such an approach. Simply focusing on the headcounts of diverse and minoritized individuals only articulates the institution's DEI plan. In such situations, minoritized individuals are often included only when the institution benefits from doing so without having access to systemic and structural resources to improve their experiences.

EIB efforts at Morehouse College are framed in the viewpoints and values reflective of Historically Black Colleges and Universities/HBCUs. A holistic approach to understanding each person's intersectionality of privileges and marginalized identities, housed in a larger dehumanizing societal context, elevates complex dialogues about power and privileges within the College. This framework is built on a collectivistic community that extends empathy and care for one another. It encourages and celebrates individual successes while acknowledging the community and its many sacrifices to build the foundation for these successes. This framework also reflects the concept of the *World House*, by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., where all people are interrelated and interdependent with one another.

A plethora of research shows that equity, inclusion, and belonging are deeply connected to organizational, physical, emotional, and psychological wellbeing and wellness, especially for minoritized individuals (i.e., Hagerty et al., 1996, Walton & Cohen, 2011, Bassett et al., 2013; Begen & Turner-Cobb, 2014; Sanchez et al., 2019; Berman, 2020;). Those outside HBCUs often believe that HBCUs have already achieved DEI goals. They only focus on the ethno-racial composition of students, faculty, and staff, the most salient marker of HBCUs, without appreciating the wealth of diversity within. Indeed, many HBCUs have HBCU-specific EIB challenges. And such challenges need not be framed in a simple check-the-box approach. In addition, EIB at Morehouse College transcends a compliance issue: It is an authentic institutional commitment to the wellbeing of students, faculty, and staff.

At Morehouse College, EIB efforts need to be extended to all people (i.e., gender, sexual orientation, age, (dis)abilities, national origin, citizenship, ethnicity, race, religious practice and difference, SES, language, political beliefs, etc.). Specific to Men of Morehouse, EIB efforts at Morehouse College directly connect to the College's commitment to developing Black men and men of color who become leaders. As leaders, Men of Morehouse must be positioned to work with, manage, and lead individuals in ever-evolving diverse spaces both nationally and internationally. Furthermore, EIB efforts for Men of Morehouse recognize the essence of the brotherhood that, regardless of individual differences, they are to extend compassion and respect for one another to advance individual and collective aspirations.



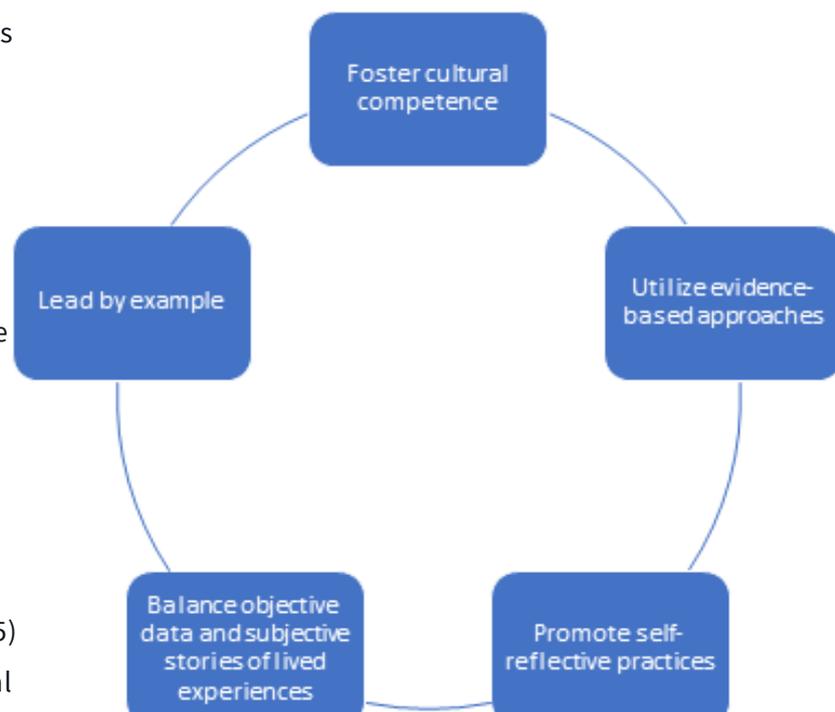
The EIB Itambi at Morehouse

Many traditional African constructions are made from different ingredients blended to create a cylindrical structure - a roundhouse Kenyans call *itambi*.

Imagine an aspirational campus that presents itself as an *itambi* where people feel a sense of belonging because there are systemically equitable and inclusive decisions, actions, and interactions by and for all.

To build an aspirational EIB *itambi*, the Office of Equity, Inclusion and Belonging will focus on five goals to (1) foster cultural competence; (2) utilize evidence-based approaches; (3) promote self-reflective practices; (4) balance objective data and subjective stories of lived experiences; and (5) lead by examples. No one goal is more critical than the others.

Five Goals of the Office of Equity, Inclusion and Belonging



3 Modes for Goals

THERE ARE 3 MODES TO ACCOMPLISH 5 GOALS FOR THE OFFICE OF EQUITY, INCLUSION AND BELONGING

1. Programmatic:

- To provide population/group-specific (i.e., students, faculty, and staff) opportunities to foster understandings of different groups and communities.
- To partner and collaborate with key stakeholders to offer such opportunities (and topics are generated by the needs expressed by students, faculty, and staff).

Possible Programs:

- "Courageous and empathic 21st-century leadership development"
- "Bystander training for allies"
- "Intersectionality of privileged and marginalized identities"

2. Structural:

- To critically evaluate Morehouse College's physical, systemic, relational, and psychological spaces toward supporting and committing to EIB.
- To partner and collaborate with key stakeholders for these evaluative processes.
- To make formal recommendations for revisions of existing policies or practices to better embody EIB.

Possible Projects:

- Policy audits
- Assessment and observations of physical spaces (i.e., ADA accommodations, etc.)
- Climate and/or Sense of Belonging survey

3. Resource (resources to receive and resources to provide):

- To seek funding opportunities that will advance the work of the Morehouse House-specific EIB.
- To serve as a resource for the College and provide EIB-framed consultations to students, faculty, and staff.

Possible Resources:

- Private and/or federal fundings
- Grants