



Moira Gaidzanwa, M.B.A.

Managing Consultant, The Improve Group

Moira is a connector who brings empathy, emotional intelligence, and spirituality to her work. She has 25 years of research, financial analysis, and evaluation experience and a rich background in banking, government, and nonprofits. Outside work, Moira enjoys helping women's savings clubs and advancing the Pan African Women's Philanthropy, of which she was a founding member.

Expertise

Evaluation

Moira has led projects evaluating public policy efforts across topic areas, including housing and community development. Her skills include facilitation, interviewing, quantitative and qualitative data analysis, program design, social impact investment portfolio management, and development of staff cultural competency. Moira is experienced in working alongside clients and community members to carry out community needs assessments, such as for local Community Action Partnership agencies. She brings an equity lens to each evaluation and is particularly adept at responding to the needs of marginalized communities.

Consulting

Moira enjoys collaborating with clients and building authentic relationships to ensure the projects she leads uncover meaningful insights. She approaches her work with cultural competency and is particularly concerned about diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Strategic planning

Moira believes in the power of strategic planning to think abundantly and draw on organizational values amid uncertainty. She has supported a variety of organizations—from a housing nonprofit to Habitat for Humanity International to a state library system—with strategic planning. Moira also leads an internal community of learning around strategic planning. She works with teams to tailor strategic planning processes to be responsive to clients' specific needs, field, and context.

Impact investing

Moira brings to our team expertise in personal, community, and social impact through mission investing. She is particularly adept at answering questions about the efficacy of mission investments in delivering financial and community benefits.

Global financial market access and savings clubs for women

Moira has a rich background in global financial market access and microlending for low-income women. This includes working in her spare time to help and found women's savings clubs.

Professional Experience

The Improve Group | St. Paul, MN | Managing Consultant | 2018-present | Lead evaluation projects and phases to make the most of information, navigate complexity, and ensure clients' investments of time and money lead to meaningful, sustained impact. Project experience includes:

Leading a team of staff and youth liaisons to conduct multiple evaluations of the Minnesota Department of Health's Safe Harbor program. Youth liaisons, who have experience with the Safe Harbor system, helped make the evaluation tools and findings more practical and meaningful.

Leading the collaborative creation of an engagement framework and process around energy policy, program design, program implementation, and communication for the Minnesota Department of Commerce . The focus was on helping the State of Minnesota develop a more equitable and inclusive clean energy policy and a framework for collaborating with BIPOC-led organizations working in areas disproportionately impacted by pollution.

Leading strategic planning for the Minnesota Department of Education's State Library Services, including by conducting interviews with key staff and stakeholders from Indigenous and marginalized communities in Minnesota to understand successes and areas for improvement.

Leading a project for Habitat for Humanity International to advance Black homeownership in the U.S. This initiative included an environmental scan, goal and strategy refinement, logic models for each department and the organization, fund development materials, measurement, and implementation plans.

Leading a community health assessment for Carver County Public Health & Human Services to explore the assets, lived experiences, and forces of change in the community to improve the functioning of those systems.

Leading a needs assessment of the Minnesota Department of Transportation's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program to uncover the barriers that face DBE program participants in obtaining work on federal-aid highway heavy construction projects, examine successes, and identify program improvements.

Leading an evaluation of the Sherwood Foundation's 75 North Initiative, a place-based initiative that aims to improve community health by breaking the cycle of poverty in an Omaha neighborhood through mixed-income housing, a community hub, an early childhood center, a greenhouse, school-based interventions, and programming and services for all ages.

Collaborating with the Northwest Area Foundation on an evaluation of its Social Enterprise Initiative, which awarded grants to organizations in northwest states and Native nations to provide job opportunities to those facing the greatest socioeconomic and structural barriers to entering or re-entering the job market.

Leading an evaluation of the Small Business Equitable Energy Decarbonization Initiative, an effort to increase the accessibility of energy efficiency and clean energy to small businesses in disadvantaged communities of Minneapolis.

Minnesota Department of Revenue | St. Paul, MN | Temporary Assistant Revenue Director | 2017 | Coordinated work to make sure all activities resulted in collection of debts in a fair, efficient, reliable, and cost-effective manner.

Family Housing Fund | St. Paul, MN | Portfolio Data Director | 2016-2017 | Managed active multi-family and single-family loan data management through comprehensive understanding of all loans made by Family Housing Fund and measured outcomes and performance of Family Housing Fund's social lending activities against organization's goals and objectives.

Family Housing Fund | St. Paul, MN | Director of Evaluation and Special Projects | 2003-2016 | Developed an evaluation system. Managed a portfolio of social impact investments of loans and program related investments, and collaborated with directors, investors, and major stakeholders to achieve desired program results.

Hearth Connection | St. Paul, MN | Director of Programs | 2002-2003 | Led development of operational and reporting systems for implementation of Supportive Housing and Managed Care Pilot project, a key supportive housing innovation that incorporates housing and health. Results suggested a desirable move away from costly and disruptive institutional services and toward necessary, routine health care that improvements in quality of life.

The Urban Coalition | St. Paul, MN | Vice President & Research Director | 2000-2001 | Led production of a series of groundbreaking reports on disparities in health, education, and the impact of welfare reform on communities of

color in the Twin Cities. This resulted in increased access to healthcare in minority communities; increased awareness of the social determinants of health, and changes in school suspension policies; dietary changes and expansion by food shelves; and increased strategic partnerships among BIPOC led organizations.

Education

University of St. Thomas | Master of Business Administration in Finance

University of St. Thomas | Mini-MBA in Nonprofit Management and Health Care Management

College of St. Catherine | Bachelor of Arts in Economics and Business Administration

Training

Technology of Participation® Facilitation Methods | Institute of Cultural Affairs in the U.S.A.

Community Involvement

Pan African Women in Philanthropy | Founding Member | 2008 - present

Southern African Mutual Assistance & Development Association | Co-Founder | 2012 - present

St. Paul/Ramsey County and Hennepin County homeless advisory boards | Board Member | 2007-2015

Minnesota Public Radio Community Advisory Committee | Board Member | 2013

Women's Savings Clubs for Financial Fitness | Founder | 2016

Professional Affiliations

American Evaluation Association, Minnesota Evaluation Association