Organization Name: [Geeking Out Kids of Color](#)
Date of Interview: April 18, 2024
Organization Interviewees: Maria Muñoz Contreras, Lidia Sanchez
Impact 100 GRT Interviewers: Manuela Noske, Stephanie Reents
Application Link: [Click here](#)

Organization Mission: The mission of Geeking Out Kids of Color is the liberation of Black, Indigenous, and youth of color (BIPOC) by creating decolonized tech education and providing mentorship to nurture leaders of change.

What are the compelling reasons for Impact 100 to partner with this organization?

An aspect of the organization and its work that has not quite been captured is the way that the organization joins technology education with a social justice curriculum to bring students' diverse backgrounds into the classroom and show BIPOC students that they have a role to play in the development of new technology and software. This work begins in elementary school through GOKiC's in-person after school and summer programs. A recent course called "Immigration, Equity, and Minecraft," for instance, invited students to build worlds in Minecraft, to collaborate with their peers on the creation of bigger worlds, and to use this world building to talk about their own cultural backgrounds and immigration stories. Another course on media game development challenged young women of color to think beyond their assumption that the only people making video games are white men. GOKiC weaves social justice and equity issues into all of the tech education that it offers. Collective Youth, a student led initiative, provides a network for BIPOC students at the high school and college level who are interested in pursuing career within the tech industry, but who need role models, networking opportunities, paid internships, and support through the application process, all of which are less available to BIPOC students who may be first-generation college students or from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Right now, GOKiC's education programs end after middle school. An unrestricted grant from Impact 100 Seattle would enable the organization to hire a development director and expand its educational programs, adding new sites at elementary and middle schools and continuing its program through high school.

Seattle is a technology center with significant opportunities and resources. However, these opportunities are not equally open to everyone, and this is one of the systemic issues that GOKiC addresses by providing BIPOC youth with tech education; challenging mainstream narratives about who should be creating the technology for the future; and ensuring that BIPOC students can bring their whole selves into the classroom and eventually their jobs. As tech companies become more diverse, this diversity will lead to new and innovative technology as well as change the sense of possibility for young BIPOC communities.

Do you have any reservations about this organization as a potential grantee partner for Impact 100? None.

What does the organization do?

GOKiC has three core programs, all in service to BIPOC youth:

> **GOKiC Enrichment Program**: Offered in the Highline and Federal Way school districts and in GOKiC's own afterschool program in White Center, the enrichment programs offer age- and developmentally-appropriate curricula focused on tech trends and social justice issues of interest to youth. Mentorship opportunities are also available with BIPOC professionals.

> **Collective Youth**: A youth-led and designed program for high school students at Chief Sealth International High School and college students at University of Washington's School of Computer

Science and Engineering, Collective Youth provides support for students interested in tech careers, ensuring that students have role models that come from their communities and networking opportunities. Student leaders run this program.

Designing Technology to Address Inequities: Developing new technology, like the Allyship App (https://www.allyship.app/), a tool to support effective allyship, serves a dual purpose at GOKiC: it supports the organization's social justice mission and it provides educational opportunities for students and interns to work on the app, just as they would at large tech companies.

Who does the organization serve?

GOKiC currently offers programs in South Seattle, White Center, SeaTac, Burien, Federal Way and is looking to expand to other areas of Seattle and South King County. Almost 100% of participants come from families who face barriers to economic stability and are BIPOC. 97% of participants come from immigrant or refugee backgrounds, with the majority from Mexico, Central America, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia. GOKiC serves students from elementary school through college and early career.

How does the organization reflect, maintain proximity to and stay accountable to the community it serves?

GOKiC's board members all identify as BIPOC, with half identifying as queer. Their Executive Director is a Two-spirited, Native Latinx individual, and their staff is entirely composed of people of color. This diverse leadership ensures that programs are designed to resonate with the experiences and backgrounds of their students, who are 100% youth of color. All staff take anti-racist training during onboarding.

What inequity is the organization addressing and what is the root cause of that inequity? How is the organization addressing this?

GOKiC is committed to dismantling racism and sexism, using technology education for BIPOC youth as a means of doing this. GOKiC counters mainstream narratives about who belongs in the field of technology and works to ensure that their pedagogical approach to tech education reflects the lives of the students they serve instead of lives of students from the dominant culture. BIPOC students come away with a new vision who belongs in STEM fields.

How is the organization collaborating with other community-based organizations?

GOKiC partners with BIPOC professionals who work in the tech industry in the Seattle area to bring their technology expertise and lived experiences into the classroom and transform the idea of what being a professional can look like for young people. For example, Blacks@Microsoft, Hispanic/Latino Organization of Leaders in Action at Microsoft, Latinos in Tech Seattle, Niantic Latinx group, and BIPOC Amazon employees are some of the groups with whom they have built partnerships. Through their community of BIPOC tech professionals, they help connect GOKiC youth to internships at local tech companies.

What is the vision for the organization in 5 years?

Since 2022, GOKiC has hired an Operations Manager to support the organization as a whole and a Program Director to strengthen relationships between community partners, students, and educators, and oversee its educational programming. Over the next five years, the organization would like to grow its program, hiring new staff, offering more professional development opportunities for all staff, and expand to new sites.

What is the organization's area of greatest need?

Unrestricted funds would enable GOKiC to hire a development or program director, which in turn would put the organization in the position to raise more funds and expand and improve the education programs they offer. Their current funding, which comes from contracts to deliver educational programs, is quite restricted.

Highlight a story of impact.

GOKiC is uniquely suited to serve BIPOC students from elementary school through high school and college and help them successfully pursue positions in the tech field. An example of such a person is Mekedes, a young woman from an Ethiopian family in South Seattle who recently started her career at Microsoft. Mekedes' early interest in technology, software development, and computer science can be traced back to her participation in GOKiC's after-school tech education and literacy programs. After she finished these programs, she returned to GOKiC as a software engineering intern, working on the organization's Allyship app and as an assistant educator in the elementary and middle school programs. At the University of Washington, where Mekedes pursued a degree in computer science, she founded Collective Youth (discussed above).