Alliance Unveils 2020 McAdam Book Award Winners

*Measuring Social Change* and *Subtle Acts of Exclusion* selected for focus on capacity building and inclusion

Every year for decades now, a committee of capacity building experts from across North America spends their summer reviewing dozens of books published in the nonprofit sector. Their aim is to zero in on those books presenting the very best thinking in management, governance, and capacity building, and those exposing practitioners to new knowledge and approaches in the field.

It’s all a part of a decades-long tradition and celebration at the Alliance for Nonprofit Management - the selection of the book that will win the coveted Terry McAdam Book Award.

“As many of us can reflect upon, this year’s McAdam Book Committee experienced some unforeseen events during our review process,” says Anne Jin Soo Preston, this year’s committee chair. “COVID lockdowns occurred across the country early in our approach. And one committee meeting occurred just days after the murder of George Floyd. As chair and one of a few BIPOC folks (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) on the committee living a mile away from where this happened in Minneapolis, it really changed how the committee needed to operate this year.”

The Alliance’s Terry McAdam Book Award Committee is pleased to announce that this year marks the first year that the committee is bestowing awards upon two books: *Measuring Social Change: Performance and Accountability in a Complex World* by Alnoor Ebrahim and *Subtle Acts of Exclusion: How to Understand, Identify, and Stop Microaggressions* by Tiffany Jana and Michael Baran.

The authors of both books will join the Alliance virtual conference, Adapting to New Realities: Rebuilding for Social Change on Tuesday, October 6 at noon to accept their awards.

Preston noted that in this year’s process, when the committee’s reading groups came together to select a book that would move forward into the final round, the discussions included many topics. “Some conversations focused on acknowledging how many self-published books were in the pool compared to even a few years ago,” she noted. “Our current reality, paired with the heightened awareness of inequities from the pandemic and violence on Black and Brown bodies, was another.”

The 13 committee members discussed past years’ dilemmas of trying to resolve the need for books that met that year’s criteria and helping push all capacity builders to think more intentionally about the systemic changes (and solutions) that they need right now. “We need to champion and challenge dominant white structures and think about how we can be part of the solution to ensure that our sector continues to move towards making things more equitable, especially for people historically and currently marginalized by those systems,” said Preston.
Measuring impact can be somewhat elusive - no program exists in a vacuum, ultimately many external forces can influence or contribute to its outcomes. *Measuring Social Change* uses well-researched case studies, strategies, and corresponding performance systems for agencies to consider in measuring impact and offers them a guiding hand toward more comprehensive and on-point measurement systems. Jana and Baran’s book helps people recognize how certain interactions or comments may in fact be “subtle acts of exclusion” and how to work towards mitigating these acts with positive intent. *Subtle Acts of Exclusion: How to Understand, Identify, and Stop Microaggressions* pushes you out of your comfort zone to face some hard realities. It’s extremely relevant in today’s times.

Over the past decade, I’ve had the good fortune of engaging with hundreds of nonprofit leaders on their challenges of performance and accountability. Many of their questions have centered on a single dilemma: how can we use measurement strategically — not only for tracking performance but, more importantly, for improving it? This book seeks to answer that question. Receiving this award from the Alliance is especially important to me, as this book was written to influence and honor the work of nonprofit leaders. I hope it will help nonprofits and their funders to design strategically useful measurement systems. I am in awe of the practitioners profiled in this book, who shared their wisdom and their struggles so that we might all learn from them.


“*Measuring Social Change* was well-written and well-researched and provided a fresh and comprehensive perspective for measuring impact,” observed Emmanuelle Jarmon of Jarmon Consulting and a McAdam Committee member. “*Subtle Acts of Exclusion* is both thought-provoking and relevant and can bring value to any organization. One is more about capacity building and the other inclusion.”

I am honored to be recognized, alongside friend and co-author Michael Baran, as a 2020 Terry McAdam Book Award winner. Conversations about belonging and inclusion and their counterparts - racism and exclusion - have been surfacing in the nonprofit consciousness in more complex and holistic ways in the past decade, and especially in the wake of George Floyd’s murder. I believe that most people, and especially those in the nonprofit sector, want to drive social change, uplift humanity, and be inclusive. However, after over 20 years in this field, I know that many well-intentioned people and institutions can feel overwhelmed by the task at hand or lack the clear tools and guidance to align their intentions with their actions. We wrote this book to provide a compassionate and practical guide to those in the nonprofit sector to put their values of inclusion into action. We hope that the recognition from the Book Award will help more professionals access these tools and apply them in their work, so that we may see a more inclusive nonprofit sector in our lifetime.

- Tiffany Jana, *Subtle Acts of Exclusion: How to Understand, Identify, and Stop Microaggressions*

The authors are offering 20% discounts for books ordered from their websites:

I am humbled and honored to receive the Terry McAdam Book Award with my friend and coauthor Tiffany Jana. We were inspired to write the book because we saw a serious problem that seemed stuck, and we felt confident that we could do something to unstick it. Subtle acts of exclusion are happening so regularly to people with marginalized identities that they are often causing mental and physical health problems. Yet the ones that are truly subtle are often ignored because they aren’t explicit or obvious. We aimed to bring a deeper understanding, a language for speaking up, and some practical guidelines for creating cultures that are more open, inclusive, and accountable. Addressing these issues is critical for nonprofits as workplaces—to create more inclusion so that they can more effectively address the important problems they are working to solve. And thinking deeply about these issues should help those in the nonprofit sector more inclusively engage with the people and communities they serve. We even hope that the insights on culture, cognition, communication, and framing are strategically helpful no matter what issue nonprofits are working to address.

- Michael Baran, *Subtle Acts of Exclusion: How to Understand, Identify, and Stop Microaggressions*

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**The Terry McAdam Book Committee Selection 2020 Process & Timeline**