RACIAL EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Sharing stories and resources for supporting diversity work

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What is Environmental Justice?

Equal protection from environmental and health hazards, and meaningful public participation in decisions that affect the environment in which people live, work, play & pray

-OPAL Environmental Justice Oregon

Sandy River Basin Watershed Council

Working together to restore the Sandy River

How do we define equity?

The guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically underserved and underrepresented populations and that fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is needed to assist quality in the provision of effective opportunities to all groups.

-UC Berkeley Initiative for Equity, Inclusion, & Diversity

Equality vs. Equity

Equality is treating everyone the same.

Equity is removing barriers to meaningful participation.

Equality = Sameness

Equity = Fairness

Why does racial equity matter in my organization?

- Personal motivation: moral responsibility
  - It's the right thing to do

- Institutional motivation: diversity = success
  - Diverse teams *managed* for diversity are higher functioning than non-diverse teams or unintentionally diverse teams

- Financial motivation: grant agencies are now seeking diversity in partnerships & practices
  - OWEB grant application, foundations (Meyer Memorial Trust), private funders and individual donors

Why does racial equity matter in my organization?

- Social motivations: demographics are changing
  - Since 2011, over 50% of births in the US are people of color

- Political motivations: people of color vote!
  - Voters of color show concern over environmental issues **often at higher rates than white voters**

Issue	Concerned White Voters	Concerned Voters of Color
Global Warming	39%	57%
Pollution of Lakes & Rivers	46%	60%
Loss of Fish & Wildlife Habitat	35%	51%
Loss of Natural Areas	32%	54%

Metz & Weigel, Key Findings from National Voter Survey on Conservation Among Voters of Color, 2009

Why focus on race?

- Oregon has a history of racially-based exclusionary and discriminatory practices

- History of racism has created intergenerational inequality for many individuals in health, education, housing, employment, income and wealth

- We know that other groups of people are still marginalized
  - Race can be an issue that keeps other marginalized communities from effectively coming together

Now What?

- How do I get started on equity work?
- Where are examples to follow?
- What are resources that support equity work?
- Who can I talk to about this?

Understanding where your organization is today in regards to equity

Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist Multicultural Organization

MONOCULTURAL ==> MULTICULTURAL ==> ANTI-RACIST ==> ANTI-RACIST MULTICULTURAL

Racial and Cultural Differences Seen as Deficits ==> Tolerant of Racial and Cultural Differences ==> Racial and Cultural Differences Seen as Assets

Exclusive An Exclusionary Institution	2. Passive A "Club" Institution	3. Symbolic Change A Compliance Organization	4. Identity Change An Affirming Institution	5. Structural Change A Transforming Institution	6. Fully Inclusive Anti-Racist Multicultural Organization in a Transformed Society
• Intentionally and publicly excludes or segregates African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans • Intentionally and publicly enforces the racist status quo throughout institution • Institutionalization of racism includes formal policies and practices, teachings, and decision making on all levels • Usually has similar intentional policies and practices toward other socially oppressed groups such as women, gays and lesbians, Third World citizens, etc. • Openly maintains the dominant group's power and privilege	• Tolerant of a limited number of "token" People of Color and members from other social identify groups allowed in with "proper" perspective and credentials. • May still secretly limit or exclude People of Color in contradiction to public policies • Continues to intentionally maintain white power and privilege through its formal policies and practices, teachings, and decision making on all levels of institutional life • Often declares, "We don't have a problem." • Monocultural norms, policies and procedures of dominant culture viewed as the "righ" way" business as usual" • Engages issues of diversity and social justice only on club member's terms and within their comfort zone.	• Makes official policy pronouncements regarding multicultural diversity • Sees itself as "non-racist" institution with open doors to People of Color • Carries out intentional inclusiveness efforts, recruiting "someone of color" on committees or office staff • Expanding view of diversity includes other socially oppressed groups *But...* • "Not those who make waves" • Little or no contextual change in culture, policies, and decision making • Is still relatively unaware of continuing patterns of privilege, paternalism and control • Token placements in staff positions: must assimilate into organizational culture	• Growing understanding of racism as barrier to effective diversity • Develops analysis of systemic racism • Sponsors programs of anti-racism training • New consciousness of institutionalized white power and privilege • Develops intentional identity as an "anti-racist" institution • Begins to develop accountability to racially oppressed communities • Increasing commitment to dismantle racism and eliminate inherent white advantage • Actively recruits and promotes members of groups have been historically denied access and opportunity *But...* • Institutional structures and culture that maintain white power and privilege still intact and relatively untouched	• Commits to process of intentional institutional restructuring, based upon anti-racist analysis and identity • Audits and restructures all aspects of institutional life to ensure full participation of People of Color, including their world-view, culture and lifestyles • Implements structures, policies and practices with inclusive decision making and other forms of power sharing on all levels of the institutions life and work • Commits to struggle to dismantle racism in the wider community, and builds clear lines of accountability to racially oppressed communities • Anti-racist multicultural diversity becomes an institutionalized asset • Redefines and rebuilds all relationships and activities in society, based on anti-racist commitments	• Future vision of an institution and wider community that has overcome systemic racism and all other forms of oppression. • Institution's life reflects full participation and shared power with diverse racial, cultural and economic groups in determining its mission, structure, constituency, policies and practices • Members across all identity groups are full participants in decisions that shape the institution, and inclusion of diverse cultures, lifestyles, and interest • A sense of restored community and mutual caring • Allies with others in combating all forms of social oppression • Actively works in larger communities (regional, national, global) to eliminate all forms of oppression and to create multicultural organizations.

Where does your organization fall on the continuum and why?

BUILDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Danielle Miles

Johnson Creek Watershed Council
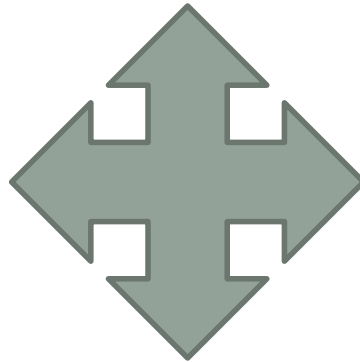
One Story: Intercultural Partnerships

- Oops moments

- Venturing out of comfort zone: not knowing

- Decolonizing within

- Organizational awareness shift

Lessons learned

Where to start?

More Inclusive Organizational Culture

Diversifying Outreach & Recruitment

Reputation in the Community

Individual Members Awareness

Adapted from "A Multi faceted Look at Diversity: Why Outreach is Not Enough" by Berthoud & Greene

Sticking with your Mission, Looking for Overlap

"It's not in our Mission"

- You may not find an organization that has a perfectly matching mission, but partnerships can foster projects that benefit more than a single organization's mission
  - Example: rain garden project to help reduce flooding at Ethiopian church

- You are not providing a service, you are working to make your organization's programs <u>accessible</u> to all members of your community.

Who is making the decisions?
Getting beyond "tokenism"

- How much is power being shared between partners? Do both/all parties have an equally heard voice?
  - Real collaboration vs. single-serve event attendance

- Recognize that communities of color, low income communities, and often rural communities are more vulnerable to exploitation. It takes time to build trust.

Rethinking Outreach Strategies

- What are the primary avenues being used to connect with the community? If you keep using the same avenues, you will keep seeing the same results.

- "Word of Mouth" is a powerful tool- but requires relationship building and a positive reputation in the community you wish to engage.
  - Example: working with Portland Native community

Going Out into the Community

- What community need is being met through the partnership, and **who identified this need**?
  - The concept should be coming from within the community you wish to engage or there is real potential for harm.

- Who is benefitting most from the partnership?

- Does your organization have something useful to offer?

Inviting the Community In

Make sure everyone can make it to the table.

Some considerations…

- Welcome families and/or offer a space for children, and free childcare

- Transportation: offer to give rides, bus tickets, etc.

- Languages: Hire translators and/or provide event that is carried out in another language

COLUMBIA SLOUGH WATERSHED COUNCIL

Our experience drafting a

Racial Equity Action Plan

Where our work began

- Center for Diversity and Environment
  - Exploring Power and Privilege and Tools for Change

- Equity Strategies Cohort Program
  - Coalition for Communities of Color
  - Portland State University faculty
  - Intertwine

Columbia Slough Watershed Council

We're here

Complete organization assessment

Develop action plan

Implement Equity Action Plan

More equitable outcomes among communities of color

Communication and support

Graphic from Coalition of Communities of Color Organization Self-Assessment Tool, January 2014.
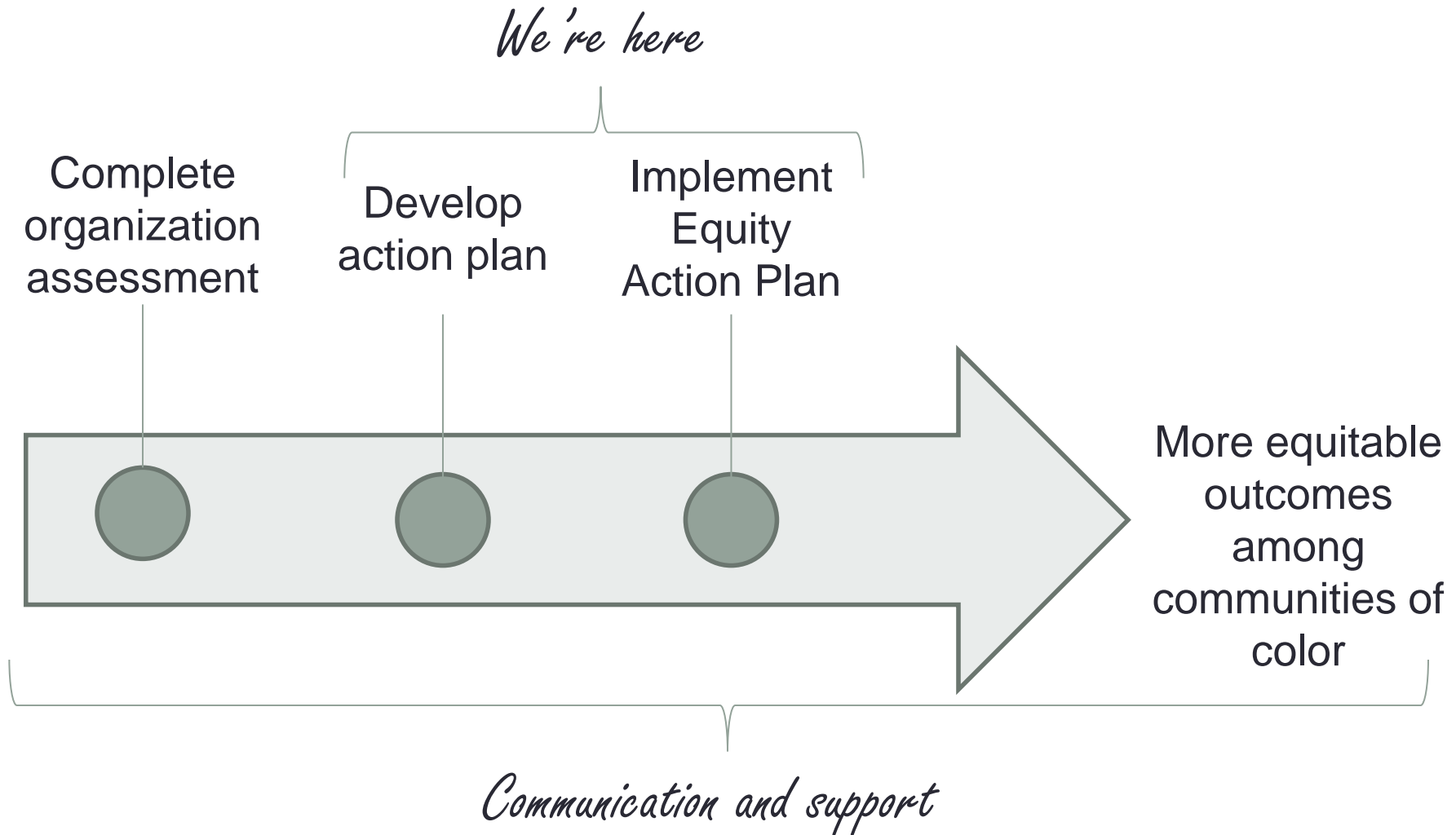
Organization self-assessment

- Organization Commitment, Leadership & Governance
- Racial Equity Policies & Implementation Practices
- Organization Climate, Culture & Communications
- Service Based Equity
- Service-User Voice & Influence
- Workforce Composition & Quality
- Community Collaboration
- Resource Allocation & Contracting Practices
- Data, Metrics & Continuous Quality Improvement

Common difficulties

- "Equity work isn't…"
  - In my job description
  - In our mission
    - Is our work sustainable and lasting if we don't have everyone on board?

- "I'm afraid of saying something offensive…"
  - This is common. It happens.
  - Authenticity and humility.

Do it anyway. Start where you are. ❤️

Community Collaboration

- **Step 1:** organizational readiness assessment
- **Step 2 (y/n):** Does your organization allocate resources for engagement and outreach in communities of color?
- **Step 3 (y/n):** Do you have a method in place to assess the overall satisfaction of communities of color with your organization?
- **Step 4 (short answer):** How do you ensure that your community engagement practices with communities of color are culturally appropriate? Share specific practices.
- **Step 5 (narrative):** How do you ensure that your organization is responsive to current and emerging issues in communities of color?

Possible action areas

💡 Equity committee, board support

💡 Staff member trainings

💡 Recruitment and hiring practices

Equity Action Plan

Equity Action plan

- Vision Statement
- Justification
- Goals
  - Multiple categories
  - Actions beneath each
- Timeline

Implementation

- Need:
  - Feedback
  - Practice, experimentation
  - Committee leadership
  - On-going support

- This work needs to be a thread that runs through the entire fabric of our organization.

Task	Fiscal Year '15-'16			
	Summer	Fall	Winter	Spring
Category 1: Commitment, Leadership, Governance				
Create Equity Steering Committee (ESC)		███ (dark red)	███ (dark red)	
Develop work plan for ESC			███ (red)	███ (red)
Elect ESC Chair		███ (orange)		
Develop plan for community member recruitment			███ (yellow)	███ (yellow)
Publish Final Equity Statement			███ (light green)	
Collect data of existing Board members		███ (green)		
Incorporate Equity Action Plan into Council's long-term strategic plan			███ (light blue)	███ (light blue)
Include Equity and Inclusion as standing agenda item		███ (blue)	███ (blue)	███ (blue)
Reconfigure Board meeting structure			███ (navy)	███ (navy)
Category 2: Organizational Culture				
Develop Board/staff mentorship program				███ (purple)
Establish common language tool				███ (dark red)
Include equity information into employee handbook		███ (red)		
Post equity statements around CSWC office			███ (orange)	
Post equitable images around CSWC office		███ (yellow)	███ (yellow)	
Make improvements to office signage			███ (light green)	███ (light green)
Category 3: Policies and Professional Development				
Schedule annual staff reflection/ revision retreat			███ (green)	
Consider equity funding in budget review				███ (light blue)
Develop procedure for race related complaints			███ (blue)	
Develop and include nondiscrimination policy in contracts				███ (navy)
Include equity statement in CSWC PowerPoint		███ (purple)		

Category 4: Program Design					
Develop tool for assessing community needs				dark red	dark red
Review organizational materials for equity			red	red	red
Set 3 clear goals for each program area					
Assign funding to support program goals					yellow
Category 5: Workforce & Volunteers					
Include equity work in new position descriptions			light blue	light blue	light blue
Edit work plans to reflect diversity work				medium blue	medium blue
Implement Annual Staff Cultural Competency training			navy	navy	navy
Develop new employee equity training					purple
Add optional racial equity self-identification to staff/volunteer intake forms		dark red			
Develop a mechanism for considering diversity and life experience in hiring		red			
Prioritize competency for languages in position descriptions		orange			
Category 6: Community Voice & Collaboration					
Participate in planning meeting/events of 3 potential and current pattern orgs.			light blue	light blue	light blue
Continue to partner with current communities of color orgs.			medium blue	medium blue	medium blue
Establish contact with 3 potential partner orgs.			navy	navy	navy
Update contact information for potential and current partner orgs.			purple	purple	
Consistently collect feedback from program participants			red	red	red