CCLT Small Group Report on DEI Session 3/21

**SUCCESSES:**

Organizational culture change:
- Acknowledgement of the need for DEI
- Listening to start the process
- Writing internal policies that support DEI (i.e. recruitment and hiring for staff and board)
- Open discussions internally
- Applying for grants to pay tribal members to work on projects with the org
- Setting internal goals
- Building internal capacity and skills to engage across differences
- Continued conversations internally to keep the momentum going
- Funding from health-related sources
- IDEA (inclusion, diversity, equity, and access) plan established
- Getting all staff on the same page regarding plan and language

Hiring & recruitment:
- Diversifying applicant pool
- Diversification of board and staff across race and gender lines
- Create opportunities for staff (i.e. internships and fellowships)
- Removing unnecessary qualifications (i.e. having nature experience)
- Hiring from the local community
- Org hires undocumented people and supports their path to citizenship

Partnerships & Community Engagement:
- Engaging in local partnerships & community centers
- Partnership with local tribes
- Partnerships with orgs who are values aligned, especially related to DEI
- Partnering with various religious groups
- Working with communities to specifically address access issues/needs
- Listening to external stakeholders
- Inviting stakeholders to early stages of project design
- Use property as a point of entry to work on different issues
- Working with land trusts that specifically protect indigenous cultural sites
- Meeting with landowners to hear their concerns
- Hosting listening sessions with community members
- Considering family structure in program structure and community engagement
- Holding space for the socio-political divide
Creating culturally appropriate pedagogy for a diversity of communities
- Providing childcare, meals, and translation at meetings
- Marketing materials in multiple languages
- Using language that reflects the community

Policy & Programming:
- Creating inclusive programming that serves all community members (or a broader constituency of community members)
- Creating free programming/events
- Organized field trip programs
- Hosting community hikes
- Getting every child outside for environmental education every year
- Strategic support of organizations that already do DEI work (i.e. loaning money to purchase land or donating land with easements)
- Engaging youth, ensuring they have a voice in decision making
- Programming for community members and youth
- Matched programming to educational requirements
- Programming in multiple languages
- Removing barriers to access

CHALLENGES:

Hiring & recruitment:
- Cost of living
- Lack of board diversity
- Retaining young staff
- Lack of DEI knowledge in board and staff
- Cloning in staff and board

Community engagement:
- Physical access
- Engaging tribes in a meaningful way
- Building trust with various communities (especially since this takes a lot of time)
- Access to preserves require personal vehicle
- Lack of engagement with Latinx community
- Youth don’t have a sense of accessibility
- Gap between expectations of outcomes and actual outcomes with community
- Engaging conservative locals
- Engaging communities long term

Program & Policy:
• Balancing diversity of users needs
• Farmland access for underserved communities

Organizational culture & structure
• Implicit bias in staff and board
• Lack of follow up after trainings
• Lack of shared language on basic concepts (i.e. what is diversity?)
• Challenge quantifying equity efforts
• Environmental community identifies as liberal and can alienate conservatives
• Lack of staff capacity & time
• Lack of space for people of color to voice their needs & concerns in trusts
• Concern about mission drift
• Getting the resources needed
• Identifying funding sources
• Language as it relates:
  o DEI specifically (the language can be hard to interpret)
  o Across different identities (i.e. across classes and races; the language can be very different)
  o Across different languages (i.e. some staff’s first language is English whereas others first language is Spanish)
• Board & staff focus on the environment, not community
• Providing funding for DEI work
• Finding ways to address and work through discomfort
• Adapting to a new business model
• Finding ways to embrace DEI as mission adaptation rather than mission creep
• How to shift from strictly a financial ROI to add in an interpersonal ROI component
• Understanding what success even looks like

Marketing & Communications
• Reaching new audiences
• Speaking to all audiences needs
• Identifying new audiences
• How to re-brand
• Avoid tokenizing people in marketing materials

RESOURCES NEEDED:

Community engagement:
• More active networking locally across race, class, and culture
• Toolkit for meetings and public engagement
• Co-create a place in the community you want to serve
• Good models for information sharing across different communities
• Face to face meetings/relationship building
• Messaging that includes all
• Translator assistance

Hiring & recruitment:
• Internship program
• Staff that have experience working with the communities we engage with
• Better board composition
• Bilingual staff
• Younger staff

Organizational culture & structure:
• More connection with community colleagues
• Funding
• Technical assistance funding
• Education/training
• Internal capacity building for DEI work
• Maintaining institutional knowledge
• Very committed staff and board
• Being open to different perspectives
• Openness to change and difficult conversations
• Cross organizational collaboration to build upon each other work (i.e. a hub to find not only other land trusts, but other affiliate organizations)
• Money to pay all staff a living wage
• Funding & funders for DEI work
• A staff person to constantly champion DEI work (and get paid for that labor)
• Fresh set of eyes on our sector
• How to make DEI actionable
• Institutional investment

Policy & programming:
• Municipal support – permitting in place
• Programming specifically for local community members
• Cap and trade dollar allocation to DAC communities
• Reduced Match for CE properties for disadvantaged communities
• Ensure that everyone can get to the land
• Mechanisms to protect affordability
• Trust for Public Land – white papers on DEI
• More education components to our work
• Sensory experience that helps you see the world in a different way

Resources for further learning:

Dispossessing the Wilderness, Mark David Spence
An Indigenous People’s History of the United States, Roxane Dunbar-Ortiz
Braiding Sweetgrass, Robin Wall Kimmerer
The Rise of the American Conservation Movement: Power, Privilege, & Environmental Protection, Dorceta Taylor

Avarna resources page: www.theavarnagroup.com/resources