

CCLT Small Group Report on DEI Session 3/21

SUCSESSES:

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:
 - DEI specifically (the language can be hard to interpret)
 - Across different identities (i.e. across classes and races; the language can be very different)
 - 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