Paths Toward Racial Diversity in Waldorf Schools

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Abstract

This research project asked the question “Given the present lack of racial diversity in Waldorf Schools, what practices can lead to greater diversity in these schools and schools to come?”. Textual research and interviews provided the foundation upon which the rest of the research would work upon: namely, what is the current state of racial diversity in Waldorf Schools? Why is racial diversity important? Why is racial diversity especially important in Waldorf education? Further textual research and interviews focused on the key factors influencing racial diversity in Waldorf Schools, successes and challenges toward this end, and effective strategies toward creating truly racially diverse schools.
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**Introduction**

Waldorf education separates itself from other educational philosophies in many respects. To name a few examples, it is artistic, human-centered, informed by a spiritual understanding of child development, and a child remains with the same teacher grades one though eight. But two especially unique elements to Waldorf education are its emphasis on the personal development of the teacher and its inherent role in broader social change. Since the founding of the first Waldorf School in 1919, Waldorf education has spread throughout the world, nourishing children and communities with an impulse universally sought after. And yet, we find ourselves touching a relatively small and privileged sector of society: the white and the middle and upper class. Meanwhile, the United States continues to grow increasingly racially diverse, and at the same time, ever more segregated.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the present lack of racial diversity in Waldorf Schools in the United States, the factors influencing it, and what possible practices can lead to greater diversity in these schools and schools to come. For the purposes of this paper, my definition of racial diversity is not limited by demographics alone. Racial diversity also implies an inclusion and respect of people from all racial backgrounds and a working knowledge on a person’s experience of privilege and oppression within society.
The scope of this research will cover four main categories as they relate to racial diversity and Waldorf education: individual schools; teacher recruitment, retention, and training; Waldorf education as a movement; anthroposophy.

Before uncovering my new findings, it is important to put this discussion into a larger social context. Previously published research will provide the background necessary to understand racial segregation, diversity, and its role in education.

**The State of Racial Segregation Today**

Over 50 years have passed since the historic ruling of *Brown v. Board of Education* where it was declared that education in the United States must be racially integrated if we are to provide an education that “[helps] him adjust normally to his environment” (Brown v. Board, ¶ 9) and yet we continue to find that the majority of schools, both public and private, are highly racially segregated. As documented by the UCLA Civil Rights Project (Bhargava, Frankenberg, and Le, 2008), racial integration “increased continuously from the mid-1950s to the late 1980s, [and] has now declined to levels not seen in three decades” (pg. 11). The trend largely continues across public and private school lines, but not seamlessly.

Forster (2006) finds that “in the nation’s largest 100 metro areas, private schools are more segregated than public schools, but the difference is extremely small – equal to less than two percentage points” (pg. 3). Another study (Reardon and Yun, 2002) finds that black-white segregations is greater among private schools than among public schools, while Latino-white segregation is lower among private schools than among public schools, white students are more racially isolated in private schools than in public
schools, and that white and Asian students enroll in private schools at twice the rate of black and Latino students. Additionally, a study aimed at measuring the level socialization and integration between racial groups found that “[o]f all students observed in private school lunchrooms, 63.5% were in an integrated setting. That is, 63.5% of private school students were sitting in a group where at least one of the five students immediately around them was of a different racial group. In public schools, 49.7% of all students were in a similarly integrated lunchroom setting… This difference is both substantively and statistically significant. Private school students are more likely to be sitting in racially heterogeneous groups than are public school students” (Greene and Mellow, 1998, pg. 7). And when looking at racial homogeneity, “[s]lightly more than a third (36.5%) of private school students sit in groups where everyone is of the same race. A little more than half (50.3%) of public school students sit entirely surrounded by people of their own racial group” (Greene and Mellow, 1998, pg. 7). One reason for this disparity may be related to size. Private schools tend to have fewer classes per grade, which would mean less separate tracks, which can (unintentionally) segregate children according to race.

**Waldorf Schools and Segregation**

Taking a look at Waldorf School in particular, in *Factors Influencing Diversity in Waldorf Schools*, Michael Soulé (2006) surveyed 72 Waldorf Schools on their racial diversity levels and compared them with the US Department of Education’s statistics on racial diversity in public and independent schools (as well as differentiating between Catholic, other religious, and nonsectarian independent schools).
His findings illuminate two interesting statistics: first, that 89.7% of Waldorf Schools are 70% white or more; second, that 47.4% of Waldorf Schools are comprised of 11-30% students of color—far more than all other schools listed. Nearly all other schools have their highest numbers in the extremes (1-10% or >50%), indicating that most other schools are highly segregated while Waldorf Schools demonstrate a high potential and ability for well-integrated and diverse schools. Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that the survey and the US Department of Education’s statistics do not distinguish between racial groups, and as has already been pointed out, Asian students are overrepresented in private schools while blacks and Latinos are severely
underrepresented.

**Racial Demographics and Their Causes**

No one school is identical and thus the reasons surrounding their identities will never be the same. For every school there is a unique dynamic and organic process that makes the school who it is. Nevertheless, certain trends or tendencies can be traced and commonalities seen between schools with strong racial diversity and those without. The following are possible causes drawn from textual research and interviews.

**Financial Accessibility**

Despite listing financial accessibility first, my research indicates that it is not the primary factor affecting a school’s racial diversity. In a 2002 study *Private School Racial Enrollments and Segregation*, the researches found that “[d]espite the strong association between income and private school attendance rates, the income differences among white, black and Latino families do not explain racial/ethnic differences in private school attendance rates” (Reardon and Yun, 2002, pg. 19) and “[a]t every income level, white students are more likely to be in private schools than are black and Latino students.” (Reardon and Yun, 2002, pg. 19)
Given Soulé’s findings, we can safely assume that these findings would apply to the vast majority of Waldorf Schools. In fact, every single interviewee believed this dynamic to be true.

It is important to remember that every racial/ethnic group has wealthy members within them. Nevertheless, we must also recognize the very real relationship that exists between race and class. My evidence supports the following to be true: we must look at, but not only look at, financial accessibility when strategizing how to make our schools more racially diverse.

Intention and Priority

What Michael Soulé’s work points to, more than any other single factor, as key to a
school’s racial diversity is its intentionality behind racial diversity. For those of us who are Waldorf teachers, we know the power of intention, and Soulé’s work demonstrates this power: “it is clear that when a school puts its intention for diversity into action, the results are positive. The schools that enjoy the greatest diversity are the ones that have paid attention to it in their development.” (2006, pg. 31). And at the same time, in our interview, his study suggests, that if no attention is paid to racial diversity there will be no results.

**Founding Impulse**

Soulé’s findings suggest that a school that was founded with a belief in the virtue of racial diversity in a school, had “a clear advantage in developing as a diverse institution.” (2006, pg. 28) If the school was not founded with this impulse in mind, “[t]hose schools with significant diversity did at some point in their development take active and ongoing steps towards their implicit desire to be diverse.” (2006, pg. 28)

**Location**

Location, as documented in Soulé’s survey, was reported as a significant but not essential factor. Of course, schools in predominantly white locations will have a predominantly white population, so we must always think of racial diversity within its geographic context. Nevertheless, most schools that knew the racial demographics of their geographic area answered that the school had less students of color than the surrounding community. It is also important to consider residential segregation and the relationship between the school and the neighborhood. A school, depending on its
orientation towards racial diversity, can either further segregate an area or help counter that neighborhood’s segregation.

Transportation

Some schools cited in Soulé’s survey cited zoning and real estate costs as factors moving them out of city centers, thus away from public transportation. Soulé references the Garden City School where 36% of the student population was of color and the bus system serves every school district and allows any student free transportation to any school.

Transportation has been a part of desegregation efforts since the implementation of Brown v. Board. Given the stark reality that our neighborhoods are still very segregated today, and becoming increasingly more so, we cannot ignore the importance of transportation. Given that Waldorf Schools can be located in inconvenient geographic areas, transportation is even that much more important to consider. Also, if we aim to attract students from throughout our geographic area, we must think of how to make ourselves more accessible. In a study (The Civil Rights Project, 2009) on magnet schools, “research finds that the provision of free transportation is particularly important for minority parents’ consideration of magnet schools for their children, and magnets without transportation are more likely to be racially isolated.” (pg. 1) Of course, we are challenged by rising transportation costs and the limits of our own schools’ budgets. Nevertheless, as research suggests “[g]iven persistently high levels of housing segregation, transportation is a critical tool to helping…create [racially] integrated schools.” (The Civil Rights Project, 2009, pg. 1)
“White Flight”

Though we would not like to believe that this possible cause be true, statistical study suggests that the dynamic of “white flight” (white people flocking to private schools in avoidance of their child attending heavily black schools) should not be ruled out. A study by Reardon and Yun found that “[w]ithin metropolitan areas, private school enrollment rates are similar in central cities and suburbs for all racial groups except whites. For example, while black, Asian, and Latino private school enrollment rates differ by no more than 1% between the central cities and suburbs, in central cities, almost 20% of white students are enrolled in a private school, compared to 13% of white students in the suburbs (Figure 3).” (pg. 24)
Even after factoring in all possible variables that could affect the data, the researchers still found that “[d]istricts that have small percentages of black students have, on average, much lower white private school enrollment rates than districts that have high black student proportions, a pattern that is consistent with the hypothesis that white parents avoid sending their children to public schools in districts with high percentages of black students.” (pg. 43)

Methods

To fulfill the intention to uncover the obstacles facing racial diversity in Waldorf education as well as to illuminate possible strategies towards creating more racial diversity in our schools, I decided that a more in-depth approach would be necessary.
For this reason, I decided to interview individuals part of schools and institutions who, given their experience or position, may have unique insight into these questions. For this same reason, I also conducted a case study of the Denver Waldorf School and the Lakota School to get some real concrete examples of these ideas and issues at work.

**The Denver Waldorf School Diversity Committee: A Case Study**

In the fall of 2009, a handful of parents and teachers from the Denver Waldorf School community came together to form a diversity committee. The founding of the committee sprang out of a common desire to make the Denver Waldorf School more diverse and inclusive. Individuals were frustrated with their own experiences of racism, a lack of cultural competency, and a lack of racial demographic diversity. Though the Diversity Committee did not wish to focus on race alone, the experiences related here can be easily seen through the lens of race.

**Making Another Commitment**

In years past teachers attempted to form a diversity committee, but it never got off the ground. The reason most commonly cited was the difficulty the already overburdened teacher had in making another commitment. At the Denver Waldorf School, as in most Waldorf Schools, each faculty member is expected to sit on at least one committee. Thus, at the outset of the Diversity Committee’s formation, all faculty members were already part of an existing committee. This posed not only a challenge to their energy, but also to forming a cohesive schedule. A year following its most current founding in 2009, the Diversity Committee found itself having to change its meeting time
in order to generate greater stability and continuity at the expense of knowing one of its members would not be able to attend. Nevertheless, the committee continued to grow and by October of 2009 the committee claimed eight members and has had only one member leave and one new member join since its inception, contributing to the committee’s overall stability and cohesion.

Part of what allowed the group to form and stabilize was the recent addition of several new young staff members into the school community. These younger teachers saw the issue of racial diversity as vital and allied with already established teachers to form the committee.

**Membership**

Together, these eight members represented nearly every aspect of the school: two early childhood teachers, two grades teachers, one administrator, one parent (though other staff were also parents), a special subject and high school teacher, and a therapeutic consultant. Later, the grades teacher would leave and a DWS alumna would join. Additionally, the Diversity Committee would be comprised of members of white, black, and Latina communities. Both of these aspects of diversity proved incredibly helpful as the committee sought to address issues affecting all sectors of the school community.

**Defining the Diversity Committee**

Once the committee had built a substantial membership, it was ready to begin its work. Unfortunately, the committee tended to put the cart before the horse. Fortunately, there was never a shortage of work to be done. Instantly, issues in the community began
presenting themselves to the committee without the committee having had fully
developed their mandate, mission, or vision as a committee. These latter aspects were
often tabled in order to address the time-sensitive issues brought forth by the community.

Without having a foundation laid of what their mandate was as a committee, the
Diversity Committee found itself struggling with how to address the issues coming to it.
In November of 2009, after reviewing mission statements and mandates from diversity
committees in Waldorf Schools as well as non-Waldorf Schools, the DWS Diversity
Committee drafted the following statement as a mandate:

Waldorf education is founded in a worldview that acknowledges the spiritual
nature of all beings. Waldorf fundamentally recognizes and values the many people and
perspectives of the world. It honors the freedom, equality, individuality, and unique
capacities of each child and is dedicated to creating an inclusive community that respects
and affirms each of its members.

The Denver Waldorf School Diversity Committee believes that diversity and
inclusiveness strengthen education and foster the essential element of respect that
prepares students to live and work in a global environment, and contributes to the well
being of all life. It provides a forum for discussion, education, and exploration of issues
of age, ancestry, color, creed, disability, family composition, gender, gender-
identification, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, and
socio-economic status. It is committed to making The Denver Waldorf School a place
where families, faculty, and staff of different backgrounds feel welcomed and valued.

The DWS Diversity Committee decided that it would make most sense for the
committee to be mandated by the College, and later down the line, the Board. The reason
for this decision largely rested in the feeling that the issue of diversity should be more
strongly held by the faculty before presenting it to the Board and the parent body. The
College of Teachers accepted the Diversity Committee’s mandate and became an
officially mandated committee.
Common Trends in Agenda Items

As soon as the Diversity Committee formed itself, even before its mandate had been defined, issues from the school community began finding themselves on the agenda of the Diversity Committee. They generally fell into the following categories:

- **Social Inclusion**

  Whether it be faculty, parents, or students, the Diversity Committee found itself holding the role of advocate and ally to those who needed support when facing adversity in relation to their identity (real or perceived). The committee found itself asking questions the following kinds of questions: *what is the relationship between the school culture and a student’s home culture; how do we empower students facing adversity; how do we distinguish (or can we distinguish) whether a student’s struggles stem from oppression or from their own individuality?* These kinds of discussions demonstrated the need for cultural context to be part of the process leading us to a student’s individuality.

- **Pedagogy and Curriculum**

  The Diversity Committee found itself in the role of educating the teachers over what content is appropriate and what content is potentially offensive. Through this process, the committee resolved to become a pedagogical resource for teachers in providing curriculum and content that fully takes advantage of a truly diverse curriculum in a manner that makes all students feel included. This work also included looking at festivals, such as Halloween and the school’s Winter Holiday Faire. Though initially having these conversations with colleagues can
be difficult, the committee found that it encouraged an atmosphere of respect and an openness to learn.

- **School Literature**

  During a year when the entire school was reviewing the enrollment process, the Diversity Committee reviewed the school’s applications and edited them to make them more inclusive of all people’s backgrounds (race, home language, gender, sexual orientation, family make-up, etc.).

**Working with the School’s Economic Life**

A large percentage of the Denver Waldorf School’s racial diversity is in part due to scholarships and grants the school was able to attain for students of color. The Diversity Committee also played a role in helping obtain a grant that would provide significant tuition assistance for two families of color. The Diversity Committee sees areas where this kind of involvement could grow.

**Building School Support**

The most consistent effort of the Diversity Committee was to make the issues of diversity and inclusiveness a school-wide issue, actively pursued and held by every member of the community. This is very long term work and the Diversity Committee continually brainstormed over how to best go about this process. The Diversity Committee found that even though they were a College-mandated committee, their work was not integrated within the community. To achieve this would take much more
concentrated work. The committee decided the most effective way to build community support would be to organize a training for the school community.

Community Trainings on Oppression and Privilege

After looking over resumes and interviewing a couple of different candidates, the Diversity Committee hired a pair of consultants to provide the school three workshops titled *Dismantling Privilege and Oppression*. One training would be for faculty and staff, a second for the parent community, and one for the high school students. The money to pay the consultants would come from Federal Title Grants the school receives each year allocated by the state education department and the local school district for both public and private school professional development.

- **Faculty and Staff Training**

  On October 4th around 20 faculty and staff came in on a scheduled in-service day for the six hour workshop. This workshop presented an overview of oppression within the framework of the “4 I’s” (Ideology, Interpersonal, Institutional, and Internalized), privilege, and how these factors affect all of us and our school community.

  Some faculty members were very hesitant to engage in conversations involving oppression and privilege, many others were open to the dialogue. Unfortunately, not all faculty and staff attended, emphasizing the need for more frequent discussions around these topics.

- **Parent Community Training**
Unfortunately, because the workshop was scheduled on the Saturday of a four-day weekend, attendance for the workshop was very small. Attendance may also have been poor because the faculty and staff of the school had not yet taken this work to heart themselves and thus could not effectively model their enthusiasm to the parent body.

- **High School Training**

Feedback from the high school students indicated that scheduling was also not properly considered. The high school students missed their artistic and movement classes, and shortened their lunch. Some students appreciated these conversations being brought up, others viewed the materials as redundant of what they already knew. The Diversity Committee concluded that high school students should have been part of the planning process. This also awakened the Diversity Committee to the need to find high school students to be part of the committee.

**Sustaining and Continuing to Build Community Support**

The Diversity Committee and the two consultants wanted to ensure that this work would continue to grow and flourish in the community. Despite resolutions made by faculty and staff to conclude the workshop, very little concrete action emerged. This is a reality of introducing any new concept into a community. In February of 2011 a representative of the Diversity Committee met with the two co-chairs of the College of Teachers to discuss next steps in making the work of diversity and inclusiveness permeate the school community. The co-chairs of the College asked for the Diversity
Committee to draft a statement of recommendations to be presented to the College. The Diversity Committee began drafting this statement and as of April 2011 the meeting with the College of the Teachers was pending.

**Continuing to Strengthen the Diversity Committee**

While looking to make diversity a school-wide issue, the Diversity Committee recognized its own need to continue to develop as a working committee. In order to support this renewal, the Diversity Committee decided to meet with the two consultants who facilitated the training on a quarterly basis. The committee also decided on co-chairs and scribes in an effort to strengthen its stability and share the organizing workload. The committee recognized the need to review its mandate and mission at the beginning of each meeting in order to keep them fresh and living. Lastly, looking towards the new 2011-2012 school year, the Diversity Committee began brainstorming more new members with an emphasis on including more parents and high school students in the work.

**Summary**

The Diversity Committee found that consistent education and conversation around issues of racial diversity was key in their endeavor to make racial diversity a school-wide issue. Toward this end, the Diversity Committee plans on presenting and facilitating discussion at faculty meetings aimed specifically at diversity within the school’s curriculum. These presentations will be a collaboration between the Diversity Committee and the two facilitators brought in for the school’s in-service. Furthermore,
every month the faculty meeting agenda will set aside time for teachers to share how they have implemented more diversity in their teaching and the results therein.

**Interview Findings: Individual Schools and Racial Diversity**

To examine the experiences different schools have had when considering racial diversity, I asked a series of questions aimed at uncovering struggles as well as successes. The following commonalities emerged out of these conversations.

**Racial Diversity as a Priority and Value**

All of those interviewed reflected back that racial diversity was a strongly held community value. The more this value was emphasized the more racial diversity was a reality. Schools had the most progress when all aspects of the school considered racial diversity a priority. This can wax and wane depending on personnel and leadership, but if the issue of racial diversity is well-integrated then its value within the community remains stable. Susan Braun, administrator of the Garden City Waldorf School—one of the most racially diverse Waldorf Schools in the United States—emphasized how “diversity is cherished by the entire community.” (Braun, 2011)

**Curriculum as a Strength to be Supported**

All those interviewed related the good fortune Waldorf education has of being naturally multicultural in scope. It is not artificially manufactured, but instead actively living within the curriculum because of how it relates to the child’s development. As the curriculum recapitulates human history, it encompasses cultures from all over the world:
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fairy tales in grade one are found all over the world; Native American legends in grade two; old testament stories in grade three; tribal life and African geography in grade seven. This being said, interviewees also reflected back the need to continually renew and refine our curriculum so that it is cutting-edge and directly applicable to the students in front of us. Susan Braun emphasized the need for curriculum to be tailored to place, people, and time (Braun, 2011). Linda Williams (board member and former class teacher at the Detroit Waldorf School and education professor at Eastern Michigan University) emphasized the importance of integrating the 12 senses into our storytelling so that skin color and other physical attributes are recognized (Williams, 2011). Our curriculum should be in response to the children in the class and this means looking at race and culture as well. Lastly, the difficulty of a tradition so deep-seated in Europe can make the curriculum Eurocentric. It takes considerable work to find new resources to use in the classroom and it is much easier to default to the more popularly published and recommended. In 1990 “over 5,000 children’s books were published…; only fifty-one of those were written and illustrated by African Americans” (Harris, 1992, p. 68).

Second Language Program as an Asset

Also inherent in Waldorf education is the teaching of a second language. This program was designed with the specific intent of helping children appreciate the humanity of every human being and to better understand “the Other.” Interviewees expressed the appreciation of the richness of this program and the cultural competency it awakens in the child. In the United States, Spanish is one of the most common foreign languages taught in Waldorf Schools, and though it is a European language, Spanish is
most commonly found being spoken in Latino communities. Additionally, foreign language programs have significantly decreased in number in the last decade, except for Chinese (Dillon, 2010). It would not be unfair to presume that this trend may carry over into the Waldorf School movement. Indeed, just to name a couple, Urban Prairie Waldorf School and the Brooklyn Waldorf School offer Mandarin Chinese as an elementary language program.

Cultural Values and Academics

More than one interviewee expressed the difficulty many people of color (especially from the African American and the Asian American communities) have with what they perceive as a lack of academic rigor. When people of color are already at such a strong societal disadvantage, it is difficult for many to take a risk on an education that could put them at a further disadvantage. Even wealthy people of color, as Linda Williams related, have a hard time accepting Waldorf education because their wealth is not multi-generational and thus their class security is still more fragile. Stacey Alston, enrollment directory of the Waldorf School of Atlanta, named how even students of color looking at independent schools, will nine out of ten times choose an independent school other than theirs because of its perceived elite status. By no means does this mean we simply accept our differences, but it does help inform our understanding of who is coming to us and what experiences and viewpoints they bring with them.

Racism and Cultural Insensitivity
Working against racism is an on-going process and those interviewed reflected this reality. Interviewees discussed racism as it happens within the student body, with parents, and with teachers. This is an inevitable reality and each interviewee discussed how it must be dealt with. Interviewees emphasized the importance of having discussions with families of color and asking them what brought them to the school and what aversive experiences have they encountered. It is important to create a culture of open dialogue with students, faculty, and parents. With children it is easier and we can encourage this sensitivity and respect through our teaching and curriculum. With adults it is much more challenging, but rewarding nonetheless. More will be said on this topic under the section concerning recommendations.

Financial Accessibility

Just as Reardan and Yun suggested a “strong association between income and private school attendance rates” (2002, pg. 19), all interviewees emphasized the importance financial accessibility plays into a school’s racial diversity. More than one person interviewed was able to think of specific instances where a family of color did not enroll at the school because they could not afford the tuition. At the Waldorf School of Atlanta where 27% of students are of color, 50% of students receiving tuition assistance are of color. Furthermore, as Arthur Auer pointed out in reference to Antioch University of New England’s Waldorf Teacher Training Program, a lack of ability to offer financial aid hinders a school’s comfort in marketing towards communities of color who often, though certainly not always, have less socioeconomic privilege. As he put it, “we do not want to offer something if we cannot back it up.” (Auer, 2011) Ideas and strategies
addressing this dilemma are put forth later under “Recommendations.”

Biography Work as a Faculty

An effective way of building support and understanding among the faculty was through discussing diversity issues as part of the faculty study. Often this took the form of biography work, looking at identity, or looking at their own experiences growing up and when they began to recognize difference. Linda Williams discussed bringing this in an artistic manner so that it does not become intellectual, but instead an experience that everyone can relate to with feeling. Recommendations I put forth later will continue this conversation in light of further findings presented here.

Finding Commonalities with People of Color

While on one hand interviewees had struggling experiences with people of color seeking a more academically competitive education, interviewees also expressed finding commonalities between Waldorf education and different people of color’s experiences. Participants related stories of families of color finding similarity between Waldorf and the school they attended in their country of origin. Due to its emphasis on orality before literacy, Waldorf finds commonality with cultures with a strong oral tradition. More often than not these reflections came either from internationals or more recent immigrants. To be sure, we can find general differences in experience between a person of color whose family has been in the United States for generations and one whose family emigrated during her lifetime or shortly prior to her birth.
The Struggle of Sustaining the Issue of Racial Diversity

More than one participant expressed the difficulty in keeping the issue of racial diversity alive within the school. This sentiment came from individuals whose schools’ progress in the realm of racial diversity is much greater than the average Waldorf School. Reasons cited were the overbearing load each teacher and staff member already carries. Stacey Alston related how her school’s Diversity Committee emerged out of a Board member’s own initiative but once he left, the Diversity Committee disappeared.

Cultural Renewal

Similar to discussions on curriculum, interviewees expressed a need to continually renew the school culture to be an active member of the greater community. Susan Braun described the Garden City Waldorf School as a kind of oasis of racial integration within a highly segregated area. Linda Williams pointed out how we need to expand our cultural reaches and habits. We cannot expect everyone to come to us, we must go out into the community and appeal to them. Part of this renewal is self-study. Similar to work with faculty, Williams emphasizes, the whole school needs to take a look at what unsaid rules are at work, what do we ask families to do, and what are we inviting people into. As discussed earlier, conversations with families of color can help us better understand each and every person’s experience at our schools. More detail will be given to this topic under “Recommendations.”

The Lakota Waldorf School: A Case Study
In Kyle, South Dakota on the Pine Ridge Reservation is a little school called The Lakota Waldorf School. The school emerged out of the relationship between a Swiss Waldorf graduate, Isabel Stadnick, and her husband, Bob Stadnick, who was a Lakota tribal member. After much discussion between the council elders, Isabel, and Heinz Zimmerman—both on Pine Ridge and at the Goetheanum, the school was founded in 1992. Over the years it has had its ups and downs, never really able to take root. Part of this reason, was that up until recently, the teachers for the school had always been white. In recent years, the school has found Lakota members of the community taking up the work and making it their own, imbued with Lakota language and tradition.

In 2008, the Mid-States Gifting Group awarded AWSNA a grant that would provide two visits aimed at determining the status of the school’s development. Laurie Clark, Tom Clark, and Patrice Maynard together visited the school in October of 2009 for three days. Laurie Clark worked with the kindergarten teacher at the time, who was taking the Lifeways training in Boulder, Colorado. Over the three days Laurie mentored this teacher further in practicing circle activities, cooking and baking, storytime, and other Waldorf kindergarten staples.

Laurie and Tom Clark brought this experience back to the Denver Waldorf School and encouraged the school to develop a relationship with the Lakota Waldorf School. One such effort was school drive to collect food, winter clothing, blankets, and toys.

When the Clarks returned to the Lakota Waldorf School, a community dinner and parent evening was held for all of the families. While Laurie spent each day in the kindergarten, Patrice Maynard and Tom Clark continued their work with Isabel Stadnick,
the development coordinator as well as school board members. Furthermore, Tom and Patrice began a relationship with the nearby Oglala Lakota College.

In September of 2010, with the support of an independent anonymous foundation, the Oglala Lakota College hosted an accredited two week introductory course about Waldorf Education. This course covered the basic philosophy, curriculum overviews, and artistic and scientific activities taught by Laurie Clark and Tom Clark. John McManus and Barbara Richardson also taught eurythmy for one week each. A total of ten participants attended, including practicing teachers, home school teachers, and Lakota Waldorf School board members.

It remains to be seen where the teacher trainings for the Lakota people will go from here. Currently, all of the Waldorf teacher training programs have been helpful in supporting this process as a means to obtaining a Waldorf teaching certificate. It will be necessary for the students to intern at existing schools, which is a challenge for multiple reasons. Firstly, The Lakota people live in such trying circumstances, that it makes it extremely difficult to leave. Their responsibilities to people on the reservation are very strong. Secondly, the Lakota people have such a strong relationship with the land that they live on, that it is difficult for them to be away from it for too long. Nevertheless, as Patrice Maynard expressed it, the hope is that their yearning will get stronger that they will go and visit other Waldorf Schools.

Lastly, a burgeoning relationship continues to show signs of growth with the Lakota Oglala College. There is a possibility that Waldorf education could become part of the school’s education department. This is a great sign of trust that has been established between Laurie, Tom, and Patrice and the Lakota Oglala College. It is also
important to note that each student at the college receives a stipend to attend and that the college is completely autonomous not accepting money from the Bureau of Indian Affairs or the reservation’s Tribal Council. The entire college is run on a gift economy—further demonstrating the school’s compatibility with the philosophy of Waldorf education.

**Interview Findings: Teacher Recruitment, Retention, and Training**

Creating racially diverse learning environment involves not only who we have in our class but also who we have teaching them. Racial identity aside, the Waldorf movement is in dire need of more teachers, period. The pool of teachers we have to choose from needs to grow. There are many difficulties facing this need: the heavy burden that each Waldorf teacher must carry; the often low pay teachers receive; the high expenses of teacher training; the inconvenience of travel to complete the training. In addition to these logistical obstacles, Stacey Alston at the Waldorf School of Atlanta described the challenge of finding individuals who see Waldorf education as a spiritual calling. We are asking for them not only to subscribe to a curriculum, but also to be involved and have some level of engagement with a spiritual philosophy.

Interviewees were asked to describe their experiences and their ideas surrounding recruiting and retaining teachers of color. Attention was also given to how the topic of racial diversity is addressed in Waldorf teacher training.

**Shortage of Teachers of Color in General**

Finding teachers of color is not just a problem facing Waldorf education. Linda Williams, who teaches in the Eastern Michigan University Education Department and
whose student population is one of the largest in the country, could name just three Arab American students, two Latinos, five African Americans, and no Asians enrolled in the teaching program. As cited by Michael Soulé, “the percentage of the minority teachers is decreasing. In 1985, 88 percent of the teaching force was white. In 2000, this number was over 90%.” (2006, pg. 10) Part of this reason, as found by Rettig & Khodavandi (1998), is that many people of color did not grow up with teachers of color to serve as role models within that profession. Additionally, Claycomb and Hawley (2000) cite that the cost of education to become a teacher outweighs the benefits of teaching, especially financially. Lastly, Zapata (1988) and Linton (1988) found that administrators and faculty had little experience working with students of color and struggled with how to support them. Su (1996) reports the common dynamic White students dominating classes and monopolizing the discussion time, thus alienating students of color.

**International Students**

Due to the fact that Waldorf education can now be found on every continent, Waldorf education does have a strength in attracting more international students. Arthur Auer at the Antioch University of New England Waldorf Teacher Training Program cited this international presence as a strongpoint. According to Laura Andrews (Admissions Director at Antioch University of New England) international students make up between 5 and 10 percent of students enrolled in the Antioch University of New England Waldorf Teacher Training Program. If this strength is emphasized and built upon, there remains the potential to attract even more international students, especially from countries in the Global South (Latin America, Africa, Asia) large populations of people of color.
Administration

More than one school interviewed cited having people of color in administration. The pool of applicants for administrative position is often much larger than for a Waldorf teaching position, thus increasing the possibilities of having more racial diversity from the applicants.

Financial Aid

As with enrollment in our K-12 Waldorf Schools, financial aid is necessary if we want to enroll more students of color in our teacher training programs. Some schools offer assistance to members of their school community, AWSNA as well as other Waldorf foundations provide some scholarship opportunities, but these often still leave a considerably large amount of money to be paid out of pocket by the student. If a school has accreditation, this helps in obtaining loans and other scholarships, but in an age where debt is so pervasive, people are wary of acquiring more of it.

Travel

For those with limited means and heavy responsibilities at home, traveling for weeks at a time to complete the Waldorf training can be too burdensome to bear. Some local Foundation Studies programs exist and there are even some local teacher training programs (i.e. Chicago, Kula Makua, Sound Circle). These can help relieve the burden of travel.
The Issue of Racial Diversity in Teacher Training

As of yet, no Waldorf teacher training demonstrates an explicit approach to racial diversity, cultural competence, or issues of privilege or oppression. Arthur Auer at Antioch described the implicit process a teacher goes through when learning the curriculum (i.e. in middle school we look at human rights, in eighth grade we study revolutions). When asked why not address racial issues explicitly he cited the prevalence of trainings being too intellectual and not adequately “waking up the heart forces.” (Auer, 2011) Through Waldorf education, he continued, we learn the humanity of others first through willing, then feeling, and then finally thinking. Soulé and Williams both saw the Waldorf movement as very behind in this area when compared with the education mainstream. There also persisted a belief that these issues could be brought in a manner that would awaken those much needed heart forces. I will return to these ideas later.

Interview Findings: The Waldorf Movement

Interview participants were asked to share their opinions on how racial diversity might become a Waldorf movement-wide issue. Among all of the different opinions, there were some commonalities, which are worth noting.

AWSNA

Some participants were hesitant to believe that AWSNA (the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America) should play a large role in the effort towards prioritizing racial diversity within our schools. Some believed it should play some role, others not at all, and some thought the issue too big for AWSNA to manage. In the past
AWSNA had formed a Multicultural Committee, which published newsletters introducing curriculum ideas incorporating more cultures from around the world. This committee helped further awaken people’s consciousness to this issue, but once the committee dissolved, many participants did not believe this consciousness was sustained.

**Top-Down or Bottom-Up?**

Opinions diverged about where the impetus should come from in making racial diversity a movement-wide issue. Michael Soulé suggested that it starts with individual schools networking with other schools. Others believed that it needs to move from the top-down, whether as a movement looking at AWSNA or as a school looking at the Board.

**Leadership**

Whether or not movement started from the top or from the bottom, participants agreed that there needs to be leadership. This leadership can be made up of interested parties who come together and organize, it can come from AWSNA, it can come from the College or Board at a school, but it needs to come from somewhere.

**Demonstrating the Importance of Racial Diversity**

The research thus far presented demonstrates that racial diversity is still an issue not prioritized by most schools. For this to be the case, Michael Soulé insisted that the importance of racial diversity needs to become evident to everyone, not just those directly affected by it (namely people of color).
Redefining Ourselves

Whether it be through our curriculum or through our own personal perspectives, participants believed some kind of transformational process must occur for racial diversity to become a priority in our movement. As Susan Braun described, each school needs to uniquely answer what they value and what does not resonate. Linda Williams also emphasized our need to redefine our relationship with anthroposophy. I will return to this issue shortly.

Anthroposophy and Racial Diversity

Participants were asked how might anthroposophy affect the way we look at issues of diversity and inclusion? Their responses were many, but all recognized its importance in this work.

The Universal Human

A few participants cited how anthroposophy enables us to understand and connect with the universal human that stands behind each and every one of us. The way we approach this universal humanity within the individual was not uniformly answered. Arthur Auer answered that “race is secondary to us being human beings” (2011) and anthroposophy promotes “worldwide brotherhood and sisterhood consciousness.” (2011) This implies a bypassing of the racial and moving through to the individual. Linda Williams proposed that we need to “approach the individual through the many” (2011)
and that better understanding culture, race, and folk souls will help inform our picture of the individual.

**Broad Intentions vs. Narrow Words**

Many participants cited how at times Rudolf Steiner’s words could be construed to be racist. These participants emphasized a few things: first, that we need to remember that Rudolf Steiner was a real human being living in early 20th century Western Europe where making broad sweeping remarks about a race was common. Second, we must remember that often we are not reading his exact words, but instead a stenographer’s. Third, and perhaps most important of all, we must focus on his broader intentions and not isolated words. Indeed, as Magally Luna put it, “a founding piece of anthroposophy is to meet the Other.” (Luna, 2011) Susan Braun recalled Steiner’s description of a watch: if we pick it all apart and look at all the pieces separated on a table, we do not have a watch—it is more than merely a sum of its parts. Rudolf Steiner gave us a spiritual foundation from which to work in order that we might come to our own conclusions through our own struggles.

**Recommendations**

Through my research, a plethora of ideas flowed forth, many tested, and still others untested. It should be kept in mind that each school must have a thorough understanding of who they are and what social context they find themselves in. These answers will provide the most important means of determining the steps taken on the path towards racial diversity. Also, I would like to point out that my focus in this paper is on
race and ethnicity alone. Nevertheless, what is said here about race will often apply to any marginalized group and flexible thinking should be applied to meet your goals and your individual situation. Finally, I will draw on additional textual research to further emphasize effective strategies in meeting this goal.

Individual Schools

1. Founding a Diversity Committee

My research indicates that a school with a strong Diversity Committee will have a higher level effectiveness than a school without one. I recommend that Diversity Committees not be limited to race, but instead inclusive of all identities that face or historically have faced persecution and oppression. People are not one-dimensional and our conversations concerning race will be nourished by understanding the intersections of identity all people experience.

A Diversity Committee best comes out of a strong impulse carried by many rather than one. As the Atlanta Waldorf School experienced, if a committee is largely founded and maintained by one person, then their existence is wholly dependent upon that individual. The DWS Diversity Committee grew out of many people’s own sense of need and importance, but was largely held by one person in its most fragile, formative beginnings. If you feel called to this work, start having conversations with people in your community: teachers, staff, parents, students (high school), Board members. Through these conversations, an organic growth
process will start to develop, and potential members will begin to make themselves known. Though in its beginnings the DWS Diversity Committee was largely held by one person, a conscious effort was made to distribute the responsibility among others and to equally include all voices.

Membership

The DWS Diversity Committee also actively considered membership as a key strategy in its success. Western States Center describes what I have been calling Diversity Committees as “Change Teams.” The following are people who would make good Change Team members:

- Really want to see positive change in their communities;
- Bring enthusiasm and commitment to the process. They are role models and cheerleaders;
- Have a certain degree of skill in helping make change happens;
- Have some degree of leadership in their organization or community;
- Are willing to see themselves as change agents;
- But understand they can’t do it alone. They must build a group or organization of people who will take over leadership of the process and in turn develop new leaders.

We should also aim to have diversity (in this case racial) represented on our committees. When building a Diversity Committee, it may not be possible at first to find interested members who apply to every category given. What is important
is that we work with whom we have, build strong relationships with those individuals, and continually seek to grow as a committee.

_Scheduling Meeting Times_

Seemingly mundane, finding a regular time to meet posed a very real challenge to the DWS Diversity Committee. In the end, it meant settling for a time when one of the members would never be able to meet. This decision was made because it became evident that the committee’s stability would continue to be at risk if this sacrifice was not made. That individual remains part of the committee, but does not attend Diversity Committee meetings. It is likely that other schools’ Diversity Committees will come to a similar crossroads. Each committee will have to face these difficulties and make a decision that best suits their needs as an organization and as individuals making up that organization. It may be worthwhile to bring this need to the attention of the College, Board or other relevant bodies in an effort to find a time that best meets everyone’s needs. Creativity, flexibility, and sacrifice will be a must in moving forward with this work.

_Intentionality_

In order to best harness the power of each member’s driving impulse to engage in this work, it will be important to spend some time as a committee reflecting on what brought each person to the group and what they hope to see come of their collective work. As Michael Soulé reminds us, “Rudolf Steiner spoke repeatedly in his lectures about the role of interest in the shaping of social relationships. He
indicated that interest was the force between people that brought about connection, harmony and development.” (2006, pg. 31) As a means towards honing this common interest, here are some suggestions for budding Diversity Committees to discuss:

- What brought you to this committee? Why are you interested in this work?
- What experiences in your own biography have affected your view of oppression, privilege, or inequity?
- What has been your experience with issues of cultural competence, privilege, oppression, or inclusiveness at the school?
- What are your goals?

Some of these questions will be revisited in more formal discussions, but it is important to revisit these questions again and again as the committee grows and defines itself.

Defining Itself

Naturally evolving over each individual’s intentions comes the purpose of the Diversity Committee. This process of definition is ongoing and should not be set in stone. Nevertheless, it is important to build a foundation upon which the committee can begin working. The Western States Center Center (2003) model of defining “Change Teams” is an effective means in understanding the tasks of a Diversity Committee. Given that this model was created for organizations in
general, not simply schools, I will insert my own commentary in italics to emphasize important details to consider:

What is the Job of a Change Team? (Developed by changework, 1705 Wallace Street, Durham NC 27707 .919.490.4448)

1. To lead and organize the process towards becoming an anti-racist social change organization
   - Help move people into actively supporting (or at least avoid resisting) the changes necessary to move the organization towards that vision
   - Help to resolve conflict

As seen in the DWS Diversity Committee case study, this encompasses all members of the school community: faculty, staff, parents, students, board members, school community members.

- Avoid becoming ‘‘morality police’’ by including others in the work of the change team

   Firstly, this especially applies to our work with pedagogy and curriculum.

The DWS Diversity Committee’s work emphasizes this important in not only giving feedback, but also proactively engaging with teachers in the process of their lesson planning. Secondly, this further emphasizes the importance of having a membership in the committee that represents as many sectors of the school as possible.

2. To lead and organize a process to evaluate the organization as it is now

3. To lead a process to help the organization envision what it would look like as an anti-racist social change organization
4. Lead a process to establish specific, clear, and meaningful goals for reaching the vision

5. Build community and move the organization to collective action
   - Help the organization think about how to integrate and/or educate those in the organization who have not been through a DR [Dismantling Racism] training
   - Be in open communication with all members of the organization

6. Insure the integration of the work of the change team with program work

7. Think like an organizer in helping the organizer in helping the organization move toward its goals
   - work with members of the organization to think strategically about how to reach the goals of the organization

After the committee has gone through this process of intention and definition, it is time to draft the committee’s mission and vision statements. Briefly, for a lengthy discussion of these statements is beyond the scope of this paper, it is important to distinguish between the two: a mission statement is what the committee seeks to accomplish and what tasks it will undertake; a vision statement is what the committee would like to see, their most ideal future as a result of its work. All of this work then leads us into the how of the matter.

*Mandate, Goal and Task Setting*
Now the work moves into the practical aspects of its work. How will the Diversity Committee best affect change? Once again, I will use the *Western States Center* model for addressing this work and insert my own comments in italics as needed:

**How Can the Change Team Do Its Job?** *(Adapted by Grassroots Leadership’s Barriers and Bridges program from Judy H. Katz, White Awareness: Handbook for Anti-Racism Training)*

1. Identify the problem that you want to address.
   - Who else sees this as a problem?
   - Is it widely felt?

   *Reflect on the history of the school and its relationship to racial diversity. What has been done in the past? What efforts have been made? Successes? Challenges?*

2. Identify who has the power in your organization to solve the problem.
   - What is their self-interest?
   - Do you expect them to support you or oppose you?

   *The DWS Diversity Committee decided it would be most strategic to begin with the College of Teachers and be mandated here first. The Committee saw importance in becoming Board mandated, but in a Waldorf School the most powerful organization really is the College. The DWS Diversity Committee sees as a future goal to Board mandated because it recognizes its importance as well. How you proceed will depend on your school’s and committee’s own unique circumstances.*

3. State the specific goal or goals that will move your organization toward solving
the problem.

- These goals need to be tangible. In other words, “eliminate racism” is not a tangible goal while “get the board to adopt by-laws specifying percentages based on race, gender, income, sexual identity, etc.” is.

- Talk about how this goal (or goals) is (are) in line with your organization’s values and mission.

4. Identify who needs to be involved in helping to shape these goals.

Avoid setting the goals by yourself; involve a larger group whose participation in setting the goals will raise their stake in achieving them.

_The Diversity Committee could attend a faculty meeting, a College meeting, or a Board meeting to help broaden participation and buy-in._

5. Identify who in the organization shares a desire to reach these goals.

- How much power do they have to influence decision-makers (answer to number 2) in the organization?

- What is their self-interest?

6. Identify who in the organization is threatened by or opposed to these goals.

- How much power do they have to influence decision-makers (answer to number 2) in the organization?

- What is their self-interest?

7. Identify any additional risks or barriers you face.

8. Identify your strengths and resources.

9. Identify the specific strategy steps the change team will take to meet the goals.
• How will you involve allies and address challenges from those who are threatened or opposed?
  • How will you include those who might otherwise oppose you?
  • Who should be recruited onto the change team?
  • Who will coordinate the efforts?
  • When and how will people meet to work on these goals?
  • Develop a timeline.

10. Build in evaluation and reflection.
  • At what points will you revise your strategy?
  • How will you build change team morale and relationships?

(continued)

After answering these questions, it is now time to draft your mandate and present it to either the Board the College or both. When drafting your mandate, you will also need to consider leadership roles within the committee. The DWS Diversity Committee found itself in a nebulous structure before deciding on these specific roles. Commonly these roles present themselves as committee chairs and note-takers/scribes. To fit its own needs, the DWS Diversity Committee decided upon two co-chairs and two scribes, thus involving more members in the leadership process. Be honest about people availability and desires and remember that these roles should change in order to develop more leaders within the committee.

2. Building School Support

Information Gathering
The work towards creating racial diversity in a school cannot be done alone and the largest job the Diversity Committee will undertake will be in drumming up support. First, the case must be made as to why this is an important issue. Gather information on the state of racial diversity in your school. Have conversations with enrollment about their experiences with race and admissions. Chances are, families (both white and of color) have expressed something related to race and the school (whether it be the demographics, the art on the wall, or a possibly Eurocentric curriculum). Talk with faculty, staff, parents, high school students, and alumni about their experiences with race at the school. These conversations are aimed at bringing the issue of racial diversity into greater consciousness within the school community. There is no effort to problem solve, just an intention to listen.

Making a Case for the Importance of Racial Diversity

Once information has been sufficiently gathered and you have a good pulse on the school’s history, practices, and attitudes, it is time to make presentations to the school community. Who you present it to will depend on to whom you are mandated and your own unique situation. The DWS Diversity Committee found it helpful to begin with faculty and staff. The Diversity Committee should draft a statement of why racial diversity is important, both generally and especially for your school. The evidence already cited is important to present, and a further discussion of racial diversity’s importance within the context of Waldorf School and anthroposophy will be presented later.
Educating the School Community

Once again, your target audience will depend on your own strategic circumstance. Scheduling for an educational event/training/in-service should happened far in advance. The Diversity Committee should seek to schedule the training during an already allocated in-service day. Most consultants/trainers suggest at least a four-hour training. Be sure to involve your targeted participants in this process of scheduling and hiring to ensure greater investment. When reviewing possible facilitators for the training, the Diversity Committee should keep in mind their school’s personality and which applicant best fits their school. Also consider the facilitator’s framework of presentation and whether it matches your committee’s own views and goals.

Ideally, your target audience for the training will come out of it excited and inspired to take on this work. Ask participants to make concrete commitments to carrying this work forward. Perhaps some participants will even want to join the Diversity Committee. Document these commitments and revisit them a couple months down the line. It is important that this training not be seen as an isolated incident, but instead as a first step in a greater journey. As the DWS Diversity Committee did, perhaps you are able to have your consultants periodically meet with your committee or even your school as a whole to check in, re-evaluate and sustain this work.

3. Self Study
The process of understanding the relationship between your school and race has begun, but it is only the beginning. It is important to continue this learning process, much in the same way we conduct a child study. Imagination, openness, and love will be important tools on our way towards better understanding ourselves as an organization. Nevertheless, this does not mean to avoid difficult issues or conversations. For growth to occur, we must have these conversations, but in a manner of respect and love for everyone in the group.

As discussed earlier, it is important to have these discussions be artistic and personal to avoid intellectualizing the subject matter. We can begin these discussions by reflecting on our own biography (as Linda Williams suggested) and our experiences with race as we grew.

After looking at ourselves in this light, we can turn our gaze towards the biography and personality of the school itself. Remembering that our schools are also living beings will help us better access our imagination and make the discussion more real and less abstract.

**What Kind of School are We?**

As stated before, *Western States Center* outlines four different types of organizations in terms of anti-racist organizational development: the “All White Club”, the “Token or Affirmative Action Organization”, the “Multicultural Organization”, and the “Anti-Racist Organization.” (Appendix A) If Waldorf Schools are effectively executing the republican model of governance originally laid down by Rudolf Steiner, then Waldorf Schools should find (like the DWS
did) that their organizational process falls largely under “Multi-Cultural” or “Anti-Racist”. Nevertheless, as previous statistics have demonstrated, most Waldorf Schools (like the DWS) should find that their racial demographics in membership largely fall under the “White Club” or “Token Organization.” After analyzing your school’s organizational status, the work lies in predominantly two areas, which inevitably will intersect: organizational structure and organizational racial representation.

- **Organizational Structure**

  Though the Denver Waldorf School found its organizational structure largely to be empowering, there were still sentiments expressing the view that the College of Teachers and the Board of Trustees behaves as a club. If this is true for your school, it will be important to discuss with parents, teachers, and Board members how they view this dynamic and brainstorm ways to become more empowering. See the appendices (Appendix B) for help in analyzing organizational racism.

- **Racial Representation**

  Of the three categories given by Western States Center, “Organizations of Color”, “White Organizations”, and “Multi-Racial Organizations”, the vast majority of Waldorf Schools in the United States fall under “White Organizations” (…organizations that are almost entirely made-up of white people among staff, leadership, constituency and membership. A few people of color could be part of the organization even in meaningful ways, but the organization is dominated by white people”). See the appendices (Appendix
C) for help analyzing the racial representation within your school.

*Caucusing*

Holding separate caucuses for people of color and white people can be an effective means of holding more honest discussions about how racism affects members of the community differently. Racism affects all of us, but affects white people differently than people of color. Caucuses are an effective means of self study, but there can be many other purposes as well (Appendix D). The two caucuses can reconvene and reportback or not, depending on the goals of the group. If there is a reportback, the Diversity Committee can act as a body to facilitate this process.

4. **Taking Action**

The wonderful thing about this work, is there is never a shortage of work to be done! The Diversity Committee should consider what are the most important issues to address and how much agency they have in accomplishing these issues. The following, in no particular order are some important areas of action to consider. After considering your priorities, the Diversity Committee should draft an action plan and present it to the relevant parties (faculty, College, Board, parents, etc.). Please note that building school support is an ongoing effort that must not be forgotten. The Diversity Committee should not operate in isolation.

*School Literature*
Does the literature of the school (policies, website, promotional materials, etc.)
address issues of race, multiculturalism, inclusion, or diversity? Is it available in
the languages most commonly spoken in your area (Spanish, Vietnamese, French,
Portuguese, etc.)? Is a statement about anti-discrimination, racial diversity, and/or
multiculturalism in the mission statement of the school? Is a racially diverse
school part of the school’s vision statement? Are the school applications
welcoming of various cultural backgrounds?

Of the participants interviewed, all of them recognized our curriculum as naturally
multicultural and inclusive, but do we make this evident to the public? What
about the second language program? How well do people know this about
Waldorf Schools?

Marketing and Outreach

This category piggy-backs on the previous one. To whom does the school market
itself? Does the marketing reach communities of color? What might be the best
way of reaching out to communities of color? Are there people of color already
in the school community who could be a possible resource?

Some schools even hold targeted open-houses aimed at attracting a certain
demographic lacking in the community (i.e. African Americans, Asian
Americans, etc.). Or perhaps you could present an informational night at a
community center, church, or temple in a particular area? Maybe you want to go
door-to-door promoting your school, or set up a table at strategic events.

One particularly effective method of outreach is through building community
partnerships with either individuals or organizations. Think creatively, some examples of possible groups to consider are religious institutions, local colleges, NGOs, and neighborhood associations. These relationships take time and energy to develop and must be nurtured with patience and respect.

Admissions

Waldorf Schools with waiting lists have a number of factors when considering whether to enroll an applicant: gender, social behavior, developmental/academic level. Can race be part of your school’s admissions considerations? This is an important conversation to have amongst all faculty and staff.

Financial Aid

Does your school have targeted scholarships for people of color? In most every community there are grants and scholarships available for students of color seeking to attend a private school. If there are the resources and the interest, a school could set up their own scholarship fund or endowment specifically designed to admit more students of color.

Community Engagement

One way to get the Waldorf name out there is for the school to be an active part of the broader community. Waldorf has such a great dedication to service, it would be a logical progression to have students demonstrating this service out in the community. This can be a great learning process for the children and the adults,
and it shows people outside of Waldorf what this wonderful education can do.

School Leadership

Are people of color in positions of leadership? College of Teachers? Board of Trustees? When considering making a decision-making body more diverse, it is important to consider whether the motivation is tokenizing (Appendix) or seeking real opinions and change.

Curriculum

Again and again, interviewees expressed a need to continually renew our curriculum to reflect the needs of our students today. Have conversations with faculty about what materials they are using in the classroom, what is the essence of what we are teaching and how we can best teach it. How well are people of color represented? How are they represented? Are some of our resources out of date, inaccurate, or offensive? Often there is a shortage of multicultural resources and it can be difficult to find them. Having collective discussions helps determine where we need more resources and opens up the possibility for resource-sharing.

Celebrating Diversity

What diversity do we already have in the school? Do we celebrate it enough? Are our school celebrations/festivals inclusive of all peoples?

Transportation
As cited previously, transportation is a very important issue to consider. The Denver Waldorf School have forms for newly enrolled families to fill out concerning transportation and carpooling. It would be worthy to look at whether this is enough or not. Some families may not feel comfortable with carpooling at first, or ever. Is there accessible public transportation to the school? What is the cost? Can the school alleviate this cost at all?

In some cities, private school students are eligible for transportation provided by the school district. It would be worthy for each school to determine its eligibility and potentially to pursue a free means of public transportation if such a program does not exist.

**Networking**

Chances are, your school is not the only independent school in the area with its eye towards racial diversity. In some cases there may already be a network set up between schools and their Diversity Committees. The more people and organizations we are connected to, the more effective we are in brainstorming and implementing change.

**Personnel and Hiring**

The issue of staffing people of color will be addressed in greater detail, but there are some things individual schools can consider when hiring. As indicated in interviews, it is difficult to find Waldorf teachers, especially teachers of color. Nevertheless, there are some strategies we can consider:
- To find a fully trained Waldorf teacher can be difficult, but a school can use assistant positions in the kindergarten, early grades, and after-school care as ways to bring new people into the community. Larger schools especially can then groom these assistants into becoming teachers. This “grow your own” model does require financial incentives (loans, scholarships, etc.) on behalf of the school if they want these new staff members to become fully trained Waldorf teachers. But in a time when there is a shortage of Waldorf teachers, this financial sacrifice should be well worth it.

  Often hiring is prioritized to people already directly connected with the school (parents, alumni, etc.) but if advertising is broadened, we can expand the breadth of our movement and the diversity of our staff.

- Administrative positions, as indicated in interviews, can broaden the field of applicants much beyond what is normally found when hiring a Waldorf teacher. Likewise, if we broaden our advertising beyond our school newsletter then we have a better chance of finding more racially diverse applicants.

- Making ourselves financially competitive is, of course, every school’s goal. The more we meet this goal, the more attractive our schools will look to all people, not just people of color. And with the reality of the overlaps between race and class, by proving our teaching positions to be financially sustainable, teaching at Waldorf School will seem a more feasible option for people of color.
Lessening the burden of each teacher also makes our positions more appealing. We pride ourselves on how we govern our schools, but our schools also struggle with burdening our teachers with too much responsibility. Looking at more efficient ways to make decisions while maintaining our teacher-run governance model is a must.

Working with Anthroposophy

Anthroposophy is the foundation from which all of our work is built, thus our work with racial diversity should not be separate from this understanding, but instead further informed by it. As Linda Williams emphasized, “we do not work with anthroposophy deeply enough.” More will be said on this issue later.

Teacher Training

The results of my research point to a number of important aspects we must consider in our teacher trainings, both in terms of creating a more racially diverse teaching pool as well as making all of our teacher prepared to teach in racially diverse environments.

International Students and Faculty

The amount of international students and faculty we have in our teacher training programs is a strength to be built upon. Currently, most of these faculty come from Europe, but as Waldorf schools in Latin America, Africa, and Asia grow more veteran teachers, the more faculty of color will be available internationally.
to come teach in the United States. In many countries (especially non-European countries), there are not yet teacher training programs in place, which means those prospective teachers must travel to the U.S. or other countries with established programs to complete their training. Also, as teacher training programs emerge in countries throughout the world, it might behoove teachers from the United States to attend foreign teacher training programs in countries where many children in their region may have emigrated from (i.e. the Cuernavaca, MX program).

**Administration**

As stated previously, the potential pool of applicants for administrative positions can be much greater than that of a trained Waldorf teacher. The more we expand our Waldorf administrative programs, the more we can also focus our attention toward recruitment of people of color into these positions.

**Financial Aid and State Accreditation**

To attend what is essentially graduate school requires a large financial sacrifice on behalf of the students. Furthermore, for average Waldorf teacher pay to be so low, the payoff is not very appealing. The more a teacher training program can provide financial aid, the better. Some programs are already in place in conjunction with local schools and AWSNA, but these must grow if we are to attract more teachers.

State accreditation can help a school access more funds (like the Jonathan Daniels scholarship at Antioch University of New England) as well as federal loans. State
accreditation also makes each Waldorf graduate qualified not only for Waldorf Schools, but also for the public sector. This added qualification can help a student feel more occupationally secure. Such security is often essential for people of color who tend to have much less economic privilege in the marketplace. Additionally, accreditation with an already existing institution (i.e. Antioch University of New England, the Oglala Lakota College) can lend additional legitimacy to the program and additional outreach and marketing. Lastly, the more financial aid we have, the more secure a teacher training program will feel in advertising itself to communities of color. Money was the number one reason interviewees cited as a challenge in recruiting teachers, and especially teachers of color. If an institution is really serious about racial diversity, then pursuing grants, scholarships, and endowments aimed at racial diversity would be a very worthwhile consideration.

**Location**

For many, leaving home and attending teacher training for weeks out of the year can be too large a sacrifice to make. The more we have local teacher trainings, the more we will be able to accommodate the needs of underprivileged individuals. Sometimes this must be done creatively, as seen at the Lakota Waldorf School. There are communities of color out there who share values and principles with Waldorf education but who lack the ability or means to travel long distances for training. We must make ourselves available to these communities
and think creatively about how to meet the needs of those who are truly longing for this education.

**Marketing and Outreach**

A continual goal for every teacher training program is to make itself known to more and more people. The more we understand the kinds of people coming to us, the more we will know where to look for them.

**Racial Diversity Trainings**

My findings indicated that understanding racial diversity, privilege, and oppression is increasingly important in this day and age, but opinions diverged on how to present this material. The common ground found was a need for these discussions to be rooted in the heart forces and be artistic in nature. My findings indicate that it is essential for our teachers to come prepared to teach each and every student, and this means understanding their cultural context as well. As Linda Williams put it, we must come to the individual through the many. In other words, we must better understand each individual’s group soul, or folk soul, in order to gain a clearer picture of the soul of that individuality. Interviewees indicated the importance of biography and the curriculum. All Waldorf teacher trainings emphasize personal development and curriculum. If we spend time understanding our own folk souls, their missions, and our individual biographical experience, we will have a better understanding of the children coming toward us. As Rudolf Steiner points out, “[s]ocially sensitive individuals can develop only
within an educational system which is conducted and administered by other socially sensitive individuals.” (Lamb, pg. 52).

The curriculum we study in teacher training can give us the artistic material to help us navigate these conversations and to illuminate the heart forces necessary to understand the individuality and the universal humanity shared by all. These discussions will also benefit if, as suggested by Magally Luna, it is the new teachers leading the discussion with the faculty taking a more gentle, restrained approach. The reason for this is twofold: first, the power differential between faculty and teacher-in-training will dissipate if the faculty member holds a quieter role, thus allowing for a more honest and vibrant discussion; second, it is the new teachers, the younger generations that are more consciously wrestling with these questions and bringing new insights perhaps yet heard by older faculty members. The aim should be that everyone has something to learn.

Lastly, as Gary Lamb stresses, “[i]t is vital that teachers understand the social [his emphasis] task or mission of Waldorf Education and how it relates to the threefold nature of social life.” (pg. 98) I, for one, was drawn to Waldorf education just as much by its spiritual profundity, as by its incredible power in affecting social change. If we want to recruit more young teachers, we should emphasize Waldorf Education’s foundational commitment to social change.

The Waldorf School Movement

Though interviewees differed on where it should come from, all interviewees agreed some kind of leadership is necessary to address the issue of racial diversity in
Waldorf Schools. The Waldorf movement has a great advantage in being so well networked. To not seize this advantage would be a great missed opportunity.

My research indicates that the entire movement, both the top and the bottom, must recognize racial diversity as an important issue. Nevertheless, AWSNA works in response to the will of the individual schools, and if the individual schools do not demonstrate the desire for racial diversity, then there is no need for AWSNA to respond in kind. What we can do is ask our delegates to represent our school’s desire to make racial diversity a movement-wide issue. AWSNA delegates, as Magally Luna suggested, could not only bring back and spread an awareness of anthroposophy, but also of social issues such as racial diversity.

Also, those believing in the importance of racial diversity in Waldorf Schools need not wait for others to carry the cause for them. The beauty of the Waldorf movement is its autonomy in the vast amount of agency each individual and school has in affecting change.

**Organize**

Based upon my research, my recommendation would be for individuals and schools interested in the cause of racial diversity, should create their own organization or task force aimed at such a goal. This could begin as simply as creating an email listserv of interested parties. Strategies, successes, and challenges could be shared to help each school meet its goals. Articles could be written addressing the issue for Waldorf-related publications (i.e. *Renewal, Research Bulletin, Lillipoh*). As done in the past, conferences could be held
specifically addressing racial diversity in Waldorf education. My research confirms that there exists both a lack of interest and a strong desire to see significant racial demographic change in Waldorf Schools. The impulse is there, it merely needs to be acted upon.

Anthroposophy, Waldorf Education, and Racial Diversity

What my research indicates more than anything else, is how the case for the importance of racial diversity needs to be made. Furthermore, this case needs to be made within the framework of anthroposophy and the founding principles of Waldorf Education, for, as Rudolf Steiner demanded, “[w]e must feel ourselves influenced by the working together of our anthroposophical and our social movement.” (1969, pg. 111)

Race and Cosmic Evolution

According to anthroposophical wisdom, we are living in a time of transition between the fifth and the sixth post-Atlantean epoch (Steiner, 1909). Already, characteristics of the sixth epoch are being prepared. One of these characteristics is the concept of race. Race, both according to Steiner and modern-day science, is but an illusion whereas “the concept of race has ceased to have any meaning in our time” (Steiner, 1909). And though this may be true, illusionary concepts can still hold very real worldly implications. As demonstrated earlier, racism continues to be a strong force today.

I do believe that we are transitioning into an epoch where racism can be conquered and we shall overcome, but nonetheless, transition is never easy. As
Steiner explains in his fourth lecture of “The Universal Human”, “[in] the future, it will not matter whether what Christ is will still be called by that name. However, a lot will depend on our finding in Christ the spiritual uniter of humanity and accepting that external diversity will increase more and more” (Steiner, 1916). Thus Steiner presents an interesting paradox: race will both cease to have meaning in our time and external diversity will increase more and more and so must we also increasingly embrace this diversity. If we do not, the implications are very real.

The Harms of Segregation and the Benefits of Racial Diversity

**Brown v. Board and Modern Research**

The harms of segregation are manifold. During the time of *Brown v. Board* social science evidence demonstrated “that segregated Black schools caused irreparable psychological harm to the Black children” and additionally, “that segregation reinforced feelings of racial superiority among segregated white children.” (Bhargava, Frankenberg, & Le, 2008). For whites to be isolated from people of color means decreased opportunity to learn from others of different backgrounds and a decreased ability to live and work in racially diverse settings as adults. Conversely, to isolate students of color from white students means to limit their access to potential resources and networks that broaden their opportunities and increase their ability to be successful after high school graduation.
Just as the Supreme Court recognized the social detriments of segregation, it recognized that education “is the very foundation of good citizenship” and “a principal instrument in awakening the child to cultural values, in preparing him for later professional training, and in helping him to adjust normally to his environment”. Modern research has only continued to support the Court’s findings.

Academically, “research suggests that all students in…segregated schools are harmed, regardless of individual background—and that the effects of segregation can be cumulative for students” (Bhargava, Frankenberg, & Le, 2008). In schools with high concentrations of students of color, academic achievement tends to be dramatically weaker, with fewer resources, less experienced teacher and higher teacher turnover.

In racially diverse classrooms, all students develop “deeper ways of thinking, higher aspirations—both educational and occupational, and positive interactions with students of other races and ethnicities” (Bhargava, Frankenberg, & Le, 2008). In the long-term students from racially diverse environments grow to live and work in more diverse settings, thus more ready to work in the increasingly diverse United States landscape. This ability and desire to live and work alongside people from different racial backgrounds counters deep-seated residential and occupational segregation. All students tend to have friendships across racial lines and thus grow up to recognize discrimination and prejudice against all people, promoting a healthier culture of social cohesion and justice.
Racially diverse schools also serve as institutional models of truly democratic environments that promote the well being of all peoples. If students grow up experiencing an environment that is truly inclusive and empowering of people from all racial backgrounds, then they are able to carry this forward into their adult civic life.

**The Individual and The Folk Soul**

Seen anthroposophically, if we segregate ourselves, we limit our understanding of the Folk Souls. Rudolf Steiner describes the necessity of deepening this Folk Soul knowledge:

…the destiny of mankind in the near future will bring men together in far greater measure than has hitherto been the case in order to fulfill a mission common to all mankind. But the members of the individual peoples will only be able to offer their proper, free and positive contributions if they have, above all, an understanding of their ethnic origin, an understanding of what we might call “the self-knowledge of the folk”. The injunction “Know thyself!” played an important part in the Apollinian Mysteries of ancient Greece. In the not too distant future the following injunction will be addressed to the Folk Souls: “Know yourselves as Folk Souls” (1929, p. 23).

Here, Steiner stresses the understanding of ourselves in terms of our cultural heritage in order to best fulfill our own Folk Souls’ mission as well as the mission of all of humanity. I would add, that in our very global and culturally diverse age,
the injunction “Know thy neighbor’s Folk Souls” will also be of great importance, especially as teachers. To not have this understanding would mean to lose an understanding of ourselves and the “Other. To cultivate this understanding will help teachers and students to have a deeper understanding of themselves and their neighbor. This understanding will help each of us achieve our mission as individuals and as a united humanity.

Waldorf Education and Social Change

Similar to the findings of The Supreme Court in Brown v. Board, Rudolf Steiner asserted that “if we want to raise [children] to be, in the broadest sense of the words, social, democratic, and free adults” (Lamb, 2007, pg. 59) then we must enter into a new relationship with education. Rudolf Steiner perceived how “[h]umanity has now entered into a phase in which social institutions produce antisocial tendencies” (Lamb, 2007, pg. 69), a reality we continue to find reflected in our educational institutions. “These tendencies”, Steiner continues, “must be overcome each time.” (Lamb, 2007, pg. 69) Waldorf Schools serve as these counter-institutions aimed at cultivating the necessary social feelings of freedom and love.

Indeed, if our schools are racially diverse institutions, pervaded by a deeper understanding and appreciation of every single person’s cultural background and of the universal human therein, the implications extend to all spheres of life, not simply the cultural. As Gary Lamb points out, this “concept of the universal human can lead us to an appropriate understanding of the role, dynamics, and
basis for the political State.” (Lamb, 2004, pg. 118) If equality is demonstrated in the cultural sphere and this feeling of universality is held for all of humanity, then civil equality cannot be ignored. Economically, “Steiner maintained that through recognition of the universal human, we can achieve an understanding of the spiritual unity of all humanity and gain the possibility of going beyond self-interested behavior through the power of love.” (Lamb, 2004, pg. 119) Our current economic system perpetuates racism through the marketplace because the feelings of racism persist and have now been institutionalized (i.e. the Prison Industrial Complex, environmental racism, residential segregation, privatized healthcare). If, through education, we transform our culture’s feelings of self-interest into a deep-seated interest in the “Other” then our economic system will reflect practices that benefit all of humanity, instead of a privileged few.

**Conclusions**

Waldorf Education in the United States is a strong and growing movement. More and more people are discovering this transformative education and the power it has to teach and raise our children. With growth comes struggle, but only by truly embracing the struggle can we continue to grow. It is common and natural to respond to this work with fear. Race is a topic most were taught not to talk about, to avoid, to gloss over. But there are some who do not have the privilege to ignore this reality. People of color are reminded of their racial category and the oppression they face in this society on a daily basis. To try and ignore a person’s racial identity is to deny that what happens to people of color on a daily basis happens at all. White people also experience the implications of
their race on a daily basis, but its privilege largely goes unnoticed and unseen. It is natural to respond to the issue of race with fear. We fear what we do not acknowledge, what is not said. Throughout my research, over and over again I was struck by the courage that those individuals demonstrate who have taken up the cause of racial diversity in our schools. If we are to truly serve all of humanity, this is the kind of courage we will need on our journey.

If I could do one thing differently with this project, given a second opportunity, I would have involved students and alumni to a much greater degree. Who better to speak about the power of Waldorf education and social change than those who have received this education the most? Who better to tell us their challenges or experiences with racism? Who better to tell us of how they learned about race and racism and if/how they came to understand people from different racial backgrounds than theirs?

Lastly, what I was most surprised to learn, is how uniquely positioned Waldorf Schools are to lead the way towards racial diversity, inclusion, and social justice in the field of education. Our freedom (largely) from government control allows us to institute long-lasting change, not change that can be repealed with a different face in the Oval Office. Our governance model is designed to empower every individual in the school to highest degree possible, thus demonstrating what equality and democracy can truly look like. Our international scope blesses us with a diversity of perspectives from around the world, instead of being stuck in a narrow geographically bound viewpoint. Our curriculum is inherently multicultural, needing only proper renewal to maintain its vital nature, as opposed to an artificially imposed curriculum uninformed of a child’s developmental needs. We are not an isolated school or a long-deceased philosophy, we
are a strong and living movement. Our schools are connected and what is done need not be done in isolation. If we all take hold of the power we have to change the racial landscape of Waldorf Education, we shall certainly not be alone.

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Appendix

A. Western States Center, 2003, “Anti-Racist Organizational Development”

B. Western States Center, 2003 “Assessing Organizational Racism”

C. Western States Center, 2003 “Moving Racial Justice: Are You Ready?”

D. Western States Center, 2003 “Caucuses”
A. Western States Center, 2003, “Anti-Racist Organizational Development”

The process of Dismantling Racism is not just about individuals changing our behavior and ways of thinking. This important individual work must in turn trigger a commitment to dismantling racism in organizations in order to position us to move effective and accountable racial justice organizing.

Organizations, like individuals, can evolve to become anti-racist. The transformation begins with developing a comprehensive understanding of how racism and oppression operate within an organization’s own walls. From that analysis comes a commitment and concrete plans for dismantling racism within the organization and in the larger society.

There is no cookie cutter approach to anti-racist organizational development. The road to anti-racist organizational development is necessarily impacted by the size, structure, mission, constituency and geographic location of an organization. Some organizations may need to commit to transforming their organization into a multi-cultural anti-racist organization. Other predominantly white organizations may decide that it is most appropriate to evolve toward being an anti-racist white ally organization that can work in alliance with organizations of color. People of color organizations may decide to engage in organizational development to address internalized racist oppression within the organization in order to strengthen their ability to build power for communities of color.

This section of the Dismantling Racism Resource Book is designed to provide tools to help organizations begin the discussion of their anti-racist organizational transformation. If we build a shared and strong analysis of race and racism within our organizations then we will be able to select the tools and processes to achieve anti-racist organizational transformation most appropriate to our organization.
FOR ORGANIZATIONS STRIVING TO BECOME MULTI-CULTURAL ANTI-RACIST ORGANIZATIONS

Anti-Racist Organizational Development

Adapted by Kenneth Jones and Tena Okun based on work done by the Exchange Project of the Peace Development Fund, Grassroots Leadership’s Barriers and Bridges program, and the original concept by Bailey Jackson and Rita Hardiman.

ChangeWorks
1705 Wallace Street, Durham NC 27707, 919.490.4448

The goals of this exercise are to give you time to begin to analyze your organization in terms of the organization’s anti-racist vision. This is an evaluation tool.

This evaluation is designed for organizations that are either all white or which include both white people and people of color.

Because racism is reflected in every institution and organization in the U.S., it is also present in progressive, social change groups. The structures and cultures of non-profits and grassroots organizations reproduce white privilege and racial oppression found in the wider society. But organizations, like individuals evolve, change and grow. Groups can transform themselves into anti-racist groups.

We are presenting four states of organizational development. Most organizations have characteristics from each of the states. No organization fits any stages precisely, although you will find that one stage may be dominant. Whatever the dominant characteristics of your organization, it is impossible for an organization at the All White Club stage to move directly into becoming an Anti-Racist Organization. Any transition requires moving through the elements of one stage to the next.

In order to use this assessment, read through the written descriptions and the chart of characteristics and think about how your organization reflects the various states. Then fill out the worksheet that follows.
The All White Club

All White Clubs are non-profits that, without trying, find themselves with an all-white organization.

These are not groups that have intentionally excluded people of color. In fact, many times they have developed recruitment plans to get more people of color involved in their group. However, when people of color join the group, they are essentially asked to fit into the existing culture. Many leave after a frustrating period of trying to be heard. After years of trying, the Club cannot figure out why they do not have more people of color in their group; they begin to blame people of color for not being interested in the group’s important issues or work, or they just give up. They do not understand that without analyzing and changing the organizational culture, norms, and power relations, they will always be an all-white club. While they are good people, they have no analysis of racism or of power relations and no accountability to people or communities of color.

The Affirmative Action or ‘Token’ Organization

The Affirmative Action or ‘Token’ Organization is committed to eliminating discrimination in hiring and promotion.

The Affirmative Action or ‘Token’ Organization sets clear affirmative action goals, clear and unambiguous job qualifications and criteria, a percentage of people of color who need to be in a candidate pool for a new job, and a bias-reduced interview process. Staff and board are encouraged to reduce and/or eliminate their prejudice and the organization may conduct prejudice reduction workshops toward this end. There may be one or two people of color in leadership positions. For people of color, coming into the organization feels like little more than tokenism.

The Affirmative Action of ‘Token’ Organization is still basically a white club except it now includes structural and legal means to bring people of color in.

The Multi-Cultural Organization

The Multi-Cultural Organization reflects the contributions and interests of diverse cultural and social groups in its mission, operations, and products or services.
It actively recruits and welcomes people of color and celebrates having a diverse staff and board. It is committed to reducing prejudice within the group and offers programs that help members learn more about the diverse cultures that make up the organization. White people in the organization tend to feel good about the commitment to diversity. Like the previous two, however, people of color are still asked to join the dominant culture and fit in.

An interesting point to consider is that most multi-national corporations are at this stage, while most non-profits, even social change non-profits, are still predominantly in one of the first two stages. Multi-national corporations recognize that their financial success is tied to their customer base and their customer base is racially diverse. So, for example, in states where there are active English-only campaigns, the banks are offering ATM machines in English and Spanish. This is not to say we should model ourselves after multi-national corporations, but it is worth thinking about how they are further ahead than most of us in thinking about the implications of a changing demographics for their organization.

The Anti-Racist Organization

Based on an analysis of the history of racism and power in this country, this organization supports the development of anti-racist white allies and empowered people of color through the organization's culture, norms, policies and procedures.

The Anti-Racist Organization integrates this commitment into the program, helping white people work together and challenge each other around issues of racism, share power with people of color, take leadership from and be accountable to people of color, feel comfortable with being uncomfortable while understanding that we are all learning all the time. The Anti-Racist Organization helps people of color become more empowered through taking leadership, sharing in the power, transforming the organizational norms and culture, challenging white allies and other people of color, sharing in decisions about how the organizations resources will be spent, what work gets done as well as how it gets done, the setting of priorities, and allowing people of color to make the same mistakes as white people. The organization does this by forming white and people of color caucuses, providing training and encouraging discussions about racism, white privilege, power, and accountability, setting clear standards for inclusion at all levels of the organization, reviewing the mission, vision, policies, procedures, board agreements, etc. to insure that the commitment to end racism is a consistent theme, helping people to understand the links between the oppressions, and devoting organizational time and resources to building relationships across race and other barriers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All White Club</th>
<th>Token or Affirmative Action Organization</th>
<th>Multi-Cultural Organization</th>
<th>Anti-Racist Organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decision Making</strong></td>
<td><em>made by white people (often men)</em>&lt;br&gt;Decision made in private ways that people can’t see or really know</td>
<td><em>made by white people&lt;br&gt;Decisions made in private&lt;br&gt;Often in unclear ways</em></td>
<td><em>made by diverse group&lt;br&gt;Board and staff&lt;br&gt;Takes steps to involve those targeted by mission in decision-making</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Budget</strong></td>
<td><em>Developed, controlled, and understood by (one or two) white people (often men)</em></td>
<td><em>Developed, controlled, and understood by (one or two) white people</em></td>
<td><em>Developed, controlled, and understood by people of color and white people at all levels of the organization</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Money From</strong></td>
<td><em>Select foundations&lt;br&gt;Wealthy or middle-class college-educated white donors&lt;br&gt;Often a small number of very large donors</em></td>
<td><em>Foundations&lt;br&gt;Wealthy or middle-class college-educated donors</em></td>
<td><em>Foundations&lt;br&gt;Wealthy or middle-class college-educated donors&lt;br&gt;Some donations from people of color and lower-income people</em></td>
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<td><strong>Accountable to</strong></td>
<td><em>Funders&lt;br&gt;A few white people on board or staff</em></td>
<td><em>Funders&lt;br&gt;Board&lt;br&gt;Staff</em></td>
<td><em>Funders&lt;br&gt;Board and staff&lt;br&gt;Takes steps to report to those targeted by mission</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>All White Club</td>
<td>Token or Affirmative Action Organization</td>
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<td><strong>Power and Pay</strong></td>
<td>• white people in decision-making positions, paid very well</td>
<td>• white people in decision-making positions, paid relatively well</td>
<td>• white people in decision-making positions, paid relatively well</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• people of color (and/or women) in administrative or service positions paying low wages</td>
<td>• people of color (and/or women) in administrative or service positions that pay less well</td>
<td>• people of color in administrative or service positions that pay less well</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• few, if any benefits, and little job security</td>
<td>• few, if any benefits for anyone</td>
<td>• training to upgrade skills is offered</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• people at bottom have very little power</td>
<td>• people at bottom have very little power</td>
<td>• people at bottom have very little power</td>
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<td><strong>Located</strong></td>
<td>• in white community</td>
<td>• in white community</td>
<td>• physically accessible to people of color</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• decorations reflect a predominantly white culture</td>
<td>• decorations reflect some cultural diversity</td>
<td>• decorations reflect a commitment to multi-culturalism</td>
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<td>• physically accessible to community served</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• decorations reflect a commitment to multi-culturalism and power sharing</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Members</strong></td>
<td>• white people, with token number of people of color (if any)</td>
<td>• white people and people of color, with only a token ability to participate in decision-making</td>
<td>• from diverse communities</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• members have no real decision-making power</td>
<td>• people of color are only aware of the organization because it is providing a direct service</td>
<td>• from range of communities</td>
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<td>• from range of communities targeted by mission</td>
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<td>• encouraged to participate in decision-making</td>
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<td>• provided training to enhance skills and abilities to be successful in the organization and their communities</td>
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<td>Culture</td>
<td>Token or Affirmative Action Organization</td>
<td>Multi-Cultural Organization</td>
<td>Anti-Racist Organization</td>
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<td><strong>top down, paternalistic</strong></td>
<td>still top down</td>
<td>organization looks inclusive</td>
<td>organization actively</td>
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<td><strong>often secretive</strong></td>
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<td>with a visibly diverse</td>
<td>recruits and mentors</td>
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<td>**success measured by how     **</td>
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<td>board and staff</td>
<td>people of color</td>
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<td><strong>much is accomplished</strong></td>
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<td>actively celebrates</td>
<td>celebration diversity</td>
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<td>**little if any attention paid</td>
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<td>diversity</td>
<td>has a power analysis</td>
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<td>**to process, or how    **</td>
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<td>focuses on reducing</td>
<td>about racism and other</td>
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<td><strong>work gets done</strong></td>
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<td>prejudice but is</td>
<td>oppression issues</td>
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<td>**little if any leadership on</td>
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<td>uncomfortable</td>
<td>a diversity of work</td>
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<td><strong>staff development</strong></td>
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<td>styles encouraged with</td>
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<td>**no discussion of power</td>
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<td>active reflection about</td>
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<td><strong>analysis or oppression</strong></td>
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<td>balancing what gets done</td>
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<td>and how it gets done</td>
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<td><strong>conflict is avoided at all</strong></td>
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<td>a willingness to name</td>
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| Programs                         |                                          |                            |                          |
| **not about building power**     |                                          |                            |                          |
|       **for communities of color** |                                        |                            |                          |
| **designed to help people**      |                                          |                            |                          |
|       **who have little or no**   |                                          |                            |                          |
|       **participation in         |                                          |                            |                          |
|       **decision-making**        |                                          |                            |                          |
| **emphasis is on serving or**    |                                          |                            |                          |
|       **“helping” those in need** |                                          |                            |                          |
| **intent is to be inclusive**    |                                          |                            |                          |
| **little analysis about root**   |                                          |                            |                          |
|       **causes of issues/problems**|                                        |                            |                          |
| **people in programs**           |                                          |                            |                          |
|       **appreciated until they** |                                          |                            |                          |
|       **speak out or organize**  |                                          |                            |                          |
|       **for power**              |                                          |                            |                          |
| **designed to help low-income**  |                                          |                            |                          |
|       **people who have little** |                                          |                            |                          |
|       **or no**                  |                                          |                            |                          |
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| **designed to build power**      |                                          |                            |                          |
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| **some attempt to understand**   |                                          |                            |                          |
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|       **big picture**            |                                          |                            |                          |
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|       **served in program planning** |                                          |                            |                          |
|       **constituency may have only** |                                        |                            |                          |
|       **taken representation in** |                                          |                            |                          |
|       **the organization**       |                                          |                            |                          |
| **designed to build and**        |                                          |                            |                          |
|       **share power**            |                                          |                            |                          |
| **designed to help people**      |                                          |                            |                          |
|       **analyze and address root**|                                          |                            |                          |
|       **causes**                 |                                          |                            |                          |
| **people most affected by**      |                                          |                            |                          |
|       **issues/problems centrally** |                                        |                            |                          |
|       **involved in program     |                                          |                            |                          |
|       **planning**               |                                          |                            |                          |
| **opportunities for            |                                          |                            |                          |
|       **constituents to move**   |                                          |                            |                          |
|       **into leadership roles in** |                                        |                            |                          |
|       **the organization**       |                                          |                            |                          |
Assessing Organizational Racism

Western States Center Views, Winter 2001

"We don't really have a problem with racism in our community because most of our population is white."

When it comes to race and racism, many social change organizations have trouble walking their talk (and for some, even talking the talk gets short shrift). Predominantly white organizations may think that racism is not their issue until more people of color join. Or they may think that the extent of their work around race is to get more people of color to join.

The Dismantling Racism Project at Western States Center believes that racism is everyone’s problem, whether or not people of color are involved in your organization. Primarily white organizations can and should become anti-racist, even if their racial composition does not change. Becoming a multicultural organization is not a necessary goal of antiracist work.

The fact is, racism is reflected in every institution and organization in the U.S.: social change groups are not exempt. The structures and cultures of community-based, grassroots groups reproduce the white privilege and racial oppression of the wider society. Whatever your social change mission, it’s bound to fall short as long as racism continues to flourish and maintain the status quo.

Fortunately, organizations, like individuals, can evolve to become anti-racist. The transformation begins with developing a comprehensive understanding of how racism and oppression operate within an organization’s own walls. From that analysis comes a commitment and concrete plans for dismantling racism within the organization and in the larger society.

This Organizational Assessment — an excerpt of a longer self-evaluation tool used by the Dismantling Racism Project — offers a place to start. This sampling of questions is designed to help you examine and change the ways your organization replicates larger racist patterns. Grab a snack and something to drink, get a pen and a pad of paper. Better yet, gather a few other people from your organization and work through these questions together. As you read each question, take a moment to answer it for your organization before reading the additional commentary.

Finally, remember: this is a starting place. The fundamental evolution needed to become actively antiracist is a long, slow, deep process. But organizations that have made the commitment are living proof that it can be done. The changes they’ve made confirm that the hard work of transformation is worth every minute.

Who makes decisions in your organization?

• Does your organization have a goal to dismantle racism? Is this goal reflected in your decision making process?
• Is there a shared analysis of who has decision making power and who does not? Does everyone know how decisions are made?
Paths Toward Racial Diversity

• Is there a deliberate plan to develop the leadership of people of color staff members and to share decision-making authority?
  • Is your organization accountable to people of color organizations and communities who are affected by but not part of the organization?

  Anti-racist organizations develop the leadership of staff and members so that power can be shared in a meaningful and accountable way. In an anti-racist multi-racial organization, decision-making power is shared across race. A white anti-racist organization must create a decision-making process that is accountable to organizations and communities of color; this task is essential, complicated and requires constant attention.

Who has control and influence over financial resources?
• Who develops the budget? Who does the fundraising?
  • When the budget or fundraising plan reflects work to be done in support of people of color communities, do these communities have input on where the money comes from and how it is going to be spent?
  • Does your organization advocate with funders to support the work of people of color organizations directly?

  In an anti-racist multi-racial organization the budget and fundraising plan are understood by people of color as well as white people at all levels of the organization. Budgeting and fundraising in a white anti-racist organization must ensure accountability around racism.

What kind of education about racism and oppression is provided through the organization?
• Are people of color supported in seeking information around issues of internalized racist oppression and self-empowerment either within the organization or from outside the organization?
  • Are white people supported in seeking information around issues of white privilege and supremacy either within the organization or from outside the organization?
  • Are there regular trainings and discussions at the member, staff and board level about dismantling racism and accountability?

  An anti-racist organization will provide training and encourage discussion about racism, white privilege, power and accountability with board, staff and members. People of color within an organization will have specific opportunities to understand and dismantle internalized racist oppression, while white people are charged with understanding and dismantling white privilege.

What is the culture of your organization?
• What are the values and norms, stated or unstated?
  • Are people of color welcomed in the organization only in so far as they assimilate into the existing organizational culture?
    • Is culture treated as the norm? Do the art, holiday activities, and food reflect people of color cultures?
    • Is discussion of racism and oppression normal and encouraged or seen to distract from “the real work”? Do people in leadership positions participate in and support discussion of power and oppression issues?
• Are there people of color who consistently do not participate in meetings and discussion? If so, is there active reflection on why, and how to encourage more balanced participation?

These questions reveal whether the day-to-day experience of the organization reflects the lives and cultures of people of color. Groups committed to addressing racism and oppression must examine the ways that we communicate, the space in which we work, and the activities we share.

How does your organization work in alliance with people of color organizations?
• Does your organization provide support and resources for members, staff, and board members of color to develop leadership through working with organizations or campaigns led by people of color?
• Does your organization seek input and guidance from people of color organizations and community leaders of color in its strategic planning and decision making?
• Does your organization advocate for the participation of people of color organizations when working in coalition with other groups?
• Does your organization provide support and resources for white members, staff, and board to develop as anti-racist white allies through working with organizations or campaigns led by people of color?

An anti-racist organization will work in alliance with people of color organizations. However, the structure of an alliance is fundamental to the success of anti-racist work. Primarily white organizations often come to the table with greater staff capacity and financial resources than people of color organizations. This imbalance of power often undermines the leadership of organizations of color when working in alliance.
C. Western States Center, 2003 “Moving Racial Justice: Are You Ready?”

MOVING RACIAL JUSTICE: ARE YOU READY?

Assessing Your Organization’s Readiness and Capacity to Move a Racial Justice Agenda

Not every organization is ready to take on racial justice work even if they are eager to do so. The following assessment is designed to raise critical issues as organizations and organizers think about their capacity to move a racial justice agenda. These assessments are designed to identify potential barriers to taking on a racial justice focus and outline the preparatory work that may be needed to effectively engage in and sustain racial justice work for organizations of color, white organizations and multi-racial organizations.

Read through the questions designed for your organization based on the descriptions of people of color, white and multi-racial organizations found at the beginning of each assessment. Allow these questions to help you identify barriers, challenges and opportunities for moving racial justice through organizing.

These assessments may be effective exercises for Change Teams who are engaged strategic planning or developing a workplan.

Organizations of Color
(We are referring to organizations that are primarily or entirely comprised of people of color, whether of various racial groups or mostly one)

Organizations run by people of color and devoted to building the power of people of color through organizing are essential elements of an effective racial justice movement. People of color must develop independent autonomous institutions that they control, although that does not exclude the possibility of working in alliance with white allies.

The assessment for organizations of color differs from that for white and multi-racial organizations. Although some of the assessment questions listed for white and multi-racial organizations may be useful and relevant for organizations of color, this section will focus on the unique context of organizations of color.

Historically, organizations of color at the forefront of racial justice struggles have faced severe obstacles. These include the difficulty of sustaining financial stability, dealing with the erratic support of - and sometimes betrayal by - white liberal and progressive organizations and defending themselves from the repressive strategies of the police, the courts, local, state and federal governments and non-governmental bodies. This history informs the approaches organizations of color may take to sustain their work over time.
Do you have intentional and effective approaches to developing leadership throughout your organization?

In order to sustain and build the work, organizations need to be intentional about leadership development. Building power for organizations of color means building a strong base of members and leaders. Concentrating leadership in the hands of a few weakens the work and makes it easier for opponents to hurt the organization by discrediting one or two individuals.

Is there a shared analysis and language about race and racism within the organization?

Does your organization have an analysis of institutional racism and white supremacy? Some groups of color mistakenly seek to address racial inequities by facilitating the assimilation of people of color into dominant racist institutions, while many people of color have internalized some of the myths about the end of institutional racism and the existence of "equal opportunity."

Does your organization intentionally work to educate its membership and the community about the realities of racism?

What is your approach if you want to target the systemic racism of an institution (school board, police department, city hall, etc.) that is headed by a person of color? Without an analysis of institutionalized racism, it may be difficult for your organization to challenge institutions headed by people of color due to fears of discrediting people of color public officials.

Does your group have a strategy for dealing with people of color groups and leaders who are recognized by the power structure but who oppose your analysis and methods?

Racism continues to try and divide people of color in order to conquer us. Does your group have an analysis and strategy to deal with tokenized and mainstreamed people of color who will attack your credibility, including and especially people who are recognized by some as "community leaders?"
Are you intentionally building alliances with other organizations and communities of color?

To what extent does the organization’s analysis of racism affirm the shared experiences of various groups of color both within the organization and in relationship to other communities?

One of the ways racism operates in the U.S. is that it divides to conquer, driving wedges between various ethnic groups and communities of color. It is critical for organizations to proactively build alliances among people of color. We cannot ignore real differences and tensions, but should consciously and constructively try to mend problems and create collaboration. If people of color are divided, our work for racial justice is jeopardized.

Does your organization have a strategic approach to weighing the costs and benefits of entering coalitions, particularly with white organizations?

Organizations of color need to be careful about coalition work with white organizations. Although such coalitions are often necessary - especially given the demographic realities of the West - there are many potential pitfalls. White organizations are often larger and better resourced, creating significant power imbalances. Few white organizations “get” racism at a deep level and have a track record of fighting racism in appropriate ways. How can organizations of color collaborate while maintaining an appropriate level of leadership, keeping their focus and avoiding getting usurped? What type of internal strength do you need to build before entering new collaborations? How can you assess the capacity of predominantly white organizations to be effective anti-racist allies to your organization?

How is your organization prepared to deal with racist attacks?

If your work is effective, you will most likely be targeted at some point, if not also constantly, in a million smaller ways. Many established organizations develop “risk management” plans to deal with all kinds of potential crises. People of color organizations should consider adding to these usual disaster possibilities (fire, embezzlement, financial crisis, etc.) some of the liabilities that come with building power for people of color in a deeply racist society: media misinformation and mischaracterization, harassing lawsuits (SLAPP suits), challenges to your nonprofit status, infiltration by government agents, etc.
White Organizations: (By “white organizations” we mean organizations that are almost entirely made-up of white people among staff, leadership, constituency and membership. A few people of color could be part of the organization even in meaningful ways, but the organization is dominated by white people.)

White organizations need to be incredibly thoughtful about their role in racial justice organizing. It is necessary that white organizations become active allies in struggles for racial justice, but ultimately, white organizations need to be taking leadership from and be accountable to people of color organizations and communities in the work as much as possible. The following are questions that will help identify whether white organizations are ready to take on a new or expanded commitment to engage in racial justice work.

Who is currently committed and interested in taking racial justice work on?

As an organizer or leader are you the primary one pushing the agenda? Is there a shared commitment among leaders and people who hold power and influence within the organization? How thoughtful and deep is the commitment? Are people committed enough to expand real resources for the work? Do people understand that this will involve internal work, possibly internal resistance and tension, and may impact external relationships? Are people going to back off at the first sign of trouble? The fiftieth?

If there is not a shared commitment among a critical mass of people with power in the organization who also share a sense of the potential barriers and problems that could arise, the organization is not ready. More internal education and more effort building a base of support for taking on a racial justice focus must happen.

What is motivating people within the organization to take on racial justice work?

Are people interested in the work out of a sense of solidarity with people of color, political thinking which prioritizes the work, a sense of guilt, or opportunism? Seriously thinking about these questions can help get a sense of how deep the commitment is as well as identifying potential major pitfalls.

When is adding a race analysis to your campaign work opportunistic? - some examples

➢ When this is done to garner money or to generate #s or information for a grant
➢ When spokespeople of color are used without any depth of relationship:
• The spokesperson of color isn’t rooted in the community and has no depth of
  relationship to the community of color
• The organization is engaging that spokesperson without any interest in engaging
  the community itself

➤ When adding a race analysis shines the spotlight on a community that puts them in
  jeopardy, diverts their energy and focus, puts them in a situation they don’t want to be
  in, and wasn’t asked for

What is and has been your organization’s relationships with
people of color organizations and communities of color?

White or predominantly white organizations that have no relationship with people of color
or organizations and communities of color are not ready to move a racial justice campaign.
Nor are they ready if the relationships they do have with people of color are not
particularly deep or lack a level of meaningful trust. In this context, white organizations
should be beginning to develop alliances with organizations and communities of color by
educating themselves about relevant issues and building relationships.

In regions or places where people of color organizations are few and communities of color
are isolated, white and predominantly white organizations must act creatively to seek
avenues of accountability in their racial justice work. This may mean building relationships
with key organizations of color and leaders outside their community, town, city, or state.
Regional organizations can be useful in helping to identify possible alliances that can hold
white and predominantly white organizations accountable and that can potentially
strengthen and support isolated organizations of color.

Have organizations of color identified a need for support on an
issue or campaign?

How would you know if people of color have identified a need for support on an issue or
campaign? This is related to your organization’s level of relationship with people and
communities of color. Is your organization answering this question based on common
knowledge, media reports, or a specific request for your support?
Is there a shared and sharp analysis of race and racism among the organization’s leadership and membership?

There does not need to be a shared analysis of race and racism among the entire organization in order to begin racial justice work (although that would be better), but if there is little shared language and analysis problems will result. Is there enough of a shared analysis among leadership that the work won’t be compromised? Note that the actual process of engaging in campaign work can create opportunities for membership education if you plan for it.

Dismantling racism training and political education are effective methods of developing shared organizational analysis. An organization that is really struggling to find a language to talk about race and racism in their own organization and in their organizing work may not be ready to move a racial justice campaign.

Do you expect some resistance to taking on more explicit racial justice work?

Any type of change often comes with some level of resistance. From whom is the resistance likely to come and why? Resistance should be expected and can be worked through. Membership and constituency education can help avoid resistance as well as surface inevitable resistance in a structured setting where it can be productively discussed and challenged.

**Common Points of Resistance among white organizations**

*Fear of POC coming into the organization*
If the majority of membership or leadership of an organization is fearful of people of color coming in to the organization, then that organization is definitely not in a good position to seriously take on a racial justice focus. Rather the organization should most likely focus on internal dismantling racism education. If, however, this fear is isolated to just part of the membership or leadership than it may be possible to move forward with a racial justice organizing campaign while doing intentional internal dismantling racism education.

The research phase of an organization’s campaign may provide an opportunity to provide some of the internal education needed to dismantle racist fears. Empirical and anecdotal data may move white members and leaders to begin to focus on issues rather than their own racist beliefs.
Paths Toward Racial Diversity

People feeling unprepared and inexperienced at working with a race analysis
Organizations can build on the work and expertise of other organizations and institutions
that have experience working with a race analysis. This can be an impetus for building
alliances or coalitions that bring organizations with a strong history of racial justice work
together with less experienced organizations.

Relying on tried and true organizing strategies - while still being flexible - may provide
and opportunity to overcome assumptions that racial justice organizing is a whole different
ballgame than familiar organizing strategies. While we don’t want to deny that moving a
racial justice campaign may have unique strategies and challenges, sometimes the feeling
of not being equipped does not represent a lack of capacity to move a racial justice agenda.

Fear of wedging membership, wanting to avoid "divisive" issues (Alinsky
organizing rule)
If we avoid issues of race because we think it is divisive, we are avoiding some of the most
critical issues. Too many progressive organizations have sat out key racial justice fights
for fear of wedging their membership, with the effect of strengthening the racist right
wing.

It’s better to strengthen your constituencies’ understanding of and commitment to racial
justice than to avoid the issues of race and racism. Building a strong and shared analysis of
oppression is key to undermining this “cardinal organizing rule.” Sometimes confronting
points of disagreement can move an organization past seemingly huge barriers to a whole
new level of work.

Is the organization prepared not to tokenize the few people of
color who are part of the organization?

Tokenism is the act of placing a limited number of people (pick one and only one) from a
non-dominant group for a prestigious position in order to deflect criticism of oppression.
Tokenism is a form of co-optation. Sometimes it takes the best and brightest of the
most assimilated, rewards them with position and money (though rarely genuine leadership
and power), and then uses them as a model of what is necessary to succeed, even though
there are often no more openings for others who may follow their model. Tokenism is a
method of limiting access that gives false hope to those left behind and lames them for
“not making it.” “If these two or three black women can make it, then what is wrong with
you that you can’t?”

Sometimes tokenism is unconcerned with credentials or expertise. Under pressure to stop
the displacement of Southeast Asians caused by urban “redevelopment,” the mayor
appoints a Vietnamese businessman to head a task force on the problem. The businessman has no expertise on housing or displacement but hopes to benefit from the redevelopment. By appointing this “token,” the mayor hopes to create the appearance of concern for, or even accountability to, the community.

Typically the tokenized person receives pressure from “both sides.” From those in power, there is the pressure to be separate from one’s race (for instance) while also acting as a representative of the entire group. The tokenized person is expected to become a team player, which means that identifying racist activity within the organization or working on behalf of one’s community is seen as disloyalty. The pressure from one’s community, on the other hand, is to fight for that community’s concerns, in other words, to help from the inside. Of course, it is virtually impossible to work from the inside because the tokenized person is isolated and lacks support. It is a “no win” situation, filled with frustration and alienation.

Example: Recruiting a person of color on an otherwise white board of directors with no intention of actually changing programs in order to serve the needs of people of color.

Adapted from Suzanne Pharr’s “Common Elements of Oppression”

When predominantly white organizations take on racial justice work, the few people of color in the organizations are often put into uncomfortable positions within the organization. People of color may want to take the opportunity to caucus in order to build a strong network of support as they enter a racial justice campaign. The caucus may allow people of color to assess whether the organization is tokenizing them in order to put a “colored face” to the campaign while marginalizing people of color from meaningful positions of leadership in the campaign. The caucus may also allow people of color an opportunity to address the impact of internalized racism on members and leaders as active participants in moving a racial justice agenda.

Why is your organization primarily white?

This is an incredibly useful question to reflect on before proceeding. In thinking about this question, it is crucial to “step out of the box” and seriously test your basic assumptions.

- Is it because of demographics: few people of color in your area? Has your organization allowed demographics to be an excuse for not doing the work?
- Is it because your organization has historically framed issues in ways that aren't relevant for people of color?
- Have there been specific incidents where the organization has tried to build relationships with and include people of color but it didn’t work? Why?
Multi-Racial Organization: (We are referring to organizations that are composed of people of color and white people. A multi-racial organization, as opposed to a “white organization” for the purposes of this assessment, has equity in leadership and power between people of color and white people.)

Multi-racial organizations devoted to building alliances across race and building the power of people of color through organizing are essential elements of an effective racial justice movement.

Similar to organizations of color, multi-racial organizations at the forefront of racial justice struggles have faced severe obstacles. These include the difficulty of sustaining financial stability, dealing with the erratic support of – and sometimes betrayal by - white liberal and progressive organizations and defending themselves from the repressive strategies of the police, the courts, local, state and federal governments and non-governmental bodies. Multi-racial membership organizations are also at risk for being wedged apart by racist attacks. This history informs the approaches multi-racial organizations may take to sustain their work over time.

Multi-racial organizations need to be incredibly thoughtful about their role in racial justice organizing. It is necessary that multi-racial organizations become active allies in struggles for racial justice, but ultimately, multi-racial organizations need to be taking leadership from and be accountable to people of color within their organization as well as other communities and organizations of color. The following are questions that will help identify whether multi-racial organizations are ready to take on a new or expanded commitment to engage in racial justice work.

Who is currently committed and interested in taking racial justice work on?

As an organizer or leader, are you the primary one pushing the agenda? Is there a shared commitment among white and people of color leaders within the organization? How thoughtful and deep is the commitment? Are people committed enough to expend real resources for the work? Do people understand that this will involve internal work, possibly internal resistance and tension, and may impact external relationships? Are people going to back off at the first sign of trouble? The fiftieth?

If there is not a shared commitment among a critical mass of people with power in the organization who also share a sense of the potential barriers and problems that could arise, the organization is not ready. More internal education and more effort building a base of support for taking on a racial justice focus must happen.
Do you have intentional and effective approaches to developing leadership throughout your organization?

In order to sustain and build the work, organizations need to be intentional about leadership development. Building power for communities of color means building a strong base of people of color and anti-racist white allies as members and leaders. Concentrating leadership in the hands of a few weakens the work and makes it easier for opponents to hurt the organization by discrediting one or two individuals.

Is there a shared analysis and language about race and racism within the organization?

Does your organization have an analysis of institutional racism and white supremacy? Some multi-racial organizations mistakenly seek to address racial inequities by facilitating the assimilation of people of color into dominant racist institutions. Other multi-racial organizations fall into the trap of using a “color-blind” or “love sees no color” analysis to make diversity within the organization.

Does your organization intentionally work to educate its membership and the community about the realities of racism?

What is your approach if you want to target the systemic racism of an institution (school board, police department, city hall, etc.) that is headed by a person of color? Without an analysis of institutionalized racism, it may be difficult for your organization to challenge institutions headed by people of color due to fears of discrediting people of color public officials.

Are you intentionally building alliances with other organizations and communities of color?

To what extent does the organization’s analysis of racism affirm the shared experiences of various groups of color both within the organization and in relationship to other communities?

One of the ways racism operates in the U.S. is that it divides to conquer, driving wedges between various ethnic groups and communities of color. It is critical for organizations to proactively build alliances among people of color. We cannot ignore real differences and tensions, but should consciously and constructively try to mend problems and create collaboration. If people of color are divided, our work for racial justice is jeopardized.
Are there people of color organizations or institutions who have identified a need for support on your potential campaign or would ally themselves on the campaign?

Although your organization is multi-racial, does your membership of color reflect the community most impacted by your potential campaign? It is important to reflect on whether your organization needs to look outside itself for additional sources of accountability in order to move forward.

How would you know if people of color organizations or institutions have identified a need for support on an issue or campaign? This is related to your organization’s level of relationship with people and communities of color. Is your organization answering this question based on common knowledge, media reports, or a specific request for your support?

Does your organization have a strategic approach to weighing the costs and benefits of entering coalitions, particularly with white organizations?

Multi-racial organizations need to be careful about coalition work with white organizations. Although such coalitions are often necessary - especially given the demographic realities of the West - there are many potential pitfalls. White organizations are often larger and better resourced, creating significant power imbalances. Few white organizations "get" racism at a deep level and have a track record of fighting racism in appropriate ways. How can multi-racial organizations collaborate with predominantly white organizations without tipping the balance of multi-racial equity in leadership within their own organization? What type of internal strength do you need to build before entering new collaborations in order to support leaders of color in your own organization? How can you assess the capacity of predominantly white organizations to be effective anti-racist allies to your organization?

Do you expect some resistance to taking on more explicit racial justice work?

Any type of change often comes with some level of resistance. From whom is the resistance likely to come and why? Resistance should be expected and can be worked through. Membership and constituency education can help avoid resistance as well as surface inevitable resistance in a structured setting where it can be productively discussed and challenged.
Common Points of Resistance among white people

Fear of more POC coming into the organization
If the white membership or leadership of an organization is fearful of more POC coming into the organization, then that organization is definitely not in a good position to seriously take on a racial justice focus. Rather, the organization should most likely focus on internal dismantling racism education. If, however, this fear is isolated to just part of the membership or leadership then it may be possible to move forward with a racial justice organizing campaign while doing intentional internal dismantling racism education.

The research phase of an organization's campaign may provide an opportunity to provide some of the internal education needed to dismantle racist fears. Empirical and anecdotal data may move white members and leaders to begin to focus on issues rather than their own racist beliefs.

People feeling unprepared and inexperienced at working with a race analysis
Organizations can build on the work and expertise of other organizations and institutions that have experience working with a race analysis. This can be an impetus for building alliances or coalitions that bring organizations with a strong history of racial justice work together with less experienced organizations.

Relying on tried and true organizing strategies - while still being flexible - may provide an opportunity to overcome assumptions that racial justice organizing is a whole different ballgame than familiar organizing strategies. While we can't deny that moving a racial justice campaign may have unique strategies and challenges, sometimes the feeling of not being equipped does not represent a lack of capacity to move a racial justice agenda.

Fear of wedging membership, wanting to avoid "divisive" issues, Alinsky organizing rule
If we avoid issues of race because we think it is divisive, we are avoiding some of the most critical issues. Too many progressive organizations have sat out key racial justice fights for fear of wedging their membership, with the effect of strengthening the racist right-wing.

It's better to strengthen your constituencies' understanding of and commitment to racial justice than to avoid the issues of race and racism. Building a strong and shared analysis of oppression is key to undermining this “cardinal organizing rule.” Sometimes confronting points of disagreement can move an organization past seemingly huge barriers to a whole new level of work.
Is the organization prepared not to tokenize the people of color who are part of the organization?

Tokenism is the act of placing a limited number of people (pick one and only one) from a non-dominant group for a prestigious position in order to deflect criticism of oppression. Tokenism is a form of co-optation. Sometimes it takes “the best and brightest of the most assimilated, rewards them with position and money (though rarely genuine leadership and power), and then uses them as a model of what is necessary to succeed, even though there are often no more openings for others who may follow their model. Tokenism is a method of limiting access that gives false hope to those left behind and blames them for “not making it.” “If these two or three black women can make it, then what is wrong with you that you can’t?”

Sometimes tokenism is unconcerned with credentials or expertise. Under pressure to stop the displacement of Southeast Asians caused by urban “redevelopment,” the mayor appoints a Vietnamese businessman to head a task force on the problem. The businessman has no expertise on housing or displacement but hopes to benefit from the redevelopment. By appointing this “token,” the mayor hopes to create the appearance of concern for, or even accountability to, the community.

Typically the tokenized person receives pressure from “both sides.” From those in power, there is the pressure to be separate from one’s race (for instance) while also acting as a representative of the entire group. The tokenized person is expected to become a team player, which means that identifying racist activity within the organization or working on behalf of one’s community is seen as disloyalty. The pressure from one’s community, on the other hand, is to fight for that community’s concerns, in other words, to help from the inside. Of course, it is virtually impossible to work from the inside because the tokenized person is isolated and lacks support. It is a "no win" situation, filled with frustration and alienation.

Example: Recruiting a person of color on an otherwise white board of directors with no intention of actually changing programs in order to serve the needs of people of color.

Adapted from Suzanne Pharr’s “Common Elements of Oppression”

As a multi-racial organization takes on racial justice work, people of color could be put into uncomfortable positions within the organization. People of color may want to take the opportunity to caucus in order to build a strong network of support as they enter a racial justice campaign. The caucus may allow people of color to assess whether the organization is tokenizing them in order to put a "colored face" to the campaign while marginalizing people of color from meaningful positions of leadership in the campaign. The caucus may also allow people of color an opportunity to address the impact of internalized racism on members and leaders as active participants in moving a racial justice agenda.
How is your organization prepared to deal with racist attacks?

If your work is effective, you will most likely be targeted at some point, if not also constantly, in a million smaller ways. Many established organizations develop “risk management” plans to deal with all kinds of potential crises. People of color and multi-racial organizations should consider adding to these usual disaster possibilities (fire, embezzlement, financial crisis, etc.) some of the liabilities that come with building power for people of color in a deeply racist society: media misinformation and mischaracterization, harassing lawsuits (SLAPP suits), challenges to your nonprofit status, infiltration by government agents, etc.
CAUCUSES

What are Caucuses?
All people of color and white people are affected by racism and have to work together to end racism. However, how we are affected by racism and the work we have to do is different. Caucuses are times when people of color and white people within an organization meet separately in order to do our different work. Many organizations have gender caucuses or other types of caucuses as well.

What are some reasons to have Caucuses?

People of Color can caucus in order to:
- check in and assess an organization’s progress in anti-racist organizational development or racial justice organizing
- provide a safe space for people of color to talk about and address experiences of racism within the organization and in the larger world
- talk about racism and how it affects people of color without having to explain it to white people
- gain tools to talk about racism
- create an alternative power base for people of color within the organization
- build relationships
- create a plan of action
- provide a space to address how internalized racism can hold people of color and racial justice work back
- look at barriers such as anger

White people can caucus in order to:
- work through guilt and other barriers that hold white people back from being an ally and doing racial justice work
- ask questions and explore ideas that help white people learn about racism without having to learn at the expense of people of color
- hold each other accountable for actions and behavior
- build relationships
- check in and assess an organization’s progress in anti-racist organizational development or racial justice organizing
- gain tools to talk about racism, white supremacy and privilege
- remind white people that work needs to be done to address racism every day
**Tips for Successful Caucusing**

- **Successful caucusing is often based on** having a clarity of purpose. Caucuses are the place to identify and talk about issues or concerns about racism, but are not always the appropriate place to solve those issues. When issues or concerns are raised it is important for the caucus to identify which organizational structures or processes should address those issues. In the case where the issue is a result of a lack of organizational structure or process, the caucus will need to identify how to give direction toward the development of that structure or process.

- **One of the goals of caucusing is to create a space for** building relationships between people of color and between white people that will strengthen dismantling racism work. Successful caucuses will pay attention to creating activities and time that will support relationship building.

- It is critical that there is a clear communication structure that provides a way for caucuses to communicate with one another. Caucuses do not necessarily have to come together after meeting separately in order to "report back." However, there needs to be a conduit through which appropriate information is shared. In many organizations, this is one role of the change team.

- **Confidentiality is crucial to successful caucuses.** Confidentiality means that personal information, stories, or concerns that are shared by individuals within a caucus are not shared outside the caucus. Individual sharing may lead to group proposals, ideas, or plans of action that will be shared through the appropriate channels. Caucuses must take the time to be clear and reach consensus about what is being shared and what is not.

- In some cases it is important to have an outside facilitator for caucuses. The power dynamics within organizations often make it difficult for staff, board members or leaders to facilitate a caucus effectively.

- Some organizations have caucuses on a regularly scheduled frequent basis while others may hold caucuses infrequently or in relation to other events such as board retreats. The regularity or frequency of caucuses is often based on the logistics of bringing people together. It is important for an organization to
integrate caucusing, whether frequent or infrequent, into the organizational workplan so that caucus members have a sense of timeline for getting together.

- Just as any other committee or working group, caucuses may need to be staffed. It is crucial that people of color caucuses receive equitable staff time and resources as compared to white caucuses. It is a common barrier to successful caucusing in predominantly white organizations that the white caucus has more staff and resources than the people of color caucus. This racist practice will undermine the caucus process.

- Caucus agenda’s need to be developed with intention. People of color caucuses and white caucuses will often have very different agendas. But, an organization that is seeking to use caucuses as part of a process of anti-racist organizational development must think clearly about how the caucus agendas create movement toward organizational goals. Again, it is often useful for the Change Team to have a role in developing caucus agendas.