Beyond Diversity

A ROADMAP TO BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE ORGANIZATION

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www.diversegreen.org

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Many thanks to all of those who participated in surveys and interviews. Your willingness to participate is a positive sign of your interest in diversifying this sector and this report would not have been made possible without you. And special thanks to all of those involved in this work for lending their expertise and drive to see it to fruition.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The increasingly diverse demographics of the United States and the rising share of educational and consequent financial capital possessed by people of color are beginning to force organizations across sectors to rethink models of success and how to ensure sustainability in the future. In the environmental sector, organizations are turning attention to diversifying management and leadership to better reflect the constituencies they serve. In order to do this effectively, mainstream environmental organizations must institute readiness, recruitment, and retention (3Rs) practices that integrate diversity, equity and inclusion into their mission and work. In terms of diversity, equity and inclusion, readiness refers to an organization's capacity and preparedness to foster diverse viewpoints, support employees and partner organizations through inclusive and equitable practices and culture. Recruitment means the active procurement of diverse talent pools, and retention means building meaningful pathways to promotion and building affinity within the organization so that all differences are valued. 3R best practices are the tools by which an organization meets its diversity challenges, especially at the highest levels, and transforms into a truly inclusive work culture. 3R practices are critical to organizations remaining relevant and developing sustainable solutions to our most pressing environmental problems.

This Report

Research on readiness, recruitment, and retention practices among environmental NGOs and foundations has been limited, with virtually no examination of how these practices increase diversity and which specific practices used by these organizations are most effective. In this study, we examine these practices, collected through 85 in-depth interviews and surveys with CEOs, COOs and HR Directors of major U.S.-based environmental NGOs and foundations. Where appropriate, we also present relevant research from diversity studies outside the environmental movement.

A significant aspect of this research includes interviews with consultants from blue chip and boutique executive search firms identified as having been used frequently by environmental organizations in the recent past. Some analysis of that research is included here, and a more thorough examination of executive search practices and their efficacy in diversifying the C-Suites of environmental NGOs and their funders is captured in a separate report, *Diversity Derailed: Limited Demand, Effort and Results in Environmental C-Suite Searches* (2016).

Defining Diversity and Why it Matters

When asked for the working definition of diversity used by their organizations, NGOs and foundations were either unable to cite the definition or were unsure whether their organization used one. Without a shared definition of diversity, it is clear why it would be difficult for NGOs and foundations to follow through on their stated desire to diversify. In contrast, search firm consultants, particularly at smaller firms, had very clear definitions of diversity that were generally more sophisticated. Search consultants agreed, for example, that filling one position with someone different than the status quo of an organization would not diversify it.

Regardless of how a firm or organization defined diversity, participants were clear about the benefits of diversity and why it mattered. Several noted that diversity not only helps an organization get rid of its blind spots and relate to the communities it serves, but also increases creativity and makes good business sense. When it comes to the environmental sector broadly, at least 70 percent of representatives from NGOs, foundations and search firms agreed that diversity could help:

- attack environmental problems from multiple perspectives;
- increase focus on environmental justice;
- help brand the movement by making it appear more heterogeneous; and
- increase support for the movement by widening its constituents.

Participants were also asked about the challenges of diversity and, overwhelmingly, NGOs, foundations, and search firms agreed that diversity could lead to cultural misunderstandings.

Diversity Plans, Managers, and Committees

Despite the challenges to diversity, most NGOs and foundations were proactively engaged in at least one initiative related to readiness, recruitment, or retention. Prior research evinces the positive effects that diversity managers, committees and plans have on increasing diversity in leadership within organizations. Research shows that diversity plans increases the odds of black men in management positions significantly. This same research indicates that designated diversity staff, such as a diversity manager or chief diversity officer, has a greater impact than do diversity plans. However, research also establishes that diversity task forces or committees, ones comprised of division leaders from across an organization, have even stronger effects on managerial diversity than does the presence of a diversity manager (Dobbin and Kalev 2007). That is, in terms of increasing people of color in leadership, while a diversity plan is nice, a diversity manager is better, and a diversity committee is best.

For the 39 percent of foundations and NGOs that had a plan in place, participants described diversity plans as rather vague instruments, consisting primarily of broad statements about the need to diversify but without concrete goals, programming, or incentives — positive or negative — for managers and staff to comply. Among plans that were more developed, however, several trends emerged, they are:

1. Ensure ownership of the plan throughout the organization;

2. Hold staff and managers accountable for achievement by making it a part of annual evaluations;

3. Emphasis recruiting and ensure that the slate of candidates identified was diverse; and

4. Measure diversity goals comprehensively.

Despite the overall efficacy associated with these positions, however, only 26 and 13 percent of NGOs and foundations had diversity managers in place. Moreover, of the few organizations that had such personnel, the majority were relatively new features, having been put in place within the last three years. Because of the newness of the position, the responsibilities of diversity managers appeared to be even more elusive than the content of diversity plans. Generally, managers are charged with creating or revamping diversity plans, determining what diversity trainings are needed, acting as a liaison for diversity committee if one existed, and overseeing initiatives like internships targeted at women or people or color.

Diversity committees or task forces were the most common initiative taken by participating NGOs and foundations. The charge of the diversity committees reported by study participants was the least developed aspect of these initiatives, and none emphasized the importance of diversity in senior leadership. However, research on for-profit organizations suggests that diversity committees are generally charged with identifying remedial steps, overseeing diversity initiatives, and monitoring progress (Dobbin and Kalev 2007). If the leadership of an organization takes input seriously, then the diversity committee is capable of being the type of effective change agent that has long-term influence on increasing diversity in management.

Best Practices in Readiness, Recruitment, and Retention

The following recommendations are broader than those found in prior research and are based on this study's empirical evidence. In order to implement effective readiness, recruitment, and retention strategies, organizations should:

- **Integrate diversity into the structure, mission and bottom line:** A culture of integration and learning should be implemented where employees can contribute the insights, skills, and experiences they have developed as members of various cultural identity groups.

- **Require accountability:** Executive and senior management should be responsible for ensuring diversity-related issues are given attention, communicated down the line, and executed.

- **Provide incentives:** Incentive structures that require cooperation produce results, as team membership becomes more salient than demographic differences.

- **Establish a diversity committee or manager:** Diversity managers and diversity committees must be senior level positions or comprised of senior level employees so that initiatives that address diversity issues are communicated, accepted, and executed.

- **Develop a comprehensive plan with evaluation:** Effective diversity plans and the programs related to them should be based on concrete goals with ongoing evaluations and feedback.

- **Employ metrics to identify organizational needs:** Metrics should be used to track progress towards clearly defined goals and request feedback to make refinements as time goes by.

- **Use metrics to attract diverse applicants:** Metrics convey the emphasis an organization places on its diversification and inclusion efforts. Messages expressing the desire of an organization to target specific groups for recruitment due to the value it places on diversity and diverse perspectives are particularly effective.

- **Recognize limitations of diversity training:** The small body of empirical research that does exist about diversity trainings suggests that current practices are largely ineffective over the long-term. Therefore, it is imperative to conduct needs assessments to determine what content should be included in training modules.

INTRODUCTION

America's demographics are changing. By 2043, there will be no racial/ethnic group that comprises a majority. For non-profits, this equates to a fundamental shift in the donor base, constituents, and policymakers on which they rely. Successful organizations will need to adapt their workforces to accommodate these changing dynamics, and to do that leadership must begin to look more like other stakeholders.

Finding qualified leaders of color to fill these positions should not be difficult. The changing demography of the United States are concurrent with an increase in the educational qualifications of people of color. Between 2010 and 2016 alone, the percent of people of color[1] age 16 and above with at least a bachelor's degree increased from 14% to 16%, and went from representing 23% to 27% of degree holders. Yet despite the increasingly high number of well-educated people of color, diversity among management and leadership across sectors and industries remains negligible. In 2012, for example, 68% of U.S. companies had executive management teams that were at least 90% white (Hunt, Layton and Prince 2012). And although otherwise progressive, the environmental advocacy sector is predominantly led by white men. As of 2014, only 3% and 13% of the top three positions[2] at environmental NGOs and foundations respectively were held by people of color (Taylor 2014).

An abundance of research produced over the past twenty-plus years has demonstrated the benefits of diversity for organizations, including improved problem-solving (Antonio et al 2008) and creativity within teams (McLeod and Lobel 1992), as well as expanded customer bases and greater market share (Herring 2009). The persistent homogeneity of organizations in the face of an increasingly strong business case for diversity, however, suggests that part of the problem may be a fundamental lack of awareness about how to increase and maintain diversity, particularly at upper levels. Indeed, while NGOs and foundations have blamed a lack of job openings for their slow rate of racial diversification, most environmental organizations made hires between 2011 and 2014 and only 13% and 17% were people of color (Taylor 2014).

Prior research on lack of organizational diversity has focused primarily on the educational pipeline as well as organizational cultures and discriminatory hiring practices for entry and mid-career positions. It offers little information about what occurs at more senior levels and does not provide concrete, empirically based recommendations on how to change institutional dynamics and demographics.

This study investigates the ways in which NGOs, foundations, and search firms approach diversification and inclusivity at the senior levels and how specific actions impact their efforts to recruit and retain diverse talent. The following report has two components. First, it examines the attitudes towards diversity, and the diversity and inclusion efforts of mainstream environmental NGOs and foundations, as well as the search firms they employ. Second, it presents a best practices guide for diversity and inclusion relying on the interviews and survey results coupled with extensive academic research on diversity efforts.

A REVIEW OF PRIOR RESEARCH

The Importance of Diversity in Senior Leadership Positions

Since the early 1990s, leaders of environmental organizations have articulated a desire to diversify, yet minimal progress has been made, especially at the top (Taylor 2014). This is not only emblematic of a lack of racial equality within the environmental advocacy sector, but it overlooks the significant body of social science research that demonstrates diversity is highly beneficial to individual employees, work groups, and organizations as a whole.

Research demonstrates that diverse leadership is associated with a number of organization-wide advantages. Most germane to the non-profit sector, past studies show that organizations with diverse senior personnel and boards tend to have stronger social governance performance (Soares, Marquis and Lee 2011; Brown, Brown and Anastasopoulos 2002), more customers, greater market share (Herring 2009) and are more innovative (Miller and Triana 2009). Diversity in leadership is also an important antecedent to increasing diversity at different levels. Organizations that are diverse at upper levels have been shown to have employees that act against biases in their workplace interactions (Gelfand, Nishii, Raver and Schneider 2007), while the proportion of people of color in top management has a positive effect on the odds of subsequent hires of women and people of color to lower level management positions (Dobbin and Kalev 2007).

The advantages to employees of working in a diverse environment include greater intellectual engagement and motivation (Gurin 1999), improved problem-solving abilities, heightened cognitive functioning (Gurin, Dev, Hurtado and Gurin 2002; Chang, Astin, and Kim 2004; Lising et al 2004;) and lower intergroup anxiety (Levin, van Laar, and Sidanius 2003). Diversity is also associated with improved team problem-solving abilities (Antonio et al 2008). In particular, diverse working groups tend to make more cooperative choices (Cox, Lobel and McLeod 1991) and produce higher quality, more unique ideas (McLeod and Lobel 1992). As Page (2007) points out, innovation is dependent not only upon collective ability but also upon difference: “If people think alike then no matter how smart they are they most likely will get stuck at the same locally optimal solutions. Finding new and better solutions, innovating, requires thinking differently. That’s why diversity powers innovation.”

INTERVIEW AND SURVEY RESULTS

The Importance of Defining Diversity

Understanding how different stakeholders define and understand diversity is an important first step in identifying the leaks and blockages to changing the racial composition of environmental NGOs and foundations. When interview participants were first asked for the working definition of diversity used by their organizations, most were either unable to cite the definition or were unsure whether their organization used one. As the CEO of a foundation pointed out, this was rather perplexing since his/her[3] organization and several others did not have a working definition of diversity but did have a diversity task force and other diversity initiatives:

> *We actually don't [have a working definition of diversity]. It's an interesting thing. We haven't defined it on paper but it would make a big difference. We have a diversity and inclusion task force. We talk about getting diverse people in the room and making sure everybody room feels like they matter and they're included, but we don't have a definition.*

Likewise, the CEO of an NGO pointed out that,

> *It's mildly problematic how we talk about [diversity] because I think it's just sort of used as a really generic term and a lot of people import different values from it. So, we need to talk about it much differently. It should be more specific.*

Indeed, as became evident throughout the interviews, without a shared definition, it was difficult for organizations to follow through on their stated desires to diversify. Ultimately, most respondents from NGOs and foundations provided the definition they believed their organization would use if they were defining diversity explicitly and, in most cases, that referred to demographic diversity — race and gender primarily, with the occasional nod to sexual orientation.

In contrast, search firm consultants, particularly those at smaller, boutique firms, had very clear definitions of diversity that were generally far more complex. One consultant described three different facets of diversity his/her firm used:

> *We think of diversity in three ways: demographic diversity, experiential diversity and cognitive diversity. So, the demographic of course is race, gender, sexual orientation, religion… which obviously is quite related to experiential diversity: how people experience the world and what what you've done in your life. What kinds of environments did you work in, that kind of thing. And then cognitive is how people think in different ways or communicate in different ways. There are all related, right? We try to look at these things together but separately as well.*

Other search consultants noted that the definition of diversity changed from search to search depending on the client and their current organizational demographics. One asserted,

> *We really define diversity pretty much in the context of each particular search, because it depends on the client and their goals and where they're located. And [given] what their workforce looks like, diversified might look different from place to place. So I would say with each search there might be a different definition of diversity.*

One thing all search consultants seemed to agree upon was that regardless of how diversity was defined — whether in general or for a specific search — filling one position with someone different than the status quo of an organization would not diversify it and that such efforts were bound to fail in the long run. As one consultant put it:

> *The idea of fixing a diversity problem through a single search is a problem in itself. I feel like many of the organizations I've dealt with are trying to fix a historical long-term organization-wide problem through like one senior leadership search and I think that's a problem that hinders a lot of organizations.*

Diversity Matters

Regardless of how a firm or organization defined, or did not define, diversity, participants had very clear beliefs about the benefits diversity could bring to an organization. Some, like the CEO of a foundation, noted the importance of diversity to providing different perspectives:

> *You get rid of your blind spots. When you have people who all — they say or have the same life experience, you are blind to what they don't know about. Because no matter how culturally sensitive you think you are, you grow up with a certain set of cultural assumptions.*

Others, like the HR director of another NGO explained that diversity fosters creativity:

> *I think workplace, culture and what happens in the workplace, I think that you get more creativity and you get more under — you get a better flexibility about difference and difference of opinion. When you have a kind of monoculture, anything that varies from that is hard. And when you have more diversity, there's more room for all kinds of ideas and opinions and experiences.*

A third line of reasoning was that a diverse workforce, particularly at senior levels, helped their organizations relate to the communities they served. One CEO, for example, stressed the need for cultural competency:

> *It's about inclusion for us. We see increasingly the changing demographics related to the kinds of policy changes that we want to see implemented.... It helps if your organization reflects the demographics that you're trying to reach. You get more sensitive. Issues of sensitivity and cultural competency really come into play if you look like the community that you're trying to participate in.*

And finally, a small number of organizations focused on the business case for diversity. The CEO of one NGO pointed to both the short and long-term implications of a diverse organization.

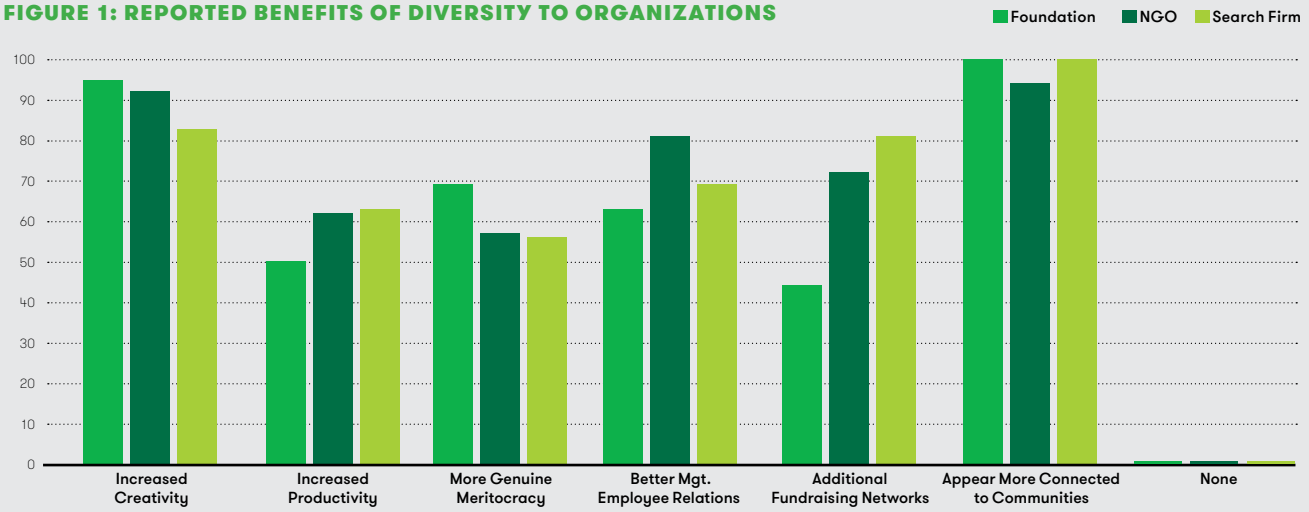
> *In one way, it's about making sure that we are able to address any challenge or questions or request for solutions that come — we're in a problem solving business. And if your ability to be successful is based on creativity or thinking differently then being organized differently and structured is part of that.*
>
> *If you think about this issue in a longer-term, broader perspective, the face of this country is changing. We're becoming blacker and browner, more urban, and those trends will accelerate. If we think about relevance going forward; if we think about political support going forward; if we think about financial support going forward, then it's hard to see how we survive without engaging a majority of Americans. Staying relevant, part of that is having the diversity of perspectives to be able to thrive in a changing country.*

He/she went on to assert that many of his/her colleagues were still looking at diversity as an issue of equality rather than a business necessity:

> *I would argue very strongly that most people right now are thinking "oh, we've got to diversify. Well, why? Because it's the right thing to do." But they're not thinking about the business implications for what's important to do, how to sequence that, how to do it appropriately. And that's endemic of the non-profit field. Non-profits are primarily staffed by people with big hearts and big visions and very little business sense. And I think that has got to change.*

Participants in the survey and interviews also provided yes/no responses concerning the potential benefits of diversity to organizations. As demonstrated in Figure 1, participants overwhelmingly believed that diversity increases creativity and social responsibility within an organization. Well over 50 percent of participants also believed that diversity would improve management/employee relations and promote a more genuine meritocracy. Sixty percent of NGOs and search firm participants, but slightly less than 50 percent of foundations believed that diversity would increase productivity.

FIGURE 1: REPORTED BENEFITS OF DIVERSITY TO ORGANIZATIONS



Participants were also asked about the benefits diversity could bring to the environmental sector. As Figure 2 demonstrates, most participants believed that diversity would increase the focus on environmental justice; widen the sector's constituency; help attack environmental problems; and get marginalized communities more involved. Despite the general agreement, however, there was significant disagreement regarding whether diversity could get marginalized communities involved in environmental advocacy. While 86 and 91 percent of search firm and NGO participants respectively agreed, only 68 percent of foundations did so.

Diversity was also seen as having a number of challenges that may help explain the slow movement to diversify among environmental NGOs and foundations. Only 31, 41 and 31 percent of foundations, NGOs and search firm representatives agreed that there were no challenges to diversity, respectively. As Figure 3 shows, well under 20 percent, and often under 5 percent of participants from each type of organization agreed that having a diverse staff requires organizations to protect themselves legally; it is difficult to achieve diversity without losing quality in the workforce; diverse hires often have a higher turnover rate; it is difficult to have cohesive diverse working groups; or that staff diversity can dilute the mission of an organization by increasing the number of issues on which they focus. Yet 63, 40 and 50 percent of foundations, NGOs and search firm participants agreed that diversity could lead to cultural misunderstandings.

As one HR director pointed out, diversity requires people to be open to understanding and appreciating different perspectives:

> *I think there are always challenges, right? It's one thing to be diverse; it's another thing to be inclusive: being able to be inclusive of divergent viewpoints or different backgrounds and experiences takes more.*

A CEO from another organization elaborated on the effort it takes to be inclusive:

> *It's easier sometimes to put together a homogeneous group because you know you all get the same jokes and you just have a common cultural frame of reference which allows you to do shorthand. So when you are building a diversity inclusive workplace, you have to intentionally work on it. It's slower at first because you have to work really hard build a culture. But I think once you have done that initial work, you can move much faster… I think if you're someone who's afraid of change or afraid of being pushed, diversity is hard because it inherently pushes you, but if you build a culture where learning and growing is a priority, then diversity becomes, once again, an asset.*

Similarly, another CEO noted,

> *Let's just say that it takes deliberate work. I like to think of diversity work and increasing diversity as something that takes a lot more effort on the front end and then once people are actually used to it and comfortable with it, then it becomes much more natural and people can see the benefits and feel the benefits. But I think at the front stages it isn't just throw everybody in and things will be fine or you can all of a sudden just recruit a bunch of people that you were not previously recruiting or hiring or retaining.*

FIGURE 2: REPORTED BENEFITS OF DIVERSITY TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL SECTOR

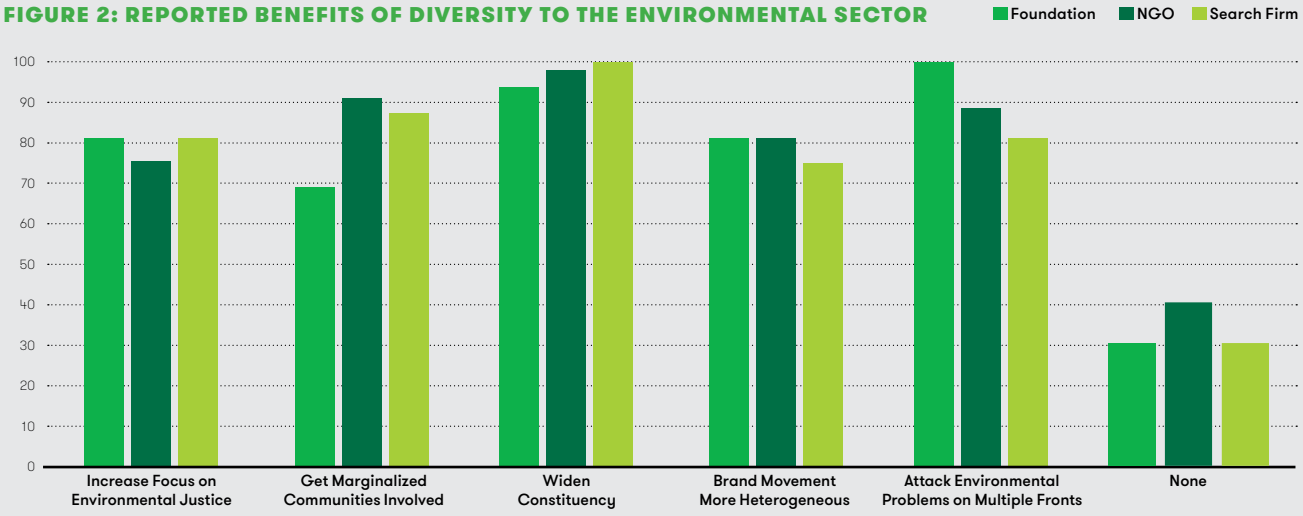
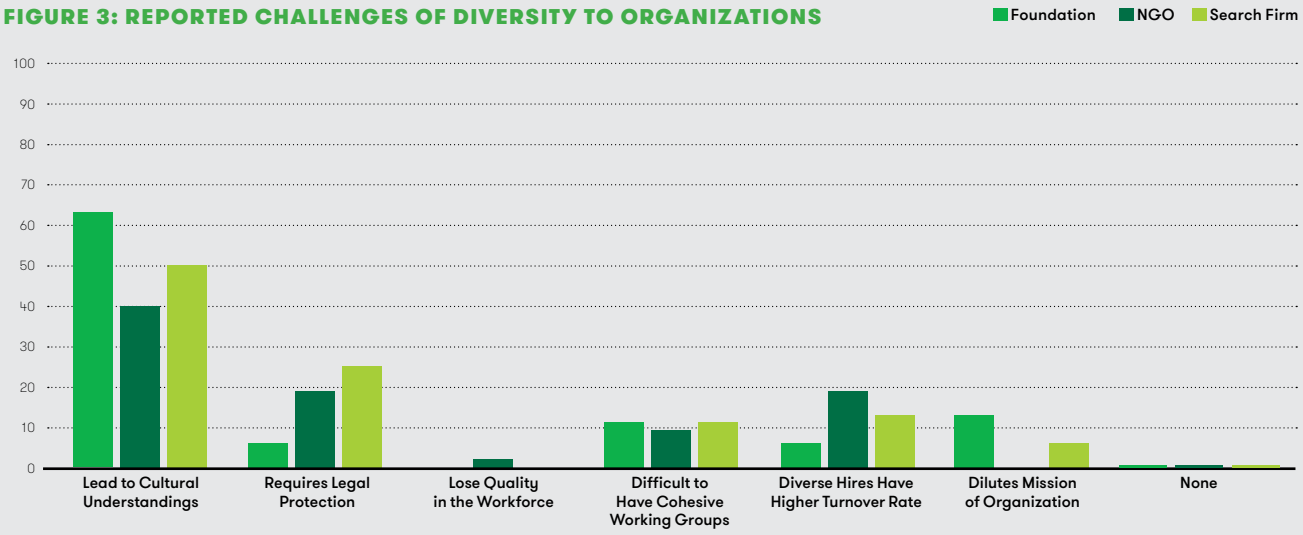


FIGURE 3: REPORTED CHALLENGES OF DIVERSITY TO ORGANIZATIONS



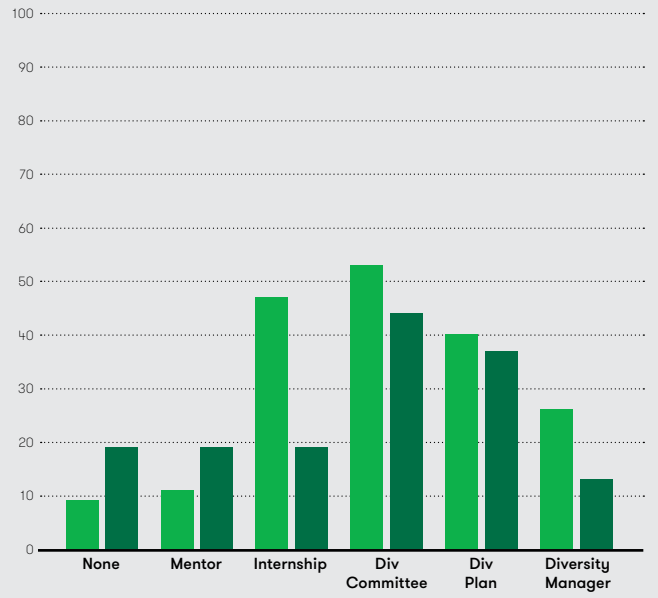
These responses provide some insight into the reluctance some leaders might have to diversifying. That is, those who did not believe the benefits of diversity outweigh the challenges, and those who did not want to or were unaware how to overcome certain challenges may well deprioritize diversifying, especially at the senior level. As one search consultant noted,

> *The bridge of moving from intention to action is one of the underlying problems — that every organization, mine included, struggles with. I think there's a widespread acceptance or belief that diversity is important and can help everyone achieve their missions, but I think there's an equally widespread total lack of understanding about actionable steps you can take to achieve it.*

Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives

Despite disagreement between NGOs and search firms over the cause of their troubles diversifying, most organizations were also proactively engaged in at least one initiative related to diversity readiness, recruitment or retention. As shown in Figure 4, the three most common initiatives in this sample were a diversity committee, internships, and a diversity plan.

FIGURE 4: DIVERSITY INITIATIVES EMPLOYED BY ORGANIZATIONS



The existence of these initiatives can be taken as a very positive sign of organizational willingness or desire to increase diversity among its leadership. However having these types of initiatives in place without an accurate understanding of the factors halting diversity or how these initiatives concretely impact them may diminish the chances for success. Indeed, none of the representatives interviewed could identify any effective metrics associated with their initiatives. One executive director of an NGO did note plans for monitoring progress:

> *It's going to essentially be a sort of monitoring component involving a combination of statistical analysis. We'll do an annual survey of staff and see whether our numbers are changing. And then we'll do annual anonymous survey of staff to get concerns and see if we're improving.*

While this is a step in the right direction, this CEO did not, however, tie the monitoring to any specific initiatives.

Surprisingly, several CEOs — organizational leaders who are purportedly forerunners of diversity efforts — had difficulty recalling specifics about what diversity initiatives were in place in their organizations. One executive director of an NGO responded enthusiastically, "Oh! My goodness! Tremendous benefits" to the question, "what benefits, if any, do you think come from diversity within your organization?" and went on to enumerate quite a few. Yet when asked whether the organization had specific diversity initiatives in place, he/she could only answer with certainty about two of the five (listed in Figure 4). Of those two, the one for which he/she responded most assuredly was an internship program aimed at undergraduates. He/she was unaware of anything in place for advancing mid or senior level staff.

Plans, Managers and Committees

Previous studies evince the positive effects that diversity managers, committees and plans can have on increasing diversity in leadership within organizations. Longitudinal research show that after employers create "affirmative action" or "diversity plans" the odds of black men in management positions increases significantly but has no effect on black women (Kalev, Dobbin and Kelly 2006; Dobbin and Kalev 2007). This same research indicates that designated diversity staff, such as a diversity manager or chief diversity officer, has a greater impact than do diversity plans. Employers with full-time diversity staff have seen significant increases in the odds of women and minorities (of both genders) being placed in management positions (Kalev, Dobbins, and Kelly 2006). As Dobbins and Kalev 2007 point out, "it helps to have a plan, but it is better to have a full-time staff person devoted to equity." However research also establishes that diversity task forces or committees, ones comprised of division leaders from across an organization, have even stronger effects on managerial diversity than does the presence of a diversity manager (Dobbin and Kalev 2007). That is, in terms of increasing people of color in leadership, while a diversity plan is nice, a diversity manager is better, and a diversity committee is best.

Fifty-nine percent of NGOs and foundations in this study identified themselves as having a diversity manager, committee or plan. However, what those looked like varied among organizations, and most importantly for this report, very little of the work or content involved was directly related to diversifying senior leadership, hence the positive effects shown in prior research may not extend to the environmental sector. In some cases, having a very small organization was identified as the reason for not having anything in place. It is hard to imagine having a diversity committee or manager with a total staff under 30 and no intentions to grow. However, most of the organizations that participated in this research are not that small.

Diversity Plans

Only 39 percent of foundation and NGO organizations reported having a diversity plan in place. In some cases, plans had been around for over ten years, often having undergone multiple revisions or reanimation (in situations in which they had simply existed on the books but had not been acted upon), and in other cases the plans were relatively new initiatives, often having been launched within the previous three years. In a number of cases, participants described diversity plans as rather vague instruments, consisting primarily of broad statements about the need to diversify but without concrete goals, programming, or incentives — positive or negative — for managers and staff to comply.

Among more developed plans, several trends emerged. First, there was a recurrent focus on ensuring ownership of the plan throughout the organization; each department or program set goals and was responsible for reaching them. The COO of one NGO described the purpose of doing so in his/her organization:

> *[To ensure] that each department owns and has an expectation of living out the principles of diversity and inclusion, from recruitment to vendor procurement to advocacy in all of the communities. And that they have specific expectations and goals associated with how does D&I (diversity and inclusion) reflect itself within your department. If we don't have very clearly defined D&I expectations and we don't have it cascading down to all the various departments, or various business units, and then naturally the independent staff personnel, then we won't ever realize the vision of D&I for this organization.*

Making attainment of whatever goals were set an implicit part of managers' annual evaluations and holding staff accountable was a second common component of more developed plans. The CEO quoted above went on to explain that:

> *Part of what we're doing now is trying to create D&I specific goals that bubble up to the overall D&I goals for the organization. That is certainly a part of the departmental leaders' evaluation. [For] 2016 we are making sure that each departmental leader has some level of D&I goals in their own departmental goals and may hold their staff accountable for working as again as advocates within the organization whether they serve on the [diversity committee] or not but just being a staff person at this organization and having the responsibility of being held accountable for meeting the departmental set of goals for D&I. We will be working with the departments to make sure that they each have a clearly qualified set of D&I goals for that department, that all departmental staffers are held accountable for it.*

The executive director of another NGO explained how they had gradually made diversity and inclusion a part of staff evaluations from the top down:

> *We haven't set a bonus system actually but these are key performance indicators that staff have, so, it's factored to their overall evaluation at the end of the year. Over the last few years, what we've done is we pushed it down into the organization, so that started with executive team then it went to senior managers and then all managers. Next year, we're doing all staff.*

A third feature of more developed diversity plans was an emphasis on recruiting, and ensuring that the slate of candidates identified was diverse. One HR manager from an NGO explained,

> *You've always been required to have an expansive search, but now you're being measured on whether that's happening. Candidates are being pushed back if the search was not expansive, so you're not allowed to hire without an expansive search.*

What was consistently missing in all of the diversity plans described by participants was how diversity goals would be measured comprehensively. This is similar to the corporate sector, which has been criticized repeatedly for doing little to measure efficacy aside from tracking basic hiring, promotion and turnover rates. In the case of the environmental sector, this is particularly problematic. Although 85 percent of NGOs and foundations reported tracking the race of hires, less than half of organizations (38 and 47 percent) tracked race in retention of recent hires or job leavers (at any point in their careers). According to research by the Corporate Leadership Council (2005), a lack of sophisticated metrics for success of diversity programming prevents organizations from identifying and understanding their progress against the goals they set in their diversity plans and from driving persistent improvement long-term.

Diversity Managers

Management experts have consistently contended that if an organization intends to accomplish a goal, it must make someone responsible for doing so. Hiring a diversity manager or director should make someone responsible for increasing diversity and inclusion within an organization by, among other things, examining workforce data to identify whether the policies and programs put in place to do so are effective, and by advising the organization and helping establish initiatives to ready, recruit and retain people of color at all levels of the organization (Dobbin and Kalev 2007).

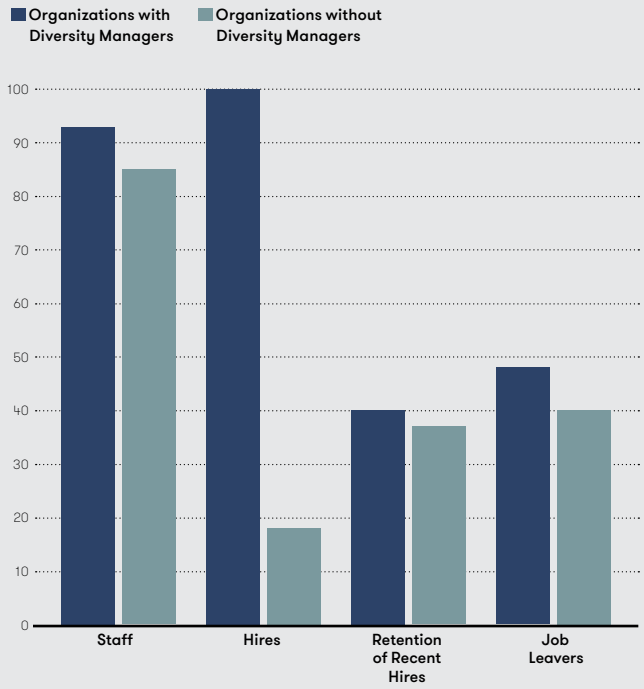
Only 26 and 13 percent of NGOs and foundations had diversity managers in place. Moreover, according to data gathered from the interviews, of these few organizations that had such personnel, the majority had only been put in place within the last three years. Further, in most cases, interview participants (HR managers, COOs and CEOs) were uncertain what the job of diversity manager encompassed. Generally, however, it appears that these personnel are often charged with creating or revamping diversity plans (if an organization had or planned to have one); determining what sort of diversity trainings, if any, would be provided to staff; and acting as a liaison or manager for the diversity committee if one existed. Diversity managers also oversaw the management and inception of other initiatives like internships targeted at women or minorities, or fellowships for recent graduates.

As of 2015, very little of what diversity managers did was directly related to increasing diversity of at the senior or mid-career levels, and as discussed previously, most organizations did not keep metrics on their hiring or retention. As shown in Figure 5 although most organizations tracked the racial demographics of staff, regardless of a whether they had a diversity manager, organizations with a diversity manager were far more likely to track the race of hires and less than half of organizations with or without diversity managers tracked race in retention or job leavers. Hence, there is evidence that having a diversity manager in the environmental sector is associated with some increase in maintaining metrics, but not consistently or comprehensively.

Diversity Committees

Diversity committees or task forces were the most common initiative taken by participating NGOs and foundations (53 and 44 percent), and they were also the most vague and varied entities described by HR Directors and CEOs. Some organizations had diversity committees comprised of dozens of staff members at all different levels of an organization while others, even those with hundreds of employees, were comprised of only a few senior staff. In some cases, organizations sought to have representation from each unit or division, while this was not a factor in the composition of other task forces.

FIGURE 5: TRACKING DIVERSITY WITHIN ORGANIZATIONS BY PRESENCE OF DIVERSITY MANAGERS



The charge of the diversity committees reported by study participants was the least developed aspect of these initiatives, and none emphasized the importance of diversity in senior leadership. Indeed in a few cases, the diversity committee itself was not demographically diverse due to a lack of people of color at higher levels in the organization. Research on for-profit organizations suggests that diversity committees are generally charged with identifying remedial steps, overseeing diversity initiatives, and monitoring progress (Dobbin and Kalev 2007). The CEO of a foundation described its diversity task force as partially responsible for two of those three things: overseeing initiatives — in this case, diversity trainings — and monitoring progress. He/she explained,

> *Primarily, what we do is we survey the staff or where they feel their areas they need to grow their skills, and we design a staff-wide development plan to help build the skills of the staff on the issues of inclusion. So for instance, we did Racism 101. We did Gender Identity 101, and these are specialized trainings for the entire team on topics that the teams said, "I'd really like to understand this topic better." That's been the main function of the task force. Plus we did establish a D&I dashboard this year, where we're looking at the percentage of staff that are people color, the percentage that are LGBT, the percentage that identify as women, the percentage that are US-born, and we also measure our board on these attributes. So every year we will get data, and we can see those trends that were encouraging or disparaging.*

He/she went on to describe how one of the initiatives of the task force had been put into action by the executive leadership in 2016.

> *This year, we are going to use a recommendation of the task force; we'll be incorporating in our professional development goals a cultural competency development goal. Because some people might be very familiar with LGBT issues but might not know much about disability. So they're supposed to identify where they most need to grow and set goals and a plan for how they're going to develop their cultural competency at that area.*

In this case, it seems the diversity task force had a clear mission and that the leadership of the organization took their input seriously, making it capable of being the type of effective agent of change identified by research on corporate diversity as having a long-term influence on increasing diversity in management.

Mentoring Programs

Internships are not typically thought of as being beneficial to increasing diversity among senior staff in the short term, but across industries and sectors, they have been accorded special status by executives for "building the pipeline" where a shortage of talent is commonly perceived. In this study, 19 and 47 percent of foundations and NGOs identified themselves as having some sort of internship program. Although the majority were focused squarely on college students, a few of the organizations offered fellowship programs to graduate students or mid-career professionals.

One foundation [whose executive director was interviewed] offers a one-year fellowship to three individuals with a six-figure salary to pursue a project targeted at the environment or the other area of focus funded by the organization. Fellows are generally recent graduates. Although not specifically designated for people of color, the majority of their fellows have been non-white, due in part to a strong message included in the online introduction to the fellowship regarding diversity.

Unlike internships and fellowship programs that typically focus on entry-level positions, mentoring has been lauded as capable of assisting staff move up the hierarchy at all levels. Prior studies indicate that mentoring programs have a positive impact on women and racial minorities moving into management positions. The assumption is that these relationships connect aspiring managers with people who can help them by providing them advice and connecting them with jobs (Dobbin and Kalev 2007).

Despite the general recognition within the business world that mentoring is effective, both as a tool for individual mobility and as a mechanism to increase diversity at upper levels within an organization, it was the program least used by the environmental organizations sampled. Only 11 and 19 percent of NGO and foundation representatives, respectively acknowledged having a formal mentoring program, and none of them were targeted specifically at upper levels or at people of color. Some organizational representatives suggested part of the reason they had not implemented a mentoring program was their belief that forced mentoring does not work. One NGO executive director asserted,

> *We don't have a formal mentoring program. And we have a whole series of vehicles for leadership development among our young and mid-level professionals. But this is my own feeling: forced mentoring programs are a farce. Mentoring happens when you like me and I like you. You have more experience than I do. And you're a good fit. I'm comfortable with you and you are comfortable with me. Those types of mentorships are enormously positive and productive and we have a lot of that that happens.*

The problem with voluntary matching is that individuals have preferences for working with and helping people they believe are like themselves, often along racial and gendered lines (Gorman 2005). They often do this unconsciously (Dovidio et al 1997). As a result, women and people of color are often unable to penetrate the networks of the white male dominated groups or organizations and miss out on important opportunities and resources (Seidel, Polzer, & Stewart, 2000). Thus, relying on informal mentoring as a mechanism to advance mid-career staff to senior positions is unworkable.

Recognizing that informal mentoring is not always an option, some of the organizations in this study required assigned pairing. For example, the CEO of a foundation explained their mandatory buddy system:

> *Everyone who is hired is assigned a buddy. We all know that the real issue around diversity is what's not said; it's the spoken cultural rules. And the purpose of the buddy is to be a cultural translator for the new employee so that they understand our culture. They understand why things happen the way they happen because it's always the unspoken that is the problem.*

Hence, while having an informal mentor that wishes to help a fellow employee because they feel some sort of bond, whether real or imagined, may be preferable, organizations with mentoring programs that keep diversity as a priority must, and in some cases already do, realize that is not always possible.

BEST PRACTICES FOR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Integrate Diversity Into the Structure, Mission and Bottom Line of Organizations

Diversification in organizations is not always successful. As several participants pointed out in the section on "Diversity Matters," diversity and inclusion must be deliberate and thoughtful. A carefully configured organizational environment — one that is supportive of diversity as a concept and of diverse workers — may need to be implemented before the benefits of diversity can be actualized (Dahlin, Weingart and Hinds 2005). In particular, diversity is most accepted when it is both structured and informally integrated into an organization (Cox and Tung 1997).

One framework for accomplishing this that has been applied with considerable success in the corporate sector is integration-and-learning within an organizational culture. This framework emphasizes the "insights, skills, and experiences employees have developed as members of various cultural identity groups," and encourages workers to learn from divergent viewpoints and approaches. In this case, a diversity of demographic or cultural backgrounds are considered "valuable resources that the work group can use to rethink its primary tasks and redefine its markets, products, strategies, and business practices in ways that will advance its mission" (Ely and Thomas 2001, p. 240). Moreover, because people from different backgrounds are able to bring more of themselves to their jobs, groups that are underrepresented, such as people of color, report feeling more respected, and organizations have an easier time attracting and retaining highly qualified professionals (Thomas and Ely 1996).

To successfully implement an integration-and-learning framework, Thomas and Ely (1996) recommend the following preconditions be met by an organization:

1. Leadership must accept and value that a diverse workforce will bring a diversity of perspectives and approaches to work.

2. Leadership must be committed to persevering in the face of inherent challenges that these different perspectives and approaches will bring to an organization.

3. There must be an expectation of high performance from everyone.

4. The organization should design jobs that allow people to grow and be educated.

5. Openness and tolerance for debate must be encouraged by the organizational culture.

6. All workers must be made to feel valued and empowered.

7. The organization must have a clear and well-recognized mission which includes diversity.

8. The organization must be structured to promote the exchange of ideas and welcome constructive challenges as a part of its culture.

As noted, leadership must convey strong support for this or any other framework used to make diversity part of the culture and strengths of an organization. Indeed, the factor most related to the efficacy of diversity initiatives is the perception that leadership supports it (Rynes and Rosen 1995). Arguably, having a leadership team that is itself racially diverse is perhaps the most powerful way of expressing this commitment (Jayne and Dipboye 2004).

Demonstrating the Impact of Diversity on the Bottom Line

Connecting diversification to organizational results can be the foundation of success. In order for effective, long-term change to occur, all stakeholders must recognize and embrace the business case for change, and that business case must be tailored to the specific work of an organization (Jayne and Dipboye 2004). For example, research on the banking industry (Richard 2000) established a positive association between racial diversity and firm performance in institutions pursuing a growth strategy. In this case, the insight and cultural sensitivity provided by people of color could be a strategic asset to organizations entering new markets.

The COO of an NGO reflected upon the response to recent senior diverse hires made by his/her organization:

> *When [Chris] started bringing in all these things that [he/she] did with [his/her] previous organization and similar roles to this organization to advance objectives, metrics, etcetera, people were like, "Wow! So these folks are on point." So when performance and change in culture are aligned, it broadens or increases the willingness to take that additional step to try to find [more diverse leadership]. It actually works. So now when [Chris] says in a staff meeting or something, "This is what we need to do regarding diversity," and they (other staff) get the data or a best practice, benchmark, or something like that, then they feel like, "Okay, we have the assurance that this is something that actually makes business sense. It actually, it increases our effectiveness."*

Employ Metrics to Identify Organizational Needs

Because there is no one-size-fits-all strategy to increase and retain diversity, particularly at the senior level, diversity initiatives must be carefully tailored to the organization, taking into account the mission, work products, current organizational culture, and demographics. A needs assessment of employees and senior staff as well as an evaluation of current interventions can help ensure organizations select programs and policies that are well suited to what they are trying to achieve (Jayne and Dipboye 2004). Metrics should be used to track progress towards clearly defined goals and request feedback to make refinements as time goes by (Rice 2012).

The following is a list of suggested measures organizations should gather at regular intervals:

1. Cultural Audit

    a. The current demographic composition of an organization at different levels and within different units, departments or components.[4]

    b. Employee attitudes regarding diversity separated out by demographic categories.

    c. Workforce flow including hires, turnover rates, promotion rates.

    d. Employees utilization and/or awareness of resources (e.g. formal or informal mentoring, participation in affinity groups, participation in professional education or coaching).

    e. A review of complaints and legal activity regarding employment practices.

2. Review of Diversity Initiatives

    a. Inputs (e.g. the number of events sponsored, available mentors, outreach programs, budget of the diversity manager and/or committee, the number of diversity trainings).

    b. Outputs (e.g. the number of individuals who actively participate in a mentorship or buddy program, the number of individuals who attend sponsored events, the number of individuals who participate in career coaching or learning opportunities, the number or amount of time individuals spend on diversity trainings).

    c. Outcomes (e.g. promotions and salary increases, attitudinal changes about diversity, attitudinal changes about the organizational culture, specific actions taken by senior leaders and managers to promote diversity and inclusion).

    d. The relationship between outputs and outcomes for different demographic groups:

        i. Perhaps most importantly, longitudinal data and evaluations of these programs must be collected. This enables evaluators to assess the direction of causality and establish whether their programing was, indeed, responsible for specific outcomes (Leggon 2010).

        ii. Formative evaluations, those made in the midst of programming, can provide feedback to facilitate changes to enhancing outcomes.

Provide Mentoring Programs with Careful Matching and Monitoring

Prior research shows that biases within organizations can have significant effects on the salaries and promotion potential of people of color (Roth 2004) by disadvantaging their access to resources and opportunities associated with mentoring. Because most high-ranking positions are dominated by white men — many of whom express a preference for working with other white men — people of color often find it difficult to find a mentor who can and/or is willing to offer important career related advice and access (Burke, McKeen and McKenna, 1993; Whitely, Dougherty and Dreher, 1991; Dreher and Cox 1996).

Carefully crafted mentoring programs for employees at all levels can help ensure that people of color are not overlooked and further restrained by the absence of powerful network tools. This requires ensuring the following:

1. Employees of color are aware that a mentoring program is available to them.

2. Potential mentees are provided with mentor options, specifically, employees senior to themselves and are in their same vocational field (e.g. attorneys should be matched with attorneys, scientists should be matched with scientists, program managers should be matched with program directors, etc.).

3. Mentors and mentees be provided with clear guidelines about the role and structure of the program.

4. A reporting program is in place (preferably a form of electronic tracking) that monitors meetings and the overall relationship between the pair. The system should automatically alert whomever is tasked with overseeing the mentor program if meetings are infrequent or do not follow guidelines.

Develop a Comprehensive Diversity Plan

Effective diversity plans and the programs related to them are based on a foundation of concrete goals with ongoing evaluations and feedback. Goals, such as those memorialized in diversity plans, affect performance through three main mechanisms (Locke and Latham 2002):

1. Goals direct attention and effort toward relevant activities.

2. Goals serve to energize individuals and organizations. More aggressive goals lead to greater effort than do less aggressive goals.

3. Goals indirectly affect action by leading to the stimulation, learning and use of strategies.

Regardless of the specific goals, they should be based on a comprehensive assessment of the organization (such as a cultural audit as recommended above) and translated into tangible targets that can be evaluated over time (Jayne and Dipboye 2004). These goals should be buttressed with a clearly articulated justification that legitimizes the efforts, and provide meaning and significance to current racial and gender patterns in an organization (Sturm 2001).

The following elements listed in Table 1 are recommended for inclusion in an organizational diversity plan:

TABLE 1:
RECOMMENDED DIVERSITY PLAN ELEMENTS

COMPONENTS
A message(s) or foreword by organizational leaders stating the purpose of the diversity plan and how it fits into the mission of the organization.
An explanation of the business case for diversity and inclusion specific to the organization.
A statement regarding the importance of moving beyond compliance with state and federal regulations in order to ensure that diversity is effective for the organization as well as for current and future employees of all demographic backgrounds.
A breakdown of current workforce diversity by demographics, organizational units, and level of employee.
A comparison of hires and losses by demographics, organizational units and level of employee.
An overview of the diversity and inclusion plan including the mission, vision, values, goals and steps for implementation.
Specific long-and short-term goals with strategies for actualizing them, and measures of efficacy.

Use Metrics to Attract Diverse Applicants

Metrics and diversity plans are not only useful for evaluating the existing workforce and identifying next steps. Metrics can also serve the audience of potential job candidates by conveying the emphasis an organization places on its diversification and inclusion efforts. During the job-search process, applicants use peripheral cues or signals to make inferences about unknown organizational characteristics in an effort to assess that organization (Rynes, Bretz and Gerhart 1991). And while signals that indicate an organization is racially diverse or values diversity, are useful in attracting minority applicants, they have no impact on non-minorities, making it a "win-win for organizations that wish to diversify without turning off white applicants" (Avery, Hernandez and Hebl 2004).

Messages expressing the desire of an organization to target specific groups for recruitment due to the value it places on diversity and diverse perspectives are particularly effective (Avery and McKay 2006). Thus organizations with comprehensive diversity plans may showcase them prominently on their website. Likewise, highlighting diversity efforts through recruiting materials or on the organizational website may cause people of color to find an organization more attractive since persons with strong racial identities tend to be more attracted to organizations that make explicit references to their diversity initiatives (Gelfand et al 2007).

Require Accountability and Provide Incentives

Institutional barriers to diversification are often systematic, subtle, and deeply ingrained (Lyness 2002), therefore increasing diversity and inclusion requires persistent and thoughtful leadership. As John Rice (2012, p. 40) points out, "If no one person or group is responsible for building a diverse senior management pipeline, it's hard to develop an integrated, game-changing strategy."

While human resources can be beneficial in this regard, research indicates that line management is more effective at owning diversity strategies, and holding managers and other employees accountable. Thus many organizations maintain diversity committees with executive and senior line manager representation responsible for ensuring diversity related issues are given attention, communicated down the line, and executed (Jayne and Dipboye 2004).

Research also indicates that incentive structures must promote cooperation and encourage the formation of collegial relationships (Brickson 2000). That is, when the work and incentives require cooperation, team membership becomes more salient than demographic differences. In contrast, individualistic task designs, incentives, appraisals and compensation systems foster barriers to cooperation and inhibit team members from appreciating the benefits of the very diversity goals towards which they are working (Chatman, Polzer and Barsade 1998). Thus repeatedly emphasizing the relationship between diversity and the bottom line, basing part of employee or unit compensation on reaching goals, continually collecting feedback on performance (from a variety of stakeholders including superiors, peers and subordinates), and recognizing successes are all strongly recommended.

Recognize the Limitations of Diversity Trainings

The diversity training industry is estimated to be worth at least $8 billion (Huet 2015). An estimated 43 percent of U.S. organizations report using diversity trainings (Society for Human Resource Management 2009) yet empirical research indicates they are largely ineffective over the long-term (e.g. Hill and Augoustinos 2001) and sometimes backfire. Specifically, diversity trainings do not significantly affect individual attitudes towards particular racial or gender groups (Kulik and Roberson, 2008). Instead, in the short-term people learn to respond in the politically correct way to questions about bias and, in the long-term, they "forget the right answers" and actually report increased hostility towards other groups (Dobbin and Kalev (2016).

Perhaps most importantly, diversity trainings appear to have limited positive effects on organizational dynamics. For example, Dobbin and Kalev (2016) found that trainings had no significant effect on the percent of white female, black male or hispanic managers, and had significant negative impacts on the percent of black female and asian managers. They surmised that it is difficult to "train away stereotypes" and that because white men frequently respond poorly to training, it can provoke a backlash (Dobbin and Kalev 2007). Indeed, people of color are significantly more likely to transfer the knowledge they gain in trainings to the workplace than are their white counterparts (Roberson, Kulik and Pepper 2009). As John Rice (2012), founder of Management Leaders for Tomorrow, pointed out in the Harvard Business Review,

Changing the organizational culture to level the playing field is important. But culture change happens very slowly — and usually not at all until new faces have appeared in your company's leadership ranks and new perspectives have begun to reshape its strategies. Your first priority should be to improve performance and promotion rates in underrepresented groups. You'll find that culture change comes more readily from a critical mass of diverse executives than from a series of diversity and inclusion seminars or one high-profile minority hire.

Although evidence of the efficacy of diversity trainings is sparse, the context and content of these trainings matter (Dobbin and Kalev (2016). We do not know enough from the small amount of research that does exist to endorse any particular practice or to encourage dismissing diversity training entirely. Instead, we strongly encourage organizations that wish to continue offering diversity trainings to employ thorough evaluations using three key criteria:

1. Evaluations must use at least three data points. Do not rely on the typical pre-test/post-test designs applied immediately before and immediately after trainings. By examining effects in the short, interim and long-term, we increase our ability to understand the speed and durability of learning outcomes (Kulik and Roberson 2008).

2. Use objective measures and avoid self-assessments of skills. One option is to use instruments based on implicit measures of behaviors and attitudes such an implicit association tests (Bezrukova, Jehn and Spell 2012).

3. Test not only for intent to engage in positive diversity behavior, but the actual behavior itself.

4. Measure the effects of diversity trainings on diversity itself. Measuring attitudinal and behavioral changes are important, but organizations must also identify whether diversity trainings actually impact diversity.

CONCLUSION

Environmental organizations and the search firms with which they work are in the same position organizations across sectors and industries now find themselves: in a race to adapt to shifting American demographics or become obsolete. A critical step in doing this is to diversify their leadership. Yet although this need has been driven, in part, by an increasing body of research that demonstrates the importance of diversity, there is a void in the literature about what organizations are doing and which practices are effective. This study is one of the few to examine the readiness, recruitment and retention efforts of organizations.

While this study is about the environmental sector and their practices, the findings are generalizable to many other sectors including the broader NGO sector, as well as a variety of for-profit industries and government offices that are working to diversify. As people of color become the majority in communities across the United States, successful organizations will need to engage diverse constituencies or consumer bases, employ a more diverse workforce, and hold themselves accountable to increasingly diverse donor bases or shareholders in order to maintain and grow their operations. By studying environmental organizations, a sector that is regarded as socially progressive and whose work is considered altruistic, we have a chance to examine what transpires within a context in which diversity is ideologically consistent with organizational norms, but has not been achieved. Additional barriers may well exist in the 3Rs within fields that have not, at least outwardly expressed diversity as a priority, but those areas are fast becoming a minority. We began this study by asking participants to define diversity — an important first step in identifying the [leaks and blockages] to changing the racial composition of environmental NGOs and foundations. However, many of the CEOs in our sample could not recall whether their organization had a definition of diversity or provide one on their own. Yet without a working definition of diversity, it is difficult for organizations to plan for and implement initiatives to diversify. That is, it is hard to operationalize something for which a clear concept is lacking; at the least, it makes it difficult to come to a consensus about what can and should be done. Search firm consultants, on the other hand, often had had very clear definitions of diversity, but as we found in *Diversity Derailed*, if search firms do not push their clients, NGOs and foundations frequently falter in their commitment to prioritize diversity.

The issue of prioritizing diversity, and the lack of commitment among some organizations to do so, was made all the more clear in the benefits of workplace diversity cited by different actors. Although a high proportion of participants from foundations, NGOs and search firms agreed on a wide variety of benefits that diversity held for the environmental sector and also agreed that within organizations it increased creativity, social responsibility, and the appearance of connectedness to communities, far fewer believed diversity leads to heightened productivity or a more genuine meritocracy. While it is encouraging that key stakeholders see at least some benefits of diversity, it is essential that they recognize diversity is not only the right thing to do, but a business necessity. Without having an organizational imperative, it is easy for organizations to falter in their commitment.

On the bright side, 53 and 44 percent of NGOs and foundations had implemented diversity committees, 40 and 38 percent had adopted diversity plans, and 26 and 13 percent had hired a diversity manager — three of the most effective diversity practices available when executed carefully, with forethought and frequent reviews. Yet given the lack of belief that diversity affects the bottom line, it comes as no surprise that while most NGOs had at least one diversity initiative related to readiness, recruitment or retention, none were tied to any sort of organizational audit, nor had any organizations conducted an evaluation of the efficacy of such programs. This is not a problem limited to the environmental advocacy sector, but it is one that is limited to diversity.

The Bottom Line

In order for organizations to properly implement a 3R strategy, diversity requires a consistent commitment and engagement from top leadership. First, this requires a commitment to integrating diversity into the structure, mission, and work of the organization. It must be seen as a valuable resource (Ely and Thomas 2001) for individuals, teams, and the organizational bottom line rather than only another initiative for social equality. Leadership must convey strong support for this framing in order to emphasize its importance and hold others accountable. A clear indicator of such commitment is to diversify the leadership itself (Jayne and Dipobye 2004). Search firms can assist in doing this by encouraging the organizations that hire them to maintain diversity as a priority in their leadership hires, as discussed in *Diversity Derailed*, and by recommending the establishment of strong readiness and retention programs to support the diversity they build.

Although we have laid out a series of best practices in this report, is it essential to remember that diversity strategies and initiatives must be tailored to individual organizations. This means not only reviewing and potentially revising the mission of the organization to incorporate diversity, but also collecting metrics to assess organizational needs prior to devising goals and creating policies or programming to reach them. Developing robust metrics for evaluating the efficacy of diversity programming enables organizations to identify progress and improve initiatives.

Notwithstanding the challenges to building and maintaining a diverse leadership, real and perceived, there is a clear interest in doing so. The few diversity initiatives that are in place in some of the organizations that participated in this research are either quite new or have only recently been reanimated, so it is not possible to assess their effectiveness. However, we are encouraged by the considerable interest participating organizations expressed in this report and have sought to provide empirically tested best practices and recommendations that they can utilize in building their 3R practices in the future.

APPENDIX A: STUDY METHODOLOGY

This report is based on the findings obtained from a study of the practices employed by major environmental NGOs and foundations as well as the executive search firms they employ in an effort to diversify their senior staff.

Sample Frame

The 85 participants that took part in this research came from a convenience sample of three types of organizations:

- Major U.S.-based environmental advocacy organizations (i.e. members of the Green Group — an alliance of approximately 36 of the nation's largest environmental organizations) — as well as environmental organizations that were recognized by the Foundation Center as having been among the top 40 NGOs that received the most foundation funding in 2012.

- Foundations that are significant grant makers to environmental advocacy organizations (i.e. those listed among the top 50 foundations awarding the largest dollar value in grants to environmental organizations in 2012 according to the Foundation Center).

- Executive search firms which Green Group CEOs identified as having been used frequently by environmental advocacy organizations in the recent past.

Within these organizations, we sampled three different types of actors: CEOs from environmental organizations and foundations; human resources directors and chief operating officers from environmental organizations and foundations; and principal consultants or practice leaders at executive search firms.

Study Design

The study has two complementary components: a semi-structured, in-depth interview administered to 36 individuals, and an online survey (derived from closed-ended questions in the interview schedule) collected from 49 additional participants. The interviews, the primary component of this research design, allow us to delve into the whys and hows of the readiness, recruitment and retention practices, while the survey provided an opportunity to identify quantitative trends. Interviews and surveys took place over the course of four months, between September and December of 2015.

Interviews

The interviews, which lasted approximately 75 minutes each, were semi-structured such that each participant was asked a series of open-ended and closed-ended questions, but were provided the opportunity to discuss any other topics they believed are relevant. This allowed the researcher to explore new topics that arose during the interviews and to follow up on compelling responses. Interviews with participants in the DC Metro Area primarily took place at participants' offices, while the majority of other interviews took place via videoconference and a small number were completed over the telephone.

Surveys

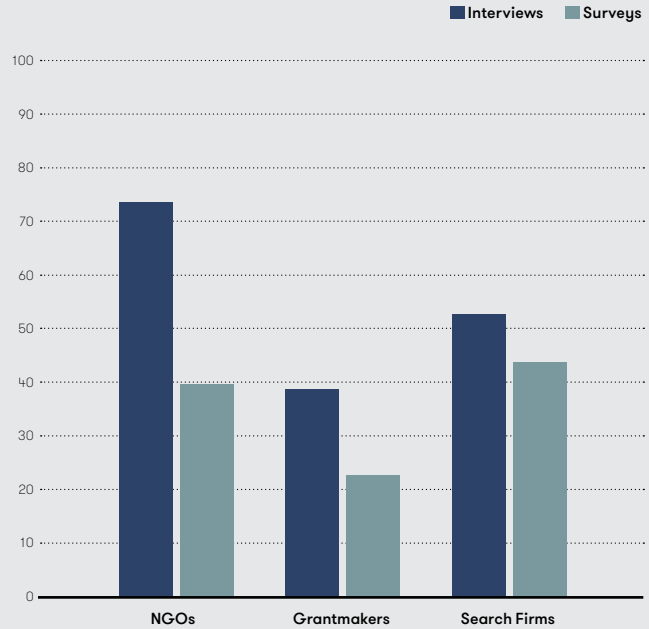
The online surveys were derived from closed-ended questions asked during the interviews. Survey data was collected through an online survey administered on surveymonkey.com that allowed the researcher to apply skip logic to questions and administer an electronic consent form through WuFoo, an online affiliate. All interview participants were asked the same closed-ended questions that appeared in the survey and their answers were entered into the survey database by the interviewer.

Recruitment

Solicitations for interview participants were made through tailored form letters sent to the CEOs, HR managers and a small number of COOs of environmental advocacy organizations and foundations, as well as to the environmental or non-profit practice managers of executive search firms. Individuals were provided with a scheduling link that allowed them to select the date and time of their interview as well as designate whether it would be conducted in-person on online. Individuals who elected to participate in a video or telephone interview were automatically provided with an electronic consent form. As displayed in Figure A we received a high rate of participation for both surveys and interviews. Of the 23 NGO, 23 foundation and 19 search firm executives contacted for an interview, 74, 39, and 52 percent respectively participated. This yielded 36 interviews.

Individuals who were solicited for an interview but were unable or unwilling to participate in this lengthier part of the study were invited to participate in an online survey that took approximately 20 minutes to complete. This was augmented by requests to additional individuals from the sampling frame. A total of 83 NGO, 30 foundation and 16 search firm executives were invited to participate in the survey. This resulted in 49 survey participants and a response rate of 40, 23 and 44 percent of NGO, foundation and search firm representatives respectively. The email requests for participation contained a direct link that allowed those who wished to participate to access the survey and electronic consent form.

FIGURE A: PARTICIPATION RATES BY ORGANIZATIONAL TYPE AND INSTRUMENT



Data Management And Analysis

All respondents were assigned a unique identifying number, and their first and last names, as well as their organizational affiliations were removed from the files used for analysis. A separate key file containing IDs and names was encrypted and stored on a flash drive locked in the principal investigator's office.

All recorded audio interviews[5] were transcribed; only the unique ID number of interview subjects appeared on the transcripts or any related files used for qualitative analysis. Transcripts and related files were kept on the principal investigator's computer and were protected using an encrypted password that only the PI knew.

The primary method used to analyze interviews was constant comparative analysis. This technique, developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), is one of the most commonly used qualitative techniques available. The strategy involves taking one piece of data (e.g. one interview or journal entry) and comparing it with all others from the same and then different groups in order to identify patterns and develop theories about the relationships between various pieces of data (Tesch 1990).

The survey data was protected on Survey Monkey using a Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) protocol that encrypts data transmitted and collected when subjects take a survey. Once all subjects completed the surveys (and the PI had entered survey responses for interview participants), the data was imported into STATA where it was cleaned, coded and analyzed. Because of the exploratory nature of the research and due to the relatively small sample size (N=85) only basic descriptive analysis was used.

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FOOTNOTES

1. Non-white persons alone or in combination.
2. The top three positions defined here include Executive Director, President, and Vice President.
3. The use of both pronouns is intended to preserve the anonymity of participants.
4. Tracking demographics within an organization, both pre- and post-hire is legal and in some cases, obligated by the federal government. This data must, however, be voluntarily provided by the applicant or employee.
5. Of the 36 individuals interviewed, 34 consented to having their interviews audio-recorded and transcribed.

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A REPORT BY MAYA A. BEASLEY, Ph.D.
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