

Approach to Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity

We ground our work in well-researched, validated, and reliable developmental models that come from the fields of intercultural psychology, organizational development, adult learning theory, and community organizing analyzes of power. Specifically, three core models guide our analysis and approach to ameliorating institutional disparities: intercultural organizational development utilizing the Intercultural Development Continuum, adult learning theory and action learning, and organizational exercise of power & privilege. (See Appendix 1 for a brief visual overview of these models)

The developmental nature of Zemsky & Associates' approach allows us to deliver challenging material in a way that helps participants learn content that is broadly applicable. We use active experiential learning techniques that challenge participants to develop new skills and competencies in a way that supports them to grapple with new ideas and concepts with enough dissonance to stretch and grow.

Our objective in working with clients is to develop an action learning community that engages participants in applied intercultural learning to develop collaborative solutions to achieve organizational equity goals.

Methodologies

Assessment utilizing the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), policy review, and key contact engagement

Assessment instruments are designed to focus on specific patterns of human and/or organizational behavior in order to assist in better understanding the dynamics of interactions. The best assessments are those that provide relevant data upon which training and organizational development can be based. Our team of consultants is highly skilled in administering and interpreting information to help organizations maximize the information provided to meet their goals.

We utilize the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). The IDI is a 50-item, theory-based, statistically reliable, and cross-culturally valid measure of intercultural competence. The IDI assesses the major stages of the Intercultural Development Continuum as conceptualized in Milton Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS). The instrument is easy to complete, and it can generate a graphic profile of an individual's or group's predominant stage of intercultural development.

Secondly, further qualitative assessment information can be obtained through focus group or key contact interviews with staff, board, and select stakeholders.

The goals of these focus group sessions and interviews are:

- To assess the needs and concerns of the participants.
- To gather information about necessary potential organizational and systemic changes that can inform potential action learning projects.

- To lay the foundation for on-going engagement and relationship building.
Finally, we work with organizational leadership to identify and review key policies, procedures and practice that, if altered, could have significant positive impact on the organization obtaining its equity goals.

Intercultural Organizational Development

Intercultural Organizational Development is a process of linking an organization's overall strategic development with its strategic diversity, inclusion and equity goals in order to become more effective in recruiting and retaining staff, board and volunteers, building effective intersectional collaborations, serving the diverse needs of constituents, and impacting the long-term changes we wish to see for our communities.

Becoming an intercultural organization first requires making one's current organizational culture transparent. This goal can be achieved through thorough assessment and by intentionally working to support an organization in becoming more proficient in seeing, and then shifting, how dominant cultural norms have been incorporated into organizational policies, practices, and culture.

Intercultural Organizational Development brings together vision, skill building, the development of policies and procedures, structural support, and coaching. This combination helps create an organization that is successful in meeting its strategic equity goals, while also enjoying a healthier and supportive work and learning environment.

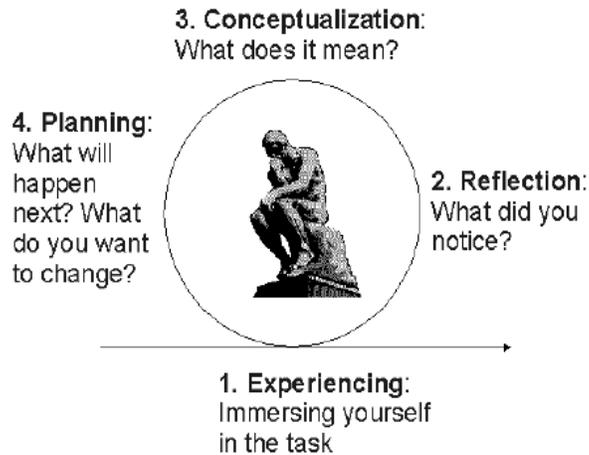
Action Learning

Action learning is a continuous process of learning and reflection, supported by colleagues, with the intention of getting things done. Through action learning, individuals learn with and from each other by working on real problems regarding equity and reflecting on their own learning experience. Adult learning theory suggests that adults learn best when they are provided with new information and concepts, opportunities to reflect and increase self-awareness, and meaningful activities through which they can apply and practice the new concepts and skills they have learned in a supportive environment.

Action learning is specifically well suited for increasing participants' ability to contribute to the successful completion of complex projects involving multiple constituent groups with many necessary *and* sufficient outcomes. Given the complexity of tackling current challenges and institutional policies and practices related to diversity, inclusion, and equity, an action learning approach is well suited to address the needs of creating and reinforcing an intercultural learning community within an organization.

Leadership as a Learning Journey

David Kolb's model of the Learning Cycle



Action learning is most effective when it occurs in a setting in which participants are learning and sharing with each other. Utilizing this approach, typically the learning community focuses on building the individual and collective capacities of the participants to be increasingly inclusive in the execution of its strategies by working together to set and achieve individual and collective goals for action.

Typically, activities are geared towards achieving objectives such as the following:

- To facilitate baseline understanding of your current organizational practices and level of level of competency necessary in order to build habits of mind and heart to direct current and future equity work.
- To develop a shared language, intercultural framework, and guiding principles regarding diversity, inclusion, equity in concrete ways that support the implementation of an organization's strategic plan and enhances collaborative approaches towards achieving equity.
- To develop increased skills and build internal capacity to practice the centering of affected communities in existing and emerging projects, develop innovative strategies, and apply an equity lens to evaluate impacts.
- To develop an organizational strategy and increased staff ability to continue to identify equity concerns and formulate culturally competent solutions for ongoing intercultural organizational development.

Organizational Exercise of Power & Privilege

Strengthening an organization that aims to impact systemic issues of power and oppression requires an understanding of the local and national political milieu, the historical trajectory of the context in which your organization is situated, and the context in which racial disparities and social justice policy and advocacy is created, constructed, and shared. Utilizing social change and social movement theories, questions to be explored may include:

- How can we use these changing times to move away from reactive, transactional approaches and toward more purposeful, transformational social change?
- How do we shape the nature and direction of social change towards equity rather than reacting to, or catching up with it?
- How do we attend to, and manage, our power as a leading organization in the field as we address racial, social, economic and environmental polarization and disparities?
- What are our relationships with our colleagues, non-profit organizations, funders and communities as we do this work?