

Reimagining Nonprofit Boards

Holding Up A Mirror: Designing for Inclusion Starts with the Board

01.08.23

What Are We Talking About?

There are few tables as important as the boardroom table where the very design of organizations takes shape and is codified. This session will focus the conversation on understanding the board's role and power to design for inclusion within itself and the organizations they serve.

- Non-profit boards are responsible for setting policies and procedures, setting financial and fundraising goals, and ensuring that the organization is operating in compliance with legal and ethical standards.



Diverse Community Foundations

1. We are all doing the best we can (most of the time).
2. Seek first to understand, then to be understood.
3. Just because you are, doesn't mean you understand: Just because you're not, doesn't mean you don't understand.
4. Oppression is pervasive and impacts us all.
5. There are no quick fixes.
6. Communities are built through building relationships of trust and commitment.
7. Conflict and discomfort are often a part of growth.
8. It is not our fault, but we must accept responsibility to create change.
9. Individuals and organizations DO grow and change. There is HOPE.
10. We're better together, and deeply connected soul to soul.

Which are you already living out in your leadership? And, which of these is an opportunity in your leadership?

BIG IDEA

Who and what we were designed to be is not who we are today nor is it what we need to be.





Why this? Why now?

Key Concept

Context before Content

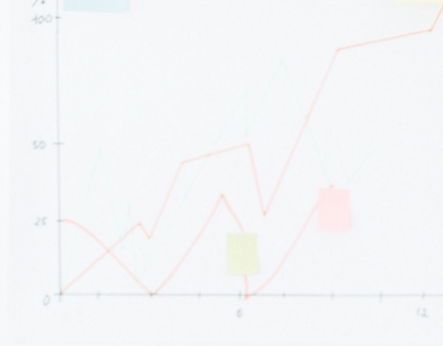
- Context shapes, guides, and defines our perception of content

What are you thinking about as board leaders today because our context has changed?



Progress?

- Actively seek out and invite people from diverse backgrounds to join the board
- Ensure that diverse board members feel supported and valued
- Create opportunities for ongoing learning and development

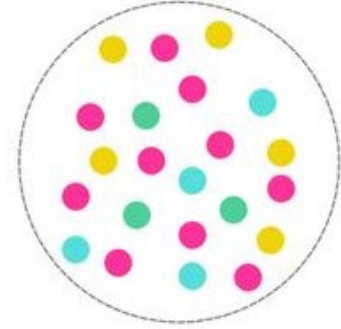
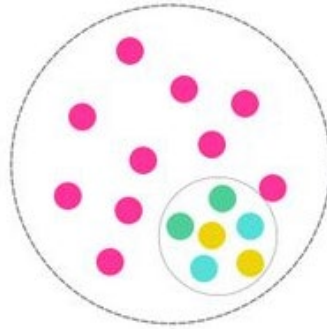
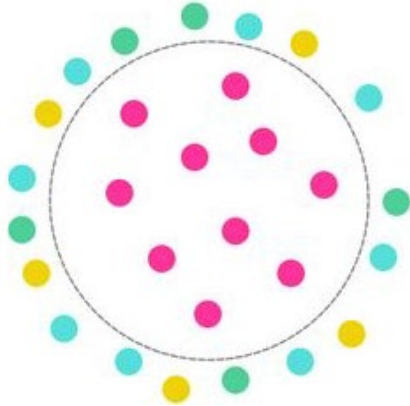


Dynamics of Status Quo

Marginalized Groups <u>tend to</u> focus on/ask for:	Privileged Groups <u>tend to</u> focus on/ask for:
IMPACT of Dominant Group's behavior	INTENT of Dominant Group's behaviors
PATTERNS of Dominant Group	INDIVIDUAL ACTS of Dominant Group
SYSTEMS/CULTURE	INDIVIDUAL ACTORS
HOW FAR WE NEED TO GO	HOW FAR WE HAVE COME
PRIORITIZING TRUTH	PRIORITIZING HARMONY

Discuss a time when you saw an issue from the dominant or privileged position.

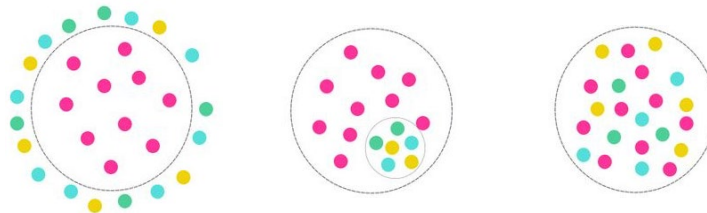
Illusion of Inclusion



Illusion of Inclusion

What is it?

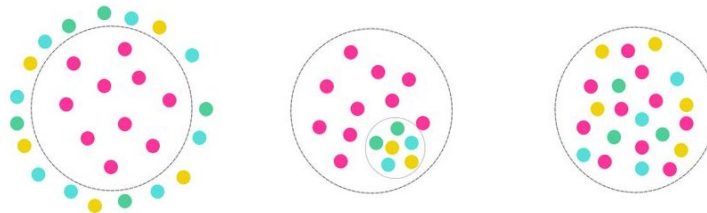
1. The expectation that marginalized groups must assimilate and adopt the dominant culture
2. Allocating only a small number of spaces for marginalized groups in organizations
3. The belief that we have truly included diverse perspectives and voices, when in reality, we have simply asked these groups to conform to the dominant culture



Illusion of Inclusion

How to solve it?

1. Acknowledge the limitations of current systems and structures and challenge underlying assumptions
2. Understand the unique experiences and needs of marginalized communities through an intersectional lens
3. Intentionally seek out and operationalize diverse perspectives and experiences
4. Change and create a more inclusive culture within the organization



BIG IDEA

We cannot begin again, can we? We must carve out a path while we walk. This is about managing transformative change right now. Given what we collectively know we must do differently.



(Re)Design Steps

1. **Identify the need for change:** Before embarking on a redesign, understand the reasons.
2. **Assess the current state:** Identify areas that are working well and areas that need improvement.
3. **Set goals and objectives:** Clearly define what you hope to achieve.
4. **Gather input:** Engage stakeholders to ensure redesign aligns with the (new) needs and values of the organization.
5. **Develop a plan:** Generate a detailed plan including timelines, budget, and responsibilities for key tasks.
6. **Implement the plan:** Put plan into action, making sure to communicate clearly with all stakeholders throughout the process.
7. **Monitor and evaluate:** Assess the progress of the redesign process.

BIG IDEA

Both individual and collective work is required to redesign boards and

Discuss: What is your relationship to change? What are you willing to give up or do differently? What do you have capacity to lead?

ourselves and inside our organizations before we can produce it for the world.



(Re)Design Thought Exercise

What boards are:

1. Non-profit boards are typically composed of volunteers who are elected to serve by the organization's members or appointed by the board itself.
2. Board members are typically expected to have a strong understanding of the organization's mission and goals, as well as the ability to provide strategic direction and oversight.
3. Board members are also expected to participate in fundraising efforts and represent the organization to the public and other stakeholders.
4. In order to be effective, non-profit boards should be diverse and representative of the community served by the organization.
5. Non-profit board members are typically not compensated for their time and service, but may be reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred in connection with their duties as a board member.

(Re)Design Thought Exercise

Who the United States is:

- According to the United States Census Bureau, as of July 1, 2020, people of color made up approximately 39.9% of the population of the United States.
- According to data from the Pew Research Center, in 2020, the median household income for Black households was \$53,600, compared to \$77,800 for White households..
- The Human Rights Campaign Foundation reports that 29 states in the United States do not have explicit protections for LGBT people in employment, housing, or public accommodations.
- According to data from the National LGBT Health Education Center, LGBT people face higher rates of mental health issues and substance abuse compared to the general population.

(Re)Design Thought Exercise

Who the United States is:

- According to data from the Federal Reserve, the median net worth of White households in the United States is approximately \$188,200, compared to \$24,100 for Black households and \$34,000 for Hispanic households.
- Women are more likely to be living in poverty compared to men, with a poverty rate of 12.7% for women and 8.9% for men, according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau.
- Women are more likely to be working in low-wage occupations, with data from the National Women's Law Center showing that women make up the majority of workers in occupations with median wages at or below the federal minimum wage.

Knowing your role and understanding our context and your organization's mission -
How would you redesign your board and/or your organization?

Going Forward with Reflections & Questions

- Who or what is your organization designed for? What's the evidence of this design?
- Through your policies, practices, and procedures what is being reflected back to you?
- How seriously are you taking your role and responsibility as an architect of the organization?
- Whose perspective and experience does your organization reflect or serve?

Thank you!