



Culturally Responsive Evaluation: Empowering Educators of Color to Share their Voice

American Evaluation Association 2018 Annual Meeting

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Context

In Fall 2017, a group of organizations, all working in environmental education (EE) with a stated interest in addressing equity and inclusion, began to work together.

The five partner organizations identified a shared vision in developing tools and resources to support EE organizations' efforts in fostering equitable and inclusive work environments for their staff.



Funded by the Pisces Foundation, the planning grant would contribute to the design and/or development of future publications and professional learning opportunities.

A Culturally Responsive Evaluation Approach

Project Assumptions:

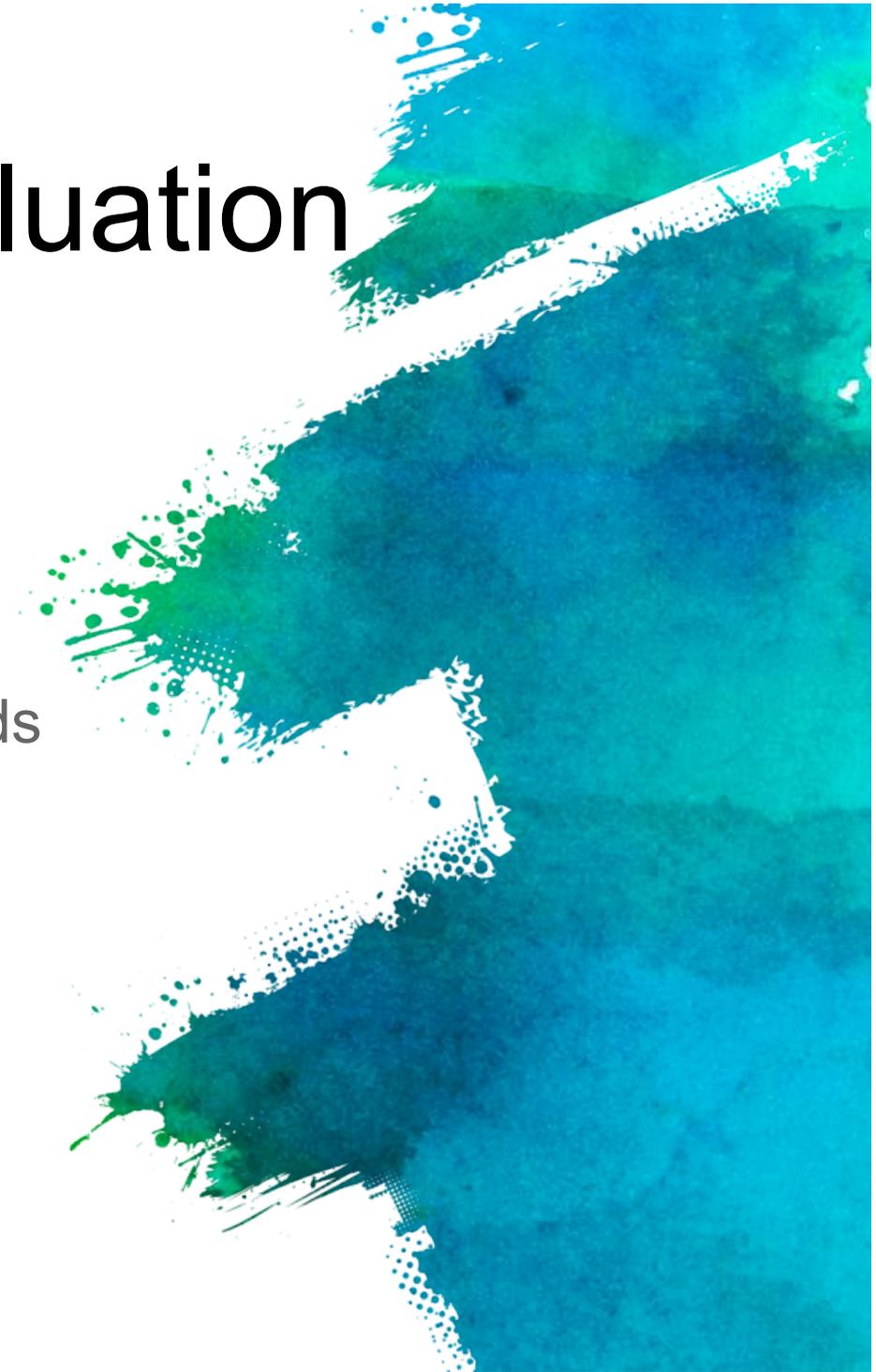
- ❖ Environmental education, as a field, continues to be predominantly comprised individuals who are white identifying
 - ❖ There is a sociocultural historical context that contributes to marginalize and exclude people of color
 - ❖ There is an abundance of people of color who are qualified and interested in working in environmental education but are remain underrepresented in the field due to historical systems of oppression
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- ❖ How can the evaluation provide ground-truthing evidence about the need for professional learning, tools and resources that are focused cultivating change at the **systems** and **organizational** level?
 - ❖ How can the evaluation provide a space to amplify the lived and professional experiences of people of color in a way that does not cause further trauma to individuals?



Culturally Responsive Evaluation

- ❖ Understand context of the environment and individuals
- ❖ Engage stakeholders in planning and theory development
- ❖ Employ culturally appropriate design and methods
- ❖ Build trust and facilitate communication
- ❖ Make the evaluation accessible to stakeholders
- ❖ Reflect on one's own culture and positions of power

¹ American Evaluation Association, 2011; Casillas & Trochim, 2015

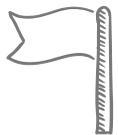


Evaluation Study Purpose



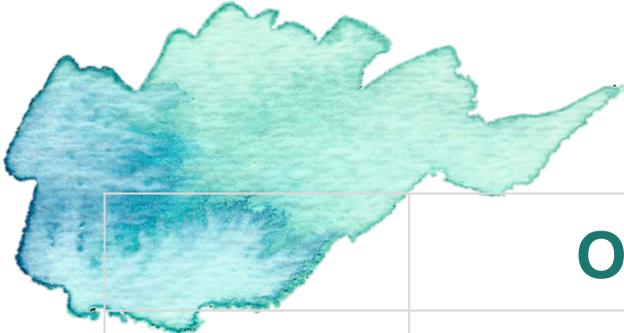
To gather **perspectives** from organizational leaders and education staff of color about the work environment, including:

- how EE organizations may **address** issues of equity, inclusion, and/or diversity in its practice
- where organizations may **need support** to foster an equitable, inclusive, and/or diverse work environment for staff of color.



To **inform decision-making** and planning of the project team.





Evaluation Methods

	Organizational Survey	Educator Focus Groups
Purpose	gather perspectives from executive directors of outdoor science programs about the <i>goals, priorities, and practices regarding equity, inclusion and/or diversity</i> in their organizations	gather perspectives of environmental education educators about the <i>goals, priorities, and practices regarding equity, inclusion and/or diversity</i> in environmental education
Input	Survey: 40 open- and closed-ended questions, about 45 minutes	Focus Group: up to 11 educators in 3 separate focus groups, 90-minutes
Incentive	\$40 Amazon gift card	\$60 Amazon gift card and dinner
Sample	Executive Director (or equivalent) of 130 outdoor science organizations identified through the project network	Self-identified EE educators of color in the San Francisco Bay Area

Perceptions of Equity, Inclusion & Diversity

Equity, inclusion and diversity **must go beyond** access to **address the systemic structures** of power, privilege, and oppression

access for “all learners” and/or “all staff”

Equity: organizations provide **access to outdoor spaces** for “all learners” and/or **provide resources** for all staff

Inclusion: organizations provide **a safe and welcoming** environment for all learners and staff.

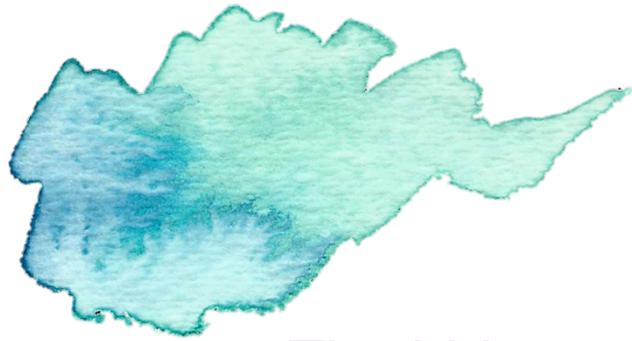
Diversity: organizations foster an environment where individual differences are respected and organizations are attentive and responsive to learner and staff needs

Equity requires recognizing and responding to the historical oppression within environmental education.

Inclusion requires listening to, learning about and sharing the narratives of people, communities and land.

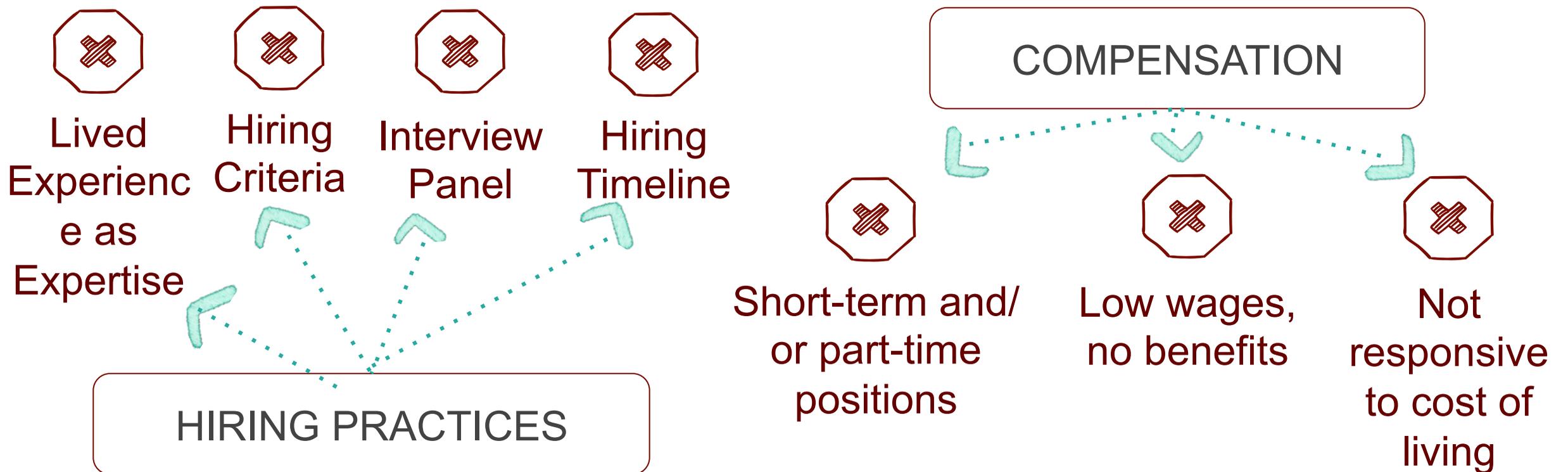
Diversity requires examining the intersectionality of culture and how it impacts equity and inclusion.

Understanding systemic oppression, power, and privilege



Perceptions of Barriers to Entry

The hiring practices and compensation reinforce systemic barriers to entry that disproportionately impact people of color.



Perceptions of the Work Environment

I'm making people **uncomfortable**

My experiences are **not the same** as every black or brown person.

I was **culture shocked!**

There are always **assumptions** made...

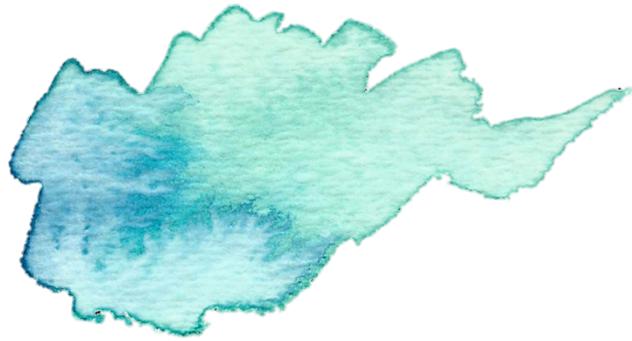
I have to **speak for** my community

Educators of colors highlight an experience of the work environment being **marginalizing and exclusive** for individuals whose lived experiences **are not** part of the **dominant** cultural values, norms and lived experiences.

Environmental education organizations are **gatekeepers**

Decision-making **power** lies in white leaders

Am I the **only one?**



Working Towards Equitable Organizations

Contributing to
Change at the
Systems Level

- 2-year Professional Learning for Residential Outdoor Science Programs
- Foci 1: Capacity building for current organization leaders
- Foci 2: Leadership development for emerging leaders of color within that organization.

Building a
Conceptual
Foundation

- Historical Context and Building a Common Language
- Advancing Equity and Inclusion in EE: Perspectives from the Field: Evaluation Findings
- Unconscious Bias & Microaggressions
- Power & Privilege

Strategies for
Identify Areas of
Growth

- Affinity Space
- Values Based Change
- Capacity Building Reflection
- Organizational Survey

Acknowledgements



Thank you to the Project Partners for your thoughts, guidance, and contributions to this work:

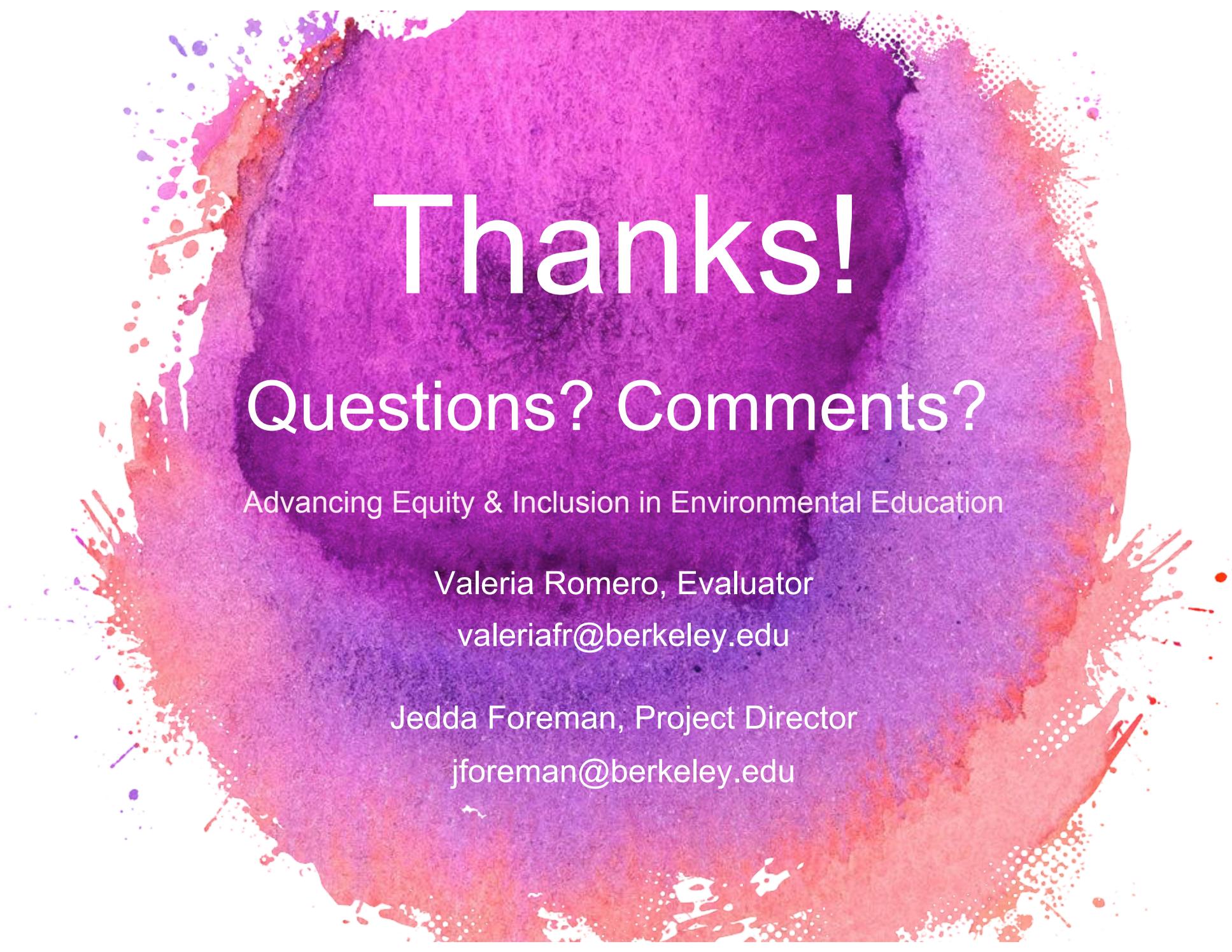
- ❖ **BEETLES Project**
- ❖ **Crissy Field Center**
- ❖ **Latino Outdoors**
- ❖ **Yes Nature to Neighborhoods**
- ❖ **Youth Outside**

This work is funded by the



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Thanks!

Questions? Comments?

Advancing Equity & Inclusion in Environmental Education

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