

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

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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
- 
- ❖ 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

<sup>1</sup> American Evaluation Association, 2011; Casillas & Trochim, 2015



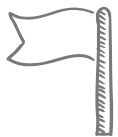


# Evaluation Study Purpose



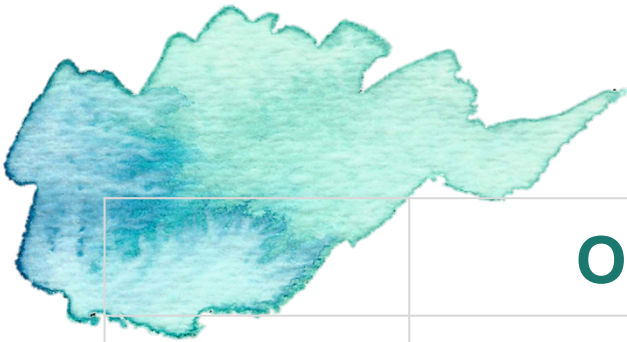
To gather **perspectives** from organizational leaders and education staff of color about the work environment, including:

- 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.

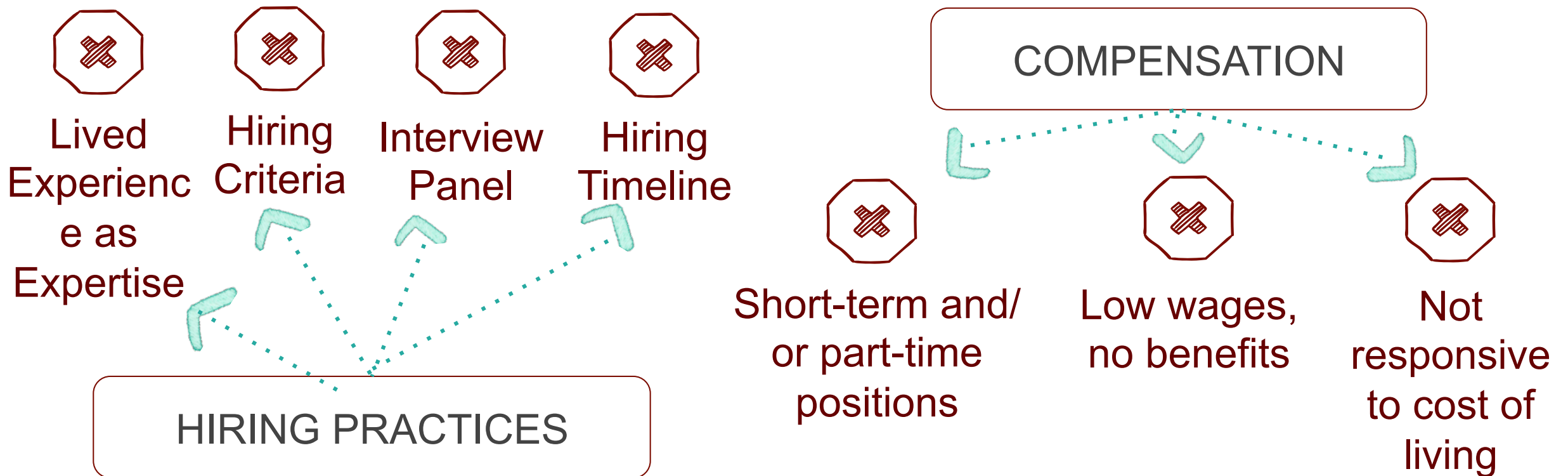
***Diversity requires*** examining the intersectionality of culture and how it impacts equity and inclusion.

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  
**assumptio  
ns** made...

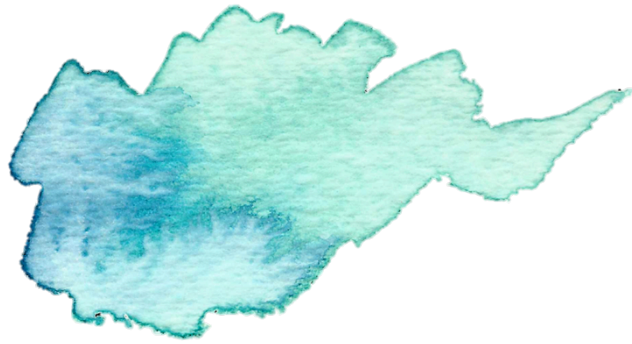
I have to  
**speak for** my  
community

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



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# Thanks!

## Questions? Comments?

Advancing Equity & Inclusion in Environmental Education

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