

3-10-2010

Building More Inclusive Organizations Initiative: Evaluation Report

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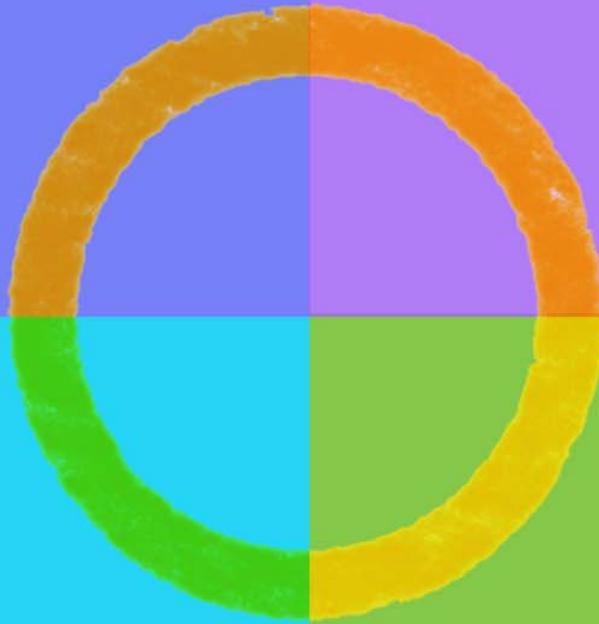
Galvan, A., LaRocque, L., The Learning Community (2010). Building More Inclusive Organizations Initiative: Evaluation Report. 1-44.

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Building More Inclusive Organizations Initiative
Evaluation Report



**Intercambios and
University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point**

**A Project of the
Environmental Education and Training Partnership**

March 10, 2010

by Alma Galván and Lisa LaRocque and the Learning Community



Dedicated to Kathy Kinzig
December 15, 1965, to December 17, 2008

...Being a part of this pilot has been a highlight of my career here at Eco Ed. I've just wanted us to do this for so long and the right mix of people and dynamics and opportunities like this pilot finally came up! It has been a huge energizer for me this past year and since leading Eco Ed for 13 years, one of the most exciting. I look into the future and know this is the way to go...don't know the path or outcome yet but just know keeping at it and building those relationships will be the key.

— E-mail from Kathy, November 2, 2008

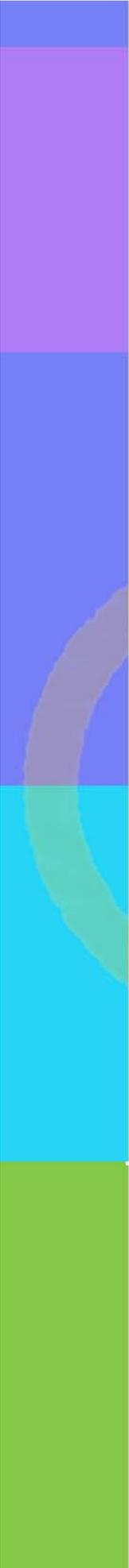


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Executive Summary

The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (UW-SP) has been collaborating with Intercambios, a binational, bicultural consulting group, to advance the cultural relevance of environmental education (EE). Cultural relevance, or inclusiveness, requires deep reflection about one's own values and behaviors and a long-term commitment to shifting organizational practices. According to the Denver Foundation,

Inclusive organizations not only have diverse individuals involved; more importantly they are learning-centered organizations that value the perspectives and contributions of all people, and they strive to incorporate the needs and viewpoints of diverse communities into the design and implementation of universal and inclusive programs. (Pease, 2005, p. XIV)

The "Building More Inclusive Organizations Initiative" was designed to capture the concerns and problem-solving processes of organizations as they worked toward becoming more inclusive. From 2007 through 2009, UW-SP and Intercambios created a Learning Community with Eco Education in St. Paul, MN; Partners in Environmental Cultural Connectedness (PECC) in Las Vegas, NV; and the Norfolk Environmental Commission (NEC) in Norfolk, VA, to begin the internal work needed to achieve inclusiveness objectives. These objectives worked toward the following five outcomes:

1. Develop a blueprint or strategic plan aimed at understanding and making linkages between organizational factors (e.g., organizational structure, programming, staffing, and evaluation) and inclusiveness practices.
2. Articulate current and future stakeholders' perspectives regarding their community, field, and organization.
3. Identify current strengths and weaknesses, in terms of inclusiveness practices, through self-assessment processes.
4. Shift communication and decision-making strategies to better include partners and stakeholders.
5. Intentionally shift practices to increase the inclusiveness of the organization's work with other partners and stakeholders, and provide reflection on the pre-requisite knowledge, skills, attitudes, and environmental factors needed to implement such changes.

During the two-year initiative, the Learning Community participated in both formal and informal processes. Through a facilitated meeting conducted in September 2007 in Minneapolis, MN, each organization developed an action plan or blueprint to guide its own processes. Through conference calls and site visits, Intercambios facilitated dialogue and critical reflection within each group and within the Learning Community as a whole while documenting progress achieved, obstacles encountered, and lessons learned in the journey toward the intended outcomes. In October 2009, UW-SP and Intercambios brought the Learning Community together in a facilitated retreat in Oregon City, OR. The group took time to reflect on and articulate the lessons they learned in the process of becoming inclusive and extrapolated these lessons to the broader environmental education profession. During the Lessons Learned Meeting, the Learning Community concluded that:

1. The organizations could describe what inclusiveness should look like from programmatic and community perspectives. However, the groups were not as

comfortable with their strategies for getting there. The Learning Community's first attempts needed to be adjusted in scale, focus, and ways of measuring progress.

2. The organizations initially had minimal contact with the community and were anxious about approaching uncharted territory. As the organizations let go of their agendas and listened to the community, their understanding of and interactions with the community members increased. However, the learning communities' new perspectives and practices did not fit into their current organizational structure.
3. The organizations' resistance to letting go of or adapting their tools and procedures was an impediment to forming relationships with community members. The organizations' commitment to becoming more inclusive allowed them to operate "out of the box." The teams were no longer service providers but had formed real and dynamic relationships with the community.
4. The organizations worked "out of the box" when they deliberately examined their approaches and priorities in such areas as outreach messages, job descriptions, and communication styles with respect to achieving the outcome of connecting with broader communities.

In addition to documenting the Learning Community's journey and facilitating the Lessons Learned meeting, Intercambios also examined the organizations' written documents and conference call transcripts. The goal was to measure intentional affective and behavioral shifts in how organizations practiced inclusiveness. The examination was viewed through the lenses of two theoretical frameworks: Milton Bennett's Continuum of Cultural Sensitivity (Bennett, 1989) and Everett Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation (Rogers, 1995). Bennett's continuum provides descriptors for individuals and organizations becoming more inclusive. Rogers' diffusion model looks at the stages of concern as individuals and organizations internalize inclusiveness practice. We realized that there were patterns of cultural sensitivity and adoption of innovation, patterns that could be described in three artificially defined time segments: baseline, planning, and implementation.

1. Baseline

Philosophically, the organizations wanted to be more inclusive. However, two factors held them back: (1) the underlying assumptions about maintaining their role and agenda, and (2) their limited experiences interacting with the communities. Because the organization treated the community as a new program as opposed to a new set of relationships, the members felt the need to increase their sense of expertise in the communities' culture rather than immerse themselves into the community.

2. Planning

The organizations felt more comfortable using the traditional approaches of an EE service provider to reach their inclusiveness goals. These strategies proved ineffective because they created barriers to listening to, learning about, and making connections with the community—the fundamental elements for building collaborative relationships.

3. Implementation

The acknowledged ineffectiveness of operating under a "business as usual" mode pushed the organizations into the community. The new relationships made the organizations aware of programming that no longer seemed appropriate or effective in reaching their inclusiveness goals. A cultural ambassador encouraged the organizations and provided new perspectives and opportunities to interact with the communities. The new experiences gave organizations a tangible sense of what inclusiveness is and how to continue to work in this direction.

In summary, the patterns of what moved groups forward, what held them back, and the lessons they learned were very similar in all three organizations even though the team composition, geographic area, focus, and types and durations of programs were different. In each case, the organizations started out with limited direct interaction with the community. As the groups attempted to provide their services, they all concluded that their standard way of operating was an inappropriate model for achieving inclusiveness. They realized that developing relationships and creating win-win approaches and projects with the communities were richer, more respectful and inclusive ways to operate than their traditional approaches. The evaluators and Learning Community felt that this was a paradigmatic shift that would continue to reshape the way these three groups interacted with their communities.

Overview

Building More Inclusive Organizations Initiative

Summary

Building More Inclusive Organizations is an initiative grounded in the need to make environmental education more culturally relevant to diverse audiences.

Administration and Delivery

This activity is being administered by the Environmental Education and Training Partnership (EETAP), which is funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Environmental Education through a cooperative agreement with the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (UW-SP). EETAP serves as a national leader in the delivery of environmental education training to education professionals. EETAP is committed to ensuring that ethnically diverse and low-income communities benefit from, and actively participate in, education that advances student learning and environmental literacy.

The Inclusiveness Initiative is being delivered through collaboration between UW-SP and Intercambios, a binational, bicultural consulting group that assists education professionals in making their program services culturally relevant through offering training, facilitation, and diversity content.

Background

The initiative originated in 2006, when UW-SP and Intercambios began to assist EE organizations with the internal work needed to achieve diversity objectives. As a result of EE and diversity work conducted over the past six years, UW-SP and Intercambios had learned that EE leaders need additional strategies and tools to help them make their organizations and programs more inclusive and relevant to diverse audiences. In late 2006, using established criteria, UW-SP and Intercambios selected three organizations (from more than a dozen applicants) to attend an organizational meeting conducted in September 2007 in Minneapolis, MN. The selected organizations—Eco Education in St. Paul, MN; Partners in Environmental Cultural Connectedness (PECC) in Las Vegas, NV; and the Norfolk Environmental Commission (NEC) in Norfolk, VA—would develop action plans or blueprints for becoming more inclusive. The organizations would be considered a Learning Community that would share their experiences with each other and benefit from the work each organization was doing.

Work and Timeline

In 2007 and 2008, UW-SP and Intercambios served as facilitators of this Learning Community. Information on the challenges of and progress toward becoming more inclusive was collected through a series of periodic conference calls that were recorded and transcribed. Quotes describing organizational strengths and weaknesses were excerpted from the transcripts and later shared with the respective groups.

In 2008 and 2009, UW-SP and Intercambios made site visits of participating organizations to obtain firsthand information about changes made and challenges faced. In October 2009 the organizations and community representatives met in Oregon City, OR, to describe lessons learned and identify next steps. The Learning Community shared the practical knowledge gained with other EE organizations during a symposium at the North American Environmental Education Association Annual Conference immediately following the Lessons Learned Meeting.

Outcome Targets and Evaluation Process

The goal of the Building More Inclusive Organizations Initiative was to capture the concerns and problem-solving processes of organizations as they worked towards becoming more inclusive. According to the Denver Foundation,

Inclusive organizations not only have diverse individuals involved; more importantly they are learning-centered organizations that value the perspectives and contributions of all people, and they strive to incorporate the needs and viewpoints of diverse communities into the design and implementation of universal and inclusive programs. (Pease, 2005, p. XIV)

The Environmental Education and Training Partnership (EETAP) developed a model for organizing and measuring the results of this initiative. The model included setting measurable outcomes, and then determining a process for evaluating the achievement of each outcome.

Outcomes

Achievement of inclusiveness objectives would be measured by evaluating five outcomes:

1. Develop a blueprint or strategic plan aimed at understanding and making linkages between organizational factors (e.g., organizational structure, programming, staffing, and evaluation) and inclusiveness practices.
2. Articulate current and future stakeholders' perspectives regarding their community, field, and organization.
3. Identify current strengths and weaknesses, in terms of inclusiveness practices, through self-assessment processes.
4. Shift communication and decision-making strategies to better include partners and stakeholders.
5. Intentionally shift organizational practices to increase the inclusiveness of the organization's work with other partners and stakeholders, and provide reflection on the pre-requisite knowledge, skills, attitudes, and environmental factors needed to implement such changes.

Evaluation Process

Evaluation of outcomes one through four is supported by the reflections of the Learning Community. Evaluation of outcome five is grounded in two different theoretical frameworks: (1) cultural sensitivity vis-à-vis Bennett's Continuum of Cultural Sensitivity (Bennett, 1989); and (2) Everett Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation (Rogers, 1995). In this study, inclusiveness was the innovation. The Concern-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) was used to measure the skills involved in adopting the inclusiveness practices

Selection of Learning Organizations and Collection of Data

In 2006, EETAP invited organizations to apply to be part of this initiative. More than 100 organizations requested an application, and 12 applied. Three organizations were selected and a decision was made to use qualitative data collection and analysis.

Selection of Organizations

The three organizations selected for this initiative submitted an application letter and answered interview questions in a conference call. Each letter explained why the organization wanted to participate in this program; its cultural inclusiveness goals; its current inclusiveness practices; and a description of how well the organization met the selection criteria, including the following:

- Organization leaders and community representatives with individual scores between 14 and 21 points on the “Readiness Questionnaire” developed by the Denver Foundation.
- Readiness to make an 18-month commitment to participating in this program and sending a three- to five-person culturally diverse team to the action plan workshop scheduled for June 2007 and the Lessons Learned workshop tentatively scheduled for September 2008. Workshop teams were to include at least one board member, one staff member, and one member from the broader community in which the organization works.
- Primary focus on environmental education or a related field.
- Local or regional focus that allows the organization to have meaningful participation with others that hold different worldviews.
- Two or more full-time paid staff members. Ideally, the employees had been with the organization for at least one year.

These three organizations were selected:

1. **Norfolk Environmental Commission (NEC)**, appointed by the City of Norfolk, VA, responsible for recycling, beautification, and other environmental initiatives. Huntersville, the community with which the organization worked, has been described as a predominantly low-income, African American community of home owners and renters.
2. **Partners for Environmental Cultural Connectedness (PECC)**, an ad-hoc association made up of county, state, and federal employees as well as nonprofits and university professionals. PECC is working primarily with the Michoacán communities of Las Vegas, NV.
3. **Eco Education**, a nonprofit educational program focusing on urban environmental education that works with many multicultural schools throughout the Twin Cities of Minnesota. Eco Ed addresses the unique environmental concerns of urban dwellers—the combination of the natural, built, and social environments.

Collection of Data

Because of the small scale and exploratory nature of this activity, the evaluators collected qualitative data via transcribed conference calls. Every eight to ten weeks, the UWSP and Intercambios facilitators held a conference call with each organization. The facilitators wrote a summary of each call and distributed all summaries to the Learning Community. In addition, the call was recorded and transcribed for later use. In every other eight- to ten-week interval, the conference calls were held with the whole Learning Community; these calls were not transcribed. In all cases, the questions served as a guideline and no attempt was made to match each response to each question.

The questions asked at each call were as follows:

- Tell us what progress you have made toward your inclusiveness blueprint or action plan since we last contacted you.
- What new contacts have you made and what information have you learned?
- What have been the opportunities/barriers that have helped or hindered you in accomplishing these activities?
- Can you explain more about the strategies that you have envisioned to move you in the areas of organization, programs and community?
- Can you explain more about the evaluation mechanisms that you have envisioned to move you in the areas of organization, programs, and community?
- What do you think your next step will be?
- How can we help you?

The schedule of written documents and transcribed calls was as follows:

Baseline

- Application letter, Jan. 2007
- Selection conference call transcript, Feb. 2007
- Focus conference call transcript, Mar. 2007

Planning

- Conference call transcript, Dec. 2007
- Conference call transcript, Mar. 2008

Implementation

- Conference call transcript, Sept. 2008
- Spring '09 visit transcript

In preparation for the Lessons Learned Meeting, the evaluators coded the transcripts to illustrate two different theoretical frameworks: (1) cultural sensitivity vis-à-vis Bennett's Continuum of Cultural Sensitivity (Bennett, 1989); and (2) Everett Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation (Rogers, 1995). In this study, inclusiveness was the innovation. The Concern-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) was used to measure the skills involved in adopting the inclusiveness practices.

The transcripts, without coding, were read by members of the group to refresh their memories, as the Learning Community went through various facilitated exercises during the final meeting in October 2009 to draw out the strategies, obstacles, and lessons learned.

Two-Year Summaries of Participating Organizations

This summary provides readers with background about each organization at checkpoints throughout the Initiative.



Norfolk Environmental Commission (NEC), Norfolk, VA

The Norfolk Environmental Commission is a 22-member citizen advisory board appointed by the Norfolk City Council with the mission “to lead citizens toward environmental stewardship.” According to NEC’s application letter:

Our primary reason for participating is that at both the staff and board level, we have grappled with the challenge of delivering our programs and environmental education activities to a broader, more diverse audience. While we exclude no one from access to our programs and actively market our services to residents and groups of all cultures and age levels, we sometimes see that we are not sought out by some groups. We would like to learn how we could be more effective in reaching all of our population and develop our board and working committees to be more representative of our population.

In the December 2007 interview, Norfolk Environmental Commission recounted that it used the Learning Community exercises from the Minnesota meeting to update its entire Board about the Inclusiveness Initiative. The Commission decided to adjust its original plan of focusing on three communities to just one: Huntersville. Other city departments were also working with Huntersville to address quality of life issues. NEC hoped all of these efforts could become complementary.

Mindful of its mission, NEC set its goals for increasing curbside recycling. One strategy was to find those who were already recycling. However, there was concern that learning and using this information might only reinforce the usual ways where NEC had already been successful. The challenge was in finding out why people were *not* recycling, alternative concerns, and ways of taking action. Then together, the community could work with the Commission to adapt its program, probably in tandem with solving other issues.

The learning community encouraged NEC to visit service providers in the community—such as healthcare centers, community centers, boys and girls clubs, and churches—and to take time observing each subset of the community. The Commission showed its sincere interest in the community by explaining their interest in possibly working with the community and wanting to learn more about local issues and concerns. The organization understood that project ideas would follow from these observations. NEC generated this list of observational questions to guide its observations of local groups: What is the decision-making process? Where do they get their information? What are their general concerns? Who are the movers and the shakers?

The organization had some concrete plans, such as modeling recycling by setting up centers in public buildings. They wanted to engage youth in their surveying and encouraged local champions to share their ideas. Even though the organization had

many great second steps, they realized that learning the inner workings of the community would create an organic way to develop the details and next steps.

In a March 2008 interview, NEC did some reality checking by “just listening” when attending community meetings and talking to locals. What they learned changed their perspectives on how they saw community issues and on how the community perceived them.

Residents shared that non-residents contributed to much of the crime and litter in their community. They felt reluctant to go to police for fear of retaliation by these groups. Their issues were about housing and safety, not recycling.

... *“We come at these things too flippantly and move it along too fast in the name of efficiency, but that doesn’t mean we are effective ...”*

Previously, when city departments had asked for a suggestion from the community, residents saw little follow-through from the city. Some had heard that recycling might increase their garbage bill and wondered who ultimately made the profit from their efforts to separate and recycle garbage.

The conclusion for NEC was that “one size did not fit all” and they had been *jumping in* too quickly. “We come at these things too flippantly and move it along too fast in the name of efficiency, but that doesn’t mean we are effective,” the NEC Director realized. “The group was acquainted with the community after three months of visiting, but had yet to build any meaningful relationships. This would take more time and more visits.” The outcome would be trust and it wouldn’t happen easily because there is a “disconnect” with people in power. Creating the trust and personal connection was paramount.

NEC questioned the current recycling revenue stream. They knew the City only charged for the direct costs for the service, but what did the contractors who took the recycling do with their profit? How could the contractors help invest in the community? When a community was in need, perhaps the intrinsic rewards of recycling weren’t enough.

In a September 2008 interview, the commission continued to build relationships with Huntersville residents and organizations. NEC examined how recycling could benefit the community, looking at the question through the residents’ eyes and as a larger institutional issue. NEC had learned in earlier focus group meetings that residents don’t want to recycle to generate money for someone else. NEC started exploring ideas for using recycling as an incentive to give back to the community. Potential ideas ranged from benefiting parks and youth programs to providing individual incentives.

NEC knew that relationship building took time and should evolve without any preconceived ideas about the best way of behaving. For NEC, it was no longer the tools they used, but how they engaged the community to use these tools for themselves. The corollary suggested that this was no longer a service, but a relationship.

The NEC staff, the advisory committee, and the community felt a change in mindset. The rest of the City and business sector had not made this same shift. The City viewed success by quantitative measures and not by qualitative shifts in adapting a program to meet the needs of the community. The business sector, far removed from the community, had not considered reinvesting its profits back into the communities that provided its revenue stream.

With its increased sensitivity toward the community, NEC realized that creating a successful recycling program was not about environmental values and how-to brochures. The issues were more complex. Competing community problems such as absentee landlords, renters, and outsiders who weren’t vested in the community illuminated

communication obstacles. The frustrations of working with impersonal, unwieldy institutional systems also contributed to the community's frustration and feeling of disenfranchisement in working with others.

NEC would need to work with these sectors to determine which best practices would benefit everyone. The Learning Community suggested that NEC have community leaders develop the agenda and the approaches to exploring potential incentive programs. These same leaders would tell their own story to the businesses and processors that use their waste stream. In both cases, the residents knew the community best.



The Partners for Environmental Cultural Connectedness (PECC)

PECC was formed to address a joint priority of the University of Nevada-Las Vegas' Public Lands Institute (PLI) and area-wide environmental educators (Partners for Education about the Environment, [www. enviroedexchange.org](http://www.enviroedexchange.org)). As described in its application letter:

...PECC hopes to address collective concerns of the environmental education community by initiating... an inclusiveness program to increase appreciation, understanding, and interaction between the Hispanic community and the natural world through education. This initiative will seek meaningful ways of involving the Hispanic community in creating and implementing environmental education in the Las Vegas valley, including the nearly seven million acres of public lands surrounding the valley.

In a December 2007 interview, PECC felt its charge was to get colleagues to understand and apply inclusiveness practices. PECC began with three strategies. First, PECC created opportunities for internal reflection with the Southern Nevada Agency Partnership (SNAP), made up of supervisors from four federal agencies. Second, PECC designed and implemented a conference called "Planning *with* Our Community." Finally, certain members planned a pilot outdoor overnight program with, and for, a primarily Latino community.

PECC's goal is help SNAP become more inclusive by shifting its standard operating procedures. A marketer serving the Hispanic community delivered a strong message to SNAP that helped the group realize that outreach was more than translating a newsletter. Although willing, many SNAP staff were unsure where or how to begin and what the key messages and methods of communication would be.

PECC's initial concerns were how to plan the next inclusiveness training for SNAP. After some discussion, they decided that learning more about each member and agency, and their opportunities and barriers, would be the best use of time. With more information, PECC would know how to better influence the group. PECC hoped to create a clear vision of the "inclusiveness" target for everyone. However, as the call progressed all recognized the vision would continue to change as people and organizations became more culturally competent.

The conference was not only titled, but also provided a lesson in, “planning with the community.” Innovative field trips to casinos and corporate centers provided insight into how other groups reached culturally diverse audiences. These trips were an immersion into experiences outside the participants’ comfort zone and proved new insights, because they were a deviation from typical environmental education programs. Panels talked about marketing to Hispanic audiences, reaching inner city youth, and identifying cultural perspectives of the outdoors to build on participants’ awareness and outreach strategies.

From these new tasks, PECC realized that its role was one of a facilitator rather than a purveyor of knowledge. Its preparatory work load as a catalyst for change decreased. However, the group was still concerned about how to maintain the momentum of interest after the conference was over. The group suggested quarterly field trips to culturally unique sites with diverse attendees to stimulate further discussion. A follow-up session during the next conference would be a great opportunity to share lessons learned from these exchanges.

The last challenge was finding ways to develop formative and summative assessment tools. Intercambios offered to review interview questions for the SNAP members and the post-conference evaluation.

In a March 2008 interview, PECC had just completed the conference with federal agencies. PECC needed more time to process what had taken place, but already felt the magnitude of trying to influence institutional ways of operating.

There were 170 attendees at the conference. PECC designed programs with the local community and brought them to the conference and the panel presentations. There were several “ah-ha” moments when statements came right from the community, for example, “Yes, uniforms are intimidating!”

It was challenging for the community members to articulate intuitive processes in approaching their work. The federal agency participants struggled to find overlap and relevance with the community approaches. Even those on the planning team had trouble imagining how practices could change as a result of trying to create these new connections.

The planning team and participants knew there was a need for change, but weren’t sure what it would look like. After the conference, the shock of realizing that it was about *me* and not *them* was causing dissonance.

Now the challenge was to not let these feelings of dissonance result in a retreat to the status quo. How do you make your messages understandable, but still relevant, especially if there is an attitude that these are *my* parks and *they* are not using them? How do you change that sense of propriety so one side lets go a little and other side grabs on?

... Now the challenge was to not let these feelings of dissonance result in a retreat to the status quo. How do you make your messages understandable, but still relevant, especially if there is an attitude that these are my parks and they are not using them? How do you change that sense of propriety so one side lets go a little and other side grabs on? ...

These were tough questions for PECC. We connected PECC coordinators with Jack Shu, an inclusiveness consultant who has worked for California Parks and other recreation and parks organizations. Jack wrote, “Some things just seem to repeat themselves or stay the same. I offer these terms as they may be useful in such programs: resource- or park-centric thinking and community-centric thinking; ‘assimilation versus involvement’ as opposed to outreach, who is in and who is out?”

PECC was planning an April field trip with the park officials and Latino leaders to visit the media industry to discover what makes that industry effective at reaching its audiences.

In a September 2008 interview, PECC began to shift its tactics. After hearing some inspiring examples from a California park about culturally sensitive programs, PECC decided to create programs of its own with the community and its partners. With help from the cultural specialist at Winchester Cultural Center, a small group brainstormed about how to make cultural connections with nature. What evolved was a program building on the Michoacán community's celebrations of life and nature. Two specific events were planned: the Day of the Dead in Fall 2008 and a celebration linking Monarch and local blue butterfly migration through the area in Spring 2009. (The Michoacán community in Mexico is a host to overwintering Monarchs.)

The group saw great potential in giving their programs a multicultural flavor that created connections. They had already discussed the importance of how to approach the groups: being sensitive to needs, inviting input and feedback, and honoring talents and contributions. Listening was key.

The group brainstormed new thematic topics. These topics included reasons and ways to garden; celebrations of seasons; the cultural significance of certain plants; the symbolism of the butterfly migration and U.S. immigrants.

This ambitious group still had to consider how to bring other PECC members, the administrators, and the rest of the community into this experience so they could feel the energy and value of the effort. Ideas such as involving everyone from the beginning, building in communication and feedback mechanisms, and creating opportunities for administrators and community to join in a special ceremony would all help create a sense of inclusiveness.



Eco Education, St. Paul, MN

Eco Education focuses its programs on the local communities of St. Paul and Minneapolis. Eco Ed is committed to addressing the unique environmental concerns of urban dwellers—combining the natural, built, and social environments. They bring together upper elementary, middle, and high school students and their teachers with community representatives, local agencies, businesses, and neighborhood associations. Together, these teams of people work on environmental issues, problems, or initiatives in the school neighborhood that students care about.

In its application letter, Eco Education staff and board explained their challenges in becoming more inclusive. There was a disconnect between the diverse urban students with whom they were working and the homogeneous group of professionals that delivered, supported, and implemented their program. EcoEd wanted the professionals to mirror the diversity of the students. Eco Ed's long-term goals are expressed in its letter of application:

We are interested in incorporating inclusiveness in all that we do—changing the way our organization meets its mission, our culture, and the environment related to race and ethnicity, and how we recruit and retain people of color as board, staff, volunteers, and clients... . The Twin Cities area of Minnesota is the urban center of the state. There is a lack of environmental education programs that focus specifically on fostering a stewardship ethic in urban youth for their city environment, a place some urban youth never leave.

In a December 2007 interview, Eco Ed was working on creating a student-driven parent survey before the end of the school year. Admirably, Eco Ed had let go of the “E” word, i.e., “environmental,” and was just asking what people did in their free time. What were the issues of importance to them? With whom did they hang out?

It was up to Eco Ed to see if there was an “E” connection. Eco Ed was ready to expand its own definition and share that with students, parents, the community, and the board.

Eco Ed provided an example about immigration to illustrate potential interconnections. How does our treatment of new immigrants affect the urban community? Decisions about information written in English only, and the ability of immigrants to navigate through public systems, including transportation, were all important considerations. All of these social and economic choices led to environmental consequences. Could professionals who hadn’t shared in these urban experiences readily create these interconnections?

Eco Ed staff thought the task was about finding new partners, but also included helping the board understand the significance of its inclusiveness practices. Eco Ed challenged everyone’s views of environment when they engaged the board in discussions about the interconnectedness of urban issues. Some board members held firmly to their definitions of the environment, asking, “Couldn’t we help everyone feel the intrinsic value of caring and respecting the environment like we do?” Others hoped that interconnection messages would help students strengthen their environmental values.

An Eco Ed staff member had interviewed a former partner working on eco-justice issues and received this direct message about motives for working with people of color: “People of color are not there to help you learn; they are there to do their work. If you wanted to come together, great, but having a diverse staff helps.” In the end, the EJ organizer, who knew what Eco Ed did, offered to help—another lesson in letting people vent their feelings.

... “People of color are not there to help you learn; they are there to do their work. If you wanted to come together, great, but having a diverse staff helps.”

Eco Ed felt that its organization was still on the cusp of change because they knew change meant more than saying that they saw a connection. They also had to figure out how to adapt inclusiveness practices into the entire system, and to identify what to enhance, what to let go of, and which relationships to build and opportunities to seize. Some of these questions might need to be made by partners, if this was truly to be a more inclusive process. Even though around every corner there seemed to be a lot of questions, with each turn, there were also more experiences to help answer them.

In a March 2008 interview, Eco Ed increased staff and board members’ involvement with the inclusiveness process by using the same approach and tools used at the Learning Community Meeting in Minnesota. Together they developed a detailed action plan, complete with assigned tasks and deadlines. Staff posted the plan visibly in their offices as a regular reminder of the work to be done. One staffer created a large spreadsheet of questions about the networks that they were going to investigate. This would help ensure that information becomes a ready resource for all.

The action plan increased knowledge and strategies about community issues and cultural norms. Although it showed a strong commitment for doing a good job, the staff realized its research and “over-preparing” kept them from interacting in the community. This strategy worked against Eco Ed since many cultures value relationships over preparation and believe that there is no better teacher than firsthand experience.

Eco Ed is a sensitive and intelligent group and UW-SP and Intercambios were confident that the sincerity of its efforts would be successful in creating trusting and supportive relationships with new community contacts.

UW-SP and Intercambios generated many ideas to encourage Eco Ed to immerse themselves. For example, two ideas included (1) talking with the school district’s Family Engagement Center and (2) asking the Hmong Cultural Center to facilitate a student/community discussion with a targeted sixth-grade class, which was largely from the Hmong community.

Eco Ed was figuring out how to transition new cultural issues, approaches, and people into its complex program. The organization’s ability to focus on the process, instead of the outcomes, would help bring about this change.

In a September 2008 interview, Eco Ed went through some soul searching about what personal qualities the group should seek in its next hire, if Eco Ed wanted to become more inclusive and bring new perspectives and ideas to the organization. Recognizing there were enough EE skills at the table, Eco Ed looked for new qualities and hired a former college educator in social issues whose skills included analyzing power dynamics and other decision-making processes related to urban problems. The new staff person saw the connection between social justice issues and the environment and came to Eco Ed to learn more. The staff would clearly benefit from this perspective.

Another big step for Eco Ed was its move to become more intentional in its work with diverse communities. Since building relationships takes diligence, time, and commitment, each staff member had built face-to-face meeting time into his and her schedule. It was not an add-on; it was part of accomplishing the organizational mission. Eco Ed identified some professional development opportunities related to inclusiveness practices. Based on this research, Eco Ed submitted a pre-proposal seeking support for relationship building and staff development on institutional racism and sustainability.

When asked if this new level of community involvement seemed like advocacy, Eco Ed stated that they believed the real world was full of sticky issues (besides the environment) that included social, economic, and political components. Learning about other components brought balance, not bias.

Eco Ed also recounted an interesting experience about organizing a summer eco-justice (EJ) teacher workshop that provided new lessons in developing contacts, picking issues of interest, and appealing to new audiences. When trying to make in-roads with new contacts, staff found that having established community contacts facilitated meeting new resource people. The topic of the workshop also influenced the attendance. One veteran teacher suggested that EJ might have felt too intimidating or disengaging for Eco Ed’s white teachers, who lived in suburbia, to attend. However, it proved to be of great appeal to a dozen Ojibwa math teachers who were invited by a new speaker.

Eco Ed realized there were still many unknowns, but its first experiences had been positive and enlightening. For example, staff had concerns that volunteer activists might not have time to visit classrooms, but felt that students still had opportunities to visit them during walking tours of the community and through follow-up calls and e-mails. Challenges seemed manageable.

Outcomes Reached as Described by Learning Community

The achievement of the first four outcomes is demonstrated through materials developed by the Learning Community during

- 1) *The Planning Meeting in September 2007 in Minneapolis, MN; and*
- 2) *The 2009 Lessons Learned Meeting in Portland, OR.*

1. Developing a Strategic Plan

OUTCOME ONE: Develop a blueprint or strategic plan aimed at understanding and making linkages between organizational factors (e.g., organizational structure, programming, staffing, and evaluation) and inclusiveness practices.

In the fall of 2007, each organization created its own plan and a description of how organizational and programmatic practices and community perceptions would change as the organization became more inclusive over the next two years. This qualitative description of change is referred to as a rubric.

The blueprint rubrics (Table 1) were the organizations' first attempt at articulating what inclusive practices might look like. Organizationally, for example, Eco Ed described itself as wanting to change from being a science-oriented group to one that could view multiple lenses to address environmental issues. All three groups imagined that they would shift from their traditional way of doing business to one that was more community-centric, and that this shift would be visible at both the partnership and the issue level. The three groups also hoped that the community would perceive that having relationships with the environmental education groups would create more win-win solutions.

The three groups knew what inclusiveness should look like from programmatic and community perspectives. However, the groups were not as comfortable with their strategies for getting there. In fact, as the Learning Community shares in the lessons learned activities, their first attempt needed to be adjusted in scale, focus, and ways of measuring progress.

TABLE 1: Rubrics Describing Progress in Building More Inclusive Organizations

ORGANIZATION RUBRICS	Baseline	Midterm (aka planning)	In 18 months (aka implementation)
Eco Ed Organization	We use our current networks to find community partners who can talk about traditional environmental issues in scientific ways, but have no system to go beyond our networks effectively/successfully.	We are collecting new information but don't know what the big picture is yet or how it will work for us/with us.	We have a system of engaging people out of our network that provides students and teachers with multiple lenses to address environmental issues and that network has expanded from where we started.
PROGRAM RUBRICS	Baseline	Midterm	In 18 months

NEC Programs	The recycling program is a one-size-fits-all model with little community input on the design and utility of the program.	The program examines its responsiveness to the community needs with community input.	Non-contaminated recycling participation has increased through greater communication by champions.
PECC Programs	Programs are being created to meet agency goals.	Starting the dialogue, but still holding onto the agency goals. Traditional ideas begin to shift. Beginning to understand the knowledge and skills that will be needed to design programs with the community rather than for it. Beginning to make some changes. Feels like we are beginning to tackle something important.	We are in partnership working with the community, not just the environment. The community participation increases and is perceived as more appropriate by the agency. The agency understands the value of the change. Feeling like we are connected to and part of a larger community.
Eco Ed Community	Use the scientific paradigm as the foundation of our program.	Bring in diverse perspectives, but favor our operating model when making decisions about our program and funding.	Work collectively to address community issues, incorporating multiple world views and approaches.
COMMUNITY RUBRICS	Baseline	Midterm	In 18 months
NEC Community	The recycling program is a one-size-fits-all model with little community input on the design and utility of the program.	Residents see value for the program and begin to advocate on its behalf.	The community perceives the recycling program as a win-win means of addressing their needs because it is there in part to support the community and is connected with the community and trusted by the community.
PECC Community	The community feels unwelcome.	The community feels that an initial and sincere dialogue is happening with the agency.	The community sees evidence of enough adaptability that it is willing to continue its relationship <i>with</i> the agency. Participation increases and behavioral modifications are perceived as do-able and supportive of the park.
Eco Ed Community	Explain the urban community through traditional environmental systems.	Explain the urban community as interplay of many systems.	Use your understanding of the interplay of systems to improve your community.

2. Understanding Perspectives

OUTCOME TWO: Articulate current and future stakeholders' perspectives regarding their community, field, and organization.

During the Lessons Learned Meeting, individual groups came together to discuss the strategies used in the program and by the community. The groups were asked to describe the level of understanding that the organization had of the community and vice versa. Below is a summary from the three groups at the baseline, planning, and implementation segments followed by the primary data from the workshop.

BASELINE

Initially, the organizations had had minimal to no contact with the communities with which they wanted to partner. At this early stage, the organizations could not articulate the communities' different concerns, needs, and questions, let alone differentiate the multiple perspectives within the communities (Table 2).

TABLE 2: Description of Organizational and Community Perspectives During Baseline Segment

Baseline	NEC	Community Group
Your understanding of the other group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>It's okay not to know</i> • <i>Racial similarities do not automatically foster understanding</i> • <i>Leadership shows interest</i> • <i>Not adverse to taking risks</i> • <i>Collaborating with other city initiatives and government programs</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Discussed "Who benefits?"</i> • <i>Perceptions of cost</i> • <i>Different understanding of what recycling is</i> • <i>Neighborhood is actually four individual communities</i> • <i>Finding hot buttons helps to galvanize involvement</i>
Strategies used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Community "at the table"</i> • <i>Change in attitude of the organization</i> • <i>No predetermined agenda or assumptions</i> • <i>Taking a step back</i> • <i>Needed license to go slower</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Civic league</i> • <i>Neighborhood coalition</i> • <i>Community neighborhood center</i> • <i>Listening and outreach to neighborhood community-based groups</i> • <i>Connect with commercial and business leaders</i>
Baseline	PECC	Community Group
Your understanding of the other group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Community uses the public lands differently</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>They had no connection with us at all</i>
Strategies used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Resources were one-size-fits-all</i> • <i>We wanted to change the approaches of four federal agencies through a change in their basic culture and attitudes</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We knew that the community was not accessing or using the information that the parks provided</i> • <i>They just went and used it</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We needed agency buy-in since all were risk adverse Without buy-in we could not get resources allocated for the task We needed to change the SOPs 	relying on word of mouth
Baseline	Eco Ed	Community Group
Your understanding of the other group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No prioritization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No prioritization
Strategies used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading newspapers Meeting with EJ group Application for EE inclusiveness project Start an inclusivity meeting (board?) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey for diversity (students) Engage community through students Visiting groups Meeting with EJ group

PLANNING

The organizations had overcome their initial discomfort in approaching the communities and were beginning to explore and recognize differences within their community by listening and observing. Through facilitated discussions within the Learning Community and with community leaders, the groups questioned whether their familiar strategies, (e.g. standard operating procedures, the service provider culture), would support the new relationships that were forming (Table 3).

TABLE 3: Description of Organizational and Community Perspectives During Planning Segment

Planning	NEC	Community Group
Your understanding of the other group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We questioned our assumptions We did much listening or planned this approach Positive response Welcomed; acceptance Curiosity expressed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very diverse Recycling was not a high priority; including new meetings Key concerns; safety; about the landlords, etc. Sub-communities had different interests Recycling approached under different methods/approaches
Strategies used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Took a step back to listen Need to engage community Did not feel stress since the process was undefined for building trust; learning about community Develop a narrative Openly selected groups to benefit this exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visited communities Recruited a community ambassador Utilized unsung heroes Started community visits Addressed decision-making process
Planning	PECC	Community Group
Your understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gave away free stuff Had a Spanish speaker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What will you bring for us? (not enough that we are there)

of the other group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Lots of interest in animals and nature</i> • <i>Very forgiving with Spanish, welcoming</i> • <i>The environment is inherently interesting</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>With a collaboration each has a role</i> • <i>What are you going to do? (give contribution)</i> • <i>A cultural ambassador let them discover cultural norms because s/he is friends with both sides</i>
Strategies used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Started the Family and Natures program as a concept with the Michoacán • Framed as a pilot to continue under the radar • Found a bridge that made putting ourselves out there feel safer • Determined to keep the door open • Joined a community event that is usually cultural and brought EE activities • Did research for our program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals were to preserve traditions • Extend the information about the Michoacán community by enlarging community • To be proud of culture
Planning	Eco Ed	Community Group
Your understanding of the other group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Realization of scale (teachers, community partners; silent partner– environment)</i> • <i>Realization that we needed to look internally</i> • <i>Realized that we should use our own educational process</i> 	<i>Still not a priority</i>
Strategies used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff meetings together • Job descriptions • Board level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - formed committee - retreat planning • Read community newspapers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey Hmong students and families • Assigned newspapers but didn't work • Met with people with knowledge of the community that lived in the community

IMPLEMENTATION

Organizations were able to see more complexity in the community than before. Learning Community members began to empathize with and value others' perspectives in shaping their organization's practices as evidenced by their participation in the communities' activities (Table 4). However, the groups were still grappling with how their program goals fit with these new more inclusive approaches. How do you measure the quality of a relationship with quantitative data?

TABLE 4: Description of Organizational and Community Perspectives During Implementation Segment

Implemnt'n	NEC	Community Group
Your understanding of the other group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They want to be heard with deep listening • They may not know the benefits of recycling • Appreciate shared benefits • Willingness to come to their terms/their zones • Facing fears; maybe none exist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural thought of approach (they know how to influence, impact each other... their neighbors, friends, and citizens) • They are knowledgeable partners
Strategies used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remaining committed to the process • Understanding the different layers of relationships • Building relationships • Tweaking resources, process, approach, ideas • Major change coming to city with the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They would choose recycling program – they're in control • Issue of trust resonates • This community welcomed messages despite their cultural proclivity or inclination
Implemnt'n	PECC	Community Group
Your understanding of the other group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lots of different areas with subcultures in culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cultural ambassador let them discover cultural norms because she is friends with both sides
Strategies used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joined a community event that is usually cultural and brought EE activities • Joined a second event and framed it in the cultural context for Day of the Dead • Did research for our program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend the information about the Michoacán community by enlarging community • To be proud of culture
Implemnt'n	Eco Ed	Community Group
Your understanding of the other group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PC School Assignments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small, intimate • Relatively unknown still
Strategies used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcomes designed • Using CI filter for planning and decision making • Non-traditional posting process and staff hire • EJ summit • Staff attended community meetings • Classroom speakers • Board CI committee met 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EJ summit • Classroom speakers • Tech advances • Recruit schools through greater inclusive filter • Increased relevancy of projects • Staff professional development

3. Identifying Strengths and Weaknesses

OUTCOME THREE: Identify organization's current strengths and weaknesses, in terms of inclusiveness practices, through self-assessment processes.

After individual group discussions, the three groups came together to share three things: (1) what moved them forward; (2) what held them back; and (3) lessons learned. Below is a summary from the three groups followed by the primary data from the workshop.

“WHAT MOVES YOU FORWARD” SUMMARY

The participating organizations' commitment to and bonding through working on becoming more inclusive organizations helped them overcome obstacles and celebrate successes. The groups' willingness to shift from being a task-oriented provider to a flexible community member contributed greatly to the process. Ultimately, the organizations embraced the perspectives and practices of the community, moving toward more equitable relationships (Table 5).

TABLE 5: Summary and Examples of “What Moves You Forward” During Lessons Learned Meeting

TOPIC: What moves you forward?	
BASELINE	Examples
1. Committed group who were ready	<i>“EETAP’s diversity training brought committed people together.”</i>
2. Adjustment to scope	
3. Finding connectivity in the community	
PLANNING	Examples
1. Flexibility	<i>“Acknowledge that we don’t know much about the community, including historical relevance.”</i>
2. Focus on process	
3. Build relationship	
4. Let go of the agenda/flexibility	
5. Focus on the process, taking time to listen	
IMPLEMENTATION	Examples
1. Embrace incremental success	<i>“Initial successes in doing things.”</i>
2. Taking a risk (“Jump off the cliff”)	
3. Quality vs. quantity (No more charts)	

“WHAT HOLDS YOU BACK” SUMMARY

The organizations felt they were traveling in uncharted territory without a concrete planning or “to do” list. The tools, approaches, and service provider mentality were impediments in being ready to listen and form relationships. It was not until the groups let go of their traditional operating procedures that their level of comfort and confidence increased when interacting with the community (Table 6).

**TABLE 6: Summary and Examples of “What Holds You Back”
During Lessons Learned Meeting**

TOPIC: WHAT HOLDS YOU BACK?	
BASELINE	Examples
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not knowing where to begin – there is no manual – uncomfortable; no plan; lack of knowledge 2. Created plan (false creativity) 3. Narrow view of community – sub-communities 	<p><i>“These communities are complex.”</i></p>
PLANNING	Examples
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assumptions check; pride of professionals 2. FEAR – Yikes! 3. Urgency and timelines 4. Addressing cultural inclusiveness as a separate component – viewing it as stand-alone 	<p><i>“Check yourself before you wreck yourself.”</i></p>
IMPLEMENTATION	Examples
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Obligation to organization taking priority over relationship to community 2. Expecting bigger results 	<p><i>“You have to start somewhere?”</i> <i>“We have trouble prioritizing with our board.”</i> <i>“Size matters – start small.”</i></p>

“LESSONS LEARNED” SUMMARY

The lessons learned were ultimately a paradigmatic shift in the way the groups interacted with the community. No longer were they delivering a one-directional outcome-oriented program to a “generic diverse” community, but instead, forming an organic, collaborative, reflective relationship, with new approaches that were responsive to individuals with different needs, values, and ways of communicating (Table 7).

**TABLE 7: Summary and Examples of “Lessons Learned”
During Lessons Learned Meeting**

TOPIC: LESSONS LEARNED	
BASELINE	Examples
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seek to understand them, value the community values 2. Recognize communities’ “R” complex: respect for self; respect for others; responsibility for all your actions. 	<p><i>“It is about the relationship.”</i> <i>“Even within these communities are different levels of communities.”</i></p>
PLANNING	Examples
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create something new (one size does not fit all) 2. Diversity is not just “race” 3. Find the bridge 	<p><i>“Diversity is not just race.”</i> <i>“It is about the relationship—not the program.”</i></p>

IMPLEMENTATION	Examples
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be prepared for personal change 2. It a longer process than “you think” 3. Check your assumptions 4. Include cultural inclusiveness in your planning, programming, relationship building, decision-making, etc. (Holistic Cultural Inclusivity Filter) 	<p><i>“These communities are complex.”</i></p>

4. Shifting Communication and Decision-Making Strategies

OUTCOME FOUR: Shift communication and decision-making strategies to better include partners and stakeholders.

During the two years in the Inclusiveness Initiative, organizations used new strategies to shift their communication styles, and as a consequence, their connections with others. Below are three vignettes about what they did.

PECC: A shift in events is a shift toward building relationships.

PECC members understand that it is about the relationships one builds and not the events attended and programs delivered. However, one event, the Day of the Dead Festival, helped PECC see the world, the afterworld, and the Hispanic community differently. A cultural ambassador invited PECC members to build an *ofrenda*, or altar, honoring those that have died. Despite mainstream cultural norms of not bringing attention to tragic accidents, PECC members created an altar honoring the lives of ten young Hispanic boys who died in Lake Mead and how their deaths served as an example of how one could enjoy nature more safely. The altar showed the boys as skeletons in the water, on one side, and other people with good swimming abilities and life jackets, on the other. There were more than 11,000 visitors at the Day of the Dead Festival. Visitors shared an unexpected appreciation for the respect shown by PECC members.

The experience helped PECC members examine new views about death, a new sense of community, and opportunities missed in creating new relationships. Because this type of event was such an anomaly for PECC, the members felt that they had entered a new cultural arena and were acting more inclusively. Later, PECC members also realized that having the Hispanic community attend PECC events was equally inclusive. It was the time spent together sharing interests and experiences that mattered.

NEC: A shift in service provider behaviors is a shift toward collaboration.

It can feel like an abnormal shift for an expert service provider to be in the back row listening; that is exactly what NEC did in Huntersville. Pairs of staff and board members asked permission to sit in on various community meetings, including the local civic league, neighborhood coalition, and community center—and just listen.

The community organizations were not used to city program staff coming to listen without an agenda. NEC realized that traditionally they only met with groups if they were training them. This time NEC staff and board were not the experts, service providers, purveyors of

a message, or even a usual member in the group. Without an agenda, NEC was able to listen, observe, and find out more about the decision-making process, information sources, and general concerns. NEC's quiet participation at these meetings helped them better understand the community. In return, the community opened their doors, with the community leader being the first to greet them.

Although the community leader was a gatekeeper, he or she was also the most knowledgeable, influential, and cross-cultural member of the community. This person opened doors, provided new opportunities, and gave advice. NEC realized one's agenda or poor listening skills could inhibit one's ability to value community's perspectives, an integral part of building a relationship.

Eco Ed: A shift in vocabulary is a shift toward a new way of thinking in the organization.

Eco Ed's approach to locally based urban environmental education has provided them with the tools for problem solving, critical thinking, and analysis. The ability to explore the interconnectedness of issues lent itself to inclusive practices. What Eco Ed felt it lacked were staff, teachers, and community resource connections that were diverse enough in priorities and world experiences to make these issues come alive and be relevant for the students.

Eco Ed's first plan was to bring in community resource people who represented a greater cross-section of community views than their more traditional speakers. While strategizing about how to bring in new people, an opportunity arose to hire new staff. Since Eco Ed had already been examining inclusiveness issues, they decided to revisit their standard job description. Some of the words and phrases that changed are illustrated in Table 8.

TABLE 8: Eco Ed Inclusive Job Description

BEFORE	AFTER
PURPOSE: ...a dynamic educator who can effectively reach diverse audiences. ...to facilitate environmental service-learning curricula and projects...	...a dynamic educator who can effectively collaborate with culturally diverse communities... to facilitate locally based and multiple perspective environmental service-learning curricula and projects...
QUALIFICATIONS: ...Excellent organizational, communication, and technology skills, program planning, interest in environmental issues, and team oriented. Interest in environmental education or willingness to learn.	Experience in facilitating groups of adults or young people to make positive change in their communities. Demonstrated ability to work effectively with individuals with different cultural backgrounds. Excellent organizational, communication, and technology skills; program planning, and team oriented. Interest in community issues.
KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES: ...Organizing and motivating groups of teachers, interest and ability in keeping abreast of current research and techniques in areas of teacher training, environmental education, and service-learning. A commitment to empowering others.	...Organizing and motivating groups of people. A commitment to empowering others. Knowledge of Mpls./St. Paul area and cultural groups preferred. Interest and ability in keeping abreast of current research and techniques in areas of teacher training, environmental education, service-learning, community revitalization, and community problem-solving.

In addition to rewriting the standard job description, Eco Ed also changed its usual announcement venues. The job description went into diverse community papers and websites, instead of the usual environmental education sites.

The result was an applicant who had worked in community activism with college students on several social justice issues. She brought a fresh view, a new vocabulary, alternative strategies, and a broader network of contacts. The discussions explaining and validating Eco Ed's approach helped the whole staff re-evaluate possible limitations in their delivery. The value of having fresh eyes and an ethno-relative reflective staff made everyone fully utilize all tools and resources toward become even more inclusive than before.

Outcomes Reached as Described by Intercambios Evaluators

5. Creating Affective and Behavioral Shifts in Practices

OUTCOME FIVE: Intentionally shift organizational practices to increase the inclusiveness of the organization's work with other partners and stakeholders, and provide reflection on the pre-requisite knowledge, skills, attitudes, and environmental factors needed to implement such changes.

In order to measure the intentional affective and behavioral shifts in practice, the responses from the learning community were examined in the context of two seminal frameworks: Milton Bennett's Continuum of Intercultural Sensitivity (Bennett, 1989) and Everett Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation (Rogers, 1995). The former provided descriptors for individuals and organizations becoming more inclusive. The latter looked at the stages of concern as individuals and organizations internalized inclusiveness.

BENNETT'S CONTINUUM OF INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY

According to Milton Bennett's developmental model Continuum of Intercultural Sensitivity (Table 9), an individual moves from ethnocentrism to ethno-relativism. An individual who is ethnocentric uses his/her own set of standards and customs to judge all people, often unconsciously; an individual who is ethno-relative is comfortable with many standards and customs and can be effective interpersonally by adapting his/her behavior and judgment (Bennett, 1986).

Earlier stages of the continuum define the parochial denial of differences, the evaluative defense against differences, and the universalist position of minimization of difference. Later stages define the acceptance of difference, adaptation to difference, and the integration of difference into one's world view (Bennett, 1986).

One's frame of reference and subsequent reactions will differ depending on his/her stage on the continuum. An individual's position in the continuum is his/her departure point in a training workshop or in real life. For example, if an educator is in the defensive stage the educator may criticize certain groups for their large social activities in nature parks, dictating that values of solitude are superior to communal gatherings. In the minimization stage, individuals will bury differences, ignoring important issues like power, colonialization, racism, and other forms of oppression. For instance, an individual who believes that "water conservation is important to everyone" never examines how socioeconomic factors influence water consumption. In the acceptance stage, cultural differences exist, but they are not evaluated. For example, coalitions that come together may fight their separate battles under one banner, but they don't pursue the interconnectedness of their issues beyond this point. A person who joins a coalition effort to improve a city's air quality, but who is also trying to address multiple industrial emissions from a plant in her neighborhood, may ask "Why isn't improving our immediate communities seen as an environmental issue?", a question posed by Sharmeen Khan (n.d.) in the article, "Whiteness of Green."

TABLE 9: Bennett's Continuum of Intercultural Sensitivity

	Description	Examples
Ethnocentric	DENIAL: A person in this stage has limited categories to notice differences. Also, a person in this stage may attribute subhuman qualities to those from different cultures and regard them with extreme prejudice.	"There are those who protect the environment and others who destroy it."
	DEFENSE: In this stage, people make statements that indicate they feel threatened. The most common reaction at this stage is to denigrate the differences or to create negative stereotypes. An alternative response in this stage is to promote one's cultural superiority.	"Businesses only care about a profit." "Poor people are either ignorant or lazy when it comes to helping the environment."
	MINIMIZATION: People in this stage believe that cultural differences are just superficial; the basic qualities of being human will suffice. Western values of individuality, openness, and honesty contribute to this view. Sometimes people with overseas experience find a haven in this stage—it sounds culturally sensitive and it allows them to avoid feelings of incompetence in the face of many cultural unknowns. Moving into the next stage represents "a major conceptual shift," from an ethnocentric position that relies on simple principles (e.g., either/or) to an ethno-relative stage where answers aren't so clear.	"As long as I am sincere that is all that counts." "I thought their polite positive responses meant that they had committed to come; now I see that maybe they just didn't want to hurt my feelings."
Ethno-relative	ACCEPTANCE: People in this stage enjoy recognizing and exploring differences. They are fairly tolerant of ambiguity and are comfortable knowing there's no one right answer (although there are better answers for particular contexts).	"I feel comfortable greeting other women from Mexico with a kiss, although I still don't greet my U.S. friends that way."
	ADAPTATION: People in this stage can intentionally shift their frame of reference (e.g., consider the greater influence of status in some cultures); they can empathize or take the other person's perspective. They can choose to act in alternative ways, based on their intercultural perception. People in this stage may be called "bicultural" or "multicultural." It should be noted that some people can shift frames of reference but still hold an ethnocentric view.	"To work together on this grant I need to change my behavior to account for the perceived difference in status between myself and my less educated partner."

<p>INTEGRATION: People in this stage can handle multicultural identity issues. Some people become so aware of the multiplicity of cultural ways they no longer can identify with any, and they feel disturbed. Others at this stage readily adapt. Strategies: Establishing one’s own “cultural core” or personal value system is a key step here. Some people choose to become “mediators”; they assume roles that help two cultures understand each other. As with all ethno-relative stages, integration requires thought and effort.</p>	<p>“Sometimes I don’t feel like I fit in anywhere.” “I feel most comfortable when I am bridging differences between cultures.”</p>
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THE CONCERNS-BASED ADOPTION MODEL (CBAM)

Working with Rogers’ Diffusion of Innovation model, Intercambios used a methodology called The Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) (Table 10) to follow the process of change in the Learning Community. According to the National Staff Development Council, CBAM can be described as follows:

The Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) is a framework about human learning and change that staff developers need to know, understand, and apply to their work (Hall & Hord, 2001). CBAM is based on the principle that change is a process and not an event. This means everyone connected with assisting educators to learn new instructional practices or improving principal leadership needs to think about change as a series of actions and processes spread over a long period of time. Most people do not transform their behaviors and practices as a result of a single event—no matter how powerful. Developing a new classroom or leadership habit takes time, support, and determination.

CBAM identifies a variety of concerns that educators may express as they implement new practices. Each of those stages requires a different form of support/intervention to resolve those concerns. For example, personal concerns are one of the initial stages of concern. At this stage, a teacher is concerned about how the innovation will affect him or her personally. Educators might wonder what new skills and knowledge will be required of them and whether they will be able to learn those new skills. They wonder whether the materials they need will be available or whether students might react negatively to new forms of instruction and disrupt classroom routines and discipline. If these concerns are not addressed, the teacher may get “stuck” at this stage and never move on. The intervention and/or support that is appropriate for the personal concern stage include acknowledging that these concerns are legitimate and appropriate, explaining plans for distributing classroom materials, arranging visits with others who have already implemented the innovation, and demonstrating how to implement the innovation in small steps (Roy, 2005).

TABLE 10: Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM)

Description	Examples
<p>AWARENESS/INFORMATIONAL: A general awareness of the innovation and interest in learning more detail about it is indicated. The person seems to be unworried about him/herself in relation to the innovation, being only interested in general characteristics, effects, or requirements for use.</p>	<p>“Everything is fine; I don’t want to.”</p>
<p>PERSONAL: Individual is uncertain about the demands of the innovation. This includes analysis of her/his role in relation to the reward structure of the organization, decision-making, and consideration of potential conflicts with existing structures or personal commitment. Financial or status implication of the program for self and colleagues may also be reflected.</p>	<p>“I can’t do all that.”</p>
<p>MANAGEMENT: Attention is focused on the processes and tasks of using the innovation and the best use of information and resources. Issues related to efficiency, organizing, managing, scheduling, and time demands are utmost.</p>	<p>“I’ll try, but I am not a believer.”</p>
<p>CONSEQUENCE: Attention focuses on the impact of the innovation on individuals in their immediate sphere of influence. The focus is on relevance of the innovation for these individuals, evaluation of outcomes, including performance and competencies, and changes needed to increase outcomes.</p>	<p>“I am not convinced that it is worth it.”</p>
<p>COLLABORATION: The focus is on coordination and cooperation with others regarding use of the innovation.</p>	<p>“I have my own ways of doing this.”</p>
<p>REFOCUSING: The focus is on exploration of more universal benefits from the innovation, including the possibility of major changes or replacement with a powerful alternative. Individuals have definite ideas about alternatives to the proposed or existing form of the innovation.</p>	<p>“Everything is fine.”</p>

Intercambios reviewed responses to the evaluation questions and the general discussion in the Learning Community and analyzed them for themes set out in Bennett’s Continuum of Intercultural Sensitivity and the Concerns-Based Adoption Model. (Figure 1 summarizes the results). As the groups became more inclusive over time a greater proportion of their statements moved from ethnocentric toward ethno-relative practices.

ANALYSIS OF CULTURAL SENSITIVITY AND CBAM CONTINUA AS THEY APPLY TO THE INCLUSIVENESS INITIATIVE

Throughout the two years of this initiative, Intercambios read and coded each transcript, noting comments that indicated various stages of two different theoretical frameworks: (1) cultural sensitivity vis-à-vis Bennett's continuum; and (2) skills to adopt inclusiveness practices through the Concern-Based Adoption Model (CBAM). The specific quotes were inserted in spreadsheets and made available to the groups during the Lessons Learned Meeting.

Although these quotes provide concrete examples of the feelings and actions of each group, it is the patterns of cultural sensitivity and adoption of practices that tell the story of how these three groups shifted affectively and behaviorally over time (Figure 1). For this reason, Intercambios has reduced the size of the data sheet by replacing each quote in the spreadsheet document with a gold block to represent a quote in a specific stage of cultural sensitivity, and a blue block, for a specific stage of adoption practices. A bold line has been inserted between the third and fourth column to indicate the division between ethnocentric and ethno-relative stages designated in Bennett's continuum. Intercambios continued this line through the CBAM graph dividing mechanical practices from more reflective ones. Below is an analysis of the groups looking at both the cultural sensitivity and adoption practices at three points in time: (1) the baseline; (2) the planning; and (3) the implementation segments.

BASELINE OBSERVATIONS

There were many similarities in the composition and motivations of each group interested in becoming part of the Learning Community. Individuals in each group expressed ideas characteristic of both ethnocentric and ethno-relative stages (shown in gold). However, the conflicting values of ethnocentric and ethno-relative approaches caused dissonance and (as described below in the interpretation of the CBAM graph) temporary paralysis.

The presence of ethno-relative members and leaders was a critical prerequisite in engaging the groups in these challenging processes. In fact, the Denver Foundation's research, *Inclusiveness at Work*, identified having ethno-relative leaders as an important condition of an organization's readiness to become more inclusive. Based on this finding, UW-SP and Intercambios used this criterion, and others, for selecting the organizations that would participate in the Learning Community and as such, one would expect these views to be expressed.

The quotes made by these leaders during the baseline segment illuminated the external forces—changing demographics, questions of effectiveness, and the homogeneity of the professional support—that added urgency to the motivation to apply for participation in the Inclusive Initiative:

...There is virtually no EE programming specifically created for Hispanic audiences....informal education organizations in and around Las Vegas do not have adequate resources or expertise to address this growing issue and also lack the staff to effectively connect with this growing Hispanic community. --PECC

... I think that the relationships we have with underserved populations are positive, but my biggest concern is that we're not reaching enough of the underserved population because the messaging does not get to them or we're not going about it in the correct way. So, I would like to see through this program, or in general, how we can think about ways to target those audiences more directly. -- NEC

...Our staff level, our board level, and our supporters level, even our teacher level, is kind of overwhelmingly white middle upper class. That doesn't reflect the diversity of the audience we're serving, who are students. ... Those community partners do not tend to reflect the diversity of the students. We think that this is a barrier to their learning and to, in some ways, as seeing themselves as part of a solution or being engaged. ...But, the idea that some of these topics might have cultural angles or ways of interpreting different environmental issues based on your heritage, family role, class, economic class, all of the different ways you can think about something. But, how [is] our programming engaging people in specific issues based on where they come from?
--Eco Ed

When comparing ethno-relative thoughts (coded as gold) with the skills to adopt inclusive processes (coded in blue), all the groups struggled in understanding the personal demands in becoming more inclusive. Comments—concerning PECC members learning the newly formed group's goals, to NEC's need for guidelines, to Eco Ed's overwhelming view of the big picture—illustrate the struggles that made the planning of the task intimidating.

..We have a good understanding of our mission and our focus and where we are going. We develop from there.
—PECC

...Our concerns expanded once we looked at your organizational self-assessment. We saw things about our ordinance and bylaws and policies that don't explicitly state anything about this, it doesn't exclude it. It names different—for example, what our board make up is—professional types as well as community organizations. It lists some things, but it doesn't address this particular issue. We looked at the collaborative arrangements and how we involve or get involved with other organizations and we do quite a bit with other environmental organizations. We collaborate with more and more community organizations, but I don't think we have a set mechanism to address diversity in our education outreach or any kind of process. I don't think we restrict or limit our delivery of our program, but we don't have a mechanism, really, in place to address diversity, to ensure that we're reaching all audiences with our educational messages.
—NEC

...Because of the way we operate, I think becoming more culturally inclusive is just this huge, huge thing that I see would require a lot of really deep changes in our organization.
—Eco Ed

PLANNING STAGE OBSERVATIONS

In the planning stage, the ethnocentric members of the groups felt most comfortable using familiar approaches to reach their inclusiveness goals. NEC members received coaching about how to be a participant rather than a presenter at community meetings. PECC's professional conference format ended up not producing the community interactions for which they were hoping. Eco Ed clung to research and organizational charts in hopes that it would help remove their filters. The following comments illustrate their positions:

... But, when we go with these, whatever they may be, meetings, gatherings, however it may come about. Here we are, white middle and upper class, do we, besides letting someone know who we are, do we say something about what we are doing, do we lay back and just kind of listen? How would you recommend we go about that? ...How can you go into a meeting like that where you obviously are not part of that organization or group and not identify yourself? Because that to me would arouse suspicion, why are you there?
—NEC

...We need to know what we're trying to do and why we're trying to do it and support it. And, ultimately how we design our programs, it is fundamentally flawed in terms of not being inclusive and designing just to meet agency mandates and to meet science standards when science is taught 20 hours out of the year. These don't even make sense anymore...just trying to influence that little bit little over time as well.
—PECC

...I think we decided that because if we just go to somebody and say, like a really open-ended question, we might get some feedback, but if we had some kind of knowledge in general and were able to ask more specific questions, it might yield more, it might inform what kind of questions we want to ask.
—Eco Ed

The organizations felt more comfortable using the traditional approaches of a service provider in an EE organization to reach their inclusiveness goals. These strategies proved ineffective because they created barriers to listening, learning about, and making interconnections with the community—the fundamental elements to building collaborative relationships.

...We jump to these messages way too soon and realized that we've got to do a lot more investigating before we begin working... if we hope to increase recycling we are going to have to do some other method of communicating with those we are trying to persuade. And, I think the other part that I'm taking away is that it's taken us three months to simply make relationships, or make visits, I wouldn't really call them relationships yet, with a handful of groups. It's a long-term process.
—NEC

...The whole idea of designing programs with the community is a very tough one to take....I was just hoping there would be paradigm shifts at least beginning to happen.
—PECC

...If we are all about student voice and hearing what they say. There is a little bit of conflict there. I don't know if that is the right word to use. That can come into some conflict. The students could say that we are not really interested in that, we don't want to talk about that. What is our role?...If we are going in to other classrooms and not trying to impose the traditional definition of environment when they are interested in more urban issues, [then] we can't go the other way and say to the other students [who] are interested in the traditional we want you to do this.
—Eco Ed

IMPLEMENTATION STAGE OBSERVATIONS

In the third segment, the majority of the groups' comments reflect a shift toward ethno-relative values. The frequency of ethno-relative comments reflects their assimilation of a way of viewing the world through different lenses. This does not exclude participants from feeling and expressing ethnocentric statements; it can be a natural response. However, members now demonstrated the ability to draw from a wider range of options,

perspectives, and processes in understanding and working with others as they questioned their initial reactions. As evidenced by the quotes below, the learning community members internalized the idea that inclusiveness cannot be a one-size-fits-all model, a predictable set of experiences, or a one-directional approach.

.... But, see, that lets us know that there's no magic bullet and for us to sit down and say there is one simple reason and there is not. Everybody looks for something to be all neatly tied up in a bow and say this is the reason why and there isn't just one reason why. There's not going to be one silver bullet that's going to solve the problem because it's not a one-size-fits-all.... —NEC

....The way that has been approached lately, the steps they have been doing, which are good; they're going away from the traditional. They still have it on the back burner, the survey, because that is what's understood, that's what is standard and what is expected, and looking at other venues to step on somebody else's shoes, their culture. That's a good way to speak with another language in a sense that, okay, this community is going to respond because they're learning differently. —PECC

... Everybody knows this is a lifelong journey. Nobody said it will be great when this is done in the next three years. One of the things that we did when we identified all our stakeholders—we have our community partners and teachers and students and then we have the urban environment and the staff. Including ourselves in there in the process and mission of the organization, for me, felt it took some of the pressure off staff when thinking about professional development. —ECO ED

One common element that cannot be underestimated is the link that the organizations have made with someone with a keen sense of the community. These people are referred to as cultural ambassadors, bridges, gatekeepers, or opinion leaders. Because of their cross-cultural wisdom, they can provide context, forethought, and perspective to the groups as their inclusiveness goals evolve.

... And you know, you make an important point. But, I also look at this is the population that is also the one that's the most, felt like they're the victim, they're the ones that have been taken advantage of, you want to use me, they're suspicious for a lot of real reasons; especially the Huntersville Community. You have used my data, you have used me to promote and to get funds, but I have not always been the recipient, but yet you have used me to usher certain programs through. You used me to sit down and pick my brain, you want me to come in to facilitate this and that to meet your agenda and once again it's just piggybacking off of what you said. But, ultimately I'm sitting down and doing all of this, and then you are going to take my ideas and either you're going to package them and take them somewhere else. But, am I going to be the beneficiary of what I have sat down and helped you put together... —NEC

... We are in the beginning stages, but at the same time we do have the acceptance from the Michoacán community. I'm totally focusing on them, okay? So, they're willing to do things. By this point they could have closed the door already. Knowing them, I have a little more connection to them. Even me, I'm Mexican, there are limits and borders that we put and I want to be careful with those limits and make sure that I can be allowed to move forward more and more and so far we are pretty much in. And, that's good. But, we're not done. —PECC

...She comes in with the fresh eyes and sees yes we are not accomplishing these ideas that we have and something that is very attractive about Eco Ed is that we have these ideals and that we have these programs and processes that try to get us toward these ideals. —Eco Ed

The groups' skills are less mechanical; they are able to reflect on the impact of becoming inclusive and the changes needed to become more effective within their immediate sphere of influence. Although the tradeoff of these practices and the benefits they yield requires more time, mentoring, and a continual need to question assumptions, all groups feel that these investments have given them a richer and more tangible understanding of what inclusiveness means than they had when they started this initiative.

...We have to go slower, we have to do a stakeholder process, we have to go out and talk to the people [who] actually live and work and use those corridors and get them involved, or at least listen to what they know before we start saying, let's do some more cleanups, let's do some more enforcement, let's put more litter receptacles out there. All those common solutions that are probably going to be part of the solution, but without the participation I don't think we're going to get buy-in. We've hung with them, we've built relationships, we got to know who the people are who really care about the issues that live there and work there. But, I think it's just as important that it becomes the neighborhood's program versus the city's program. —NEC

...No, I don't think so. I think, we, as a team, as PECC, we have moved forward really far and we have done a lot of stuff, but we haven't impacted yet because we haven't been able to show it and we have other challenges. —PECC

... But it still doesn't account for how the teachers will react or how the students will respond to things they have never heard before or how we can facilitate the whole process not just the one with the communities. —Eco Ed

The groups found more important reasons to be inclusive than the initial external factors that propelled them into this Initiative. Being inclusive provided one with: (1) new and relevant strategies; (2) new interconnections that addressed multiple concerns and solutions; (3) new and rich relationships that helped one become more mindful and ultimately effective at addressing the complex problems faced.

THE FACILITATION PROCESS

Much credit must be given to the organizations and the community partners in this Learning Community. Their commitment and reflection have made these insights into the inclusiveness process tangible. The dialogue, coaching, and questioning were equally important ingredients in moving from one end of the cultural inclusivity continuum to another.

Drawing from comments and earlier planning documents, the evaluators identified certain conditions that helped catalyze this process. The facilitators intentionally chose interventions designed to shift organizational practices toward ethno-relative views.

Initially, all the organizations struggled to understand the personal and organizational demands of becoming more inclusive. Case studies, visioning exercises, reflective planning processes, and the assimilation of new views and processes were the initial

strategies used to help the groups diminish their discomfort. Simple, low-risk, strategies such as sitting in community meetings helped groups get “in the community’s door.”

As the organizations gained confidence during the planning segment of the initiative, probing questions and reflection on implemented strategies helped members of each group to understand how their traditional practices ran counter to the dynamic relationships within the community. Members began to understand the need to shift their role from service provider to community member. This understanding allowed them to be open to applying new strategies and alternative outcomes. The ambassadors in each group served to help members check assumptions, reflect, identify new strategies, and increase confidence as they moved toward more inclusive practices.

During the implementation segment of the initiative, the organizations’ ability to implement culturally sensitive interaction and reflect on their approaches created a trajectory for developing rich inclusive practices. The structure of the Lessons Learned Meeting validated the experiences they had and continued to share. Relationships were recognized as an important element in the process. With a concrete path, valuable partners, and a defined roadmap, members were able to describe the journey with others. The benefits of the experience had already been echoed in the members’ final reflections:

... The most exciting outcome of the workshop, from my perspective, is the common language our group now shares about its values, approaches, and relationships... There have been times when I felt very frustrated at assumptions that have been made (both in our group and in our organizations) about the community members we are getting to know and the "best" ways to develop these relationships. I feel like during the workshop I was given the place and space to share my feelings in a way that was clearer and more easily understood by the members of our team.... I feel that I more deeply understand the perspective of each of our team members and how our combined strengths allow us to develop authentic community relationships.

...Begin to think about what it means to have a relationship with the community as opposed to providing programs for the community. Relationships help remove barriers; listening and understanding; valuing the community values. Deeper relationships don't depend on the service.

...I have come to realize that the idea of being inclusive is more of a process versus another program. I have learned that this is a very complex process and requires commitment and willingness to change and examine your own views, perspectives, habits.

Conclusion

The patterns in what moved groups forward, what held them back, and what they learned were similar in all three groups even though the team compositions, geographic area, focus, and types and durations of programs were different. In each case, they started out with limited direct experiences interacting with the community. As the groups attempted to provide their services, they all concluded that their standard ways of operating were inappropriate when working with the communities. Developing relationships and creating win-win approaches and projects with the communities were richer, more respectful, and inclusive approaches than their traditional practice. The evaluators and learning community felt that this was a paradigmatic shift that would continue to reshape the way these three groups interacted with their communities.

Recording the process of how three environmental education groups become more inclusive is a seminal contribution in the field of environmental education. Through this effort, UWSP and Intercambios have affirmed the characteristics needed to work inclusively; identified important issues of scale and group composition; and begun documenting types of support, impediments, and necessary lessons in moving forward. The techniques used were successful in providing a level of support, trust, and reflection that ultimately contributed to organic and appropriate shifts in working more inclusively. This technique can help other environmental education groups that are ready to become more inclusive.

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The Learning Community

A special thanks to all the members of the Learning Community for their work and dedication to becoming more inclusive organizations

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