

Diversity and Inclusion



How might we address issues of diversity so that they enhance rather than hinder life opportunity and equity?

Importance of Diversity for Communities

1. **CULTURAL IDENTITY:** Communities want their youth to know and appreciate their culture, history, faith, and community. It is central for adults that their youth know “who they are.”
2. **CROSS-CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES:** Communities also want their youth to be exposed to and be confident in dealing with other cultures. There is safety in monocultural experiences, but they see cross-cultural opportunities as also critical to their future.
3. **SOCIAL-JUSTICE:** Communities care deeply about social justice for diverse groups and see many opportunities where Minnesota needs to improve.

Building Internal Capacity: Encouraging a Cultural and Global Mindshift

From	To
I am largely unaware of my own culture.	I know and honor my own culture, faith, and history (i.e. everything starts with a positive self-identity).
I seek friendships with people just like me.	I seek friendships with good people, whether they are like or unlike me.
I am not confident outside my own cultural group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am able to navigate and succeed in a multicultural, interconnected world
I have little interest in understanding the point of view of different cultures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I enjoy exploring and understanding different cultures and perspectives.
I possess stereotypes and am quickly judgmental of others different from me.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am empathetic, humble, and compassionate about differences.
I see all issues as local.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I understand how local and global issues are intertwined.

Knowledge & Skills Supporting the Mindshift

Building External Capacity: Addressing Access, Quality and Purpose

1. **ACCESS:** Do all youth have access to participate?
2. **QUALITY:** Do all youth participate in high quality programs?
3. **PURPOSE:** Do existing programs focus on the authentic needs of all youth?

ACCESS EQUITY: *What is needed for all youth to be able to participate in diversity and inclusion programs?*

Issue	What Limits Life Opportunities and Equity?
Mainstream Organizations	Many mainstream organizations have been built to serve customers from 30 years ago. With the Twin Cities becoming increasingly diversified, need to rebuilt those organizations to serve today's population.
Cross Cultural Connections	Race-based cliques in schools; not being taught about other cultures; not enough mingling in schools; (idea raised to host a conference for youth to teach each other about their respective cultures).
Stereotype Threat	Many misguided stereotypes exist about all groups. Need to find ways to erase denigrating stereotypes and project understanding, positive traits and images. People often make assumptions about youth because of their ethnicity or because they are homeless or because (fill in the blank)
Spectrum of Diversity	Need to understand diversity within within ethnic communities (people want to put a whole group into a single narrative).
Education	Not enough teachers that can connect, be a role model, and teach ethnic history.
Balance Cultural and Cross-Cultural	Need to balance preserving culture and exposure to activities outside your community.
Criminal Backgrounds	Criminal backgrounds and histories create huge barriers to getting ahead (affect housing, hiring, financial aid, education, everything). Provide incentives for landlords to house and employers to hire former felons.
Mental Health	Need more funding for youth with mental health issues. Create barriers to every part of one's life.
Code of Silence	Some cultures may not share problems in order to get help. May not access help or services because of issues of pride.
Workforce Diversity	Find more ways to bring diversity to our city's workforce (e.g. teachers). Example of 150 applicants to be a police officer but no Hispanic or African-American.

QUALITY EQUITY: *What is needed for all youth to experience high-quality diversity and inclusion programs?*

Issue	What Limits Life Opportunities and Equity?
Blended Cultures	Immigrants are challenged as individuals and families to blend two cultures. Can cause intergenerational conflict and misunderstandings.
Cultural Competence Training	Long list of those that could use more cultural competence to avoid “cultural collisions”: 1). Business-Human Resources; 2). Youth-Serving Organizations; 3) Teachers; and 4). Public Institutions.
Mainstream Organizations	Need to build more cultural competence throughout the workforce in mainstream youth-serving organizations.
Cultural Celebration	Find more ways to celebrate strengths and accomplishments of ethnic communities here in the Twin Cities.
Preserve Culture	People want to preserve faith, stories, language, and culture.
Educate Minnesota	Need to educate Minnesotans about important immigrant communities that are here. (Somali youth learn about the Civil war in the US but other students don’t learn about the Somali Civil War).
Visible Leadership	Desire to make different cultural groups visible in the leadership of programs and services. Important that youth see those like themselves.
Cross-Cultural Service	Need more activities together with other cultures, not just to celebrate and educate on individual cultures, but do joint projects together.
Police Relationships	Need to improve understanding and how police engage with young people in general but especially young people of color (ideas included buddy system between police and kids youth workshop for police).
Informed Support	Policymakers and decision makers often don’t know what to do to help homeless or other youth. They get into “saving” mentality that can end up enabling or prolonging problems.
GLBTQ	Need more awareness and program about GLBTQ (including homeless youth). Expand resources to this group (e.g. clinics, support groups). Many programs not set up to meet their needs (perhaps need a mobile unit that reaches youth in multiple spaces rather than a building).
Family	Mainstream organizations need to understand the definition and importance of family in each community group.

PURPOSE EQUITY: *Do the purposes of diversity and inclusion programs address youth's authentic needs and desires?*

Gaps	What Limits Life Opportunities and Equity?
Reverse Prejudice	Parents need education too; may have same distrust of others. Can have stereotypes of whites and others and pass along to youth.
Create Cultural and Resources Map	Need to shape our own maps of service providers that “get” East African culture. Service providers are very uneven in what they know about East African experiences and culture.
Identity	Need a huge focus on youth understanding and appreciating their own cultural identity and history.
Intercultural Communication	Need for facilitated intercultural courageous conversations. Foster inter-racial dialogue between groups and community (need to step out of our comfort zone). Need to address racial disparities in MN and don't worry about offending anyone --respectful talks.
Exposure Outside the Community	East African youth can attend mainstream events, but may feel overwhelmed, isolated, and not fully participate. Other youth need more training in cultural competence. East African youth need more effective and safe opportunities to get exposure to other cultures
Strengthening Families	Immigrants challenged by American lifestyle that is more about individualistic mindset and less about family relationships. Family is key to preserving cultural identity.
Youth Leadership	Find ways to inspire youth to serve (and better get to know) their own ethnic community.
Poverty and Racial Disparities	Need to take a hard look at current systems, laws and policies and how they keep people in poverty or encourage racial disparities (institutional racism). Look at schools, criminal justice and other systems for built-in bias. (e.g. government attitude; "They should know English").
Cross-Cultural Advocacy	There are multiple communities with similar experiences that could team together to make a more powerful difference.
Innovation	There are many diversity initiatives. Need not only skill (many are done poorly) but need innovation and fresh thinking about how to bring everyone together and even what that means.
Youth Futurists	Help all youth to better articulate their hopes, dreams, and ideas for the future.

Diversity and Inclusion: Old Story and New Story

A group of MIC members met on June 2 and constructed the following chart. It illustrates what they see as the “old story” that needs to be changed and the “new story” that needs to be told about diversity and inclusion.

Old Story	New Story
Melting Pot	Tossed Salad
Assimilation	Cultural Identity
Social and Cultural Integration	Access???
Programs	Experiences (can help us empathetically connect with one another; change core values)
U.S. Centric	Global. Worldly Focus
Individualistic	Collaborative (includes risk, trust, vulnerability)
Single Historical Narrative	Holistic and Multicultural Historical Narrative
Punitive	Restorative, Rehabilitative
Separation/ Segregation (Race-Based Cliques)	Bridge Cultures
Non-Affordable	Affordable
Affirmative Action	Legacy and Mainstream Organizations Reinventing Themselves
Respect—Based Teaching (Commanded Respect)	Relationship-Based Teaching (Authentic Respect)
Reverse Discrimination	Recognition of Unconscious Biases as Root of Racism
POC’s Held Accountable for Calling Out Racism	Every Person is Held Accountable for Cultivating Racial Equity and Inclusion