DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND BELONGING

Building an architecture of participation

This kind of change involves the co-creation of spaces, relationships, and practices that support full participation.

What is participation?

Full participation is a positive value that involves creating institutions that enable people, whatever their identity, background, or institutional position, to thrive, realize their capabilities, engage meaningfully in institutional life, and contribute to the flourishing of others (Sturm 2006, 2010). Full participation is an institutional transformation strategy that sustains ongoing improvement.

How do we address building an architecture of participation?

Ensure that the **communities we have identified as experiencing the greatest disparities** are brought into the work we do.

Ensure supportive supervision that acknowledges individual contributions and allows staff members to thrive and grow, realize their capabilities, and experience meaningful engagement. Engage staff members in designing and structuring work teams, including determining hiring needs and designing senior positions.

Review and regularly track stipend amounts and payment processing times to ensure that people can participate in our work regardless of socioeconomic status.

Design decision-making processes to ensure that staff members have input. Seek input from staff on internal operations/systems changes. Before announcing internal changes, clearly communicate decisions to staff members whose work will be most impacted.

Convene an organization-wide Cultural Responsiveness Committee (CRC) to guide our work across projects and in communications and other operational areas.

Prioritize full participation of members of the Board of Directors (BOD) to influence BOD governance beyond recruitment of members from diverse backgrounds. Structure opportunities for staff members to meet and work with the BOD. Encourage the BOD to consider staff input in their decisions. Request that the BOD include staff members in committees. Convene a joint staff-BOD group to guide DEIB framework implementation across the organization.

Key Questions to Explore in Building Participation

WHO? Who are the "organizational catalysts" and drivers of change, and how can the institution help them connect to each other and provide support for their work to advance full participation?

Who needs to be at the table in order for the values of full participation to be realized?

WHAT? What does full participation mean in a particular institutional and community setting, given the strengths, capacities, issues, and needs of the relevant stakeholders?

What are the narratives that exemplify practices of full participation?

What is the relationship of that full participation vision to concrete goals and institutional priorities?

WHERE? Where are the physical and social spaces and "action arenas" where people, programs, and practices can effectively be brought together?

WHEN? When can full participation concerns be put on the table so that they will be hardwired into institutional values and priorities?

When are the occasions and opportunities providing leverage points for institutional transformation advancing full participation?

HOW? How do you build transformative leadership development into the everyday practices of the institution?

How do you know whether you are improving, and what accounts for the impact you are (or are not) having?

More resources on Building an Architecture of Participation

Read "Full Participation: Building the Architecture for Diversity and Community Engagement in Higher Education" (Sturm et al., 2011) for ways to **deepen participation in your organization**.

Dig into this article about building inclusion in the workplace and **changing the workplace culture** from the World Economic Forum.

Watch **this video about inclusion at work** from The Kaleidoscope Group to learn how to approach improving participation and empowerment.

DOUG HARRIS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

FAMILY **V**OICES ®

familyvoices.org/DEIB