



**2022**

**Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging  
Cultural Assessment Report**

**Prepared for Many Hands**

Report written April 2022 by Conditioning Leaders:

Brianna Boggs

Madeline McNeely

[www.conditioningleaders.com](http://www.conditioningleaders.com)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<a href="#">Executive Summary</a>	2
<a href="#">Overview of the Engagement</a>	5
<a href="#">Assessment Process</a>	7
<a href="#">Data and Themes</a>	8
<a href="#">Recommendations</a>	14
<a href="#">Questions for Further Exploration</a>	17
<a href="#">Appendix 1: Definitions</a>	19
<a href="#">Appendix 2: Member Learning Series: “Head, Heart, and Hands”</a>	21
<a href="#">Appendix 3: Member Listening Sessions</a>	22

## Executive Summary

2020 and 2021 have been critical years in our country's history. Three pandemics-- COVID-19, political and economic instability, and white supremacy--have combined to galvanize millions into marching behind the rallying cry, "Enough is enough."<sup>1</sup> The devastating impact of COVID-19 on Black and brown communities has laid bare the impact of structural racism in the United States, at the same time that racialized violence and the backlash against movement toward equity have cast a spotlight on the continued strength of white supremacy.<sup>2</sup> In response, pressure for change at every level on which racism operates--internally, interpersonally, institutionally, and structurally--continues to grow.

Like many funders, Many Hands (MH) has been working intentionally over the past two years to better understand how racism and bias show up in the challenges grantmakers seek to address and in grantmaking itself. This commitment is reflected in internal and external communications, educational opportunities, the creation of the Racial Equity Working Group, and added reflection questions in the Focus Area Committee decision making process. In addition, this process has led Many Hands to examine the member experience through a lens of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB), with the goal of strengthening both its grantmaking and the organization as a whole.

In the spring of 2021, Many Hands engaged Conditioning Leaders to support its racial equity and DEIB work by designing and leading a racial equity learning series for members and by conducting an organizational culture assessment through a DEIB lens. Both projects took place in the fall of 2021. This report draws on the DEIB assessment to share high level themes, patterns in member perceptions, areas of success, challenges, recommendations, and questions that need further exploration. It reports findings from the DEIB survey that was completed by 109 members (39%) in September 2021 and is informed by two member listening sessions that took place in December 2021.

## Findings

*Overall, members give Many Hands high marks on inclusion and equity. More than 80% of members feel valued and supported and that they can contribute to Many Hands in ways*

---

<sup>1</sup> Jennifer D. Roberts, "Pandemics and protests: America has experienced racism like this before," The Brookings Institution, June 9, 2021: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/how-we-rise/2021/06/09/pandemics-and-protests-america-has-experienced-racism-like-this-before/>

<sup>2</sup> Jacqueline Howard, "Institutional racism contributes to Covid-19's 'double whammy' impact on the Black community, Fauci says," CNN.com, December 18, 2020: <https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/23/health/coronavirus-pandemic-racism-fauci-bn/index.html>; Janice Gassam Asare, "4 myths about white supremacy that allow it to continue" Forbes.com, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/janicegassam/2021/01/14/4-myths-about-white-supremacy-that-allow-it-to-continue/>

that interest them. Nearly 60% agree that MH policies and practices promote an inclusive and equitable environment.

*Members give Many Hands lower marks for diversity.* Fewer than 60% report having had opportunities to know and learn from members with a diverse range of identities, experiences, and perspectives. Fewer than 40% believe that MH policies and practices promote membership diversity.

*A large majority of members (more than 90%) believe that racial equity is essential to Many Hands' work,* and more than 80% believe that the leadership is committed to supporting racial equity. Roughly two-thirds of members agree that the membership shares this commitment.

*Most members (more than 80%) believe that Many Hands' grantmaking supports racial equity.* Of members who have served on a Focus Area Committee, close to 80% believe that their most recent committee's evaluation of applicants reflected commitment to racial equity. Large majorities, in the range of 85%-90%, report feeling heard and valued in the committee process and believe, more broadly, that their most recent committee operated in a way that was equitable and inclusive.

The report includes more details about these responses, as well as themes raised in survey comments and listening sessions, which reflect a range of views and experiences.

## **Recommendations**

The assessment revealed a desire amongst a critical mass of members to sharpen their "DEIB lens" as they evaluate potential grantees. The following are abbreviated recommendations for how Many Hands might support that learning:

- Continued racial equity education might be provided through existing events and book groups, as well additional learning and discussion sessions.
- Group learning about the values of [Trust Based Philanthropy](#) could move Many Hands further along on its equity aspirations if applied systematically.
- The Racial Equity Working Group should track work to date--its own and that of the wider organization--as part of Many Hands' "DEIB Story." Chronicle the steps you've taken to date and use the information internally to track progress and hold yourselves accountable.
- Before taking any recruitment action to increase diversity, a plan should be in place. The population of the DC/Maryland/Virginia areas should be researched and known to all who are involved in member recruitment before creating these metrics.

- Targeted recruitment may yield better diversity outcomes. For example, use LinkedIn to find prospective members and leaders that express interest and expertise in philanthropy and/or the issues and organizations Many Hands supports.
- Many Hands must continue to assure that new members feel welcomed. We recommend a buddy system in which current members mentor new members, accompany them to events, and generally introduce new members to the dynamics of Many Hands.

## Overview of the Engagement

Many Hands (MH) is a women's grantmaking organization that brings donors together to support nonprofits serving DC area women, children, and families in socioeconomic need. In 2020, motivated by the nationwide awakening to the deadly nature of racism and white supremacy in the United States, Many Hands embarked upon a multiyear process of learning and reflection, with the goal of more intentionally supporting racial equity and more broadly, diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) as a grantmaker and membership organization.

In May 2021, Many Hands hired Conditioning Leaders as its consulting partner to help examine its work through a racial equity lens and develop knowledge, capabilities, policies, and practices that will help the organization better support diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in its relationships with internal and external community members. The engagement included a member learning series on racial equity and a DEIB-focused organizational culture assessment, consisting of a member survey and listening sessions. (See [Appendix 1](#) for definitions; see [Appendix 2](#) for information about the member learning series.)

This report is based on work Conditioning Leaders carried out from May 2021 through December 2021 as part of the organizational culture assessment. It was prepared by consultant Brianna Boggs with the input of Conditioning Leaders Principal Madeline McNeely and editorial support from Many Hands Board member Mary Kwak. Other team members included Shaunda Lewis on survey design and Cheryl Harris on learning session design and facilitation.

The report provides an overview of member experience when it comes to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging and support for racial equity. It identifies areas of success, challenges, recommendations, and questions that need further exploration. These suggestions are intended to forward Many Hands' goal of deep institutionalized commitments to DEIB that are felt within the organization and out in the communities it serves.

This report reflects a snapshot in time in Many Hands' history. For example, during the final months of data gathering and report writing, Many Hands was engaged in its second cycle of grant application review since the initiation of racial equity work in 2020. We are aware that new materials and guidance related to racial equity were developed for use during that process; their impact is not reflected in this report.

## About Many Hands - Mission and Philosophy

Our clients' mission and values root our assessment. We know an organization is healthy when these core elements are woven and expressed throughout all levels of an organization.

The current formulation of Many Hands' mission dates to 2015, when the Board added the goal of helping members become well-informed donors to the original focus on supporting women, children, and families in socioeconomic need. In April 2021, the Board approved a supplemental statement of philosophy to articulate the relationship between Many Hands' mission and racial equity.

**Mission:** Many Hands is a women's grantmaking organization committed to making a lasting impact on the lives of Washington, DC area women, children, and families in socioeconomic need and helping its members become well-informed donors.

**Philosophy:** In order to effectively support women, children, and families in socioeconomic need, we must understand how race and other drivers of inequity shape the distribution of resources and opportunities within our society. We must also recognize and work to interrupt our own biases so that we, as grantmakers, do not reinforce inequitable outcomes.

To support this work, we are committed to building a more diverse, inclusive, and equitable organization. We believe that empowering a wide range of voices will promote deeper and more lasting learning that will inform our choices as Many Hands members and in our daily lives.

## About Conditioning Leaders - Values and Approach

Conditioning Leaders is a network of master-level coaches, consultants, trainers, facilitators, and adjunct faculty committed to conditioning leaders and organizations to do meaningful work for decades. We have been engaged in DEIB work for more than 25 years.

Our work is rooted in the following core concepts:

**Diversity:** Valuing diversity means embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of difference that exist in all groups and social systems.

**Equity:** Equity means that all groups have access to the resources and opportunities necessary to eliminate opportunity and resource gaps, and thereby, improve the quality of their lives.

**Inclusion:** Inclusion is the value and practice of ensuring that people feel they belong and that their input is valued by the whole (group, organization, society, system, etc.), particularly regarding decisions that affect their lives.

**Belonging:** Belonging means more than inclusion. Belonging entails having a meaningful voice and the opportunity to participate in the design of social and cultural structures, once participation at the decisions level has happened.

See [Appendix 1](#) for more information about each of these terms.

We are racially explicit, but not racially exclusive in our analysis. We lead transformative culture change equity work with an intersectional approach and understand that all forms of oppression have interlocking expressions and impact.

### **Assessment Process**

To design and carry out the organizational culture assessment, we met, both internally with the Conditioning Leaders team and with our primary Many Hands contacts, Board members Mary Kwak and Karen Murrell, periodically over the course of eight months. These meetings assisted us in collecting and reviewing background data and documents, designing and administering the member survey, and facilitating the listening sessions.

Questions we asked in reviewing the data collected through this process include:

- What are the findings telling us that align with building an inclusive culture where MH members have a sense of belonging?
- What are the findings revealing that aren't aligned with MH's DEIB commitments?
- How do these findings inform recommendations going forward?

### **Background Documents**

Documents Many Hands shared with us included:

- excerpts from the Board book
- impact reports
- newsletter articles
- Nominating Committee process documents
- recruiting and fundraising communications
- brochures
- research and interview notes from other philanthropic organizations



## Member Survey

Conditioning Leaders conducted an anonymous online survey of Many Hands members in September 2021. The 31-question survey covered, across four sections, demographic information; diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging; and racial equity. We distributed the survey to 283 individuals who were Many Hands members in 2020-21; 109 recipients (39%) responded. (For context, Many Hands reported that 57% of members participated in committees and/or events in 2020-21.) The average amount of time it took to complete the survey was ten minutes. Only Conditioning Leaders consultants had access to the raw data.

## Member Listening Sessions

Conditioning Leaders held two group listening sessions by Zoom in December 2021. A total of 17 members participated. Conversation ranged widely but focused on four key questions:

- Is supporting racial equity essential to Many Hands' work?
- In what ways is MH doing well when it comes to racial equity?
- In what ways would you like to see MH's racial equity work strengthened?
- How would you like to deepen your own learning about racism and white supremacy/privilege through Many Hands?

Many Hands Board members Mary Kwak and Karen Murrell facilitated a listening session with members of color in February 2022. This conversation focused on the following questions:

- Why did you join MH?
- What are the primary challenges or barriers for recruiting and retaining a more diverse membership?
- Which barriers can MH most effectively address and how?
- What goals should MH set for membership diversity?

A summary of themes raised during the listening sessions appears as [Appendix 3](#).

## Data and Themes

### Demographics

- Nine out of ten survey respondents identify as white; 6% identify as Black, African, or African-American and 3% as Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander.
- Seventy percent are over 55, and more than 40% are over 65.
- Slightly more than half live in Maryland, 40% in DC, and 10% in Virginia.
- Nearly half have been Many Hands members for 2-5 years; 20% were first-time members in 2020-21, and 30% have been members for more than five years.

These numbers are broadly consistent with data collected by Many Hands. Based on a sample of 58% of current members as of February 2022, Many Hands found that 89% identify as white and 45% are over 65, with the median age being 63. Roughly half of members live in Maryland, 40% in DC, and 10% in Virginia.

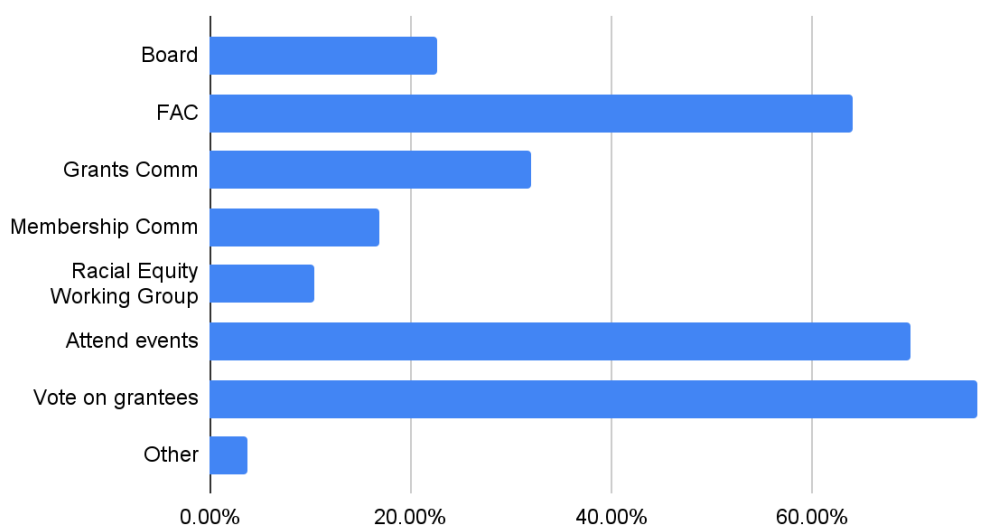
## Member Experience

The first section of the survey asked participants about the quality of their member experience:

- *81% agreed or strongly agreed that they felt valued and supported as members, 15% were neutral, and 3% disagreed or strongly disagreed. (Throughout the report, percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding and “I don’t know” responses.)*
- *Over 85% felt able to contribute in ways that interested them, 13% were neutral, and 1% disagreed.*
- *It is notable that fewer respondents--only 58%--felt that they had the opportunity to know and learn from members with a diverse range of identities, experiences, and perspectives. (28% were neutral, and 9% disagreed or strongly disagreed.) Answers here could vary based on one’s definition of diversity and participation, of course.*

This section also delved into the roles respondents have taken on over the years, with the most popular being voting on grantees, attending events, and Focus Area Committee participation. Participation seems high in all of the seven areas we inquired about, but there is a likely correlation between those most likely to respond to a survey like this and those who actively participate in MH work.

Which roles, if any, have you taken on at Many Hands since becoming a member?



## Organizational Policies and Practices

The questions about member experience assessed the degree to which members feel that diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging characterize their interactions with Many Hands. A follow-up set of questions sought to measure how members feel that Many Hands' policies and practices shape the strength of DEIB within the organization.

Four questions asked to what extent policies and practices in the following areas promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging within Many Hands:

- Membership
- Events (including scheduling, venues, speakers, etc.)
- Governance (selection of FAC chairs, selection of Board members, decision making, etc.)
- Communications (newsletter, social media, website, etc.)

Far larger numbers of respondents remained neutral or responded "I don't know" to these questions:

- *46% agreed or strongly agreed that MH membership policies and practices promote DEIB, 32% were neutral, and 10% chose "I don't know."*
- *Two-thirds agreed or strongly agreed that MH events policies and practices promote DEIB, 20% were neutral, and 6% chose "I don't know."*
- *Roughly one-third agreed or strongly agreed that MH governance policies and practices promote DEIB, nearly 30% were neutral, and the same number chose "I don't know."*
- *Around two-thirds agreed or strongly agreed that MH communications policies and practices promote DEIB, one-quarter were neutral, and 5% chose "I don't know."*

These responses suggest that Many Hands has an opportunity to strengthen and/or more effectively communicate policies and practices in the areas of membership and governance that support DEIB.

Three questions asked how Many Hands policies and practices, taken as a whole, affect DEIB:

- *38% agreed or strongly agreed that MH policies and practices promote membership diversity, slightly more than the number of respondents who were neutral.*
- *57% agreed or strongly agreed that MH policies and practices promote equity among members, with 25% remaining neutral.*
- *Similarly, 56% agreed or strongly agreed that MH policies and practices promote an inclusive environment, with 23% remaining neutral.*

This pattern of responses matches that of the member experience section, with members agreeing that Many Hands is stronger when it comes to equity and inclusion than diversity.

In comments from the survey and listening sessions, a variety of themes surfaced, including:

- Praise for the organization's overall commitment to DEIB, including efforts to highlight issues, increase diversity on the Board, and offer a more inclusive range of meeting times and payment options (young member rate, installment payments).
- Identification of fundraising goals/practices (\$1,000 membership contribution), member social networks, the timing and location of events and meetings as barriers to greater diversity.
- Observation that MH remains largely made up of white women with significant financial resources; reported experiences of a clubby atmosphere and little diversity in opinions.
- Recognition of the difficulty of moving forward on DEIB.
- Recommendation of targeted recruiting and true DEIB for members over changes to membership cost as a strategy for increasing diversity.
- Concern that the emphasis on diversity may feel the opposite of inclusive and equitable to other members who are not part of underrepresented groups.
- Belief that MH has been more successful with equity and inclusion than diversity.

### **Many Hands and Racial Equity**

We asked members in both the survey and listening sessions to reflect on how important and/or central racial equity work is to Many Hands' mission.

*94% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that racial equity is essential to Many Hands' work.*

Comments from the survey and listening sessions revealed a range of positions, including:

- Structural racism affects everyone, and the entire community benefits from movement toward racial equity.
- Racial equity work helps Many Hands members understand the privileged position they occupy within the community.
- Racial equity work is essential if the goal is lasting, generational change.
- Eliminating unconscious bias is important to MH's mission; annual unconscious bias/other DEIB training should be required.
- Many people and organizations have gone overboard with respect to diversity; the focus should be on need and organizational capability, not race or equity.
- Many Hands needs to have room for people with a broad range of beliefs.

*83% of respondents believed Many Hands' leadership is committed to racial equity within Many Hands and through its grantmaking.* Survey and listening sessions comments included:

- Praise for the commitment and knowledge of the Board, in particular the work that was undertaken to provide Focus Area Committee participants with the information they needed to look at applications through a DEI lens.
- Criticism of the organization and the Board for failing to retain members of color, giving their voices less weight than the voices of white members, and blindness to continuing patterns of privilege, paternalism, and control.

Positive response rates were significantly lower for the remaining questions in this section:

- *65% agreed or strongly agreed that the membership is committed to supporting racial equity* within Many Hands and through its grantmaking, with most of the remainder remaining neutral or selecting "I don't know."
- *70% agreed or strongly agreed that they understand the nature of MH's commitment to racial equity.*
- *64% agreed or strongly agreed that they are satisfied with MH's commitment to racial equity,* with around 30% remaining neutral or answering "I don't know." Due to the wording of the question, it is impossible to determine whether those who disagreed believe that MH should increase, decrease, or otherwise alter its commitment to racial equity.

Members who provided comments to amplify their responses or participated in listening sessions raised a number of themes:

- Belief that equity requires diversity and diversity is lacking at MH.
- Praise for the thoughtful and comprehensive approach undertaken by MH.
- Concern that MH does not offer an environment where members can bring their whole selves.
- Uncertainty about how commitment to racial equity plays out in grantmaking in practice, beyond the sharing of materials.
- Support for developing basic guidelines and expectations that, although difficult to create initially, could support better decision making.
- Belief that there should be more focus on mission than race.

### **Grantmaking and Racial Equity**

Overall, *82% of members believe that Many Hands' grantmaking supports racial equity,* with 11% remaining neutral, and 4% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

This question was a prominent theme of discussions in the listening sessions. Many members expressed a desire for the reflections of a more racially diverse group when it

comes to evaluations of organizations and grantmaking. Remedies suggested by members included asking an ad hoc advisory group of women of color, possibly drawn from former grantees, to evaluate Many Hands' grantmaking priorities, and offering a tiered donation model to make MH accessible to potential members with a wider range of perspectives.

Listening session participants also raised the question of how members should use their racial equity knowledge and skills at Many Hands, both in grantmaking, and more generally. The views voiced included:

- Interest in creating more consensus around the meaning of equity and how it should enter the decision making process.
- Concern about lack of clarity about the meaning of racial equity in terms of grantmaking and disagreement with some of the views expressed in committees, including by committee chairs.
- The belief that thinking about racial equity is inescapably personal.
- Interest in exploring the impact that thinking about racial equity within Many Hands has on members' external philanthropic activity.

In addition, members suggested different ways in which MH could potentially strengthen support for racial equity through grantmaking, such as:

- Bringing together different kinds of funders to learn how they address racial equity.
- Making smaller/monthly grants.
- Supporting organizations that serve racial equity goals in areas that are not covered by the four existing FACs.

### **Focus Area Committee Experience**

79% of respondents reported that they had served on a FAC. Of this group, 64% had served most recently in 2020-21, 15% in 2019-20, and 21% more 2019-20.

Past FAC participants were asked a series of follow-up questions to drill down into their most recent experience on a committee:

- 31% agreed or strongly agreed that the committee had significant diversity in identities, experiences, and perspectives; 30% were neutral; and 36% disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- 89% agreed or strongly agreed that their voice was heard and valued.
- 91% agreed or strongly agreed that they had an equitable role in decision making.
- 85% agreed or strongly agreed that the committee operated in a way that was equitable and inclusive.
- 77% agreed or strongly agreed that the committee's evaluation of applicants reflected commitment to racial equity; 15% were neutral; 7% disagreed.

Themes that were raised in survey comments and listening sessions included:

- Concern about a lack of group standards, which could allow a few voices to dominate the discussion.
- Concern about the lack of racial/ethnic diversity on committees and how that might affect decision making.
- Desire for more tools to support discussions around equity.
- Praise for committee chairs and committees for a thoughtful, inclusive approach.
- Concern that the discussion process felt rushed, limited members' autonomy, and did not encourage divergent views on applicants or the overall process.
- The sense that everyone was interested in DEIB but had different ideas about how or how much to consider applications through a DEIB lens.

Several members commented specifically on how the racial identity of applicants' executive directors, leadership teams, or board members seemed to affect decision making within committees. Their views covered a broad range, including:

- Strong commitment to supporting leaders of color as part of a broader commitment to racial equity.
- Concern that too much focus was being placed on the racial/ethnic identity of organization leaders, to the detriment of organizations with white executive directors.
- Disagreement that racial/ethnic identity played a role in the selection process.

## **Recommendations**

Two particular elements of Many Hands' model are clear, and leaders have expressed that they are unlikely to change. First, the focus of grantmaking is on organizations meeting basic needs of women and children in the greater DC area. In other words, Many Hands is unlikely to become a "racial justice funder," focused exclusively on grantee partners doing root cause racial justice work. Second, the giving circle model of "one member, one vote" allows for individual values and drivers to shape decision making. No member is required to use any particular lens through which to see or evaluate applicants' work. But given that current events have focused our attention on the deadly impact of white supremacy more clearly in the last two years, there is a desire amongst a critical mass of members to sharpen their "DEIB lens" as they evaluate potential grantees. The following are recommendations for how Many Hands might support that learning.

### **Racial Equity Education**

One promising development since the initiation of Many Hands' racial equity work is the establishment of a Racial Equity Working Group. In its first year, the working group led the planning for this engagement, drafted language articulating the relationship between equity

and Many Hands' mission, and developed resources on bias in grantmaking and inequity in each focus area to share with the FACs. Over this past year, working group members continued to learn together, develop and recommend educational resources for other members, and bring their learning into each FAC. It is wise to continue to resource this group, possibly through coaching and facilitation training, so that a cross-section of the membership continues to support leadership in creating a learning arc for interested members.

Continued racial equity education might be provided through MH events and book groups, as well additional learning and discussion sessions. Topics might include:

- A deeper dive on Dr. Barbara Love's Liberatory Consciousness model, a framework we introduced in the member learning series. Supporting all MH members to root themselves in this [four-part framework](#) would help give context to ongoing education work
- Trust and relationship-building in mission-driven organizations
- Antidotes to white supremacy culture
- Racially equitable and trauma-inclusive facilitation skills
- Racial identity development
- Socialization and unconscious bias
- Systems thinking
- Racial abuse - microaggressions and repair
- DEIB lens on current, local events
- DEIB lens on the past, for example the rise of the US women's movement and how it excluded women of color. This could include the introduction of white fragility, white supremacy, and intersectionality.
- [White Women and the Power Paradox](#) is a Conditioning Leaders class designed to support white women as they deepen their racial equity learning and application. MH might offer or refer members to the program as an educational offering to help the white membership look more deeply at their socialization and the challenges that white women face in deepening trust and rapport with women of color.

Here are a few additional resources to deepen your analysis and expand your sense of what's possible:

- The [BIPOC ED Coalition's open letter to funders](#) is a powerful call to action.
- Darren Walker's book, [From Generosity to Justice](#), might be another way to continue the learning about how to ensure MH's equity values truly disrupt white supremacy.
- [Shonda Rhimes](#) offers us another view via the Ford Foundation into how to view justice-based philanthropy.



## Philanthropy Education

Many Hands needs to keep grappling more deeply with what it means to be an equitable philanthropic organization. Group learning about the values of [Trust Based Philanthropy](#) could move MH further along on its equity aspirations if applied systematically. The linked guide has many good questions and suggestions that you might explore. See also the Boston Women’s Fund [Movement Building Grant Awards process](#) for an innovative nomination and grantee selection process.

## Story Tracking and Accountability

Many Hands, and in particular the Racial Equity Working Group, should track its work as part of the MH “DEIB Story.” This could be as simple as a Google Doc that chronicles in a table format the following:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity:</b> What was done	<b>Outcome:</b> What results were produced from the activities taken (decisions, policies enacted, measurable changes, etc.)?	<b>Liberatory Consciousness Model Phase</b> (awareness, analysis, action, accountability)	<b>Leaders:</b> MH members responsible for the work

Once you chronicle the steps you’ve taken to date, you use the information internally to track progress and hold yourselves accountable. Down the line, you might write your own case study for an internal newsletter or to help other giving circles. You are one of many giving circles that is strengthening DEIB principles and practices, and you will have wisdom to share. MH members, your community, and the national giving circle network need to hear your stories of success and challenges.

## Membership

*Recruitment:* Before taking any recruitment action, a plan should be in place. Leaders should first set goals on their recruitment numbers. Ideally you would want MH membership to represent the demographic makeup of the greater DC area. How many BIPOC members should be recruited in a fiscal year? Should there be increased and more strategic efforts for certain constituencies? The population of the DC/Maryland/Virginia areas should be researched and known to all who are involved in member recruitment before creating these metrics.

Recruitment must be for more than racial and ethnic diversity. The metrics for recruitment can also include age, education level, participation within community, and/or sexuality.

Note of caution: While these efforts may seem noble, they can be performative and reinforce tokenism. Being explicit that targeted recruitment is grounded in and an expression of your mission, philosophy, and grantmaking goals will help members support recruitment strategies that may be narrow in focus intentionally and be perceived as being “racist” in the absence of a shared foundational analysis about how to racially diversify an organization.

Recruitment that uses search firm/headhunting strategies vs. purely social networking yield better diversity outcomes. An example of search firm strategy would be using LinkedIn to find prospective members and leaders that express interest and expertise in philanthropy and/or the issues and organizations Many Hands supports.

Some listening session attendees recommend that MH recruit members with more limited economic resources. Ideas include waiving the minimum donation for women interested from grantee organizations. The people who know most about the non-profit organizations MH seeks to support are not MH members, but rather people in the communities and organizations they’re funding. Exploring a very different committee recruitment approach would be a possible next step in MH’s evolution as a funder.

*Retention:* For new members, MH must continue to assure that they feel welcomed. We recommend a buddy system in which current members who have similar life experiences (gender, age, race/ethnicity, location, etc.) mentor new members, accompany them to events, and generally introduce new members to the dynamics of MH. This could also be used as an opportunity to connect members who do not share similar life experiences, helping members learn from and better understand one another. Note of caution: So much of a sustainable buddy relationship depends on chemistry between the paired members. If the pairing is not ideal, making it clear to new members that they have access to other committee and Board leaders for informal onboarding would be wise.

*Participation:* A combination of Zoom and in-person meetings and events, scheduled at a variety of times and in different locations, may support both greater diversity and more effective discussions and decision making. One listening session participant also noted that she felt that Zoom leveled the playing field for site visits and reduced the potential for implicit bias.

### **Questions for Further Exploration**

1. What is the retention rate of membership by race?

2. What is the pipeline for committee and board leadership? How is its development and strength attended to?
3. What should be the role of a Racial Equity Working Group member on a given committee? How do you measure the impact of the resources they provide?
4. Do you track the income level of your members?
5. Are speakers paid? If so, how much?
6. How are you measuring the impact of educational forums on member awareness and analysis about structural inequities?
7. What impact do educational forums have on the grantmaking process?
8. Do you require grantmaking members to attend a certain number of educational forums?
9. Do you ask members on grantmaking teams to cite examples of practicing what they learned from an educational forum?

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Appendix 1: Definitions

Key definitions Conditioning Leaders uses to ground our clients in a shared foundational analysis are below.

**CULTURE:** We define culture as the values, beliefs, arts, and customs that a group of people have discovered, invented, developed, or inherited to address internal and external needs, and that comprise a way of life that can be taught, learned, reproduced, transformed, and passed on.

**DIVERSITY:** Valuing diversity means embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of difference that exist in all groups and social systems. Each individual is unique, and groups of individuals reflect multiple dimensions of difference including race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, cognitive styles, and much more.<sup>3</sup>

Diversity asks: *“Who’s here? Who’s not here? Who was excluded?”*

**Actual** – There is actual diversity amongst internal and external stakeholders, especially in regards to race, ethnicity, and overall backgrounds of the constituency the organization is aspiring to serve.

**Accepted** – Difference in as many forms as possible is accepted in all spaces, places, and within the overall culture of the organization.

**Valued** – All people in the organization embrace and celebrate difference, and space is created within the organization to recognize and appreciate difference.

**EQUITY:** Equity means that all groups have access to the resources and opportunities necessary to eliminate opportunity and resource gaps, and thereby, improve the quality of their lives.<sup>4</sup> Differences in life outcomes cannot be predicted on the basis of race, class, or other dimensions of identity. As Dr. Karilyn Crockett, Chief of Equity for the City of Boston says, “Equity is a value, a process, and an outcome.”

Equity asks: *“How is this value, process, outcome affecting us/me?”*

**Institutional** – Related to policies and practices throughout the organization, from the governance structure, to the on-the-ground operations, and everywhere in between.

---

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from Diversity Initiatives Campaign, The Diversity Project, via Interactions Institute for Social Change, 2014: [www.interactioninstitute.org](http://www.interactioninstitute.org).

<sup>4</sup> Adapted from Equity and Inclusion Campaign, via Interaction Institute for Social Change Fundamentals of Facilitation for Racial Justice, 2014: [www.interactioninstitute.org](http://www.interactioninstitute.org).

**Systems-Based** – Embedded into the operations of the organization, with fair policies, practices and beliefs that are known, recognized, and practiced by all employees.

We review listening sessions, survey results and documents through this definition of equity. Questions we ask ourselves as we're performing cultural assessments are:

- Is the value of equity reflected in what we're hearing and reading?
- What are the equitable processes that are intentionally practiced to reflect equity as a value? Think about one's heartset/mindset and behaviors.
- What outcomes (results) are accomplished that support equity as an underlying value, including measurable results like the amount of money granted each year and relational shifts within an organization and between an organization and external stakeholders?

**INCLUSION:** Inclusion is the value and practice of ensuring that people feel they belong and that their input is valued by the whole (group, organization, society, system, etc.), particularly regarding decisions that affect their lives.<sup>5</sup>

Inclusion asks: *"Have everyone's ideas been heard?"*

**Wholistic** – Felt throughout the entirety of the organization: intra-personally, interpersonally, within group and between groups, and within the overall dynamics of the culture.

**Collaborative** – All members of the organization value and practice inclusion. It is not just an ideological concept or theory, but actions that all members of the organization take, work together on and continuously improve.

**BELONGING:** Belonging means more than inclusion. Belonging entails having a meaningful voice and the opportunity to participate in the design of social and cultural structures, once participation at the decisions level has happened. Belonging means having the right to contribute to, and make demands on, society, political and social institutions. In a legitimate democracy, belonging means that your well-being is considered and your ability to design and give meaning to its structures and institutions is realized.<sup>6</sup> *People know they belong when they feel it in their heart and in how they are treated.*

Belonging asks: *"Are my contributions making a difference and being realized?" "Am I valued and empowered to make a difference?"*

---

<sup>5</sup> Adapted from Equity and Inclusion Campaign, via Interaction Institute for Social Change.

<sup>6</sup> John A. Powell, [The Othering and Belonging Institute](#)

## **Appendix 2: Member Learning Series: “Head, Heart, and Hands”**

In conjunction with the organizational cultural assessment, Brianna Boggs and Cheryl Harris facilitated three 90-minute learning sessions by Zoom for Many Hands members in October, November, and December 2021. 49 members attended at least one session, and 23 attended all three, a healthy participation rate. Sessions included facilitator presentations and small and large group discussion. The sessions were organized around the following themes:

### **Foundations**

The way race plays out in our work and communities isn’t just a modern phenomenon. Its deep roots are in our national history and in the messages we’ve received all our lives about the meaning of race. In this first session, we’ll start with our heads - exploring those early messages and building a foundation for our series with history, core concepts, and shared definitions.

### **Boldly Leading**

How do we disrupt old, harmful patterns in ourselves, our relationships, and our organizations? The key is in understanding the kind of challenges we face. Our willingness to build new skills and new ways of thinking to meet the challenge make or break us. In our second session, we’ll engage both heart and hands as we explore implicit bias, inquiry, advocacy, and adaptive and inclusive leadership skills.

### **The Way Forward**

How will you carry forward your inspired ideas and commitments? We each have an important role to play, and so in our last session, we’ll focus on our hands - the way we carry our values into the world. We’ll identify allies, accountability partners, and helpful tools and resources, then create a personal action plan that motivates and sustains you.

## Appendix 3: Member Listening Sessions

### Conditioning Listening Sessions with MH Members, December 2021

Is supporting racial equity essential to Many Hands' work?

- All influenced by racism; all benefit from racial equity; need to embrace relationships with folks from all kinds of identities
- Need to understand our privilege, biases
- Need to be specific about what we're trying to accomplish and what racial equity really is - not necessarily accomplished by focusing on race/ethnicity of leaders

In what ways is MH doing well when it comes to racial equity? In what ways would you like to see MH's racial equity work strengthened?

- Involve more people of color, people with different background and perspectives
- Involve all members in discussion of important issues
- Talk about/address huge gaps in terms of education, wealth
- Increase access through a combination of Zoom meetings and in-person meetings.

How would you like to deepen your own learning about racism, white privilege, or white supremacy through Many Hands?

- Learn from other experiences, deepen understanding to get to next level
- Learn from knowledge that is in our communities, value perspectives/knowledge people bring, not just/in addition to financial resources
- Remember diversity is not just about race
- Sometimes information is overwhelming, could be helpful to learn more about decision making processes/best practices

### MH Board Listening Session with MH Members of Color, February 2022

Why did you join MH? What were the factors that made membership attractive to you?

- Giving circles democratize philanthropy; people can give smaller amounts and work together; who you are doesn't matter;
- 100% of gift goes to grantees
- Large grants
- Local focus
- Learning opportunities - about community issues, evaluating nonprofits, smaller local organizations
- 100% volunteer + ability to select own level of participation
- Women working together
- Thoughtful and organized processes

What are the primary challenges or barriers for recruiting and retaining a more diverse membership?

- Potential members may already have other giving priorities - competition from other groups
- Existing organizations for women of color offer greater sense of community
- Event locations may not be convenient, may not feel welcoming
- Cost not seen as major barrier

Of these barriers, which can Many Hands address and how? Which approaches have the greatest promise?

- Build member pipeline, offer lower rate for women earlier in career
- Make DEIB more central, strengthen values statement
- Invest in building connections and relationships among members
- Prioritize diversity on board, be very purposeful in recruiting, maybe set yearly goals
- Think about gender identity in relationship to MH mission and membership
- Bring more exposure/support to EDs of color of smaller organizations, showcase grantees and process
- MH is a “well-kept secret” - take more credit

What goals should Many Hands set for membership diversity?

- 50% of board - board diversity will lead to membership diversity
- Depends on industry, starting point; large law firms use Mansfield rule (30%)