

World Forestry Center Strategic Diversity Plan Summary



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Introduction

World Forestry Center was established in 1966, and currently operates from a six-acre campus within Washington Park in Portland, Oregon. The mission of World Forestry Center is to create and inspire champions of sustainable forestry. We envision a society that values and takes action to support the economic, ecological and social benefits of forests. Historically, we have pursued our mission by emphasizing the education of the public about forestry issues through interactive exhibits and educational events while also supporting forestry professional events and meetings. Despite increasing public awareness of how forests impact society through issues such as climate change and wildfire, we are concerned that this awareness alone is falling short of the public action needed to create a more sustainable forestry future. After consulting experts with demonstrated track records of affecting public action in markets and policies outside the forestry conversation, we have begun adapting our programming to not only raise awareness but build the public will to support action by leaders in policies and markets that can create a more sustainable forestry future. Core to the success of this effort is bringing more voices to the forestry conversation, many of whom are aware of how forests affect their everyday lives but have yet to feel empowered to contribute to and support the solutions that can create a healthier future for our forests and our communities.

This means expanding the forestry conversation beyond those who traditionally participate, and amplifying voices that have been disengaged in the past. We recognize that the history of forestry in the United States and around the world is full of nuance, and that history may look very different depending on the lens of identity through which it is viewed. If we are to truly engage the broader society in thinking about and caring for forests, we must continuously examine and address our own organizational biases and ensure that we are creating programming, communication and a culture that supports the meaningful inclusion of as many communities as possible in our work.

Our organization is in the midst of a strategic transformation that affects every aspect of our work, from our campus to our programming to the types of partnerships we seek. This plan will serve as instruction and inspiration to keep us accountable to our goals as they relate to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access.

Process

DEIA is both an outcome and a process. While we want to make sure that our staff and programming reflect the communities we serve, we also see DEIA as the way we work together. Just as the participation of the full staff and board was central to the creation of this plan, the sustained, active engagement of all staff and board in the execution of the plan will be required to successfully create a place that is diverse, equitable and inclusive in our mission of creating champions of sustainable forestry. To launch this process, we sought out expertise to help us enhance our capacity to address and improve diversity, equity, inclusion and access in our practices, policies, and programming. We engaged Mind Heart for Diversity, LLC (formerly Easley Branch, LLC) to guide us through the following activities:

- 1) **Diversity Audit** – a deep exploration into our organization’s history, policies, and workplace culture.
- 2) **Diversity Education** – internal workshops that taught enrichment and skill building with a focus on diversity, equity, inclusion and access.
- 3) **Diversity Mentoring** – Staff leadership worked one-on-one with the team of Mind Heart for Diversity to explore our professional relationships and practices, and to observe which aspects were not adequately reflecting our values of DEIA.
- 4) **Diversity Strategic Planning** - After our diversity workshops, our staff and board collaborated in the creation of actionable DEIA work plans for four different areas of the organization: fundraising, communications, programming, and recruitment/retention. Each plan features objectives particular to that area, specific tactics to achieve the objectives, and assigns staff leads and metrics to ensure accountability. Staff then incorporated these key actions and objectives for 2022 into the annual work plan.

Definitions

Diversity – The practice of actively incorporating people of different backgrounds, perspectives, thoughts, and beliefs throughout the organization to ensure that World Forestry Center is advantaged by the best thinking possible.

Equity – Ensuring fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for “all” people while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups.

Inclusion – The practice of intentionally building a culture that is flexible, values diverse ideas, and embraces the meaningful participation of all.

Access – The practice of ensuring that clear pathways to resources and the means of activating them are open to all who might benefit from them.

Diversity Statement

World Forestry Center commits to practices and programs that elevate diverse voices, promote inclusiveness, and improve equity, both within our organization and in our community. This is central to our mission and essential to our daily work.

We acknowledge that many people and their voices are under-represented in forestry both nationally and internationally. We understand that barriers of discrimination and economic and social exclusion remain. We believe we must dismantle these barriers, celebrate our individual differences, and seek a shared vision of healthier forests and healthier communities.

We will pursue strategies to improve representation, access, and outreach by allocating time and resources to create opportunities to do this work, both internally with our staff and board, and externally by collaborating with our partners and engaging organizations beyond our existing network.

For more information on how we are proceeding with this essential work, please see our full DEIA plan.

Objective of the Plan

- 1) To serve as a reference for World Forestry Center leadership to ensure that the values of DEIA are incorporated into strategic organizational goals.
- 2) To serve as a guide as World Forestry Center implements strategies to evolve organizational culture.
- 3) To be a resource that informs engagement of outside entities as we seek to expand our community and collaborations.
- 4) To inspire more innovation and creation for DEIA at World Forestry Center.

Areas Of Focus, Implementation, & Adaptation

Our plan is organized into four operational areas that we identified as productive places to begin incorporating our values of DEIA into our work. These are: Fundraising and Development; Communications; Programming/Partnerships/Outreach; Recruitment and Retention. These plans articulate goals, objectives, timelines, and actions for each area, as well as identifying staff responsible for leading the efforts and metrics by which to measure our progress. These were then incorporated in our organization's annual planning. The working groups that developed the plans will meet periodically throughout the year to reinforce accountability and to ensure that goals, objectives, and actions continue to evolve beyond 2022.

A Message from Mind Heart Diversity

Over the last two years, World Forestry Center has worked with Mind Heart Diversity to assess their organizational diversity, equity, and inclusion practices, procedures, work culture, and competency. After a series of workshops, executive coaching, interviews with staff and board members, this strategic plan outlines organizational findings with action plans to implement in four areas of focus for achieving stronger DEI. Although the desired outcomes of each focus area have been crafted by World Forestry Center staff themselves, we recognize that organizations and their needs, as well as their capacity are often in flux. This plan outlines a roadmap to achieving organizational goals, but leaves room for innovation, modification, and adaptation as DEI is not a one-size-fits-all regimented approach. World Forestry Center has done a lot of introspection to better serve its community with respect to staff, community members, and additional stakeholders of the forestry industry. It is our hope that with actionable next steps to implement, coupled with a timeline and accountability plan, World Forestry Center can achieve its goals in becoming the inclusive organization that it desires to be.



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