

Multiple Ways of Exercising Leadership: Increasing the Participation of People of Color in the Leadership of the Nonprofit Sector

**A report prepared by the Leadership Learning Community
with support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation
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Background and Challenge Statement:

The Annie E. Casey Foundation has identified a dramatic shift that could take place in the leadership of the nonprofit sector as baby boomers enter retirement age over the next 5-10 years. Based on an analysis of available demographics, it is possible that by the year 2010, as many as 24,000 non-profit executives will retire. This finding was further reinforced in the New York City metropolitan area by a United Way study in 2004, which found a “gap” in leadership approaching as the baby boom generation leaves the sector. There is reason for concern about how these positions will be filled given a lack of middle management training, executive career paths and mentoring opportunities within the sector. Many variables (e.g. changes in retirement age and the contributions of emerging leadership training and succession planning strategies) make it difficult to predict the extent to which this transition could create a leadership void. It is clear that there will be a significant transfer of leadership, which presents an opportunity to positively influence the diversification and preparation of the next generation of leadership in the sector.

In light of these findings, the Leadership Learning Community (LLC) has partnered with the Annie E. Casey Foundation on a research project to investigate the experiences of people of color in leadership positions in the nonprofit sector with regard to strategies for increasing the access to and sustainability of leadership positions for people of color in the sector. There are factors that influence issues of recruitment, organizational receptivity, and cultural change that both support and challenge people of color in leadership. Significant change will require orchestrated change on many fronts.

LLC’s contribution to the research during the first phase of work was through the lens of leadership development. In 2003-2004, the Annie E. Casey Foundation funded LLC to draw on the combined experience of more than 100 leadership programs to extract lessons about how to effectively support and expand leadership opportunities for people of color. Strategies engaged in that first phase of work included a literature review, a focus group, interviews with over a dozen key informants, and the development of a leadership development matrix tool, all of which elicited both contributing problems within the nonprofit sector and recommendations for further investigative and developmental work. The practices currently in place in leadership development programs and reporting some success include:

- Mentoring mechanisms
- Expansion of networks and access to networks
- Skills development
- Whole person development
- Culturally Competent program design
- Intentional recruitment
- Financial support or awards
- Leadership programs targeting emerging leaders

- Social entrepreneurship programs to support new organizations
- Organizational strategies (Support for leaders implementing the above mentioned strategies in their own organizations)

Interview and focus group participants in phase one expressed a great deal of concern about what we are calling the “dominant culture” of the nonprofit sector and its apparent valuing of a certain set or type of leadership traits. This culture, also frequently referred to by informants and in literature as the “normative” model, the “corporate” model or the “white-heroic male” model, contributes to a phenomenon of invisibility in which people of color are overlooked, not respected when exercising their own leadership style, discouraged by a lack of diverse leadership role models, or simply not valued as current or potential leaders. As the sector addresses the need for future leadership, a cultural shift to an environment that embraces multiple styles of leadership will need to take place if that future leadership is to be diverse and able to reach its full capacity thus bringing about effective and positive change for children and families. As a result, the initial guiding question for phase two of this work was investigated in the broader nonprofit context in order to better define the obstacles and solutions to this challenge and understand the directions and strategies for leadership development programs. This report focuses on that broader investigation. For a complete report on phase one of this project, visit the Emerging Areas section of the LLC Web site at <http://www.leadershiplearning.org/pools/emerging> or contact LLC at 510.238.9080.

Research Methodology

Framework

Phase II of this project began in late Fall of 2004 and focused on the leadership contexts referred to by participants in the first phase of work. The framing question for this second phase of work is:

What can be learned from the experiences and practices of people of color and allies about how to more successfully involve and sustain people of color in the leadership of the nonprofit sector?

The leadership development programs involved in the beginning of the project (phase one) raised a number of challenges and obstacles to the participation of people of color in leadership positions. More than half of these issues had to do with the context in which people are or would be leading. The challenges and obstacles raised by participants were grouped into three categories.

1. Manifestations of institutionalized, interpersonal and internalized oppression
2. Organizational challenges within individual organizations
3. Contributing problems in the nonprofit sector

The strategies reported as achieving some success at addressing these issues were largely targeted toward developing individual leaders. This target is crucial for effecting change but is also one that does little to directly address the issues related to the organizational and sector-

based challenges (which are also inextricably linked to the recruitment, development and sustenance of people of color exercising leadership).

The framework for the inquiry carried over a set of assumptions from phase one that LLC makes in its examination. They are as follows.

Framing Assumptions:

Our inquiry assumes that:

- People of color are underrepresented in leadership positions in the nonprofit sector, and especially in large organizations with sizeable budgets.
- Diversification of the nonprofit sector will have positive outcomes.
- Leadership development programs can help to increase leadership opportunities for people of color.

We are not assuming that:

- Nonprofit organizations with leadership representation of the communities served will have equitable access to resources and power.
- Leadership within nonprofit organizations is the only or best way for people of color to exercise increased influence in community agendas.
- People of color would want leadership positions in many nonprofits that have a history of paternalism, bureaucracy, racism, or other issues.
- Leadership development strategies alone can address the legacy and multiple manifestations of institutionalized racism that have existed in and have implications for the nonprofit sector.

As a result of the findings in phase one and the early experiences of phase two we realized we had begun operating on an additional assumption which we named and added to the framework. It is:

Additional Framing Assumption:

Our inquiry assumes that:

- There is a “dominant culture” model of leadership, or set of characteristics defined as leader-like, that is culturally biased and can limit the recognition, support, and acceptance of people of color as leaders.

This assumption ignited some conversation among participants because of the potentially troubling nature of the phrase “People of Color.” Experience, history, and popular media tell us how different we are from one another and how distinct our cultures and social structures are (in addition to how we discriminate and otherwise exercise power in negative ways with regard to each other). It is important in the spirit of creating an inclusive leadership culture that honors difference, to acknowledge the many, many differences in the expression of leadership among ethnic minority groups and to appreciate within specific groups the additional influences of class, gender, age, religion and sexual orientation. What we experience in common across these rich differences is the effect that the currently accepted culture of leadership has on our capacity to influence, impact, and otherwise effect change efforts in our communities. We employ the notion of people of color to build the contingency of people directly affected by this issue and concerned about how to create leadership culture that better honors, supports and strengthens leadership diversity within the nonprofit sector.

Methods

In order to probe deeper into this issue from a broad base of perspectives, which form the context of leadership in this case and locate many of the challenges and obstacles raised by previous participants, LLC convened three formal focus groups in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York. Two informal groups (during open space opportunities throughout the course of the project) were also convened in addition to nine follow-up interviews. Present in these focus groups were individuals representing community organizations, leadership development programs, program alumni, funders, and to a lesser degree, consultants and technical assistance providers. For a list of project contributors and participants see Appendix B (specific comments and contributions to the project are not associated with specific individuals or organizations at the request of several project participants).

We also conducted a deeper literature review, revisiting some of the literature from phase one as well as looking at other sources, and completed a review of job descriptions/position advertisements from a random selection of organizations. A final working session to clarify strategies and recommendations was held at the close of this phase. Participants in this session included representation from Compass Point, LLC, The Violence Prevention Community of Los Angeles, Women's Leadership Circles, and the Hass, Jr. Fund.

Literature Review

The literary research utilized and built on the foundation of literature gathered from foundations and management service organizations in the first phase of this project. Additional Web research was conducted as well so that an analysis of 18 articles and reports and six books shaped this project. See Appendix A for a summary of the literature review and a list of resources.

Focus Groups

The focus groups were held in three locations where LLC has strong connections and access to meeting space and other resources that were of support to the project.¹ Attendees included a broad range of folks who totaled 44 in number (35 or 80% of whom are people of color). Participants included nonprofit leaders, leadership development program staff and alumni, funders, and to a lesser degree, consultants and technical assistance providers. For a list of project partners see Appendix B.

The format of the gatherings evolved over the course of the project but consistently employed strategies combining individual work with whole and small group work that set a common frame, solicited feedback and questions, and generated answers and new questions that propelled us to deeper understandings as we progressed through the project. The first formal focus group took place in Los Angeles and focused on characteristics of leadership (what's valued where) and leading from authentic self. The understandings reached as a result of that gathering

¹ We would like to have conducted more of these sessions in more locations but project parameters including time and funds available necessitated a limited scope. However, literature and feedback from individuals and organizations outside of these areas served to reinforce the findings from the three locations, indicating that their perspective on this issue is not necessarily region or location specific.

helped to give shape to our second gathering, which took place in the San Francisco Bay Area and focused on what is lost in a biased leadership culture and how it is lost. The third formal focus group took place in New York City and engaged participants in discussing the findings from previous work before looking at their individual paths to leadership and what structures and strategies are working. This was followed by a brief exercise identifying values integral to their personal leadership styles and examining job/position advertisements with that framework in mind.

The informal conversations happened in two contexts.

1. As an Open Space conversation at a national gathering of Tides Center projects
2. As an Open Space conversation at LLC's national gathering, Creating Space VI

For the materials and notes from the sessions, see Appendices C and D respectively.

Interviews

Interviews were conducted by phone with nine focus group participants as a follow-up to the focus groups. Session participants were asked to indicate on the attendance list if they were willing to be interviewed as a part of this project. Interviewees were then selected according to availability and in an effort to achieve a balance of stakeholder perspective (i.e. with representation from community programs, leadership development programs (staff and alumni), and funders). All interviewees are people of color. The interviews were designed to deepen our understanding about the characteristics of leadership valued by people of color, how these values are supported or not, and what structures or strategies have been supportive. See Appendix E for documentation of interview questions and responses.

Job/Position Posting Analysis

A random collection of Web-based job announcements was amassed using nine nonprofit job-listing resources to better understand how positions are being conceived of and what characteristics are implied in advertising for them. These listings were then analyzed using the lens created by the set of leadership values and characteristics participants named as important to them and their constituencies. For a list of resources accessed see Appendix F.

Working Session

A final working session to clarify strategies and recommendations was held in San Francisco at the close of this phase. Participants in this session included representation from Compass Point, LLC, The Violence Prevention Community of Los Angeles, Women's Leadership Circles, and the Hass, Jr. Fund. For materials and notes see Appendix G.

Findings

At the outset of this phase of the project, we initially hoped to offer at its conclusion, recommendations, and strategies to mitigate the impact of discrimination frequently resulting from the lack of awareness of and support for different models of leadership. We have gathered and generated a collection of strategies and recommendations we will report here, but have also developed, with the input of several organizations, individuals, and traditions, a model for change that mirrors the vision of a more inclusive way of leading and is applicable to both leadership development and the context in which leadership is exercised. The findings that led us to the strategies, recommendations, and model follow.

Building on Phase One: Feedback and Expansion from a Broader Constituency

In our initial work with focus groups we asked for feedback on the challenges, obstacles, and strategies reported by early participants on diversifying leadership through work in leadership development programs. The responses, based on the experiences of the nonprofit staff members, funders, consultants, and technical assistance providers attending, were not significantly different from those speaking from the lens of leadership development programs. That is, the experiences of the people engaged regarding obstacles and challenges also fell into the categories of internalized oppression, organizational challenges, and obstacles intrinsic to the nonprofit sector. Specifics regarding these categories also remained largely the same, however, there were some observations and comments that served to deepen our understanding and thus impact the resulting strategies and recommendations. Therefore the obstacles and challenges list expanded from phase one of the project and includes:

Manifestations of institutionalized, interpersonal and internalized oppression

- Disparity of opportunity to access of education and training programs
- Exclusive networks that recruit and perpetuate white leadership
- Discrimination in recruitment, selection and advancement
- Unwelcoming, exclusive or hostile environment
- Internalized oppression and lack of self-confidence
- Exclusive dominant culture model of leadership
- Leadership associated with abuse of power and suspicion
- Lack of role models, mentors and success stories
- Disempowerment: loss of faith in the opportunity to make a difference
- Economic Status: Cannot afford unpaid internships, low paid, unstable jobs

Organizational Challenges

- Resistance to change
- Normative model of leadership is a given and people with resources are more comfortable operating within this model. Dominant culture does not tap the talents of people of color
- Legacy of racism: predominantly white staff and board
- Diversity of participating individuals mistaken for an authentic shift from the dominant culture
- Community is not cultivated *within* organizations
- Mentoring not validated in organizational culture
- Technical assistance that doesn't involve the white or power-holding leadership is not available

- External technical assistance is applied when not appropriate or is inappropriate for the context
- Not enough room for people of color to take risks, instead conform to what they think is expected
- Constituency often has no say in or effect on who the leadership/leader is
- Leaders of organizations are often not connected to nor would they be embraced or respected by the people they are “serving”
- Differences are not raised let alone valued. Not defining issues within organizational culture allows them to be glossed over, circumvented, or ignored
- Lack of asset-mapping and inventorying of existing staff skills
- Little or no exposure, access, or opportunities to observe and engage with those in leadership positions for those doing “frontline” or “on the ground” work
- Extreme lack of leadership development for white allies with regard to “alternative” leadership models or creating culturally inclusive organizations
- Expectations for leadership are often too much for one person
- Lack of visioning – what does diverse, inclusive leadership culture look like? And what’s appropriate for what context?
- Leadership energy is drained by management demands
- Emphasis is often on indoctrination or inculcation rather than development
- Not an environment where those who exercise leadership or hold power in different ways can “show up and be whole”

Contributing problems intrinsic within the nonprofit sector

- Low salaries
- Limited career paths
- No leadership term limits or explicit transition programs (gate keepers)
- No mid management leadership development
- Leadership imported from outside the community
- Nonprofits financially unsustainable
- Little networking and limited to ED’s
- No transparent, effective mechanism for recruitment and promotion
- Time demands incongruent with cultures of whole person and work/personal life balance
- Product trumps process
- Undemocratic governance structures
- Risk taking not encouraged
- Beneficiaries of current system may not want to relinquish power, positions, privilege
- Debate is prioritized over dialogue/conversation (i.e. Robert’s Rules)

What is missing, according to the participants and the research, are the values and characteristics important to communities and leaders of color as well as the strategies that address the obstacles and challenges raised that are organization- and sector-based. This is not to say that leadership development programs alone can address the structures and cultures of organizations or the entire nonprofit sector. Greater attention does need to be paid by leadership development programs, however, to the context in which program graduates or fellows work. This is especially so when several research reports and the experiences of many participants in this project indicate (and political leadership illustrates) that diversity alone is likely not the answer to change since racial diversity in an organization frequently does not result in a change in culture, values, practices or outcomes.

An early understanding reached was the need to expand the goal of what this shift to “diverse” leadership of the nonprofit sector would be. Numerous examples were shared of instances of racial diversity that do not reflect the values of leadership for which participants would hope in a more inclusive leadership culture. Some may argue that the leadership of the nonprofit sector is pretty diverse, especially when compared to other employment sectors. Project participants in phase one pointed out that there are a lot of nonprofit executive directors of color. The dominant culture model of leadership to which we refer has also been called the “white-heroic male” model yet, 62% of nonprofit executive directors are women and 25% are people of color according to the 2001 *Daring to Lead* report published by CompassPoint. LLC is not of that opinion however, even if we were, racial and ethnic diversity does not mean the same thing as cultural diversity or diversity of leadership style. Also raised in phase one, and in the CompassPoint report is that most of those organizations are small community-based efforts that frequently do not have the same access to resources and have much smaller budgets when compared to larger organizations. One must ask a) if this diversity reflects the constituencies served by the sector, and b) if the distribution of access, influence, power, and resources is equitable among organizations and how this is connected to culture, leadership style, and oppression inherent to the larger macrocosm of American culture.

For the purposes of our examination we took a closer look at leadership style and the values and characteristics underpinning them. To better understand what participants view as the characteristics and values of good and inclusive leadership, as well as to better understand what is lost by not having a more inclusive leadership culture in the nonprofit sector, we engaged project informants in exercises to elicit these defining descriptors.

Values and Characteristics of “Desirable” Leadership

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community/constituen
cy ownership • Deliberateness • Slowness • Listening • Shared Leadership • Spirituality • Stepping aside • Love • Cultivating acceptance
and understanding • Embracing difference • Humility • Connectedness • Selflessness • Patience • Integrity • Investing in young
people • Transparency • Transfer of knowledge • Open discussions of
oppression | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship building • Bridge building • Team building • Connectivity • Valuing unconventional
knowledge ○ knowledge resides in
community ○ knowledge not
hierarchical • Many models of
leadership/ Leadership
style is fluid and is a
function of context and
what’s expected ○ Collective leadership ○ Mentoring ○ Shared leadership • Humble learning • Empathy • Compassion • More attachment to
characteristics than | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> title • Fluidity • Stepping back • Asset-based approach • Making space for
people to take up
leadership • Acknowledgement • Allowing access to
power --”loosening”—
hierarchy • Doing what we do best
and partnering/working
with each other to
reach common goals--
instead of competing • Under-valued
intelligences (i.e. not
linguistic, reading and
writing, or logical-
mathematical) • Accepting different
approaches |
|---|--|---|

What is lost, then, through the continued prevalence or privileging of a dominant culture style of leadership? And how exactly is it lost? Participants named a handful of contributions lost, all essentially boiled down to values. Responses we heard included:

- “When community is not cultivated in organizations it can’t be cultivated outside of the organization.”
- “Financial capital and organizational capacity = compete. Social capital and community capacity = cooperate. Values of community are not the values of the sector. We are losing our values.”
- “It’s not so much the model of dominant culture that is the problem but the values serving as the foundation for the model. What we are struggling with in the nonprofit sector is values. We need to reclaim them.”

Respondents reported that this loss of or contradiction in values leads to a loss of creativity, innovation, perspective, spirits, skills, talents, desire, and commitment. One person referred to working as an African-American in what was described as “a very white, male” environment as “soul crushing.” Another person of color in a similar work context referred to the experience of coming back again and again everyday as “spirit killing.”

Strategies, Structures, and Contexts

What exactly is it about the structures and environment employed, cultivated, and maintained by this dominant culture of leadership that brings about this loss? And what actions or attributes have been of support to people of color?

Many stories and situations were offered that address these questions. Most challenging experiences were either the result of organizations having no explicitly stated values, having values different from those of project participants, or engaging in practices that were contradictory to values; or challenging experiences were the result of people of color exercising leadership in ways that were outside of the organizational norm.

Not all experiences of participants were negative though and quite a few had found strategies, structures, and environments in which their values could remain, for the most part, intact as leaders. Interestingly, one of the factors mentioned most often in the interviews as a boon to leaders of color achieving leadership positions in the sector has been a strong sense of self and of values (even though values seem to comprise the same arena in which much of the conflict or cultural disconnect occurs). For example, one person described her practice of sharing leadership within her department, working more as a facilitator in many instances, and allowing staff to take on leadership roles. This was one of the ways she put her values into practice and helped others to develop their leadership skills, take risks, and grow. This practice inspired great productivity, loyalty, and relationships among her staff. For this outcome she was recognized and promoted. On the other hand, because of this practice, she was sometimes rendered invisible and thought to be ineffectual or unnecessary by others. Another

Job Posting Analysis

In a random selection of 26 Web-based job postings for leadership positions in nonprofits, the announcements rarely listed the qualities and values of leadership described by project participants as essential to good or desirable leadership. All of the postings were heavy on management skills and implied a specific type and level of education and experience. Little space was given to leadership or desired leadership skills of any sort with few exceptions (4 of 26). The exceptions were all for positions within organizations with a focus on social justice and/or civil rights and these postings still only included two or three lines about desired leadership or explicit encouragement for application by people of color.

Experiences Challenging to People of Color Exercising Leadership

Operationalizing values

- Diversity initiatives stated as priorities but not prioritized at a level that gets funding or staff assigned.
- Frequently people of color in organizations wind up talking only to each other about issues concerning organizational values and culture.
- Quiet way of leading (free of chit-chat and “schmoozing”) makes many people uncomfortable.
- Well-intentioned women’s organization doing good work did not have a maternity policy. Had not been intentional about integrating values and organizational goals into organizational structures and practices.
- Organization with explicit values did not incorporate values into performance evaluations. Work was evaluated based on entirely different criteria and reflected a different set of values.
- Organizations say one thing but do another. Having values that respect and embrace diversity of every kind does not mean that the experience is such.

Balancing invisibility with making room for others

- Showing flexibility by being willing to listen and converse instead of voicing an opinion and arguing or debating seen as weakness.
- Commitment to leadership development and roles for others perceived as laziness or incompetence.
- Involvement of staff in leadership roles where they are exposed to others can create an aggressive environment because folks have an opportunity to “show themselves.”
- Being more of a facilitator than a “top-down leader” has given folks on staff and “superiors” the idea that person is not effectual, or necessary, or doing any work.

organization’s leader was seen as a risk to the majority of the board because of her “nontraditional” qualifications when she was promoted internally into the executive director position while, she and the staff saw the action as an investment. The same action was seen two very different ways based on respective values.

The other factor mentioned most frequently as a key to their pathway to leadership was access to education. Education was named as a determining factor in the ability to exercise leadership by several of the 44 respondents and by 7 of 9 interviewees. To quote one participant, “Educational privilege, led to my being exposed to different people who had access to resources. Because of my own values I was then able to think creatively about how to use that access and those resources to affect what I think is important.” This is interesting to note as a factor in allowing people to assume leadership roles in the sector as education was described by focus group participants as “suspect” to some of the communities in which organizations work. The 2001 report, *Reflecting an American Vista*, by the National Community for Latino Leadership did not report viewing education as suspect but did report that it was not necessarily an important characteristic of leadership in Latino communities. Yet most job descriptions for leadership roles in nonprofit organizations mention education as a minimum requirement or desired qualification. See the box on page 11 for more information.

Leadership: What is it?

If leadership, then, is something different from a title or a narrow set of skills, what do we mean by leadership in this project?

For the purposes of this investigation we needed to define and define broadly what we mean by leadership. Looking to the work of Howard Gardner we arrived at a working definition based on his definition of

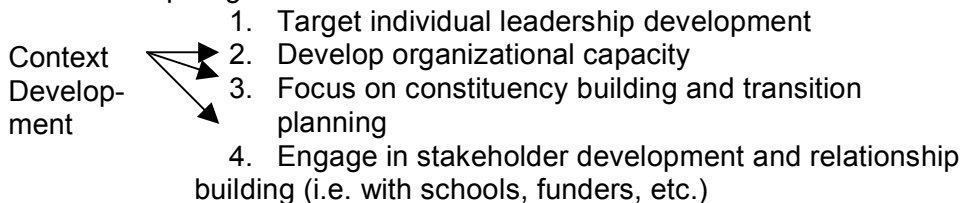
intelligence. In his 1993 book *Frames of Mind*, Gardner defined intelligence as “the ability to fashion a product or solve a problem of value to a group of people.” Further shaping this

statement we put forth as a definition of intelligence, the ability to fashion a product, address an issue, or solve a problem of value to a community or a group of people. We then went on to define leadership as the ability of an individual or a group to develop intelligence in self and others. Thus, addressing the need to shift the framework around discussions of leadership from one where a select few have power to one where multiple people hold or have the potential to hold power in different situations and contexts. Therefore the meaning of “multiple stakeholders” is in fact “people who hold power in different ways” and leadership development might be more accurately termed leadership support or enhancement.

Initial Ideas for Increasing Leadership Opportunities for People of Color through Leadership Programs

Project participants raised a number of other strategies and recommendations for both developing leadership within organizations and communities as well as for shifting sector culture to one that recognizes and values multiple styles of leadership. (That they raised these strategies is interesting in light of the fact that only one person of those interviewed had a response when asked what was supported or embraced about their leadership style in their work environment.) The contributions are summarized and separated into four categories of concurrent work. People who hold power in different ways (i.e. community-based organizations, leadership development programs, schools, foundations) may take up or prioritize different categories or areas of work depending on their context, constituency, and capacity.

Four prongs of simultaneous work:



Individual Leadership Development

- Mentoring (internal and external)
- Networking/Relationship Building
- Cross Boundary Learning
- Cultural Competence of the Leadership Program
- Leveraging Opportunities
- Skills Development
- Whole Person Development
- Program Design
- Intentional Recruitment
- Financial support/Awards
- Support for continued education
- Culturally competent leadership development for allies
- Implement, lengthen, and/or strengthen follow up activities around implementation and support

Organizational Development

- Link leadership development to community goals
- As an organization, create or revisit values
- Look at personnel policies and align with values
- Develop performance and operating standards that reflect community values and organizational needs

Points of interest about strategies

Interesting to note is that although prioritizing and valuing mentoring is an important strategy to respondents, no one included having a formal mentor as a key to their personal pathway to leadership. None of the focus group participants mentioned having had a formal mentor and 3 of 9 interviewees had informal mentors (two of these mentors were also white).

Also interesting, 3 of 9 interviewees, who were age 35 or younger, raised age as even more of a barrier than race or ethnicity when considering values conflict and exercising leadership.

- Examine job descriptions and their alignment (or lack thereof) with values
- Institute development and recognition programs for middle managers
- Organizations should be *of* community not *on behalf of* communities

Constituency Building and Transition Planning (Pipeline)

- Support organizations to make time to mentor internally, attend conferences, provide PD for other staff, etc.
- Involve the community/or constituency served in defining the direction, strategies, and in the evaluation of the work
- Advocate for the establishment or support of student loan forgiveness/payment programs
- Balance individual development with action and community/constituency development
- Show your bench – bring at least one, always, to everything, rotate the one, if only one at a time
- Look at position transitions and diversification through lens of organizational stability *and* mission sustainability

Stakeholder Development and Relationship Building (Larger Sector)

- Influencing organizational capacity funding
- Encouraging student loan forgiveness/payment programs
- Where possible, engage board and supports (fiscal and otherwise) who value real and thorough inclusivity and diversity and honor the inputs and outcomes as they look and are, as well as honoring the strategies and leadership that produce the outcomes that have been identified as relevant for the context and the community/ies
- Exercise influence to develop new system of rewards for “new” set of attitudes and values
- Exercise influence to make it part of the criteria for funding for organizations and programs that there is diversity and inclusiveness demonstrated by the organization
- Bring money (fiscal capital) and organizational and community values and relationships (social capital) into alignment. Look at structures/practices that impede this relationship/alignment

There were also general guidelines shared by participants that are applicable to all areas of strategy.

General Guidelines

- Leave room for error – forgiveness. There has to be open space for risk-taking/making mistakes
- Innovative approaches to capacity-building and professional development
- If limiting or undermining, stop and reorganize. Fear of failure is not a reason to keep going because in the long run will fail anyway, if continuing to dishonor those involved
- Must embrace and live with tension
- Must talk about power – using fairly, appropriately, effectively, justly
- Provide trusted place to connect as a white person - If you look around your life and there are no people of color close to you, that's the problem. How does one get over that? Not up to people of color to make change

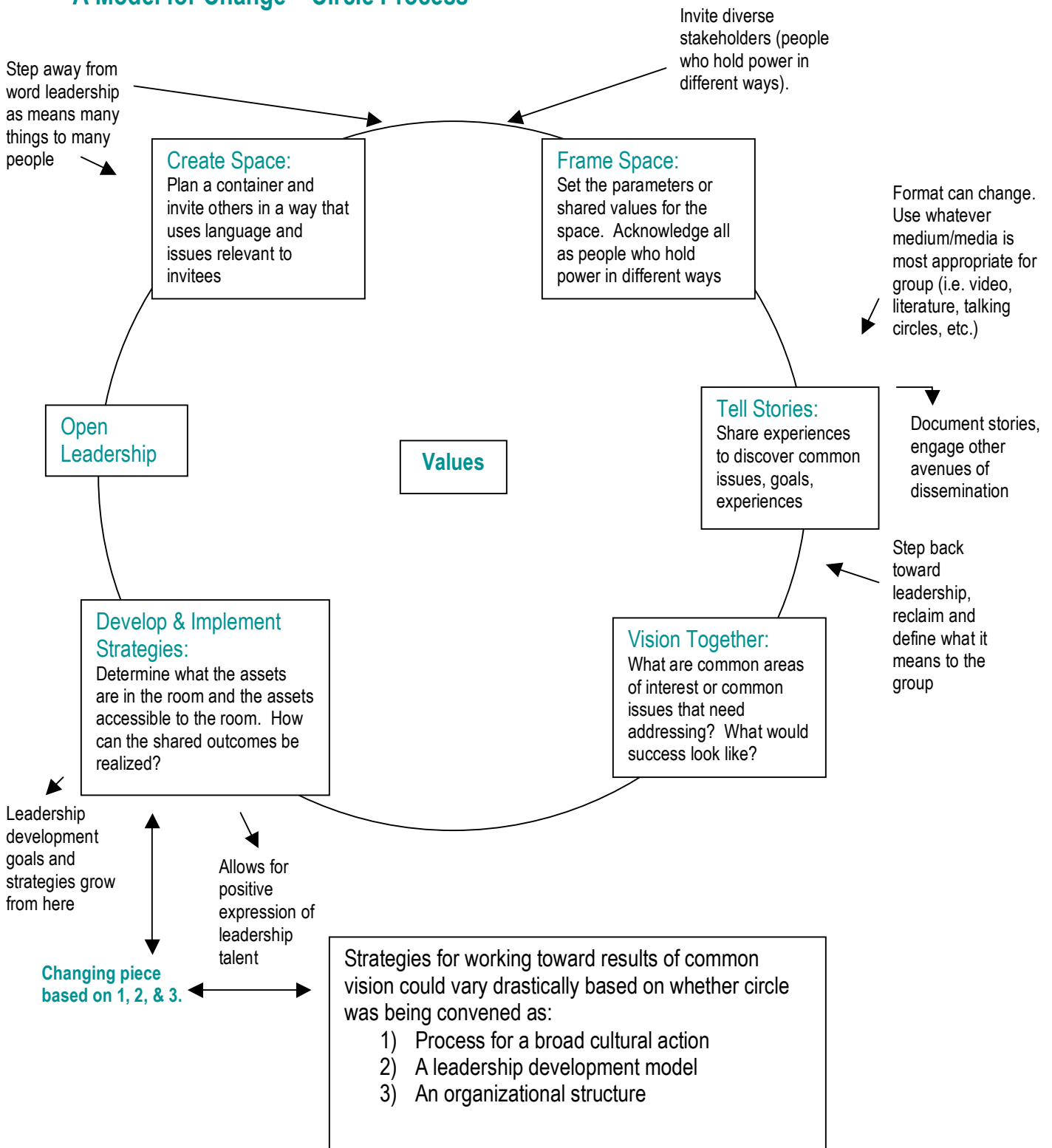
Working Session Outcomes

In response to the initial ideas and guidelines gleaned, elicited, and developed in and from literature, focus groups, and interviews. Working session participants in phase two discussed how these pieces of work might fit into a model. What was apparent is that any model or way of working would have to open the definition of leadership and create a space and framework for bringing people who hold power in different ways without limiting attendance with loaded words such as leadership and without indicating traditional power relationships. For instance, bringing community residents and organizations together as equal stakeholders might require a different kind of invitation to a different kind of space. In that space participants must be able to tell stories or provide evidence in whatever way is appropriate for them. These stories would be documented for sharing with other communities and stakeholders not present. With the assistance of a facilitator or facilitating group, the larger group would then mine the stories for common issues and experiences around which the group would engage in a collective visioning process. The following development of strategies for realizing that common vision would then determine outcomes, leadership development and appropriate leadership for the particular pieces of work. Thus, also providing an opportunity for the expression of leadership talent toward shared positive outcomes as well as providing a framework for changing or rotating leadership as the vision and outcomes dictate. Leadership development, support, and/or enhancement would also grow out of this piece.

This circular model of a change process (illustrated on the next page) has key components that build on one another but there are many entry points to this continuous process. It can also be applied to a number of situations. For instance in a leadership development program, leaders might be brought together initially in an equalizing space created by the convener where competition is not a factor. They would engage in storytelling, which could take the form of oral stories, videos, collectively reviewing an evaluation, etc. As an example, one common issue that might be raised is balancing management, leadership, and fundraising responsibilities in a way that allows for “a life” and a continuous connection to community. Fellows would then participate in a collective visioning process of what this might look like and some outcomes that they could work toward collectively. The strategies for development would then be identified or created based on this work. Different stakeholders (fellows, community members, organizational staff, funders, fellowship program staff, etc.) could take the lead or be involved at different times in the implementation depending on the vision and the desired outcomes.

The Leadership Learning Community does not claim this model as its invention. In fact, one of the issues raised by working session participants is that many of the “models” that work in communities are in fact processes that have ancient traditions in many cultures. Academically or sectorally “validated” models frequently are the result of studying indigenous cultures. This circle process is the result of contributions from project participants regarding what’s working and what’s necessary. Many of these informants are using circle based models or traditions of cooperation such as Ubuntu, an African tradition of community cooperation in which the system of accountability is more reflective of community values. The success of the circle approach for these organizations is evident in the attainment of shared community outcomes as well as in formal evaluations. An external evaluator of the circle process in use by one organization commented that their way of working allows them to get at “the unobvious” in a quick and authentic manner. Several of the organizations using circle processes offered that they frequently hear from circle members, “I have no idea why I just said that. I just felt like I could share that here.” The circle suggested by this work is a combining of several different circle approaches described by our project partners. An illustration of this model is given on the following page.

A Model for Change – Circle Process



One Example: A cost benefit approach to violence prevention

In one particular community the common issue prioritized was violence in the community. A decision was reached by people in the community, that folks needed to understand their relationship to and power around violence and its presence in their community. A strategy engaged for addressing this issue began with developing a real understanding of what violence cost the community. An organization in the community worked with the police to do a cost-benefit analysis of violence. The estimate reached was that for each murder the city spent a million dollars. When community members, including perpetrators of violence, were able to see the amount of money that was not going to schools and services in their communities, they suddenly had a different relationship to, not just violence, but to their own power. The community then began to work on how they could affect policy so that some portion of the money they saved the city could then be returned to their community.

Research Implications: Recommendations for Phase Three – Increasing the Participation of People of Color in the Leadership of the Nonprofit Sector

- Examine more closely what's working in order to create and define language and picture of "alternative" leadership
- Seek out, develop, and share comprehensive tools, structures, and methods for operationalizing values
- Refine and test model proposed by working session participants

As a way of addressing the research implications described above, LLC recommends testing the proposed model by working with organizations identified through this work as having processes, tools, and structures that are working for them in creating opportunities for people of color to exercise leadership as well as preparing people to take up leadership in the sector. The focus of this work would be to a) elicit and develop a shareable body of knowledge from which other organizations, funders, and communities can learn and b) to test the proposed model (in essence continuing the work begun in the working session at the end of this phase).

Potential project partners include:

- Women's Leadership Circles
- Choice USA
- CompassPoint
- Violence Prevention Community/Non-Traditional Leadership Institute
- Mary Babcock Reynolds Foundation
- TEAMS (Transformation through Education and Mutual Support)
- Annie E. Casey Foundation

Impact: Since the inception of this project (and seemingly growing in intensity) there has been the

question raised by organizations and individuals "How?" There is buy-in from many arenas that this shift needs to happen, but there seem to be disparate tools, if any at all for much of the work. Those that exist in a shareable are not always easy to locate, obtain or adapt as there is not yet a repository or accessible resource where these kinds of stories, tools, and methods for increasing capacity and opportunities for organizational leadership by people of color are collected and some tools are cost prohibitive. The results of this work would not only address this question of how but provide several entry points to the work as well as raise the visibility and sectoral validity of alternative models so that they are more widely recognized and accepted.

Influence and Leverage: The strong partnership and wide network inherent in the coming together of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Leadership Learning Community (and other potential partners) provides for an immense potential for development, implementation, and testing of the results followed by wide dissemination and greater leadership capabilities in the sector.

Conclusion

As a result of this ongoing project, we aim to eventually shift the conversation among boards of directors, funders, nonprofit organizations, and transition teams around organizational development and leadership styles and thus, prepare the groundwork for shifting the paradigm around effective leadership to one that is more inclusive and more responsive to cultural validity. Such a framework for producing relevant outcomes would allow for organizations to be more effective and reach greater capacity in their work.