



ORGANIZATIONS
IN SOLIDARITY

LEADING CHANGE: BEST PRACTICES GUIDE TO EMPOWER BOARD DIVERSITY

SEPTEMBER 2023



WCAPS | WOMEN OF COLOR ADVANCING PEACE,
SECURITY, AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION



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ABOUT

The Organizations

Women of Color Advancing Peace, Security, and Conflict Transformation (WCAPS)

is a platform devoted to women of color that cultivates a strong voice and network for its members while encouraging dialogue and strategies for engaging in policy discussions on an international scale. Through our dedication to mentorship and partnerships and our passion for changing the global community landscape, we remain committed to achieving our vision of advancing the leadership and professional development of women of color in the fields of international peace, security, and conflict transformation.

OrgsinSolidarty (Ois) is a partnership formed among more than 300 organizations and individuals who are signatories to the WCAPS United States or United Kingdom Standing Together Against Racism and Discrimination Statements. Our mission is to combat racist beliefs, attitudes, and acts of discrimination, and integrate diversity within all levels of our organizations and as individuals in the peace and security, foreign policy and national security fields. We evaluate the current state of affairs, educate, elevate and support diverse voices and perspectives and the individuals who hold them, giving due recognition and credit to achievements of Black people and people of color, and creating a world where all people are treated fairly, equitably, and with respect.

Please connect with us!



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ABOUT

The Working Group

The core commitment of **OiS' Leadership Diversity** working group is to strive to diversify boards of directors and advisory committees to include people of color.

The Authors



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Gratitude

This project benefited from the insights from leading experts and practitioners in the industry. We express our appreciation to the experts who generously spared time and shared their experiences to inform this report. A special thank you to WCAPS's Executive Director, Dr. Maleeka Glover for her time and support to this project. Dr. Lindsay Rodman, and the entire OiS Leadership Diversity Working Group for their encouragement and valuable inputs on the importance of board diversity. We are thankful for their commitment and also intellectual investment in this project. Several board members, leaders and experts lent their knowledge to help shape this project including Dr. Marion Messmer, Ambassador Susan Burk, Mr. Shane Ward, Mr. Arpit Chaturvedi, Ms. Sneha Nair, Ms. Hadeil Ali, Ms. Jennifer Smyser, Mr. Keith Porter, and Ms. Mari Faines. Their leadership and passion for diversifying the peace and security field are appreciated. We are deeply thankful for our funders - the Carnegie Corporation for supporting and encouraging us to research and generate awareness on this issue which is often overlooked and under scrutinized.

INTRODUCTION

A critical but often overlooked component of promoting peace, security, inclusiveness, harmony, and a range of perspectives is addressing diversity and the lack thereof. Given the nature of the challenges and opportunities in the 21st century, it has become important to be intentional about diversity, especially in the context of boards in the non-profit sector. For instance: Women of Color (WOCs) - specifically Black and Asian women comprise less than 5% of board membership. A greater number of organizations are realizing the importance of and the need to commit to working towards 50% gender and POC diversity on organizational and advisory boards. To delve deeper into why diversity in boardrooms is important, it is essential to first define what is diversity, and what constitutes a diverse board.

Diversity encompasses the ideas and conceptions of color, age, gender, race, ethnicity, ability and/or disability, sexual orientation, religion, education, socioeconomic class, geographical locations, professional background, marital and parental status, and learning and communication styles but is not limited to this. The term 'diverse' can even encompass diversity of thought and perspective; however real diversity must encompass factors beyond this basic level in white-dominated workplaces. At the heart of understanding and being diverse lies the powerful idea that everyone is unique, and their individual traits, backgrounds, and experiences uniquely shape their personalities that can add value to the collective. True diversity not only means "a range of differences," but the meaningful respect for those different experiences.

INTRODUCTION

The Organizations in Solidarity (OiS) is committed to diversifying workplaces in the peace, security, and foreign policy field and ensuring that women and people of color have a seat at the table. OiS does so through a variety of initiatives. This publication is one such effort to create guidelines that reflect some of the best practices that organizations can adopt to diversify boards. The document lays down a few principles that organizations will find easy to incorporate and offers direction that board members can follow to ensure a diverse board.

The architects of this OiS project reached out to more than two dozen experts in the industry and posed the question of what changes they would like to see in the field which ensures diversity. The report reflects insights gained from conducting interviews with a diverse group who are working in different ways to diversify the peace and security field.



WHY DIVERSITY ON BOARDS MATTERS



WHY DIVERSITY ON BOARDS MATTERS

To better qualify the importance of a diverse board, it is important that the role of a board is briefly discussed.

The role of a board and its members can be expansive or specific and often differs. Though broadly, a board is structured to ensure organizational governance, an oversight to the executive body of an organization, plan and strategize for the short and the long-term good, and put mechanisms in place to monitor progress vis-à-vis objectives and goals. Furthermore, they have an obligation to make decisions in the interest of the shareholders and stakeholders. In that sense, their objectives are closely aligned with the goals of the organization to serve the community they engage with within the nonprofit sector.

Boards are too often composed based on a 'who you know' selection process – a recipe for homogenous and insular thinking that is unhelpful in advancing new ideas and creativity. When faced with rapid developments – digital, business, climate, etc. diverse boards are better equipped to tackle ever-changing issues and challenges. When members hold wide-ranging views, boards are better able to consider the wide-ranging implications of their decisions including risks and challenges that may result. Members' expanded viewpoints also facilitate a critical board obligation: consideration of all constituencies. Board diversity can lead to more effective risk management, and better alignment with core organizational objectives while promoting innovation. McKinsey & Company conducted an international study in 2018 titled 'Delivering through Diversity' and found that more diverse businesses are 33% more likely to have higher financial returns.[1]

WHY DIVERSITY ON BOARDS MATTERS

Aside from financial gains, studies have indicated that a well-performing board relies on the caliber and perspective of each board member, and it is the dynamic between and among board members that drive effective governance. Furthermore, when membership encompasses a broader range of attributes, boards govern more effectively.[2] In the OIS interviews conducted, several board members indicated that when boards experience the benefits of diversity, they become greater advocates for it. Lack of representation in boards is self-defeating in the long run for the viability of organizations.



WHY DIVERSITY ON BOARDS MATTERS

Diversity on boards matters. However, solely having a diverse board is not a cure-all. There needs to be a culture where everyone's voices are heard and included in decision-making. There are real costs to not prioritizing this. It is tied to institutional credibility. One interview respondent stated that an organization without diverse leadership will be seen as inflexible and not in sync with the demands of the 21st century with its employees and stakeholders. This can impact talent recruitment and even retention as employees look for organizations that reflect their values. Hadeil Ali, director of the Diversity and Leadership in International Affairs Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) stated, "Boards without diversity risk becoming stagnant and deeply out-of-touch with the broader society within which the issues they work on are embedded."

Board Diversity Has Benefits

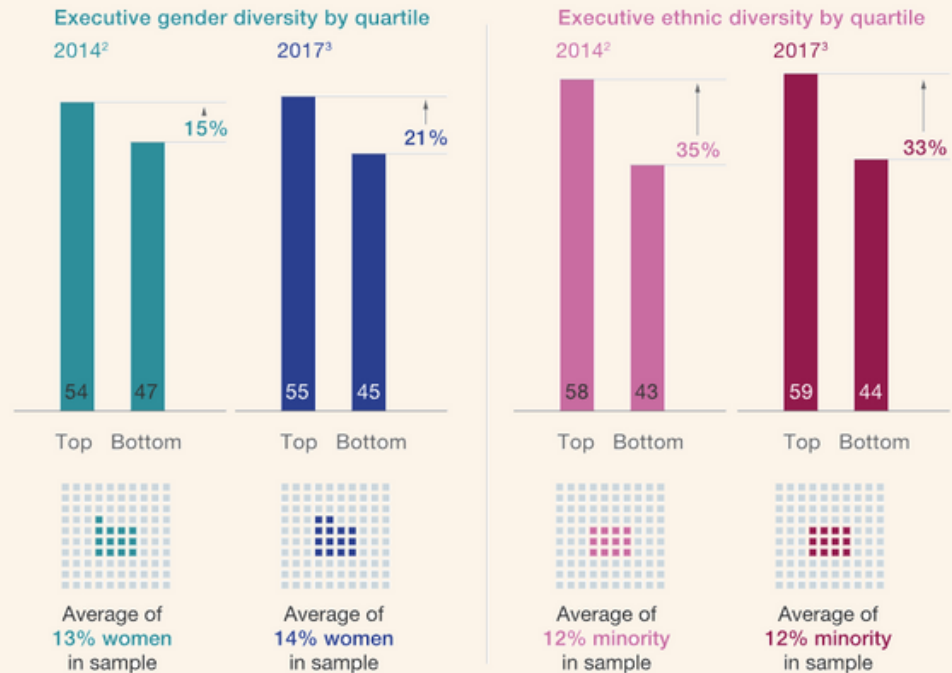
- 01 It allows for wider perspectives.
- 02 It helps quash previously held stereotypes.
- 03 The heterogeneity of interactions leads to productivity gains as the ability to learn and grow from each other is exponentially expanded.
- 04 Diversity drives creativity and innovation. [3]
- 05 Diversity is correlated with profitability.
- 06 Diverse groups make better decisions. [4]

WHY DIVERSITY ON BOARDS MATTERS

Board Diversity Has Benefits

Successive Harvard Business Review (HBR) studies have indicated that there is a strong case to be made for establishing a diverse workforce at all organizational levels due to the financial impact. The study reveals that the business case for a diverse board and organization is clear “when women are at the table, the discussion is richer, the decision-making process is better, and the organization is stronger. Additionally, HBR studies make a strong case for hiring more women and people of color to benefit from the different identity groups. In 1996, an HBR article, “Making Differences Matter: A New Paradigm for Managing Diversity” argued that companies adopting a radically new way of understanding and leveraging diversity could reap the real and full benefits of a diverse workforce. This new way entailed not only recruiting and retaining more people from underrepresented “identity groups” but also tapping their identity-related knowledge and experiences as resources for learning how the organization could perform its core work better.[5]

Likelihood of financial performance¹ above national industry median, %



¹Average earnings-before-interest-and-taxes (EBIT) margin, 2010–13 in Diversity Matters I and 2011–15 in Diversity Matters II.
²Results are statistically significant at p-value <0.10.
³Results are statistically significant at p-value <0.05.

McKinsey&Company

WHY DIVERSITY ON BOARDS MATTERS

Often boards are disconnected from the communities and people they, and their organizations, serve. 49% of CEOs say they don't have the right board members to "establish trust with the communities they serve". However, only 32% of the boards place a high priority on "knowledge of community served".[6] At minimum to be able to effectively serve a community, boards need to have representation from that community. Currently, boards are heavily skewed white. 84% of all non-profit board members are white and only 17% are under the age of forty.[7] 27% of boards did not have a single person of color[8].

Figure 1: Detailed demography breakdown of boards [6]

DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY OF BOARD & EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP			
Race & Ethnicity	Chief Executive	Board Chair	Board Members
White/Caucasian/European	87%	83%	78%
Black/African American/African	5%	6%	10%
Hispanic/Latino/Latina/Latinx	3%	5%	5%
Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islander	2%	2%	4%
Multi-Racial/Multi-Ethnic (2 or more races or ethnicities)	3%	2%	1%
Native America/American Indian/Indigenous	0.3%	0.4%	1%
Other race/ethnicity	1%	1%	2%
Gender & Gender Identity			
Female	74%	53%	53%
Male	26%	47%	47%
Non-Binary	0.3%	0.1%	0.1%
Not Transgender (Cisgender)	99.3%	99.6%	99%
Transgender	0.7%	0.4%	1%
Age			
Under 35	4.1%	4.1%	9%
35 to 44	16%	20%	21%
45 to 54	31%	25%	26%
55 to 64	38%	28%	26%
65 or older	11%	23%	17%
Disability Status			
Without disability	95%	97%	95%
With disability	5%	3%	5%
Sexual Orientation			
Heterosexual or Straight	90%	94%	94%
Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual	9%	6%	6%
Other	1%	0.1%	0.1%

In the for-profit sector, within the Fortune 500, 200 companies have greater than 40% diversity, almost four times the number of companies a decade ago.[9] However, white women have been the largest beneficiary of the increased diversity. There has been no increase in representation of minorities over the past three years. Furthermore, 36% of the diverse board seats are occupied by persons on multiple Fortune 500 boards.

WHY DIVERSITY ON BOARDS MATTERS

Opportunities should be more widely spread, which would in turn allow room for women and people of color to bring their perspectives and experience into these roles. Lastly, studies reveal that several skills such as corporate sustainability, socially responsible investing, government, and technology are not adequately represented on boards. Less than 55% of board members bring these skills to the table. Having these skills would ensure the adaptability and flexibility of organizations. It is evident that the 'old ways' of constituting boards consisting of only white males will no longer be useful and beneficial for organizations. To ensure that organizations thrive, it is essential to increase diverse representation on boards with people of color, and especially women of color, who would bring the needed skill set, as well as their diverse experiences and perspectives.[10]



ENSURING DIVERSITY



ENSURING DIVERSITY

Diversifying a board is a journey that needs to be undertaken by organizations at all levels. It first begins with recognizing the benefits of inclusion and diversity. The meaning of diversity can vary from one organization to the other as can how organizations measure diversity. Prior to undertaking steps to diversify its board, organizations should define diversity and why it matters. Understanding the organization where it stands, and the community it serves, and clarifying its mission, vision, and goals regarding diversity is an essential step. Board diversity does not begin with a diversity statement and ends with recruitment of a few diverse candidates. Approaching it this way will come off as obligatory and stigmatize the 'diversity hires'. Instead, organizations should embark on a comprehensive process that is holistic by laying down a roadmap to achieve, cultivate, maintain, and sustain diversity.

It is a cyclical process and consists of iterative enhancements, monitoring, and accounting. Instilling a diverse board within an organization requires a step-by-step process of outlining priorities to: 'Roadmap', 'Recruit', and 'Retain' & 'Remodel'. Outlined below is a brief manual on how boards can develop, incorporate, and achieve these four 'R's to diversify boards and maintain diversity.



Focusing on the Four 'R's to Build Diverse Boards



Roadmap



Diversity needs to be fostered through a clearly aligned vision for the organization. The vision then needs to be sustained and substantiated through intentional action. One of the first steps is to create a board diversity policy.

The board diversity policy should define what diversity means to that organization. Board diversity policy would be unique to each organization and should be ideally aligned with the organization's unique values, goals, and objectives. Additionally, a board diversity policy should also outline how the organization intends to measure diversity.

Any board member recruitment process should clearly define how the organization intends to build upon its diversity policy. Including bi-annual diversity training is a good way to involve employees, make everyone feel included, generate awareness of the benefits of diversity as well as illuminate inherent biases and means to counteract them. Organizations should bi-annually circulate blind demographics surveys. One leader at an OIS Partner Organization interviewed mentioned, "Our board does intentionally include demographic data as part of the process for gathering and considering potential new board members. This includes comparing the diversity of the board to that of the county we serve. The process, however, has not yet led to greater diversity on that board." Simply focusing on data collection might not necessarily lead to different outcomes. Instead, along with collecting data, the process needs to be supplemented with additional steps in tandem.

Eventually, a diverse board should look like a microcosmic representation of the community that the organization serves. Furthermore, there needs to be flexibility and commitment from the board to show swift actions towards amendment of bylaws to ensure a certain percentage of the board should come from the community it serves.[12]

ENSURING DIVERSITY

A diverse board and organization also means diversity of thought, perspectives, and opinions. Therefore, an inclusive climate needs to be encouraged where differing views should be welcome. To sustain diversity, diverse board members and staff need to be heard, included in efforts, and converted into invested stakeholders who are equally committed to strengthening the goals and objectives of an organization. It is important to make women and people of color joining as board members feel comfortable and ensure that they are equal stakeholders. This would ensure an organization doesn't fall into the traps of tokenization. Every organization should engage and encourage free, safe, and candid discussions to quell hidden biases and establish genuine collegiality and collaboration across the spectrum. Particular focus should be paid to the "safe" element of the prior statement as open discussion cannot be a cover for harm being done to diverse board members through microaggressions.



Recruitment



Board recruitment processes can be ad hoc, especially when boards recruit under time pressure or don't take the time to evaluate and interrogate their recruitment practices. Additionally, recruiting for boards tends to come from within, i.e., current board members identify whom they know in a field and believe would contribute to an organization's work as a board member. In the past, there were a limited number of organizations, especially NGOs active in the peace and security field. These fewer organizations predominantly had white-male heavy boards. Simultaneously, there was little effort undertaken to diversify their boards. In contrast, today there are a greater number of active organizations and stakeholders in the field and an urgent requirement to shift the overreliance on traditional white-male dominant boards.

ENSURING DIVERSITY

Often organizations point to systemic challenges and barriers that prevent them from pursuing specific opportunities to recruit diverse board members. While there are numerous opinions about the reality of the challenges of diversifying boards, one WCAPS member with board service experience stated that “Networks and access to positions on boards, especially prestigious board positions, are often not accessible to women and women of color (WOC), especially in the peace and security space where women and people of color have been historically underrepresented. WOC are often starting at a disadvantage as board positions frequently rely on referrals, personal networks, and cherry-picked candidates. WOC do not have the same institutional support and networks that their counterparts do, and hence they are likely to be frequently overlooked.”

It became increasingly evident that there are deeply entrenched systemic barriers to diversifying boards and recruiting diverse talent. Several experts in the peace and security field interviewed indicated the problem of tokenization in boards where WOC or other POC may be overlooked because of the perception that they were only selected to meet diversity quotas. Many experts stated that an absence of transparency in board recruitment processes like board selection for integral roles perpetuates these systemic challenges.

Dr. Marion Messmer shares, “A common problem I've observed is that board lists are essentially composed by asking existing board members for recommendations. Unless the board members are aware of the research you cite, or are very clued in on DEI practices, they tend to recommend friends or former colleagues which is a risk as it means the board is much more likely to replicate itself or recruit other members that are already like the current board members.” Dr. Messmer also highlights other systemic barriers like how much free time or autonomy women and women of color must devote to additional responsibilities. She points out, “Women with caregiving responsibilities are far less likely to be able to take on additional responsibilities such as board responsibilities. Most boards cover travel expenses for meetings, but not all cover childcare expenses. Even if childcare expenses are covered, finding flexible childcare can be a barrier to attendance.”

ENSURING DIVERSITY

Furthermore, an issue that tends to emerge where those responsible for nominating board members tend to nominate people that remind them of themselves – usually resulting in an affinity bias for candidates that reflect their age, experience, and alma mater – as well as characteristics like gender, race, and sexuality.

To overcome some of these systemic barriers and engage in a recruitment process that focuses on diverse hiring, here are some of the steps that organizations can follow:

Think Broadly

01

To make meaningful progress toward more diverse board member recruitment practices there is a need to think and reevaluate the needs of the organization broadly. Are there competencies that would be of value that are beyond a narrowly defined mission? Are there missing perspectives and lived experiences that would strengthen your organization and help it to more truly reflect the community you serve?

Be Transparent

02

Organizations need to be transparent about the process of board recruitment. This transparency should include organization staff and existing board members, relevant external partners, and the community your organization serves (where appropriate.) Also, be clear about the expectations of board members. Consider explicitly enabling board membership through “Work” rather than just “Wealth and Wisdom.” Diversity in boards does not impact fundraising negatively.[13] However, requiring minimum charitable contributions from board members causes an obstacle to attracting diverse talent to serve.

ENSURING DIVERSITY

Communicate

03

Convey your interest in inclusion explicitly and broadly both internally and externally - project a vision of who is a board member that is inclusive, to help potential candidates visualize themselves in the role.

Reach Out

04

Organizations should reach out to potential partner organizations (e.g., WCAPS or LCWINS) that can help provide ideas and connections to interested diverse candidates. Although, each organization would need to be intentional and do their best to identify diverse candidates and should not shift responsibility onto others to do the work for them. While expanding the search pool, organizations should also account for the limiting effects of current recruiting strategies and the biases that tend to perpetuate. There is also an urgent need to consider candidates from outside board members' personal networks.

Expand Networks

05

Organizations need to expand interpersonal networks deliberately to bring diverse people into the organization and the organization's orbit. As discussed above, boards are often built and expanded through interpersonal connections, so a very concrete means to improve the diversity of recruitment of board members is by focusing on concrete efforts to diversify networks.

Create Opportunities

06

Organizations can initiate several new policies for diverse candidates to join the board. For instance, organizations can create new seats, establish policies for renewing board makeup, and create pathways into board service for diverse candidates. An excellent example of this is the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists Bulletin Board Fellowship Program. [14]

ENSURING DIVERSITY

Retention

Retention of diverse talent is equally as important as recruitment to cultivating a diverse board. Once organizations fully appreciate that diversity and diverse boards improve their outcomes, they must be intentional in their efforts to retain diverse board members. To do this organizations need to advance people of color to positions where they can make decisions and take on leadership roles to mitigate the structural biases and systemic exclusion factors that have prevented them from serving in these positions.

For boards that are willing, including board diversification and retention in an organization's strategic plan and creating public commitments can help create accountability for these pledges. For boards that aren't willing to make this kind of commitment, organizations may choose to enforce bylaws for board members (such as attendance, engagement, contributions, etc.) to remove less active board members, and retain and create space for new, committed board members to join – and specifically to create opportunities to advance and promote candidates of color. An effective communication plan is key to sustaining and retaining diversity. Organizations doing so should ideally also prepare for some resistance and pushback.

ENSURING DIVERSITY

Some concrete strategies for encouraging retention of diverse board members are:

Engage

01

Involve on a committee or project right away. Engage new board members in the real work of the board immediately by giving them a role on a committee they are interested in becoming a part of. Organizations should also ensure that their contributions are acknowledged and credited appropriately.

Support

02

Match with a buddy or mentor. As new and diverse members are brought into service on an organization's board it can help to pair them with a mentor or buddy who has served on the board for longer to help them acclimate to their role and the norms and structures of your organization specifically. This will help them to both be more effective in their role and help with the retention of new members.

Check-in

03

Conduct regular midyear and end-of-year check-ins. These check-ins should be both in the form of concrete, measurable, and comparable data collected from surveys as well as less formal interpersonal outreach. Having quantitative data you can compare and use to guide decision-making and measure the impact of your approach, however the value and importance of the qualitative experiential element for the individuals serving on the board should not be underestimated.

Evaluate

04

Monitor results routinely. Data that is not used is not useful. You should develop a plan for how the collected data, both qualitative and quantitative, will be used in decision-making. Monitoring trends and shifts is important. It is vital at this stage that biases are carefully examined and mitigated or trends and impacts could still be missed. Transparency in this process is also a useful accountability tool. That may mean publishing a report of the findings or holding a yearly readout event.

ENSURING DIVERSITY

Some more concrete strategies for encouraging retention of diverse board members are:

Measure

- 05** Monitor retention rates of diverse board members. Define what diversity looks like, what your goals are, and actively track changes. Don't make assumptions about it, instead collect data.

Plan Ahead

- 06** Create a succession plan. Creating a succession plan also ensures the advancement and retention of a diverse board. Even an organization with a less diverse board can make slow progress toward a more diverse board as prior members leave their seats by implementing a succession plan that ensures diverse perspectives are prioritized when seats are filled. Boards should formalize succession planning in advance to promote transparency and accountability. This provides more opportunities to be intentional about hiring/recruiting practices.

Listen

- 07** Conduct exit interviews of departing board members. Allow space for departing board members to share their reasons and experiences. Don't assume you know the entire context, keep an open mind, and strive to promote a safe space where honest communication is possible. What you learn could be vital for future changes to the board to help promote retention.

Remodel/Renovate

Beyond building a plan, refining recruitment, and prioritizing retention, our research and interviews also indicate that organizations should regularly reassess, remodel, and renovate their organizational policies and board structures to maintain diversity and effectiveness. This process should be carried out deliberately and with appropriate research and resources. Intentionality is one of the most important ideals that any organization can cultivate—whether that’s in regularly asking a set of questions that tests assumptions about board operations, pushing outside of the circles of people already known, or directly inviting people of color to be involved.

The process of remodeling and renovating should include a thorough assessment of the board diversity policy, renewing the goals and objectives to reflect changing times and circumstances, and weeding out inherent biases. Given that peace and security organizations have largely excluded people of color, and especially women of color, as knowledge producers until relatively recently, criteria used to determine suitability for Board membership, like publications, position, other leadership opportunities, etc. compound structural exclusion issues – and limit the number of people of color ‘qualified’ to be on boards – thus also creating greater demands on the time of a limited group of senior people of color in the field. Examining what qualifications are vital, what are ideal, and what are actually reflections of exclusionary systems is a key part of this examination. Furthermore, as mentioned before an issue that tends to emerge where those responsible for nominating board members tend to nominate people that remind them of themselves – usually resulting in an affinity bias for candidates that reflect their age, experience, and alma mater – as well as characteristics like gender, race, and sexuality. This vicious cycle makes it more difficult to diversify boards organically. To mitigate these inherent biases, remodeling, and renovating are an important and integral part of establishing diverse boards.

ENSURING DIVERSITY

A few steps mentioned below can ensure that organizations are regularly engaging in remodeling and renovating to ensure diverse boards.

Practice Inclusion

01

Focus on inclusive behavior and not just broad 'inclusion'.^[15] When renovating and/or remodeling board policies, and more generally within your organizations, focus deliberately on integrating policies that promote inclusive behavior (eg. mentorship, fair recognition of contributions, etc.) rather than focusing on policies promoting inclusion alone.

Survey Broadly

02

Conduct surveys of organization leaders, staff, members of the community you serve, and stakeholders to learn how diversity initiatives are perceived. This temperature-taking can result in excellent insight into ways to refine and improve your efforts as a part of a renovation process. It can also help with transparency and communications around board diversification efforts in general.

Welcome New Voices

03

Create term limits to ensure board rotation. Fresh perspectives being brought to the organization is an essential step to maintaining board diversity, and the effectiveness of your organization more generally. This process also needs to be supplemented with regular performance reviews for board members. Additionally ensuring that leadership roles on the board are clearly defined and rotate as well is important. At this stage, it is worth underlining again that succession planning is an essential element of any plan for board diversity. According to a 2019 survey by HLB USA only 30% of nonprofit respondents had a formal succession plan.^[16]

ENSURING DIVERSITY

Counteract Biases

04

Mitigate Implicit and Unconscious Biases.[17] There need to be routine and regular refresher courses to educate board members on implicit and unconscious bias. Challenging instances of implicit biases can cultivate a more diverse board recruitment and retention process and can foster a welcoming environment for diverse board members. The board chair and members must commit to fostering an environment of respect for the diversity initiatives and appreciation for the value that diverse members bring to the board.

Build New Ways In

05

A junior board is a natural way to build a pipeline. Establishing a junior board is an excellent way to train, equip, and provide resources to new board directors to enable them to succeed. A junior board should not be “lesser” than, but rather a means to allow new board members to get up to speed in their roles.



TURNING INTENTION INTO ACTION



TURNING INTENTION TO ACTION

In conducting this research on ways to ensure and enhance board diversity, a few thematic issues were routinely voiced in interviews, experiences, and broad research. First, to enhance board diversity, organizations need to understand and appreciate that the lack of a diverse board will have a detrimental effect on the long-term health of an organization. To succeed in hiring and retaining a diverse board, organizations should be intentional and targeted about both recruitment and retention and get across cross-sectoral silos. To successfully maintain a diverse board, organizations should hold themselves accountable and publish board members' demographic data. The lack of transparency about the board of directors often leads to undesirable outcomes of tokenism and diversity quotas. A nuanced understanding of how people of color, and particularly women of color, are already starting at a disadvantageous position in the peace and security field should lead organizations to calibrate their policies accordingly to promote people of color, and particularly women of color. Organizations should also consider that caregivers have less time to volunteer and therefore organizations should provide access and cost expenditures for childcare and rearing. Since board positions are often made on the basis of referrals, candidates tend to get cherry-picked. Falling into the trap of the affinity bias phenomena needs to be actively and intentionally challenged. Boards without diversity risk becoming stagnant and deeply out-of-touch with the broader society and hence organizations need to focus on regularly remodeling and renovating.

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A Harvard Business Review study found that women, people of color and people in the LGBTQ+ community were 20-25 percent less likely to share their ideas in companies without diverse leadership. Diverse teams out-innovate and out-perform others.

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