# How Creative Strategies Can Build Relationships and Awareness within Racial Equity Learning Cohorts Focused on Environmental Justice

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# Foreword

Over the last year, the COVID-19 pandemic and historic, Black-led racial justice uprisings have thrown our nation's ongoing racial reckoning into stark relief, laying bare the many ways in which the system of white supremacy is threaded and embedded throughout our lives and all aspects of government – from our policies and programs to our practices, structures, and culture. This insidious depravity is nothing new. Racism has justified government actions and inactions in the United States since white European settlers began violently stealing and exploiting Indigenous lands and lives, and Black lives and labor.

As government budgets continue to tighten and jurisdictions such as Seattle stare down enormous deficits in the wake of the pandemic, anti-racism efforts must remain at the forefront of all that government does. The last two decades have shifted government actions toward seeking racially equitable outcomes, but our civic institutions still have a long way to go in becoming anti-racist. Today, government must deepen and expand its commitment to anti-racist practices, processes, outcomes, and culture.

Two years ago, a racial equity learning program called Turning Commitment into Action for Environmental Justice formed to better align policy influencers with the leadership of people of color, Indigenous people, and immigrants who are most affected by environmental injustices. The program brought together people from the City of Seattle and from community organizations for a series of sessions, using a curriculum that integrated racial equity and social justice concepts with an under-explored approach to societal transformation that uses arts, culture, mindfulness, and embodiment-based strategies in a cohort model of learning.

By integrating arts, culture, mindfulness, and embodiment activities, racial equity learning cohorts can help to build the networks and relationships needed to tackle society's most pressing problems. Networks and relationships enable people to address large-scale issues, such as climate change and its detrimental impacts on poorer countries of the Global South, as well as more localized issues, like those that require institutional decisions about where to plant trees in underinvested neighborhoods or how to hire for green jobs in racially equitable ways. Connecting leaders from government agencies and organizations across the environmental sector is a meaningful part of the process that leads to structural change.

The cohort learning model shared in this report focuses on the environmental sector, but it also offers possibilities for building racial equity capacity in other areas. Similar models have since been used to build the capacity of government supervisors, managers, and HR advisers, and to support

City employees who either hold key Race and Social Justice Initiative roles or identify as anti-racist organizers within the institution. We invite you to join us in learning from this model and interrogating it. We hope you will iterate on the ideas presented here and reach out to share your own learning, thoughts, and questions.

*Photo by Zorn B. Taylor*

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*While Seattle is rapidly growing and gaining recognition for our progressive policies, people of color, immigrants, refugees, people with low incomes, and people with limited-English proficiency have not received equitable outcomes and often experience disproportionate harm. Addressing these challenges requires* **bold and systemic changes** *in our city policies, programs, and practices. To advance environmental justice requires going further than policy recommendations; we must fundamentally change the way policies are created and* **prioritize historically excluded communities to have power** *in leadership and decision-making.*

*—Jill Mangaliman and Dionne Foster, Co-Chairs of the Equity and Environment Initiative's Community Partners Steering Committee*[1]

*Typically at trainings, particularly within dominant culture, formality is key, and getting to the point is paramount, and it is assumed that there are those who have the answers, and all else should simply listen. In the TCA training, the tools are different –* **relationship is key, the process is paramount,** *and it is the collaborative effort toward shared meaning-making and problem-solving that will point us towards the answers.*[2]

*—Alan Wong, Turning Commitment into Action for Environmental Justice artist-facilitator*

1 A quote from the former Co-Chairs of the Equity and Environment Initiative's Community Partners Steering Committee, a committee which no longer meets as it was the initial body for what became the City's Environmental Justice Committee, 2015.

2 Alan Wong, teaching artist reflection notes, 2019.

As a result of structural racism, the environmental sector has funded and upheld influential organizations that are historically white-led and dominated by white staff. According to the City of Seattle's Equity and the Environment Agenda, "one reason environmental justice concerns often go unaddressed is because of the "green ceiling": Those who are most impacted are underrepresented in environmental agencies and government.[3] At the request of local BIPOC leaders, Turning Commitment into Action for Environmental Justice was conceived to change that.

This report:

- provides an overview of the cohort model approach to anti-racism and racial justice work;
- examines the philosophical underpinnings of the design, curriculum, and learnings/best practices; and
- presents a framework and set of preliminary impact measures.

The intended audiences for the promising practices described in this report are City of Seattle employees and other municipalities nationwide, especially those who are members of the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE).[4] The importance of this work could not be more underscored than through the political context of 2020, as national forces sought to dismantle and delegitimize racial justice work, including within government specifically.

3 Equity and Environment Initiative, "Equity & Environment Agenda," 2016. This is a blueprint to advance racial equity in Seattle's environmental work and lays out four goal areas, recommended strategies, and eight opportunities for leadership: http://www.seattle.gov/environment/equity-and-environment/equity-and-environment-initiative. Green 2.0 is a recent report that also addresses POC attrition in the environmental field: https://www.diversegreen.org/leaking-talent/.

4 GARE homepage, https://www.racialequityalliance.org/

# About Turning Commitment into Action and the Creative Strategies Initiative

## The model for racial equity learning cohorts

Created in 2014, Turning Commitment into Action (TCA) is a racial equity learning cohort model developed and managed by the City of Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI). It aims to give organizations of all kinds and sizes the tools they need to turn their commitments to racial equity – both within their organizations and in partnership with the community – into institutional and structural change. While many organizations and institutions have diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, fewer of them are explicitly working to address institutional and structural racism, or to engage in the explicit power-sharing that equity demands, even when they call the work they are doing "equity." TCA participants learn how to move beyond diversity, inclusion, and access models to enact and communicate a pointed focus on anti-racism and social justice. The TCA approach teaches groups why it is necessary to center race and apply an anti-racism lens when working to achieve the best possible outcomes for all people. Host partners incur a cost (listed in the report appendix), but participation through an application pre-screening process is "free" and happens during participants' paid staff time.

## An initiative within the culture-shift strategy

TCA for Environmental Justice (TCA for EJ) is a program of the Creative Strategies Initiative (CSI), a component of the City of Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative's culture-shift strategy[1] and an outgrowth of a longtime partnership between the Seattle Office of Arts & Culture (ARTS) and Seattle Office for Civil Rights (SOCR). Racial equity and social justice require us to be relational, creative, adaptive, and interconnected. That's why CSI projects position artists, cultural organizers, and healers as designers and leaders of strategies that interrupt structural racism and move the needle toward racial justice. CSI projects use approaches based in arts, culture, embodiment, and mindfulness to support strategic racial equity work across City departments and issue areas, and in relationship with communities most affected by structural racism.

CSI projects use a range of creative modalities to approach racial equity work holistically. They break down silos and transform institutional culture through experiences, policy processes, learning communities, deep listening, out-of-the-box

1 http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/RSJI/18-21_RSJI_Strategic_Plan_4.6.19_FINAL.pdf

thinking, and developing innovative tools that center the experiences and leadership of BIPOC communities. They engage participants as whole people – their bodies, minds, spirits, hearts – and invite them to see themselves, each other, the community, and the Earth as a web of interdependent living systems. CSI recognizes that building racial equity is a creative and relational process that requires work within individuals and teams, as well as on organizational culture, to support institutional and structural change. In other words, how we make change is essential to get to the change we're trying to make.

RSJI Strategic Advisor and Creative Strategies Initiative Manager Diana Falchuk (co-author of this report) and former RSJI Manager Glenn Harris developed and facilitated the first TCA cohort in 2014 through SOCR.[2] A second iteration of TCA, provided in partnership with ARTS in 2015–2016, involved three cohorts made up of arts and cultural organizations. Evolving from the learning and intentions of the first two iterations, in 2018 TCA for EJ introduced the integration of arts, culture, mindfulness, and embodiment as vehicles for learning and organizing.

*Photo by Zorn B. Taylor*

TCA for EJ enhanced the TCA curriculum with a number of new elements from its artist-facilitators: Sonali Sangeeta Balajee brought a focus on interconnection, well-being, belonging and living systems rooted in her work as founder of Our Bodhi Project[3]; Alan Wong provided a creative facilitation framework rooted in writing, improvisation,

2 At the time, TCA served organizations of all kinds and sizes, from nonprofit and government to schools and small businesses. In 2015 and 2016, ARTS partnered with SOCR to design and facilitate three TCA cohorts specifically for arts and cultural organizations. These initial TCA cohorts only tangentially used arts and culture as vehicles for learning, strategizing and organizing within organizations. In 2017, ARTS partnered with the Office of Sustainability & Environment and Seattle Public Utilities to design and hold a third iteration of the TCA model, TCA for EJ.

3 https://www.ourbodhiproject.com

and movement; and Jéhan Òsanyìn brought elements of Theater of the Oppressed and somatic dance/movement. In addition to all of these new components, the curriculum featured elements of mindfulness, such as body-based meditations.

The artist-facilitator team – which also included Falchuk, who is a visual artist – met several times as a group to share and develop curriculum ideas. Falchuk then worked one-on-one with each of the three contracted artist-facilitators to design and facilitate two full-day sessions. (Collectively, they facilitated seven sessions over six and a half total days.) Sara Cubillos, a project planner and Drainage and Wastewater Planning Advisor for Seattle Public Utilities, also facilitated a few specific modules and supported the artist-facilitator team.

Unlike the previous two iterations of TCA,[4] which focused on giving individual organizations the tools and knowledge to develop their racial equity plans and ongoing initiatives, TCA for EJ focused on supporting individuals who develop and influence local environmental policy. These individuals came from City government and its partner organizations, including both nonprofit organizations and other government agencies. The program concentrated on environmental policy impacts in three areas: food systems, green stormwater infrastructure, and urban forestry.

## Programmatic Elements

Like many CSI projects, TCA for EJ emphasized arts, culture, mindfulness, and embodiment integration – project dimensions that help build the kinds of trusting, connected relationships (with one's self and others) that can interrupt business as usual and support the work of racial and social justice. Creative facilitation of these dimensions helps to shift the culture of an institution, making it more relational and conscious of the power dynamics of social positionality and hierarchy. This shift ultimately changes the norms, attitudes, beliefs, expectations, practices, and ways of being, which both undergird our systems, policies, and procedures, and negatively affect BIPOC communities who are most impacted by structural racism.

In cultivating these changes, TCA for EJ not only engaged community, it also built internal organizational capacity, influenced policy development and program design, and supported Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) processes. The RET is a racial equity assessment tool that the City of Seattle developed around 2008. It offers a set

4 See City of Seattle Office of Arts & Culture: http://www.seattle.gov/arts/programs/professional-development/turning-commitment-into-action

of questions to help assess the potential harms and potential benefits of a particular program, policy, budgetary decision, or other decision being made. Since 2014, City departments have been required to use the RET a minimum of four times per year and to report on those uses to City Council.

## Participants and Partners

The TCA cohort included 29 individuals from large institutions, including the City, and community-based nonprofits. With the support of their employers, the cohort spent six and a half days over five months in anti-racism training and application sessions at the City's Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute. The project was managed by Falchuk, who is positioned interdepartmentally on the Race and Social Justice Initiative Team at SOCR and as staff at ARTS. Additional partners were staff at the Office of Sustainability & Environment and Seattle Public Utilities including Sara Cubillos, Pam Emerson, Sharon Lerman, Steve Hamai, and former Equity and Environment Initiative Manager Sudha Nandagopal.

The sessions included learning activities for the whole groups as well as for individuals, pairs, and small groups, such as racial caucusing and group projects that culminated in final presentations about the three environmental policy subject areas (food systems, green infrastructure, and urban forestry). All three of these areas are staffed at the City by multiple departments working collaboratively. The two City departments below served as partners who shaped and supported the project.

- **Office of Sustainability & Environment (OSE)** houses the Equity and Environment Initiative (EEI), which fosters community-driven solutions in order to inform the creation of policies and programs that deepen connections with racial and social justice in Seattle's environmental work. OSE manages several food access programs, including Fresh Bucks, which helps Seattle residents on a tight budget afford fruits and vegetables, and operates the City's Food Policy Program, which coordinates citywide action to create a more sustainable food system that reduces greenhouse gas emissions and delivers positive health outcomes. OSE also runs the Urban Forestry Program, which supports Citywide urban forestry policy coordination, staffs the Urban Forestry Commission, and is a partner in Seattle Parks and Recreation's Green Seattle Partnership restoration program.

- **Seattle Public Utilities' (SPU)** job is to protect public health and improve the quality of life. It maintains some of the nation's best drinking water and helps

Seattle residents and businesses be recycling leaders – diverting more waste than practically any city and protecting local waterways and the Puget Sound from polluted storm and wastewater – through rain gardens, tank systems, and overflow treatment. SPU houses the City's Green Infrastructure Program, which accelerates the use of nature-based approaches to stormwater management and community development. Its Drainage & Wastewater Programs focus on green stormwater infrastructure and the use of nature-based approaches to stormwater management and community development.

## What led to turning commitment into action for environmental justice?

TCA for EJ started with a request for support from the City's Environmental Justice Committee (EJC). Policy influencers from historically white-led organizations had been getting in the way, often unintentionally, of the environmental policy organizing efforts led those who are most impacted by environmental injustice. Committee members wanted to build the capacity of those policymakers and influencers, including those working for the City of Seattle, so they could more effectively

serve the environmental justice goals and strategies articulated in the City's Equity and Environment Agenda, which itself had been produced through a community-led process. Looking for help in this effort, the committee turned to the City staff who were managing the Equity and Environment Initiative. Those staff reached out to their City colleagues who were working on the Creative Strategies Initiative, and TCA for EJ emerged as the program that would grow the desired capacity.

Unlike the previous two iterations of TCA, which were oriented toward the needs of historically white-led organizations, TCA for EJ was consciously and explicitly designed to help policy influencers from historically white-led organizations follow the leadership of people of color and Indigenous people at the forefront of environmental justice policy

change. The goal of TCA for EJ was to move toward the vision of a multi-racial network of local leaders who are collectively advancing Seattle's Equity and Environment Agenda and amplifying the priorities and leadership of BIPOC communities, immigrants and refugees, people with low-incomes, and English language learners.

## Curriculum

The TCA for EJ curriculum combined foundational racial equity and social justice concepts and frameworks with learning that focused heavily on application and practice, and on integrated arts, culture, mindfulness, and embodiment. As part of this curriculum, participants increased their understanding of racial equity and practiced taking action with greater awareness. This included:

1. An awareness of one's own social positionality in relationship to oppressions such as racism, colonialism, and sexism

2. An understanding of the four types of racism (internalized, interpersonal, institutional, and structural) and how they are connected and mutually reinforcing

3. Practice taking a structural-racial approach to change

4. An understanding of how relational culture – ways of being, norms, habits, attitudes, beliefs, and expectations – can interrupt the culture of white supremacy that fuels racism and other forms of oppression, as well as how relational culture can support interconnection, collective health and wellbeing, and belonging.

Improvisation, physical theater, creative writing, movement, drawing, painting, mural-making, sculpture, meditative and embodiment practices, and other creative, body, and spirit-based activities were woven throughout the curriculum. The following are a few examples of the creative learning activities the artist-facilitators used.

### Living System Embodiment

In his written reflection on the cohort experience, artist-facilitator Wong explains how this activity uses creative play: "Small groups get assigned to embody a living system – a beehive, a forest ecosystem, and a wetland. This allows participants to live in the left brain, to resist the dominant imperative to be intellectual, serious, and formal, and to work from a felt connection to each other and the natural world."

## Milling

Through this movement-based, interactive activity, participants come to know each other at a deeper level. Participants are asked to move through the room and then to stop periodically and find another person. They're then given a prompt to share something about who they are, such as the meaning in their names. There is power and vulnerability in sharing these pieces of themselves with someone they don't know well or at all. This shared experience increases participants' capability to collaborate authentically and effectively. This activity was also used by Wong.

## Zip zap zop and bippity bippity bop

In these theater games, the group follows a specific set of rules about how to connect with others using their bodies and voices. The activities help a group warm-up by "messing with the wiring in our bodies," as artist-facilitator Òsanyìn puts it. This helps prime participants for the deeper work of examining how racism and other forms of oppression are internalized and expressed through our bodies in the form of reactions such as pain, discomfort, grief, defensiveness, and anger.

Other aspects of creative facilitation allow for a deeper engagement and group exploration of internalized, interpersonal, institutional, and structural forms of racism. Below are some of the other activities used by the cohort.

## The web of interconnection and wellbeing and the web of structural racism and oppression

Drawing on inspiration from past exercises and activities[5], these two group activities were developed by artist-facilitators Sangeeta Balajee and Falchuk.

- **The Web of Interconnection & Wellbeing**
  In this group mural exercise, individuals are asked to visualize a living system they love in balance and at ease, and to reflect on how it makes them feel to experience that living system that way. Then the entire group is invited to silently collaborate on a large mural of the Web of Interconnection and Wellbeing using multi-colored pastels. Upon completion of the mural, they are asked to reflect on their word-less

5 The Web of Structural Racism & Oppression was inspired by a web activity Falchuk had learned through the Intergroup Dialogue Education and Action Center at the University of Washington School of Social Work and by a group warmup activity facilitated by Lara Davis, former Youth Arts Manager for the City of Seattle. The Web of Interconnection & Wellbeing mural was inspired by a group mural project by artist-facilitator Sonali Sangeeta Balajee through Our Bodhi Project, a spiritual and political project focusing on belonging and collective health.

group process and consider questions such as: How do we communicate as a group when we aren't using words? What brings us together? What creates a sense of belonging? What is inherent in us as creative, living beings? What is possible? What can we imagine together? How do we co-create?

- **The Web of Structural Racism and Oppression**
  In this activity, which follows the Web of Interconnection and Wellbeing, the group passes yarn to each other across a circle. With each pass, they name a system or institution that perpetuates structural racism, e.g. education, housing, transportation, healthcare, social services, etc. Each new system or institution named must have policies with institutional racism that overlap with the system or institution named previously. A physical web of structural racial oppression emerges from the policies, practices, procedures, and culture of these overlapping systems or institutions.

- In a third activity, the artist-facilitators place the Web of Interconnection and Wellbeing mural underneath the Web of Structural Racism and Oppression and invite participants to reflect: How can interconnection, a sense of belonging, collective visioning, and co-creativity help them co-create a world in which all people and the planet experience liberation? Rather than focusing on dismantling the Web of Structural Racism and Oppression, participants discuss how these liberatory resources make it possible to create racial equity, social justice, and belonging. Instead of a conversation about tearing something down, participants think through racially and socially equitable, anti-racist ways to harness and nurture collective resilience and vision for liberation.

## Theater of the Oppressed

Developed by Brazilian theater artist Augusto Baol, Theater of the Oppressed is a system of tools and practices that inspires critical thought and creative collaboration, and empowers communities to solve seemingly intractable problems through theatrical role play.[6] In one exercise Wong

6 Other bodies of work that have informed the Creative Strategies Initiative at the City with use of theater and performance is a collaboration called The Shape of Trust. The Shape of Trust emerged from more than a decade of organizing for racial equity within the City of Seattle workforce by employees who are most impacted by racism, sexism, and other intersecting forms of oppression. In 2017, staff from ARTS, SOCR, and Department of Human Resources began exploring ways that arts experiences could shift workplace culture away from the white dominant behaviors and expectations that promote racism and other forms of oppression toward ones that foster connection and belonging, and match our actual practices and processes with our stated values and outcomes. How can visual arts, theater, music, movement, and mindfulness help cultivate these changes? How can we understand the power dynamics of race,

*TCA participants holding the Web of Structural Racism and Oppression above the Web of Interconnection and Wellbeing. Photo by Zorn B. Taylor.*

used, participants embody and perform the visceral pain of the "machine" of racism, capitalism and oppression in the body; participants then "re-calibrate" the machine as it molds and takes alternate forms, until systems of oppression have been lifted from their spines. Participants then reflect on these two embodied experiences and what this means for their day-to-day work.

gender, and other identities, and use that knowing to create racial equity in our workplace relationships and environment, and in how we engage community? It was soon after this time that ARTS staff were working with acclaimed playwright Sara Porkalob to produce *Real Talk,* an original performance based on stories from workers of color in the Seattle arts community and inspired by a similar project by Arts Workers for Equity in Portland. These various seeds grew into the performances, video, community of practice, publicly available video activity guide, and other resources that comprise The Shape of Trust, which is ongoing.

### Final projects and presentations

These included theater, visual art, and other expressive mediums. Presenters practiced facilitation skills they had learned and experienced during the program, engaging the cohort as shared learners rather than passive recipients of knowledge.

## Racial identity caucusing

About halfway through their two-day sessions, cohort members also spent six hours in racial identity caucuses. Racial identity caucuses are voluntary, optional spaces in which people who are positioned similarly in relationship to the system of white supremacy can choose to examine how they have internalized racism and develop skills and practices to interrupt and replace it. No one is turned away from a racial identity caucus. Racial identity caucusing recognizes that all people in the United States are socialized within the system of white supremacy and need space to become conscious of the different and specific ways that socialization has dehumanized them in order to keep itself going.

- For BIPOC participants, caucuses are spaces to examine and unpack the effects of dehumanization and internalized racial inferiority that result from living in a white-dominant, racist society. BIPOC caucuses can be cathartic by allowing space to process the psychic and spiritual costs of working as people of color in white-dominated and historically white-led spaces and institutions.[7] Caucuses provide participants of color with an opportunity "to let their guards down that we didn't know were up," Wong says. Participants leave with a sense of shared power.

- For white participants, caucus are spaces to understand how they have internalized racial superiority. Caucuses also help white people recognize how living in a society that positions them as the perpetrators and beneficiaries of harm caused to BIPOC results in spiritual and other costs to white people. White caucus spaces are often used for learning new frameworks and practices, processing white feelings and taking accountable action to interrupt racism8. In white caucuses, white people learn to build anti-racist relationships with other white people, ones that are committed to challenging and supporting each other in their work to uproot whiteness and take action for racial justice.

7 Kelsey Blackwell, "Why People of Color Need Spaces Without White People," https://arrow-journal.org/why-people-of-color-need-spaces-without-white-people/. Aug 2018.

8 Pippi Kessler, "How to Plan a White Caucus Agenda," https://medium.com/@PippiKessler/how-to-plan-a-white-caucus-agenda-9049847e9bd5. Jan 2019.

TCA for EJ caucus spaces used elements of the City's existing curricula on internalized racism and were entirely voluntary. Cohort members were able to choose which caucus to attend and whether to participate. RSJI Manager Tamar Zere and RSJI Strategic Advisor Kyana Wheeler joined artist-facilitator Wong in facilitating the BIPOC caucus. Falchuk facilitated the white caucus. The internalized racial oppression curricula were developed by the RSJI Strategy Team (a part of SOCR), which first developed and piloted its Internalized Racial Inferiority training for people of color and then developed its Internalized Racial Superiority training for white people. While there are necessary differences in the content of the two trainings – which stem from significant differences in how people are racialized – both curricula focus heavily on reflective activities and dialogue, and cover the basics of Internalized Racial Oppression, the role of the ego in the process of manifesting internalized racism, and ways that all people can heal from the impacts of racism.

*TCA participants using improvisational, physical theater to co-create a human "machine." Pictured here is the Machine of Racism, Capitalism, and Colonization. Afterward, they formed the Machine of Equity, Justice, and Liberation. Photo by Zorn B. Taylor.*

# Impact of Program Participation

## Assessment approach and methodology

The following assessment tools were used:

1. Anonymous pre- and post-survey for participants
2. A post-cohort reflective conversation with the City partners who both helped to shape it and participated in it
3. Written reflections from artist-facilitators
4. Semi-structured, 45-minute interviews with four participants to demonstrate qualitative shifts to their work performance related to environmental justice
5. Final reflections and recommendations compiled several times over the course of the 20 months following the end of the cohort by City partners who helped to shape the project. Project partners and artist-facilitators also reviewed and provided feedback on a draft of this report.

## Integration of arts, culture, mindfulness, and embodiment into racial equity learning

### Baseline measures

Before the start of the program, respondents were very hopeful about the potential of arts- and culture-based approaches to build racial equity in historically white-led organizations (4.2 out of 5). But most individuals indicated they had on average "very little" command (1.9 out of 5) with how to use arts- and cultures-based approaches in their work. (Mindfulness and embodiment were initially considered sub-sets of culture and theater arts learning and were not explicitly assessed in the pre- and post-survey. As a result of this project and others, all CSI projects now explicitly name mindfulness and embodiment in addition to arts and culture.)

### Afterward

In the post-survey, participants indicated strong levels of usefulness (4.8 out of 5) for overall use of creative facilitation and other forms of arts and culture integration, including visual arts, poetry, and theater activities, mindfulness and embodiment activities. This shift very much aligns with the program's intentions. These quantitative measures are further elaborated upon through participant testimonials.

*I was very nervous about the arts approach and who else would be in the cohort, but after the first couple of activities, I really got into it, and tried to dare to raise my hands to participate in skits, jump right into activities etc. It was so worth it! We got to know each other really quickly, and* **broke down the typical power dynamics and barriers that come with job titles and agencies.** *I can now see the value of this approach* **for building authentic relationships** *and helping people be vulnerable and open to new learning."*

*"This training tied* **collective liberation into my heart,** *not just my head. Creative practice opened the doors allowing foundations of love and belonging to wander in."*

*"I think there was a sense that the art-based practice was going to be too 'soft,' 'awkward,' 'out there,' and a fear that they would not applicable/translatable in a lot of environments / worlds that I work in. I think that was really challenged, and I have seen a tremendous amount of value in the practices we were exposed to. I really value the way* **it awakened the room,** *encouraged collaboration, allowed us all many different types of avenues and opportunities to open ourselves, be vulnerable, and build relationship with fellow members of the group.*

Falchuk reflected on the arts, culture, mindfulness, and embodiment integration of TCA for EJ: "These aspects did the job we intended them to do – to open people up, normalize vulnerability and risk taking, get people to experience each other in different and more holistic, humanizing ways than they typically do at the policy table or in the office.

"As a long-time teaching artist who has worked in several bureaucratic systems," she continued, "I had a feeling this would happen, but I also held onto some skepticism. It was a beautiful thing to see people go from trepidation about the creative learning piece in the beginning of the cohort to diving into their creative selves. I also loved seeing people really live into their bodies and their spirits, both in the more physical arts activities and in the meditative moments." In Falchuk's view, this set of activities helped many white people in the cohort begin to identify and work through the ways that white normative culture and their own whiteness prevent them from showing up present and accountable in the work of racial, and specifically environmental, justice.

For artist-facilitator Sangeeta Balajee, this cohort experience was distinctive from other forms of racial equity capacity-building: "Our ability to co-facilitate from examined places in terms of positionality as a multiracial team moved the conversation deeper around what it meant for various participants to begin to explore their own positionalities. Linked to the Our Bodhi Project's Embodying Belonging and Co-liberation Frame, and also a quality and practice valued by all the artist-facilitators, we embodied a fair amount of stillness, reflection, and mindfulness throughout the two days together, and the other artist-facilitators did the same in their [two-day] sessions." One participant wrote in the post-survey that they appreciated the co-liberation framework, and characterized it as "refreshingly affirming and empowering, as opposed to the oppressor/oppressed framework [they] had experienced before."

## Changes in how participants understand and conduct their work

As a member of the cohort and part of TCA for EJ's planning and facilitation group, SPU's Cubillos says her participation has helped her with the creative facilitation of meetings, and enabled her team to take bigger risks in disrupting racism. Cubillos shared the practices she learned in the cohort with her team, including people who have never been a part of anti-racism work. She led activities with them, including one in which team members cut up paper leaves and drew a vision for what Environmental Justice could look like. Some

of her colleagues began using the activities when they facilitated. Cubillos said using these arts- and culture-based strategies to share space and power in meetings made it easier to interrupt racism and advocate explicitly for racial equity in government from a human-centered design approach.[1] In one instance, Cubillos led her team in imagining environmental futures in an effort to develop a more community-centered and adaptable long-range infrastructure plan. "Creating opportunities for our engineers to unlock their creative side and develop a willingness to leap and see what happens or what is created" provided opportunities for deeper connections, she said.

SPU engineer and cohort participant Ben Marre is part of a division comprised mostly of policy subject matter experts and engineers, and he was used to connecting with people through a presentation, PowerPoint, or document. In the aftermath of TCA for EJ, the division's meetings have shifted; they now include more creative facilitation strategies that have given them the push they needed to get important work done. "Though the work is a slow build, it has taught me how important it is to work outside of your box to build new boxes," Marre says.

The TCA for EJ trainings also helped Marre to recognize how he was supporting manifestations of white supremacy culture in the workplace. Now he sees how a bias toward often-unnamed white-dominant norms can affect who is seen as right for certain jobs and leadership roles. He also recognizes how he cannot go as far as an individual, but can go further by working more deeply as a team. Marre says the City can be a tough place to work, but opportunities like TCA for EJ – and the potential it holds to create interdepartmental relationships and its depth of content – are what keep him working at the City.

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The cohort's green stormwater infrastructure group, which included Cubillos, Marre, and staff from City departments and community-based organizations, began meeting during the cohort and continues to meet quarterly, maintaining a supportive space where group members share challenges and help keep each other accountable to anti-racist practices throughout their policy, planning, and community-engagement work.

1 For a scholarly treatment of what it means to use human centered design approaches to serving vulnerable populations, see Emma J. Rose, "Design as Advocacy: Using Human-Centered Design to Investigate the Needs of Vulnerable Populations." (2016). https://doi.org/10.1177/0047281616653494.

Robyn Kumar, Fresh Bucks Program Manager at OSE, sees the impact of TCA for EJ most tangibly when developing program strategies that both lead with a racial equity lens and uphold the expertise and experience of community organizations and leaders. Kumar and her team work on healthy food access and food justice; they conducted a RET assessment of eligibility and screening processes as well as enrollment systems for people receiving assistance accessing and purchasing food. Kumar and the four other OSE staff who participated in TCA for EJ incorporated activities and learning elements from the program into three one-hour facilitated staff meetings. These activities included the Web of Structural Racism and Oppression, a collaborative drawing activity known as an Exquisite Corpse[2], skits demonstrating ways to interrupt white supremacy, and ice breakers. As someone who identifies as Japanese American, Kumar was moved by the racial caucusing for people of color she experienced as part of TCA for EJ. Kumar is in a position with decision-making power regarding benefits for lower-income community members who are disproportionately people of color – and TCA for EJ was a chance for her to reflect on the duality of her own positionality as a woman of color working within the system.

For non-City participants like Sara Jo Breslow, Social Science Lead at the University of Washington's EarthLab, TCA for EJ supported a desire to grow racial equity conversations within her own workplace. EarthLab's Nature and Health[3] initiative promotes research on the health benefits of nature and improving access to the outdoors, with implications for urban planning, landscape architecture, and regional infrastructure. TCA for EJ gave Breslow ideas for content, frameworks, techniques, and people she could potentially engage more in the Nature and Health effort.

As with many anti-racism and racial justice trainings or learning opportunities, several participants' post-surveys described a desire for "more concrete strategy-building and problem-solving activities" alongside the "more abstract conversations." While many scenario and roleplay activities were incorporated throughout the curriculum, some participants still expressed the need for more concrete examples and case studies.

2 Exquisite Corpse is an activity developed by the Surrealists in Europe after World War I. In the classic activity, each participant in a group folds a piece of paper into three sections, each representing part of a body: the head, torso, and legs. Participants begin by drawing the top or head section. Whey they're done, they fold that over so that only the still-empty middle section is visible, and pass their paper to the next person. The next person draws the middle section, folds that over so only the blank bottom section is visible, and passes their paper on the next person. The resulting, often silly image or body is a surprise to all, generated by a spontaneous, collaborative process. The activity promotes trust in each other and the unknown, risk-taking, and fun.

3 https://natureandhealth.uw.edu/

## Numbers of participants from each organization

The project planning team initially explored organizational representation in the context of its intention to build relationships among policy influencers both from the City and from historically white-led community environmental organizations. Past TCA iterations had required at least two participants from each organization (and ideally three) so that they could support each other in the work of moving their organization toward racial equity. The TCA for EJ project team considered this representation alongside the need to include multiple organizations and keep the cohort intimate (roughly 30 people). The planners ultimately decided to include a single policy influencer from each participating community organization, though they also engaged the executive directors of those organizations by asking them to sign off on their staff's participation.

As with previous TCA models, having at least three people from an organization or agency was associated with greater and continued impact on the organization or agency's internal processes – and therefore on their work to develop or influence policy and affect structural change. This was especially evident for the green stormwater infrastructure group, which included six SPU staff. (Seven total staff from SPU were part of the cohort.) Cubillos says she couldn't have brought mindfulness, arts, and other creative practices to workplace meetings if her supervisor, Leslie Webster, and their division director, Marre, had not also been in the cohort. The three of them not only experienced this approach to building environmental justice together, their different positions within their organizational hierarchy meant they had multiple levels of leadership support for change.

Similarly, Steve Hamai, who works in a different division at SPU, reported an amplifier impact: Cohort participants were "showing up in different ways" and bringing their energy, approach, and momentum to other project spaces, including projects that were applying the City's Racial Equity Toolkit. Many of the seven cohort members from SPU, including multiple people of color with years of experience in environmental justice work, were part of the green stormwater infrastructure group; these SPU employees continued to convene the entire subject-area group of environmental policy influencers from the City and from community organizations. OSE had six staff members in the cohort and, as described above, was able to carry learning into their staff meetings and policy processes.

## Interdepartmental collaboration

The program planning team represented four City departments: SOCR, ARTS, OSE, and SPU. As a result, the program design, curriculum, and facilitation all benefited from an array of subject-area expertise – from racial equity learning (SOCR) to creative practice (ARTS) to environmental policy and relationships with BIPOC-led environmental justice organizations (OSE and SPU). Program planning team member Pam Emerson, from SPU, noted how much is learned through interdepartmental work and how much farther it moves the needle toward long-term, sustainable change. In interdepartmental collaborations, practices and ideas are exchanged, people are supported as they're challenged, and structural problems, including all forms of environmental injustice, are met with structural solutions for the interconnected ecosystems within organizations, communities, and non-human living systems.

## Tensions and harms of focusing on historically and predominantly white-led organizations

TCA for EJ had its roots in a long-term strategy. First the City had invested in BIPOC communities most impacted by environmental injustice to develop their collective agenda for environmental justice, forming the Community Partners Steering Committee that created the Equity and Environment Agenda. Then, when the Agenda was complete, the Committee had invited historically white-led organizations to come learn about it. TCA for EJ was a next step in bringing historically white-led organizations into better alignment with environmental justice organizations led by BIPOC communities.

But the project team struggled with a perennial problem: Does the benefit of including BIPOC participants outweigh the risks of the harms they experience in a group of mostly white people who are new to racial justice? How would the program not to center whiteness and white people? Faced with these concerns, the project planning and facilitation teams, which were predominantly BIPOC, expected a range of impacts on BIPOC in the cohort.

Racial equity capacity-building is necessary work but can also be fatiguing for people of color – both the cohort members and the artist-facilitators. The majority of TCA participants were white and many had had little or no exposure to anti-racist, anti-oppressive ways of thinking, being, and doing their work. One artist-facilitator of color, Òsanyìn, was disappointed by some of the final project presentations: "I just remember the people who stood in front of their peers and showed how they'd turn their commitment into action someday when they had more time to get together to work on their presentations." Òsanyìn contrasts this privilege of time to do things better when the conditions are right to the urgency of displacement and gentrification that communities of color are experiencing in the Seattle area affordability crisis. She introduced to the cohort the concept of false mastery, the idea that white people can feel related to anti-racism and racial justice on an intellectual level – having the words but no practices – while BIPOC have actual mastery that comes from lived experience and practice accrued because their lives depend on it.

During the last cohort session, one of the subject groups, which was entirely white, didn't mention race or racism in their final presentation. "Race, racism, and racial equity are what the whole project was about," Falchuk reflected. "We had all named them so many times and talking about race and racism was a requirement mentioned throughout the written assignment describing what to include in their final presentations. I remember asking the group what was missing from this presentation and waiting in silence for what seemed like too long before a white participant from a different project group named it. I know that my own whiteness makes me prone to moments of silence and complete ignorance about racism. As a facilitator, I felt my role was to let them learn from the discomfort of their silence and create space for another white person to call them in."

Cubillos recalls the BIPOC caucus feeling like "why am I here in this cohort?" She recognizes the intention to have white people from historically white-led environmental organizations experience "aha moments" that otherwise would be more difficult for them to express and explore in a more racially diverse cohort. "On the other hand, because I was both part-time facilitator and participant, I felt it was a core part of my job to bring equitable practices into a white-led organization – the City – both in the workshop and in my current SPU position."

Hamai recalls moments when he "realized how much this whole experience was really set up for white people. And all that we were saying in training was hopefully to influence or change them, and as an Asian American, what are we really getting out of it?" Echoing

*Photo by Zorn B. Taylor*

some of Òsanyìn's reflections, Hamai recognized the privilege of forgetfulness and being able to revert back to white dominant norms like not talking explicitly about race and racism. He wondered whether, as time goes by, it will still fall to him and the other BIPOC participants to call people in the green stormwater infrastructure group back to the work of centering race and racism, of actual environmental justice. "It's easy to show up in a racially equitable way while you're in it," Hamai reflected. "But as time progresses, you slip back to normed previous behaviors."

Falchuk, Cubillos, Nandagopal, Hamai, and all of the program planners had expected some moments like these, and they have continued to reflect on what they could have done differently to minimize or prevent them. Would a more racially balanced cohort have changed the dynamics from the get-go? How could they have created that balance, given that the majority of environmental policy influencers who needed to shift were white and coming from historically white-led organizations? Could they have broken through some of the material more easily if more white people in the cohort already had anti-racism training and anti-racist organizing practices? "These white people could have influenced and modeled to the group as their peers in a way that would reinforce the facilitators," Falchuk says.

Cubillos recalled one cohort participant in the BIPOC caucus suggesting tracks of learning that would support their different racialized experiences. The cohort could start the day together for some shared learning and then, if they choose, spend the rest of the day in race-based caucus spaces unpacking and expanding their learning, with attention to their positioning vis-à-vis the system of white supremacy. “Then, maybe the BIPOC caucus has different content that might include tools like what it is to be a person of color in a white-dominant organization or sector, and how to be more in power when in that position,” Cubillos says. “Maybe other members of the community could have been part of that learning.” She also recognizes the important power dynamic created by having people of color as all but one of the program facilitators.

# Promising practices: creative strategies in racial equity learning cohorts

The following realizations and recommendations from program participants and organizers are useful for developing and supporting future racial equity learning cohorts, including those specifically designed to build capacity for environmental justice.

## Race and racial dynamics

### 1. BRING IN THE VOICES AND EXPERIENCES OF BIPOC ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMUNITY ORGANIZERS SOONER.

Members of the EJC were invited to participate in a conversation with cohort members toward the end of the sessions and only two EJC members were able to attend. Program planners chose to focus first on training the cohort, which they anticipated would be predominantly white, before engaging with BIPOC-led environmental justice organizations, to avoid positioning those most impacted by environmental injustices as the educators of people from the very same organizations that had gotten in the way of their policy organizing efforts.

Rather than rely solely on EJC members to support the cohort's learning and leave this experience to the end of the cohort, future cohorts could include site visits to environmental justice-focused, BIPOC-led organizations or participation in environmental justice events led by communities most impacted by structural racism and colonization. Because of actual and potential harm, the process for how to bring in these voices and experiences sooner would need to be decided by the EJC. The limitations of the cohort based on racialized life experiences and previous exposure to anti-racist learning and practices would need to be shared and discussed openly with these community leaders as part of the invitation for them to engage.

### 2. INCORPORATE AN UNDERSTANDING OF COLONIALISM, DECOLONIZING, AND RE-INDIGENIZING THAT IS CONNECTED TO LOCAL INDIGENOUS-LED MOVEMENTS FOR JUSTICE.

An environmental justice approach must center Indigenous Peoples who are and who have been the historic stewards of the land; it also must include learning about the violent history of settler colonialism and attempted erasure of Indigenous Peoples, current and ongoing

manifestations of colonialism, and the vibrant communities Indigenous Peoples continue to build today.

As a program organized by local government, there is also a need for local government to name and educate itself on the complexities of government-to-government relations, which includes but is not limited to the history and ongoing realities of colonialism. While the TCA for EJ curriculum made many references to these realities and brought in a decolonizing framework in several places, the curriculum did not consistently weave in the significance of current day colonialism in our local community, its generational and environmental wounds, and the role of government in all of this.

As SOCR writes in the 2018 RSJI Survey Report, published in 2020, "We must reconcile and repair the relationship between the City of Seattle and the Native communities of this land. Decolonization is the meaningful and active resistance to the forces of colonialism that perpetuates the subjugation and exploitation of Native minds, bodies, communities, and lands." In addition to the ideas named in number 1, above ("Bring in the voices…"), contracting with local Indigenous environmental leaders to help shape and review cohort curriculum is one way to help ensure a framing of environmental justice that is reflective of current, Indigenous community-led efforts.

**3. CREATE A COHORT THAT HAS A GREATER BALANCE AMONG BIPOC AND WHITE PEOPLE.**

Participants and artist-facilitators mentioned a desire to have a more racially balanced cohort. In particular, the planning team recognized the need for Black and Indigenous environmental leaders in the cohort. As described above, the historical, institutional, and structural racism within the mainstream environmental movement is evidenced

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by the predominance of white people in policy influencer positions, and specifically within the historically white-led organizations who were invited to participate in this cohort. Program planners and members of the EJC should explore how to address this in a way that is not tokenizing and that creates practical, healing spaces in which BIPOC can grow their racial equity skills and practices. One way to do this might be to include community partners from BIPOC-led organizations who are already in relationship with other cohort participants. Another way to do this might be to offer more voluntary caucus-based learning spaces alongside multi-racial ones.

4. **INTENTIONALLY INCLUDE WHITE PARTICIPANTS WITH A MIX OF ANTI-RACISM ORGANIZING SKILLS AND EXPERIENCES.**
Most white cohort members had never participated in racial caucusing or formal anti-racism learning. Having a wider range of white cohort member experiences related to anti-racism could provide opportunities for white people with more anti-racism skills and practices to deepen their abilities to call other white people in and forward. At the same time, this could offer peer-to-peer modeling and relationship-building opportunities that the sole white artist-facilitator was not fully able to offer, due to the power differential and her limited capacity as both a facilitator and the cohort's coordinator.

5. **BRING PARTICIPANTS BACK TOGETHER AT PERIODIC INTERVALS.**
Cohort members, program planners, and facilitators all recognized the need for additional sessions in which participants could reflect on and deepen their racial equity practices, and thicken their cohesion as a multi-racial environmental justice support network. This could have led to greater long-term impact on policy change at the city and regional levels. The budget and City staff capacity allotted for TCA for EJ did not allow for this ongoing support – future iterations should.

## Arts, Culture, Mindfulness, and Embodiment-Based Approaches to Capacity-Building for Racial Equity

1. **USE HOLISTIC, TRANSFORMATIONAL, ANTI-RACISM APPROACHES THAT CENTER WELL-BEING, BELONGING, AND INTERCONNECTION BY INTEGRATING ARTS, CULTURE, MINDFULNESS, AND EMBODIMENT AS VEHICLES FOR ENVIRONMENTALLY**

**JUST PRACTICE, STRATEGY, AND POLICY. HIRE ARTISTS, CULTURAL ORGANIZERS, HEALERS, AND OTHER SPIRIT- AND BODY-BASED PRACTITIONERS TO SUPPORT THESE APPROACHES.**

Across the board, participants, program planners, and artist-facilitators saw the value of arts, culture, and mindfulness, as well as activities that wove in spirit and body, as modes for building relationships and a relational culture. These modalities make it possible to present and digest new and sometimes challenging material, connect whole humans with the natural environment, and create the conditions for openness, curiosity, bravery, and embracing the unknown – all significant aspects of the necessarily relational process of building racial justice.

*Photo by Zorn B. Taylor*

Similarly, participants noted the way the approach of TCA for EJ mirrored the connectivity of all living systems – people, communities, earth, water, air, animals – as well as the internalized, interpersonal, institutional, and structural levels of racism and of anti-racism work. This approach is necessary to counter and replace the disembodiment, disconnection, extraction, and lack of transparency that are endemic to white supremacy and settler colonialism, and to shape the culture of government agencies and other organizations. Such work is gaining traction in government agencies and other institutional settings for its integrated, ecosystemic approach, one that explicitly elevates connections between parts and the whole. Learnings from TCA for EJ already have been incorporated into other Creative Strategies Initiative projects, such as The Shape of Trust's Pilot Community of Practice and the RSJI Key Leaders Series (2020–21), as well as Citywide RSJI training, capacity-building, and coaching efforts.

2. **INCREASE CONCRETE APPLICATION OF CONCEPTS, TOOLS, SKILLS AND PRACTICES**.
   While multiple activities used theater-based learning to explore specific scenarios, and considerable time was allotted for strategic subject area project work (with support from artist facilitators), a few participants noted the desire for even "more concrete strategy building and problem-solving activities" with the "more abstract conversations." With more budget and capacity, future models might include additional practice spaces based on actual scenarios from participants' work.

## Organizational Participation for Long-Term, Collective Change

1. **INCLUDE AT LEAST TWO IF NOT THREE PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH ORGANIZATION.**
   Unlike previous iterations of TCA, the TCA for EJ program planners chose to focus on individual policy influencers, many of whom knew each other from the environmental sector and the work of affecting City environmental policy. Organizations with only one representative in the cohort ended up missing the important component of organizational (aka, institutional-level) application, which in turn weakened those individuals' and organizations' abilities to impact the structural-level change that environmental justice demands. In these instances, individual policy influencers in the cohort sometimes talked about the challenges they experienced getting

their colleagues to dedicate capacity and budget to the type of learning offered in the cohort. This learning is a reminder that change – whether within an organization or in the policy arena – happens collectively and not individually.

**2. INCREASE CROSS-ORGANIZATIONAL AND CROSS-DEPARTMENTAL PARTNERSHIPS TO RESOURCE THIS APPROACH TO RACIAL EQUITY.**
SPU, OSE, and SOCR all contributed resources to the primary budget and staffing provided by ARTS. Departments should find resources to continue this kind of interdepartmental, creativity-based work. ARTS, in partnership with SOCR, can continue to provide staff labor and some cash resources, however there is a need for more partnership with more departments to share the cost and to make and evaluate structural impacts at the same time.

Across the board, participants, program planners, and artist-facilitators saw the value of arts, culture, and mindfulness, as well as activities that wove in spirit and body, as modes for building relationships and a relational culture. These modalities make it possible to present and digest new and sometimes challenging material, connect whole humans with the natural environment, and create the conditions for openness, curiosity, bravery, and embracing the unknown – all significant aspects of the necessarily relational process of building racial justice.

# Appendix 1

## Demographics and additional information about the learning cohort

There were 29 participants. The following information is based on self-reported data in a pre-survey that was filled out by a majority of the cohort and that had a 75% response rate.

- 6 out of 22 respondents were **BIPOC** (3 Asian, 1 Native/Indigenous, and 1 Latinx)
- 17 respondents identified as **female**
- 1 respondent identified as **transgender**
- Prior to their participation, respondents **averaged less than 2** on a scale of 1 to 5 on whether they use arts- and culture-based approaches in their paid or unpaid work. (As noted above, this changed in meaningful ways as a result of the cohort.)

There was very little participant attrition during TCA for EJ: Only one participant left, and this was due to a family emergency.

## Estimated budget

| | |
|---|---|
| Artist contracts | $21,700 |
| Food, professional documentation, materials | 5,200 |
| City staff salaries (in-kind) | 34,000 |
| **TOTAL** | **$60,900** |

The majority of project funding came from ARTS with additional funds from SPU. ARTS provided more than half of the overall staff capacity with the remainder coming from OSE, SPU, and SOCR.

## Cohort members

The 29 participants in the inaugural cohort came from the following organizations.

9 City and County agencies Seattle Public Utilities (SPU); Seattle City Light (SCL); Seattle Department of Construction & Inspections (SDCI); Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT); Seattle Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD); Seattle Office of Sustainability & Environment (OSE); King Conservation District; King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks; King County Water Treatment Division.

6 nongovernmental organizations The Nature Consortium; Stewardship Partners; Delridge Neighborhood Development Association; Earth Corps; Seattle Urban Forestry Commission; Northwest Harvest.

2 university agencies University of Washington Center for Creative Conservation; Washington State University Extension.

Artist-facilitators came from these partner organizations: Our Bodhi Project; Earthseed Seattle; Alan Wong LLC.

## Artist-facilitators

*Diana Dvora Falchuk*

*Sonali Sangeeta Balajee*

*Jéhan Òsanyìn*

*Alan Wong*

## Co-author biographies

**Mytoan Nguyen-Akbar,** PhD, is Impact and Assessment Manager at City of Seattle Office of Arts & Culture. Mytoan does monitoring, assessment, and impact measurement of institutional movement towards more racially just outcomes. She came to city government by way of a Mellon/American Council of Learned Societies Public Fellows position from 2017–2019. She earned a doctorate at the University of Wisconsin–Madison in sociology. Mytoan, who came to the United States as a boatperson/refugee from Vietnam, has published more than six peer-reviewed scholarly articles in global sociology, American ethnic studies, and international/area studies.

**Diana Dvora Falchuk** is the Creative Strategies Initiatives Manager, positioned in a partnership between the City of Seattle Office for Civil Rights and Office of Arts & Culture. Throughout her work, Diana weaves together her different orientations as an artist, organizer, mother, spiritual practitioner, facilitator, trainer, coach, and strategist.

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