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Tackling the Blob: Getting started on equity, inclusion, & diversity work

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*NOTE: If this post leaves you hungry for more information, join us on January 21st for this **free webinar***

*(https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1699160351502545665?*

*utm\_source=TYO+Master+List&utm\_campaign=c64c2509ee-*

*December\_News12\_9\_2015&utm\_medium=email&utm\_term=0\_10fd937bcc-c64c2509ee-64195249), hosted by Transforming Youth Outdoors.*

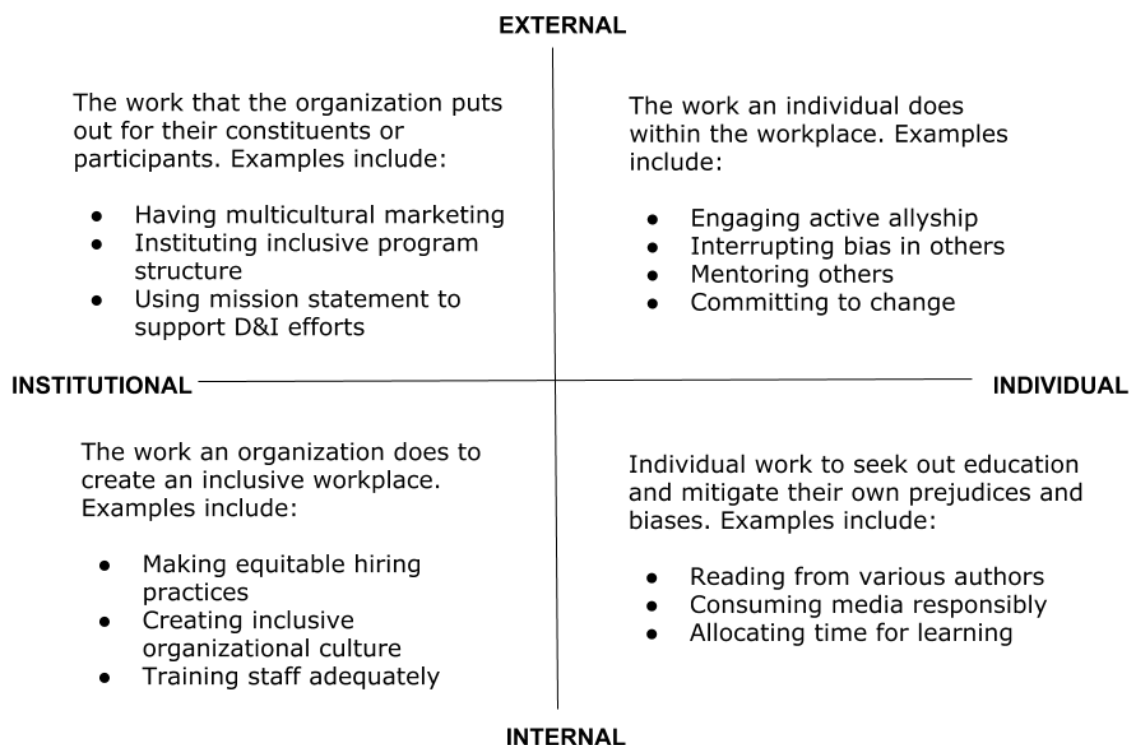
Embarking on equity, inclusion and diversity work can feel like you're tackling a shape shifting, amorphous giant while simultaneously trying to swim a mile in maple syrup. Or something equally challenging, frustrating, and confusing. At social events, I often get to tell people about the work I do and inevitably, they will make reference to an organization, an article, or a movement that pertains to diversity and inclusion in the environmental context. I love getting to hear people's raw reactions to what I do because it gives me insight into the endless ways a person or an organization can imagine doing this work.

Although these conversations are intriguing to my cultural anthropologist side, I also recognize that engaging in diversity and inclusion can feel overwhelming.

Earlier this year I was in a meeting with a bunch of smart, motivated people and within a span of fifteen minutes the following diversity and inclusion efforts were mentioned: confronting white privilege in leadership, inclusive hiring practices, unconscious bias, and multicultural marketing. Those are all equally important, yet pretty distinct pieces of the equity, inclusion, and diversity puzzle.

In an effort to move the conversation toward action steps, we have created the following framework for organizations to start thinking about how to approach this work.

## QUADRANTS OF EQUITY, INCLUSION, & DIVERSITY WORK



**Individual-Internal:** This is the most personal work you'll do. It's about understanding your own identity, confronting your privileges and biases, and finding a productive way for you to move through the discomfort to learn. It's also about holding yourself accountable to always being open to learn more and from different people.

**Individual-External:** This is about what you individually put out into the world; a person doing this work might provide essential mentorship or actively engage in conversations that are uncomfortable. It encompasses anything you do as an individual that outwardly impacts someone other than yourself.

**Institutional-Internal:** This runs the gamut from how your organization functions to how it hires people to how it supports new ideas from different people. In short, how does your institution foster an inclusive culture?

**Institutional-External:** This is about the work your organization puts out for public or semi-public consumption. This includes the marketing, programming, and advocacy work that impacts your participants or constituents, and perhaps the broader public as well.

Each of these quadrants are important and interact with one another, but if you are just starting out or are feeling mired down by the vast array of ways to approach this work, utilize this quadrant to begin to sort through and triage your own process, both as an individual and an institution.

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These quadrants do reflect back to me the locations within which focus my actions in my job, from my responsibilities and from my authority, as well as, the places of leverage that are either cultivated by me or connected to my job. Looking at this illustration helps me reflect more deeply on how to cross the thresholds so the connections are clearer to people with authority in a quadrant different from my daily focus.

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