

Advancing a More Diverse, Equitable, Inclusive, and Justice-Centered Western Conservation Ecosystem:

Hewlett Foundation's Successes and Lessons Learned



Framing and Prefacing Comments

- Undoing a long legacy of conservation not focused on diversity, equity, inclusion and justice (DEIJ); complex and disruptive
- Point-in-time reflection of how partners are experiencing Western Conservation Portfolio
- Opportunity to learn from the perspectives of partners
- The Western Conservation Program Officer tends to serve as proxy for the Hewlett Foundation
- Results reflect the collaboration with Western Conservation Portfolio, not other Program Officers/staff



Evaluation Questions and Goals

1.

How did the Western Conservation Program's grantmaking help **build organizations, coalitions, and the field** that were DEIJ-centered?

2.

What **strategies and approaches** did the Western Conservation team use to contribute to organizations, coalitions, and the field that were DEIJ-centered?

3.

In what ways did the Western Conservation grantmaking **contribute to and influence change in organizations, coalitions, and the field** that were DEIJ-centered?

Evaluation Questions and Goals

4.

What were the **benefits and challenges that grantee organizations experienced** in implementing equity-centered work including approaches, initiatives, and change management process internally and externally?

5.

From the perspective of funded organizations, how can Hewlett **continue to build, accelerate, and propagate DEIJ-centered organizations, coalitions, and the field?**

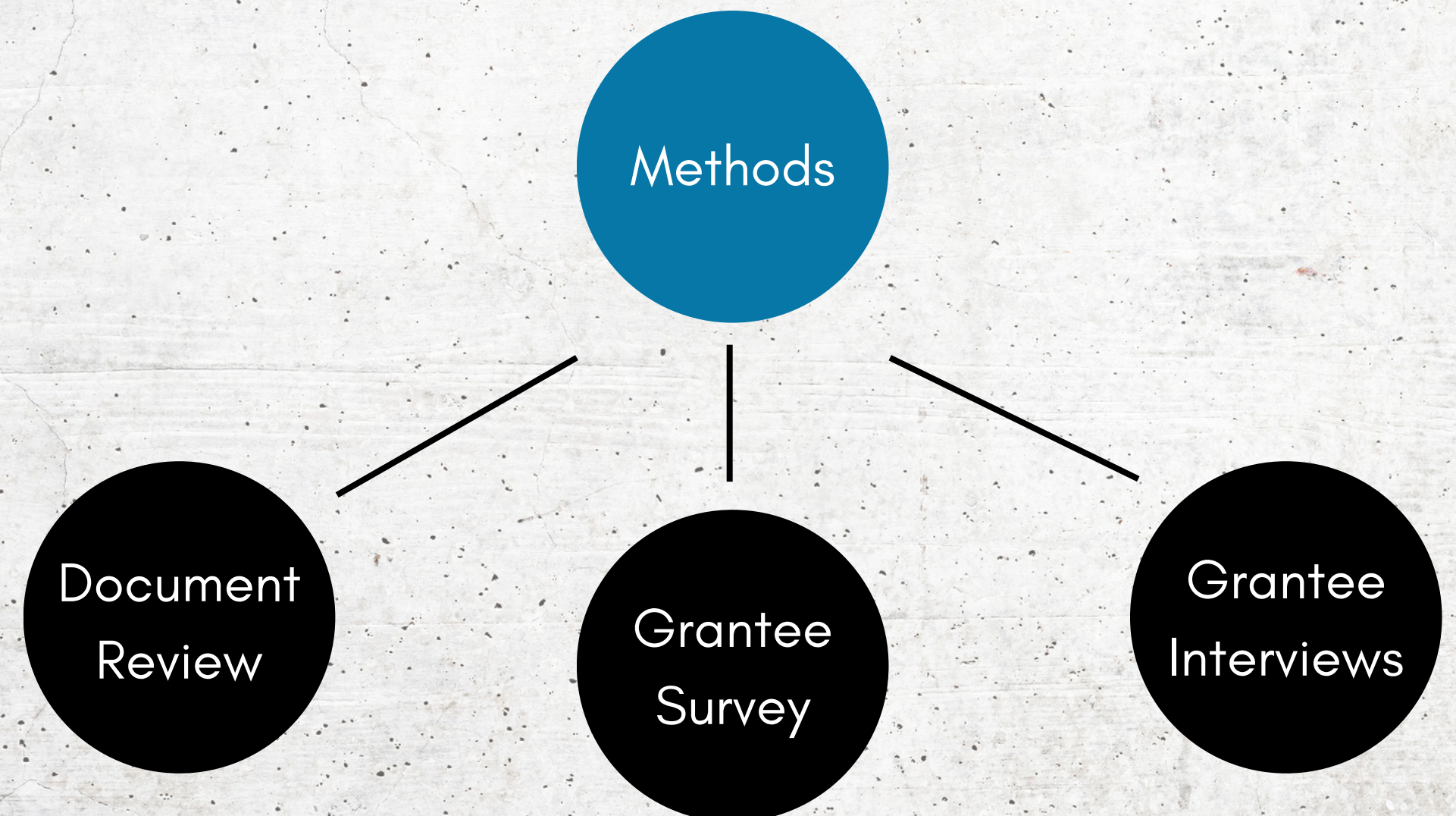
6.

How did the Western Conservation team **build relationships with and support grantees** as they focused on DEIJ in their organizations, coalitions, and the field?

Overview of Methodology

Mixed-methods approach that included:

- Survey for grant-funded organizations
- Interviews with grantee organizations, peer funders of Hewlett Foundation, and DEIJ thought-leaders
- Review of funded organizations' DEIJ-focused grant proposals and final reports.





Overview of Methods

Survey

- 24 responses to the survey out of 40 that were invited to participate (60%)
- 25 question-survey

Interviews

- A total of 19 qualitative interviews were conducted
- 11 grantee organization representatives, 5 field-wide thought leaders and 3 funders

Document Review

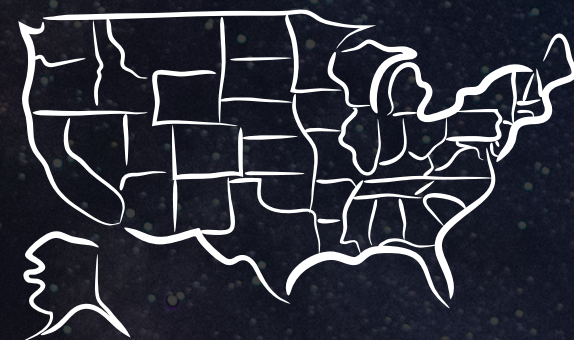
- Document analysis of 64 DEIJ Organizational Effectiveness (OE) and program grants
- Reviewed grant proposal, application summaries, and final reports

Findings

The findings from the evaluation are broadly categorized into four areas.



Organizational
Approaches



Field-wide
Approaches



Alignment
Relationship &
Partnership with
Western
Conservation
Program



Voice and
Influence of
Hewlett
Foundation



Training and Learning

Task Forces and Committees

Frameworks and Language

Plans and Roadmaps

Human Resources

Budgeting

Decision-Making

Engagement with Tribes and Indigenous Communities

Field/Cohort Learning

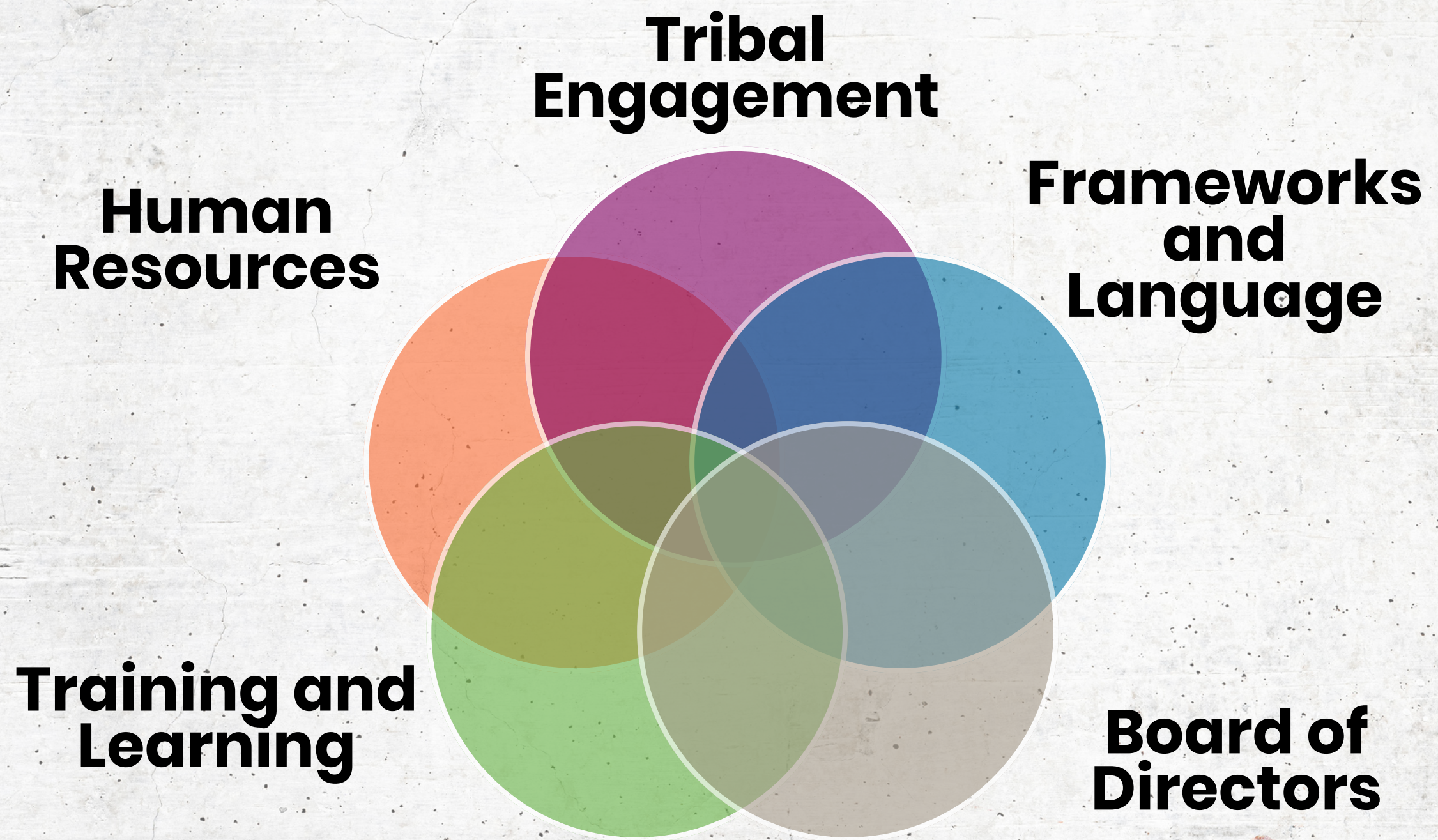
DEIJ Strategies and Approaches

Grant proposal and final report analysis revealed several strategies and approaches grantees took to DEIJ work.



DEIJ Accomplishments

Throughout the surveys, grant reviews, and interviews, a set of themes emerged regarding grant accomplishments.



Top Reasons for the Success of DEIJ Strategies

| Top Reasons for the Success of DEIJ Strategies | |
|---|---------|
| Topic | Percent |
| Building the DEIJ capacity of staff through learning and skills training | 56% |
| Leadership support/buy-in to DEIJ | 56% |
| Common understanding that DEIJ is a mission-imperative for our organization | 52% |
| Staff support/buy-in to DEIJ | 52% |
| Common understanding of the complexity of DEIJ work | 44% |



Lack of Staff Capacity
45%

Lack of Resources Available to Staff
(29%)

No Accountability Structure(s) for DEIJ Work
(25%)

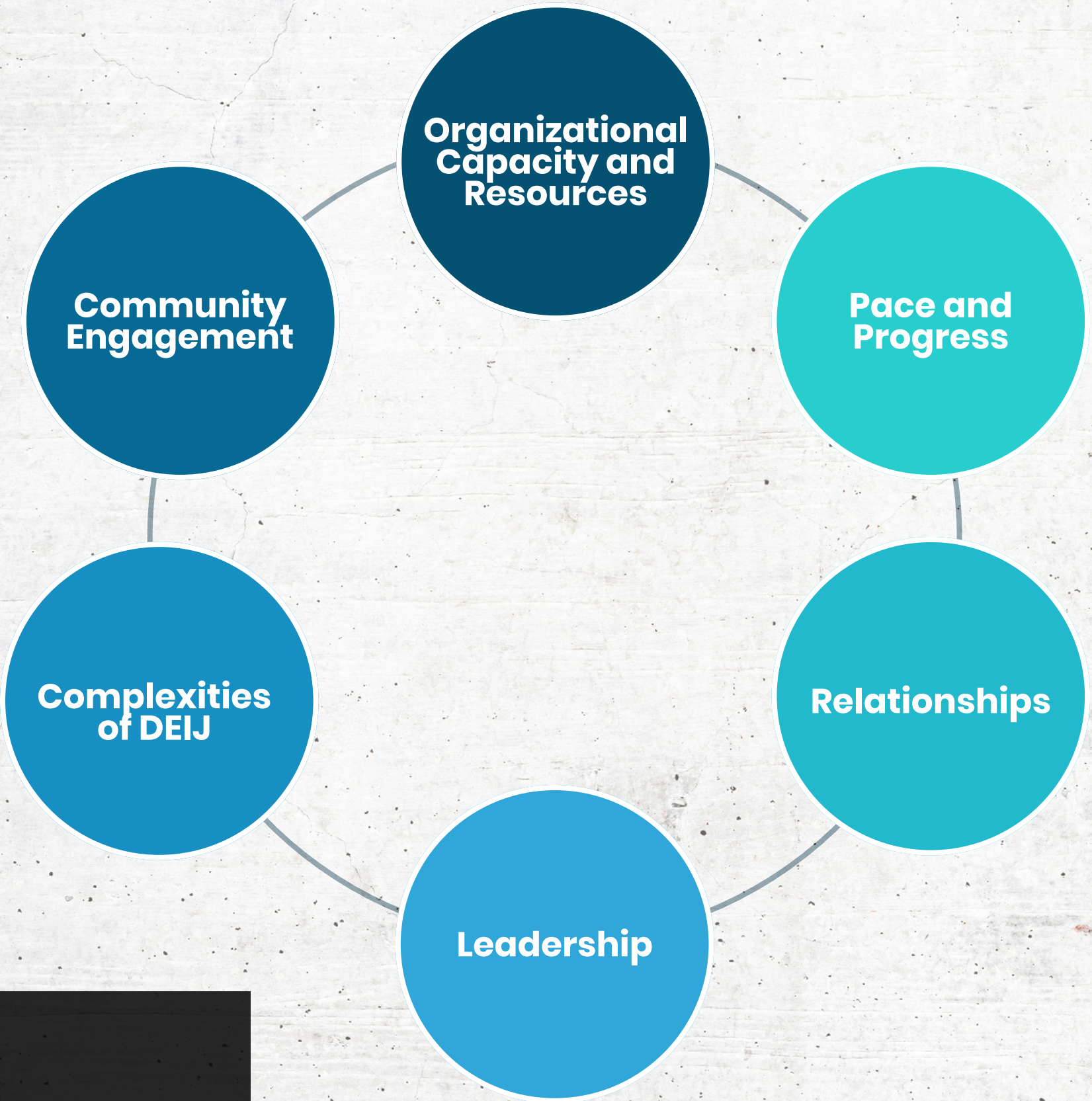
Lack of Organizational Readiness
(17%)

No Common Understanding of the Mission Imperatives
(17%)

Lack of Board of Directors/Trustees Support/Buy-In
(17%)

Inadequate Amount of Communication about DEIJ
(17%)

Barriers and Challenges to DEIJ
Survey results revealed several reasons for why organizations experienced challenges in their DEIJ efforts.



Lessons Learned
Respondents' reflections on lessons learned highlighted a number of themes; many of which are fundamentals of organizational change management.



Western Conservation Program Organizational Impact

Support from the Western Conservation Program led to several long-term changes to organizational values, policies, behaviors and/or strategies for DEIJ

- Allowed for deeper discussions and examination of **organizational practices**
- Helped support the **Board in understanding DEIJ** as a mission imperative
- Bolstered the organization's HR policies around **hiring diverse candidates**
- Changed the **organization's budgeting process**



Western Conservation Program Organizational Impact

In conversations and reflections of conservation leaders, a lack of tether between internal DEIJ work & external conservation outcomes was prominent. Two principal and divergent themes emerged:

1. The partnerships and inclusion of Tribal Nations was something they could directly link to their internal capacity building
2. The organization's work has yet to translate to conservation outcomes. Internal DEIJ efforts will be foundational to their external strategies when they are at that stage.

Reorienting the Field: Funding for and with Indigenous Communities

This work begins for grantees by laying the foundation of transformation in their partnerships, their conservation strategies, and their internal diversity and culture.

"I also did some internal data gathering to see how our coworkers work with Indigenous groups. There's a body of things in their recommendations that I cannot do, as a non-Native person. So, I said I'd do the job for a couple of years and then we'd either hire someone with a personally informed experience, as a native person, or we are gonna stop doing the work. Then the organization hired an Indigenous person, the hiring pool had 50% Indigenous applicants and we [have] grown our Native employee population too."

- Environmental Grantee

Voice and Influence of Hewlett Foundation

“Hewlett has been the greatest champion for building a more inclusive community-led equitable movement based on meaningful relationships. They've figured out how to be a catalyst in a way that has created big change.”

Conservation Organizational Executive

Ways the Hewlett Foundation leverages their voice & influence

Centering DEIJ
In the Western
Conservation
Portfolio

Organizing,
Leveraging, and
Reframing
Philanthropic
Strategy for DEIJ

DEIJ-centered
Communications

Providing
Learning
Opportunities
on DEIJ

Modeling DEIJ
as a Foundation
and Staff
Practice

Grantees share the various approaches Hewlett used their voice and influence on DEIJ issues.



Alignment and Relationship with Western Conversation Program

Grantees seem to be well-versed in the priorities and strategy the Western Conservation Program had set out, and many are working in support of the program's theory of change that bringing affected communities' voices to the work can lead to more durable outcomes.

Through the survey and a series of interviews, we were able to explore issues of trust, the working relationship, and experiences with the Western Conservation Program Officer.



Relationship and Partnership with Western Conservation Team and Grantmaking

“Bluntly, our relationship with Hewlett is one of the best, especially with Andrea [Western Conservation Program Officer] and should be seen as a case study for how philanthropies should show up and work with communities like ours.”

– Leader of BIPOC Organization



Strengths and Assets of the Western Conservation Program Officer

Connector of
Ideas, People,
and Resources

Thought-Partner
and Partnership

Field Expertise,
Knowledgeable, and
Savvy

Investment In
Building and
Relationships

Feedback with
Support

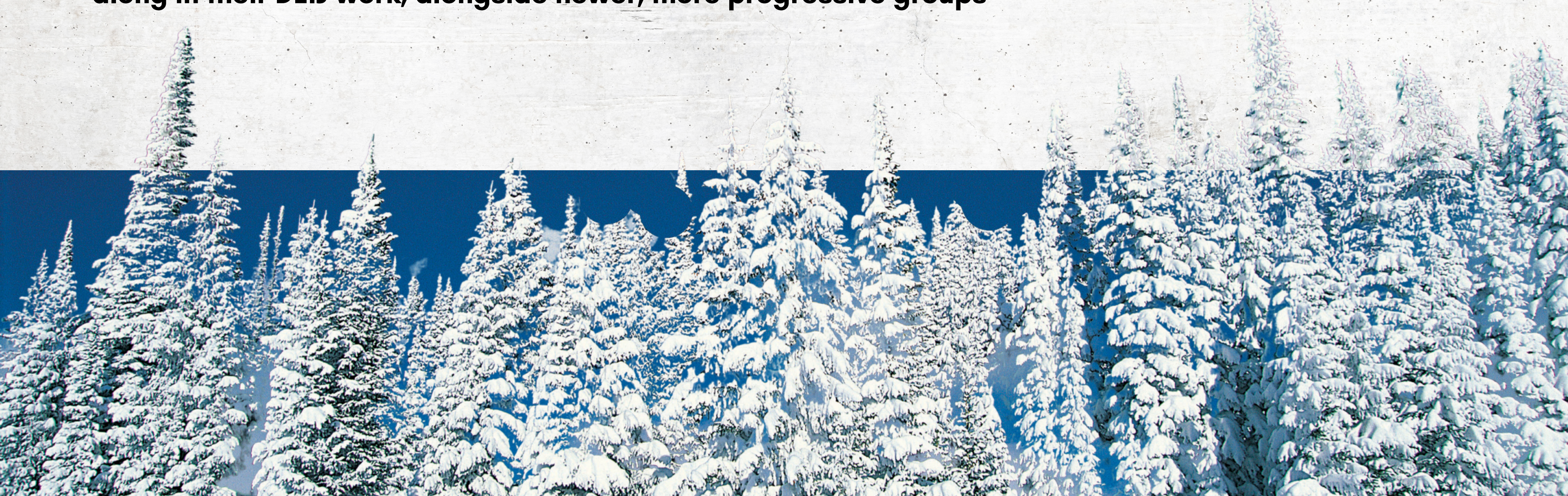
Ally and
Reinforcement

Funder, Collaborator
and Leader

Considerations and Reflections

While organizations appreciated the direction of Western Conservation Program's DEIJ work, they raised issues that are important for Hewlett to consider:

- **Value and place** of grantee within the Western Conservation Portfolio
- The complexities of **funder-facilitated change**, which can feel high-touch to some organizations/individuals
- Leveraging the **existing ecosystem of expertise** to value traditional grantees, some who may be less further along in their DEIJ work, alongside newer, more progressive groups



Recommendations

The report's recommendations are separated into five buckets:



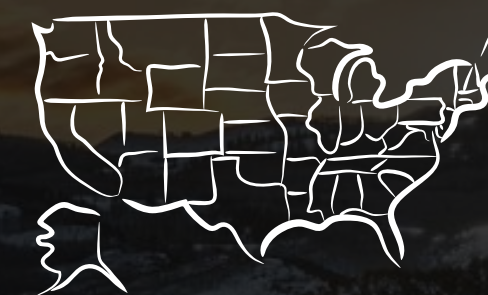
Program
Officers:
Building Equity
Competencies



Overall
Grantmaking



Grantmaking:
At the
Organizational
Level



Grantmaking:
Fieldwide
Impact



Hewlett
Foundation:
Voice &
Communications



Building Equity Competencies of Program Officers

Standardize, hire, train, and institutionalize skills and competencies for Program Officers that broaden and hold them accountable for the role of grantmakers in organizational and field-wide change.



Overall Grantmaking

1. Examine, interrogate, and refine your organizational risk assessment process within grantmaking to **evaluate whether organizations are ready to engage in deep and transformational DEIJ-centered conservation.**
2. Examine and **expand to multi-year (three to five year) grants** to support the long-term transformational work that DEIJ requires.
3. **Assess, evaluate and hold intermediaries accountable for their DEIJ journey** and equitable grantmaking practices to foster greater and more consistent fieldwide impact.



Grantmaking at the Organizational Level

Require funded organizations to connect short, intermediate, and long-term internal organizational work with external strategies to DEIJ-centered conservation outcomes and ensure overall mission alignment.



Fieldwide Impact of Grantmaking

1. Maintain, scale, and formalize field-wide initiatives that convene Hewlett-funded organizations to learn from, network, and create the conditions and outcomes for DEIJ-centered conservation.
2. Accelerate Indigenous, Tribal, historically marginalized community-led and focused conservation by directly funding, encouraging other funders to engage, and aligning with long-term partners to ensure durability and sustainability.



Hewlett Foundation Voice & Communications

Create consensus for, systematize, train staff on, and evaluate how Hewlett will use its voice and influence to advance its foundation strategic goals for DEIJ.

Thank you!

To read the full report, please reach out to the Hewlett Western Conservation Team.

