



# WEF's DE&I Leadership



# **SPEAKER INTRODUCTION**

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**Donnell Duncan, P.E., S.E.**  
**Associate Vice President, Arcadis**

**WEF Leadership Roles:**  
DE&I Subcommittee Co-Chair  
HOD Speaker-Elect

# THE WEF DE&I JOURNEY

**WEFTEC 2018:** Launch of InFLOW pilot with 3 schools

**WEFTEC 2019:** Launch of Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Task Force

**September 2020:** Engagement of DE&I Consultant, Launch of Board of Trustees DE&I Subcommittee and HOD DE&I Workgroup

**WEFTEC 2021:** Upgrade to Board of Trustees DE&I Committee and launch of HOD DE&I Committee

# DE&I Virtual Resources



Diversity, Equity,  
and Inclusion @WEF

## Unconscious bias

"To have bias is to be human"

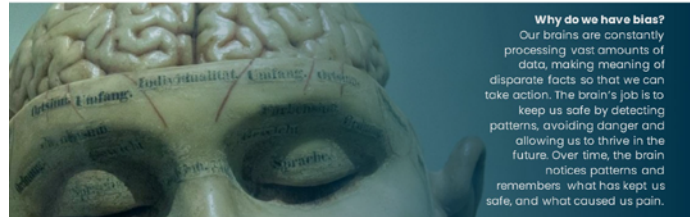
There's a lot of buzz about 'unconscious bias' related to diversity, equity and inclusion. What is it, why should we care and what can we do?

We all have preferences, or biases, based on our life experiences and belief systems. Humans are hardwired to be on the alert for danger, and just as we tend to feel safe around people we sense are familiar, we also tend to feel wary around those we perceive as different.

We might have bias about someone's accent, language or clothing choices, or we might trust someone quickly because they remind us of an old friend. We might assume they are competent because they are tall. Or incompetent because they are overweight.

Biases can be **explicit** in that we are aware when we are expressing them and are controllable, or **implicit**, that operate outside of your awareness.

"But I'm a scientist, I observe data."  
Bias can occur even when we rationally know stereotypes to be false.



**Why do we have bias?**  
Our brains are constantly processing vast amounts of data, making meaning of disparate facts so that we can take action. The brain's job is to keep us safe by detecting patterns, avoiding danger and allowing us to thrive in the future. Over time, the brain notices patterns and remembers what has kept us safe, and what caused us pain.

[www.wef.org/dei](http://www.wef.org/dei)



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## Race and Racism

What is race?

**Race** is a socially constructed categorization rooted in certain physical characteristics. Racial categorization was developed by European 'scientists' as a means to justify colonization. We still center conversations around race because it has an outsized social impact in many countries with colonial histories.



What is racism?

Racism is a system that is built upon a hierarchy of power.  
Power is the ability to act or have influence over others.

Therefore, we can define racism as:

**RACISM = RACIAL PREJUDICE + INSTITUTIONAL POWER**

While the idea of race was invented without any real biological basis, over time it has been used to construct systems that subjugate and oppress. **Race was made very real through racism.** These systems continue in many aspects of society.



Misconceptions

There is no such thing as a "diverse" person. Groups can be diverse, not individuals.

Even people who are color blind see light and dark. You can't 'not see' skin color.

Since racism relies on hierarchies of power, reverse racism does not exist by definition

## FOUR TYPES OF RACISM

**Individual Racism** refers to the idea that one's race is superior and to the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individuals that support and perpetuate racism in conscious and unconscious ways. The US cultural narrative about racism typically focuses on individual racism and fails to recognize systemic racism.

**Interpersonal Racism** occurs between individuals and includes public expression of racism, often involving slurs, biases, hateful words or actions, or exclusion and rejection.

**Institutional Racism** occurs in organizations. These are policies and practices that intentionally or unintentionally give unfair advantages to whites over people of color. These institutional policies often do not mention any racial group, but the outcomes result in advantages and disadvantages based on one's race.

**Structural Racism** is the interplay and compounding impact across institutions and society. These systems give privileges to white people resulting in disadvantages to people of color.

Source: National Museum of African American History and Culture (<https://nmaahc.si.edu>)



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## Microaggressions

Based on work of Dr D. Sue and Dr K. Nadal

Microaggressions are intentional or unintentional everyday slights, indignities, put-downs and insults that members of marginalized or underrepresented groups experience. The name doesn't do justice to the impact, which can be extremely hurtful.

### Within our water community

The following examples have all been experienced by WEF members working in our industry. Often these are unintentional. A helpful principle in addressing such behavior is to help aggressors understand they are not under attack for their comments/behaviors, but that change would be welcome.

### Age/Youth

"They're not old enough / don't have enough experience to serve in that role"

"You wouldn't know anything about this (it's before your time)."

"You're so hardworking (for your age)"

"You'll probably be gone in \_\_\_\_\_ you know millennials are job hoppers."

**Notes:**  
If working with someone who appears younger, ask them questions about their role, what they do, and what they want to do to or are interested in, instead of assuming that they are too young to be familiar with the work.

### Meritocracy as Microaggression

I believe the most qualified person should get the job.

### Types of Microaggressions

**Microinvalidations**  
Negating the feelings and experiences of othered or minoritized peoples.

**Microinsults**  
Rude or discriminatory snubs or actions that can be slightly covert.

**Microassaults**  
Explicit discriminatory comments or actions meant to harm the target.

### Race

"Where are you from?" "No, where are you really from?"

"You don't sound black."

"You're so articulate"

"She's so aggressive" (a woman of color).

"Can I touch your hair?"

"When I look at you, I don't see color." [This denies the very real daily experience of being treated differently.]

- Misidentifying people of same race/ethnicity
- Mistaking someone of color for a hospitality professional rather than a fellow attendee or staff member at a gathering.
- Failing to learn to pronounce or continuing to mispronounce people's names after they have corrected you.
- Disregarding different religious traditions or their details

**Notes:**  
Racial microaggressions have been found to cause adverse effects to both mental and physical health and well-being over time.





# New: Inclusive Committee Leadership



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## Inclusive Committee Leadership

### Why does WEF need inclusive leadership?

- ✓ To facilitate learning from each other
- ✓ To maximize professional development
- ✓ To network outside of your geography and company
- ✓ To drive innovation

### Committee Leadership sets the tone for WEF work

Leadership in committees and taskforces sets the tone, and it directs the course of the work. It's a team effort and requires a good mix of people, experience and thought. **As leaders**, we must be willing to support all committee participants' learning styles, facilitate work meetings in which everyone can contribute, and develop group rapport that invites challengers to bring their concerns forward in order to innovate.

### ASSESS YOURSELF AND YOUR LEADERSHIP TEAM

- ❑ **Set the tone for a learning environment.** Be vocal that while you may be the lead, you are not the expert on everything.
- ❑ **Model self-awareness** and self-management, e.g. minimize your own reactivity by pausing and taking a breath or two, or three!
- ❑ **Listen to understand**, not just to respond or defend. What can you learn from what is being said?
- ❑ **Decide when you will speak** first, and when it is better to speak last, to moderate your influence

*The act of inclusion embraces and celebrates the perspectives, voices, values, and needs of each individual to generate a culture where all feel heard, respected, valued, and included in the broader WEF purpose.*

### Facilitate Inclusive Meetings

**Collaboratively develop agreed meeting norms**, such as communication, decision making and application or invitation norms.

**Determine how members join the group** and make this information public and transparent.

**Develop committee agreements** that focus on mutual respect. For example:

- ❑ Invite diverse perspectives
- ❑ Listen before responding
- ❑ Raise hands and wait to speak until called
- ❑ One person speaks at a time
- ❑ 'three before me', or 'four before more' rule of contribution in a meeting
- ❑ Post and remind participants of these agreements at the beginning of each meeting.
- ❑ Consider appointing an 'upholder' for agreement accountability
- ❑ Ensure in-person meetings are welcoming to newcomers. Consider stationing a greeter at the door and strategically placing leadership at different tables.

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I have definitely endeavored to be a much more understanding listener. I am more thoughtful in listening to understand rather than respond and to take time to process rather than providing a primarily emotional instead of thoughtful response.

Aimee' Killeen, WEF Vice President



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### Plan meetings that encourage participation and contribution

**Develop and distribute meeting agendas in advance.**

- ❑ This accommodates different reading and learning styles—those who think “on their feet” and those who need time to consider information and come prepared with questions and comments
- ❑ Invite input to the agenda and send out a revised agenda if individuals do have additions.
- ❑ Build camaraderie with ice breakers or share outs that invite people to share personally and professionally
  - Make sure the ice breaker invites participation from all spaces and individuals who are joining—in-person, remote, and hybrid

**Rotate unassigned duties** such as time keeping, note taking, and, if in-person, room clean up, to allow participants to contribute and participate fully in equal measure

- ❑ Make sure these aren't always women, people of color or the least experienced people in the room

**Use breakouts** for collaborative problem solving and strategizing

- ❑ Use a variety of modalities to allow participants to reflect on their own ideas, share ideas in small groups, and report out ideas to the whole group in order to accommodate different styles and comfort levels with contribution.

**Elevate diverse voices**, by inviting a variety of committee members and external specialists, when appropriate, to present on relevant topics at meetings

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Inclusiveness is a cultural change that we individually have to make in our mind and to revisit a check list to know if someone is getting left out of the group or the conversation.

Gustavo Raymundo Gallo Chacon, Board of Trustees

*Diversity encompasses the varying experiences, strengths, skills, perspectives, personal characteristics, cultures, and backgrounds represented by and within the WEF community.*

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By increasing diversity and inclusion, I think we transform from a hierarchical organization to one that really becomes fluid and on the forefront of ideas and innovation. In the future I see all different ages, colors and genders of people contributing to the work at WEF, and out of that will come richer and faster ideas.

Amy Corriveau, Committee Leadership Council Chair



### Actively Facilitate the Meeting

**Develop skilled facilitators**, whether on the steering committee or within the general committee who can facilitate different topic discussions.

- ❑ **Develop norms for acknowledging contributions.** Skillful facilitation appreciates all comments equitably, “Thank you for sharing,” or “I appreciate that comment,” or, “Thank you, noted” to each person who speaks in a way that does not show favoritism.
- ❑ **Manage the room** to skillfully navigate dominant speakers. You may need to interrupt someone who is dominating the conversation by reminding them of group agreements, and then move to invite other speakers. For example, “I’d like to invite folks we haven’t heard from yet to share.”
- ❑ **Periodically stop to check-in** with members, “Do these comments or suggestions make sense? Does anyone have questions about what’s come up so far?” Regularly encourage participation by inviting all questions, comments, and suggestions.

Prepared for WEF by The Silverene Group [www.silverenegroup.com](http://www.silverenegroup.com)

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# MA DE&I Starter Kit



2021

## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Starter Kit for Member Associations

### CONTENTS

#### INTRODUCTION

#### KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

##### PART 1

What is Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion?

##### PART 2

The Benefits of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion  
in Workforce Development

##### PART 3

Take the Journey

- Step 1 – Speak with Someone in the Know
- Step 2 – Understand Your MA's Needs
- Step 3 – Plan and Implement

##### PART 4

References

### TOOLS AVAILABLE

[www.wef.org/dei](http://www.wef.org/dei)

1. Exploring and Defining DE&I for your Member Association
2. Action Ideas for Defining DE&I for your Member Association
3. Start a Subcommittee – Example Vision and Mission Statements
4. Best Practices
5. InFLOW Program Guidance

### » INTRODUCTION

If you are reading this section, you are probably a committed volunteer for your Member Association (MA). As such, you are probably a pathfinder. Anyone beginning a journey into new territory understands that the right equipment will help them on the journey. This section presents ideas and information (tools) for leadership to consider when addressing DE&I for their MA.

A survey was conducted to learn from MA's, particularly regarding DE&I gaps and efforts in progress. Members of the Water Environment Federation House of Delegates DE&I Workgroup then went to work to provide a series of tools that would share the best ideas and information available.

### » KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Respondents to the DE&I Survey identified the following factors as being key to their success:

- Engagement of passionate members.
- Consistency in communication.
- Personal stories that enhance and make real the importance of the topic.
- Support and leadership from the MA Board.
- Scheduled / routine D, E, & I committee meetings.
- Engaging YP members.
- Being realistic about what can be accomplished in a given period of time.
- The MA leadership must establish lines of communication and access to resources.
- It takes multiple people pushing together and encouraging each other. This is really hard work, first and foremost personally, and then beyond trying to address systemic long-standing issues. Tools, resources, and formal training is not enough, we need to see the people behind the topic, the people who are impacted, the faces of future people who will benefit from this work being done now.
- Need for partnership with MA committees.
- Engagement of colleges for InFLOW program.



WEF DE&I STARTER KIT 1

WEF DE&I STARTER KIT 2

### » WHAT IS DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION?

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are integral to the mission of WEF. We believe that creating an inclusive and equitable organization is vital to ensuring that the diverse perspectives of our members are valued, respected, and considered. WEF believes that enhancing diversity with respect to race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, ability status, accent, socioeconomic status, cultural heritage and religion, parental status, marital status, personality type, political perspective, job classification, and all other characteristics of diversity allow us to better serve our members and the diverse water workforce.



Diversity, equity, and inclusion are not mutually exclusive and the success of one is dependent on the other two. For instance, diversity without inclusion can result in tokenism and inclusion cannot truly exist without diversity because those who are not present cannot be included. At the same time, equity is necessary to ensure the best outcomes from diversity and inclusion efforts. Therefore, these three definitions are intentionally connected.

The 15 dynamic water professionals serving on the subcommittee represent the diverse perspectives and experiences that we hope to see more of within WEF and the water sector as a whole.

#### DIVERSITY

Diversity encompasses the varying experiences, strengths, skills, perspectives, personal characteristics, cultures, and backgrounds represented by and within the WEF community.

#### EQUITY

A commitment to equity means an environment where everyone has the opportunity to realize their full potential, and no-one is disadvantaged because of their group identity or other socially determined circumstance.

#### INCLUSION

The act of inclusion embraces and celebrates the perspectives, voices, values, and needs of each individual to generate a culture where all feel heard, respected, valued, and included in the broader WEF purpose.

[Click to View WEF's Commitment to DE&I](#)

WEF's Board of Trustees has established a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Subcommittee to provide guidance on our programs, communications, and membership. In 2020, WEF hired The Silverene Group to work with the subcommittee to develop a strategic plan for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

WEF DE&I STARTER KIT 3



# MA DE&I Starter Kit

## » THE BENEFITS OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Against the backdrop of the WEF's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in our organization, our industry is facing a number of significant challenges in workforce development.

### 1 AGING WORKFORCE

A phenomenon known as the "silver tide" of retirements is reducing the number of employees and the size of the pool from which to hire replacements. Even more compelling, workers in this sector tend to be older with a median age of 42.8 years as compared to the national median of 42.2 years.

### 2 A LACK OF DIVERSITY

In 2016, 85 percent of the workers were male and two thirds were white. This combined with rigidity in prevailing hiring procedures, and lack of training programs leads to difficulties in reaching out to different types of workers.

### 3 CHALLENGE OF RETENTION

Workers tend to migrate to areas of the country with a lower cost of living.

*These are clear indications of the need for a new talent pipeline, one that values the diverse perspectives of our work force and is representative of the communities that we serve.*

## THE WATER INDUSTRY HAS OPPORTUNITIES

The water work force includes nearly 1.7 million people involved in designing, constructing, operating, and governing the US water infrastructure. While operators, electricians, and plumbers rank the largest occupations overall. There are also workers involved in administration, finance, and management. Utilization of the diversity, equity and inclusion toolkit components will expand the pool of available resources and promote job satisfaction. Make no mistake, consideration of a career in water requires outreach, recruitment, hiring and training efforts but we have significant benefits on the offer:

- 53% of water workers have a high school diploma or less.
- Many water occupations require extensive on-the-job training and familiarity with a variety of tools and technologies.
- Water occupations tend to pay more on average.
- Water occupations also pay up to 50 percent more to workers at lower ends of the income scale.
- The water industry is community based—we can't outsource the work... and can't import the workforce. Given this community connection, water utilities should be representative of the community in their workforce.

## THE RESULT IS A BUSINESS CASE FOR DIVERSITY

While expanding the resource pool and reflecting the community in which we serve are of tremendous benefit, the McKinsey Report Diversity Wins – How Inclusion Matters, a five year study of over 1,000 large companies across 15 countries, provides extensive data on additional benefits of diversity.

Greater diversity, in terms of both gender and ethnicity, is correlated with significantly greater likelihood of outperformance.

- Competitive advantage: Companies whose boards are in the top quartile of gender diversity are 28% more likely to outperform their peers.
  - Increased innovation and marketability of ideas.
  - Drives employee retention and increased job satisfaction.
  - Increased commitment: Employees and volunteers who feel connected and included are more engaged and involved.
  - Promotes business growth and development.
  - Taken collectively, these affect the bottom line—improving performance and increasing value/revenues.
- Bold actions are needed to foster diversity, equity, and inclusion in WEF and your member associations. This toolkit has been developed to support your effort to:**
- Ensure representation of diverse talent.
  - Strengthen leadership accountability and capability for inclusion and Diversity.
  - Enable equality of opportunity through fairness and transparency.
  - Promote openness and tackle microaggressions.
  - Foster belonging through unequivocal support for multivariate diversity.



## » TAKE THE JOURNEY

### 1 SPEAK WITH SOMEONE IN THE KNOW

The first step to take is to speak with someone who has taken the journey. Contact the Water Environment Federation (WEF) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) team. They have knowledge and experience that will help you to achieve your goals better, faster, and with fewer volunteer hours.

### 2 UNDERSTAND YOUR NEEDS

Not all MAs are alike. Some are large and some are small. Some have staff and others do not. The diversity needs of each MA will depend in large part on the geographical area in which it is located. Equity and inclusion may be different as well. Tool No. 1 and No. 2 (right) are offered to assist with this step.

### 3 DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT YOUR PROGRAM

Follow this checklist to cover each step.



#### Follow this checklist to cover each step

- ☐ Dedicate a 90 minute timeslot for discussion with your Board/committees.
- ☐ Conduct the DEI exercise included herein.
- ☐ Identify gaps and a champion.
- ☐ Survey membership for benchmarking.
- ☐ Charter a DE&I committee with mission and vision.
- ☐ Start a regional Inflow program.
- ☐ Leverage communications: Email, social media, and articles.
- ☐ Reach out to other committees and coordinate.
- ☐ Hold a focused conference session/workshop.
- ☐ Share back to WEF via delegates.

## THE TOOLS

**Tool No. 1**  
*Exploring and Defining DE&I for your Member Association*

A tool has been developed and designed that MA leadership can use to explore and define diversity, equity, and inclusion goals for their organization. The tool is presented in the stand alone section titled Tool No. 1, and is available in electronic format.

**Tool No. 2**  
*Action Ideas for Defining DE&I for your Member Association*

This tool has many of the same ideas and concepts as Tool No. 1, with the exception that it can be used to create your own approach, or to fit into a collaboration model that your MA likes to use.

**Tool No. 3**  
*Start a Subcommittee: Example Vision and Mission Statements*

**Tool No. 4**  
*Best Practices*

**Tool No. 5**  
*InFlow Program Guidance*

**Click to Learn More**



Learn more about career opportunities at Work for Water

**Click to Learn More**

WEF DE&I STARTER KIT 4

WEF DE&I STARTER KIT 5

WEF DE&I STARTER KIT 6

# What's New

**MA Inclusive Events Best Practices (launching at WEFTEC)**  
**First DE&I Focused WEFMAX**



# Additional Virtual Resources

**Event Moderation**

**What Committee is right for me?**

# WEF EVENTS

## **1. All Conferences**

- i. Gathering Speaker Demographics**

## **2. Specialty Conferences**

- i. Moderator Training**

# WEF NOMINATIONS

- **Revamped the 2022 Nominations process to include DE&I considerations which will be reflected in the new slate of trustees and VP to be announced soon.**



# DE&I Coaching

- **6 Current and Emerging leaders were selected for a DE&I coaching program that is currently underway**

# WEF Board of Trustees

- **DE&I Consultant worked with the Board on Psychological Safety and led a Design Thinking workshop with the Board during the board meeting at UMC.**
- **Currently developing a Member/ Volunteer DE&I Scorecard which allows us to measure our progress as an organization.**

# ANY QUESTIONS?

