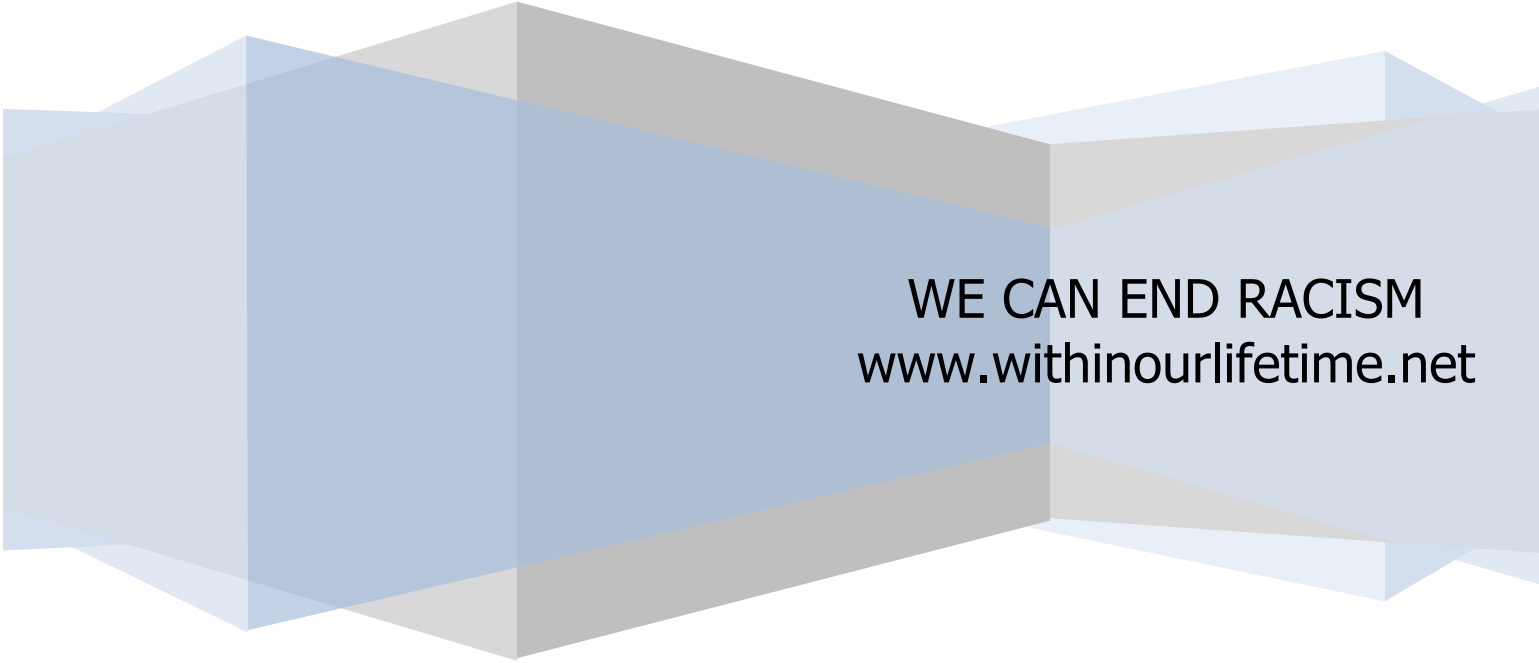


*RACIAL EQUITY/RACIAL HEALING NETWORK*

# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

## **RACIAL EQUITY/RACIAL HEALING NETWORK SURVEY**

**April 2013**



**WE CAN END RACISM**  
[www.withinourlifetime.net](http://www.withinourlifetime.net)

## RACIAL EQUITY/RACIAL HEALING NETWORK SURVEY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### INTRODUCTION

The Racial Equity/Racial Healing Network survey was designed to solicit views on the potential value of creating a network of racial equity/racial healing organizations and practitioners and on the types of activities that would maximize such a network's value to organizations. The discussion about this network started at an open space discussion at the America Healing Conference hosted by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation in New Orleans in April 2012. The discussion continued during two meetings of racial healing and racial equity practitioners convened in Chicago by the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation through the generous support of the Kellogg Foundation. All of the participants in these meetings have a strong belief that by working together we can strengthen efforts to achieve racial equity and racial healing. Though the initial convenings were supported by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, this is currently not a grant-funded program or an initiative of the foundation. An initial informal working group has come together to pursue this effort. The current names of the working group are below.

The survey invitation was sent to approximately 580 people representing the many organizations working on racial healing/racial equity, including those who have participated in the America Healing initiative of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. As of April 5, 2013, we had received 215 responses, a 37% return rate.

*Working Group Members (affiliation listed for identification purposes only):*

Lloyd Asato, BuildCommunity

Susan Glisson, William Winter Institute

Dushaw Hockett, SPACES

Jeanne Isler, Search for Common Ground

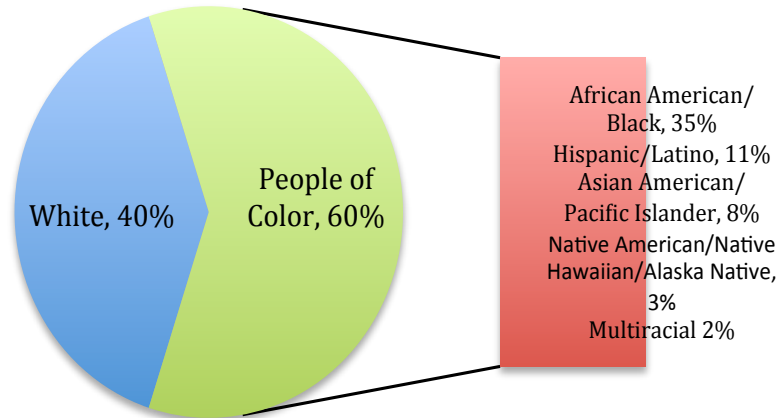
Maggie Potapchuk, MP Associates

Robin Toma, Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission

Mike Wenger, Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies

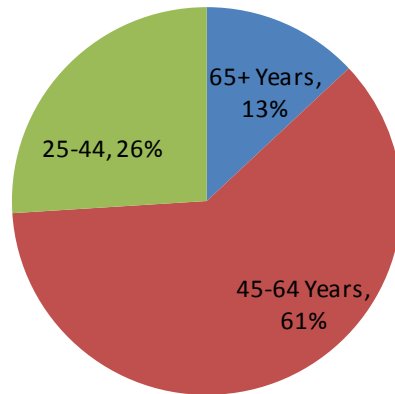
**INFORMATION ABOUT SURVEY RESPONDENTS**

**RACE**

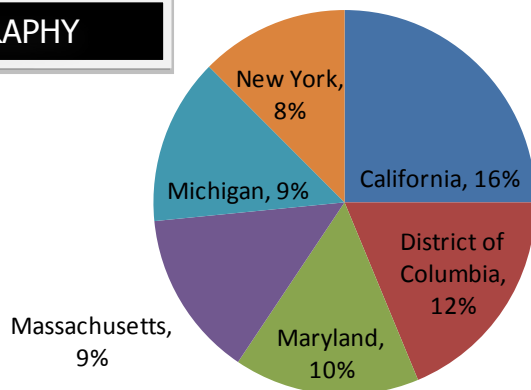


Respondents also shared how they self-identify race/ethnicity including: Afro-Latino, Puerto Rican, Mestizo, South Asian, Chicano, and Indigenous.

**AGE**



**GEOGRAPHY**



**States with Highest Representation**

**Note:** Seventy percent of the respondents shared which state they lived in which included 33 states and the District of Columbia. Based on those who shared their geographic location, 17 states were not represented. This chart shares only the states which had the highest percentage of survey respondents.

## WORK

Sixty percent of the respondents work in non-profit organizations with 17% working as consultants, 11% working in college/university settings, 4% in a government organization or agency, and 2% other (e.g. foundation, for-profit, faith-based organization). Less than half work nationally (46%) while 23% work locally, 21% regionally and only 10% work internationally.

## ORGANIZATIONS' WORK AND STRATEGIES

Responses to the question, "How do you describe your organization's work on racism?" resulted in these major themes:

**The top five focus areas were:**

1. Education (e.g. curriculum development, professional development),
2. Structural racism and institutional barriers – typically focused on a specific issue,
3. Reconciliation and healing,
4. Dialogue and community building,
5. Grassroots community organizing.

**The top five methods were:**

1. Training (e.g. training of trainers, providing workshops),
2. Community-based organizing,
3. Education,
4. Policy advocacy,
5. Organizational development including leadership training and coaching.

Respondents were asked about the primary strategies their organization employed to work on race and racism.

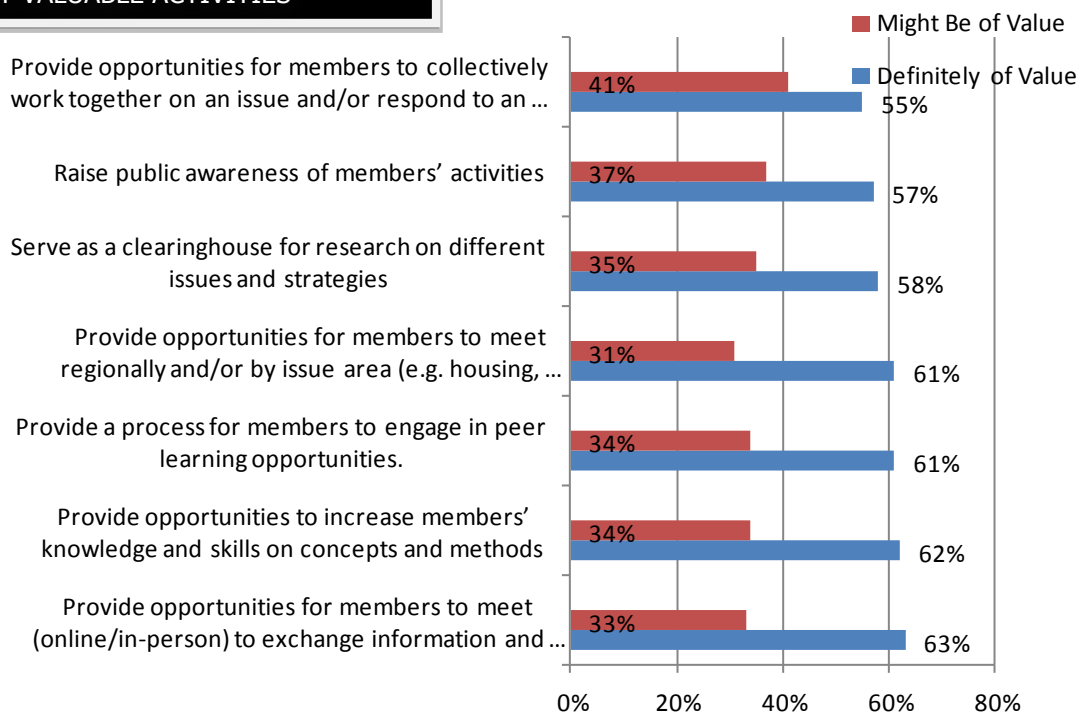
**Five major themes emerged:**

1. *Building awareness and knowledge of racism* (e.g. book groups, anti-racism workshops, storytelling, history walks, workshops on fair housing),
2. *Increasing skills and experiences for relationship-building and healing* (e.g. conflict resolution, family to family partnerships, racial identity caucusing, unravel internalized oppression, addressing white privilege),
3. *Targeting institutional patterns and practices in organizations* (e.g. litigation, organizing stakeholders, action planning, and organizational coaching),
4. *Community organizing for action* (e.g. lobbying, community mobilization, participatory action research, and voter registration), and
5. *Policy work* including research and development.

## RACIAL EQUITY/RACIAL HEALING NETWORK

The survey listed several potential network activities that could support respondents' organizational work.

### MOST VALUABLE ACTIVITIES



*“Evaluating and going beyond the frames we have worked with the past. Looking at our work honestly and with compassion, analyze the impact of our collective work to see how we cannot just have limited successes, but find ways to alter the will for change and imagination of the US and other countries.”*

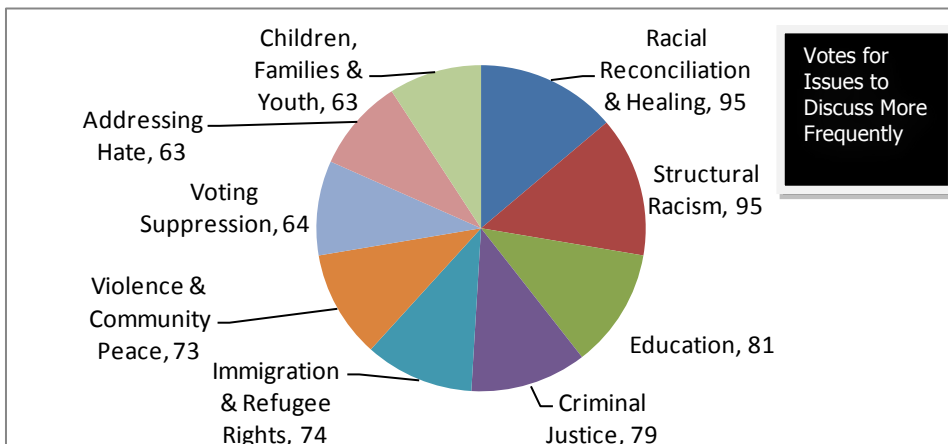
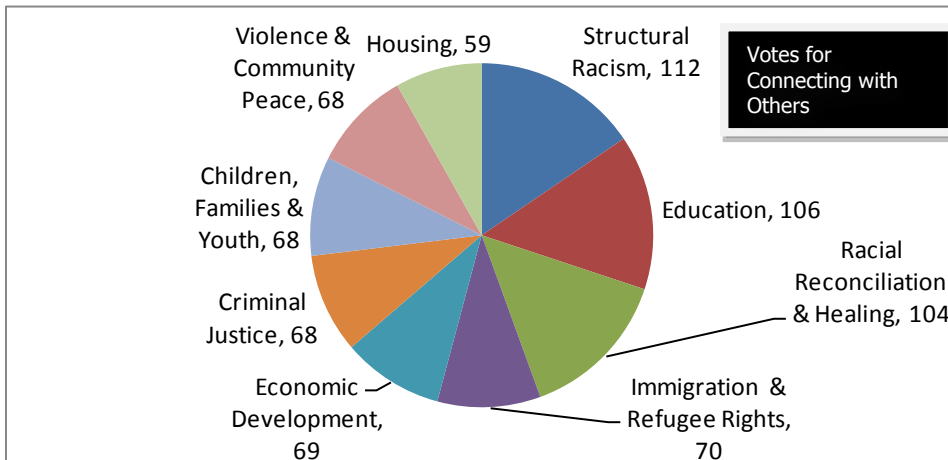
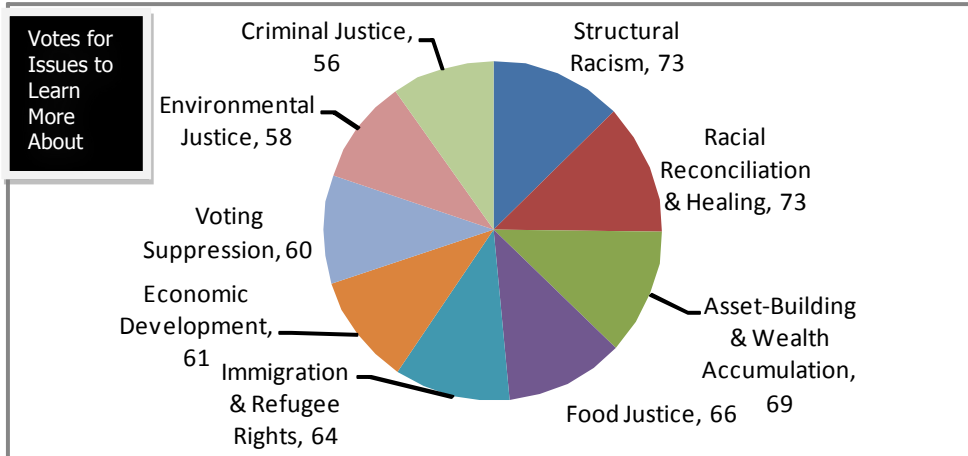
Survey respondents also shared many ideas on how the network could be helpful to their organizations in playing a communication and connection role, building capacity, and sharing funding opportunities. The following are a sampling of the ideas shared:

- Create a listserv and message board for communication at the state, regional and national levels.
- Regularly publish success stories of how racial equity improves social and economic outcomes for all communities.
- Maintain a resource directory of community-based non-profits working on issues of race.
- Create a safe space for authentic dialogue among those with widely differing points of view.
- Prepare or identify videos and power point presentations that can be used in training sessions.
- Make it a priority to engage young people.
- Provide workshops and seminars that connect the academy and the community.
- Identify and disseminate funding opportunities.
- A platform for learning across missions; opportunity to learn from trials and errors and successes; and opportunity to collaborate on the work.

Survey participants were asked to choose from among 20 issues that they wanted to *learn more about*, or *discuss more frequently* or *connect with others doing work* in this area. Two of the most popular issues in all three categories were structural racism and racial reconciliation and healing.

*“How structural racism plays out in the philanthropic sector and serves to perpetuate the myth of white supremacy.”*

The following charts reflect the top issues noted by the respondents.



Also, issues that were not included on the survey list which were mentioned by several respondents are: intersectionality, leadership development, internalized oppression, LGBTQ rights, affordable public transportation, and spiritual approach to equity.

Overall, respondents were enthusiastic about the creation of racial healing/racial equity network and *four major themes emerged* as what they hope the Network is able to accomplish:

**Create an infrastructure for a racial equity and racial healing movement by connecting people and organizations and supporting them in various ways. *Ideas on how to do this:***

- *Create a learning community where people can share ideas, learn from each other's experiences, adapt promising practices to their own unique situations, and support each other in times of intense stress.*
- *Create regional plans of action and connect similar communities working on issues of racial equity and racial healing.*
- *Create an online mapping of all the organizations that utilize a racial justice/racial healing framework.*
- *Create models for both inter-racial and intra-racial caucus work.*
- *Convene and educate funders with regard to the need for this work and the need to provide sufficient time to assess progress.*
- *Develop and implement systems of accountability.*

**Build public will for racial justice and racial healing.**

- *Develop a unified message regarding structural racism's role in creating and sustaining inequities.*
- *Create and implement a strategy for impacting biased media behavior.*
- *Create and implement a campaign raising public awareness about the impact of racial inequities on the society as a whole.*

"We have to move away from socially constructed binary ways of seeing, doing and being."

"We believe that racial healing and commitment to racial equity go hand in hand. There can be no real structural change without personal change; and personal and community healing must include steps toward racially just and inclusive communities."

**Broaden the conversation.**

- *Develop avenues for peer learning opportunities and for the engagement of young people.*
- *Move beyond the black-white paradigm to capture the nation's enormous diversity.*
- *Recognize the intersectionalities of race and poverty and race and gender.*

**Develop a "road map" and shared vision for collective action.**

- *Create a common framework, definitions, and language so that we can communicate more easily and effectively with each other.*
- *In particular, we need to develop a common understanding of what we mean by "racial healing."*
- *Develop principles of practice and a shared agenda for addressing racism through collective action.*
- *Develop specific and tangible projects around which members of the network can collaborate.*

**CHALLENGES FOR THE NETWORK**

There also were several concerns expressed about participating in a racial healing/racial equity network. Time to engage in the network was one of the biggest concerns. People wondered if there would be sufficient resources for the network to function effectively and sustain itself. Some respondents were concerned with how to deal with tension between members' theories and approaches, as well as how to avoid the perpetuation

of racial and economic hierarchy and ensure the network is member driven. Some respondents spoke of wariness about differences in terminology and of the implicit competition among members for funding. Conversely, some felt a network could possibly help with the challenges of time, resources and staff capacity. And some survey participants wondered whether a network, depending on how it is constructed – might inadvertently “prop up what it is trying to tear down.”

### **RACIAL HEALING AND EQUITY: WORKING TOGETHER**

The survey asked *how organizations identify their work* – racial healing and/or racial equity. The majority of respondents said they engage primarily in racial equity work though some mentioned equity in general vs. focused specifically on racial equity. Many responded using the term social justice. Some expressed difficulty defining racial healing. Several suggested that there is a continuum of approaches and that it is not possible or desirable to label approaches as one or the other.

The next two survey questions were designed to *learn how respondents describe racial healing work and racial equity work*.

#### **DEFINING THE WORK**

Survey respondents described racial healing in a variety of ways. Some focused on the individual and on personal transformation. Others described it as people coming together to reduce bias and discrimination and build bridges and coalitions. Other descriptions included creating and facilitating safe spaces and processes and addressing privilege and systems of domination and exploitation. About 8% of the comments referred to the fact that they do not view their work through the lens of racial healing, and it's a relatively new term to them.

There seemed to be more clarity among survey respondents in describing racial equity. Respondents mostly focused on describing racial equity in terms of outcomes to addressing racial inequity, strategies they implemented to work toward racial equity, or conceptual frameworks of what racial equity meant. Some use the terms equality and equity interchangeably.

#### **WORKING INTERDEPENDENTLY**

**Respondents were then asked how organizations with different approaches can best complement each other's work.** Many of the respondents expressed the importance of organizations with different approaches working interdependently in communities

#### **DEFINING THE WORK**

“Healing the internal and interpersonal damage caused by white supremacy in order to create individuals ready, willing, and able to engage in multiracial community and work side-by-side to build a new world based on principles of justice and equity.”

“That the "racial healing" offers nothing but platitudes that serve those – mostly white, I am sure -- who are in charge of this effort but offers nothing of substance to those groups who have not benefitted from America's idea of "equity." If this is the case, once again, whites will benefit and feel "healed" while POC will still be dealing with the "same old, same old"

“Racial healing – focuses on addressing an individual, group, community levels, current and historical trauma, wounds, philosophical/political differences to recover, reconcile, and seek liberation to create a world that is respectful, equitable, and humane.”

“We describe racial healing work as work designed to bring about repair, both material and psychological, of historical and present-day harms.”

“Working to identify and transform laws, policies and practices that unfairly discriminate against people of color, creating systemic change that leads to more equitable opportunities and outcomes for people of color.”

“Racial Equity is a “state of being” we are trying to achieve. It is a society where no one's skin color or racial or ethnic identity will be a predictor of your life opportunities.”

“As work that is more focus on changing systems and institutions to take stock of historical realities and their impact on racial justice, and put new mechanisms and processes into place to shift the distribution of power and resources.”

“To insure fairness which might not mean equality in all instances but it does mean that one has a fair shot and is not hampered by race. Racial equity insures opportunity as well as the tools necessary to take advantage of that opportunity.”



and some specifically mentioned the importance of having a common language and/or analysis to be effective in working together.

**Some of the respondents shared process ideas for learning about each other’s work through dialogue, or creating a community of practice, or developing working relationships:**

**Examples of respondents’ suggestions for CREATING A DIALOGUE include:**

- Be clear on the limitations of different approaches as well as recognize our assumptions about approaches.
- Embrace common language and framework.
- Work on understanding shared values, vision and goals.

*“Sharing in dialogue and discussion and gaining an understanding of what each do and then asking the question – what skill, resources, or capacity each has that might of real assistance.”*

**Examples of respondents’ suggestions for CREATING A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE include:**

- Share emerging learning.
- Share resources to increase public awareness about the importance of this work.
- Share best practices.

*“Looking for synergies, eliminating duplication and cooperating on programs...”*

**Examples of respondents’ suggestions for DEVELOPING WORKING RELATIONSHIPS include:**

- Link organizations that work at different scales.
- Craft a joint strategy.
- Find common ground – without forcing unnatural alignment.

*“Build real relationships with a level of trust that allows us to meaningfully share rather than position or pose with each other.”*

*“Creating integrated narrative – takes in the collective thinking transforms into convergent movement”*

**WORKING INTERDEPENDENTLY**

“All pathways lead to the goal – just and racially equitable society that values everyone as unique contributors. The work is complex multifaceted and multi layered – healthy respect for mutuality among members is prerequisite to meaning work together – opportunities for collaboration across approaches for all members will reveal unique innovative ideas for complementary strategies”

“Organizations, through this network, could learn about the effectiveness and the impact of strategies, work collectively to be innovative, create accountability mechanisms, and respond to national incidents with a strong and effective racial equity messages. It could also be a vehicle for organizations to work collaboratively toward building movement for change.”

“Recognize that the “actual” solution may be the combination of all our efforts rather than competing over who has the ‘one, right’ solution. Identify where and how our work connects in terms of addressing different aspects of a matrix of oppression and serving as both resources and referrals for other organizations.”

“Organizations that focus on different approaches to racial healing/equity work can work best together if they share the same foundation or analysis of racism. Understanding the lens through which we define race/racism allows us to continue to use our strengths and resources in different capacities to continue to move forward in addressing racial healing/equity.”

**Respondents also shared different examples of what gets in our way in working together across approaches:**

- Avoid silo-building.
- Less divide and conquer.
- Move beyond “my way is the best” and interact with a true spirit of inquiry on how all the different pieces fit together.
- Not competing and avoid one-up.
- *“First, we need to compare notes. We all feel strongly that our approach is best; otherwise we'd be doing something else. Moreover, the issues of race and equity are deeply personal and emotional. There is a temptation, therefore, to limit feedback or participation at larger gatherings, and in my experience, the ideas shared at these events are often introductory, uncontroversial, bland and unoriginal. We need a balance between an unmediated free-for-all and an overly controlled structure with little opportunity for meaningful input and discussion.”*

“To collectively invest in working through our philosophical and strategic differences to achieve our common vision of transformational change for just and inclusive world... It is important to guard against sending a message of exclusion to colleagues whose power or racial analysis differs from ours. It is equally important to create strategies for maintaining solidarity, even when there are conflicts, so that we don't help others to “divide and conquer.” Our differences need to be addressed respectfully and we need to fully leverage our respective capacities.”

- *“Most of us can learn from each other. But different approaches are not necessarily complementary. Our work generally is driven by what Indigenous nations and organizations tell us they need. If another organization is responding to a different agenda, our work may not be complementary at all.”*
- *“One of my consistent criticisms of practitioners is the lack of power analysis of racism that is multiracial and anti-colonial. Practitioners with a limited analysis of racism are harmful to the work, perpetuating and exacerbating the very dynamics they say they are working against. – We must correctly diagnose white supremacy if we are going to eliminate it from our system.”*
- *“I do think that healing work is critically important. But so often it is done poorly - it seems like the process moves too quickly to helping white people feel comfortable, to avoiding conflict, to pretending like all stories and wounds are equal. Healing can be a*

*part of justice, but only if: 1) it includes an explicit focus on truth telling, 2) it amplifies the voices and stories of people of color, and 3) it is framed in the context of historic and current structural racism (not just personal hurts). So often, when healing comes first, it becomes the beginning and the end of the conversation.”*

**When respondents were asked for any final comments, they shared more information about their work or about their hopefulness for the network or their concerns about the network. What follows are some of these final comments:**

- *“I would be thrilled beyond words to have such a network to explore what white people who desire racial healing need to do collectively to prepare the way for racial healing with justice to be possible....”*
- *“Building capacity for small organizations doing big work by making sustainable connections to build capacity would be so helpful.”*

- “I would be very greatly supportive of a network that has an action agenda - we can't continue on the path of identifying racist situations and agonizing; we have to develop well conceived, feasible and realistic strategies for change. My organization would be very willing to be active in such a process.”
- “It would be great if there's a network that could be mobilized to action when events occur that require a national response -- be it support for a positive occurrence or outcry when injustice has happened.”
- “It is a great idea. I hope it gets the support that it needs from organizations and funders.”
- “Please recognize that network development takes time for the developers and the participants....If the goal is to say "there is a network" just sharing information infrequently is enough, if the goal is to create a powerful new voice and force for racial equity and racial healing then there needs to be ongoing investments in making network activities feasible for all participants. I think it's important to look at the resourcing of the project itself.”
- “I have a lingering, nagging concern about how a network that is focused on racial healing and racial equity will deal with the intersection of oppressions. While our organization is deeply committed to the specificity of antiracism organizing, we strive to do so in a way that is informed by the intersections. We know that when we facilitate group process, there are complex interactions of oppression and privilege at work; it's not just racism we are dealing with. How “would a network of this sort, deal with that complexity while maintaining a strong antiracist focus?”
- “Any effort to build bridges, collaborations etc. can only be accomplished with someone(s) responsible for making it happen. Such brilliant collaborating efforts are all compromised when they are not resourced at all or sufficiently. Folks doing the work cannot take on this additional burden and be effective in place, their work or the collaboration.”
- “There needs to be a clear path and clear leadership for next steps after the meeting. Let's avoid having a beautiful wedding without a real marriage.”
- “Do we want this network to provide broad support for its member organizations, assisting them with expertise in areas that aren't their local strength, or is it a strength-in-numbers network that tackles broader regional/national causes that its members couldn't do themselves? (Or, of course, both of those things--they needn't be exclusive, though if it is both we would likely want to prioritize.) Once we answer that question I think the specific "products" that we want to work to generate will percolate more organically to the surface.”
- "The field desperately needs to establish a recognized and accepted set of metrics that can solidly measure the impact of interventions and cessation of racist policies, structures and systems on the quality of everyone's life."

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 ~ Lee Bell, Kevin Fong, Christopher Schultz, Mike Wenger and Maggie Potapchuk reviewed specific survey questions and identified themes which are reflected in this executive summary.

~Executive Summary Design-Lydia Gonzalez-Seals,  
 Staff Member of Action Communication and Education Reform Inc.