

Cultural Proficiencies for Racial Equity: A Framework

Joint ALA/ARL Building Cultural Proficiencies for
Racial Equity Framework Task Force

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American Library Association (ALA)
Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL)
Association of Research Libraries (ARL)
Public Library Association (PLA)

Cultural Proficiencies for Racial Equity: A Framework

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Introduction: This framework has been developed as a tool both theoretical and practical in its orientation, as a guide for developing personal, organizational, institutional, and systems-level knowledge and understanding of the nature of racism and its many manifestations. Racism results in differential, inequitable, and devastating impacts on Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) in the library and information science (LIS) sector, the communities libraries serve, and beyond. The framework is not intended to be **liberatory practice** in itself,—an instrument or agent that will abolish racial inequity or a step-by-step guide—but, rather to provide the grounding needed to effect change in thinking, behavior, and **practice** that will lead to better outcomes for **racialized** and **minoritized** populations. Therefore, while the framework offers examples of implementation, these are not meant to represent an exhaustive list. Although the LIS sector cannot, on its own, solve the problem of racism in society, it can acknowledge the role it has played in contributing to and sustaining systems of inequity and oppression of communities of color, and own the responsibility for countering its effects, both historically and today. And while we acknowledge the global impacts of racism, for the purposes of this framework, we will specifically address the impacts of racism in both the United States and Canada.

We acknowledge that Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) -centered language is frequently evolving and rooted in identity to include intersecting identities.

The primary focus of this framework is on racial inequity, but it would be remiss to neglect the ways in which white supremacy works based on interlocking systems of oppression, such as sexism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, and others. These systems work in tandem to create intricate layers of oppressive tactics; as such, in order to be fully committed to racial equity, it is necessary to understand the intersectionality of these systems and to address them while working to enhance racial equity in libraries.

The authors of this framework aim to use language that is as universal as possible, but EDI-centered language in particular is frequently evolving and rooted in identity. As such, disagreement on language usage is natural. In many ways, the language that is used in this framework reflects the unique positionalities of the people who are writing it as well as the contemporary moment in which it is written. This framework is intended to be a living document with language updates made as necessary- at a time and by individuals to be determined by the sponsoring organizations.

- 1. Addressing and Interrogating How White Supremacy, White Privilege and Racism Show Up in Libraries.**

Engaging in antiracism is multifaceted. Understanding core ideas around racial equity is one of the first steps to laying a strong foundation for racial equity work and allows us to take individual actions into a holistic practice.

1.1 Understanding Historical Inequities

The phenomenon of racism is not new, but rather is rooted in an historical trajectory of oppression and discrimination (based on **racial/ethnic identity**) that has its roots in **imperialism** and **colonialism**, and which has been supported by policies, misleading science, laws, norms, and religion for centuries. In order to understand the degree to which **racism** and **white supremacy** are embedded in contemporary systems, it is necessary to understand how systems of inequity have created and sustained disadvantage for BIPOC populations while rewarding those who identify as majority, or “white” with often unrecognized, unearned advantages. This system of white supremacy is rooted in a fabricated hierarchy of human value based on race and manifests even within communities of color. Recognizing that institutions such as slavery and colonialism have played out differently within the US and Canada, the resulting inequities and their impacts are consistent across those borders and are evidenced by disparate outcomes for BIPOC populations as they navigate threats to their survival via social systems (healthcare, education, criminal justice, housing, etc.).

Framework Implementation Example: Employees and patrons of a public library system in Ontario participate in the [KAIROS Blanket Exercise](#) to gain greater understanding of the history of oppression and genocide experienced by Indigenous populations in Canada.

1.2 Methodologies for Self Assessment - Fundamental (Adjacent to Historical Inequities)

Including self-assessment in antiracist work is critical to the success of antiracist practice. Because society is built upon systems that work to minoritize many people, individuals have been conditioned to practice implicit, internalized forms of racism that we need to address. Including self-assessment allows us to identify power and privilege in the LIS profession.

Framework Implementation Example: Library staff can take any of the Implicit Association Tests (IAT) related to race/ethnicity provided by Project Implicit at Harvard University. Please note that the purpose of IAT is to measure associations, both positive and negative, toward specific groups and identities. It is *not* intended to predict behavioral bias. More information can be found on the IAT's website listed in the resource section.

1.3 Libraries & Racial Equity

The history of Libraries and the LIS profession cannot be told without acknowledging and addressing an origin story that was built on a foundation of exclusion, not inclusion,

homogeneity, not diversity. Reverberations of these inequities must be acknowledged as BIPOC individuals continue to experience the residual harm of this past. Even as physical structures in the early 20th century were built to provide library services to People of Color, the “Separate but equal” doctrine was applied at whim in tandem with governmental policies of the time that segregated, excluded, and harmed these communities. As LIS workers, our foundational growth is strengthened by an ability to identify and acknowledge ways in which whiteness and white supremacy have impacted the field of librarianship. Beyond this, Libraries and LIS workers must actively engage in practices that address and redress these inequities.

Framework Implementation Example: Conduct a policy audit to gauge whether your library’s policies are having a differential impact on communities of color. While outside of the LIS field, the City of Seattle’s Race and Social Justice Initiative developed a [toolkit](#) that outlines a process for assessing whether a potential policy will have negative effects on BIPOC communities. The toolkit can be easily adapted for the LIS profession..

I.4 The Language of Racial Equity & White Supremacy

The process of learning, understanding, and thinking critically about EDI terminology creates a consistency around shared language. Developing a common understanding of core constructs such as racial identity, systemic racism, **structural racism, equity, inclusion, diversity,** and **social justice-** along with **internalized oppression** and **antiracism, is a necessary step in advancing racial equity.**

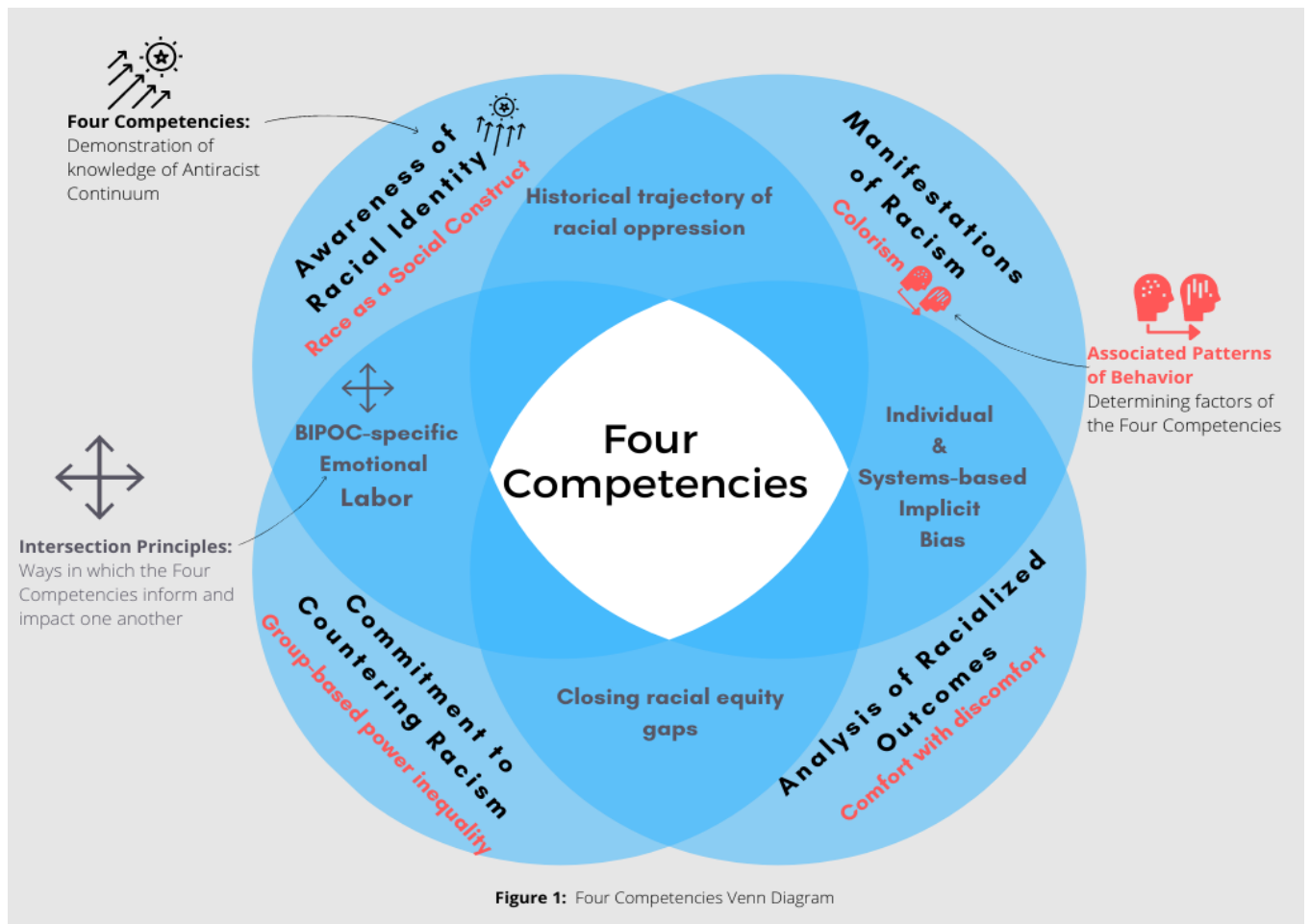
Framework Implementation Example: Host a forum in your library where employees research glossaries from anti-racist organizations to develop a list of terms and phrases related to racial equity and build consensus around those definitions for the community.

I.5. The Competency Continuum

Libraries should approach racial equity and other types of EDI work not as an end but as a practice, understanding that racial equity work is an iterative process during which we are re-learning, re-envisioning, and rebuilding. As understanding evolves and contexts and vocabulary change, libraries must reassess and revisit their practices to ensure they remain relevant, fulfill their objective, and do not cause harm. To this end libraries need to have a clear and realistic plan to evaluate cultural competencies* within their organizations and must demonstrate openness to critically look inward and make the necessary changes. Libraries must actively interrogate their practices at all levels (individual, interpersonal, organizational, structural), and continually explore how power is held and granted within their organizations to ensure an equitable distribution.

This process is reflected in the competency continuum illustrated in Figure 1, below. The diagram shows four broad categories for approaching the work moving from an awareness of

the concept of racial identity (its historical, social construction, its development as a strategy to divide cross-racial alliances who were organizing for labor solidarity in colonial times), to understanding the contemporary manifestations or realizations of racism (e.g. anti-Black racism, mass incarceration, Indigenous invisibility). From understanding of how racism shows up historically and contemporaneously, we move to analyze the profound impacts of racism on communities of color, e.g. in disparities in access to quality healthcare, the “achievement gap” in education, the lack of generational wealth for communities of color, or the lack of representation in the library sector. Once we fully understand these principles, we can begin to explore the strategies--the behavioral, policy, and systems changes--that will bring about greater racial equity.



* Please note that “competency” in this context does not mean that there is an ending to this process. The medical field has coined the term “cultural humility” to reflect an ongoing commitment to life-long learning, acknowledging and accepting our own limitations to cultural sensitivity, and recognizing power imbalances that exist in institutions and systems. The term “competency” is used above, with acknowledgement of both its ubiquity and its limitations.

Framework Implementation Example : Develop strategies that support your organization in moving beyond cultural competence (attending a single training, or reading a few journals/articles that discuss EDI) to cultural fluency (an on-going, sustained process that allows for continued growth and deeper understanding).

2. **Accountability, Assessment, and Implementation**

In order to engage in antiracist practices, libraries and library workers must hold themselves accountable individually, organizationally, and structurally. Effective accountability uses assessment methods to evaluate and guide where resources and energy should be directed.

2.1. **Antiracist Objectives and Organization Strategies for Libraries**

Libraries, their workers, and the communities that they serve are all unique, as are their needs. It is for this reason that there is not a singular plan or path that all libraries and library workers can use for assessment and accountability. Each individual, organization, and library must do the work to map out how assessment and accountability works best in their contexts. While there is no singular path forward, there are components each individual and organization should consider in order to implement change. Below are a set of key components needed for successful assessment and accountability measures.

Framework Implementation Example: Start by assessing your organization's understanding of EDI by reviewing and completing the [2021 Equity Scorecard for Libraries and Information Organizations](#).

2.2 **Hiring, Retention, and Advancement**

For decades, the library profession has viewed and used “diversity” or “minority” recruitment as the principal strategy for addressing the lack of representation of minoritized racial/ethnic populations in the profession. Numerous library associations (i.e. the American Library Association and the Association of Research Libraries), as well as several library and information science programs throughout the US and Canada, have long histories of hosting recruitment and career developmental programs which, in spite of some valid critique in the literature, have yielded some benefits to the participants in the programs, the associations that host them, and the profession at large. However, with rare exception and in spite of millions of dollars of investment over time, these programs have done little more than maintain stasis with respect to representation of BIPOC individuals in the LIS workforce. Strategies to retain BIPOC employees are anecdotal and are not readily found in the literature. To some degree, advancement has been addressed—at least in the academic library sector—through leadership development programs for early- and mid-career librarians, but participation in such programs is mostly limited to employees of well-resourced institutions. Libraries, library organizations, and the profession at large must remain committed to collecting demographic information about the workforce, but must also adjust categories as constructs change with respect to racial/ethnic identity. Additionally, the LIS profession must develop systematic approaches to measuring the climate of the workplace for employees from minoritized populations. This requires the disaggregation of data and the ability of leaders and managers

to accept feedback without judgment, defensiveness, or retaliation, and that they act on the input provided by measuring climate systematically (at regular intervals) and creating interventions that will improve the experiences, engagement, and the sense of belonging for employees from racialized identities. Evaluation, retention, or advancement processes should include the consideration of whether such policies have greater differential impact (short- or long-term) on employees of color than on those from majority populations.

Furthermore, data must be collected and tracked concerning the opportunities for leadership and development that are provided to library employees from minoritized groups in order to identify access gaps and uncover opportunities for improvement within organizations. Processes must be employed to help managers and supervisors analyze and track bias when assigning leadership tasks, stretch assignments, or other career-enhancing opportunities. The LIS profession must track the representation of minoritized individuals in leadership and managerial roles, whether titular roles in organizations (managers, directors, supervisors, team-leaders, etc.) or comparable roles in civic organizations, associations, professional communities of practice, and other contexts where communities of color have not had, historically, access to power, resources, or opportunities to advocate for themselves or for other marginalized people.

Framework Implementation Example: Move beyond traditional evaluative methods used for all staff to develop specialized 'temperature check' opportunities for BIPOC staff. Offered in the form of safe space conversations or anonymous surveys, temperature check questions and conversations should be used to inform and improve policies and practices that prevent BIPOC staff from finding earned success in their roles.

2.3 Strategic Planning

The work of racial equity requires that individuals and organizations not only examine the past and understand the degree to which policies and practices have created and sustained an inequitable present, but also create strategies for reenvisioning and creating a more equitable future. Traditional strategic planning processes often do not accommodate full integration of goals and objectives that advance racial equity without the explicit naming of it as an organizational and/or institutional priority. Therefore, strategic planning must articulate the development, implementation, iteration, and measurement of changes to policies, procedures, and behaviors that specifically address racial equity. Strategic plans that center racial equity are rooted in accountability and marked by an actualization of successful processes and outcomes. Conversely, a failure to identify racial equity as an organizational priority may be ineffective in creating change.

Framework Implementation Example: Strategic plans shouldn't be developed in a silo. Find ways to include the perspectives of BIPOC staff in the development of an inclusive strategic plan. If your staff is largely homogenous, find ways to turn outward and engage community members in the planning process.

2.4. Policies, Procedures, and Norms

Many of the policies, procedures, and norms employed and enforced in libraries are rooted in white supremacy, and are often exclusionary to BIPOC individuals. This stems from the fact that in most settings, including libraries, cultural practices associated with “whiteness” are normalized and considered the standard or expected behaviors. As a result, policies, procedures, and norms meant to fix a problem or improve access and service, can cause harm for BIPOC communities. While not necessarily intentional, this harm emerges as a result of organizations implementing policies without considering how they will affect the different and diverse populations they serve.

Examples include:

- Both physical police presence and internal policies that negatively impact patrons;
- Inconsistent policies around library spaces that may consciously/unconsciously create barriers to service for BIPOC communities;
- Descriptive/metadata practices that use offensive or pejorative/outdated terms;
- Library Fines & Fees;
- Requiring ID in order to access library services;
- Overemphasizing academic credentials in the hiring process.

Therefore, libraries must assess policies and procedures through a lens of racial equity to identify if and how they are causing harm to BIPOC patrons and employees. To this end, they should always consider the possible unintended consequences or adverse impacts a policy, procedure, or norm could have, which racial or ethnic groups could be affected by it, and what can be done to minimize or prevent negative consequences or impacts.

Framework Implementation Example: Before implementing new policies, procedures, and norms, administrators would consult with a diverse group of stakeholders to assess any potentially harmful consequences.

2.5. Sharing the Work: BIPOC Communities and Allies

The burden of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) work, including racial equity, often falls on members of minoritized communities: Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, people with disabilities, and members of the **LGBTQIA2S+** community. While it is important to have members of these communities engaged in the work of EDI committees, working groups, or task forces, they should not be the only ones in them. Trying to ease the burden on minoritized communities by having only allies work on these groups is also faulty as it does not take into account the perspective of these communities. Therefore, successful, useful, and equitable racial equity work requires participation by BIPOC individuals and their allies. In addition to easing the burden off BIPOC employees, mixed participation ensures buy-in from multiple sectors and a sense of collective ownership, accountability, and responsibility.

Framework Implementation Example: Coalition building is central to moving the work forward. Examples of this include REFORMA, BCALA, and APALA statements in support of Black Lives Matter and their work speaking out against violence being perpetuated against Asian communities.

2.6 Accountability in Racial Equity Work

Racial equity working groups, committees, or task forces must have a clear scope and mandate as well as accountability mechanisms to ensure equity, transparency, and trust within their organizations. They must also employ equitable practices in areas like decision-making (e.g. consensus building), discussions (e.g. adjusting to different styles of communication), membership composition, and duration of terms.

Regardless of the composition of the committee, working group, or task force, it is imperative that proper compensation is offered to the members. Compensation can take different forms, including financial compensation, promotion, or a redistribution of responsibilities to provide those working in EDI with the time and space they require to do the work. This not only removes the burden of EDI work and makes it equitable, it also denotes that the organization considers the work as necessary as all the other duties and responsibilities that help the organization meet its strategic goals.

Framework Implementation Example: Organizations structure racial equity and EDI committees using the [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committees: Getting Started Guide—UBC Equity & Inclusion Office](#).

2.7. Solidarity and Librarianship

The act of solidarity requires moments of stasis and movement. The practice of solidarity in libraries can be characterized by acknowledging the ways in which library policies, programs, services, and internal structures cause harm to BIPOC communities, and by actively identifying systems and structures for mitigating these harms. Solidarity in libraries is also circumstantial, requiring organizations to develop action plans in support of when and how to act as a vocal amplifier for underrepresented or minoritized voices. It is equally important that within the scope of these considerations, libraries understand when to remain silent, effectual listeners who recognize and respect the importance of providing space for BIPOC stakeholders (internal and external) to speak, be heard, and guide conversations. Of critical importance is the understanding that solidarity is not performative, experimental, or rooted in expectancy; rather, it is the sincere demonstration of libraries' authentic interest in protecting BIPOC communities.

Framework Implementation Example: Commit to providing space in conversations (whether casual, in the workplace, etc.) where the voices of BIPOC people are centered and prioritized.

This includes listening for and amplifying those messages that may be hidden, ignored, or suppressed.

2.8 Power Relationships Within the Field

Racial equity can only be realized when power differentials between BIPOC and white individuals are equalized and when communities of color have the agency, rights, opportunities, and access to resources to ensure that they can thrive. Historical and systemic inequalities exist and must be deliberately addressed and remedied. This process is facilitated by ceding power and providing opportunities for BIPOC individuals to develop and cultivate power. This can only be accomplished by guaranteeing that minoritized populations will have a significant role in envisioning and implementing their desired future *if they so choose*. Ways in which power differentials show up in everyday practice and which must be countered at a systemic level include:

- Power structures within work distribution (ability to work from home);
- Overrepresentation of people from majority cultures/identities in manager roles;
- Examining what is considered “canon” in material resources;
- Power one holds in deciding whether to commit to equity work (it's a luxury for some).

Framework Implementation Example: Do not be complicit in the silencing of BIPOC cohorts. Use your power and privilege to amplify and give credit to the work of BIPOC contributors.

3. Building Cross-Sector Cultural Proficiency- Influencing and Affecting Change in Other Professional, Civic, Political Spheres.

Libraries, archives, museums, and other cultural heritage organizations do not operate in a vacuum, or in silos. They are inextricably connected to communities whether neighborhoods, schools, colleges and universities, corporations, civic entities and beyond. They serve as microcosms of broader systems and structures and, therefore, can and should serve as models for developing and implementing transformative policies and practices that will lead to greater racial equity.

3.1 Civic

Public libraries, for example, can serve as models for civic entities with respect to the hiring and retention of a diverse workforce. Academic libraries can take the lead on campuses for developing transformative practices in climate assessment, as well as analysis of institutional policies for their impact on minoritized employees. Moreover, libraries and adjacent professional sectors should seek out opportunities to collaborate with other professional sectors such as corporations, K-12 education, health and human services sectors, and governmental agencies to develop strategies for addressing inequities, whether that be in employment opportunities, representation in collections and programming, or other intersecting domains. Cross-sector collaborations will have greater impact on communities of color and will develop champions for the LIS profession from a broad range of stake-holder groups.

Framework Implementation Example: Public libraries provide a space and resources for

community discussions on racism and racial equity, inviting civic leaders, K-12 educators, religious leaders, those from the health services sector, and others who serve communities of color.

3.2 Information

As leaders in collecting, storing, and disseminating information, librarians and library workers must support all patrons by building inclusive collections, classifying materials appropriately by centering minoritized communities, and disseminating useful information to under-resourced communities. This set of best practices, however, must also be proactively shared and encouraged among other sectors.

Framework Implementation Example: Libraries of all types are developing and conducting diversity audits to ensure that their collections or resources represent a broad range of authors from diverse racial/ethnic identities. Numerous library workers are conducting these audits in tandem with analysis of subject headings and metadata to ensure that resources are classified appropriately.

3.3 Corporations

Libraries and library consortia spend millions of dollars on services and products provided by vendors. Libraries can use their purchasing power to promote cross-sector collaboration in racial equity by refusing to engage in business with companies whose practices are antithetical to racial equity.

Examples of this include:

- Vendors profiting from the work of incarcerated or detained individuals.
- Companies that engage in user surveillance.
- Businesses whose products could cause harm to BIPOC individuals (i.e. artificial intelligence solutions that are mainly “trained” with white individuals).

Framework Implementation Example: Libraries can create and apply ethical and sustainable vendor guidelines and checklists when deciding to purchase new products and services.

4. Antiracist Leadership

Libraries and archives have an opportunity to serve as exemplars to other professions in building and sustaining antiracist climates, cultures, and practices, but must commit to the work of internal and systems change in the process. Antiracist leadership acknowledges the degree to which white supremacy culture is embedded in every aspect of our profession, and works deliberately and constructively to question dominant cultural norms and counter them when they are negatively impacting or harming communities of color. Leaders must understand that differential outcomes for BIPOC individuals are not a product of inherent deficits to those communities, but rather are an outcome of problematic systems that create a

legacy of advantage for people from majority cultures and identities, or for those who acquiesce to the phenomenon of assimilation. Leaders who are committed to social justice work- create environments where minoritized communities have agency to realize their full potential, countering--if not working to eliminate--oppressive systems and practices. Anti-racist leaders both outwardly and behind the scenes encourage and support equity efforts from groups and individuals within their organizations, and champion efforts even in the face of controversy. Moreover, leaders committed to racial equity recognize that solutions to systemic problems require proximity to and strategies that are focused on the challenges at hand. Effective leaders should acknowledge the importance of intersectionality and realize that coalescing around an antiracist agenda will have benefits for other marginalized groups and society at large. In addition, leaders must cultivate a comfort level with controversy so as to support the challenging conversations that are unavoidable when one is committed to antiracist work. Transformative leaders cultivate and sustain the work of collective action, building alliances with other groups, organizations, and sectors committed to racial equity. (Museus)

4.1. The Interconnectedness of Libraries and the Larger Institutions of ALA/ARL

The American Library Association (ALA) and the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), have long espoused commitments to equity, diversity, and inclusion. Within the last 25 years, millions of dollars of US federal grants have been secured by these and other organizations, and individuals, corporations, and institutions have committed significant funding to largely support diversity recruitment efforts. Significantly fewer resources have been dedicated to leadership development efforts for BIPOC populations in LIS. In addition, library and archive associations have convened numerous events- conferences, webinars, and other professional development and community-building activities – as well as published a great deal on the topic over the last several years, but particularly since May of 2020. While some progress has been realized through these efforts, the profession has not seen substantive change as evidenced by demographic statistics (i.e. higher BIPOC representation) within the workforce. Core to the challenge is that libraries, whether public, academic, school, or special, are situated within larger structures founded upon principles and histories of white supremacy with generations of policies and practices that were exclusionary in their intent. Often library boards, university boards of trustees, and other leadership entities articulate values in support of antiracist or EDI agendas but fail to set policy, fail to allocate resources, or otherwise display behaviors and actions that are inconsistent with those commitments. An additional challenge is that no library type or category is monolithic; each organization or institution is unique with distinct missions to diverse stakeholders and, therefore, strategies for addressing racial inequity must be customized and be responsive to those needs. Conversely, messaging and approaches are often inconsistent and diffuse, without a collective voice or a common vision. Developing consistency in vocabulary, communication, strategies, and vision will help to establish universal goals that have the potential to create deeper and enduring change for the profession.

Libraries operate independently and are not accountable to one another or to larger

institutions like ALA/ARL. As such, these and similar associations lack the ability to mandate wide-spread change in the field. However, there are other ways in which larger associations can model commitment to anti-racist work, influence organization and policy, and provide mechanisms to support collective action. In this way, Organizations large and small can explore what contributions they can make that will advance racial equity within their communities. While anti-racist leadership can and should come from anywhere within an organization, professional associations like ALA and ARL greatly influence the LIS sector's attitudes, priorities, and behaviors and can lead as they set policy and model efforts to advance racial equity.

Framework Implementation Example: Associations could begin by collecting and publishing relevant statistics (e.g. disaggregated demographic data, equity audits of collections, retention statistics of BIPOC employees) or include racial equity as a component of accreditation rubrics.

4.2 . Role of the Member- Advancing Member Impact

In order to benefit from participation in ALA/ARL, and other library associations, it is imperative that library workers understand that while these larger institutions often influence and inform our work, we should not be solely reliant upon them to move this work forward. The responsibility for educating ourselves about racial equity and upholding systems of accountability falls on us as individuals and as a collective, with deep implications for the workplace and our communities. It is important to remember that each person, regardless of title or position, has the power to influence their community by modeling antiracist practices, advocating for BIPOC communities, and becoming actively involved in committee work, leadership, and governance of library associations.

Framework Implementation Example: When voting for new leadership members can choose to prioritize candidates from minoritized communities or those whose candidate statements clearly mention racial equity and EDI as a priority.

Addendum 1: Background of the Framework

In September 2019 the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), along with ALA's Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services (ODLOS); the Public Library Association (PLA); and the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) formed the Building Cultural Proficiencies for Racial Equity Framework Task Force with the goal of developing a cultural proficiencies in racial equity framework.

As a result of extensive planning and research, including an environmental scan, development of a logic mode, and cross-sector survey, the CPRE Task Force has developed the Building Cultural Proficiencies for Racial Equity framework. The framework is designed to provide a comprehensive set of steps and best practices that inform EDI-centered library work. Rooted in an approach that engages institutions of all types, the framework provides action steps for coalescing EDI engagement, whether those efforts are informal grassroots, formal initiatives, or in the initial planning stages.

*Read more about the Cultural Proficiencies for Racial Equity Task Force [here](#).

Cultural Proficiencies for Racial Equity Task Force members include:

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Addendum 2: Glossary & Resources for Further Reading

Bibliography of Suggested Further Readings

Readings and resources discussed throughout the framework are listed here underneath the section in which they appear.

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Glossary

Anti-Racism

"The work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life. Anti-racism tends to be an individualized approach, and set up in opposition to individual racist behaviors and impacts." (Race Forward 2015)

Antiracism is an approach to racial equity that begins with the assumption that all races are equal and not in need of development as a whole. It suggests that racial injustices are a result of racist policies, intentional or unintentional, and that racial equity can only come through deliberate changes in political, economic, and social structures. Antiracism implies something beyond being "not racist", and requires a more active opposition to racist structures through action.

Anti-Racist

“An anti-racist is someone who is supporting an antiracist policy through their actions or expressing antiracist ideas. This includes the expression of ideas that racial groups are equals and do not need developing, and supporting policies that reduce racial inequity.” (Racial Equity Tools 2020; summarized from Kendi 2019)

Colonialism

Colonialism refers to domination through economic, political, and social policies or ideologies, especially by a non-indigenous people over indigenous, minority, or marginalized populations.

“Colonialism is a practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another.” (Kohn and Reddy 2017)

“Colonialism can refer to a transnational process of domination, the policies by which it is carried out, and the ideologies that underwrite it.” (Ramanath 2012)

In the Americas, colonialism refers to the invasion and large-scale theft of Indigenous lands by European powers, and the continuing domination of those lands and peoples through economic, political, and social policies or ideologies (adapted from Waziyatan 2014)

Diversity

Can refer to a range of differences between people that may include race, gender, sexual orientation, class, age, education, religion, language, culture, and physical or cognitive abilities. It may also include different ideas, perspectives, and values. In the context of institutions, organizations, or communities, it may refer to representation of these differences within the group, the active presence of different voices and perspectives, or the valuing of these differences as part of the culture. It is a necessary, but not sufficient step towards “Equity”.

Equity

“Equity means fairness and justice and focuses on outcomes that are most appropriate for a given group, recognizing different challenges, needs, and histories. It is distinct from diversity, which can simply mean variety (the presence of individuals with various identities). It is also not equality, or “same treatment,” which doesn’t take differing needs or disparate outcomes into account. Systemic equity involves a robust system and dynamic process consciously designed to create, support and sustain social justice.” (Race Forward 2015)

Imperialism

A system of oppression that relies on nations exerting power and dominion over another nation or group either by direct territorial acquisitions or indirectly by exerting control over their political, economic, or cultural life.

Inclusion

“Inclusion means an environment in which all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully; are valued for their distinctive skills, experiences, and perspectives; have equal access to resources and opportunities; and can contribute fully to the organization's success. (Adapted from Society for Human Resources Management, Hewlett Packard, and Ferris State University)” and (Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services 2017)

“Being included within a group or structure. More than simply diversity and quantitative representation, inclusion involves authentic and empowered participation, with a true sense of belonging and full access to opportunities.” (Race Forward 2015)

Internalized Racism

“Internalized racism is the situation that occurs in a racist system when a racial group oppressed by racism supports the supremacy and dominance of the dominating group by maintaining or participating in the set of attitudes, behaviors, social structures, and ideologies that undergird the dominating group's power. It involves four essential and interconnected elements:

1. *Decision-making* - Due to racism, people of color do not have the ultimate decision-making power over the decisions that control our lives and resources. As a result, on a personal level, we may think white people know more about what needs to be done for us than we do. On an interpersonal level, we may not support each other's authority and power – especially if it is in opposition to the dominating racial group. Structurally, there is a system in place that rewards people of color who support white supremacy and power and coerces or punishes those who do not.
2. *Resources* - Resources, broadly defined (e.g. money, time, etc), are unequally in the hands and under the control of white people. Internalized racism is the system in place that makes it difficult for people of color to get access to resources for our own communities and to control the resources of our community. We learn to believe that serving and using resources for ourselves and our particular community is not serving “everybody.”
3. *Standards* - With internalized racism, the standards for what is appropriate or “normal” that people of color accept are white people's or Eurocentric standards. We have difficulty naming, communicating and living up to our deepest standards and values, and holding ourselves and each other accountable to them.

4. *Naming the problem* - There is a system in place that misnames the problem of racism as a problem of or caused by people of color and blames the disease – emotional, economic, political, etc. – on people of color. With internalized racism, people of color might, for example, believe we are more violent than white people and not consider state-sanctioned political violence or the hidden or privatized violence of white people and the systems they put in place and support." (Bivens 1995)

Liberatory Practice

Liberation is the act of freeing people from forms of oppression on the individual and societal levels resulting in "relationships, societies, communities, organizations, and collective spaces characterized by equity, fairness, and the implementation of systems for the allocation of goods, services, benefits, and rewards that support the full participation of each human and the promotion of their full humanness." (Love, DeJong, and Hughbanks 2007). According to Paulo Freire (2000), liberation is not an end but "a reflection and action directed at the structures to be transformed."

Liberatory practice and work then represent the process of reflection and action combined with engagement in concrete liberation-inducing or liberatory behaviors that lead to societal and individual transformation (Love, DeJong, and Hughbanks 2007).

LGBTQIA2S+

Acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and/or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Two-Spirit, and the many different affirmative ways in which people choose to self-identify.

Minoritized

"The term, 'minoritized,' unlike 'minority' calls attention to the institutional processes through which religious, racial, and cultural groups are rendered into a minority rather than presuming this status based on prior or inherent identity." (Shalabi 2014)

Minoritized refers to "the social construction of underrepresentation and subordination in US social institutions." . . . "Persons are not born into a minority status, nor are they minoritized in every social context (e.g., their families, racially homogenous friendship groups, or places of worship). Instead, they are rendered minorities in particular situations and institutional environments that sustain an overrepresentation of Whiteness" (p.9). (Harper 2012)

Racial Identity

Racial Identity is the psychological sense of belonging perceived by oneself and others based on membership in existing racial categories. Racial identities often involve a sense of shared culture and history with others from a particular racial group, although this is not a necessary condition for all forms of racial identity.

Racial identities function at both the individual and the societal levels. For individuals, racial identities often provide a sense of group belonging as well as shared cultures and beliefs. When individuals talk about their racial identity, they often are referring to some level of connection, shared experience, and/or commonality between themselves and other members of their racial group. It is the perceived connection between members of the racial group that forms the content and meaning of racial identities ("Racial Identity" 2012).

"Racial identity is externally imposed: 'How do others perceive me?'. Racial identity is also internally constructed: 'How do I identify myself?' (National Museum for African American History and Culture, n.d.)

Racialized/Racialization

The social construction of race. To be racialized is to be defined by one's race. A social construction of races as "different and unequal in ways that matter to economic, political and social life" ("Racialization" 2008; Ontario Human Rights Commission, n.d.).

Racism

Generally means believing that a person's behavior is determined by stable inherited characteristics deriving from separate racial stocks; each of these distinctive attributes is then evaluated in relation to ideas of superiority and inferiority. This implies that there is a social construction in which certain groups of people are superior to others. This social construction is the result of social, economic, and political factors that have ascribed power to some groups, while leaving others powerless ("Racism" 2008).

"a doctrine that holds that the world's human population consists of various "races" that are the primary determinants of human traits and capacities. This doctrine typically regards one's own race as superior to other races" (Pettigrew 2020)

Social Justice

Social justice focuses on power dynamics among different groups of people while acknowledging historical and institutional inequities. It has a vision of a society with equitable distribution of resources, in which "all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure, recognized, and treated with respect." (Adams, et al. 2016)

“Researching and addressing the distributions of the social common good through the lens of historical power structures and social norms. Promoting just and equitable outcomes.” (University of Minnesota College of Education and Human Development n.d.)

Structural Racism

“A system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity. It identifies dimensions of our history and culture that have allowed privileges associated with ‘whiteness’ and disadvantages associated with ‘color’ to endure and adapt over time. Structural racism is not something that a few people or institutions choose to practice. Instead it has been a feature of the social, economic and political systems in which we all exist.” (The Aspen Institute n.d.)

“the historical and contemporary policies, practices, and norms that create and maintain white supremacy” (The Urban Institute n.d.)

Systemic Racism

In some cases, systemic racism is used interchangeably with structural racism or institutional racism.

“Systemic racism includes: recurrent individual mistreatment; exclusionary or harmful institutional policies and practices; and broader societal and intergenerational injustice.” (Sheppard, et al. 2020)

“societal or organizational structures and policies that privilege one race over another” (Nelson 2021)

White Supremacy

White supremacy is a term used to characterize various belief systems central to which are one or more of the following key tenets: 1) whites should have dominance over people of other backgrounds, especially where they may co-exist; 2) whites should live by themselves in a whites-only society; 3) white people have their own "culture" that is superior to other cultures; 4) white people are genetically superior to other people” (Anti-Defamation League n.d.).

A historically based, institutionally perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations, and peoples of color by white peoples and nations of the European continent, for the purpose of maintaining and defending a system of wealth, power, and privilege (Martinez 1998).

Whiteness

The result of a social and cultural process that situates White people in a place of power and privilege because of their skin color and White racial identity...There is more to whiteness than White

identity and racial privilege, however; it relates to a system and process that keeps those who are in dominant positions from recognizing or understanding how inequalities and racism operate in society ("Whiteness" 2008).

Though the term invokes ideas related to skin color, whiteness refers more specifically to a structural position—that is, to a racialized social identity that is positioned as superior relative to other "races" within a system of racial hierarchy. Indeed, because race is socially constructed—and not biological—whiteness can be understood as the result of social and cultural processes, rooted in a global history of European colonialism, imperialism, and transatlantic slavery, and maintained today through various institutions, ideologies, and everyday social practices (Cancelmo and Mueller 2019)

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