DEVELOPING MULTICULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS: A CHANGE MODEL
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Multicultural organization development (MCOD) is a process of change that supports an organization moving from a monocultural – or exclusive – organization to a multicultural – or inclusive, diverse and equitable – organization. The approach requires an initial assessment of where the organization is and a commitment to a vision of where it wants to be in the future. From an analysis of the gap between where the organization is and where it wants to be, specific interventions are then designed to accomplish the identified change goals. The MCOD model, based on earlier work by Jackson and Holvino, provides a useful way for an organization to:

1. frame an initial assessment of where it is on the path to multiculturalism,

2. decide on a vision of multiculturalism it wants, and

3. select appropriate goals and interventions to support its desired vision.

THE MULTICULTURAL ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT MODEL					
MONOCULTURAL		**TRANSITIONAL**		**MULTICULTURAL**	
Exclusionary	**Passive Club**	**Compliance**	**Positive Action**	**Redefining**	**Multicultural**
Committed to the dominance, values and norms of one group. Actively excludes in its mission and practices those who are not members of the dominant group.	Actively or passively excludes those who are not members of the dominant group. Includes other members only if they "fit" the dominant norm.	Passively committed to including others without making major changes. Includes only a few members of other groups.	Committed to making a special effort to include others, especially those in designated protected "classes." Tolerates the differences that those others bring.	Actively works to expand its definition of inclusion, diversity and equity. Tries to examine and change practices that may act as barriers to members of non-dominant groups.	Actively includes a diversity of people representing different groups' styles and perspectives. Continuously learns and acts to make the systemic changes required to value, include and be fair to all kinds of people.
Values and promotes the dominant perspective of one group, culture or style.		Seeks to integrate others into systems created under dominant norms.		Values and integrates the perspectives of diverse identities, cultures, styles and groups into the organization's work and systems.	

The MCOD Model as Diagnostic Tool

The MCOD model proposes that organizations go through six phases as they move from being **monocultural**, an exclusionary organization where the values, culture or style of one group – for example, white men – are dominant, to **multicultural**, an inclusive, diverse and equitable organization where the perspectives, culture and styles of diverse peoples are valued and contribute to organizational excellence.

Monocultural organizations take two forms. In the first *exclusionary* stage, organizations explicitly and actively base their business and processes on one cultural group's norms and values and advocate openly for the privileges and dominance of that group. Today, not many public organizations are exclusive in this way. In the second stage, the *passive club,* organizations are still based on one cultural group's informal rules, systems and ways of doing things, while not openly advocating dominance. For example, they only admit those who are similar or closely fit the dominant group's norms and expectations. In this stage, organizations operate like private social clubs where the norms include passive informal exclusion and ignorance of differences.

A *transitional* period in the path from *monocultural* to *multicultural* organizations is observed in the third and fourth stages of development. Organizations in the third stage, *compliance,* are passively committed to including members of non-dominant groups, but do not make any substantive changes in their management practices so as to include those who are different. At this stage, attention to differences is more symbolic than real, such as in a predominantly Christian organization with one or two Muslim members where the cultural symbols and celebrations remain Christian.

In the next *positive action* stage, organizations are actively committed to including members of non-dominant groups, making special efforts to attract them and be tolerant of the differences they bring. But subtle ways in which the norms, structures and ways of doing work still favor those in the dominant group make it hard for those who are different to feel that they can contribute and advance in the organization. Although there is tolerance and limited attention to differences, not enough culture and structural change has occurred to include and offer equal opportunities to all people. At this stage, a critical mass of

non-dominant group members may pioneer change by questioning existing practices. A good example is questioning the practice of "face-time," the expectation of spending long hours in the office and holding meetings very late or very early in the day. This practice disadvantages women and single parents, who carry a dispro-portionate responsibility for family and household obligations. While able to excel in performance, members of these groups need flexibility as to where, when and how to deliver on their job responsibilities. Imbalances and conflicts during the *positive action* stage often drive organizations to choose either to move toward more inclusion, the *redefining* stage, or retrench toward earlier stages.

In the *redefining* stage, the beginning of a fully *multicultural* organization, organizations actively try to include all differences and to change the subtle and not so subtle barriers to inclusion and equity in norms, practices, relationships, leadership, and other aspects of the organization. At this stage there may be acceptance of differences, but not full utilization or access, as members of both dominant and non-dominant groups are still learning to manage differences effectively and engage in new and more equitable power relations. In the *multicultural*, or diverse, inclusive and equitable stage – the ideal stage in the

MCOD process – organizations seek and value all differences and develop the systems and work practices that support members of every group to develop, succeed and contribute fully. At this stage, differences of all types become integrated into the fabric of the business of the organization, such that they become a necessary part of doing its everyday work.

A *multicultural* organization can be defined as one where: (1) the diversity of knowledge and perspectives that different groups bring to the organization shapes its strategy, work, management and operat-ing systems, and its core values and norms for success; and (2) members of all groups are treated fairly, feel included, have equal opportunities and are represented at all organizational levels and functions.

The MCOD Lens: A Tool to Develop a Vision, Goals and Interventions

The MCOD lens is a tool that helps assess the complex, systemic and interrelated dimensions of diversity in organizations. In doing an assessment, one needs to look at all of the important dimensions of an organization and all the social groups that need to be included or need equal access in order to determine the level of current multiculturalism.

The MCOD lens is based on an open systems perspective that sees organ-izations as taking inputs from the

environment and converting them into outputs through an internal transformation process. The transformation process is accomplished through activities that can be grouped into key organizational dimensions, parts of a complex whole, as diagramed in

An Open Systems Diagnostic Model. For example, an organization uses funds (inputs) to develop and implement workshops (programs), which result in advocates (outputs) for the rights of homeless persons (mission).

AN OPEN SYSTEMS DIAGNOSTIC MODEL*

EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

Mission and Purpose

People and Relationships

Structure and Roles

INPUTS
Resources
History
Funds

LEADERSHIP

OUTPUTS
Healthy people
Manuals
Grants

Policies and Procedures

Rewards

Programs, Services, Technology

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

*Adapted from Marvin Weisbord

The MCOD lens considers these key organizational dimensions and identifies indicators of inclusion, equity and diversity in each to determine goals for change and appropriate interventions to move towards a vision of a multicultural organization. When used with different stakeholders in a diversity change effort, the tool provides a common framework for addressing system level changes in a collaborative way. It is particularly useful for democratic organizations that want to initiate a participatory organizational learning and change process where organizational members, in collaboration with an external consultant and each other, collect and analyze information and develop change goals and strategies to make the organization more multicultural.

> The MCOD Lens considers key organizational dimensions and identifies indicators of inclusion, equity and diversity.

For example, the dimension of language was included as an important indicator of multiculturalism after a lively discussion between board and staff members of a bilingual community organization.

In addition, it is important that in discussing the assessment with others in the organization, the different perceptions of the stage of multicultural development is fully discussed and differences honored.

For example, in an urban nursing home, the senior management thought the nursing home was multi-cultural because a large percentage of their staff were people of color. However, several nursing assistants pointed out that while there was a large percentage of staff of color, most were in the lower-level nursing assistant and maintenance positions and that there were almost no staff of color in management. Engaging with such different perceptions usually requires the help of an external consultant which can support arriving at shared understanding.

The MCOD Lens: An Assessment Tool

The matrix that follows is not a fixed or objective instrument, but a tool that encourages analysis, discussion and a shared assessment of where an organization is on its path towards becoming multicultural. There might be organizational dimensions that need to be added to the matrix because they are relevant to your particular organization.

To assess your organization using the MCOD lens, review the assessment tool on the next page and answer the questions which follow in the MCOD Lens Exercise.

THE MCOD LENS: AN ASSESSMENT TOOL

ORGANIZATIONAL DIMENSION	Monocultural	Transitional	Multicultural
MISSION/PURPOSE	• Exclusive • Ignores differences • Driven by dominant groups	• Non-committal • Linked with diversity	• Inclusive • 4-bottom line (Economic, Governance, Social, Environmental)
STRUCTURE/ROLES	• Rigid hierarchy • Decision-making limited to dominants	• Hierarchical • Limited teams/matrix • Glass ceilings	• Shared decision-making • Flat/flexible • Wide access
POLICIES/PROCEDURES	• Discriminatory • Unwritten rules/word of mouth	• EEO/AA • Some supportive policies (e.g., partner benefits) • Performance appraisals reviewed • Zero tolerance	• Flexible work arrangements • Fair and transparent performance appraisals • Score cards
INFORMAL SYSTEMS/ CULTURE/NORMS	• Open and subtle harassment • Homosocial • Assimilation	• Support groups • "Don't ask, don't tell" • Accommodation	• Multilingual, multicultural symbols/norms • Openly confront discrimination
PEOPLE/RELATIONSHIPS	• Homogeneous/tokens • Patriarchal • Segregated work teams	• Minimum numbers • Guarded/political relations	• Diverse at all levels • Dialogue across diverse groups • Org. learning
LEADERSHIP	• Charismatic • Autocratic	• Bureaucratic • Visionary	• Shared/rotating
ENVIRONMENT	• Exploitation • Opposition to	• Limited interaction/ response to shifting demographics	• Global focus/local action • Socially responsible
PRODUCTS/SERVICES/ TECHNOLOGY	• One dimension • "Culture neutral"	• Targeted/stereotyped markets	• Adapts or creates for new populations
LANGUAGE USE	• Monolingual • "Standard English" only/no accommodation	• Bilingualism tolerated • Dominant language use pressure	• Fully bi-multilingual • Languages rewarded

The MCOD Lens Exercise: Assessing Your Organization's Stage of Multiculturalism

Select three organizational dimensions in the chart, The MCOD Lens: An Assessment Tool, and analyze and discuss the degree of multiculturalism you perceive using the following guidelines:

1. How do you assess the level of multiculturalism: monocultural, in transition, or multicultural?

2. What indicators or information did you use to assess it that way?

3. Given your informal assessment, what would be an appropriate change goal in order to become more multicultural?

4. What other information do you need in order to assess more adequately the level of multiculturalism in the organization?

The MCOD Model as a Tool to Take Action

The MCOD model also helps identify goals and change strategies to become a more multicultural organization, but those goals have to match the assessment of the stage of development of the organization. For example, while the vision of the organization might be to become fully multicultural, if an organization is at the compliance stage it is not reasonable to expect that it will immediately become multicultural. A more appropriate change goal might be for the organization to take positive actions so it can move as quickly as possible to the redefining stage. Accordingly, some change strategies are more appropriate at some stages of multicultural development than others depending on the change goal.

The chart below considers key elements in any change process and how they vary according to the level of MCOD of the organization. Consideration of these various elements will aid when selecting specific interventions and developing your diversity change effort.

KEY ELEMENTS OF ORGANIZATION CHANGE[1]

	Monocultural	Transition	Multicultural
OVERALL PURPOSE OF CHANGE	• Commit to change from exclusive to multicultural	• Assess • Eliminate discrimination • Increase access	• Integrate all groups • Ongoing learning • Alignment • Social responsibility
CHANGE GOALS	• Revamp purpose/mission • Interrupt open "isms"/ protect • Educate/create awareness • Increase diversity	• Increase representation/ access • Decrease harassment • Educate/increase awareness • Support development/ advancement	• Guarantee access to all levels/groups • Share decision-making • Integrate diversity in all • Transform culture
CHANGE STRATEGIES	• Litigation • External pressure • Open up recruitment criteria • Expand outreach	• Diversity training • Affirmative goals • Mentoring and career development • Policy changes and mandates • ERGs/networks	• Scorecards and multi-level accountability • Flexible work structures • Large group interventions
INTEREST IN CHANGE	• None, unless legal/other pressures from outside	• Social acceptability • Talent, market, other business advantage	• Complex bottom line • Performance and reputation
CONSTITUENCIES FOR CHANGE	• External forces • Pioneers	• Visionary leaders • Legal claimants • Pockets of readiness • Internal coalitions	• Multicultural coalitions • Broad/multilevel leadership

[1]This chart incorporates ideas from Chesler and Crowfoot, 1992.

Conclusion

In the last twenty years we have learned much about how organizations become inclusive, diverse and equitable; that is, fully multicultural. For example, we have shifted from relying on individual interventions with a focus on changing individual prejudicial attitudes and increasing awareness of differences to focusing on systemic change with a focus on interventions that analyze organizational systems and everyday practices that sustain inequality and prevent people who are "different" from contributing fully to the organization. We have learned that multicultural organization development is much more than managing diversity; MCOD means social diversity and justice at the organizational level.

> Multicultural organization development means working for social diversity and justice at the organizational level.

We have also learned that this type of change is a complex process of development and not a quick fix easily accomplished, but evolutionary and on-going. All social groups and all aspects of an organization must be considered in how they support or hinder the vision of inclusion, diversity and equity, both inside and outside the organization.

Becoming a more multicultural organization requires intentional effort; you can't just do nothing and expect that something will happen. You can't get there without passing through prior stages of development. And you must understand where you are and where you want to be if you want to achieve change. That is why assessment and visioning continue to be the foundations for successful diversity change in organizations.