



INTEGRATING EQUITY IN BIKE ADVOCACY

An interim report on the internal
equity assessment at the League of
American Bicyclists

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ADONIA LUGO has worked since 2008 to bring cross-cultural understanding into bicycle advocacy, planning, and research — and became the Equity Initiative Manager at the League in November 2013. She earned her doctorate in cultural anthropology from the University of California, Irvine, where her dissertation research focused on the social networks and cultural norms that shape how we use streets.

NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT



As a national organization of bicyclists, we are constantly thinking about who bicyclists are, who we represent, and what our role should be in the movement.

Every single day we are reminded of the rich diversity of people who bike and the reasons they have for riding, — from the Lycra-clad Race

Across America participant to

the “invisible” migrant worker, or mom and kids just trying to get across the street safely to work or to school.

Equally, every single day we are challenged by the reality that the popular perception of bicycling and the League does not yet reflect this diversity.

We know that building a more inclusive bicycle advocacy community is essential to building a strong, vibrant and effective bicycle movement.

We take to heart the findings of a recent Kellogg Foundation report that concluded “when people face barriers to achieving their full potential, the

loss of talent, creativity, energy and productivity is a burden not only for those disadvantaged but for communities, businesses, governments and the economy as a whole.”

We recognize that kind of change has to start at home. Before we do anything else, the League’s staff and Board is committed to taking a comprehensive look at how we operate.

How can we open ourselves up to learn from creative and innovative people who are solving bigger problems by getting people on bikes?

How can we ensure we are welcoming new voices and differing opinions, responsive to changing demographics, and alert to significant cultural shifts in our society?

We are committed to fostering a movement that makes room for anyone, everyone, who rides a bike — and I am looking forward to continuing our equity work.

Andy Clarke, League President

Introduction

The League of American Bicyclists is a national membership organization that champions bicycling through policy and movement building. We work with individual cyclists and their social networks; evaluate and advise bike friendly places; and advocate for better bike policies.

The League's Equity Initiative connects the bike movement's long-standing fight for equal access to safe streets with the growing momentum to address health and wealth inequities through grassroots and policy interventions.

As we highlighted in our 2013 report *The New Majority: Pedaling Towards Equity*, the diversity of ridership is increasing, and we have an opportunity as bike advocates to support this growth.

At the League, we believe bike equity can be achieved through the inclusion of community voices in creating streets for diverse users. It means ensuring that more people can access the many benefits of bicycling.

The League has undertaken an internal equity assessment and change process —and this is the first report on that process, which formally started in November 2013.

In this report, we outline:

- » our organizational commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI)
- » the timeline of our EDI work leading to and through the internal assessment
- » where we see EDI influencing our strategic direction and programs
- » lessons learned thus far
- » and our future plans

Learn more about and connect with the Equity Initiative at bikeleague.org/equity.

Adonia Lugo, Equity Initiative Manager

PHOTOS CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: Members of Ovarian Psychos presenting at the 2012 National Women's Bicycling Summit; League COO Jakob Wolf-Barnett (left) speaking with Equity Advisory Council member Eboni Hawkins (ctr); Adonia Lugo, League Equity Initiative Manager, speaking at the 2014 National Bike Summit; League EAC member and Equity Initiative co-founder Hamzat Sani; notes from 2013 EAC retreat; EAC members Helen Ho (left) and Devlynn Chen, author of Engaging Youth in Bicycle Advocacy

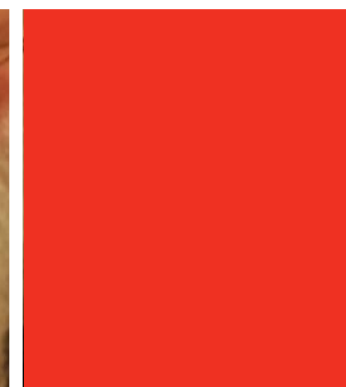


Successes - themes

- just gave birth/lots of firsts
- emerging ideas → connections?
- lots of stories to be shared
- reflects whole new way to approach bike advocacy (e.g. Bike Farm)
- More visibility / media attention
- New connections (e.g. Ely Bike / women's choice → equity)
- More of, starting for work

barriers - themes

 - money / resources to do the work that is sustainable (how is the work funded?) → equity
 - lack of strategic information / resources, access, local media
 - lack of recognition of equity / POC by advocacy + bicycle industry
 - too many demands for time, but not enough time (bills, down to not enough people)
 - "competition" w/ Women's Bike
 - getting youth involved
 - representation on council / in the work
 - racism + classism (e.g. POC, women)
 - clashes of bike movement culture → equity
 - ACCESS to basic tools, programs → equity
 - lack of shadow for the change we want to see



Our Objectives

These guiding objectives were developed through discussion with Carolyn Szczepanski, the League's Communications Director and the Equity Initiative co-founder, and Jakob Wolf-Barnett, the League's COO. They were prepared for a presentation at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Childhood Obesity Prevention Leaders Advance in May 2014, which gave us the opportunity to summarize our process for a public audience for the first time.

- » To transform the organization's strategic plan and programming so that we support equitable bike out comes that include diverse users
- » To create an inclusive work environment that promotes equitable practices and improves organizational effectiveness
- » To establish organizational structures that support meeting the first two objectives moving forward
- » To share our process as we develop it

Key Finding

With an emphasis on integration rather than a stand-alone equity program, we have reviewed each program. This has coincided with the organization's push to cross-pollinate across our areas of focus, and has sparked projects that build on our assets in new ways. An Equity, Diversity and Inclusion focus can be a great driver of innovation within an organizational structure.

Other Findings

» **Include all organizational stakeholders in developing a commitment to EDI.** This will likely result in challenging conversations that are more personal than what many are accustomed to in a workplace. Part of supporting each other through this work is creating a space where you learn together, and this can feel awkward at first. Remember that co-creating the new organizational direction by reflecting on the existing situation with stakeholders is key to sustainable change.

» **Engage staff** through an assessment of their programs, meeting specifically to talk through their ideas for EDI. This will include their know-how in any changes that might occur, while also promoting organizational effectiveness and cross-pollination.

» An organizational commitment to EDI can occur prior to securing funding for an initiative, but be sure to have a **team of organizational personnel** to steward your efforts and ensure continuity.

» **Identify peer organizations** undertaking similar processes and share ideas. We have benefited from discussions with staff and Board members of the Community Cycling Center, Bike East Bay, Bike Easy, Atlanta Bicycle Coalition, and the Bicycle Transportation Alliance.

» If working with a consultant, try to integrate **education and training for organization personnel** with strategic planning. We have worked with Queta González, a consultant and facilitator with the Center for Diversity and the Environment in Portland, OR.

Timeline

The League's organizational commitment to equity has been developing for several years due to the interest of individual staff and Board members. This timeline charts the progress from the organization creating spaces where the bike equity conversation could emerge to taking on innovating bike equity change as an internal project.

March 2010

» For the first time, diversity is the focus of a panel at the National Bike Summit. This plants the seed for organizational work, but for a few years others organize outside the League (Youth Bike Summit, United Cycling Voices).

September 2012

» The League's National Women's Bicycling Summit includes discussions about diversity in bicycling. A Board member and a staff member start brainstorming how the League could promote more EDI in the bike movement.

November 2012

» League Board approves initial EDI goals, allocating funds for a gathering of bike equity leaders at the National Bike Summit.

January 2013

» Part-time Equity Fellow hired to move EDI forward at the League. Though there is support from individual members of Board and staff, these groups as a whole are not asked to engage at this time.

March 2013

» Equity Advisory Council (EAC) formed and meet at the National Bike Summit to provide local community perspective to League equity efforts. Members chosen because of backgrounds promoting bikes with women, communities of color, and youth. They start meeting monthly over the phone and collaborate to define terms and roles. They also provide feedback on League programs based on their experiences with them.

May 2013

» *The New Majority: Pedaling Towards Equity* report on existing diversity in bicycling is released by the League and the Sierra Club.

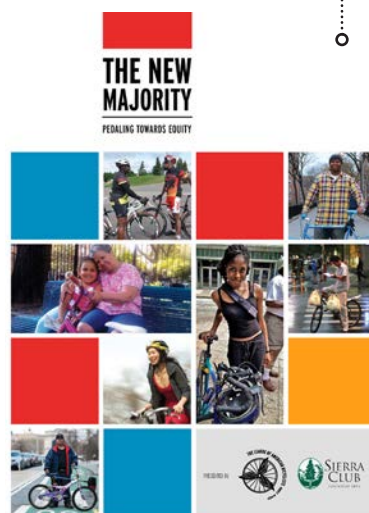
» The organization applies for Equity Initiative program funding from Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.



Coral Lobera of The Bicycle Kitchen sharing thoughts at the 2012 National Women's Bicycling Summit



League Equity Fellow and EAC member, Hamzat Sani



June 2013

» The League establishes a paid, project-based internship with EAC member Devlynn Chen, to convene focus groups in partnership with NYC Local Spokes program to investigate youth perceptions of bicycling advocacy, what would encourage diverse youth to bike more, and identify “10 Rules for Adults in Working with Teens.”

August 2013

» The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation awards funding for the Equity Initiative. In preparation for advertising for a new staff member to lead this work, management takes the opportunity to make intentional changes to the hiring process, focusing on the wording of the job description, where to post it, and how to interview for the position.

October 2013

» As part of their strategic plan update, the Board of directors drafts a proposed new mission and vision that furthers organizational commitment to diversity as a growth strategy.

» Equity Initiative Manager (EIM) hired to coordinate internal equity assessment and create resources.

November 2013

» EAC gathers in Washington, D.C., for a two day retreat to discuss organization goals and meet with program directors.

» Report on youth engagement, authored by EAC member, Devlynn Chen, is released.

» EIM starts meeting with League staff to learn about programs.

December 2013

» Bike Equity Network email listserv created to connect bike equity advocates and professionals around the country.

» League hires consultant (Center for Diversity and the Environment) and starts planning how to engage staff and leadership around equity, diversity, and inclusion.

» Board passes governance plan based around proposed new mission and vision.



March 2014

» Equity, diversity, and inclusion are a central focus of the keynote discussion at the National Women's Bicycling Forum. Three sessions focusing on EDI are held at National Bike Summit. U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx speaks at National Bike Summit about the role bicycling can play in connecting low income families to opportunities.

» At the National Bike Summit, Board meets briefly with EAC to talk about EDI. Later individual Board members request more training and education around EDI.

» EAC members meet with Congressional Black Caucus, Congressional Hispanic Caucus, and Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus to develop bike equity messaging.

» Board Equity Task Force formed to provide EDI lens for Board activities.

» Consultant from Center for Diversity and the Environment facilitates a staff EDI training. This provides directions for staff education and support. EIM administers pre-training evaluation tool to provide baseline for staff understanding of equity. This is the first time the staff have been asked to engage with these topics as a group.

April 2014

» EIM works with COO and program directors to identify current states and goal states of EDI in League programs and tactics for moving forward. COO incorporates high level tasks into employee work plans, which each include at least one EDI-related goal for 2014. The purpose is to create accountability for equity with every program lead, starting from a large or small goal that fits within the scope of the program.

» EIM starts forming work groups around specific bike equity issues.

June 2014

» EIM joins transition team to implement and operationalize Board's updated strategic plan at programmatic level.

» League starts sharing findings with other bike organizations engaged in internal EDI processes.



Why equity why now - the conversation is happening now! #NBS14 @tania_lo

Reply Retweet Favorite More



Strategic Plan

Starting in October 2013, League personnel at all levels have been engaged in a strategic plan update. The process has included a number of discussions around the status of equity in the organization's ongoing work. While the strategic plan has not yet been adopted by the Board, this is an overview of where we are now in regard to EDI.

Updated Mission

With this update, the League signals its shift to a focus on what bicycling can offer to more Americans. Rather than allowing our scope to be limited by one interest group, we have grown to consider how bicycling fits into a larger landscape of transportation and community life.

We believe

Bicycling brings people together.

When more people ride bikes:

- » Life is better for everyone;
- » Communities are safer, stronger and better connected;
- » Our nation is healthier, economically stronger, environmentally cleaner and more energy independent.

Our Vision

is a nation where everyone recognizes and enjoys the many benefits and opportunities of bicycling.

Our Mission

is to lead the movement to create a Bicycle Friendly America for everyone. As leaders, our commitment is to listen and learn, define standards and share best practices to engage diverse communities and build a powerful, unified voice for change.

Operationalizing the Plan

A transition steering committee including organizational leadership and program liaisons has held eight intensive discussions about how to operationalize the Board's proposed strategic plan. Through this process, we have been sure to integrate the organizational commitment to representing and knowing how to connect with a diverse range of American communities. We plan to develop operating principles informed by this commitment.



Programmatic Actions

We have evaluated the current state of our programs and identified opportunities to change them so that we can reach more communities. The following actions were developed through this model that we created in consultation with the Center for Diversity and the Environment.

Program	Current State	EDI Actions	Goal State
EDUCATION	Official materials available only in English	Convene translation group composed of organizations/ individuals that have done bike education in other languages and set timeline for translating and adapting core materials	Every member of the public can access education; our materials reflect community needs

The following pages include actions that have been incorporated into staff work plans, offered here as examples.

Bicycle Friendly America

Our BFA staff evaluate the efforts of cities, businesses, and universities to make bicycling an option for more people through surveys and site visits. After rating applicants at bronze, silver, gold, platinum or diamond levels, we offer guidance on improving their ranking and thus increasing bike friendliness.

EDI Actions:

- » Make outreach plan to connect with minority-serving institutions/Historically Black Colleges and Universities and minority-owned businesses
- » Review the current evaluation questions to add considerations of EDI such as language, bike network connections to diverse populations, and ways biking connects to local transportation serving low-income families
- » Create resources that support these new EDI recommendations

Education

The League's "Smart Cycling" curriculum is the authoritative source for safe riding education in this country. Through our League Cycling Instructor (LCI) program, we train bike educators who then educate bike users across the United States. using our materials. These materials have been translated only in piecemeal fashion.

EDI Actions:

- » Convene translation group composed of organizations and individuals that have done bike education in other languages, then set a timeline for translating and adapting core materials
- » Convene accessibility and biking group to learn how we can make our materials useful for their needs

Federal Policy

Our government relations staff maintain relationships with policymakers and represent bicycle priorities in legislative partnerships.

EDI actions:

- » Involve new allies in lobbying efforts with elected officials and their staff
- » Develop strategy for local coalition building in concert with D.C.-based convenors such as the Equity Caucus

National Bike Summit

This conference brings hundreds of bike advocates from around the country together in D.C. each March. In addition to providing workshops and keynote addresses updating stakeholders on the state of the art in bike advocacy, policy, and movement-building strategies, the Summit takes participants to Capitol Hill for a day of meetings with elected officials.

EDI Actions:

- » Develop organizational positions on how the grassroots movement contributes to bike policy — and vice versa — to demystify lobbying
- » Feature speakers at the Summit who can shed light on new EDI-oriented partnerships in bike advocacy, as well as the diversity in bicycling
- » Ensure that mainstream bike partners have exposure to EDI commitment through our program offerings at the Summit

Veronica Davis, co-founder of Black Women Bike DC, speaking at the 2013 National Bike Summit

State and Local Policy

As part of the shared program Advocacy Advance, our state and local policy staff work with Alliance for Biking and Walking staff to provide technical workshops and small grants to further bike policy, legislation, and advocacy projects in conjunction with bicycling organizations and public agency staff around the country.

EDI Actions:

- » Innovation in EDI considered in Rapid Response grant funding
- » Identify and invite new partners with an institutional commitment to EDI to participate in workshops
- » Develop equity-specific material to offer in workshops

National Bike Challenge

This is an online network where individuals and teams can compete by logging miles. The Challenge is currently in its third year.

EDI Actions:

- » Targeted outreach to groups and rides that focus on women, people of color, and other groups whose voices we want to elevate, like the League's Equity Advisory Council



Women Bike

This outreach program has been key in creating spaces where women bike advocates can set agendas for better bike promotion. It has a mini-grants program and convenes an annual National Women's Bicycling Forum, in addition to maintaining an active social media presence. We plan to hire our first full time Women Bike program manager in June 2014.

EDI Actions:

- » Emphasize importance of skill sets that connect to diversity and inclusion during job search for new program manager
- » Convene focus group of women of color bike leaders who can draft strategies that will ensure WB responds to the challenges to bicycling different women face, can hold us accountable to incorporating their recommendations, and evaluate our success
- » Continue to include speakers at WB events who focus on the diversity of women's issues

Membership

Our members include individual cyclists and bike clubs. While we have relationships with a growing number of rides in diverse communities across the country, we have not focused on the changing face of bike clubs.

EDI Actions:

- » Create inclusive club resources based on investigation into whether growing number of community rides would like to be organized as bike clubs
- » Highlight existing diversity in membership in official communications



Left: Red, Bike and Green leaders Eboni Hawkins, Jenna Burton and Zahra Alabanza (from left) at the 2013 National Women's Bicycling Forum
Right: Congresswoman Tammy Duckworth – Army veteran, hand-crank cyclist and disability rights advocate – speaking at 2013 Women's Forum



Key Lesson Learned

An equity assessment should be timed to coincide with a strategic plan review. This will ensure that you have integrated your organization's commitment rather than tacked on a new standalone program.

Other Lessons Learned

» We were fortunate that the ramping up of our Equity Initiative coincided with a strategic plan update, but it took us some months and consultation with an outside expert to recognize the opportunity we had to integrate EDI considerations into our framework as an organization. Even though we planned to bring an equity commitment into the strategic planning process, it was unclear how this would be operationalized on a day-to-day basis. We recommend that others map out how a strategic planning update could link up to programmatic changes.

» With many changes happening at the organization, including a rebranding process, we did not engage the whole staff around our Equity Initiative until it had been underway for over a year. Similarly, we have still had only preliminary discussions of EDI with our whole Board, though individual Board members have been instrumental in creating and shaping the Equity Initiative. In retrospect, we think that asking them to participate earlier on would have given personnel more of a stake in the Equity Initiative. Through outside consultation, we came to understand that the principle of inclusion should start with intentionally including an organization's staff and Board in the decision to commit to EDI.

» In May 2014, we had the opportunity to present about our internal equity transformation process at a leadership retreat through the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's childhood obesity prevention program. This gave us an audience of racial justice, community development, and health equity-focused professionals. While they commended our efforts thus far, they emphasized the importance of community engagement as a strategy for expanding bicycling in this country. Are we prepared, as an organization, to turn down partnership opportunities that might harm equity-focused community groups? Are we prepared to advise our network of partners to do the same? Community transportation problems extend beyond a lack of bike infrastructure, so we should be prepared to collaborate on a wider range of solutions. This advice will be integrated into our review of the Bicycle Friendly America standards.



League Board of Directors, March 2014

Future Plans

June 2014

- » Release report on our EDI commitment, internal progress, and program goals.

September 2014

- » Evaluation tool readministered to staff.
- » League releases Bicycle Equity Toolkit that synthesizes information gathered through work groups, EAC stories, and other research to provide guidance to bike advocates and others who want to engage meaningfully with a wider community.
- » League Women Bike and Equity Initiative host event at Pro Walk Pro Bike Pro Place conference — *Future Bike: At the intersection of mobility and identity*.

October 2014

- » Report on Equity Initiative progress at Board meeting.
- » Consultant provides education and training for Board around EDI, per its request.

December 2014

- » Assessment of progress on programmatic tactics for EDI included in organizational year-end report.

February 2015

- » Evaluation tool readministered to staff.

March 2015

- » Final report to public about internal EDI work.

Appendix:

Benchmarking Staff Awareness of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

This section reports on a pre-training survey 15 staff members filled out in March that was intended to set a benchmark for changes in their comfort around discussing EDI concepts in the office and in the field with stakeholders. The survey will be readministered twice before our final report on our equity assessment in 2015.

Question 1

When equity, diversity, inclusion, and similar terms come up with friends and family, I feel:
(Choose all that apply)

- » silenced (1)
- » uninterested
- » eager to speak (3)
- » exhausted
- » activated (7)
- » annoyed
- » ready (4)
- » excluded
- » criticized
- » unprepared (4)
- » uncomfortable (3)

Other:

- » “Comfortable with our efforts, but less prepared to argue for equity broadly or to someone uninterested”
- » “Does not come up”
- » “Interested”
- » “Usually comfortable, but not always eager to speak”
- » “Awkward with terms”
- » “Interested”
- » “Interested to talk”
- » “Ready to listen”

Question 2

When equity, diversity, inclusion, and similar terms come up during my work with League members and the public, I feel:

(Choose all that apply)

- » silenced
- » uninterested
- » eager to speak (4)
- » exhausted (1)
- » activated (8)
- » annoyed
- » ready (6)
- » excluded
- » criticized
- » unprepared (5)
- » uncomfortable (1)

Other:

- » “Unsure”
- » “Comfortable, interested, but not always prepared or eager to speak”
- » “Interested to talk”
- » “Ready to listen”

Question 3

The goal of the League’s Equity Initiative is

- » Clear to you (9)
- » Unclear to you (5)
- » Did not answer (1)

Question 4

What is the goal of the Equity Initiative?

- » “To broaden our base and redefine what it means to be a ‘bicyclist’”
- » “To be more inclusive, broaden our base, and make sure our programs and effort are supportive of all peoples”
- » “To change the face of bicycling by creating a more inclusive and vibrant bicycle movement. Three main areas of focus are women, people of color, and youth”
- » “To help the League better represent - and deliver results for - everyone. And to help other orgs do the same”
- » “To live up to the ‘everyone’ in our mission statement, change face of the League and the movement, to be inclusive and representative”
- » “Bicycle Friendly America for everyone”
- » “To ensure that everyone who rides a bike is welcome and represented by the League”
- » “To broaden the bicycling movement by including the needs of communities of color and other underserved populations, reaching out in culturally appropriate ways”
- » “To make bicycling equally accessible to all communities”
- » “To make sure our advocacy work includes and represents everyone, especially previously underrepresented populations”
- » “To include all minorities in our focus and outreach”
- » “To recognize the rights of all cyclists; equal access to all”
- » “A bigger, broader bicycling community that is welcoming and understanding of all who want to bike”

- » “To engage and elevate underrepresented leaders and make the League an organizational model for equity in the movement and to make its programs/offerings relevant and accessible to all”
- » “Grow equity within the movement and share our experience with others”

Question 5

Based on conversations you’ve had with others, the goal of the League’s Equity Initiative is

- » Clear to others (2)
- » Unclear to others (7)
- » Unsure (4)
- » Did not answer (2)

Question 6

How have you heard others articulate the goal?

- » “‘Do some diversity work’ — along those lines... I think it’s very unclear to others”
- » “No”
- » “Inclusive, broaden”
- » “Engage more women, diversify face of advocacy”
- » “Live up to the ‘everyone’ in the mission statement”
- » “Increase awareness of people who bike, increase participation and leadership of a diverse group of people”
- » “Serving underserved communities”
- » “I’m not sure I’ve heard anyone outside the League articulate it yet”
- » “Like the Women Bike program”
- » “Most commonly people expect or hope that the League can/will address financial barriers to current programs and funding gaps at the local level”



Learn more and find
additional resources at

WWW.BIKELEAGUE.ORG/EQUITY

Join our effort to build a Bicycle Friendly America
for everyone: *bikeleague.org/join*