

RuckusRoots Statement of Cultural Equity and Inclusion (Revised, 2021/22)

RuckusRoots creates and fosters a culture of equity in all stages of our activities (including decision-making, planning, implementation, and evaluation), while normalizing conversations about race and the intersectionality of social, environmental and creative justice.

History

RuckusRoots was founded as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in 2010 to tackle two problems facing Los Angeles: a lack of arts education and a lack of awareness and action around sustainability issues including litter, wildlife conservation, homelessness and pollution. Low income neighborhoods experience these issues most directly because they receive fewer educational and infrastructural resources. These communities are home to marginalized groups who often encounter systemic exclusion from collective conversations around both sustainability and creative artistic expression.

Perspective

Our mission, goals and activities have always been rooted in equity, but recent events have illuminated the fact that we can do more to combat systemic racism. We believe that equity is a journey; and we are learning how to better share power, access and resources with the artists and communities we serve.

Action

Since adoption of our first Statement of Cultural Equity and Inclusion in 2018, we have taken the following actions:

- Evaluating and examining the impact of colonization on the communities we serve, while self-critiquing our organization to address issues of white supremacy culture with the goal of becoming more anti-racist in all of our activities.
- [“The Characteristics of White Supremacy Culture”](#) from [Dismantling Racism: A Workbook for Social Change Groups](#), by Kenneth Jones and Tema Okun is now required reading for all staff and Board members.
- Welcomed 4 new community-based board members with diverse backgrounds that more accurately represent Los Angeles demographics.
- Hired 2 new Latinx teaching artists from the same community as our constituents in South and East Los Angeles.
- Held organization-wide meetings with Meztli Projects, an Indigenous based arts & culture collaborative centering Indigeneity into the creative practice of Los Angeles by using arts-based strategies to support, advocate for, and organize to highlight Native/Indigenous Artists and systems-impacted youth. In these meetings, we discussed best practices for incorporating and supporting First Peoples of Los Angeles in our planning and programming.
- Implemented “Intersections,” a program focused on racial and environmental equity, which amplifies BIPOC perspectives and shares resources with featured speakers. This program was initiated with the intention of amplifying BIPOC artists’ work, wisdom and voices on intersectional arts and environmentalism.

- We are currently refining our mission statement to include anti-racism and active listening as a strategy to ensure our programs are reflective of and create self-identified solutions for the communities we serve.
- In 2021 we will continue to focus on co-creation as a strategy for working with the communities we serve. We are currently building a new approach for planning and creating programs, as well as evaluating programs and staff, that is more collaborative. We are also addressing elements of white supremacy culture in our decision making and financial models and adopting new tactics that will create pathways for access throughout our organization.

Commitment

At its core, RuckusRoots is committed to discovering and activating solutions to systemic oppression, including those that involve self-reflection and internal change. Our work focuses on arts and sustainability, and the interconnectedness of these areas with economic, social, racial, gendered and place-based justice is clearer than ever. We are committed to learning from, supporting, amplifying and empowering our BIPOC and LGBTQIA partners indefinitely.