LET'S TALK ABOUT
RACE IN THE ANTI-HUNGER WORKPLACE

A Qualitative Analysis of Organizational Approaches to Addressing Race at Work

By Sofia Charlot (she/her)

SETTING THE STAGE

About the land

I lived in Baltimore City, Maryland while conducting this research. I got the opportunity to learn about the Piscataway people who stewarded this land. I offer an acknowledgement of the colonization of their land by English settlers who then continued to violate established treaties. I acknowledge the continuing efforts of the Piscataway Conoy tribe to work with policymakers to ensure that traditional hunting and fishing rights are recognized and honored. Honor and respect to the Piscataway people.

About the author

I am a proud first-generation Haitian-American from Miami, Florida. During my undergraduate career, I studied Anthropology & Human Biology and African American Studies. Post graduation, I engaged in mutual-aid exchanges between Black farmers and Black youth seeking liberation by connecting with the land and each other on urban gardens and rural farms. There I developed my passion for research, food and racial justice, and public health. My community, and many others around me, were dying because of systemic social and economic barriers to food. To address these disparities and create better outcomes, I focused my personal and professional efforts on food chemistry, security, and production. As a research assistant, I supported childhood nutrition research at the University of Georgia. As an Emerson Hunger Fellow, I am conducting qualitative research at Maryland Hunger Solutions (MDHS) about racial equity in the anti-hunger space.

About the organization

In the words of Director Michael J. Wilson, "at Maryland Hunger Solutions (MDHS), we don't touch food; but we do touch systems, policy, and people." MDHS pride themselves in doing work that goes far beyond providing a meal to the immediately hungry to end the experience of chronic hunger altogether. They connect Maryland residents with food resources by making the best use of federal and state nutrition programs like the Supplementary Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Their outreach includes youth experiencing hunger in school with their support of the School Breakfast Program (SBP), the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT), Afterschool Meals, and Summer Meals.

About the Research

This research was a strategic effort to look at the current state, successes, failures, and possible improvements to the movement to end hunger in the United States. Anti-hunger organizations reacted to parallel social justice movements with heightened energy, resources, and attention to the root causes of domestic hunger and racial equity. Research efforts uncovered whether organizational plans and policies could create transactional or transformational change. Using survey data collection and semi-structured interviews, this study interrogated the plans, policies, and strategies of organizational approaches to addressing race in the workplace. It also captured how anti-hunger staff and leadership fueled, experienced, and perceived those efforts. Organizations that employed traditional Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) frameworks created surface-level changes that upheld racialized power dynamics in the workplace. Organizational approaches that explicitly centered anti-racism and/or prioritized naming and addressing racialized power dynamics within their operations—at all levels, with all members, and with the necessary resources—were working towards transformational change. The anti-hunger movement has a stated goal of ending systemic hunger by addressing its root causes. Racialized power dynamics in domestic food systems created and sustained widespread hunger and racially disparate outcomes in food security. Anti-hunger organizations must consider how their internal operations either uphold or oppose the racialized power dynamics of white supremacy and make substantial efforts towards transforming their institutions into vehicles that push society towards a racially equitable future.

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INTRODUCTION

On March 8th 2022, 66 years after the murder of Emmett Till, the United States Senate passed the Emmett Till Antilynching Act in hopes of making lynching a federal hate crime. Emmett Till was a 14 years old boy visiting relatives near Money, Mississippi when Roy Brant and J.W. Milam abducted, beat, and murdered him. They accused him, a young black boy, of whistling at a white woman who recently admitted that these claims were false (Pérez-Peña, 2017). The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) classified his murder a lynching and pursued justice in court. Both men were tried and acquitted by a jury of their peers--white men. They later confessed to murdering Emmett (The Apology, n.d.). Till's mother held an open-casket funeral to show the public just how much his body had been brutalized. George Floyd cried out for his mother while he was brutalized in broad daylight. His suffering was captured on video and spread across the world. Masses of people flooded to street to protest the latest instance of police brutality. Protesters were met with the same brutal force as teams of law enforcement suppressed their efforts to organize. While the rest of United Stated households sheltered at home during the COVID-19 global pandemic, their attention was trained on the latest symbolic lynching in real-time. The systemic realities of a white supremacy were on full display. They had been glaring before; however, this particular tragedy in this particular context resonated differently. To understand why, would require a much more robust analysis than the scope of my workplan. Instead I will explore how the ripples from that tragedy impacted the anti-hunger movement.

The events of summer 2020 surely was not the first time that anti-hunger organizations considered how their work intersected with issues concerning race. In fact, one of the interviewees recounted hosting a session on racial equity and hunger at a national anti-hunger conference in 2017. That session was filled to capacity, and still people stood at the back and outside of the room to listen in. This leads me to conclude that the ongoing issue of police brutality, the racial health disparities underscored by the COVID-19 pandemic, the increased visibility of anti-Asian racial discrimination, the trend of organizations stating their commitments to racial equity, and the increased funding made available to the non-profit sector to bolster emergency response created the perfect storm for racial inequity to take center stage.

This research is a qualitative analysis of organizational approaches to address race in the anti-hunger workplace. There is literature on racial equity in the anti-hunger space as it relates to advocacy, research, and direct services. There is also literature on the variety of approaches to organizational development. There is not an extensive body of knowledge where these topics intersect. Therefore, my project will document new and existing efforts towards addressing race in the anti-hunger workspace. This is a strategic effort to look at the current state, successes, failures, and possible improvements to the movement to end hunger in the United States. This analysis includes how anti-hunger staff experience, perceive, and contribute to these efforts in their workplaces. To this end, I connected with a cross-section of domestic national, state, regional, and local anti-hunger organizations. They distribute food, engage in legislative advocacy, offer community outreach, conduct research, give legal services, create coalitions and more. They either directly align with, or contribute to a growing anti-hunger movement.

Research findings will highlight work that exemplifies how organizations can work towards a racially equitable society with transformation within their internal operations around race. This paper explores the literature to establish definitions and a deeper understanding of organizational development. Next, it details the specifics of the research sample, methodology, and data analysis. Then I present the findings along with their thematic descriptions. Lastly, this paper discusses these themes, and wraps up with a conclusion. This research is not exhaustive; but it sparks an in-depth conversation about how organizations are actively creating plans to operationalize efforts to address race in food advocacy. I hope this research triggering individuals and organizations to consider the weight of the practices, words, and culture they establish while laying the foundation of this movement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

"Definition Creeps," BRJA Racial Equity Practices

- Baltimore Racial Justice Action

My conversations with anti-hunger leaders and staff, as well as organizational development consultants illuminated what I needed to uncover via a literature review. They offered their own resources, pointed me in the direct of other resources, and served as resources themselves as they contributed to the direction of the research.

The first step was setting the foundation for the work by understanding the true definition of terms like racial equity, diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism. After completing all informational interviews, undergoing race equity trainings, and sitting in on conversations about racial equity within anti-hunger organizations; I heard different uses and definitions for like racial equity, diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism. I often heard them being used interchangeably. As I acquainted myself with the language generally and specifically as it pertained to anti-hunger work and organizational development, I started doing the same thing. Thankfully, I had the guidance of anti-racism experts to course correct and truly understand why precise language is necessary when discussing racial equity.

It seemed only right to look to a Baltimore organization to literally set the terms of the work that I was executing in Baltimore city. Baltimore Racial Justice Action's newsletter entitled Racial Equity Practices, emphasizes the importance of using precise language in the collective fight for racial justice.

Specifically, they argue that the appropriation and misapplication of words and phrases like racial equity, diversity, equity, and inclusion causes them to lose value in their capacity to name and call out the issue of racial inequity. This keeps oppressive power structures intact as they co-op the language without putting forth any effort or action to embody the definitions behind the words (BRJA).

BRJA's 2021 definition of racial equity guides my research: "Racial Equity refers to the time when Black, Native American, and other non-Black communities of color confirm that systemic actions have repaired societal racialized, generational damages (BRJA)." The definition goes on to clarify that "Racial Equity is a societal debt and obligation; no one institution can practice 'racial equity,' nor can individual institutions offer 'reparations (BRJA).'" Institutions and organizations can strive to be racially inclusive. BRJA defines racial inclusion as "having in place structures, processes, and policies that remove racialized barriers, resulting in more inclusive participation in institutional and structural power building, sharing, and wielding for traditionally marginalized racial groups (BRJA)."

This precise language can help guide food advocacy organizations toward implementing concrete goals and internal processes that ultimately contribute to a racially equitable society. This source also highlights the importance of language. As I do this research, it cautions me to be thoughtful of the words I use so as not to contribute to their misuse.

(Baltimore, October 2021)

"Racial Equity in the Workplace," BRJA Racial Equity Practices

- Baltimore Racial Justice Action

"Why Diversity & Inclusion Training IS NOT THE ANSWER to End Racial Discrimination, Bias, & Racism,"

- Marlysa Gamblin

I was also guided by race equity coach, Marlysa Gamblin's, YouTube videos in getting a better understanding of the accurate and precise uses and definitions of terms relevant to the research. The video demonstrates how imprecise definitions makes diversity and inclusions initiatives ineffective.

Gamblin argues that racial diversity means that the demographic makeup of an institution or organizations is no longer homogenous. Inclusion in its simplest form means to include individuals in processes, programs, and policies. She highlights that neither of these definitions address racism. That "you can have diversity, you can have inclusion, and you can still have racism." Racism is system of oppression that upholds white supremacy and harms other racialized groups according to their proximity to blackness. It is a system of advantage for groups racialized as white and oppression for groups racialized as non-white. That advantage and oppression creates disparities in all aspects of our socio-political and economic realities including social and institutional power, health outcomes, education, professional opportunities, access to food and resources, and much more. Systems, institutions, and individuals uphold and perpetuate racism in subtle, overt, intentional, and subconscious ways.

If organizations want to address the ways that institutions and organizations perpetuate the racialized inequities found in a larger societal context, then diversity and inclusion goals miss the mark.

If the societal goal of racial equity is on the agenda for institutions and anti-hunger organizations specifically, then they must specifically call out the origins and outcomes of racial inequity instead of its symptoms. When we directly name and work against the racialized power dynamics that make workplaces racially homogenous and exclusive, the resulting outcomes are workplaces that are racially representative in terms of diversity, and inclusive in terms of shared power.

Baltimore Racial Justice Action perfectly articulates my initials observations of organizational Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) industry was created, maintained, and defined by the institutions it was meant to challenge. Because of that, it took on the same functions and characteristics of these institutions. Ultimately, the institution created by the original institution, to rectify the original institution, has just become another part of the original institution and all together they still function to prioritize dominant culture, specifically white supremacy.

This prompted me to further investigate why diversity and inclusion efforts are not the answer. Audre Lorde, answers that question when she argues that "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House." Lorde questions, "what does it mean when the tools of a racist patriarchy are used to examine the fruits of the same patriarchy? It means that only the most narrow parameters of change are possible and allowable." Baltimore Racial Justice Action applies this analysis to organizational approaches to change. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives (DEI) only allow narrow parameters of change, because the decision-makers decide the scope and conditions of institutional change.

There are expectations that racial inequity will be resolved with best-practice models and timelines and no significant changes to the core of these institutions. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts will only go as far as dominant culture will allow it. When efforts make white people uncomfortable, their feelings, feedback, and comfort are prioritized. They conclude that DEI efforts will never dismantle racial inequity within institutions as long as they allow dominant white culture to dictate the parameters of change within policies, perspectives, and processes. This analysis prompted me to research the history, evolution, nature, and function of Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion (DEI).

(Gamblin, 2021)

(Baltimore, September 2021)

"A Retrospective View of Corporate Diversity Training from 1964 to the Present."

- Rohini Anand & Mary-Frances Winters

The Late 1960s – 1970s

As a result of the Civil Right Act of 1964, the predecessor to diversity training took form and companies created guidelines for legal and appropriate employee-employer conduct. Essentially, trainings in the late 1960s focused on compliance within internal operations, and compliance with the law. These early trainings were often short, one-time events with periods check-ins or refreshers. Employees were often required to confirm their receipt of the material and compliance upon completion of these trainings.

The authors conceded that the Diversity and Inclusion business lacks the tools to measure what changed behavior and work culture looks like. They argue that efforts would benefit from a clear definition and understanding of the expected and desired outcomes of Diversity and Inclusion approaches.

The Early 1980s

Anand and Winters, describe the early 1980s as an era of assimilation. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 increased workplace diversity considerably, but this growth stalled during the Reagan Era. President Reagan favored deregulation of corporate entities including matters involving discrimination. His appointed head of the EEOC had a similar approach and specifically rejected enforcing plans with specific deliverables about increasing workplace diversity. In response, companies pulled-back from diversity training for the sake of compliance; and shifted their focus to assimilating the increasing number of women and non-white racialized groups into the workforce.

The Late 1980s

In the late 1980s, William B. Johnston published "Workforce 2000," to describe what the workforce would look like in the new millennia. It posited that the workforce would see an increase in women and ethnic minorities, or non-white racialized groups. These predictions put the concept of workplace diversity on the corporate agenda and changed the focus of diversity training from compliance to the assimilation of the increasing number of women and non-white racialized groups into homogenous workplaces. An unwritten yet common theme of diversity efforts in the 1960s to the late 1980s was the expectation that people joining the workforce would assimilate to the dominant culture.

The 1990s

Roosevelt Thomas made the argument that organizational efforts need to go beyond compliance to "Managing Diversity." He posits that "affirmative action is an artificial, transitional intervention intended to give managers a chance to correct an imbalance, an injustice, a mistake. Once the numbers mistake has been corrected, I don't think affirmative action alone can cope with the remaining long-term task of creating a work setting geared to the upward mobility of all kinds of people."

(Anand & Winters, 2008)

For the future of this industry, diversity and inclusion needs to be fully integrated into an organization's business strategies. This has been a stated goal for many companies, but there has not been a corresponding push to operationalize this work into business practice.

The 1990s Cont.

Training included discussions about prominent social experiments like the Blue Eyes/ Brown Eyes experiment. They involved role play and case studies to engage trainees; and covered topics ranging from cultural awareness, understanding difference, diversity as good business practice, sensitivity, mixed in with the compliance and assimilatory trainings from the decades before.

Many large corporations sought third-party intervention from diversity firms; however, with limited budgeted resources, the trainings were short and surface level. Without the space, time, and resources to fully internalize this information; trainees often became confused and frustrated with the process and the idea of difference all together. Woman and groups racialized as non-white felt misunderstood, pressured to represent entire communities of people, and vulnerable to their co-workers' projected or internalized prejudice. These efforts to foster a general idea of sensitivity for better work relations and performance ultimately failed because they did not a result in workplace culture shifts. Diversity efforts prioritized skills building but did not work to reshape patterns of thinking or create opportunities for transformational change. Besides the lack of change, other factors contributed to this perceived failure. Training being evaluated by the number of people trained rather than the effectiveness of the content shared. Corporations prioritized cost-effective training which came along with a trade-off in the quality of training provided.

It was a means to an end, and now that the workplace has reached this end, it is time to pivot to something else so that these diverse populations can succeed in these spaces.

In the late 1980s to the late 1990s, focus shifted from assimilation to fostering sensitivity. Instead of focusing interventions on women and non-white racialized groups, organizations expended their efforts to include white men in their analysis of diversity with the rationale that everyone benefitted from increased sensitivity to difference. At times white men became the antagonists to workplace diversity. Staff complained that the broadening scope of diversity efforts no longer prioritized the unique and compounding experience of discrimination for women and groups racialized as non-white in the corporate setting.

The 2000s

These lessons informed the next iteration of the Diversity business with stated priorities in both diversity and inclusion for sake of business success and growth. Inclusion was a direct response to an increasingly globalized workplace, with efforts to organizations workable for everyone. Both staff and leadership engaged cultural competency as an essential business skills like leadership or problem solving

Diversity and Inclusion trainings at the turn of the century positioned difference as something to be embrace and use to create better business practices. The work was considered continuous as opposed to the previous one-time trainings, so the training sessions were longer and more in depth. They did not focus on either white men or people racialized as non-white; this intervention involved increasing cultural competencies for all individuals.

(Anand & Winters, 2008)

"Anti-racism"
- Alastair Bonnett

Anti-racism is

those forms of thought and/or practice that seek to confront, eradicate and/or ameliorate racism. Anti-racism implies the ability to identify a phenomenon—racism—and to do something about it.

Anti-racism is

a phenomena with a variety of global uses and iterations.

Anti-racism is

the everyday and informal oppositions to racism that people racialized as non-white use to navigate life.
the psychological process of acknowledging racisms in collective and individual consciousness.
the opposition of racialized power dynamics in social, political, and economic systems.

Anti-racism is

often reduced to extremes. This dismisses the historical and sociological groundings of anti-racism, treating it as a "cause" rather than "a topic of social scientific, historical, and geographic inquiry."

Bonnet provides a multiple dimensional view of anti-racism using a philosophical, historical, and international perspective. It challenged my initial understanding of the concept that was confined to a domestic point-of-view. I also allowed me to see the complexities of anti-racism. Specifically, that anti-racism and racism are not two extremes on a spectrum.

(Bonnett, 1999)

Anti-racism is not

adequately understood as the inverse of racism.

Anti-racism is not

for the civilized, enlightened, or intelligent. Some western iterations of anti-racism create "the impression that western modernity is benign and emancipatory in nature." That liberation is for people who subscribe to modern and western thought, constructing racism as a destabilizing force to global order. National agencies use this same rationale to condemn anti-colonial or grassroots opposition as disruptive or racist themselves. This argument also positions racism as an intellectual error, and racist people as ignorant or outdated. It individualized and flattens the systemic and dynamic realties of racism.

Anti-racism is not

only about resistance. In an exploitative or performative context, national powers use the rhetoric of antiracism to create, strengthen, and legitimize their efforts. Overstating a national standard of behavior works to assimilate diverse populations into specific political and economic agendas. The stated values also serves to vindicate political actors who boast about their efforts without making productive change.

Anti-racism is not

the corporate Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) agenda. The corporate sector aligns itself with anti-racism rhetoric if it facilitates profit though their public image or perceived social responsibility. Another driver is external pressure from government compliance laws and regulations.

Anti-racism is not

strictly essentialist. It does not reinforce the idea that race is a fixed and natural category rather than a dynamic, socially constructed identity subject to the influence of history and geography. Strategic essentialism maintains this critique but preserves identities that represent resistance and solidarity.

"Dismantling the Scaffolding of institutional racism and institutionalizing anti-racism" - Nimisha Patel

Nimisha Patel, provides a look into the consultation process she employs with public, education, and human rights organizations. Although this is not a critique of traditional approaches to organizational consultancy, she argues that they are inadequate for addressing institutional racism. Patel uses anti-racism as a stance, approach, and praxis when consulting organizations. It is not in direct opposition to racism or concerned with the individual actions or ideologies. As a stance, it pushes up against whiteness and its consequences—racism—with a commitment to create change. As an approach, it centers the realities of whiteness and the mechanisms that sustain it as dominant culture. As a praxis, it requires critical analysis of racialized power dynamics. Specifically, the power of whiteness to establish normative dominance and how that shows up within organizations.

Disrupting whiteness is no small task. It first requires centering whiteness so that it is recognized in full view. In full view, members can interrogate exactly how it is produced, defended, and sustained within their workplace. This process utilizes counter storytelling, a direct opposition to whiteness, and an acknowledgement of racism as a violation of basic human rights to position the work. The preliminary consultation is often prompted by moments of crisis when tensions are high and the need for intervention is urgent. In that preliminary interaction, Patel prioritizes speaking to staff racialized as non-white at all levels of the organization because they are likely to be hyperaware of the issues and the proposed plan to find a solution. The consultant engages all staff to make clear the nature of organizational intervention, and reasons behind the need for it. Early discussions also serve to create a sense of safety and a shared language. It's a collective responsibility to establish the bounds of safety; however, the consultant can facilitate this by acknowledging the discomfort and potential offense that may come up. The goal of shared language is not to dictate what words or phrases are right or wrong, but to create opportunities to deeper understanding of their meanings and functions. Next, the consultant explores the internal systems and values and the external social-political context in which the organization operates. This positioning highlights the systems and perspectives that would help situate the process of disrupting whiteness and facilitating an anti-racist praxis. This process require the consultant to consider their own biases, as well as the potential push back they can/will receive as they interrogate organizational values and practices.

Patel details the 5-stage process she uses to explore whiteness. The process involves answering questions and engaging in grouped or paired discussions. People racialized as non-white can choose to pair up with each other.

Stage 1 - In pairs, staff discuss the followings questions; "when did I first become aware of whiteness" and "how has whiteness been salient in my life, education, and work history."

Stage 2 - In small groups, participants talk about their experience talking about whiteness and racism.

Stage 3 - Teams within the organization discuss the following questions: "What does whiteness look like in our work/team? What does that do and for whom? How is that responded to in the org? How could/do those responses maintain whiteness, and institutionalized racism?" These questions are meant to make staff aware of whiteness and the racialization process, make space for counter-storytelling, and make visible the ways in which whiteness is defended and upheld.

Stage 4 - A second round of discussion guided by the same questions in stage 3. This time, with groups made up of a mix of staff from all levels within the organization.

Stage 5 - Discussion can lead to staff choosing to create and/or participate in racial affinity groups. These groups can initially emphasize and essentialize difference, but bringing them back together to continue discussion can deepened understanding of the complexity of whiteness.

After this process, the consultant and the consulted embark on the ongoing process of developing an anti-racism praxis. This process is not limited to a specific timeline and creates purposeful spaces for staff to continue these discussions. Strict goals and outcomes are not the sole focus of intervention. Whatever progress achieved requires collective responsibility, including senior staff and leadership.

(Patel, 2021)

National & Federal

Participant 1

does policy development, analysis, and regulations of Federal Nutrition Programs. They describe the work as "meeting the needs of hungry folk" throughout the entire lifespan by interrogating the policies in Federal Nutrition Programs like the Supplementary Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). They travel to conferences and meal sites to connect with program administers and regional officers.

Participant 5

oversees programming and advocacy for a national nonprofit network of organizations involved in domestic and international food advocacy. Their job is to bring together organizations in agreement on advocacy priorities. They convene diverse institutions like national nonprofits, community-based organizations, international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), corporations, Universities, and foundation to works towards the goal of ending hunger.

State

Participant 3

is the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) officer within the outreach department of a state organization. They are responsible for connecting state residents with the Supplementary Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). They provide access to educational opportunities for research, and access to the resources that come out of that research. They support community and economic development with small business consulting for women, veterans, and minorities; small grants for local businesses; and technical assistance for local farmers. As part of the leadership team, Participant 3 ensures that the university meets their civil rights responsibilities and their institutional responsibilities.

Participant 7

is focused on advancing nutritional equity via advocacy and coalition work at a state Health and Welfare organization. They work to improve systems of care but bringing equity to the social safety net. They advocate with state agencies and legislature. Their organization provides an umbrella of human services, coordinates a variety of nonprofit organizations, and provides direct services to low income communities in their region. Their major focus areas are access to health care, economic resilience/stability, and nutritional equity.

Participant 10

leads government relations for a network of food banks. They are building the advocacy and public policy pieces along with the food distribution to go beyond providing emergency food. In this role, they manage community relations with their network of partner food banks, food pantries, meal programs, and housing shelters. They engage in outreach for the Supplementary Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and anti-hunger public policy advocacy for their state.

Participant 12

is a policy analyst for a state law reform institution. The organization focuses on several areas of the law, but my conversational partner concentrates on food security specifically. They identify substantive law, policy, and regulations issues that requires systemic advocacy; and interact with the Supplementary Nutrition Assistance Program's (SNAP) state agency, the state government and legislature, the media, and federal agencies like the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

State & Local

Participant 9

is the director of a state non-profit anti-hunger and anti-poverty organization. Their role is fundraising; leading the policy and outreach work; hiring, supervising, and teaching staff; and communicating with partners, press, and policy makers on behalf of organization. The organization engages in advocacy around legislation, policy, and implementation of policy; specifically concerning a wide range of federal nutrition programs. They provide direct services to state residents through the Supplementary Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) outreach. They link, support, and incubate anti-hunger work across the state.

Participant 8

directs projects at a nonprofit Public Health institution. The institution brings together cross sector partnerships to improve public health by creating system and policy change, and by incubating model programs. They have community health workers placed in clinics, community-based organizations, and COVID response.

Participant 11

trailblazed their way to Director of Equity and Inclusion of a food justice organization. Their job is to keep the organizations equity efforts moving and front of mind. They do this by facilitating continuous learning and conversations around the topic, and by creating and using equity tools. Their organization distributes food to hundreds of food bank partners within the state. They interact with the state governor's office, the department of Health, other food justice organizations, and grassroots organizations.

Participant 13

is the CEO of an nonprofit anti-hunger organization that engages in direct service and advocacy. They help people access Federal Nutrition Programs like the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and Summer Meals. They started with work in their city, then branch out to provide national services as they grew. They publish research, engage in community work, and build relationships with elected official. They build coalitions with local pantries and kitchens, food banks, community organizing groups, poverty groups, unions, housing groups, academic institutions other advocacy groups at the state and federal level.

Regional & Local

Participant 6

is a part of the executive leadership team of a regional food bank. They lead community outreach which involves Supplementary Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) outreach and nutrition education. They particularly focus on connecting with the communities in the region to gauge the impact of services provided.

Participant 2

is a community and partner connecter for a regional food bank. They engage in Supplementary Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) outreach, community education, relationship building with local organizations, and referrals to a variety of social and civil services. They provide technical assistance, quality assurance, and funding scholarships to their network of partners.

Participant 4

works on health equity at a local and regional level nonprofit think tank. The work is across the spectrum of health and human services and involves research at the core. That research informs their advocacy efforts as they testify and lobby at state legislature. The research also contributes to taskforces, direct service organizations, research papers, reports, and blogs.

See appendix 1 for specific details on the racial and gender identities of the sample.

LITERATURE REVIEW

"Disrupting the Discourse: Framing at the Intersection of Racism and Opportunity"
- Makani Themba

- ✓ Disrupt dominant frames on race by focusing on why things are the way they are and how they can be different.

- ✓ Ask the following questions to develop the social context of the issue: "Who benefits? Who is harmed? Who has power? Who is left out?"

- ✓ Locate unfairness and identify practical solutions.

- ✓ Avoid sensationalizing individual stories and experiences over the patterns and structures they point to.

- ✓ Center those most affected instead of becoming preoccupied with convincing and critiquing those with power. Funnel those efforts and resources to building power with those most affected.

- ✓ Watch your language to ensure that it aligns with what the people being served want.

- ✓ Look out for the "hidden transcript," or the ways in which people communicate to evade dominant structures. Listen twice as hard to understand the script and catch the double and/ or hidden meanings.

I used these guidelines to navigate data collection and analysis because this research relies heavily on the narratives participants shared with me. They highlight techniques that illuminate the racialized power dynamics participants describe when they talk about the culture of their organization, or anti-hunger and non-profit work generally. They also center the perspectives of people who experience or acknowledge the worst of racialized power in the anti-hunger workplace; creating opportunities for their words to disrupt those dynamics.

(Themba, 2005)

DATA COLLECTION

Informational Interviews

I met with leaders of anti-hunger organizations, food and racial justice researchers, and organizational development consultants. The purpose of these conversations were to orient me to the anti-hunger space. They also provided insider insight on racial equity in the anti-hunger movement. Conversational partners shared details about their current work description and their career journeys. We talked about what racial equity in the anti-hunger space looked like generally and in their organization specifically. I asked my conversational partners questions to discern what concerns, compliments, or comments they had about efforts to address race at work in the anti-hunger space. My intentions were to collect information that could inform the next steps of data collection, the literature review. *(see appendix 2).*

Literature Review

My initial conversations revealed that I had a lot to learn about racial equity. I dedicated the literature review to clearly defining racial equity, and then exploring exactly what it looks like in terms of organizational development broadly. Using books, articles, essays, videos, newsletters, and informational interviews; I expanded my understanding of racial equity, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), anti-racism, organizational development, and institutional change. I utilized informational interviews with an organizational development professional who uses an anti-racism/anti-oppression framework as a resource on both anti-racism and organizational development.

Race Equity Training

While reviewing the literature, I engaged with the material first-hand. I participated in anti-racism/anti-oppression organizational development, race equity coaching, and a variety of training and informational sessions concerning racial equity or Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). I attended webinars, conversations, workshops, trainings, and informational sessions to observe how anti-hunger organizations addressed race; and to scan the resources and information distributed at these gatherings.

Virtual Survey

I used the information gathered from informational interviews, the literature review, and training to inform a survey as the first round of data collection. That first round included questions about the plans, programs, and policies that anti-hunger organizations had in place to address race at work. The survey helped me identify potential conversational partners, collect food advocates' feelings about their organization's polices, and produce a general scan of organizational approaches to race at work. I distributed the survey to a list of participants who had previously registered for a session on racial equity at a prominent anti-hunger national conference. I used this sample in hopes to find interviewees who would be willing and able to contribute to a conversation about racial equity in the anti-hunger space *(see appendix 3).*

Semi-Structured Responsive Interviews

All of the previously mentioned methods of data collection informed the interview guides for the semi-structured responsive interviews. Interviews started off with questions about their organizations and specific job descriptions. The bulk of the interview questions uncovered the frameworks organizations use to address race at work; including the programs, policies, strategic planning, third-party consulting, and trainings involved. I asked individuals about the impact these efforts had on their organization, what they think brought about these efforts, and how they personally experienced or perceived them. Interviewees consented to having our conversation recorded. Because interviews were semi-structured and responsive in nature; I encouraged respondents to speak freely, share stories, provide examples, challenge questions, and ask their own questions. I completed 13 formal interviews in total. Any identifiable information was excluded from this report out of respect for our candid exchange, and precaution for potential repercussion from oppressive power dynamics that seek to silence any challenge to it. I asked the Interviewees to expound on their responses from the online survey with more probing and pointed questions *(see appendix 4).*

DATA ANALYSIS

I analyzed the notes from informational interviews to find common themes and topics to inform the virtual survey questions. The primary purpose of the survey was to pinpoint potential interviewees who were knowledgeable about their organization's policies to address race, and were willing to contribute to a conversation about racial equity. The survey included a free response question that encouraged individuals to share any thoughts, concerns, questions, or hopes about race at work and racial equity. Their responses alerted me to potential topics and questions that I could use in the formal interviews.

The semi-structured responsive interviews required the bulk of data analysis. Using an automated transcription service, I created transcript drafts of each formal interview. I went through each interview transcript a second time to ensure accuracy by manually transcribing the final draft of transcripts. After transcribing interviews, I engaged in inductive coding using a mixture of in vivo, descriptive, simultaneous, and values coding. The first round of coding produced the following terms and phrases: **work description, organizational description, disparities, lived experience, advocacy, organizational efforts, perceptions of efforts, third-party consulting, strategic planning, training, social context, transformational change, talking about race, paternalism/ white savior complex, representation, leadership/funders, and institutional and systemic power dynamics,**.

After the first round of coding, I created an interview coding guide where I refined the initial codes. I combined some, expanded others, and then grouped them into themes. The themes were as follows: **The Work, Normalize, Organize, Operationalize, The Experience, and What's at Stake**. Once I located themes, I completed a second round of coding where I grouped all the relevant interview quotes together by their corresponding themes. From there, I saw the patterns, commonalities, and inconsistencies within the information provided for each code and theme. This led me seamlessly into the next step, which was thematic analysis. This is where I engaged and then arranged the interview quotes by code, and then by theme, to uncover a narrative about organizational approaches to addressing race at work.

To organize that narrative and categorize the range of activity reported in interviews, I used the Six-part Strategic Approach to Institutional Change created by the Government Alliance on Race & Equity (GARE). I adapted it to anti-hunger organizations, because it describes how they can acknowledge and then change the internal policies and practices that upholds racial inequity. I was faced with a vast amount of data describing a wide range of activities, programs, and plans; and it helped me understand the process by which organizations are trying to institutionalize race at work. It was particularly useful where participants could not specifically name their organization's efforts. For example, some used equity when talking about racial equity. When I prompted them to talk about racial equity specifically, they rebutted that their organization's use of the term equity is meant to include racial equity. Additionally, when asked what specific framework their organization used to address race at work, amongst the options of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, anti-racism/anti-oppression, Human Resource trainings and so on, some participants chose all options. Their justification being that these efforts were not formalize in their policies. In other instances, participants would use both Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), racial equity, and anti-racism interchangeably even though they all have distinct definitions and operations. This made it difficult to strictly codify these efforts into discreet groups; however the Six-part Strategic Approach to Institutional Change helped me organize their approaches without having to solely reply on what organizations chose to name them.

"Racial Equity: Getting to Results"

- Erika Bernabei

Normalize

Use a shared racial equity framework

to name the history and current realities of racialized dominance.

to imagine a new role in disrupting those racialized power dynamics.

to make clear the specific meaning and distinctions between racial equity and racial inequity; individual, institutional, and structural racism; and implicit and explicit bias.

GARE's Six-part Strategic Approach to Institutional Change

Normalize

Operate with urgency and accountability.

by making transformational change a lived priority rather than a stated priority.

by creating formalized measures that keep organizations accountable to making racial equity a lived-priority.

to encourage public and political will to follow suit.

Organize

Build organizational capacity.

by fully commuting to the scope of the work required for transformational change.

using training to increase understanding about institutional and structural racism and to build skills and strategies that promote racial equity

with leaders bring intentional about creating the organizational infrastructure needed to sustain race equity work.

with a wide range of stakeholders. Individuals and singular departments cannot singularly push the work forward.

(Bernabei, 2017)

The Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) details a six-part strategic approach to institutional change. My analysis adapts their approach to demonstrate how anti-hunger organizational can institutionalize work that contributes to a societal goal of racial equity.

Organize

Partner with other institutions and communities

to make a collective impact towards a societal goal of racial equity.

to uplift the voices of people with lived-experiences of hunger in any efforts that seek to benefit them.

with shared decision making, directional, and designing power.

by using external expertise when needed and being responsive to the external pressure from community actors.

Operationalize

Implement racial equity tools

to mechanize the consideration of racial impact in the creation and implementation of policy.

to help organizations identify specific goals, measurable outcomes, and implementation strategies.

with consistent monitoring, assessment, and technical support.

with the following elements: Inclusion and engagement, data, accountability, program and policy strategies, structural change, and education about racial equity

Operationalize

Be data-driven

and not only in tracking racial disparities. Use data to measure how strategies, investments, and policy changes contribute to closing those gaps.

to measure implicit bias. It can be made explicit using data that tracks how patterns of biased behavior lead to unequal outcomes amongst racialized groups.

and accountable to the results. Results should be determined by the outcomes of the conditions within the community that intervention is meant to address.

(Bernabei, 2017)

FINDINGS

The Work – **describes the nature of the work being done and the context in which it is done.**

Work description – information detailing the specific job description of the participant interviewed

Organization description – the organizational context of the work being done including organizational values, priorities, structures, and services provided.

Representation – the demographic make up of the organizations represented. It involves the feelings, thoughts, and perceived impacts of representation on the work.

Lived experience & The personal – the personal thoughts and experiences expressed by participants as it relates to the anti-hunger work.

Social context – this code captures the socio-political context of the work. Specifically how social movements inform the work.

Normalize – **describes efforts used to normalize these efforts and topics at the workplace.**

Training – training topics, formats, and details provided and/or mandated by organizations.

Systemic and institutional power dynamics – efforts to build knowledge around racialized power dynamics in the systems and structures of society. Its involves information sharing about racialized historical trauma, root causes of hunger and poverty, and the ways that current polices and practices uphold racialized power dynamics.

Organize – **describes how organizations build capacity to engage in the topic of race at work.**

Leadership and funders – was initially about leadership efforts and involvement in addressing race at work. After the first round of coding, I included funders as I realized their role in influencing organizational priorities.

Strategic planning – recent, ongoing, or planned efforts to engage in organizational development via strategic planning including where and how racial equity was or was not included in the plan.

Third party consulting – the nature, scope, and function of the support organizations used in their efforts to normalize efforts and conversations addressing race at work.

Operationalize – **describes the tools, knowledge, and capacity organizations are building.**

Advocacy and outreach – participants locate their advocacy work as the ideal context to operationalize race equity.

Racialized disparities – participants talk about the racialized disparities they witness in hunger and express their commitments or intentions to address the root causes of racialized disparities.

The experience – **describes how individuals experience and internalize these efforts.**

Perception – captures how participants perceive efforts to address race at work including the feeling that come up, the impression they have about it, and their overall efficacy.

Talking about race at work – the nature and function of conversations, the topics and feelings that come up during conversations, and the language used in conversations.

What's at stake – **describes what's at stake if race equity work is not operationalized.**

Trust and credibility – participants expressed concern about the trust within their organization and externally within the communities they serve

Paternalism & White saviorism – the realities of paternalism and white saviorism in anti-hunger work.

Transformational change – the goal of addressing race at work is to create transformational change within the workplace. Participants describe what that change would look like, if they see it happening within their organization, if they see the potential for change, and the possible barriers to change.

DISCUSSION

The murder of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police shook the very foundations of society. The events of summer 2020, made the racialized power dynamics that uphold and reproduce systemic racism as clear as day for many Americans. Protesters throughout the country took to the streets to demand justice for George and due process for his murderer, police officer Derek Chauvin. Many anti-hunger organizations created statements to communicate their support. They either shifted their stated priorities or doubled down on their current efforts to address racial inequity within their communities. The external social movements and internal pressure from staff required that organizations look at their policies, practices, and priorities to start, or recommit, to the process of transformational change. Some members of these organizations were already talking about race at work; however, these events brought topics of race and racism to the forefront of anti-hunger workplaces in both formal and informal settings.

"There was a turning point because those events were so in your face, and everyone was talking about it. We couldn't do what we usually do, which is ignore stuff (Participant 8, personal communication, January 27, 2022)."

The Work

Some participants were excited about the responsiveness of anti-hunger organizations, others felt like this was long overdue, some critiqued this response as simply performative, and others felt like their work already spoke to their commitments. Anti-hunger advocates considered how they could channel this social momentum into their work specifically. With the urgency of an ongoing global pandemic and the glaring truth of racially disparate food insecurity; they saw exactly why anti-hunger work needed to consider racial dynamics. Participants detailed the challenge to move that work forward while they respond to an ongoing health crisis.

 Still, they made efforts. Food banks and distribution sites considered what could they do beyond providing food. Food advocates aimed to make participation in federal nutrition programs less traumatic. Staff of anti-hunger organizations started to contextualize the socio-political climate that effected their work. How the majority white, sometimes explicit white supremacist, highly segregated, partisan, bipartisan, and polarized places where they lived and worked shaped or inhibited their efforts. Popular discourse around race equity and anti-hunger work is buzzing with energy, excitement, exasperation, and expectation. Participants characterized this industry as highly siloed and describe witnessing a push past the traditional parameters of anti-hunger work to address the dynamics of race and racism in the workplace. Zooming in from an organizational level, the individuals I interviewed located their personal experiences in our conversations. When asked what brought them to this work, they describe how their lived experiences with hunger and poverty inspired them. It also equipped them with the passion needed for the work since they see it as personal and not just professional. Participants also acknowledged their personal privilege and express gratitude for the fact that they are learning the tools and language needed to better engage the topic of race at work and in their lives generally.

They all agreed that when anti-hunger workplaces are racially representative of the communities they serve, they do better work and feel better at work. When asked if their organizations were racially representative of the people they serve, interviewees mostly responded with a quick and simple "absolutely not," then continued to describe how that is typical of non-profit and anti-hunger spaces. The few that responded affirmatively, described the specific and intentional efforts their organizations took to achieve a racially representative staff demographic. Others reported a specific pattern of diversity: the staff in administrative and direct service work were racially representative of the communities they served; while the racial demographic of the leadership team and board remained homogenous and mostly white.

"I think the folks that do direct service are really a mix, and are representative of the communities they serve. Our management structure is predominantly white, and that's an issue (Participant 7, personal communication, January 27, 2022)."

Racially diverse staff makeup does not equate to workplaces that advance society towards racial equity. Instead, workplaces become racially representative when the racialized power dynamics within their organizations are disrupted. Racialized power dynamics that reproduce whiteness as dominant culture, are the problem; homogenous workplaces are the symptoms of that problem. We cannot address the symptoms alone, without treating what caused it. Increasing the number of non-white staff addresses the symptom, not the root issue. This strategy brings about transactional change and does not transform the culture or practices that created the representation imbalance in the first place. This is the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion framework for change (Anonymous informant, personal communications, January 11, 2022). To achieve transformation, organization must move past what is easily understood, measured, and communicated and get to the part that is uncomfortable, undiscovered, and unexpected. Some participants recounted the ongoing processes at their workplaces. Others described approaches that only allowed for a narrow parameter of change. Many detailed being somewhere between transaction and transformation: using transactional language, tools, and approaches in hopes of making transformational change. Some were forced to use sanitized language to mask their efforts out of the fear of losing their jobs. All participants verbalized some degree of support for transformational change within their organizations, and outlined that change making process during our interviews.

Normalize

The Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) advises that organizations use a racial equity framework to name the history of racialized dominance within broader society and within organizations specifically. It also details that they use a racial equity framework to imagine a new role in disrupting racialized power dynamics that uphold whiteness as a norm (Nelson, 2015).

The anti-hunger organizations I connected with are engaged primarily in activities they hope will normalize race equity work. Some organizations collapsed racial equity within their general equity efforts. Others advertised a general goal of equity but lead with race to set the parameters of change for issues concerning gender, age, or ability. Their strategy is as follows: "we are explicit about leading with race because we believe that being able to have deep conversations around race allow us to have more impactful and fuller conversations around all other types of oppression (Participant 11, personal communication, January 31, 2022)." Some organizations have not located a specific approach or framework and instead communicate an intention or commitment to racial equity. Intentionality and commitment are necessary, but so is specificity. Some organizations are specifically normalizing racial equity. Participant 5 shared, "we basically educated ourselves as an organization on the importance of racial equity. Racial equity is when your race no longer predetermines certain outcomes, like higher rates of food security... it is making sure that all of the communities that you serve, have equal outcomes (personal communication, January 26, 2022)." That normalization process is necessary, as one participant expressed that after working in the non-profit sector for over 10 years, they noticed that, "there was this euphemism when talking about any social issues. Nobody would ever say anything about race, they would talk about like poverty, or classism, or economic inequality. (Participant 7, personal communication, January 27, 2022)." Another participant said that at this part of their organization's journey, "conversations around institutional racism is part of the language discussion so people get comfortable understanding that there are systemic issues that we need to talk about (Participant 10, personal communication, January 28, 2022)." Participant 11 described how they facilitated the normalize process within their organization; "a big focus of my work for a couple of years in socializing, naming personal, cultural, institutional levels of racism, and just getting us in that headspace as an

organization (personal communication, January 31, 2022)."

Almost all of the organizations represented in the sample use training in the process of normalization. A couple of participants report that though there are not any ongoing sessions, they see the need for it within their organizations. For those that do, training was prompted as a direct response to staff requests for tools and resources to assist their personal and professional interactions with race and racism. Some organizations sought training in reaction to racially charged incidents and/or conflicts amongst staff, leadership, and the communities they serve. Organizations predominantly named the parallel social movements as the drivers of their training efforts. The social unrest that erupted after the murder of George Floyd, pushed many anti-hunger organizations to questions what should be their first steps in addressing race at work. Training to build shared knowledge around racial equity, anti-racism, or Diversity, Equity, or Inclusion (DEI) was their initial response. Some trainings focused on individual experiences and interpersonal interactions with topics like unconscious bias, racial and cultural awareness, stereotyping, and civil rights compliance. Others highlighted the historic and ongoing systemic and institutional realities of racism, power, and privilege. Those training sessions covered topics like reframing racism, racial equity in anti-hunger work, racialized disparities, whiteness, and white supremacy. There has to be knowledge building and normalization around the systems and structures that uphold racism. Individual and interpersonal interventions have their place; however, any intervention that fails to address the racialized power dynamics in systems, structures, and legacies is incomplete at best, and in direct opposition to progress at worst. Training that centers and prioritizes individualist interventions, flattens and misrepresents the dynamic reality of systemic and institutional racism. It perpetuates a false sense of progress as individuals work on internalized and interpersonal issues and leave the structures, policies, and practices that perpetuate racialized power dynamics untouched (Anonymous informant, personal communications, January 11, 2022).

The normalization process requires that organizations communicate with urgency and accountability when it comes to racial equity. That looks like formalized measures to keep organizations accountable, and building the public will to collectively work towards racial equity in an urgent manner (Nelson, 2015). In response to the general urgency around diversifying staff in hopes of practicing race equity work, participant 5 advised organizations with predominantly white staff and leadership to "start doing racial equity work. That is probably the quickest thing to diversify those groups. Once you started doing that racial equity work, the community will force you to confront yourself (personal communication, January 26, 2022)." This advice aims to focus efforts on the societal goal of racial equity, rather than the transactional goal of increasing the numbers of staff racialized as non-white. One anti-hunger organization's equity department is responsible for keeping the organization accountable to their stated equity work, and each internal department accountable to their own equity work. Although not officially codified in their process, this organization leads with race first because "that's the one we'll quickly push off to the side (Participant 11, personal communication, January 31, 2022)." Because they witnessed their efforts being undermined by the organization's inconsistency, Participant 11 recognized the need for urgency in matters concerning race at work. Accountability is particularly important in organizations with individuals resistant to change. One participant described how adopting policies that prioritized racial equity created accountability for those who had not bought into the work. They continued, "At that point, it's a part of their jobs (Participant 5, personal communication, January 26, 2022). Participant 11 said that their race equity work shifted their organization's culture so much so that staff members resistant to change left the organization (Participant 11, personal communication, January 31, 2022).

The challenges one participant faced demonstrated that urgency is stifled without accountability. They reported that most of the people in their organization were committed to anti-racism as a stance, and as a way to approach the work. They faced direct opposition from

one individual who holds a disproportionate amount of power. That same person's influence restricted official lines of communication around racial equity at work (Participant 7, personal communication, January 27, 2022). Additionally, Participant 7 described the area they live and works in as incredibly racist, white supremacist, and regressive. They, along with their coworkers, saw glaring systemic issues and the need to address that directly with advocacy work; however, that one person blocking change was not held accountable to the priorities of the rest of the staff (personal communication, January 27, 2022). Another interviewee shared that with efforts to address race at work, "you have to have the board and senior leadership moving that forward, because staff can come to you and have great ideas, but if they don't feel empowered to push it forward; it doesn't go anywhere (Participant 10, personal communication, January 28, 2022)." Leadership plays a large role in setting the tone of urgency. Their influence either advances or inhibits the normalization process in the anti-hunger movement.

Organize

Institutionalizing race equity work in the anti-hunger movement requires organization. That organization process creates the infrastructure necessary to sustain the work. This is particularly important because participants express frustration with the fact that efforts to address race at work are not sustainable. They see their organization's immediate and reactionary response to external ques around social justice as performative without accompanying structural or cultural change. Building organizational capacity entails an organization-wide commitment to the full scope and depth of transformational change, along with formalized structures and processes that sustain that change. The individuals I connected with describe a variety of ways that their workplaces are organizing structures that can withstand the push and pull of social currents. Leaders and funders are responsible for ensuring that there is adequate resources and personnel to maintain that organizational capacity.

Anti-hunger groups are organizing via strategic planning. Their planning efforts build organizational capacity when they create permanent positions and departments to advance their efforts. One participant delineated the creation and growth of the equity department in their organization. As the department grew, the organization's race-first focus expanded to consider the root causes of racialized disparities in hunger (Participant 11, personal communication, January 31, 2022). Several participants noted that strategic planning led to the creation of staff committees, staff and board committees, staff working groups, and special committees for the members of the communities they serve. Some planning efforts explicitly name racial equity as priority, but most of them use the language of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). A few are intentionally undergoing strategic planning using a race equity lens. One participant decided to engage in strategic planning using an anti-racism/anti-oppression framework "not because racial equity is more important than strategic planning or that strategic planning is more important than racial equity. We can't do strategic planning in the absence of understanding how race plays a role in the work, and has historically played a role in the work (Participant 9, personal communication, January 28, 2022)." Several of the organizations represented in the sample have racial equity, equity, or Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) as a pillar within their general plans for organizational development. As they detailed that dynamic, they almost always conceded that their efforts could not happen in a silo. That the values, plans, and goals for their specific approaches to address race at work should extend throughout the entire plan.

"We are building our next 3-5 year strategies... and weaving our equity commitments to our social commitments and thinking about justice and liberation and not just charity (Participant 11, personal communication, January 31, 2022)."

Some participants took on anti-racism work in addition to their specific roles even when their organizations did not have codified plans or policies to formalize it. Others knew that they wanted to engage their anti-hunger efforts with anti-racism; but had not defined what that looks like for

their organization in particular. The leader of an anti-hunger organization described their excitement for the recruitment process of a new internal position. Their specific role will be building the organization's infrastructure to address race at work as part of strategic planning efforts (Participant 13, personal communication, January 28, 2022). Some organizations strategized transactional change in hopes that it would translate to transformational change. They reported plans to change their hiring practices to increase the number of people racialized as non-white. Creating workplaces that are no longer homogenous is a respectable goal; however, effort to do so will be transactional in nature unless organizations address the racialized power dynamics that created the representation issue in the first place. Overall, organizations are at a variety of stages of strategic planning. Some are in the data collection and analysis phase and using the information they gathered from staff surveys. They hope to use this information to inform an action plan moving forward. Others were on the second or third iteration of strategic planning; COVID-19 required that some redirect attention and resources to emergency food response.

To build capacity, organizations cannot rely solely on voluntary efforts to address race that staff create and lead. These efforts are often outside of their job descriptions and involve unpaid labor. The burden of this work falls disproportionality on Black staff and other individuals racialized as non-white. They often volunteer to lead the work because it resonates with their personal experiences and passions. That passion and urgency should not be the only driving force of approaches to address race within anti-hunger organizations. Infrastructure in the form of paid professionals, formalized lines of feedback, resources, and budgets should accompany staff initiatives that have upheld efforts thus far. One participant led a monthly virtual meetup where staff discussed books, media, and other content about race, identity, and society. Their executive director supported these effort by allowing staff to consume the content during their workday, and by reimbursing staff for the materials needed to participate (Participant 4, personal communication, January 25, 2022). Regarding their organization's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) committee; Participant 4 shares, "I thought that as a co-chair, I could take some ownership, [but] it seems that it's still in the hands of my executive director. When things get busy, optional things that don't help the organization run or raise money [are] one of the first things to go by the wayside (personal communication, January 25, 2022)." Leadership can use staff efforts to inspire the creation of internal mechanism that bring about transformational change. Their support, or lack thereof, demonstrates their commitment to building organizational capacity to address race at work.

"I think the hardest part for me is overseeing all the priorities that we are building... I make sure they have all the tools they need, but I'm one person. So as an organization, I think that is something that we all need to look at (Participant 6, personal communication, January 26, 2022)."

Organizational leaders and funders play a huge role in building organizational capacity to address race at work. Some leaders are facilitating the work themselves, while others are convinced to buy-in via their staff efforts. Some staff even face direct opposition from leadership who use the lack of funding and relevance to justify inaction. Generally, participants report that their leadership teams were open to the concerns and asks of the staff. That they were at least willing to engage with the most immediate issues or seek external expertise to pinpoint opportunities for growth. Participant 11 attributed the transformation within their leadership team and board to years of internal equity work that leads with race. Their CEO was committed to addressing the root causes of hunger, and believed that the best people to lead that work were those with lived experience of hunger, poverty, and racialized oppression (personal communication, January 31, 2022). Even so, organizational leaders have to answer to funders. Several participants are leaders themselves, and they described the tension between wanting to build organizational capacity, meeting requirements to maintain current funding, and getting

funders to prioritize their internal approaches to address race. Participant 12 shared that "because of external funding in our work, there's never an acknowledge of the importance of doing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) related internal work. So it's an add on. I think that's probably one of the biggest flaws that I see (Participant 12, personal communication, January 31, 2022)."

Third-party consulting is another tool anti-hunger organizations use to build their capacity to address race at work. The consultant's reach varied throughout the sample of organizations I connected with. Most of them had consultants interact with just the leadership team, or with the leadership team first. At a few organizations, the consultant worked with all levels of staff. The goals, formats, and topics covered by the consultant differed according to each organization. Participant 1 reported that their organization's goals for third-party intervention was to create a more respectful workplace, provide a safe space for discussions on racial bias, and help staff gain skill in incorporating Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) into their personal and professional lives (personal communication, January 13, 2022). One organization was undergoing strategic planning and organizational development using an anti-racism/anti-oppression framework (Participant 9, personal communication, January 28, 2022). Participant 11 detailed how a consulting firm helped build their organization's capacity and knowledge by working with their internal equity team. In tandem, they created structures to sustain the work after consultation; and developed tools that helped them see the racial impact of their work (personal communication, January 31, 2022).

As demonstrated by third-party consultation, cooperative partnerships with communities and institutions can be a fruitful organizing strategy. Participant 2 stated that their organization was making intentional efforts to highlight and share resources with communities of color and businesses owned by people of color (personal communication, January 20, 2022). Another participant described a network of working groups made up of anti-hunger professionals from different organizations; all seeking and imagining ways to operationalize race equity in their anti-hunger work. Diverse anti-hunger organizations working within coalitions present a great opportunity to organize approaches to address race at work. One collaborative effort made tools, trainings, technical assistance, and consultation available to their members in to support of their racial equity commitments (Participant 5, personal communication, January 26, 2022).

Operationalize

Many of the organizations and individuals represented in the sample engage in food advocacy work, and have considered how to prioritize racial equity within that context. Some specifically located disparities in hunger and poverty in white communities versus Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and other communities of color as priorities in their advocacy agendas. They saw their efforts to address race at work as a launching point to address the dynamics of racialized identities and hunger. The Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) describes how organizations can operationalize race equity in their work using tools, data, and metrics. Racial equity tools create formalized ways to consider the racial impact of plans, policies, and practices. Their consistent use can push organizations towards incremental change that can add up to large scale changes (Nelson, 2015). Anti-hunger organizations can use racial equity tools to to create new polices and reconstruct old ones that perpetuate systemic racism.

"Once we started doing these trainings, people were like 'ok so now what? We can understand this intellectually but what does this mean for us as anti-hunger organizations' (Participant 5, personal communication, January 26, 2022)?"

A few participants are using racial equity tools to engage their anti-hunger work. One described a tool that helped individuals doing anti-hunger work get a deeper understanding of the role that policy plays in creating and maintaining racialized disparities. They created and distributed another tool that allowed organizations to assess their own consideration of racial impact in their work. Since the assessment is self guided, this tool can benefit anti-hunger organizations that do not have budget priorities for third-party consultation (Participant 5, personal communication, January 26, 2022). Another tool enlisted in advancing race equity work was simple,

but it made a complex impact. It was a series of questions they considered before any major decision. Anyone in the organization could use the tool at any point of a program, plan, or decision; so it allowed for communication and accountability "across power differentials (Participant 11, personal communication, January 31, 2022)." The questions brought the following considerations to the forefront of any process: what equitable outcomes were achieved from this, what stakeholders were being intentionally and meaningfully included in the process, did it have the potential to harm people with lived experience of oppression generally and hunger specifically, would it advantage people or groups that traditionally benefit from privilege and risk upholding whiteness as dominant culture (Participant 11, personal communication, January 31, 2022)? Using tools is necessary; however, I caution that transformational change is unique to each organization's culture. In general, organizations should use tools to standardize their analysis of racial impact without using them as cut-and-paste formulas for change.

All of the participants at least alluded to the existence and relevancy of racial disparities when talking about their anti-hunger work, especially in advocacy. Data that locates a problem is imperative to its solution; however, racial equity is not about locating disparities. Racial equity is the goal of efforts to address and rectify racial inequities (Gamblin, 2022). It is action oriented, and accountable to observable changes in racially disparate outcomes. In the context of organizational development, participants located racial disparities in their workplaces, the anti-hunger movement, and the non-profit sector. To them, the most glaring issue is the racial leadership gap. Specially, that domestic hunger is disproportionately represented in Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and other communities of color; yet anti-hunger leadership is disproportionately white. Their observations lead me to conclude that this problematic dynamic is widely known within the anti-hunger movement. What remains generally, granted not entirely, unsaid are the actions that can rectify this misappropriation of power. Where is the data related to the outcome that anti-hunger advocates want to see? That outcome being leadership that is racially representative of the communities that organizations serve. Additionally, Participant 4 highlighted a possibly deterrent of data driven progress when they asserted, "the survey wasn't a problem, I think the problem will be in presenting it and seeing how we need to assess the issue (personal communication, January 25, 2022). Leadership, funders, staff, and other stakeholders should hold themselves and each other accountable to the timely, appropriate, and productive use of tools and data within their approaches to address race at work if they hope to operationalize it in the fight to end of hunger.

The Experience

A crucial part of organizational approaches to addressing race at work is the way that people experience and perceive these efforts. Capturing those narratives are equally as important as documenting organizational strategies. Participant 1 is Black, and they appreciated when efforts were timely. When organizations did "not ignore the civil rights movement we have now been living within for the last like couple of years (personal communication, January 13, 2022). They shared similar sentiments with a few other participants who appreciated having dedicated spaces and contexts to critically analyze race, the workplace, power, privilege, inequality, and their intersections. They were comforted when witnessing their colleagues disrupt and challenge their own thoughts and socialization around racialized identities. Participant 1 sees capacity for compassion when "hearing people describe their desire to be better friends and workers" and found that particularly important in anti-hunger work "because our job involved dealing with a lot of people who aren't like us in any way (personal communication, January 13, 2022)." Another participant shared, "I'm a white woman from a small town" … "I think everything that pushes you forward is good. There's a real value to pushing yourself and learning (Participant 10, personal communication, January 28, 2022). Several respondents gave a tepid affirmative response when asked about their perception of efforts to address race at work. Their caution stemmed from either ambivalence, skepticism, or hesitation to make judgements early on their their organization's process. A majority of participants share the sentiment that

"It's about time!"

Participant 2 asserted that Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts "never work because it's more about legalities and business than it is about people"..."Everyone's just checking boxes. That's easy to do (personal communication, January 20, 2022)." Participant 7 also offered a critical analysis of the ways that individuals interact with organizational approaches to address race at work. They argued that "well meaning white people are still committing harms" in these contexts when they do not fully acknowledge their privilege. They continued, "I think that speaks to white blinders on the issue of racism and racial inequity that I see in nonprofits. There is this skirting of real realities because of white privilege (personal communication, January 27, 2022)." I would contribute to that observation that efforts are often overconcerned with white comfort as well.

However, there is hope! Several participants are hopeful because of the efforts they see thus far. Participant 6 exclaimed, "I see it coming. I see it coming. I feel it coming. The staff is getting excited about it too. it's almost like starting over (personal communication, January 26, 2022)." Hope brings about excitement. Participant 8 hoped that their organization would keep the current momentum in implementing efforts to institutionalize anti-racism in policies, services, research, and operations. Along with the support of a committee, they lead these efforts; but expressed hope that "its a role that everyone has to play, and that we all take up our own banner, or do our part to make sure that this work continues for years to come (personal communication, January 27, 2022)." Most participants have a mix of hope and skepticism. This quote from participant 13 demonstrated just that, "what depresses me about history, is that there are no permanent victories. but the flip side is that there is no permanent setbacks. Our job is to keep fighting for the victories (personal communication, January 28, 2022)." Some questioned whether efforts to address race at work were genuine and sustainable.

"I have sort of a weird mix of like, defeatism and unfettered hope right now. We have a good chance. I can't say for sure that it's going to happen, but I feel that we have a good shot (Participant 7, personal communication, January 27, 2022)."

Many respondents felt that efforts to address race at work were uncomfortable. Participant 6 found it difficult to oversee all of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) priorities their organization was building (personal communication, January 26, 2022). Participant 8's organization was in the internal analysis stage of organizational development using an anti-racism approach. They shared the following observations, "It's not easy, and it's not short-term work. Undoing racism is very painful work. I think we've seen the push backs and the blowbacks already (personal communication, January 27, 2022). Another participant saw discomfort as necessary to their personal process as a white person engaging in these organizational efforts. They advised that "if it makes me uncomfortable, I think that is okay because I've lived my entire life where I haven't felt bad. The world is not set up in a fair and appropriate way. I should be embarrassed about that (Participant 10, personal communication, January 28, 2022).

Participant 11 reported their struggle against anti-blackness within their equity efforts. The organization's CEO, along with it's race-first approach to equity, transformed the demographic make up of their organization to better represent the demographic of people disproportionality experiencing hunger, poverty, and racialized oppression. Their efforts directly addressed a racialized power imbalance and created a more equitable outcome; however, that transformation was met with anti-blackness (personal communication, January 31, 2022). Black staff secured employment and achieved promotions that matched their qualifications in a workplace that acknowledged and corrected for implicit bias and racially discriminatory recruitment, hiring, and promotion practices. In this specific instance, the increased representation of Black staff in leadership prompted a series of complaints and challenges, from people whom this participant perceives did not feel the need to explain themselves to Black authority. They also highlighted anti-blackness whenever they made efforts to prioritize issues that concerned Black experiences, and those conversations shifted to the concerns of all people of color, or all people experiencing hunger and poverty (Participant 11, personal communication, January 31, 2022). Systems that thrive

on anti-blackness are not optimal for anyone. When we subvert that reality for unactionable generalities, no one benefits. The goal of racial equity requires equal and then optimal results for all racialized group.

The current global pandemic, and resulting hybrid or remote work environment, made this process difficult for some participants. One organization disbanded their equity committee because it was hard to build real relationships virtually, and during an ongoing crisis. They had "new people coming into the organization that really weren't as invested in how deep and self reflective this work [was] (Participant 11, personal communication, January 31, 2022). Participant 12 shared, "Zoom and the pandemic made it really hard to get together with people in ways that build trust. [It's different] when you don't feel like you're in a fish bowl, to bear your soul or have any really hard discussions (personal communication, January 31, 2022)."

"There are people that have come on board that I have never met other than a picture in a Zoom meeting. I think that undermines some of the harder or in depth discussions (Participant 12, personal communication, January 31, 2022)."

Most participants questioned the sustainability of efforts to address race at work. After their organization created a permanent staff position to address Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access; Participant 2 witnessed "a false sense of security that conversations [were] taking care of. Placing someone who is African American in that position doesn't mean you are taking care of diversity. I like to see action steps being taken. (personal communication, January 20, 2022). Participant 4 shared a similar perspective about their organization's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) committee. They commented, "it just seems like a show unfortunately. So in practice it sounds well, but there has been no formal [structure] (personal communication, January 25, 2022)." Participant 9 questioned "whether [anti-hunger organizations] are thoughtful about the shift, and whether the shift is meaningful or cosmetic. Whether it's the flavor of the year or whether we can make fundamental change (personal communication, January 28, 2022)." They also made the observation that Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI) efforts within their organization, and in general, are "more window dressings than substantive (personal communication, January 28, 2022)."

This wide range of emotions, experiences, and perspectives often manifest through communication: verbal, nonverbal, written, spoken, implied, marketed, formal, informal, and otherwise. When asked who was most visible and vocal in these exchanges, the interviewees described similar dynamics. They reported that in their organizations' staff age range, younger individuals are more likely to engage in conversation about race at work. In fact, they cited age as a better indicator than their racialized identities, on whether an individual would contribute to a conversation or bring up an issue. That observation pushed back against my own expectations that people racialized as non-white would be most vocal in these conversations. It reminded me to consider how my personal bias could manifest in assumptions in the research. Additionally, staff level and seniority effected the dynamic of conversations about race in the workplace. Participant responses pointed to the pattern where administrative, entry level, and internal operations staff were most vocal in the sense that they would report issues, raise concerns, and contribute to conversations about race in workplace. Managerial level staff were often on the receiving end of complaints and concerns; however, they contributed their own voices when they advocated for their staff and themselves to senior leadership. In the other direction, leadership and management were more vocal when implementing and mandating measures to address race at work. Organizational leaders also made the external facing statements about their organization's consideration of race in anti-hunger work.

 Leaders influenced the ways in which their organizations talked about race in the workplace. One participant shared that in their small organization, "people that have a lot of power talk about racial equity, but I don't think they're very well informed about it (Participant 7, personal

communication, January 27, 2022)." One person "has a disproportionate amount of control that influences official channels of communication like our staff meetings. None of us are saying a word, because we know it's not worth it (Participant 7, personal communication, January 27, 2022)." Participant 10 is an leader within their state's network of food banks. They detailed a time when they tried to assure their staff that they had a safe space to speak freely; "I had staff one time tell me… 'there is no safe space for us' (Participant 10, personal communication, January 28, 2022)." That exchange was crucial in participant 10's understanding and awareness of how power dynamics can effect their efforts to address race at work. Participant 9 is a leader of an anti-hunger organization who acknowledged the privilege inherent to both their position and seniority. It "gives me some job protection that others don't have. My age and experience gives me a platform that everyone doesn't have. I am going to be who I am, and do what I do pretty much regardless; so I think having these conversations with people like me is overall good for the organization (personal communication, January 28, 2022)." They are intentionally using their privilege to disrupt dominant discourses, and that can prove useful in conversations that directly challenge long-standing structures like white supremacy.

Several participants said that it's the champions of race equity work who keep the conversation going when organizational efforts ebb and flow. The champions are people whose anti-hunger work occupy the personal and professional spaces of their life. People with lived-experiences of hunger, poverty, and/or racialized oppression. Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and other people of color; and especially Black women. White allies who refuse to standby or be complicit with inaction. The champions are people who see anti-hunger as a systemic issue with a achievable solution, rather than a promising or fulfilling industry to work in. Those who hope to work themselves out of job.

"As a woman and then a woman of color, I had some instances where some of what we say doesn't go over too well with white men, and you can feel it. So it's very different if one of my white colleagues is able to step up and say, 'I agree and we should do this,' so that everyone is hearing it from different people, versus just the people of color speaking (Participant 6, personal communication, January 26, 2022)."

These conversations occurred in different contexts, but played similar roles in normalizing and organizing race equity in anti-hunger work. Some organizations did not address race within their ranks unless as a corrective measure to a racially charged issue or incident. Others respond to parallel social movements and crisis with words of support and solidarity directed towards their non-white staff. In one organization, the staff's racialized demographic make up is mostly Black and white. The participant shared that conversations looked like Black staff revealing their experiences and white staff being utterly surprised at the realities of racialized oppression. While Black staff get to a chance to "relish in their shared experience," they are still faced with the expectation of bearing the burden of expertise (Participant 4, personal communication, January 25, 2022). Participant 4 shared "sometimes I feel like they come to me not because they're really interested in my thoughts, but [because] they're interested in my Black thoughts (personal communication, January 25, 2022). In a different context, Participant 8 described these efforts as relationship management (personal communication, January 27, 2022).

Participants described ways that these conversations could better serve the purpose of operationalizing race equity work. One observed that "there is not enough spaces of intersection," or chances to challenge the status quo in conversations that take place in racially homogenous workplaces (Participant 2, personal communication, January 20, 2022). Participant 9 tried to use humor when talking about race at work because "humor is much easier for people to accept." On other occasions "it's more pointed." They make a point to read the room and use the appropriate language but cautions against taking "the path of least resistance. To do the easiest thing and have the most nonthreatening way of having that conversation (personal communication, January 28, 2022)". Participant 8 recounted their experience leading the conversations in their organization's anti-racism efforts, "in some cases, it almost ends up being a therapy session because you do have a lot that does come out. We are unable to spend as much as time as we'd

like processing that, [but] we allow folks to share because we feel it's important as part of that learning, particularly for those who have not faced or don't feel microaggressions (Participant 8, personal communication, January 27, 2022)." This leads me to question, how are staff supported when their traumatic experiences with racial oppression become the curriculum for everyone else? What happens with the guilt and shame of having a privileged racial identity? Organizational approaches to addressing race at work should build organizational capacity to deal with the human resources of care, compassion, trauma, grief, shame, and guilt that staff members are pouring into these efforts.

What's at Stake

I asked participants what is at stake if their organization does not prioritize racial equity in their approaches to address race at work? The majority of respondents cited distrust from the communities they aim to serve, as well as their organization's credibility. Both of those concerns deal with their organization's ability to continue doing anti-hunger work. If the communities anti-hunger organizations hope to serve do not trust them enough to use their services then that essentially renders them useless. Additionally, if anti-hunger organizations lose their credibility, their funding, partnerships, and public support might soon follow. Internally, organizations risk staff turnover if they do not create the infrastructure to operationalize race equity at work.

"There is absolutely no reason for trust amongst any of those 'non-traditional groups' because at best we've ignored them, and at worst we have actively harmed them. So the onus is on us to put ourselves in a complete and total position of service (Participant 3, personal communication, January 24, 2022)."

Also at stake is the maintenance of oppressive norms in the anti-hunger space, specifically white saviorism and paternalism. Participant 1 observed, "paternalism is ingrained in the fact that we are telling people 'when feeding children, this is what you need to do' (personal communication, January 13, 2022)." They described how federal anti-hunger senior leadership and their immediate ranks have been male; while the participants of the services they influence are predominantly female (personal communication, January 13, 2022)." In reference to paternalism, another participant asserted that "a lot of things in public health are just fact. They don't change with the times (Participant 4, personal communication, January 25, 2022)." Participant 6 observed that people working in food banks and distribution sites often make assumptions that they know what foods are the best for others, or that they are serving everyone in a community. They note that "we're quick to pat ourselves on the back because we served 20 million meals, but who cares? We're going to continue serving 20 million meals (personal communication, January 26, 2022)." They questioned how to address the root causes and systemic realities of hunger so that people are not beholden to food banks, non-profits, and charities for food. Participant 2 echoed those sentiments because to them, "the idea is to work themselves out of a job (personal communication, January 20, 2022)." Work that prioritizes racial equity, pushes up against white saviorism and paternalism. Participant 5 used racial equity technical assistance to help organizations uproot white saviorism practices in their anti-hunger work. They challenged organizations to consider "did you come out of nowhere saying 'we know what's right for you,' or are you working with communities to co-create solutions and to empower community members to be part of that solution? (personal communication, January 26, 2022)" Participant 13 contributed, "having people utilize their voice is very different than being their voice. We don't need to put a face on hunger. They already have faces (personal communication, January 28, 2022)."

What is mostly at stake is the possibility for transformational change. A few participants felt that their organization's current efforts would not lead to transformational change. Participant 1 appreciated their organization's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts because of the resources, information, and skills they gained; however, they did not see these efforts transforming their organization (personal communication, January 13, 2022). Another conceded that "at this point what we're doing is probably as good as were going to get because its not on anyone's

radar to do the real work (Participant 2, personal communication, January 20, 2022)" in regards to their organization's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access efforts. Although they note that the process of transformational change is ongoing, a couple of participants were enthusiastic about the changes they already see. Participant 5 reported, "our mission was to make [racial equity] a mainstream conversation in the sector. It's now a mainstream conversation. The question then is what are groups doing about it? There's a lot of talk. There are lots of new money around it. I think there are a lot of new initiatives, but the work itself is very recent (personal communication, January 26, 2022)."

Several responses were somewhere in between. "I do see that it can happen. The material piece I think is where we are having difficulties. Everybody is struggling with their finances" commented participant 3. With the appropriate resources, they hoped to "initiated a full culture shift (Participant 3, personal communication, January 24, 2022)." Another participant was excited to see their organization seizing the opportunity to operationalize anti-racism within their work. They shared, "I hope that we can keep that momentum, because this is long term work; and I think we've seen the push backs and the blowbacks already (Participant 8, personal communication, January 27, 2022)." Participant 9 thought that there was potential for transformational change with their organization's current efforts but had reservations because "transformational change is so hard, and it happens so rarely (personal communication, January 28, 2022)." Participant 11 saw evidence of transformation within their organization already, but understood that process to be ongoing (personal communication, January 31, 2022).

Participant 12 made an important point about the conditions needed for transformational change, "I don't think there are too many resources or that we necessarily have enough at all. Another factor is the time that staff is given to be able to participate and reflect while juggling the demands of their work and their funders"..."So one question is whether or not we can transform some of the expectations of the organizations that fund us (personal communication, January 31, 2022)." Participant 13 echoed a similar concern. Transformational change is possible "if we get the resources to truly build a national movement. To be truly transformational, you need a social movement that this is going to force it to happen, because it won't happen on its own (personal communication, January 28, 2022). Participant 9 considered all aspects involved in creating transformation when they stated "it happens because of sustained leadership engagement and involvement, with multi-level efforts; whether its legislative, political, communities, communication, all of those things (personal communication, January 28, 2022)."

"We'll just keep with the same status quo. We will keep working at the surface level, but we won't do anything to make sure that systemic changes are made," notes (Participant 8, personal communication, January 27, 2022)."

Most participants expressed concern about the barriers to transformational change and considered what's at stake if anti-hunger organizations do not prioritize transformation. Participant 3 is a diversity professional working in a state that prohibits any mandated Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts. They are a team of one, yet they are still determined to transform the culture around diversity and inclusion in their organization (personal communication, January 24, 2022). Another participant lives in a state where "every time there's progress on a broader scale, [the state] pushes against it (Participant 7, personal communication, January 27, 2022)." That dynamics effected how the organizations formally considered racial equity in their anti-hunger work. Organizational capacity was an issue for participant 13 who stated, "we had no one whose job it was to do this stuff so we've added it on to other things, but it's really hard when we are struggling to make rent on a yearly basis (personal communication, January 28, 2022)." Another hoped that transformational change could push back against the U.S. "history of going forward and then backwards, of making progress and then having a reaction (Participant 9, personal communication, January 28, 2022). Anti-hunger organizations cannot transform society themselves; however, they can transform their operations in a way that contributes to the societal goal of racial equity.

CONCLUSION

As demonstrated, there is a whirlwind of activity and conversation concerning racial equity in the anti-hunger space. There should be careful attention to the impact these efforts have on organizations, individuals working in the space, people and communities they serves, and society at large. Language should specifically name the past and current realities or racial inequity. Efforts should be led and inspired by people with lived-experience of hunger, poverty, and racial oppression. Tools, data, and metrics should hold organizations accountable to creating racially equitable outcomes. Organizations must call out the racialized power dynamics in their operation, and commit the human and material resources to rectify them if they hope to get to the root of the racialized power dynamics that perpetuate systemic hunger.

This research has limitations. One of them is a small sample size. 13 participants from 13 unique organizations cannot fully represent the scope of activity in the anti-hunger movement. Additionally, it lacks the voices of anti-hunger staff in the southern region of the United States. This does not mean that the research is anecdotal. The participants I connected with have worked in a variety of anti-hunger, social or civil service, and non-profit organizations. A majority have spent over ten years working within the anti-hunger space; a few have over 20 years of experience. They answered question's about their current organization's approaches to addressing race; however, their perspectives are informed by their collective experiences in the movement to end hunger. Another restriction was a limited time period to complete the work. Racial equity is a very broad topic, and its importance is even greater than that. The five-and-a-half month period of my field placement could not do this topic justice; however, my hopes are that it triggers individuals and organizations to be very intentional about the ongoing activity to address in the workplace. I hope this research contributes to the chorus of voices demanding that organizations operationalize race equity work in anti-hunger work. More ambitiously, I hope that it contributes to resolving the societal debt of racial inequity.

Ultimately, organizational approaches that explicitly center anti-racism, or prioritize advancing society towards racial equity in all aspects, at all levels, with all members, and with the necessary budgets and resources are working towards transformational change. There is no blanket formula for transformational change. It looks different within each organization and is unique to each organization's culture. That is why I will not offer recommendations or best practices in a prescriptive way. Instead, I adapted a visual from GARE's "Advancing Racial Equity and Transforming Government: A Resource Guide to Put Ideas into Action," to highlight examples of transactional and transformational change within anti-hunger organizations.

Transactional Change	Transaction in Anti-hunger Organizations
Solves technical problems	A few participants describe their organizations efforts to make the racial demographic diverse by hiring more staff racialized as non-white. This solves the numbers problem but does not guarantee that the diversity will be representative of the community. New hires and existing staff may feel these efforts tokenized people racialized as non-white.
Problem is easy to identify	Participant 11's CEO made concerted efforts over several years to change their board and leadership team from majority white and male to majority Black, Indigenous, and other women of color. These efforts were not easy, but the problem of a homogenous leadership team was easy to identify.
Routine solution using skills and experience readily available	A few organizations are undergoing routine strategic planning protocol with specific timelines and deliverables. The parameters of change are already established before the process. Racial equity or Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion may or may not be a discreet part of the plan.
Often solved by an authority or expert	A few organizations hired organizational development professionals to locate specific problems and solutions, or facilitate general strategic planning. The majority of efforts to address race are assigned to the consultant, and the end of their contractual agreement signals the end of those efforts. The consultation process does not create internal structures that can sustain the work.
Requires change in just one or a few places, contained within organizational boundaries	One organization concentrates their Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work within their outreach department in efforts to interact with community members, external stakeholders, and potential staff racialized as non-white. This approach does not consider how the entire organization could benefit from confronting the reason why those groups were not include in the first place.
People tend to be receptive to the technical solution	An organizational development expert who uses an Anti-racism/anti-oppression framework describes the vendor type relationship expectation that organizations sometimes start the process of consultation with. They expect the consultant to work within their specified parameters of change to produce according to their transactional expectations.
Solution can often be implemented quickly, sometimes by edict	A few organizations have training and consultation for their leadership teams and board members. Intervention stops there for a couple of them. The others have plans for the leadership team to then use those skills to lead efforts to address race at work amongst staff.
Produces short-term gains for communities, but leaves the existing structure in place	Participant 12 describes how they used to write long policy memos on behalf of the people and issues they advocating for. They would make compelling arguments that resulted in changes; however, they were essentially speaking for people with lived experience of hunger and poverty.

(Nelson, 2015)

Transformational Change	Transformation in Anti-hunger work
Solves an adaptive problem	A few organizations report that their hiring practices are racially inequitable. Several are reviewing their current practices. One found that withholding salary details made their recruiting process inequitable for people with lived experience of poverty. They also found that language requirements, when unnecessary, benefitted some groups racialized as non-white but restricted others.
Problem is easy to deny (under the surface)	Participant 11's organization transformed their leadership and board to better represent the racial demographic of people with lives experiences of hunger and poverty. They uncovered anti-blackness under the surface of their diversity issue when white and non-black people of color started to question and challenge Black leadership.
Requires change in values, beliefs, roles, relationships, and structure of operations	3 of the 13 organizations are engaged in strategic planning using an anti-racism or race-first equity framework. Their processes require and is led by the critical analysis of existing structures, values, and beliefs that govern their organization.
People facing the problem are involved in the work of solving it	One organization recruited a consultant to work with their internal equity team for a year building their capacity to then continue their race-first equity efforts. The consultant helped them create a tool that formalized the consideration of racial impact and racialized power dynamics in their decisions, plans, policies, and programs.
Requires change across organizational boundaries	Several participants either have intentions to, or are already using advocacy to compliment their official operations. They hope to move past only providing charity, direct services, and/or emergency response to target policy changes that can bring about systemic change.
People tend to avoid (or push back on) addressing the adaptive challenge	With an anti-racism/anti-oppression approach to organizational development, the consultant holds a mirror to the organization to help them interrogate their own operations and create change specific to their needs. Organizations sometimes push up against that model because they expect the consultant to guide them throughout a pre-determined processes to re-determined outcomes.
Requires experiments and new discoveries, takes a long time, cannot be implemented by edict	The change process is cannot be fixed. Transformation allows the process to dictate the required change. Also, efforts to address race at work should involve all-levels of staff within an organization. Buy-in should come from leadership, staff, and stakeholders.
Shifts cultural values and political will to create racial equity	Participant 12 transformed how they engaged in advocacy to make space for people to advocate for themselves. In one instance they created a meeting between a federal agency and people effected by their policies. They mediated the discussion but the participants did most of the talking; interjecting to only ensure that participants were not dismissed, interrupted, or spoken over. That shift to first person testimony was more of an effective tool in legislative advocacy.

(Nelson, 2015)

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1 - Racial and gender identities of participants

Racial Identity	Woman	Man	Transgender	Non-binary
Asian				
Black or African-American	5	1		
White or Caucasian	3	1		
Latina, Latino, or LatinX				
Native American or Indigenous				
Pacific Islander				
Multi-ethnic or Multi-racial	3			

Racial and ethnic identities are reported as described by participants.
Multi-racial identities include:
- Multi-racial Latina with mixed African and European ancestry
- Multi-racial Afro-indigenous
- Multi-racial African-American and Pacific Islander

Multi-ethnic identities include:
- White presenting Latina
- White Jewish-American

Organizational sample
- 1 federal agency
- 4 food banks or food bank networks
- 1 university
- 1 think tank
- 2 public health institutions
- 1 legal services organization
- 3 food advocacy groups

Geographic representation by region
- Northeast – 9
- Midwest – 3
- Southeast – 0
- Southwest – 0
- West – 1

Appendix 2 - Informational interview guide

- Tell me about your self?
- Tell me about your anti-hunger work, including work you completed before your current position?
- What does racial equity in the anti-hunger movement look like to you?
- What does is look like within your organization specifically?
- What do you think about the use of acronyms in anti-hunger work, specifically those used to label racialized people?
- If you could conduct your own research, what would you like to know about racial equity in the movement to end hunger?
- If you could review or audit racial equity practices in the anti-hunger organizations you engage with, what would you tell them to stop doing?
- Can you suggest any themes or topics that I should look into or focus on?

Appendix 3 - Virtual survey questions

- Full name
- Email address
- Phone number
- Racial identity
- Position title
- Organization name
- Length of employment
- How would you describe the framework your organization uses to address race? (Select all that apply)
  - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)
  - Anti-racism/Anti-oppression
  - Diversity and Inclusion training
  - Human resources
  - Bias training
  - *Write-in response*: Other (please specific)
- Does their organization have plans, programs, or policies to address race at work?
  - Yes
    - What is the name of these efforts? (Please spell out acronyms)
    - Are their specific goals, defined deliverables, and/or a timeline?
    - Do these plans, policies, or programs address race specifically? (As opposed to addressing race amongst other identities like gender, sexuality, age, and ability)
    - Has your organization worked with a third party for training, planning, or consulting purposes specifically concerning race?
  - No
    - Does your organization offer training or informational sessions about race or diversity?
    - Is race addressed in employee onboarding trainings and/or routine Human Resource protocol and communications?
  - I don't know
    - Does your organization offer training or informational sessions about race, bias, or diversity?
    - Has your organization worked with a third party for training, planning, or consulting purposes concerning race and/or diversity?
    - Is race addressed in employee onboarding training and/or routine Human Resource protocol and communications?
- *Matrix questions* - Rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements concerning organizational approaches to racial equity. *(Strongly disagree to Strongly Agree)*
  - What impact do you think these efforts have on your organization?
  - What impact do these efforts have on you personally?
- *Matrix questions* - Rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.
  - My colleagues will speak up/ contribute to a conversation about race, even if it makes other white people uncomfortable.
  - I have witnessed or experienced a white savior complex in food advocacy work.
  - I have noticed a shift within my organization to prioritize race, diversity, and equity.
- *Optional free response* - What would you like to know or what would you like to share about your experience in advocacy work or anti-hunger work?
- Would you like to participate in an interview to share more of your experience and insight on the topics of race, racial equity, and anti-racism in the anti-hunger movement? This interview will inform a qualitative analysis of approaches to racial equity in the anti-hunger movement. Any identifiable information regarding the interviewees and the organizations they work for will be kept confidential.
  - Yes
  - No

60 completed survey responses were collected over a 1 month period.

Appendix 4 – Semi-structured responsive interview guide

- Do you consent to having the audio of this interview recorded for data analysis purposes?
- I'd like to start off with your introduction. Please tell me you name, and anything else that you feel identifies you. That could be your racial identity, gender pronouns, geographic location, etc.
- What is your organization's focus? I.e. what does your organization do?
- How long have you worked with this organization?
- What is the purpose of your role in the organization?
- What led you to working with this organization specifically?
- Who does your organization interact with and/or serve?
  - Would you say that your orgs demographic makeup is representative of the people you serve?
- Is the scope of work local, state, regional, or national?
- How would you describe the framework your organization uses to address race?
- Does their organization have specific plans, programs, or policies to address race at work?
  - What's is the name of these efforts?
  - Are their specific goals with defined deliverables and a timeline?
  - Do these plans, policies, or programs address race specifically? As opposed to addressing race amongst other identities like gender, sexuality, age, and ability
- Does your organization offer training or informational sessions about race, bias, or diversity?
  - Are these regularly scheduled or one-time training sessions?
  - Do they outline a specific language around how to talk about race?
  - Does they use a systems approach, or are they addressing interpersonal dynamics?
    - Is there either emphasis or education about institutional and/or systemic racism?
    - What about racialized power dynamics like white supremacy?
- Has your organization worked with a third party for training, planning, or consulting purposes specifically concerning race?
  - What was the consulting for specifically; racial equity, general organizational development, or both?
  - Is this ongoing consultation or consulting for a set amount of time?
  - Who did the consultant interact with? Leaders, all staff, all together, or in separate groups?
  - Was there an end product or deliverable resulting from the consultation?
  - How visible was the consultation process?
- Is race addressed in employee onboarding trainings and/or routine Human Resource protocol and communications?
- How have or haven't these efforts had a positive impact on you personally, on the organization as a whole, and on the individuals in the organization?
- With the current efforts, do you see a chance for transformational change?
- Have you noticed a shift within my organization to prioritize topics of race equity or diversity, equity, and inclusion?
  - What do you think prompted this shift?
  - How did you notice this shift? Communications or a statement, trainings, etc.
  - What is your perception of this shift?
  - What's at stake if your organization doesn't prioritize topics of race, racial equity, and inclusion?
    - Within internal organizational structure and within the communities your organization serve?
- Will your colleagues will speak up when (explicit or implicit) issues concerning race show up at work?
  - Who do you notice as most visible and vocal with discussion concerning race show up at work?
- Have you witnessed or experienced paternalism in food advocacy work?
  - How does it affect the work?
  - How does it feel to show up as a [self-identifies racial identity] person doing this work?
- How do you experience conversations about race in the workplace?