



At L'Arche, adults with and without intellectual disabilities share life and friendships in community. We envision and inspire a world that welcomes difference and celebrates the gifts of all people.

L'Arche USA Board Webinar on Diversity – December 2019 / January 2020

Discussions in January 2020

Both sessions will focus on the Why and How of diversifying our Boards. Guests from local communities with chance for Q and A with them and collective sharing of learnings in the webinar. You might consider sending someone to both sessions.

- Wed Jan 15 at 11am Pacific / 1pm Central / 2pm Eastern <https://zoom.us/j/907689059>
 - Diversifying by including and supporting a person with an intellectual disability
 - Guests from L'Arche Portland (see video link below)
- Thurs Jan 16 at 8am Pacific / 10am Central / 11am Eastern <https://zoom.us/j/396752982>
 - Diversifying Board along race and ethnicity
 - Guests from L'Arche Boston North (see video link below)

[SIGN UP](#)

Preparation Materials

- L'Arche voices on diversity and inclusion
 - [Board Inclusion Video](#) with Tom, Frances and Andy of L'Arche Portland (15 min)
 - [Board Diversity Video](#) with Jen and Lynnette of L'Arche Boston North (23 min)
 - Recent L'Arche voices on diversity: Luther Smith, L'Arche USA Board and Laura Giddings, L'Arche Tahoma Hope Community Leader (next page)
 - L'Arche GWDC [Learnings on Inclusion](#)
 - [Beyond Political Correctness: Building a Diverse Board](#) (BoardSource)
 - [Diversity on Nonprofit Boards](#) (National Council of Nonprofits)
 - For a deeper dive: [Practical Strategies for Board Diversity](#) (1 hour + webinar from Nonprofit Quarterly)

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Paraphrase from remarks of Luther E. Smith, Jr., PhD, L'Arche USA board member, at the International Communal Studies Association (ICSA) Conference in Hudson NY, July 2019:

I offer several brief comments and questions about diversity and inclusion in L'Arche, with applications for any intentional community that aspires to be a sign of hope for beloved community in the larger society.

1. Diversity and inclusion are significant values and goals that deserve and require communal time, energy, discernment, and tenacity. Matters of disability, race, ethnicity, economic status, sexual orientation, religion, and gender identity are worthy of communal discernment. They are fundamental indicators of a community's vision of being a sign of hope.
2. Even if a community does not have a diverse membership, how does it extend hospitality to the diverse communities in which it exists? What does a community's isolation or engagement with neighbors indicate about its identity and its capacity to be a sign of hope?
3. How is inclusion being implemented for the various levels of communal authority and responsibility?
4. Efforts in diversity and inclusion not only transform the collective character of the community, these efforts transform the character of individual community members.
5. Working on diversity and inclusion is an ongoing commitment that is never over once and for all. It's never complete. Efforts to address diversity and inclusion can at times be the very initiatives that are essential to communal vitality and the authentication of a community as a trustworthy sign of hope for beloved community.

Paraphrase of remarks from Laura Giddings, L'Arche Tahoma Hope Community Leader, at National Gathering in Kansas, September 2019:

Early L'Arche history reflects a movement toward diversity in the founding of the second, third and fourth communities in different cultures (England, Canada, India) and out of different faith communities (Anglican, Muslim, Hindu). It's in our DNA.

To honor that, we need to be asking these questions:

- Diversity already exists in our communities. Do you know what it looks like in yours along the lines of faith/spirituality, ethnicity, race, ability, gender, class, etc.?
- Demographics in the USA are headed toward majority-minority populations in most urban areas, if they aren't there already. Are you aware of the demographic shifts in your wider community context? How are they reflected – or not - in your L'Arche community?
- There are stories of pain that come out of how people of color have been treated in L'Arche. Do you know if such stories are happening in your community? How can you learn and how can we collectively learn from these experiences?
- How do our recruitment and retention practices support or hinder recruitment of a greater diversity of core members, assistants and leaders?