Community Engagement for the Urban Marine Program

Key Terms

WSG- Washington Sea Grant

UMP- Urban Marine Program

Intersectionality- A term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw that refers to interconnections amongst social categories and identify such as gender, race, class, etc. and how they intersect.

DEI- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion which is a framework for promoting equitable decision-making and interacting with communities.

BIPOC- Black, Indigenous, People of Color

SDGs- United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are a set of 17 goals that are intersectional and equitable in nature to promote and advance sustainability among communities on a global scale.

Storytelling- The social and cultural act of sharing stories through a variety of narratives.

Traditional Knowledge- Traditional Knowledge are knowledge systems that exist within indigenous and local communities worldwide. These ways of knowing transcend academia and Westernized practices and exist to empower and uplift narratives.

Executive Summary

Accessibility has always been an issue for many marginalized communities and has affected their livelihood. In the case of many Washington communities it is access to marine ecosystems, marine foods, resources, and opportunities. To eliminate disparities WSG seeks to develop an Urban Marine Program that collaborates with urban populations and BIPOC communities.

This exploratory opportunity will utilize methods of environmental intersectionality, systems thinking, relationship-building and implementation to ensure that we are reaching beyond. WSG will use this toolkit as a guideline for doing equitable outreach and community development. The purpose is to engage, empower, uplift knowledge systems, increase accessibility, and to listen, learn, serve, and collaborate. To develop the toolkit we conducted literature reviews and informational interviews to obtain information of people's connection to water and what they want to see emerge from the UMP. We also participated in workshops to start a dialogue on the intersectionality of water and its application to our everyday lives.

The goal of the UMP is to advance collaboration amongst stakeholders and to hear community needs and concerns. This will be done effectively through DEI evaluators who will monitor engagement and community liaisons who will act as advocates for their community. The UMP must also use their privilege to give a greater sense of agency to the community. Ideally, we want to provide community action grants so that our stakeholders can do the work for themselves. This will happen with the help of subject-matter experts who carry traditional knowledge and WSG operating as a fiscal agent.

In addition to our DEI framework, we must integrate the UN SDGs in the work that we do because of their interconnected nature. We can create target indicators for each goal that align with the work we seek to achieve.

Based on the feedback that we received *the Community Engagement Toolkit for the Urban Marine Program* is a comprehensive guide capable of advancing a culture of equity, sustainability, and service within our BIPOC communities.

Purpose of Toolkit

ENGAGE

EMPOWER

UPLIFT KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

INCREASE ACCESSIBILITY

LISTEN, LEARN, SERVE, AND COLLABORATE

The purpose of this toolkit is to engage and empower community members of Western Washington in the practices of marine conservation, programming, and stakeholder engagement of WSG. In order to do conservation work in an equitable manner, all stakeholders must be included in the decision-making process. This looks like reaching outward and looking inward to build resilience and relationships from the lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Also, recognizing traditional and local knowledge because the communities we serve have a plethora of cultural and generational knowledge that transcends our understanding. By recognizing this we give them power and agency while being appreciative of their identity.

Furthermore, it is our duty to increase accessibility to coastal regions for those who may not be able to experience it. In order to do this, we must cultivate community partnerships with BIPOC communities, schools, community leaders, centers, etc. to hear their concerns, what their needs are, and how they want to be a part of WSG. We also need to meet people where they are at when it comes to community outreach. Emails and calls are not always substantial enough nor are they accessible to everyone. Meeting community where they are at looks like going into their communities, meeting with them, seeing what we can do for them.

Due to COVID-19 and we must think about programming from a more holistic perspective of accessibility. This can happen in the form of programming with accessible technology and tapping into the DEI work that already exists within WSG.

Key Players and Partners

Washington Sea Grant

Residents and Community Leaders

Community Liaison

Subject Matter Experts

DEI Evaluators

Washington Sea Grant

Washington Sea Grant will act as a collaborator, using the power, privilege, identity, and agency to promote equitable access to marine livelihood now and in the future. WSG seeks to do this through their partnerships and resources.

Residents and Community Leaders

Residents and community leaders will provide perspective that transcends language, generation, and culture. They will represent cultural significance and perspective.

Community Liaison

The community liaison is one of the most important partners because they are leaders in their community that can advocate for specific needs. They will be instrumental in determining what resources are needed for their community and how we can best serve them.

Subject Matter Experts

It is imperative to have subject matter experts to collaborate with the UMP to ensure that we are cognizant of the communities we seek to work with. Subject matter experts can exist within the organization of WSG such as social scientists, ecologists, and specialists. Many of whom have already been contacted through informational interviews. We also must employ traditional knowledge to ensure that our conservation efforts are equitable and go beyond the scope of academia and Westernized science.

DEI Evaluators

To work within the framework of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) we must have a committee that evaluates how and if we are meeting the goals of the UMP. Ideally, this small committee will be made up of a community liaison and WSG people. They will develop objectives that ensure we working equitably, monitor engagement, and re-envision metrics.

Goal Setting

Cultivating strong relationships with BIPOC communities.

Increase accessibility of marine resources to communities.

Use DEI framework for all outreach initiatives.

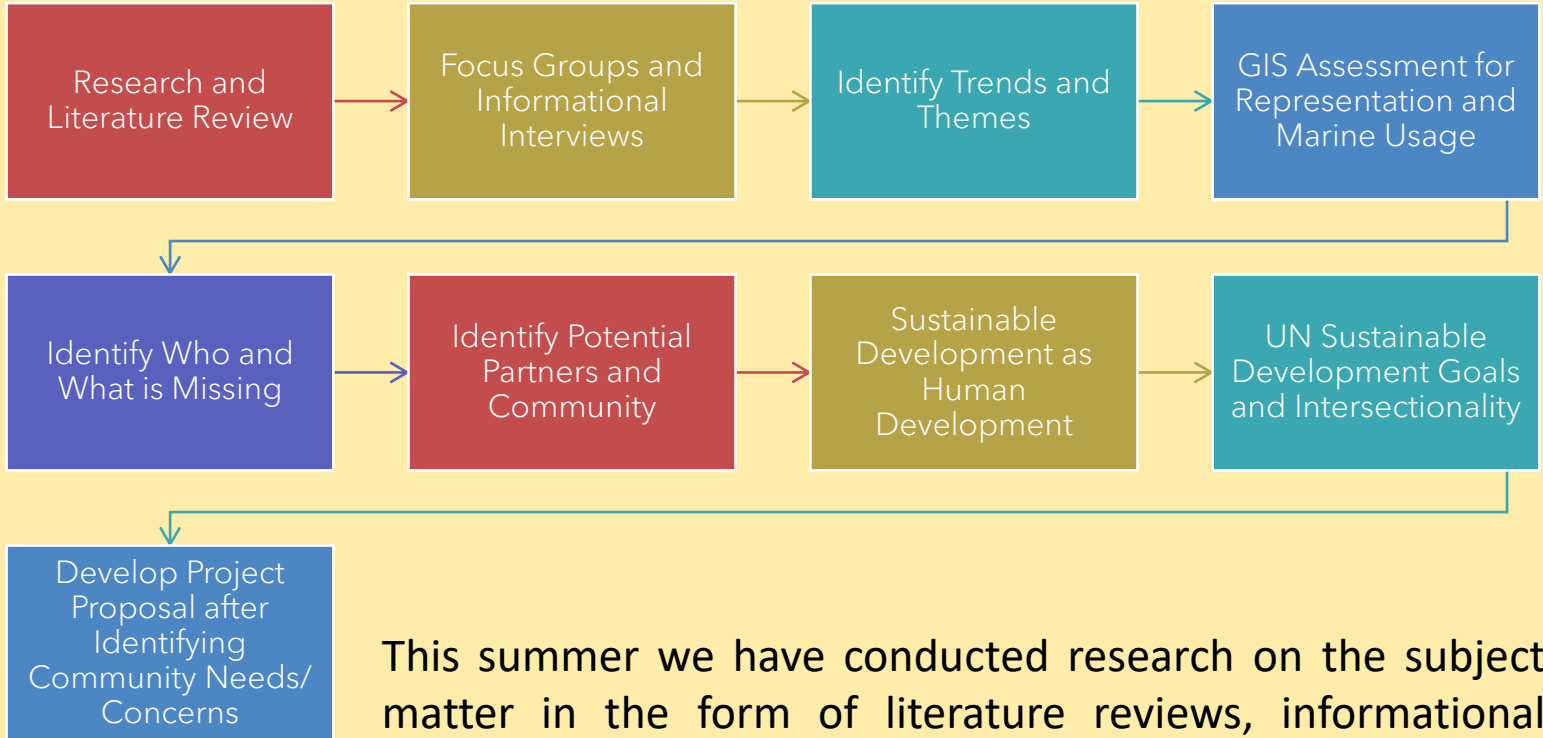Recognize and utilize methods of intersectionality.

Create opportunities for volunteering and community science.

Provide funding for CAGs (Community Action Grants).

Strategies

Research and Literature Review → Focus Groups and Informational Interviews → Identify Trends and Themes → GIS Assessment for Representation and Marine Usage

Identify Who and What is Missing → Identify Potential Partners and Community → Sustainable Development as Human Development → UN Sustainable Development Goals and Intersectionality

Develop Project Proposal after Identifying Community Needs/Concerns

This summer we have conducted research on the subject matter in the form of literature reviews, informational interviews, and workshops that promote educational outreach. These are the themes and trends we found in the literature review.

Storytelling	Climate Justice	Public Health
Urbanization	Adaptation	Food Systems
Sustainable Development as Human Development	Urbanization	Identity

Framework for Community Relationships

- Power Through vs. Power Over
- Community Participatory Action Research
- Purpose and Intent
- Place-Based Systems
- Storytelling

Power Through vs. Power Over

The power that we hold should not exist as an advisor when it comes to community work but should exist as a collaborative unit that advocates. Questions should be addressed when developing community relationships such as "How do we make sense of this?" or "What is **their** vision?" Community liaisons should also exist within each initiative to ensure that we cultivate community-oriented solutions.

Community Participatory Action Research

It is imperative that research is done prior to building relationships with potential partners so that an organization is aware of what their intentions are and what collaboration could look like. The research can take place in the form of informational interviews within the organization and then follow suit to the potential partners.

Purpose and Intent

Every initiative within WSG and the UMP has a purpose and an intent. We must recognize what they are and if our intent will serve communities. There should also be measures to assess whether the community needs or values our work. If not, then WSG should provide connections if we are not the best partner.

Place-Based Systems

Recognizing place is vital to environmentalism and DEI framework because it recognizes who is in each space, what does their zip code have to say in terms of their access to shorelines, education, and marine foods. It tells us the social demographics of a region and how they play a role in the environment. Place-based systems also teach us about community resilience and adaption to social and environmental stressors. The UMP can recognize place-based systems by reaching out to community leaders to find the partnerships they seek to develop. Using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) can be useful for assessing marine uses, what communities are represented, who is missing, and what is being captured.

Storytelling

Storytelling is a fundamental part of community work because its values identity, experience, and perspective. Storytelling can become a part of the UMP by listening to communities, highlighting their work, and empowering them. Community-oriented stories make people feel as if they are a part of something bigger than themselves. By putting community first and hearing their narratives, we further progress towards an equitable future.

Conducting informational interviews are an exceptional first step towards creating a program. However, it should first begin within your organization because those relationships are pre-existing. This will also gage with understanding everyone's roles, identity, and positionality to see how they can best fit as collaborators. We conducted informational interviews with WSG staff and staff from the Doris Duke Conservation Scholars Program at the University of Washington.

Here are some example questions that were used along with themes that emerged:
- Who do you work for, what is your job title, and what is your current role?
- How do you connect to water?
- How can we support equitable access to oceans and marine conservation?
- How do you assess and communicate your intentions for community work, and whether and how the community values your work?
- From your and/or your organization's perspective, what would you like to see emerge from the UMP?

Place-Based Systems

Reciprocity

Storytelling

Living and Non-Human Beings

Intersectionality

Empathy

Education

Holding Space

Trust

Belonging

Healing

Informational Interview with Nancy Woo from Doris Duke Conservation Scholars Program

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of 17 goals that are intersectional and equitable in nature that were adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 to end poverty, promote peace, and protect the planet all by the year 2030.

Each of the SDGs come with target indicators for reaching the goals. It stems from the urgency of intersectionality, systems thinking, root causes, and the connections between challenges. Achieving the SDGs requires the partnership of people, identity, governments, education, organizations, and the private sector to better a planet for present and future generations.

It would be pinnacle to the development of the UMP if the SDGs act as a focal point for advocacy, projects, and relationships due to their holistic nature. Furthermore, the sustainable development we want to achieve must be viewed as human development to ensure that we are aligning with DEI framework and empowering communities.

Sustainable Development Goals from www.undp.org

Workshops and SDG Dialogue

Hosting workshops are an effective way to engage community members with WSG and learn what their concerns and how different topic areas intersect with their identity. Furthermore, it creates a dialogue, informally asks questions, challenges ideas, praises perspective and ultimately cultivates community-oriented solutions. In the age of Covid-19 such workshops can take place on a virtual platform such as Zoom, Google Hangouts, Facebook Live, etc. The information can be advertised through WSG media platforms and shared amongst community leaders and members.

We hosted an SDG Dialogue workshop with WSG staff and Doris Duke Conservation Scholars on The Life of Water. The goal was to cultivate community solutions and create an informal discussion on how we connect to water and its intersectionality. The workshop started with a Ted talk by Kelsey Leonard that spoke about granting legal personhood to water, practicing reciprocity, and recognizing the livelihood that water provides. By starting the dialogue with a form of media it acts as precursor to rich conversation and gets the audience thinking.

After the video, we split everyone up into breakout rooms on zoom to have them answer a set of questions relating to their relationship with water and transcending the way it is viewed to become more equitable. On the next page are some questions along with the themes that were produced in each breakout room.
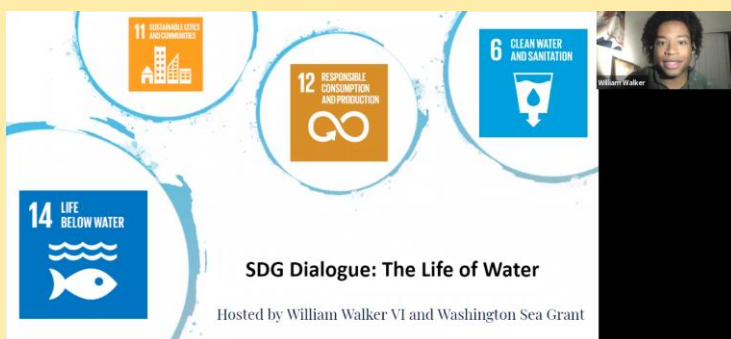
SDG Dialogue: The Life of Water hosted by William Walker VI and Washington Sea Grant

Themes → Location → Relationship

Being conscientious → Recreation → Care

Responsibility as a synonym for protection → Power through instead of power over → Accountability of stakeholders

Does we provide, use, or manipulate?

It is important when conducting a workshop to take notes of what is being said as well as the themes and questions asked. If it exists on a virtual platform it is ideal to record the workshop with the consent of all participants. This way it is simple to go back and reference.

SDG Dialogues are a great way to involve community because everyone can identify with goals in some way. By bringing it to the forefront of people's mind you influence them to further develop dialogues on DEI and sustainability. This method has been used to inform conservation-based work, acquire funding for community initiatives, and inspire an audience.

Workshops can also take place with partner organizations such as NOAA where we can meet with students to engage them in projects or answer questions about our roles.

Community Engagement Guides

Equitable Adaptation Legal and Policy Toolkit
https://www.georgetownclimate.org/adaptation/toolkits/equitable-adaptation-toolkit/introduction.html?full

Organizations

Intersectional Environmentalist
https://www.intersectionalenvironmentalist.com/

Doris Duke Conservation Scholars Program
https://www.ddcf.org/what-we-fund/environment/goals-and-strategies/strengthening-the-conservation-field/doris-duke-conservation-scholars-program

Changemaker Central @ASU
https://changemaker.asu.edu/

UN Sustainable Development Goals and Target Indicators
https://sdgs.un.org/goals

Washington Sea Grant
https://wsg.washington.edu/

Ted Talks

Kimberlé Crenshaw: The Urgency of Intersectionality
https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality?language=en

Kelsey Leonard: Why Lakes and Rivers Should Have the Same Rights as Humans
https://www.ted.com/talks/kelsey_leonard_why_lakes_and_rivers_should_have_the_same_rights_as_humans?language=en

Articles and Posts

William Walker VI: Why Sustainable Development Must Change the Way They View Collaboration
https://www.constellationsustainability.org/post/why-sustainable-development-must-change-the-way-they-view-collaboration

William Walker VI: Amplifying Black Lives Matter For a Sustainable Future
https://schoolofsustainability.asu.edu/news/archive/amplifying-black-lives-matter-for-a-sustainable-future/

Leah Thomas: Intersectional Environmentalism: Why Environmental Justice Is Essential For A Sustainable Future

https://www.thegoodtrade.com/features/environmental-justice

Ayana Elizabeth Johnson
https://www.ayanaelizabeth.com/

Warm regards podcast- Change in our oceans is a social problem too ft. Melissa Watkinson
https://soundcloud.com/warmregardspodcast/change-in-our-oceans-is-a-social-problem-too

Acknowledgements

Citations

Leonard, Kelsey. "Why Lakes and Rivers Should Have the Same Rights as Humans." *TED*, 2019, www.ted.com/talks/kelsey_leonard_why_lakes_and_rivers_should_have_the_same_rights_as _humans?language=en.

Mark, B., Gallardo,A., Pieper, J., Voss, D., Grossa, C., Cumplido, L., Lozano, E. 2020 Intersections of Climate Justice. A Resource.

Martin, J., Gray, A., Aceves-Bueno, S., Alagona, E., Elwell, P., Garcia, T., . . . Twohey, M. (2019). What is marine justice? Journal of Environmental Studies and Sciences, 9(2), 234-243.

Lashley, S. (2016). Pursuing Justice for All: Collaborative Problem-Solving in the Environmental Justice Context. Environmental Justice, 9(6), 188-194.

"Sustainable Development Goals." *UNDP*, 2020, www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html#:~:text=The%20Sustainable%20Development%20Goals%20(SDGs,peace%20and%20prosperity%20by%202030.

About the Author

William Walker VI is a student at Arizona State University studying Sustainability and Urban Planning. He is passionate about initiative-based work, intersectional environmentalism, and institutional change. To ensure equitable livelihoods that promote identity and sustainability, he has created a toolkit to help Washington Sea Grant and other organizations do community work. He can be contacted at williamwalkervi@gmail.com.