White Dominant Norm: Scenario #2

You are a senior leader in a relatively new workforce development organization. You are located in a predominantly Black community that has been impacted by generational divestment and dis-investment. The executive leadership of the organization is all white and your board is all white. All of the people your organization serves is Black. Your organization has an expressed commitment to racial equity including a statement on racial equity on your website. You've been having a hard time gaining the trust of the community members and individuals you are serving. Recognizing these challenges, the executive team decides to racially diversify the board in hopes of building community trust. You identify a few individuals of color to serve on the board and are feeling hopeful. A few months have passed and there have been minimal changes in your relationship with the community. Long-term white board members have begun to interrogate the new board members of color. In response, the new board members of color have decided to leave the board. Your organization is back at square one. What is happening here?

Reflection question:

1. Review your white dominant norms worksheet OR the Appendix A & B below and identify the white dominant norms at play in this scenario.
   a. Name the norm and how you see it showing up in this example.

   b. What are the equity/anti-racism norms that should replace the norms you see in this example?

Additional reflection questions for your organizational consideration:

2. What does this situation say about your organization's commitment to equity as an operating practice?

3. What organizational values are enforced OR reinforced as a result of this situation?

4. What cultural norms are created, enforced, OR reinforced as a result of this situation?

5. Which lived values are reinforced OR created as a result of this situation?

6. What institutional practices need to be changed OR developed as a result of this situation?

7. Who do these changed/new institutional practices support? Who do they potentially disempower?

8. What institutional policy changes need to be made as a result of this situation?

9. What individual reflections surfaced as a result of this debrief?

10. Are there any new or renewed equity commitments as a result of this debrief process?

Next steps:

1. What has the group decided will be the next steps? (Next steps can include and are not limited to departmental/organizational changes, memos, renewed commitments, public statement, apology, organizational discussion, etc.)

2. How will these next steps support/advance or uphold the organization's equity commitments?

Appendix A: White Dominant Norms

Fear of conflict	Superiority of the written word	Either/or thinking	Paternalism	Power hoarding
Comfort with predominantly white leadership	Individualism and separateness	Priorities and timelines that perpetuate white supremacy culture	Comprehensiveness	Transactional relationships
Transactional goals	Defensiveness	Progress is bigger, more	Over-working as unstated norm	Perfectionism
Skeptical management	White mediocrity	Equity washing	Official title outweighs experience	Changing the subject away from the role of race
Narrow valuation of intelligence/ performance				

Appendix B: Equity/Anti-Racism Norms

Systems and complex thinking	Partnership	Collaboration	Power sharing
Leadership representative of the community affected by inequity	Community and collectivism	Direct and constructive feedback/growth learning	Priorities and timelines set for sustainability and equity
All forms of communication valued and taken seriously	Clarity and alignment for action	Transformational relationships	Transformational goals
Vulnerability	Progress is sustainability and quality	Self-care/ Community-care	Appreciation
Supportive management	Fair evaluations and just promotions	Real equity	Holistic view of people
Compassionate curiosity about how race, cultural differences, racial bias may be at play	Broad appreciation of differences		