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Empowering inclusive innovation

Creating Inclusive Tech Hubs Part 5
Expanding Your Diversity Goals
Through External Programs

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Women Techmakers

Expanding Your Diversity Goals Through External Programs

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About This Series

"Creating Inclusive Tech Hubs" is a six-part series focused on helping tech hub leaders develop more inclusive cultures, programs and spaces. The series, which includes six easy-to-follow videos plus corresponding resources, provides a comprehensive guide to help you implement the recommended strategies at local tech hubs around the world.

Welcome to Part 5 of this series: "Expanding Your Diversity Goals Through External Programs," providing advice, tools and actionable steps for tech hubs to lead on inclusion. After you review these materials, be sure to check out the other installments in this "Creating Inclusive Tech Hubs" series:

1. Inclusive Tech Hubs: the Key to Future Innovation
2. Measurement & Accountability
3. The Role of Leadership in Diversity and Inclusion
4. Creating An Inclusive Culture
5. **Expanding Your Diversity Goals Through External Programs**
6. Creating Inclusive Physical Spaces

This toolkit series is created by Change Catalyst and sponsored by Women Techmakers. Change Catalyst empowers inclusive & sustainable innovation globally through Startup Ecosystem and Tech Inclusion Programs. Women Techmakers is Google's global program that provides visibility, community and resources for women in technology.

Driving Inclusion Through External Programs

External programs are a key driver in developing a more inclusive tech ecosystem in your city, town or region. These programs might include events, evening classes, trainings and workshops, lunch and learns, as well as startup office hours.

Broadening Your Networks with Events

Events can expand your reach and exposure to underrepresented communities. Opening your doors to diverse programming can broaden your networks for internal hiring, memberships, mentors, instructors, and more. Diverse people are out there, you just might not know them. It takes time to broaden your network, but through research and asking questions, you'll reach them.

Developing Partnerships

Often underrepresented communities can be reached best by developing trusted partnerships with individuals and organizations that are already connected and established in the communities that you are trying to reach. You can do this both at events and online.

- **Invite Diverse Organizations**
  Ask leaders of diverse organizations to host their events in your facility, or in partnership with your organization. Then give them the space, support them as much as you can and spread the word about their event to your networks. And remember: it's not enough to simply host diverse people – you need to show up, meet them and let them know you care.

- **Establish Partnerships With Diverse Networks**
  Diverse organizations and networks might help spread the word of your programs to more diverse groups if you offer a mutual partnership. You can exchange exposure on your website as an incentive, pay to put an ad in their newsletter, or find another creative way to work together. If it's an event you're sharing, offer a promo code for their community and a free ticket to join you.

Create plan for diversifying your network and partners.

Creating Inclusive Events & Programming

As you plan your event and programming, consider all aspects through the lens of inclusion and be mindful of experience you are creating. Use the guide below to begin developing an inclusive program. For more details, see the Inclusive Event Toolkit.

Event Considerations

- **Topics for Diverse Audiences:** Make sure your event topics appeal to diverse audiences.
- **Diverse Speakers:** Speakers should fully represent the audience you're trying to reach – make sure they are diverse in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, class, ability, religious beliefs, geographic origin, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic background, parental status, people who are veterans and those formerly incarcerated, etc. Sometimes it's as easy as asking friends on social media for diverse speaker suggestions.
- **Outreach:** While promoting your events, always look for different networking channels that include underrepresented individuals.
- **Timing:** The timing of the event can make a big difference to people who are parents, caregivers, currently working or commuting.
- **Cost:** Consider a sliding scale, giving discount or free codes to new communities, or even making some events free.
- **Accessibility:** Make sure you ask for accessibility needs and requests ahead of time on the website and email communications. And if someone requests a sign language interpreter, live captioning, a guide or something else - make sure that the person has what they need to fully participate in the event. If you need help with this, check out the Additional Resources below.
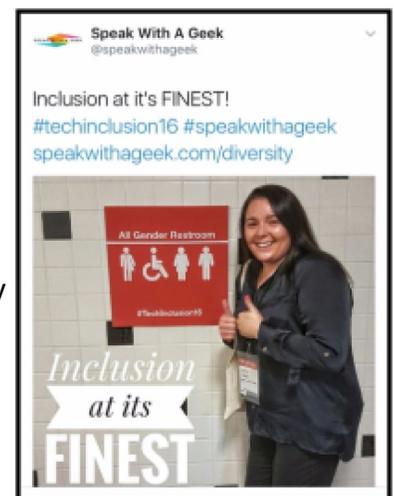

Photo by Speak With A Geek

- **Code of Conduct:** A Code of Conduct is an indicator to many people that you care about creating an inclusive event. Make sure you post this on the website and in the physical space and reiterate on stage at the beginning of the program. Visit Part 2" "Measurement and Accountability Guide" of this toolkit for more information about how to create a Code of Conduct.
- **Photos:** Nothing says inclusion like visual representation. Include diverse photos in presentation slides and marketing materials. Also consider having diverse people look through your slides, photos and other marketing materials to make sure you haven't accidentally included imagery that might offend someone.

Location Considerations

Here are some things to consider when selecting an inclusive event location:

- Is the location near public transportation? (This is especially important for people with disabilities and people with low incomes.)
- Does the location align with your mission?
    - Is the staff diverse?
    - Are their supply chain values aligned?
    - Does the location give back to the local community?
    - Are there sustainable practices in place?
    - Will they allow you to change the restrooms to be gender neutral?
    - Will they allow you to change other signs we may want to change to be more inclusive? (e.g. room names, elevator signage, etc.)
- Are your able to choose your own vendors for food, audio visual, etc.? (This gives more ability to choose mission-aligned vendors that are local, sustainable, socially-conscious and give back to their community.) If not:
    - Is the location able to provide vegetarian, vegan, Halal, Kosher and gluten-free foods?
    - Can they source from local, sustainable food suppliers?
- Will your diverse vendors feel comfortable working with the location staff and facilities?
- Does the location space align with the inclusive feeling you want to create?
    - Will you be able to have safe, intimate discussions here?
    - Will you be able to create quiet spaces for introverts?
    - Will you be able to host robust collaboration and networking sessions?
    - Is the decor inclusive? (And if not, is it changeable?)
    - Is there a place for a Mother's Room?
- Is the location accessible for those in wheelchairs or with other disabilities (e.g. Does the facility have ramps and elevators? Is there braille on signage? Are there resting places for those with limited mobility?, etc.) A necessity.
    - All entrances, restrooms and kitchens are accessible
    - All event logistics (stage, aisle, seating) are accessible
    - Directional signage is accessible to those that are blind or in wheelchairs

Physical Space Preparations

☐ **Event signage:**
   ☐ Is the language inclusive?
   ☐ Are the visuals inclusive?
   ☐ Do you have a digitally accessible program for someone who is blind or has low vision?

☐ **Directional signage:**
   ☐ Gender neutral restroom signage
   ☐ Reserved seating signage for seats in the front row near the stage,
   ☐ Signs to elevators
   ☐ Signs to Mother's Room

☐ **Room names:**
   ☐ Do current room names feel inclusive for everyone? If not, change them to better match the event.

☐ **Ground Rules:**
   ☐ Optional. Especially if you're working to create a safe, collaborative space, consider posting in each room and/or discussing at opening of program.

☐ **Decor:**
   ☐ Is there artwork that isn't inclusive? If so, make a plan to cover it or take it down. Make sure to get diverse people to walk the space and provide feedback.

☐ **Accessibility:**
   ☐ On your event website, "above the fold," let attendees know you are working to make this an inclusive event. If you are offering CART captioning (see below) or sign language interpreters, let people know here. And let people know how to reach you – and by when (eg, one week before the event) – for additional accessibility requests.

☐ **Live CART captioning:**
   ☐ Securing a Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) vendor can help your event to be much more inclusive for someone who is deaf or hard of hearing, or someone for whom their primary language is not the same as the speaker's. CART services can be remote or in person.
   ☐ If using a remote captioning service, you'll need an audio out from your audio board through skype audio.
   ☐ Whether remote or in person, caption text will be on a live website; this will need to be outputted to a tv monitor next to the main stage.
   ☐ If using an in-person captioner, they will need to sit near the tv monitor next to the stage, within clear audio and visual range of the stage.

☐ **Sign language interpreters:**
   ☐ Secure a sign language vendor. Best practice is to have 2 people taking turns signing if the time is more than 2 hours - this is because using your hands for that length of time can be very taxing. Be sure to have interpreters stay for networking time if you have them, as this will be critical for communication.
   ☐ Be sure there is a place on stage or just off stage for them to stand/sit when speakers are on stage.

- ☐ **Microphones:**
  - ☐ Be sure to have handheld or lapel microphones (vs. over-ear headsets) available for anyone who may have a hearing aid.
  - ☐ Be sure to have lapel or over-ear headset microphones for anyone who may not be able to hold a microphone.
  - ☐ Test microphones on people of different genders and make sure someone is monitoring audio during the event. Microphones often pick up men's voices best, so often women's mics need to be turned up.
- ☐ **Stage seating:**
  - ☐ Choose chairs with backs so people are able to sit comfortably.
  - ☐ Avoid stools if possible, as people of different body sizes and abilities may not be able to gracefully get onto a stool.
  - ☐ Include space on stage for people with wheelchairs to sit in their wheelchair at the same height as other speakers on stage.
- ☐ **Prayer / Meditation Room:**
  - ☐ If you have a long event, consider offering people a safe space to practice prayer or meditation.
- ☐ **Mother's Room:**
  - ☐ Women who are breastfeeding need a safe, quiet, clean and private space to pump breastmilk several times a day. This should be as comfortable as possible, absolutely not in the restroom.
  - ☐ This room should have a lock, microwave, a refrigerator where moms can store breast milk, drinking water, a comfortable seat and an outlet. Ideally, it's also near a source of both hot and cold water for washing hands, pump attachments and milk collection containers.
- ☐ **Childcare:**
  - ☐ Consider providing onsite childcare opportunities for parents - this can be in an adjacent room to the conference.
  - ☐ If the event can't offer childcare, consider offering childcare reimbursement or at the least, suggesting local and vetted childcare resources.
- ☐ **Food:**
  - ☐ As part of the event registration process, ask people their dietary needs: vegetarian, vegan, Halal, Kosher, gluten free, dairy free, nut free, and other.
  - ☐ Be sure the caterer is prepared with this list ahead of time and also able to cater to individual needs in the moment during the event.
  - ☐ Place ingredient cards with all ingredients - and common allergies noted - in front of each food dish.
  - ☐ If you're providing alcohol, ensure you provide non-alcoholic beverages as well.
  - ☐ Provide regularly accessible, clean, filtered water. If offering other drinks, make sure some are without carbonation and added sugar. Coffee, green and black teas, and decaf teas are standard at events.
  - ☐ Survey your community often for ongoing dietary needs.

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Displaying Your Code of Conduct

A Code of Conduct creates safety and shared understanding, be sure to create one before your event, as well as a method for enforcing.

☐ **Create it.**
  ☐ Visit Part 2: "Measurement and Accountability Guide" of this toolkit for more information about how to create a Code of Conduct.
☐ **Post it.**
  ☐ Clearly list it or link to it on the event website.
  ☐ Post clearly on a large board at the event entrance.
☐ **Enforce it.**
  ☐ Discuss it at the beginning of the event program and let attendees know where they can report any violations. (Best practice is to have all volunteers/staff in a specific color of a t-shirt so they are easy to recognize.)
  ☐ Create an environment where people feel comfortable to report any incidents that violate the code of conduct.
  ☐ Ensure that volunteers and staff know what to do if someone comes to them with a complaint.

Vendors, Marketing & Followup

As you prepare for your event, think about your vendors, marketing materials and outreach methods through the lens of diversity and inclusion. You will also want to set guidance for attendees through a code of conduct and training for those running your event.

For more details on other aspects of event planning outlined below, see Change Catalyst's Creating Inclusive Events Toolkit:

☐ Inclusive Vendors
☐ Location Scout Checklist
☐ Inclusive Marketing Materials & Outreach
☐ Staff, Speaker & Volunteer Training
☐ Measurement of KPI's post event

Creating Inclusive and Accessible Websites for Your Programs

Your website should be accessible for people who are blind, deaf, have color-blindness and/or dyslexia. Here are a few best practices:

- ☐ Provide a text equivalent for every non-text element (e.g. via "alt", "longdesc", or in element content). This includes: images, graphics, animations (e.g. animated GIFs), images used as list bullets, graphic buttons, sounds (played with or without user interaction), stand-alone audio files, audio tracks of video and video.
- ☐ For any information conveyed through color, provide that information through context or markup as well.
- ☐ Use the clearest and simplest language appropriate for your event website content.
- ☐ If using data tables, be sure to identify row and column headers.
- ☐ Ensure that foreground and background color combinations provide sufficient contrast when viewed by someone having color deficits or when viewed on a black and white screen.
- ☐ For more information about auditing your website for accessibility and inclusion, see Part 2: "Measurement and Accountability Guide" of this toolkit and review the Web Accessibility Checklist.

Developing a Supplier Diversity Program

A Supplier Diversity Program can be one of most impactful opportunities to expand your diversity goals – a little extra work up front to diversify your networks can make a big difference in the makeup of your hub down the line.

Diversifying your partnerships, events and vendors can quickly change your hub's reputation as a place where diverse people are welcome and belong. Companies with supplier diversity programs are more profitable and promote innovation by introducing new products and services. It's also good for your local economy and community.

Here are a few steps to get started:

- ☐ Affirm your goal of developing a diverse supply chain by formally developing processes for achieving supplier diversity.
- ☐ Clearly communicate this goal and new processes throughout your hub.
- ☐ Measure your current Supplier Diversity to establish a baseline. Review every vendor, supplier, subcontractor you partner with: from software vendors, to office supplies, to food providers in your cafe and to all subcontractors. You can collect information about the ownership of your current suppliers through a supplier survey and/or supplier interviews.
  - ● During this process, include a screen for third party certifications for ownership by women, minorities, veterans and people with disabilities, such as: B Lab, Women's Business Enterprise National Council, National Women Business Owners Corporation, National Minority Supplier Development Council, National Veteran-Owned Business Association, National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, US Business Leadership Network, Minority Supplier Development United Kingdom, WEConnect International and THOMASNET.

☐ Analyze your supplier data and develop a plan and timeline to incorporate new suppliers who meet your criteria.

☐ Explore new services or products founded by local, underrepresented entrepreneurs. You may have some potential vendors in your own tech hub.

☐ Give your team the tools needed to find diverse suppliers and hold people accountable to achieving a diverse supply chain.

☐ Consider creating a Supplier Checklist for all employees engaging with suppliers and hold employees accountable to using the checklist. Create an internal database of diverse suppliers and resources to find them.

☐ Consider posting a list of all vendors on your event website, with your commitment to supplier diversity.

☐ Consider celebrating your unique event vendors by acknowledging them from the stage and/or in your event materials.

Supplier Code of Conduct

Ensure that all your existing or potential suppliers acknowledge and respect your inclusion values and expectations, including in language and behavior. Communicate to your primary suppliers that you advocate inclusion values and respect for and from their subcontractors also.

☐ Consider developing a Supplier Code of Conduct to ensure that all your existing and potential suppliers (and their subcontractors) acknowledge and respect your inclusion values and expectations in language and behavior. Make sure the Code of Conduct is clearly communicated and readily accessible to your suppliers. As an example, see the United Nations Supplier Code of Conduct and Toms Supplier Code of Conduct for a starting place.

Photos by Techboogie Media

Next Steps Checklist

- ☐ Research local organizations and networks with a diverse tech audience, and reach out to them to develop mutual partnerships.
- ☐ Develop event topics that will reach a broad, diverse audience, and research diverse speakers.
- ☐ Ensure the timing, location and cost of your events are accessible and inclusive.
- ☐ Develop messaging and outreach that represent diversity and feel inclusive.
- ☐ Perform accessibility and inclusion audits on your website and marketing materials. Review speaker presentations and marketing materials to check for inclusiveness and diverse representation.
- ☐ Take time with your team to create, formalize and post a code of conduct specific to your space and include it at all your events. Consider enforcement methods and/or consequences.
- ☐ Prepare your physical space and event facilities for accessibility and inclusiveness.
- ☐ Evaluate your current suppliers and create an action plan, goal metrics and timeline for diversifying your suppliers.
- ☐ Create a Supplier Code of Conduct to ensure existing and new suppliers respect and align with your inclusive values and expectations.

Action Plan

Fill out the chart below to get started on creating change in your organization!

For more information about how to develop an Inclusive Action Plan, visit Part 4: "Creating an Inclusive Culture" of this toolkit.

Overall Goal				
Desired Outcome	**Action Steps**	**Resources Needed**	**Project Timeline**	**Measurable Progress**
1.				
2.				
3.				

Additional Resources

- Charlotte Jee: "How to make your tech event more diverse," Techworld, 2016.
- Ashe Dryden: "Increasing Diversity At Your Conference," 2013.
- Liz Henry: "Unlocking The Invisible Elevator At Tech Conf," Model View Culture Magazine, 2014.
- "Do and Don't for Diversity Outreach with Schools," Anti-Defamation League Curriculum Resources.
- "Supplier Diversity Toolkit," Foster School of Business, 2009.
- "Supplier Diversity Programs And Practices," Diversity MBA Magazine, 2009.
- The Hackett Group: "Supplier Diversity Pays Off," Purchasing, 2006.
- "Establishing a Supplier Diversity Program," Intel Corporation.
- Linguabee.com - American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters resource.
- "Captioning For Access", National Association of the Deaf.
- "Introduction to Web Accessibility", Web Accessibility Initiative, W3C.
- "Website Inclusion & Accessibility Audit" (from Part 2: "Measurement & Accountability" of this toolkit), Change Catalyst.
- "Planning Accessible Meetings & Events Toolkit", American Bar Association.

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