



# **Summary of the Internal IREX Diversity & Inclusion Blueprint with Updates: Two Years of Implementation**

The IREX Diversity and Inclusion Blueprint was prepared by RootWorks, LLC with support from the IREX Diversity and Inclusion Working Group. While the full document has always been available to every member of our staff, this document has been condensed and edited for public consumption by removing names and personal information as well as other financial and internal organizational information. The full document available to staff also includes the results of an in-depth diversity and inclusion assessment based on independent interviews with IREX staff.

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# INTRODUCTION

Between February and March 2018, RootWorks, LLC conducted a desk review of Human Resource materials, gathered information from information sessions with staff, and interpreted data from survey respondents in an attempt to identify and assess the current experiences, barriers, and processes within IREX culture that contribute to a diverse and inclusive organization. Details about staff responses as well as several recommendations for staff inclusion were submitted via an Assessment Report that was shared with IREX HQ. The report detailed four specific tenets staff illuminated as areas for further consideration: race, gender identity, social class, and immigration status.

As a follow up to the Assessment Report, a Diversity and Inclusion Working Group was formed in May 2018 to evaluate how IREX could more effectively respond to experienced inequities reported by staff and to support and encourage the IREX diversity and inclusion (D&I) initiative. The DIWG clarified the diversity and inclusion tenets noted in the April 2018 Assessment Report and examined D&I processes from similar organizations. The Assessment Report shared their findings and suggested potential values, processes, goals, and activities that will guide future D&I efforts.

This report supplements and enhances those recommendations. Furthermore, all of these D&I efforts are part of an ongoing process and it is expected that we will need to evaluate our progress, adjust our approach, and develop new goals as time passes.

## **Making the Case**

What can IREX learn from other organizational leaders in D&I? The below organizations were identified as potential examples:<sup>1</sup>

World Learning	Bush Foundation	Peace Corps
<b>What?</b> World Learning led a comprehensive Transforming Agency, Access, and Power initiative to increase inclusion and diversity across all aspects of international development.	<b>What?</b> Bush Foundation spent 5 years implementing a multi-prong approach to increasing diversity and inclusion across identified positions.	<b>What?</b> Peace Corps developed Employee Resource Groups and other policies to support employees from historically marginalized populations.
<b>How it aligns?</b> In addition to the TAAP Toolkit that IREX helped co-author, their Pay Transparency policy can be used as a model for IREX policies.	<b>How it aligns?</b> IREX can benefit from the Bush Foundation's transparency regarding their processes, reports, experiences, and lessons learned.	<b>How it aligns?</b> IREX can look to Peace Corps for examples of how to provide additional supportive spaces and opportunities for all staff.

<sup>1</sup>Transforming, Agency, Access, and Power (TAAP)

## Why Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Matter

*Decades of research by organizational scientists, psychologists, sociologists, economists, and demographers show that socially diverse groups (that is, those with a diversity of race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation) are more innovative than homogeneous groups. It seems obvious that a group of people with diverse individual expertise would be better than a homogeneous group at solving complex, nonroutine problems. It is less obvious that social diversity should work in the same way—yet the science shows that it does. This is not only because people with different backgrounds bring new information. Simply interacting with individuals who are different forces group members to prepare better, to anticipate alternative viewpoints, and to expect that reaching consensus will take effort.<sup>2</sup>*

Additionally, arguments in favor of diversity, equity, and inclusion can be made from multiple perspectives.<sup>3</sup>

- **Moral or social justice:** “Everyone has value to contribute, and we must address barriers and historical factors that have led to unfair conditions for marginalized populations.”<sup>4</sup>
- **Economics:** “Organizations and countries that tap into diverse talent pools are stronger and more efficient. Economists see discrimination as [economic inefficiency](#)<sup>5</sup>—the result of a systematic misallocation of human resources.”
- **Market:** “Organizations will better serve their customers if they reflect the diversity of their market base. In the private sector, companies such as [Deloitte](#)<sup>6</sup> recognize the buying power of minority populations and highlight that diversity is critical to growing market share and bottom line. In the nonprofit sector, clients are our customers, and they want to see themselves represented in the organizations that serve them.”
- **Results:** “Diverse teams lead to better outputs. Scott Page’s [research](#)<sup>7</sup> found that diverse groups of problem solvers outperform the best individual problem solvers. Diverse nonprofit organizations, and the diversity of perspectives within them, will lead to better solutions to social problems.”

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-diversity-makes-us-smarter/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://independentsector.org/resource/why-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-matter/>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> <http://business.time.com/2013/02/19/discrimination-doesnt-make-dollars-or-sense/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www2.deloitte.com/insights/us/en/deloitte-review/issue-8/diversity-as-an-engine-of-innovation.html>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/08/science/08conv.html>

**The Bush Foundation has been transparent in sharing these lessons learned regarding diversity and inclusion:**

- **As much time as you think it will take, it takes more.**
- **It can get worse before it gets better.**
- **Steady executive leadership is critical.**
- **You will need patience, humility, and a thick skin.**
- **Your organization isn't static.**

## **CURRENT IREX D&I ACTIVITIES**

Through collaborative agreement across the organization, IREX is dedicated to encouraging, advocating for, and providing resources to support Diversity & Inclusion (D&I). IREX's organizational expectations for its employees regarding D&I are meant to facilitate communication, establish priorities, guide decisions, and promote actions that are grounded in its D&I values. IREX is dedicated to consistently internalizing and applying these shared values as core to its organization and to acting in congruence with them on an ongoing basis.

This overview of the current D&I activities happening at IREX includes specific tasks and changes meant to address race, ethnicity, and gender identity as well as general updates to encourage, support, and improve IREX D&I efforts.

## **IREX D&I Accomplishments**

While other tenets might be present and should be addressed, the D&I Working Group only responded to the specific tenets noted in the Assessment Report: race, gender identity, social class, and immigration status.

The recommendations below suggested by the DIWG have been completed by the D&I Committee with the support of IREX HR:

1. established a concise and concrete IREX Diversity and Inclusion Value Statement;
2. established a D&I Committee and Charter, with defined terms, roles, and responsibilities; and
3. provided concrete recommendations that address specific identified D&I issues in the areas of race, social class, immigration status, and gender identity to encourage, support, and improve ongoing D&I efforts. This is an ongoing effort that IREX D&I will continue to address.

# I. IREX Four Levels of Learning Statement

Below are descriptions of the Four Levels of D&I Learning: Sensitivity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-Oppression. Current IREX D&I Activities exemplify work in each of the first two levels.

We acknowledge the need to continue to build infrastructure and trust to create an inclusive culture at IREX to move into levels 3 and 4. Due to varying experience of staff and their learning around D&I, we intentionally acknowledge the harm done and will prioritize levels 1 and 2 in order to build a shared foundation for everyone. The following information is intended to provide a framework for how to move forward.

## Level 1—SENSITIVITY

GOALS: These are programs and activities that aim solely to **inform** participants and **introduce** awareness about existing social and/or cultural differences. Level 1 activity seeks to expose participants to issues around diversity, improve their understanding, and increase their sensitivity to the issues discussed.

FOR EXAMPLE: Brief, informal information sharing sessions to introduce D&I topics to staff

## Level 2—DIVERSITY

GOALS: These are programs and activities that aim to **inform** participants and **develop** their skills in working with different people. Level 2 activities seek to expose participants to issues around diversity and to equip them with the practical interpersonal skills they need to work and engage with diverse groups.

FOR EXAMPLE: Having staff members actively participate in team/group discussion sessions

## Level 3—INCLUSION

GOALS: These are programs and activities that aim to **equip** participants to **build** a more equitable and inclusive work environment. Level 3 activities seek to train participants to critically engage with existing power dynamics and systemic inequities and to address forms of discrimination and exclusion at a team or institutional level.

FOR EXAMPLE: Formal training or presentation for staff from D&I professionals

## Level 4—ANTI-OPPRESSION

GOALS: These are programs and activities that aim to **empower** participants to **deconstruct** and **dismantle** the systems and infrastructures that create or contribute to oppression in institutions and/or society. While we do not anticipate many level 4 activities at IREX in the near future, individual staff may seek opportunities to build level 4 skills with IREX support.

FOR EXAMPLE: Programs dedicated to Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Training, Community Mediation, etc.

## II. IREX Diversity & Inclusion Value Statement

**In support of IREX's effort to be a leader in advancing diversity and inclusion in the global development:**

The D&I Value Statement is to be considered an integrated part of IREX organizational values.

The value statement supports facilitation, communication, priorities decision guidance, and diversity and inclusion promotion actions at IREX. IREX must articulate and internalize shared values while actively creating a more diverse and inclusive environment for its employees.

1. We **recognize** that a just, prosperous, and inclusive world is possible and incorporate those beliefs into all IREX processes, decisions, conversations, and publications.
2. We find **value** in ensuring that IREX represents a group of diverse, strategic thinkers who are committed to identifying policies, activities, and solutions that create **equity**.
3. We are **committed** to making IREX a more inclusive organization by celebrating and acknowledging diversity in our internal organizational culture and everyday practices.
4. We will make the necessary **investment** of time and resources to ensure that IREX staff, work, and activities remain inclusive by carefully planning and clearly communicating the processes, outcomes, and time spent for inclusion activities.
5. We will **educate** ourselves regarding issues of diversity and inclusion with proactive research and thoughtful questions without disempowering others.
6. We will be **accountable** to each other as inclusive leaders and within the global development sector, accepting feedback, criticisms, and suggestions in good faith.
7. We will **intentionally** consider differing personal experiences and vulnerabilities that shape our cultural understanding, striving for empathy and consideration regarding differing viewpoints.
8. We are interested in developing diversity and inclusion practices that spark **momentum**, embracing ideas that are outside our comfort zones, and being open to new perspectives.
9. We work toward ownership of diversity and inclusion across all levels at IREX and expect **every staff member** to play an active role by engaging in learning activities.
10. We understand that this is a long-term, **ongoing** process, and we commit to regularly evaluating our progress towards becoming a more inclusive organization through planning, implementation, and assessment to create an inclusive environment.

### **III. D&I Committee Charter**

The Committee will ensure broad ownership of diversity and inclusion work and deep intercultural competence across the organization. An employee-staffed and driven D&I committee will draw upon organizational capacity to recognize and respond to differences, leading to more effective programming, operations, and administration, and resulting in more equitable outcomes.

The Committee will serve as an internal resource and champion to help advance the organization's commitment to diversity and inclusion through informing organizational strategies and practices in partnership with HR. The Committee will have a publicly identified person whose responsibility is to facilitate the Committee and manage the Diversity and Inclusion Committee work plan. The D&I Initiative falls under the office of the President with support from HR. The Office of the President will continue to cover the cost of any activities related to the publicly identified person. The Diversity and Inclusion Committee will recruit staff from each Practice/Unit to represent various levels of the organization and so that each Practice/Unit contributes to participation costs.

Committee members are tasked with highlighting best practices and supporting and planning D&I activities in partnership with HR. The committee will also produce reports and be the internal champions for IREX's diversity and inclusion efforts and activities as follows:

1. Continue to develop and contribute to a D&I vision and strategy at IREX.
2. Continue to provide insight into emerging D&I issues at IREX HQ.
3. Continue to integrate D&I values and metrics into IREX strategic planning activities.
4. Continue to facilitate the D&I Working Group.

The Charter sits under the Office of the President. This office will cover the cost of the consultant. Staff participation will be covered by each practice.

## **A. D&I Committee Membership**

The D&I Committee is a cross-foundational team of IREX employees who work in cooperation with HR in overall support to the CEO. The D&I Committee is a 9–11 member team that demonstrates a mix of expertise and passion for equity work. In the first phase of their tenure, the terms will be as stated in the chart below. After original terms are completed, all members will hold one-year terms. There will be a standing position for HR staff to serve as Vice Chair of the Committee. Also, the roles and responsibilities noted below represent the values of IREX as a whole and can be reflected in any staff person. However, it is expected that D&I Committee members actively provide leadership in these areas.

Member	Term	Time Commitment
Chair	2 years	8 hours per month (96 hours annually maximum) estimate
Vice Chair (HR)	1 year	8 hours per month (96 hours annually maximum) estimate
7–9 members	1 year	5 hours per month (60 hours annually maximum) estimate

## **B. D&I Committee Roles, Responsibilities, Proposed Work Plan**

### **Leadership & Strategy Duties**

- Craft 1- to 2-year strategies to move the organization toward more equitable policies and practices.
- Select action-learning teams; identify training/workshop opportunities and other learning that will support the identified strategies and goals.
- Manage recruitment of new members.
- Represent IREX in meetings and conference to promote ongoing diversity and inclusion in the sector.
- Lead a regular review of the organization’s progress on blueprint goals, share results, and make recommendations with staff and other stakeholders as appropriate.
- Foster a supportive environment for learning, conversation, and organizational change by supporting opportunities to advance intercultural competence and equity.

### **Staff Learning & Engagement Duties**

- Manage the Diversity and Inclusion Resource Library to include adding resources and evaluating effectiveness of resources listed.
- Serve as a resource for staff as they seek to grow in their cultural competence and ability to do their work adaptively through an equity lens.
- Model cross-cultural engagement through ongoing study, reflection, and conversation.

### **Selection Criteria/Qualifications for Membership**

- Demonstrated an interest in, and understanding of, current D&I issues and trends;
- Effectively collaborated with team members who have diverse perspectives;
- Exhibited a passion for diversity, inclusion, and this area of work;
- Skills that complement those of other group members; and
- Indicated an interest in this role to supervisors or leadership.

### **Proposed Work Plan 2019**

1. The D&I Committee will establish a D&I resource library for all IREX staff.
2. The D&I Committee in partnership with HR will create and implement specific, clear, consistent, transparent indicators to measure D&I progress for accountability, goals, and achievements.
3. The D&I Committee will ensure all employees have access to the D&I training opportunities offered and are introduced to at least one member of the D&I Committee.
4. The D&I Committee will ensure expatriate, third country nationals', and field staff members' perspectives are included in the planning of D&I activities.
5. The D&I Committee will create a D&I Consultant Hiring Guide for managers.

### **Next Steps**

The current D&I Committee will organize two open houses for interested staff. Interested staff must submit their expression of interest form by 03/31/2019.

1. Selected applicants will be interviewed and chosen by a panel that includes IREX HR, members, current D&I Committee members, and the D&I consultant.
2. The Chair of the Committee will inform applicants of the panel's decisions.
3. The Vice Chair will work with the Practices/Units to plan transition of practice time at the beginning and end of member terms.

## **IV. Action Steps**

These are recommended action steps to address specific issues surrounding immigration status, race, ethnicity, social class, and gender identity, as noted in the Assessment Report as well as general updates to encourage, support, and improve ongoing D&I efforts.

1. Recommend a D&I ally training for all employees to increase awareness and support. (Level 1)
2. Recommend HR track and analyze rapid recognition program annually using race and gender to better understand how it's distributed. (Level 1)

3. Eliminate the dress code for gender neutrality. (Level 1)
4. Create and distribute D&I Consultant hiring guide for hiring consultants. (Level 1)
5. All employee onboarding materials should include current IREX inclusion materials, e.g., the IREX Guide to Gender Equality and Social Inclusion. (Level 1)
6. All open positions below Program Officer level will clearly display ineligibility for immigration sponsorship within the job posting. (Level 1)
7. Evaluate and benchmark intern pay by including all interns in benchmarking and pay evaluation activities for 2019. (Level 1)
8. Evaluate leave policy holistically to include time off, vacation time, and sick leave to take into consideration whether there is specific negative disparate impact on employees in the lower job levels at IREX (Associate and Coordinator). (Level 1)
9. Include HR information regarding employee resource opportunities in the new hire orientation process (advanced travel funds, purchasing card use, etc.). (Level 1)
10. Issue a company purchasing card to employees who spend more than \$200 out of pocket per quarter as a part of their job function. (Level 1)
11. Provide training accessible by all staff regarding how to recognize and appropriately respond to racial microaggressions, privilege, and bias in the workplace. (Level 2)
12. In any category (professional, administrative, senior management) where the affirmative action plan has identified placement goals, HR should provide training to hiring managers involved with recruitment regarding how to access a diverse and qualified candidate pool and form job requirements that do not disproportionately impact minority candidates. (Level 2)
13. In any category (professional, administrative, senior management) where the affirmative action plan has identified placement goals, HR should review promotion within Practices/Units to analyze access to opportunities for advancement. (Level 1)
14. IREX should encourage employees to indicate their preferred pronouns in e-mail signatures and when introducing themselves in meetings. (Level 1)
15. Operations should evaluate the feasibility of a gender-neutral bathroom on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor and gender-neutral signage on the fifth floor. (Level 1)
16. IREX staff should update all job descriptions, webpages, and all internal and external materials to be more gender neutral. (Level 1)
17. HR should update all forms that request demographic data to be more gender inclusive. (Level 1)
18. Conduct a systematic evaluation of IREX's organizational culture by Practice/Unit or other appropriate organizational aspect to provide manager training that defines and

explains differences in access, output, and workflow for employees who work more than the standard 40-hour workweek (e.g., for people who are parents, people without cars, non-exempt employees, people with limited resources or smaller support networks, etc.). This activity may need to be outsourced for optimal success based on current HR staff capacity. (Level 2)

# GLOSSARY

## BLUEPRINT

The **Blueprint** refers to the strategic plan of the IREX Diversity and Inclusion Working Group, which outlines the principles, processes, activities, and goals guiding IREX's efforts in promoting diversity and creating a more inclusive organization. The tenets of the Blueprint are based on the results of a D&I assessment conducted with IREX staff, which indicated the need to emphasize issues surrounding immigration status, social class, race, and gender identity.

Statements from expatriate, third country nationals, and field staff members about their perspectives on inclusion are forthcoming.

## CHAMPIONS

The IREX Diversity and Inclusion **Champions** are members of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee and other IREX employees who explain, clarify, represent, and promote D&I initiatives and activities within the organization. Champions reflect a range of diversity at IREX and represent various practices, teams, job levels, and seniority levels.

## DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

**Diversity** is defined as the multiplicities and differences between people, particularly in terms of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, geographic location, socioeconomic status, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity. We work to ensure that our organization's staff and its leadership reflect the diversity of U.S. society, and seek and encourage the involvement of people from traditionally underrepresented groups.<sup>8</sup> IREX therefore strives towards the active, intentional, and ongoing inclusion of diverse groups of people, such that they are engaged as valued decision-makers, leaders, and drivers of change.<sup>9</sup>

**Inclusion** is the process of improving the ability, access, dignity, and opportunity of people, disadvantaged on the basis of social identity, to take part in IREX and in society.<sup>10</sup> We recognize that active inclusion is built on mutual respect, and that personal, cultural, and institutionalized discrimination create power and privileges for some while sustaining disadvantages for others. At IREX, we strive to build alliances across differences so that we can work together to eradicate all forms of discrimination and bias.

## EQUITY

**Equity** denotes the fair and just distribution of access, resources, and opportunities, with the goal of meeting the differing needs of each individual or group within the context on an unjust and unequal society. Equity explicitly seeks to promote justice and inclusion, redress existing inequalities, and rectify outcome disparities for disadvantaged groups. It can best be understood as the process through which *equality* can be achieved. While the two terms are often used interchangeably, equality sometimes implies providing uniform treatment to all and assuming that each individual starts out on equal footing. Contrastingly, equity mandates an awareness of differences, and suggests that the ways in which specific individuals are treated may need to be adjusted for the sake of leveling the playing field. The implementation of equity takes many

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<sup>8</sup> Adapted from the Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Statement on Diversity

<sup>9</sup> IREX Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Toolkit

<sup>10</sup> IREX and World Learning Transforming Agency, Access, and Power Toolkit

forms, and tangible examples may include efforts to recruit employees from historically disadvantaged groups or the provision of different accommodations to meet each individual's specific access needs.

## FOUR LEVELS OF LEARNING<sup>11</sup>

**Level 1: Sensitivity**—This refers to programs and activities that aim solely to **inform** participants and **introduce** awareness about existing social and/or cultural differences. Level 1 activity seeks to expose participants to issues around diversity, improve their understanding, and increase their sensitivity to the issues discussed. For example, this may include brief, informal information sharing sessions to introduce topics to staff.

**Level 2: Diversity**—This refers to programs and activities that aim to **inform** participants and **develop their skills** in working with different people. Level 2 activities seek to expose participants to issues around diversity and to equip them with the practical interpersonal skills they need to work and engage with diverse groups. For example, this may include having staff members actively participate in team or group discussion sessions.

**Level 3: Inclusion**—This refers to programs and activities that aim to **equip** participants to **build** a more equitable and inclusive work environment. Level 3 activities seek to train participants to critically engage with existing power dynamics and systemic inequities, and to take steps towards addressing forms of discrimination and exclusion at a team or institutional level. For example, this may include formal training or presentation for staff from D&I professionals.

**Level 4: Anti-oppression**—This refers to programs and activities that aim to **empower** participants to **deconstruct** and **dismantle** the systems and infrastructures which create or contribute to oppression in an institution or society. While we do not anticipate creating many level 4 activities at IREX in the near future, individuals may seek opportunities to build level 4 skills. For example, there are programs dedicated to Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Training, Community Mediation, etc.

## GENDER IDENTITY

Gender is a dynamic set of socially constructed, historical, and institutional ideas and practices that attempts to sort people into groups based on perceived primary and secondary sex characteristics, behaviors, and expressions, which are often imagined to be innate, biological, and shared. Gender associates with differential value, power, and privilege with these perceived characteristics and assigns different social, economic, cultural, and familial roles to these groups. Societies have different sets of gender categories that can serve as the basis of the formation of a person's gendered social identity. In contemporary U.S. society, there is a basic division between gender attributes assigned to males and females, a gender binary to which most people adhere, and which includes specific expectations of masculinity and femininity.

Some people do not identify with some, or all, of the aspects of gender assigned to their biological sex. **Gender identity** refers to the personal sense of one's own gender, the concept of neither self as male, female, some combination of male and female, or neither male nor female. Gender identity can correlate with assigned sex at birth or can differ from it. Gender groups and identities are fluid, varied, and culturally specific and express a wide variety of gendered

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<sup>11</sup> RootWorks, LLC recommends these levels of matriculation for IREX training after conducting a customized evaluation of IREX culture and processes.

experiences beyond the man-woman binary (e.g., people who are transgender, genderqueer, and/or non-binary, Hawaiian and Tahitian *māhū*, South Asian *hijra*, Native American Two-Spirit, etc.).

## **IMMIGRATION STATUS**

**Immigration status** is a designation of an individual's civil relationship to a country in which they reside that is not their country of origin. In the U.S. context, it is defined in which a person has entered or is present in the country. Some examples of common immigration statuses an individual may have included: U.S. citizen, Legal Permanent Resident, Asylee or Refugee, Non-immigrant, Temporary Protected Status, or Undocumented. Immigration status impacts one's security, stability, access, opportunities, and ability to engage in civil activities. Some immigration statuses may be directly tied to one's employment or ability to remain employed. In a professional setting, immigration status may also impact one's access to travel opportunities, career advancement and mobility, wellbeing, and vulnerability to exploitation and mistreatment.

## **POWER**

**Power** is the ability to impact, influence, or control through political, social, economic, and/or other means. Power can be classified into three types—*power over* (the authority, control, or domination exercised by one party on another), *power with* (the collective agency of parties acting together in mutually empowering and beneficial manners), and *power to* (an individual's potential and ability to act and shape their own life)—although it often refers exclusively to power over. Power can be reinforced ideologically, institutionally, and/or interpersonally, and organizes racial, gendered, and cultural dynamics.

## **RACE/ETHNICITY**

**Race** is a culturally specific, dynamic set of historical and institutional ideas and practices that sorts people into ethnic groups according to perceived physical and behavioral characteristics often imagined to be negative, innate, and shared, and associates differential value, power, and privilege with these characteristics. Race is not a fixed biological trait but rather a social construct that emerges when groups are perceived to pose a threat to each other's worldview or way of life or to justify the exploitation of other groups while exalting one's own to claim an innate privilege.

## **SOCIAL CLASS**

**Social class** is a social and economic structure that establishes hierarchy based on wealth, income, background, education, occupation, and/or relative position within an organization, and confers power and opportunity accordingly within that hierarchy. Class is often attributed to individual rather than societal factors, which serves to justify denigration and exploitation while allowing those of higher class to claim innate privilege. In a professional setting, social class may be shaped by actual or perceived socio-economic background, education, job title, job grade, etc.