

# From Harm to Belonging

A three-year cultural design engagement with a national conservation organization and their flagship annual conference

A national conservation organization representing over 1,000 land trusts had a problem they could no longer ignore. Feedback from BIPOC attendees and people with disabilities at their flagship annual conference documented experiences of microaggressions, cultural incompetence, and feeling unsafe. Leadership knew something had to change. They reached out to GBE.

## THE ENGAGEMENT ARC

### YEAR 1

#### Assessment, Strategy and Implementation

GBE conducted a full inclusivity audit of the organization's event history, developed a strategic roadmap, and supported full implementation at the conference. This included speaker and staff engagement, environment design, onsite incident response, and a post-event evaluation report with recommendations for the future.

- Inclusivity audit
- Strategic roadmap
- Speaker engagement
- Onsite support
- Incident response
- Post-event report

### YEAR 2

#### Deeper Implementation and Team Training

With the foundation established, Year 2 focused on deepening the work and building internal capacity. GBE developed and delivered two distinct training programs for the organization's staff and presenters, continued advisory support, and refined the belonging framework based on Year 1 learnings.

- Recommendations
- Ongoing advisory
- Facilitator training
- Staff training
- Framework refinement

### YEAR 3

#### Light Advisory and Transition to Independence

By Year 3 the organization had built meaningful internal capacity. GBE recommended a scaled-back engagement focused on light advisory and onsite incident support. The goal was always organizational independence, not dependency. The client agreed and successfully led the event with GBE in a supporting role.

- Light advisory
- Incident response support
- Transition planning

## KEY OUTCOMES

**50%+**

of attendees from underrepresented groups rated the event as very inclusive

**2**

replicable training programs developed for staff and presenters

**3 Years**

of sustained engagement moving the organization from harm to belonging

**1**

organization now leading inclusive event design independently

*This event felt more inclusive and celebrated diverse leadership and perspectives in the field.*

CONFERENCE ATTENDEE

## WHAT MADE THIS WORK

GBE did not arrive with a generic DEI checklist. We started by listening, auditing what had actually happened, and building a roadmap that was specific to this organization's culture, community, and event. We brought in specialized partners where needed rather than overstating our scope. And we designed every year of the engagement with the goal of making ourselves less necessary, not more. That is what belonging centered consulting looks like in practice.

Ready to start the conversation?  
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