



UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

CHANGE THE WORLD FROM HERE

**Breaking Barriers and Building a Pipeline for  
Women's Leadership Success in Nonprofit Organizations**

by

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## **Abstract**

This research examined women in leadership positions, with a specific focus on minority women and nonprofit organizations. A comprehensive review of existing literature was conducted, a content analysis using The San Francisco Business Journal's *2018 Book of Lists* was performed, and commentaries from four female professionals in their respective professional workplaces were used as supplemental information. There are multiple factors and influences to prepare women for leadership positions, meaning those in authority with C-Suite, Executive, or Director level titles. The path to leadership for minority women is even more complex than for white women or men. They face a variety of additional barriers in obtaining professional leadership positions. For the purposes of this project, minority women were defined by an identifying race/ethnicity other than white or Caucasian, and included a perspective of a woman whose sexual orientation was not heterosexual. The findings in this research project add to the existing literature on women in leadership, particularly minorities, and endorsed the need for organizations to build and commit to a sustainable pipeline model which includes personal, internal, and external resources and factors that will most effectively contribute to women's advancement in the workplace.

**Keywords:** women, minority women, leadership, nonprofit organizations

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## Section 1. Introduction

When we take a look back at history and think about influential women leaders, we think of individuals like Susan B. Anthony, Amelia Earhart, Eleanor Roosevelt, Rosa Parks, Sally Ride, and many more. More recently we encounter names like Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Sheryl Sandberg, Melinda Gates, Michelle Obama, Hillary Clinton, Malala Yousafzai, and the list goes on. These women have led and continue to lead the movement of women in multiple facets, and their influences have not only laid the foundation for improving women's equity rights but impact today's society in general.

Although these women have many differences such as the time period of their successes, racial or ethnic background, age, and purposes they advocate for, they still maintain commonality – women fighting for equity of women. It is said that when women thrive, organizations thrive – and nations thrive too (Chisholm-Burns, Spivey, Hagemann, Josephson, 2017).

Sheryl Sandberg wrote, "I want every little girl who's told she's bossy, to be told instead she has leadership skills" (Heuston, 2018). According to Heuston, three undervalued traits of female leaders are: grit, passion, and tenacity. Heuston (2018) said that successful women do not rely on favors but rather by earning respect and by believing they can influence their own advancement by serving others. These traits and skills are not only appropriate in the workplace but in all facets of life.

For the purposes of this project it is important to understand that women are underrepresented in public, corporate, private, and nonprofit leadership positions. Nonprofit organizations in particular are continually working to improve and demonstrate their diversity and inclusion efforts. It is not enough to simply talk about diversity improvements and recognizing the need for equity and inclusion for all. Embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion as part of organizational values, internal practices, and policies is what must occur in order to build a sustainable future for equity and inclusion. Organizations must take the first step and establish an internal commitment towards change.

With all that we know and speculate, where do we go from here? For nonprofit organizations in particular, Rahman (2017) believed diversity and inclusion are essential to all for three reasons. First, as organizations whose goal is to make the world a better place must not question the cause for inclusion; second, when individuals who inform the values of a nonprofit come from a wide array of backgrounds they each bring a unique perspective and studies show a diverse staff leads to enhanced innovation and performance; and third, promoting inclusion is essential for the collective success (Rahman, 2017).

The discussion of the infamous “glass ceiling” for women in leadership must be cracked. While men typically have more of a linear path to leadership, the route for women has not been as easy. Ben-Naom (2018) explained that female intrapsychic barriers to leadership hinder their aspirations for leadership positions, stemming from early socialization and education. There still exists the stereotypical ideas of the traditional women’s work as caring for others and being a support for men. The three intrapsychic barriers explained are: perfectionism, fear of having a voice, and competition. There is a need to empower women to learn new skills, to practice empowering from within oneself, to find voice, and to break through this glass ceiling.

In order to address these important needs, the objective of this paper is to examine existing research surrounding the topic of women and leadership, conduct a research study to execute a primary data content analysis, speak to experts in the field, and devise an approachable pipeline model and strategy for organizations to utilize. The intention behind this is to provide more data-based evidence for organizations to best approach the current inequities that exist.

An exploration of the history of leadership, nonprofit organizations, women in leadership, and minority women in leadership are used as a foundation to emphasize the importance of this topic through a review of literature. The following section will examine an array of this existing literature to provide a comprehensive overview of the topic. Then, the sections to follow the literature review will add to the growing body of research on the topic, especially for minority women, in order to bring greater awareness, prioritize the importance, and recognize the long-term impacts created for women if organizations do not re-think their approach to diversity, complete inclusion, and equity. Nonprofit organizations are the most suitable targets to act as first catalysts for significant change.

Simply put, “Achieving gender parity in leadership is, first and perhaps the most important, a matter of fairness. Leaders are powerful, so when women are excluded from top leadership, they are denied power to make a difference in the world” (Hill, Miller, Benson, Handley, Birdwhistell, 2016).

## **Section 2: Literature Review**

Throughout history, there have been successful women in leadership positions within the workplace. However, having only figuratively a handful of women leaders is not enough and is not sufficient to represent the talents they bring to business organizations. Undeniably, there is a severe shortage of minority women in leadership positions both in private as well as nonprofit organizations as confirmed by the literature.

Current research identifies that there indeed exists an inequity of women in leadership. The following is a review of existing literature focusing on various aspects of leadership, nonprofit organizations, women, and minority women.

### **Women and Leadership**

Women leaders have been visible in the world throughout history. These women leaders have been found in nearly every culture and period of time. They have been in the forefront of social change, influenced historical political and economic movements, improved systems, led clubs, and created pathways for future women – female leadership is nothing new (Hill et al., 2016).

With the increased importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion, it is imperative to understand the past and focus on the current state of women in leadership. Research shows that progress for women in leadership falls short of expectations. Reported by the Pew Research Center in 2015, the pipeline for female leaders seemed to be widening and women have better positioned themselves for career success and leadership positions (Ben-Noam, 2018). Yet, in general, women are still less likely than men to be considered leaders across all sectors– from corporate boardrooms, to halls of Congress, universities, courts, religious institutions, to philanthropic organizations (Hill et al., 2016).

**The corporate sector.** To understand a holistic view of women in the workplace, the corporate sector provides important insight. Of the findings from LeanIn.Org and McKinsey&Company's *Women in the Workplace 2018* study of women in corporate America, it was stated in order to achieve equality companies must turn good intentions into concrete action (McKinsey&Company, 2018). Fortune 500 companies' women hold about three percent of Chief Executive Officer roles (Jones and Jones, 2017). Women are overall widely underrepresented across the board.

To add, Sanchez and Lehnert's (2018) study of women's aspirations to leadership, found that men and women have different motives to or to not aspire to leadership. While women are still underrepresented in leadership positions across all sectors, findings revealed that women often associate leadership with negativity, which could be a factor in why some do not want a leadership job.

Studies showed women leaders have improved business factors such as firm value, financial performance, economic growth, innovation, insolvency risk, and social responsiveness and philanthropy (Chisholm-Burns et al., 2017). Female representation combats the homogeneity of ideas, which can stifle critical thinking, breeds complacency, and overconfidence (Chisholm-Burns et al., 2017). Elias' (2018) research respondent said, "I think sometimes women do not succeed because they do not believe they can. Sometimes we put up our own walls" (p. 180).

**The nonprofit sector.** The diversity deficit is apparent in the corporate sector, but the gaps still exist between ideals and reality in the nonprofit sector as well. Jones and Jones (2017) explained that of the top 400 nonprofit organizations in the United States, women hold about 19% of executive leadership, in a sector overwhelmingly made up of women as staff.

As a starting point, Raham (2017) identified three key diversity revelations in nonprofits:

- Diversity deficit in relationship to race. Although 30% of the American workforce is represented by people of color, on average only 18% of nonprofit staff and 22% of foundation staff comprise people of color.
- In nonprofits, the vast majority of workers and volunteers are women, but the percentage of women in top leadership positions is low and does not reflect the workforce
- The diversity deficit is not fully documented. The issue of equity extends beyond race and ethnicity, and is important to keep in mind other dimensions of diversity and inclusion that are also lacking in representation.

Although Raham's (2017) study does not provide concrete steps to address the gaps with nonprofits, she explains the stakes are higher than ever, and organizations must have the courage to challenge "assumptions and biases that are embedded within society as well as our charities so that we can unite further in our common vision for the future."

Similar to Raham (2017), Hill et al. (2016) found that in the nonprofit sector women are well represented, but their representation in higher leadership and monetary compensation are imbalanced. Furthermore, to illustrate that imbalance, Hill et al. (2016) compared racial and ethnic diversity in higher education to show that in 2011, 17% of college presidents were minority women, just a four percent increase since 2006. Additionally, at the time of Hill and researcher's (2016) report, only six of 50 governors in the United States were women, while only two were women of color.

For an international comparison, Vasavada (2012) studied nonprofit women leaders in India, and she emphasized that in order to benefit from the full potential of women leaders, organizations must recognize the importance of feminine values. This allows organizations to shift to be more gender inclusive, since leadership is traditionally conceived as a masculine concept not only in society but in the workplace. Vasavada (2012) explained how gender roles are socially constructed and reinforced through social interactions in which power is associated with men, and feminine leadership values are down-played.

On the other hand, further research indicated that women leaders add significant economic and social value to organizational sustainability and profitability (Jones &

Jones 2017). For nonprofit organizations, it is critical to recognize the differences of leadership styles of women leaders and the value they bring, which are in support of Vasavada's (2012) findings of her study in India.

Claus, Callahan, and Sandlin (2013) also conducted an international study looking at women leaders in nonprofit and for-profit in the European Union. Like India and the United States, patterns of gendered leadership positions were similar. More women in leadership positions were typically found in nonprofit organizations, which reinforced beliefs relating to social norms surrounding women leaders in the workplace, but not many in leadership roles.

**Gender and race.** Regardless of the workplace sector and the lack of gender diversity in leadership, race and ethnicity also play a role and must not be ignored. Irrespective of the relationship that exists between gender and societal roles, Pafford and Schaefer's (2017) study on women at work and business leadership found there is a disconnect of function in the business environment. Hill et al. (2016) mentioned an existing study that found stereotypes about leadership have decidedly masculine characteristics— independence, aggression, competitiveness, rationality, dominance, objectivity. For race and ethnicity, these stereotypes unfortunately and uncharacteristically define leadership roles and can add a layer of confusion that influences how stereotypes are perceived. Therefore, they suggested that further research in this area is needed because of the complex relationships between race, ethnicity, gender, and leadership.

**Recommendations.** To address this complex issue, based on their research study, Hill et al. (2016) offered some recommendations for individuals, employers, and policy makers to close the leadership gaps Raham (2017) discussed.

For individuals, a few highlights were:

- Become a student of leadership, and seeking evidence-based leadership training
- Ask for more
- Find a sponsor or become one
- Explore and address your biases, and understand stereotype threat
- Set leadership goals, but plan for potential career interruptions
- Seek out employers that promote women's leadership
- Look for volunteer opportunities that include leadership skill development

For employers, a few highlights were:

- Offer flexible schedules

- Focus on productivity, not face time
- Offer evidence-based diversity training
- Actively encourage sponsorship programs
- Design better human resource materials

For policy makers, a few highlights were:

- Tackle persistent sex discrimination
- Strengthen pay equity laws, and increase salary transparency
- Strengthen leave policies, and update laws to protect pregnant workers
- Support educational programs for women seeking high-wage jobs
- Fully enforce Title IX

Sanchez and Lehnert (2018) made additional suggestions of adopting policies for incentivizing, mentorship from within, and creating an environment welcoming to women sitting at the decision-making table at all levels that may influence women to confidently exhibit their true capabilities.

Nevertheless, in spite of existing barriers, society is slowly moving in a positive direction of advancing and advocating for women in leadership roles. An example of a program for women looking to further themselves as leaders is at the University of San Francisco. As the Director of the Masters of Nonprofit Administration program, Tavanti (2016) said his program promotes building competency and capacity for nonprofit women leaders and as such “call[s] for organizational transformation [for] innovative and inclusive leadership practices.” Tavanti (2016) wrote that we as a society have gender bias to characterize women as “take care” and men as “take charge.” Yet, women want to lead and want to work in environments just as much as men where they can make a difference. Tavanti (2016) cites, for example, The Chronicle of Philanthropy’s 2014 “Untapped Potential of Women in Nonprofits” that found 75% of women comprise the nonprofit workforce, and that 72% of those aspire to have a leadership position.

### **Women and Career Development**

Although women in leadership is on a slow rise as indicated by research, it is important to understand there are other factors that hinder immediate professional growth.

Hill et. al (2016) summarized upward career trajectory as, “Women are not simply denied top leadership opportunities at the culmination of a long career. Rather, those opportunities disappear at various points along the way” (p. ix).

**Women are overlooked.** If equal representation of women in leadership is the ultimate goal, women must be prominently and continuously supported and given

opportunities to be recognized as valuable resources to be tapped. Leaders need courage and resources for career advancement. Walden, Snapp, Morgenstein, and Gregory (2018) collaborated on a publication about leadership equality and equity. They said that emerging professionals looking to further their careers will be faced with biases surrounding leadership attributes regardless of profession or occupation.

Regardless of gender, career success remains a significant motivating factor for leadership development. Pafford and Schaefer (2017), referenced previous studies that stated when organizations inadequately prepare women for leadership and management roles, the process for advancement and promotional opportunities often overlooks them. Women are rarely receiving opportunities for upward mobility, and typical management practices focus on promoting males.

**Advancement in nonprofits.** The nonprofit sector proves much the same as the private sector in that women are not advancing and receiving limited opportunities to advance. Jones and Jones (2017) found nonprofit women leaders that employ a transformational style of leadership will enhance their level of career success. Transformational leadership is defined as evoking strategic and forward-thinking perspectives and planning for continued improvement of an organization. Furthermore, transformational leaders focus on the organization's people rather than day-to-day operations. They embrace employee commitment, respect for individuals, and exhibit authenticity and honesty (Jones and Jones 2017). This information is critical to helping those women truly advance and receive opportunities to.

**Recommendations.** Across all professional sectors, one suggestion from Pafford and Schaefer (2017) is for additional training, education, and confidence building. Additionally, employees feeling valued and respected, are important for building and retaining a successful talent pool. It must be a collaborative effort inclusive of all individuals whose ultimate goal is equity.

Elias (2018) explored lessons learned from women in leadership positions to provide examples of working women leaders and to educate and provide insights to women entering leadership positions. One woman reported success comes from workplace mentorship to help boost career, skills, and retention. Seven women that were interviewed mentioned the importance of being and acting confident. A respondent said that women have a presumption they should not speak up without knowing all details, because it could come across as cautious and doubtful rather than strong and an expert. Elias (2018) strongly advised women believe in themselves and exude confidence.

It is important for not only women to support women, but also both women and men to commit to promoting women, amplifying their accomplishments, nominating women for difficult jobs, and calling out gender bias. Walden et al. (2018) also said mentoring, guiding, promoting, and elevating are important for women at all career stages.

## Minority Women, Leadership, and Career Development

All women must be advocated for. It is clear there exists inequity of women in leadership in the workplace, but minority women are at an even greater disadvantage. There exists a “race stratification that occurs in the nonprofit industry [which] can be understood as the grouping of one racial group at the leadership and decision-making level within a nonprofit, and the grouping of another at the front-line and entry-level positions” (Adesaogun, Flottemesch, Ibrahim-DeVries, 2015, p.42).

In Brown’s (2016) book on inclusion and diversity in the workplace, she concluded the first and most critical step is awareness – the openness and curiosity to learning more about the topic of inclusion [will] shift entire workplace cultures (p. xxvi).

**The lack of leadership diversity.** The question posed then is, what actions do people of color need to take in order to maximize their career success given that stratification? American Association of University of Women study of *Barriers and Bias and the Status of Women in Leadership* (Hill et al., 2016) found Asian, Black, and Hispanic women in the workplace are more subject to the gender gap, as are lesbian, bisexual, and transgender women, compared to others. For many minority women, specifically African Americans, they refer to barriers in upward mobility as encountering a concrete ceiling (Barnes, 2017). For minority women, it is the notion of being a double, sometimes triple, minority – a woman and one of color.

Weisinger, Borges-Mendez, and Milofsky’s (2015) concluded that diversity must extend beyond the managerial approach and take into consideration identity, power dynamics, and diversity efforts specifically in volunteering and nonprofit organizations.

**The need for nonprofit champions.** With a lack of racial and ethnic diversity, especially for nonprofit organizations, responding appropriately and proactively to the needs of their target populations may be compromised if there is not equal representation (Adesaogun et al., 2015). Understanding the overall ethnic composition of nonprofit organizations is integral to understanding the impact of racial and ethnic stratification at the leadership level within the industry.

Adesaogun et al. (2015) examined experiences of Black women working in nonprofit organizations to identify strategic communication tactics to maximize success in the field. Participants identified the need for self-preservation leading to moral dilemmas, difficulty navigating racism and discrimination, and maltreatment as barriers to success. To combat these struggles, eight communication tactics for Black women to move towards success were identified: be present, be aware, seek mentorship and consult, consider your personal path, be proactive, adapt your communication, invest in education, and commit to difficult decisions (Adesaogun et al., 2015).

To affirm these points, Flores and Matkin (2014) uncovered stories of minority leaders encountering and overcoming barriers in cultural community centers. While cultural organizations should be diverse in theory, experiences of the study's leaders showed there are still barriers that persist regardless.

Xie and Pang (2018) examined Chinese women leaders in nonprofit organizations. The study revealed that one potential reason for the lack of Chinese female leaders is the negative perception that nonprofit organizations are not desirable and appropriate careers for women's advancement. While these beliefs stem from a cultural viewpoint, there proves to be a need for greater empowerment for Chinese women already in the sector in order to grow their confidence and the respect of other Chinese individuals.

**Recommendations.** It is important to recognize that studies prove diverse organizations perform better than homogeneous ones, and organizations that change their approach to diversity make themselves more competitive companies (Brown, 2016, p.18). The changed approach comes from the top executives, starting with these leaders taking accountability for and setting clear expectations around culture, behavior, and workplace environment (Brown, 2016, 32). Brown (2016) offers five truths about diversity and inclusion in order to embrace the issue and move away from the status quo (p. 43):

- Change is hard.
- Most of a company's untapped diversity and inclusion knowledge lives in the middle and entry levels.
- Equality is good for people and for business.
- Workplace diversity and inclusion means respecting all people's inherent differences equally.
- Unconscious bias and unexamined cultural values and standards affect everything.

### **Strategic Human Resources Management**

It is important to recognize the under-representation of women in leadership across all sectors. Strategic human resources management is the development and implementation of employee-related programs that help solve business problems and contribute to the long-term business objectives. Strategic human resources management extends far beyond simply hiring and firing employees.

**Building an equitable and inclusive culture.** Part of having diverse individuals within an organization is that it creates a unique culture. Researchers, scholars, and experts in the field believe that an organization's culture shapes values and actions of an organization. Longman, Daniels, Bray, and Liddell (2018) examined existing research

about development theory on women in leadership, specifically about their motivation to accept or vacate positional leadership. The findings concluded the implications for leadership development for women contribute to shaping organizational culture such as fit, power of choice, and personal confidence.

From the organizational level, Pafford and Schaefer (2017) said theories and internal policies surrounding culture have to be in place and leaders need to make sure they align with goals to help project the messages externally. The messaging must focus on inclusion to the degree in which individuals feel part of the organization's processes and can fully contribute (Weisinger et al., 2016). Jones and Jones (2017) recommended implementing leadership assessment surveys and understanding the implications of various leadership styles in relation to career success.

Longman et al. (2018) studied organizational culture and fit and leadership aspirations of women working at faith-based universities. Many of these women attributed their experience regarding inequities was attributed to working at a religious institution burdened with the patriarchal history of the church (Longman et al., 2018). One woman mentioned that a policy restricted access for mentoring and networking. Another woman said they were viewed as domestics and should instead be at home taking care of children rather than in the workplace. One study group even provided research responses categorized as the "real danger for Christian higher education because these institutions are using Scripture to back their prejudices" (Longman et al. 2018, p. 10). Regardless of workplace institutional barriers, creating an inclusive culture within an organization equates to access and equity and feeling accepted at an institution.

**Minimizing bias.** Without a diverse organizational culture comes the risk of bias and stereotyping of individuals. Conscious and unconscious biases and gender stereotypes play a factor in creating this type of toxic culture that must be avoided. Chisholm-Burns et al. (2017) said that according to the National Academy of Sciences, it is not talent but rather unintentional biases and outmoded institutional structures that are hindering advancement of women to leadership. Chisholm-Burns et al. (2017) created a call to action to help women overcome barriers in their path to leadership with a table of strategies to be implemented on multiple levels: the individual level, the institution/employer level, professional leadership/organizational level, and ultimately the societal level.

Further research expanded on the importance of addressing bias among employees at all levels. Chisholm-Burns et al. (2017) said "It is not talent, but unintentional biases and outmoded institutional structures that are hindering the access and advancement of women. Both conscious and unconscious biases and gender stereotypes play a substantive role in impeding women's access to senior and executive level positions" (p. 314). Hays-Thomas (2017) defined implicit bias as a "nonconscious and automatic response based on previous experience implying favorable or unfavorable emotional,

cognitive, or behavioral reactions toward an attitude or object” (p. 223).

Implicit bias can affect decision making. To combat this, the Implicit Association Test is a strategic human resources tool for employees to take and measure automatic preference and explore racial attitudes that may otherwise be unknown.

**Recommendations.** To address the systemic issue of leadership imbalance, Hill et al. (2016), highlighted five current internal practices that are working. First, diversity training programs have achieved some promising results that have had a dramatic positive effect on women’s engagement as leaders. Second, implicit association testing which uses word associations to detect implicit bias in individuals can be taken by employees. Third, gender quotas and diversity hiring goals are a recommended strategic management practice. Hill et al. (2016) affirmed, “When women are in top leadership positions, women are more likely to be promoted to leadership. This brings us full circle: to increase the number of women in top leadership positions, we need to increase the number of women in top leadership positions” (p. 31). Fourth, employee practice reforms are recommended to hold individuals accountable for the hiring and promotion of women and minorities into leadership. Job descriptions using gender-neutral language will make a positive difference, and individualized career plans, flexible policies such as tenure and parental leave, help with career advancement. Fifth, introduction and exposure to role models is powerful, especially for minority women, but role models of the same race or ethnic background must exist in the organization to begin with.

Halton’s (2019) research has also provided ways organizations can be champions for women in the workplace:

- Connect the original person to the idea – do not overlook the suggestion because it comes from a woman.
- If the person with the good idea is not in the room, help them get included in future conversations – inclusion of individuals at all levels regardless of employment status allow for reducing groupthink and approaching organizational decisions and management with diverse styles and individuals.
- Remember the woman who helped you become who you are and try to pay their efforts forward – after being a beneficiary, continue to advocate for other women and stand up for those coming behind.

Another recommendation was for organizations to develop a system for succession planning to “target moving women into senior positions, and for cultural change initiatives to create less oppressive work environments for women” (Claus et al., 2013, p. 342), which helps break the cycle of only men stepping into filling the roles.

To add, Xie and Pang (2018) mentioned how organizational sponsorship can be institutionalized to help with career development for women. Sponsors are champions for an individual and can use their personal connections, endorsements, and guidance to lead another to career advancement. Additionally, they argue policies designed for equity between men and women such as maternity and paternity leave can help increase organizational commitment.

In addition, an important element is to understand outside contributing factors that women must currently seek out in order to move up in leadership. These factors can include mentoring, out of workplace development, networking, and more.

Hill et al. (2016) said studies found that social capital from networking with influential leaders is more important for advancement than job performance. For minority women however, networking takes much more effort since they are many times denied access to such interactions.

Flores and Matkin (2014) made recommendations based on their research that found mentoring, networking, and understanding bias from within were three ways to help guide organizations to uncover barriers minorities face as leaders. Mentors provide a perspective and can share their knowledge based on their personal journey. Networking opportunities allows interactions to create a community of individuals and establish mutually beneficial relationships with others. Lastly, uncovering bias and eliminating dominance of certain groups or individuals over others fosters empathy and trust.

### **Summary and Looking Forward**

While we have gained insight into this issue based on a comprehensive review of existing literature, the problem of diversity, equity, and inclusion of women in leadership still persists today.

The following research will address the lack of a current successful and sustainable pipeline for women leaders, and move beyond the high-level concepts found in existing literature to recognize there is further depth and insight that must be considered. This research will explore these high-level categories further to demonstrate there is an interconnectedness and relation between these concepts and their further depth. Therefore, a pipeline model will be representative of the need for a more holistic approach to this issue.

A sustainable pipeline will shift organizational focus toward equity and inclusion, rather than just diversity, and take into account multiple other important contributing factors for women's leadership success. "Diversity is the what or the who, and inclusion is the how of transformative performance" (Brown, 2016, p. 73). Stated clearly, there are plenty of potentially qualified, ambitious, and capable women leaders out there. The focus on a paradigm shift for the positive sustainability of the sector long term in

needed. This shift will be a fundamental change in approach, perspective, and sustainability of how organizations currently function.

This project is relevant and will benefit the nonprofit sector because inclusion of diverse women in leadership roles is an ongoing subject matter to be addressed. Many nonprofits are behind in having equal representation of men and women, and minority women leaders are even fewer. Nonprofit organizations must transition to become champions in this space and build a sustainable pipeline for others to follow. Therefore, it is essential to establish grounds for how nonprofits can improve diversity, inclusion, and equity practices immediately.

### **Section 3: Methods and Approaches**

The focus of this research is women in leadership, specifically minority women, and those in nonprofit organizations.

The first section of the research included looking at existing literature to understand women in leadership, women and career development, minority women in leadership and career development, and strategic human resources management. Scholarly articles, periodicals, nonperiodicals, and website articles were used, available through the University of San Francisco library, Google Scholar, and other available resources such as published books. The field of research included variations of the following topics: hiring practices, promoting practices, strategic human resources management, succession planning, mentorship, networking, women and gender studies, leadership in nonprofit organizations, career development, nonprofit organizations, women in leadership, minority women in leadership.

In order to address the gaps discussed in existing literature around the topic of women in leadership, a quantitative content analysis was conducted. The San Francisco Business Journal's *2018 Book of Lists* (Huss, 2017) was used as a guide for randomly selecting nonprofit organizations to perform the content analysis. Four lists were chosen and the top 10 organizations from each list were analyzed (Appendix A).

After identifying 40 nonprofit organizations (Appendix A) to conduct the content analysis, the following indicators were asked of the organization through a process of closely examining and dissecting an organization's online website. It is noted why the measured questions were chosen, how they were coded, and which indicator they were grouped with.

**Table 1: Indicators, Measures, and Coding Rules**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Measure (Question)</b>	<b>Reason for Chosen Indicator</b>	<b>Coding Rule</b>
Organizational	1. What is the name of the organization?	To identify the organization by name.	Based on the name provided in the 2018 Book of Lists (Huss, 2017).
Organizational	2. What is the number of local staff?	To identify the size of the organization.	Recorded based on the number listed in the 2018 Book of Lists or GuideStar's most recently reported Form 990, the numbers were reported or N/A for organizations without any identification of size.
Strategic HR Management	3. Does the organization have a staff directory to showcase current employees?	To identify if the organization shares its employees with the public.	Regardless of who or how many staff were showcased, if there was some indication of a way to identify staff, the indicators were coded N/A, yes, or no.
Diversity	4. Is the leadership staff inclusive of women?	To identify if there is female representation in leadership.	If an organization identified C-Suite level staff, those individuals were considered "leadership." If an organization did not identify C-Suite level staff, individuals with a "Executive" or "Director" level title were considered "leadership."
Diversity	5. If yes to #4, what is the percentage of women?	To identify the percentage of female leaders.	The percentage of women in leadership was calculated based on the number of women divided by the total number of leadership staff (men plus women).
Strategic HR Management	6. Do the women in leadership have photos or only names displayed?	To identify if the female leaders are showcased with a photo or name.	If there is a photo they were coded "photo," and if only names were listed they were coded "names."
Inclusion	7. Is the leadership staff inclusive of minority women?	To identify if there is minority female representation in leadership.	In order to identify if a woman was considered "minority" and they did not display a photo, the individual was researched on LinkedIn to find a photo.
Inclusion	8. If yes to #7, what is the percentage of minority women in leadership?	To identify the percentage of minority female leaders.	The percentage of minority women in leadership was calculated based on the number

			of minority leadership women divided by the total number of leadership women (minority women plus nonminority women).
Strategic HR Management	9. Do the minority women in leadership have photos or only names displayed?	To identify if the minority female leaders are showcased with a photo or name.	If there is a photo they were coded "photo," and if only names were listed they were coded "names."
Leadership	10. Is the leadership staff reflective (over 50%) of its beneficiaries in regards to race/ethnicity for women?	Unless the organization was only to benefit males, for complete equity, Indicator #7 should be more than/equal to 50%.	Beneficiaries with identified based on images throughout the website. If the percentage calculated in Indicator #7 was more than 50%, they were coded "yes."
Leadership	11. Is the leadership staff reflective (over 50%) of its beneficiaries in regards to gender?	Unless the organization was only to benefit males, for complete equity, Indicator #5 should be more than/equal to 50%.	The percentage of leadership staff reflective of beneficiaries was calculated based on total percentage of women in leadership (Indicator #5) and Indicator #5 number was over 50%.
Diversity	12. What is the percentage of men (regardless of race/ethnicity) in leadership?	To identify the percentage of male to female leaders.	The percentage of men in leadership, regardless of their race/ethnicity, was calculated based on percentage of women in leadership (Indicator #5) subtracted from 100%.
Diversity	13. Does the organization display diverse photos of beneficiaries/clients/participants?	To identify if the organization has photos representing all races/ethnicities and genders of beneficiaries/clients/participants.	If there were photos to identify individuals as minority race/ethnicity, they were coded "yes" or "no."
Diversity	14. Does the organization include diverse photos of staff together?	To identify if the organization has photos representing all races/ethnicities and genders of staff.	If there were photos to identify individuals as minority race/ethnicity, they were coded "yes" or "no."
Inclusion	15. Does the organization have mention of being inclusive/non-discriminatory in the hiring process (in any capacity)?	To identify if the organization publicly states they are inclusive/non-discriminatory in hiring practices.	If there is any mention of diversity, inclusion, or equity in any text capacity (written words, not images), they were coded "yes" or "no."
Strategic HR Management	16. Is there a definitive Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) statement on the website?	To identify if the organization has a public DEI statement.	If there is a definitive organizational DEI statement, they were coded "yes" or "no."
Strategic HR Management	17. If yes to #16, what is the DEI statement?	To identify the public DEI statement.	If there exists a DEI statement, the statement was identified.
Strategic HR Management	18. Where on the website is there mention of diversity, equity, and inclusion (in any capacity)?	To identify where there is mention of diversity, equity, and inclusion, even if it is only stated in the hiring process (Indicator #15).	If the organization does not have a specified DEI statement but mention diversity, inclusion, and/or equity in any text capacity (written words, not images), they were coded "yes" or "no."

Strategic HR Management	19. Does the organization have mention of professional development opportunities for employees (in any capacity)?	To identify if the organization publicly promotes professional development opportunities for its employees.	If there is a statement/section dedicated to professional development opportunities for employees, they were coded "yes" or "no."
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To hear personal accounts in order to further the findings of the content analysis, four semi-structured interviews were conducted via telephone and in-person. These individuals provided professional insights based on their expertise in their relevant field. See Appendix B for the interview protocol.

- Female nonprofit fundraising professional
- Female LGBTQ+ all-boys Catholic high school teacher
- Female police officer
- Female Human Resources professional

### Research Questions

This research aimed to answer four proposed questions. The research questions stated formally were:

1. What are effective strategies to prepare (minority) women for leadership positions?
2. In what ways is the path to leadership for minority women different than White women?
3. In what ways is the path to leadership for (minority) women different than men?
4. What barriers do (minority) women face in obtaining leadership positions?

The goal of this research is to provide a sustainable pipeline model for leadership development for women in nonprofit organizations, particularly minorities. The model will identify the various stages and layers needed for women from the time they enter an organization to the time they move into a leadership role, and what necessary factors will most contribute to their upmost success.

This project is relevant and will benefit the nonprofit sector because inclusion of diverse women in leadership roles is an ongoing issue that must be addressed in a strategic manner. This project allows for insight and investigation from experts in the field who share their knowledge and provide recommendations. The large majority of nonprofits are deficient in having equal representation of men and women in leadership positions, and minority women leaders are even represented in even fewer numbers. Therefore, it is important to establish grounds for how organizations can improve their current practices.

Existing research shows there are direct and indirect benefits of having equitable representation of both men and women in the workplace. An inclusive organization reinforces the importance of embracing diverse opinions, experiences, and individuals, and instilling organizational decision-making and management styles that promote inclusion and equity.

## **Section 4. Data Analysis**

A mixed methods approach was taken to collect data for the purposes of this research.

The first level of statistical analysis used for this research was a content analysis based on 40 nonprofit organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area. The purpose of the content analysis was to review the 40 organization's online websites using predetermined measures to identify the practices, separated into five groups of indicators: organizational, leadership, diversity, inclusion, and strategic human resources management.

The second level of analysis used for this research was conducting and collecting expert interviews. Interviews allowed for the addition of personal perspective, experience, and knowledge to the topics.

### **Content Analysis**

A content analysis is a research practice that is used to evaluate texts in a quantitative way. Content analysis allows for examination of a variety of organizations to identify relationships. For the purposes of this research, see Appendix C for the complete content analysis table.

Although the complete content analysis was conducted using 19 measures, it was most important to focus on a select few questions from each indicator to further the analysis of this paper to best address the research questions aiming to be answered.

Research Question #1 aimed to identify effective strategies to prepare women for leadership, more specifically minority women. The content analysis indicators to help answer this question were: leadership, diversity, and inclusion. Question #3 asked if the organization had a staff directory to show current employees on their website. Of the 40 organizations analyzed, the majority, 34 organizations, had some directory. Then, question #4 asked if the organization's leadership staff was inclusive of women based on what is displayed in the staff directory, and 32 of 40 organizations did have women representation in leadership positions. Question #8 then asked how many women leadership staff were of minority background, and results indicated 22 organizations had 0%-25% women minority representation. Only one organization had 100% minority women representation. From these findings, we can conclude the strategies for women to prepare for leadership are that organizations must have greater representation of

women to begin with. Based on sheer majority, organizations first need more gender diverse representation.

Research Question #2 aimed to identify why the paths to leadership for minority women are different than for white women. It was apparent minority women were largely underrepresented based on findings from question #8. Due to the increasingly low percentage of minority women in leadership based on question #8, this proved the difference in percentage of individuals in leadership was therefore made up of either white women and/or men. From these findings, we can conclude that the path to leadership will be much more difficult for minorities than white women, because there were 22 organizations with only 0%-25% minority representation in leadership. Once organizations have greater representation of women, it will be imperative to also be inclusive of minorities.

Research Question #3 aimed to address ways the path to leadership for women, specifically minorities, were different than men. Question #12 asked what percentage of men were in leadership positions based on what was viewable in the staff directory, regardless of their race or ethnicity. Findings showed 11 organizations had between 26%-49% male representation, and 11 other organizations had between 50%-75% male representation in leadership. Three organizations had 100% male leadership representation. From these findings, we can conclude that men have a greater rate of overall leadership representation compared to their counterparts, especially minority women.

Research Question #4 aimed to recognize the barriers women face, specifically minorities, to obtaining leadership positions. This question focused on strategic human resources management indicators. Question #15 asked if the organization had advertised as being inclusive/non-discriminatory in the hiring process, and 33 organizations were coded yes. Although the vast majority of the organizations were coded as yes, their mention of diversity and inclusion efforts was often a standard “we are an affirmative action employer,” or “we are an equal opportunity employer.” These statements were most often found either on the jobs/career/employment page of the website or listed as part of a specific job description, and that was all. From these findings, we can conclude that practices within the human resources realm, from a hiring perspective, can portray to prospective employees the organization’s stance as an employer on diversity and non-discrimination.

Research Question #4 was refined a step further using question #16 to identify how many organizations had a definitive Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) statement. A definitive DEI statement makes a specific declaration the organization pledges as evidence they are committed to operating within that DEI mission. Of the 40 organizations analyzed, only seven had a DEI statement viewable on the website, while

32 did not and one organization was unidentifiable. Of the seven organizations with a DEI statement, SRI International (<https://www.sri.com/careers/diversity>) was comprehensive and noteworthy:

SRI is committed to creating and celebrating a diverse workplace that recognizes and values, differences, and reflects the communities where our employees live and where our clients operate. This includes valuing differences of race, ethnicity, age, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, body type/physical appearance, disability/differently-abled, and work styles.

By using the opportunity that diversity presents to enrich each of us, SRI creates a competitive advantage in our business and adds value for our clients and our employees. By embracing the principles of diversity – valuing and respecting the visible and invisible differences that represent the strengths, experiences, and unique skills of each and every individual at SRI – we recognize that everyone is important and has a valuable contribution to offer in the workplace. Because each of us is different from everyone else, diversity is what we have in common.

Silicon Valley Community Foundation, is another example of an organization dedicated to DEI as part of their guiding principles, and their commitment is displayed in two tables to show their breakdown of employee gender and racial makeup (<https://www.siliconvalleycf.org/diversity-and-inclusion>), all viewable by the public and prospective employees. The William & Flora Hewlett Foundation, like SRI International, had a dedicated DEI landing page to explain their efforts (<https://hewlett.org/diversity-equity-inclusion>). Similarly, The Wells Fargo Foundation, The California Endowment, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, and Stanford University/Stanford Live publicly displayed their DEI stance and statement. From this, we can conclude that organizations with a definitive DEI statement are few but should be practiced more widely by others.

To take the findings of the content analysis a step further, four interviews were conducted with the following individuals: a female nonprofit fundraising professional, a female LGBTQ+ all-boys Catholic high school teacher, a minority female police officer, and a female human resources professional.

### **Expert Interview: Female Nonprofit Fundraising Professional**

The nonprofit fundraising professional indicated that being an employee in a national organization, but being based in a small regional based office, has led to limited availability for leadership growth. She said in order to continue moving into a higher-level leadership role she must move to the organization's headquarters or simply wait until a leader within her regional office leave. She attributes the lack of her personal

upward mobility to several internal organizational factors. For example, there is limited access to higher leadership within the organization. She said access to mentoring would allow her to connect and network with individuals who have been successful in their upward mobility. Having a female mentor who understands similar gender-related barriers would be helpful, too.

She emphasized the difficulty for women in her organization to manage work-life balance. She is often expected to work many events, some on the weekends and late nights. Although she does not have a family and others to care for, work often impedes on personal time and space. She said the difficult experiences of managing work-life balance are concerning, and thinking about continuing to move up in this organization may be a factor in her wanting to stay, because work-life balance may get more difficult as even more would be expected of her as a higher leader.

Another barrier to leadership success is the notion of equal pay. Although she does not know if there is inequity in pay for male and females at her organization, the lack of transparency around this issue is concerning for growth opportunities when thinking about equity and her value within the organization.

Although there are clear indications of barriers in the nonprofit workplace for upward leadership mobility, she discussed opportunities that have led to her personal leadership success thus far in her career. In her current role she said, "I have always tried to say yes to new and challenging opportunities outside of my job. Also, networking and getting to know people outside of my regional office has been crucial to gain further visibility with higher up leaders" (personal communication, April 4, 2019).

She continued to share that females must feel valued in the workplace which lends to gaining confidence. From her experience she feels most valued when asked to participate in special projects and invited to opportunities outside of her primary job role.

From her perspective, for organizations to close the gender gap she recommended to offer workplace flexibility without shame, for example, women being passed over because they are out on maternity leave. Being transparent about the gender pay gap is also necessary and organizations must create an open culture where employees feel they can question and ask for re-evaluation of pay without reprisal or intimidation. Finally, women need access to other women, and organizations need to create a space for women's empowerment and community, where women can connect and learn from others through programs and access to mentorship.

She concluded by sharing what advice she would give to young women who aspire to lead someday. "Always speak up and ask questions. I would tell them to never be afraid to challenge the status quo and stand up for what is right. Always say yes to presented

opportunities because you do not know where that will eventually lead you” (personal communication, April 4, 2019), she noted.

### **Expert Interview: Female LGBTQ+ All-boys Catholic High School Teacher**

As a female identifying member of the LGBTQ+ community at an all-boys Catholic high school, this individual has experienced barriers in upward leadership mobility. She said, “I came out during my interview and was welcomed, accepted, and hired. However, I still fear that my identity will threaten my job security. It is very common to hear LGBTQ+ individuals being let go from Catholic institutions” (personal communication, April 4, 2019).

She compared her career experiences to that of her male colleagues, explaining further how her identity as a female and LGBTQ+ member is a constant barrier for leadership growth. “I feel that, as a woman, I have this desire to prove I am just as good as a man, even though I know in the back of my mind that gender should have nothing to do with work performance. Also having to navigate sexualization puts another pressure on women. Things like that are just unnecessary and tiring, but males feel they have that right and it is acceptable” (personal communication, April 4, 2019). Thankfully, in her current role and during the hiring process, she felt her employer and superiors saw her for whom she was as a person with worthy and qualifications, rather than based on her gender. However, she knows this is not the case for many other women in similar situations.

Her current role at a religious institution has its challenges in navigating the process of growing as a leader. She explained several important strategies that have brought her to where she is today. She explained the importance of being surrounded by strong role models, especially women, and those who understood her challenges and experiences. Previously, when she was pursuing her Master’s degree in Theological Studies, she found community through other women in the program who were all committed to doing good work and working for justice. “We made women’s voices prominent and powerful in a male-dominated field. I believe in the power of voice - finding ways to express my voice and being heard” (personal communication, April 4, 2019), she said.

She concluded by sharing what advice she would give to young women who aspire to lead in the future. She said, “Do not be afraid to use your voice and to be different. Leadership is very diverse, and we all carry with us important pieces to a puzzle that is only whole if all voices are respected and heard. You matter, and you make a difference” (personal communication, April 4, 2019).

### **Expert Interview: Female Minority Police Officer**

An identifying minority female police officer discussed her insights on barriers related to leadership success in her field, all which concluded to be more personal in nature. She

said in order to be successful and move up in rank she must be open and to actively listen. She noted, “My path starts with me as an individual and professional. How I identify myself and the qualities I have will help make me grow to become a greater leader in my professional career and personal endeavors” (personal communication, April 5, 2019).

Additionally, she must be trusted by her higher ranked colleagues and gain more experience. Existing in a field of work that is stereotyped as a male job, she explained her frustration in having to compare her path to leadership with that of her male colleagues. Although she is in a leadership role in her line of work, the major difference between her and her male counterparts is that they will always be taken more seriously than a female. Even in a profession where everyone is expected to be hard-headed and authoritarian, females are still expected to be “sweet and soft” because of societal expectations. She said her path to success did not happen because she was this way – she had to become like the men in order to prove herself, especially as a minority woman.

She discussed her thoughts around feeling valued as a female in a male-dominated workspace. She appreciates knowing her value as a professional, not just another employee. When teammates ask for her opinion or assistance and guidance she feels she is helping them to learn and grow as officers, as well as helping her personally learn and grow from that experience.

In order to get to where she is today, she recounted on both professional and personal strategies. Some professional strategies highlighted were: accepting and asking for participation in special projects, taking work responsibilities outside of her normal job, volunteering for overtime to gain experience, attending professional conferences and seminars to network with others, maintaining professionalism and respect with colleagues from diverse backgrounds. Opportunities for professional growth are talked about in her field of work, but she has to actively and strategically seek them out herself and follow through on her own accord. Her personal strategies to success in the workplace include: always being honest, continuing to improve and maintain self-awareness, accepting criticism, being open and practicing active listening, and remembering to forgive and be kind to oneself.

Lastly, she wanted to share advice to give to young women aspiring to become leaders in the future. For the future of the female workforce, she encouraged organizations to close the gender gap by providing additional conferences and trainings for employee improvements, and they should be available to both men and women equally. For promotion opportunities, only women who are qualified should be promoted and not simply for an organization to check off the boxes that a woman was promoted. She finally named important practices in her every day career, and she encouraged others to consider embracing them and put them into action.

- Follow your dreams. If you discover that dream does not fulfill you or make you wanting more, it is okay. Accept that life is a journey.
- Listen, listen, and listen.
- If you feel uncomfortable about something, sit back and identify what is triggering that and making you uncomfortable. Ask yourself how you can overcome that uncomfortable feeling.
- Take three deep breaths in the morning, and at night. And any time you need.
- Take care of your personal self. Always.
- Laugh a lot, even at yourself.
- If you are too nice, learn to say NO more often.
- Embrace your emotions, but do not let your emotions control you.
- Choose your friends and network wisely, especially in the workplace.
- Smile. Be you, always.

#### **Expert Interview: Female Human Resources Professional**

To conclude the interviews, it was important to understand the perspective and insights from a female human resources leadership professional. First, she described her own personal path to leadership as one that is continually evolving. To get her to the leadership role she is in today, she shared her the philosophy, “I strive to make everyone that I interact with happy when I arrive at work, and sorry when I go home. This principle solidified the importance of being viewed as a valuable team member every day, which I believe has helped strengthen my promotability” (personal communication, April 8, 2019). As a people leader, she said that once she was in a role to lead others, her personal philosophy expanded into highlighting the strengths of those on her team, and working with them to identify and improve areas in which they were deficient that way they will be prepared to lead in the future as she is. From her leadership actions at the onset, team members saw value in her and she quickly gained support, praise, and was deemed as competent in her role which led her taking on more responsibilities and even a higher leadership role.

She attributed her rise to leadership to individuals she had encountered in life. Having a well-versed, confident manager to look up to who consistently challenged, advocated for her, and set high expectations was crucial to moving up in the workplace. One factor she deemed important, similar to many of the other interviewees, was the importance of women having women mentors to provide an additional support system and having someone as a positive role model for guidance and inspiring her to emulate one day.

She said that one of the greatest barriers women face when moving up in an organization is gaining the respect of colleagues as a leader. Women must have enough self-confidence and the belief they are just as capable as a male to take on a leadership role, and having a mentor to support and advocate for that woman is important. Personally, as she continues to climb the leadership ladder, she felt it may be difficult working at a large organization because of corporate politics. Yet she is hopeful that when the time comes for her in the future, the organization will have a different perspective of current practices and function differently.

Lastly, she recommended to young women aspiring to become a leader someday to take on a natural leadership role in their current position whenever possible, no matter how small it may seem, and to seek out a female mentor who is in a role that aligns with their aspirations. From a human resources perspective, she said it is important for organizations to continue supporting women and close the gender gap by creating and supporting diversity groups internally, providing mentorship programs, and actively striving to hire, retain, and promote women.

## **Section 5: Implications and Recommendations**

### **Literature Review Implications**

Based on existing literature, we can conclude there are many facets surrounding the topic of women and leadership.

Although there have been many prominent women leaders throughout history, the current state of diversity, equity, and inclusion for women, especially minorities, is still behind expectations. There is evidence the career success gap is widening for women, but are still statistically less likely to become leaders compared to male counterparts, and a significant gap continues to exist between the ideal and reality.

Through the literature, several overarching themes hindering women's professional growth were identified. Many organizations do not adequately prepare women for leadership roles and as such, women are overlooked and often bypassed for advancement and promotions. The discussion around diversity continues to persist, and it is evident that organizations are not making strategic changes for improvement. It was identified that women need strong support in professional development in order to get ahead. As well, an organization's culture plays an important role in eliminating bias and traditional stereotypes based on gender and race.

While women face many barriers to leadership success, minority women's barriers are even greater. Race stratification, discrimination and bias play an additional role in

limiting opportunities for minority women. If organizations lack diversity to begin with, the chances for minority women to be included in leadership will be highly unlikely. Studies proved that diverse organizations perform far better than those that are not. Diversity, equity, and inclusion expectations, goals, and an organizational culture supporting these efforts must start from top leadership. Yet if women and minority women are already underrepresented at the top, there is a high probability that the shift toward making progressive changes will likely never take place.

It is important to understand that organizational culture is built internally. In order to be inclusive and equitable for women, organizations must contribute to women's successes through short and long-range commitments, such as promoting from within, creating hiring goals or quotas, mandating implicit bias training for employees, building a succession plan for leadership positions/roles, and providing employee-related incentive programs to help move individuals upward.

Overall, the existing literature provided a foundation for understanding of this difficult topic. Therefore, further research was necessary. The quantitative and qualitative findings of this research allowed for identifying a comprehensive pipeline model for women, which will help organizations shift their focus on making positive movements in equity and inclusion, rather than simply talking about them and remaining stagnant.

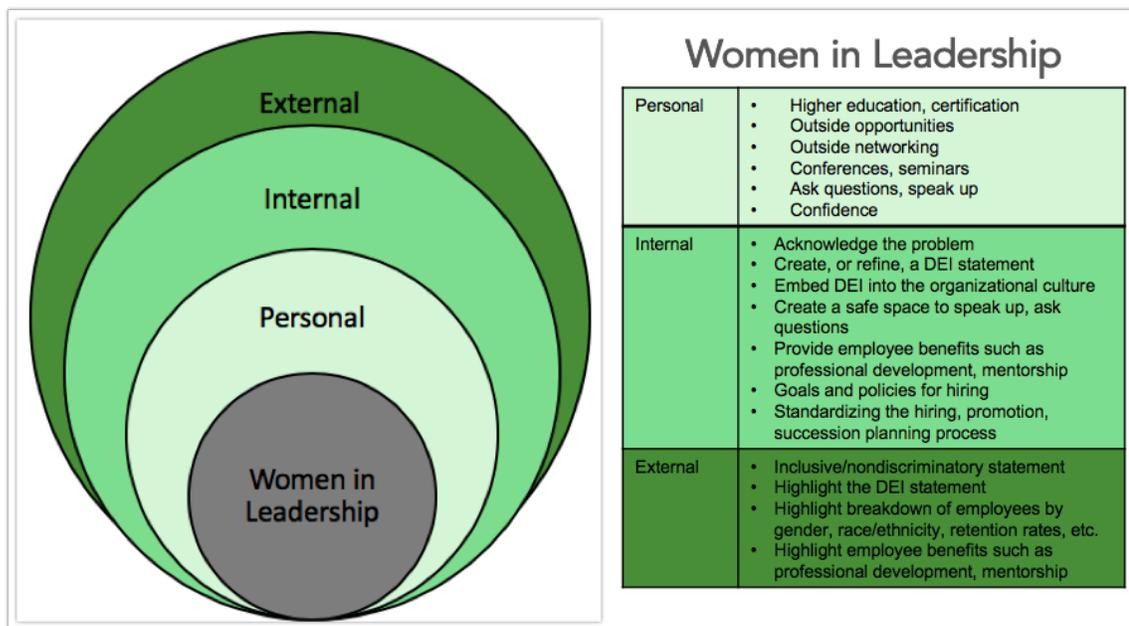
### **Quantitative and Qualitative Implications and Recommendations**

The most impactful shift for organizations is to embrace diversity, and move toward being equitable and inclusive of women, especially minorities.

Based on the findings in the literature, the quantitative content analysis, and discussions from the qualitative interviews, a pipeline model was built to demonstrate a pathway for women to leadership. The model (Figure 1) includes four interconnected strata: women in leadership, personal, internal, and external.

Women in leadership is the ultimate goal that inter-connects all three surrounding layers. Personal is the individual professional woman, internal is the organization itself and what happens within, and external is how the organization is viewed by the public, such as on their website.

**Figure 1: Women in Leadership Pipeline Model**



This model was built in order to address several important recommendations that emerged from this research.

The first layer of the model is personal. The individual woman must want to pursue and build a personal path to leadership. Largely based on existing literature and through commentaries of the interviewees, the insights were consistent. It was important for women, regardless of their career level, to seek out, consider, and accept opportunities that are outside of one's job description. These opportunities could include networking events, conferences, seminars, or additional projects and tasks. Women should also take advantage of benefits programs, if an organization offers them, such as professional development opportunities like Business Resource Groups, learning programs, educational assistance, or others. Depending on the sector, it might be beneficial for the woman to pursue higher education or professional certification programs to increase credibility. In preparation for a higher role, women must be confident, feel encouraged and unafraid to ask questions, and be willing to speak up in difficult situations. There are many other women in similar situations whose need to internalize and understand the challenging path to professional growth. It is imperative for women to share their personal stories with others. This bond could develop into further mentorships.

The second layer of the model is internal. The organization itself must take responsibility for moving its own employees through the leadership pipeline and into success. Based

on existing literature, the content analysis, and four interviewees, findings were again consistent. The content analysis revealed the importance of establishing a definitive organizational Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) statement. The DEI statement must be embedded into the organizational culture and aligned with its mission, vision, and goals. From the DEI statement, an organization should create hiring policies and quotas specifically for women and minorities, as long as those women are qualified for the positions. Once they are hired the organization can provide mentorship programs, a variety of professional development opportunities, internal cohorts of people such as Business Resource Groups, set requirements of employees taking implicit bias training, and even take a stand on equal pay for men and women. In return, existing women employees are being retained because they are provided with adequate resources. Difficult barriers of upward mobility are being cracked, and they are given opportunities to move through the pipeline to a leadership role within their organization.

The third layer of the model is external. Once the organization has made a cultural shift to embrace and model diversity, equity, and inclusion internally, it is important for the public to recognize those efforts. Once the organization establishes a definitive DEI statement, it should be highlighted on the website through its own landing page and easily accessible by others. The statement allows prospective employees to understand the organizations commitments to and practices surrounding diversity, equity, and inclusion. This effort also serves as a constant reminder for internal employees to fully embody these practices, creating an inclusive environment and culture. If organizations have diversity policies and practices in place, they could provide data charts or graphics indicating this information, for example, the number of women versus men versus non-binary individuals in its workforce, or a breakdown of race/ethnicity and include all leadership positions in isolation. Such information would have an impact to outside observers or prospective employees, particularly women, and show the organization's commitment to this issue. As many interviewees discussed the importance of professional development opportunities, it is a best practice to highlight benefits unique to the organization and what they offer current employees to help them on their career path. These benefits could be mentorship, professional development such as courses, seminars, classes, educational assistance, Business Resource Groups, and others.

This pipeline model serves as a reminder to organizations that there is not only one solution to addressing the issues that currently exist. The solution is an interconnected approach that includes the individual, the organization, and the outside world. Prior to this research, many studies focused on general high-level themes such as leadership, diversity, professional development, and organizational culture as points of interest to be addressed. This research examines the interconnectedness of these general themes,

and recognizes and addresses their additional depth. The lack of women in leadership extends to also include minorities and those in the LGBTQ+ community experiencing this issue. Diversity must be understood alongside equity and inclusion, rather than its own separate entity, and all three are intertwined. The practices of professional development extend beyond providing women a mentor, but include the offering of outside opportunities, networking, and ways for women to build their confidence. Lastly, organizational culture must expand to include discussions centering on equitable human resources practices and policies, retaining and promoting employees within, and ensuring that the organization's stance on diversity, equity, and inclusion are in alignment with its mission and vision and embedded into the organization's culture and people.

## **Section 6: Conclusions**

As the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts continues to rise, it is critical that organizations see overcoming these barriers as a necessary and essential element of business.

There must be an increasing pressure applied to nonprofit organizations to change. Nonprofit organizations do important work in the world, and because many often work directly with marginalized individuals, groups, and communities, the organization must internally be aware of diversity, equity, and inclusion related issues with its own employees. Diversity is essential for nonprofits, but inclusion and equity are critical in order for an organization's mission and vision to succeed.

Inclusion puts the concept of diversity into action. Therefore, it is not adequate that organizations merely talk about making a change to be more equitable and inclusive. A new perspective, approach, thought, and ultimately action, will lead to a more effective paradigm shift surrounding the topic of diversity, equity, and inclusion for organizations.

Based on the findings of this research, embracing diversity, promoting equity, and codifying inclusion as part of an organization's values, practices, and policies must occur in order to build a sustainable future for the workplace. Women must first commit to wanting to grow professionally, organizations must take the first step in establishing internal commitments towards change, and finally the organization must feel confident in its efforts to share those commitments externally. Transparency of an organization's structure and culture are paramount in demonstrating credibility and progress for diversity and equity. The underlying importance is that these three strata, personal, internal, and external, are all interconnected. Without one segment of the circle, a true paradigm shift cannot occur. All three must be understood as connected and imperative to building a sustainable pipeline for women's leadership. This pipeline represents what

organizations can and should move forward with. This is a model for the greater society that addresses a major and ongoing issue in the workplace for women. A cultural shift must occur in order for equity and inclusion to be standardized for all women. Realizing this as the societal norm will force organizations to change and become catalysts for change, because it will ultimately reflect society in general.

Above all, there is still much to be explored within this topic. It would advantageous to focus on avenues for future research to continue adding to what is already known. It would be important to explore organizations that have established and successfully practices in place to understand their perspectives. From there, an analysis could be conducted to compare organizations that may not be as committed to changes in this space. Interviewees in this research reflected on personal factors contributing to leadership success as well as impediments. This is why an interconnected model including personal factors was developed. Therefore, using longitudinal designs to track leadership development throughout women's professional career paths and experiences, will offer additional insights and means of improvement into the sustainability of the developed pipeline model from this research.

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**Appendix A: Content Analysis 2018 Book of Lists Selected Lists**

## Nonprofit organizations in the Bay Area (ranked by most recent fiscal year revenue)

1. SRI International
2. Pac-12 Conference
3. Electrical Power Research Institute Inc.
4. Regional Center of the East Bay Inc.
5. Golden Gate Regional Center
6. Aspire Public Schools
7. Trust for Public Land
8. On Lok
9. Episcopal Senior Communities
10. North East Medical Services

## Most Generous Foundations in the Bay Area (ranked by total giving in the most recent fiscal year)

1. Silicon Valley Community Foundation
2. William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
3. Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation
4. The Wells Fargo Foundation
5. The California Endowment
6. The San Francisco Foundation
7. S.D. Bechtel Jr. Foundation
8. The Carl Victor Page Memorial Foundation
9. Marin Community Foundation
10. The James Irvine Foundation

## Museums in the Bay Area (ranked by 2016 fiscal year revenue)

1. San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
2. California Academy of Sciences
3. Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco
4. The Exploratorium
5. Asian Art Museum
6. The Lawrence Hall of Sciences
7. San Francisco Zoo & Gardens
8. Oakland Museum of California
9. Oakland Zoo
10. Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

## Performing Arts Organizations in the Bay Area (ranked by fiscal year 2016 revenue)

1. San Francisco Opera

2. San Francisco Symphony
3. San Francisco Ballet
4. Berkeley Repertory Theatre
5. American Conservatory Theater (ACT)
6. Cal Performances
7. SFJAZZ
8. TheatreWorks Silicon Valley
9. Stanford Live
10. East Bay Center for the Performing Arts

### **Appendix B: Interview Protocol**

1. Describe your path to leadership.
  - a. What barriers did you come across while moving into a leadership role?
  - b. How does your path to leadership compare to your male colleagues?  
What similarities or differences exist?
2. What professional and/or personal strategies have you followed to prepare for where you are at today?
3. How are women currently set-up for success in organizations?
  - a. What successes did you come across while moving into a leadership role?
  - b. What are the barriers women face to moving up within an organization?
4. Describe how you feel valued with your role.
5. What advice would you give to young women to aspire to lead some day?
  - a. How can organizations close the gender gap?

## Appendix C: Content Analysis

Name	Local staff	Directory	Women in leadership	% women	Women name or photo	Minority women	% minority	Minority names/photos	Reflect benef. race/ethnicity
SRI International	2534	Y	Y	15	P	N	0	N/A	N
Pac-12 Conference	254	Y	Y	25	N	N	0	N/A	N
Electric Power Research Institute, Inc.	969	Y	Y	27	P	N	0	N/A	N
Regional Center of East Bay Inc.	393	Y	Y	83	N	Y	42	N	N
Golden Gate Regional Center	262	Y	Y	57	N	Y	25	N	N
Aspire Public Schools	2155	Y	Y	59	P	Y	53	P	Y
Trust for Public Land	434	Y	Y	63	P	Y	40	P	N
On Lok	893	Y	Y	56	P	Y	40	P	N
Episcopal Senior Communities	1515	N	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
North East Medical Services	643	N	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Silicon Valley Comm. Found.	321	Y	Y	89	P	Y	29	P	N
William and Flora Hewlett Found.	N/A	Y	Y	50	P	N	0	N/A	N
Gordon and Betty Moore Found.	N/A	Y	Y	43	P	Y	33	P	N
Wells Fargo Found.	N/A	Y	Y	20	P	Y	50	P	Y
California Endowment	N/A	Y	Y	50	P	Y	50	P	Y
San Francisco Found.	80	Y	Y	66	P	Y	100	P	N
S.D. Bechtel Jr. Found.	N/A	Y	Y	100	P	Y	14	P	N/A
Carl Victor Page Memorial Found.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N
Marin Community Found.	66	Y	Y	25	P	N	0	N/A	Y
James Irvine Found.	N/A	Y	Y	29	P	Y	50	P	N/A
San Francisco Museum Modern Art	385	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N
California Academy of Sciences	610	Y	Y	57	P	N	0	N/A	N/A
Fine Arts Museum SF	519	N	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N
Exploratorium	466	Y	Y	55	P	N	0	N/A	N/A
Asian Art Museum	227	N	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N
Lawrence Hall of Sciences	278	Y	Y	88	P	Y	12	P	N/A
SF Zoo & Gardens	250	N	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N
Oakland Museum CA	135	Y	Y	55	P	N	0	N/A	N
Oakland Zoo	240	Y	Y	56	P	Y	20	P	N
Yerba Buena Center Arts	690	Y	Y	40	N	N	0	N/A	N
SF Opera	1058	Y	Y	86	N	N	0	N/A	N
SF Symphony	122	Y	N	0	N/A	N	0	N/A	N
SF Ballet	120	Y	Y	67	N	N	0	N/A	N
Berkeley Repertory Theatre	84	Y	Y	67	P	N	0	N/A	N
ACT	270	Y	Y	100	P	N	0	N/A	N
Cal Performances	270	Y	Y	44	N	N	0	N/A	N
SFJAZZ	145	Y	Y	46	N	Y	20	N	N
TheatreWorks Silicon Valley	34	Y	Y	18	N	Y	0	N/A	N
Stanford Live	21	Y	Y	50	N	Y	25	N	N
East Bay Center Reform. Arts	12	Y	Y	83	P	Y	40	P	N

Name	% men	Diversity photos beneficiaries	Div. staff photo	Inclusive hiring	DEI statement	Text of DEI statement	DEI mention	Pro. Dev
SRI International	85	Y	N	Y	Y	<a href="#">Diversity at SRI</a>	Landing page	N
Pac-12 Conference	75	Y	N	Y	N	N	Careers Page	N
Electric Power Research Institute, Inc.	73	N	N	Y	N	N	Careers page	N
Regional Center of East Bay Inc.	17	N	N	Y	N	N	Careers page	N
Golden Gate Regional Center	43	Y	N	Y	N	N	Landing page	N
Aspire Public Schools	41	Y	N	Y	N	N	Job posting	N
Trust for Public Land	37	Y	N	Y	N	N	Careers page	N
On Lok	44	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Careers page	N
Episcopal Senior Communities	N/A	Y	N/A	N	N	N/A	N/A	N
North East Medical Services	N/A	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Careers page	N
Silicon Valley Comm. Found.	11	Y	N	Y	Y	<a href="#">Diversity and Inclusion</a>	Landing page	N
William and Flora Hewlett Found.	50	Y	Y	Y	Y	<a href="#">Diversity and Inclusion</a>	Landing page	N
Gordon and Betty Moore Found.	57	Y	N	Y	N	N	Careers page	N
Wells Fargo Found.	80	Y	N	Y	Y	<a href="#">Diversity and Inclusion</a>	Landing page	N
California Endowment	50	N	N	Y	Y	<a href="#">Commitment to Diversity</a>	Landing page	N
San Francisco Found.	34	Y	N	Y	N	N	Careers page	N
S.D. Bechtel Jr. Found.	0	Y	N/A	N	N	N	Landing page	N
Carl Victor Page Memorial Found.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Marin Community Found.	75	Y	N	N	N	N/A	N/A	N
James Irvine Found.	71	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
San Francisco Museum Modern Art	100	Y	N	Y	N	N	Careers page	N
California Academy of Sciences	43	Y	N/A	Y	N	N	Careers page	Y
Fine Arts Museum SF	N/A	Y	N	Y	N	N	Careers page	N
Exploratorium	45	Y	N	Y	N	N	Careers page	N
Asian Art Museum	100	Y	N	Y	N	N	Careers page	Y
Lawrence Hall of Sciences	12	Y	N	Y	N	N	Job posting	N
SF Zoo & Gardens	N/A	Y	Y	N	N	N/A	Job posting	N
Oakland Museum CA	45	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	Y
Oakland Zoo	44	Y	N	N	N	N/A	Job posting	N
Yerba Buena Center Arts	60	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
SF Opera	14	Y	N	Y	N	N	Job posting	N
SF Symphony	100	Y	N	Y	N	N	Careers page	N
SF Ballet	33	Y	N	Y	N	N	Job posting	N
Berkeley Repertory Theatre	33	Y	N	Y	Y	<a href="#">Mission &amp; Profile</a>	Job posting	N
ACT	0	Y	N	Y	N	N	Landing page	N
Cal Performances	56	Y	N	Y	N	N	Job posting	N
SFJAZZ	54	Y	N	Y	N	N	Careers page	N
TheatreWorks Silicon Valley	82	Y	N	Y	N	N	Landing page	N
Stanford Live	50	Y	N	Y	Y	<a href="#">Commitment to Diversity</a>	Landing page	N
East Bay Center Perform. Arts	17	Y	N	N	N	N/A	N	N

### **Author's Bio**

Kathryn Luna is a dynamic, high achieving, leader in the nonprofit sector with two years of experience. In 2017, she joined the ALSAC/St. Jude Children's Research Hospital Field Development in Northern California, leading a \$1 million St. Jude Dream Home Giveaway fundraising campaign and a \$400,000+ program budget. Her responsibilities include donor development and relations, volunteer coordination, fiscal management, internship supervision, and event planning and execution.

Prior to ALSAC, her professional accomplishments have included sales and client services for the San Francisco Giants, events and marketing for the Golden State Warriors, and marketing and public relations for Comcast SportsNet Bay Area. Additionally, she served as Account Representative for a software company, ZOZI, building and stewarding relationships with clients using the platform.

Luna is a skilled fundraising and development professional, fostering strong positive relationships with donors, volunteers, and key event stakeholders. As someone with a diverse professional portfolio, she is experienced with working with people from various backgrounds and abilities. Throughout her time at ALSAC so far, she has led the first formalized youth development program for the region, established and managed the internship program for college students, generated over \$75,000 of sponsorship in 3 months for a program, and oversaw budgeting as a lead staff for 5 core fundraising programs. As a high-achieving and strategic leader, she ensures the mission and vision of ALSAC is at the forefront of setting goals and executing daily tasks.

Luna received her Bachelor of Science in Sociology with a Minor in Communication from Santa Clara University, and will earn her Master of Nonprofit Administration in May 2019 from the University of San Francisco.