

THE IDEALIST

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LABOR & EQUITY

XUSANA DAVIS

Last month, we heard from the VT Department of Labor about the changes and challenges facing Vermont's workforce, and why this matters to municipal governments around the state as their residents confront housing, childcare, and wage inequity. For more, see this Cornell Worker Institute webinar, which defines equity in job creation with a focus on job growth through the current expansion of infrastructure investment.

[WATCH HERE](#)

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The IDEAL cohort's group profile

JANUARY CONVENING: IDI ASSESSMENT

In January, we had a group debrief of our results from the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). In the subsequent weeks, participants had one-on-one debriefs of their individual results and talked about creating a Development Plan.

In the aggregate, IDEAL participants were in the Minimization orientation, meaning that on average, the group tends to navigate cultural differences by de-emphasizing differences and highlighting common characteristics or shared values. Of course, individual participants had varying results that may have landed in one of the other orientations: Denial, Polarization, Acceptance, or Adaptation. Over the next year, we will work on a group plan together. More details are coming soon.

FEBRUARY WORKSHOP: EQUITY 102

In February, the VT Department of Labor gave us a peek at the workforce demographic data of the IDEAL municipalities. We also talked about the Ladder of Inference and the Dunning-Kruger effect as a way to help us understand how our assumptions and our view of our own capabilities can fuel our biases. We'll return to these concepts regularly as a reminder to keep questioning what we know and what we *think* we know.

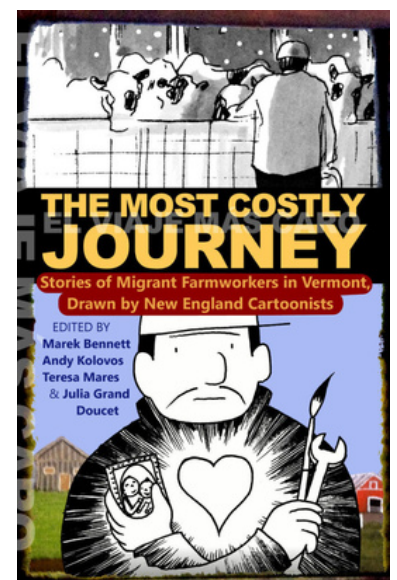
UP NEXT: APRIL CONVENING

In April, we'll gather in-person to discuss the graphic novel that we assigned last year, *The Most Costly Journey*. At this convening, we'll have a facilitator from VT Humanities who will guide us through a discussion around labor, immigration, family connectedness, and more.

If you haven't finished the novel yet, be sure to complete it by the April session. It's a quick read, but still deeply moving and visually stimulating because it's presented as a series of comics.

In the meantime, check out this 5-minute video about the making of the pamphlets that became *The Most Costly Journey*.

WATCH HERE



Cover of "The Most Costly Journey"

PARKING MY PRIVILEGE

JAY GREENE

It was February 2020. I was working as front desk staff at a hotel in the Upper Valley of Vermont/New Hampshire. One of my job duties was to valet park guests' cars and keep track of their car keys. Technically, you were supposed to verify the person's identity by checking their driver's license before giving them their car keys. I had been handing guests their keys as they rushed out the door to their vacation activities all day, smiling and putting on my best customer service performance. I did not bother to verify their identities beyond asking for their room number and last name. I noticed when I arrived that there was a beautiful cherry red convertible parked in the hotel's driveway under the awning to keep the snow off of the seats.

That weekend, the hotel was hosting some visiting musicians. The Black musicians stood out from the rest of the hotel guests, who were mostly White. A Black person approached me at the front desk and ask for their car keys, as they had just seen a White guest do. They told me that they were driving the cherry red convertible in the driveway. I paused and asked them for their driver's license before getting their car keys. Immediately, I saw their face shift to a slight frown. I realized I was imposing an additional step in the process that I had not imposed on the White guest who I had assisted before them. I awkwardly stumbled over my words, explaining that I hadn't seen their driver's license previously, so I would need to check their license to verify their last name. I had been giving away car keys to the White guests without checking their licenses all day, despite not having seen the White guests' driver's licenses either. The Black guest clearly noticed and felt hurt by the hypocrisy of my actions, which were a textbook case of a racial microaggression.

Let's examine the Ladder of Inference steps that led me to ask for a Black person's driver's license at the valet station, but not a White person's driver's license.

- **Observable data:** A Black person has approached me to ask for the car keys to the red convertible parked in our hotel's driveway.
- **Selected data:** The person approaching me is Black, while the guests at the hotel are mostly White. Notice how my brain automatically ignored the fact that a group of Black musicians was staying at the hotel for the weekend, instead choosing data that confirmed my assumptions.
- **Assumptions:** I hold implicit biases as a White person. Due in part to the history of systemic racism that informs property ownership and housing segregation, and therefore school attendance, I mostly socialized with other White kids growing up. Studies from the time period when I was developing my outlook on the world show that Black people were disproportionately portrayed as the perpetrators of crimes in television shows and on the news. Media portrayals of Black people as disproportionately poor also heightened my suspicions that a Black person wouldn't own a nice car. *(continued on Page 4)*

(continued from Page 3)

- **Conclusions:** as a result of my assumptions and the selected data, I felt heightened suspicion that the Black person asking me for their keys might not actually be a hotel guest or own the convertible.
- **Beliefs:** I suspected they might be attempting to steal the convertible by lying about their identity. Note that this was not a belief I had consciously arrived at through reasoning, but a snap judgement based on a momentary interaction.
- **Actions:** I therefore asked them for their driver's license to verify their identity, even though I had been freely giving away car keys to White guests all day without doing so.

I caught myself jumping to conclusions based on implicit bias. Because of White fragility, I didn't want to admit to my racial micro-aggression. Instead, I justified my response by referring to the hotel's valet parking policy that I had been inconsistently enforcing.

Systemic racism produces an environment that creates and reinforces implicit racial biases. Implicit bias and more overt prejudice affect the decisions people make when interacting with Black people and other people of color, reinforcing systemic racism. The complex interplay of systemic factors and interpersonal factors create racial disparities in Vermont. We need to be actively anti-racist to dismantle both our implicit racial biases *and* the systemic racism that they uphold.

I am now more deliberate in examining my underlying assumptions before making decisions that may affect how people can move through the world with or without scrutiny. My experiences of gender-based microaggressions as a visibly gender non-conforming, White transgender/non-binary person have also been informative. I have been very thankful for the learning opportunities, including Shalini's lecture on the Ladder of Inference, that give me the tools to unpack my White privilege. The Intercultural Development Plan that I created after taking the Intercultural Development Inventory involves learning more about the history of systemic racism to better understand the historical context for my implicit biases, among other goals.

Explore the Concept:

"HOW TO GET OFF THE LADDER OF INFERENCE"

A 3-minute video to help us check our assumptions and biases.

WATCH HERE

Build new, good habits

To challenge our assumptions with new data, we must learn new information and ideas. Sign up for this 21-day challenge to deepen your understanding of, and willingness to confront, racism for twenty-one consecutive days in April. *Also a great way to advance your IDP!*

SIGN UP

STATEWIDE

Guides for equity in school athletics

[LEARN MORE](#)

STATEWIDE

100 towns adopt the DoI

[READ HERE](#)

MIDDLEBURY

Representation among the college's faculty & students

[LISTEN HERE](#)

NATIONWIDE

Potential new Census categories

[LEARN MORE](#)

STATEWIDE

VT's growing Filipino community

[READ HERE](#)

BIG NEWS!



"SAN FRANCISCO LEADERS EXPRESS SUPPORT FOR \$5 MILLION IN REPARATION PAYMENTS"

[READ HERE](#)

ALL THERE, ALL IN

XUSANA DAVIS

We're grateful for the participants who make up the IDEAL cohort. Over these first few months of the initiative, we've learned a lot and can sense a genuine enthusiasm to do the difficult work. Part of that work is gathering in ways that are impactful and that create opportunities for real coalition building between our municipalities.

IDEAL Vermont was rolled out in 2022, but the idea was born in 2020, when many of us were inundated with video calls and other new ways of staying connected from the isolation of our homes. Many of us got really good at multi-tasking, which allowed us to over-commit ourselves by juggling three tasks at once. Whether we did any of those tasks particularly well... that's another story. With this backdrop in mind, we aimed to create an initiative that would be more than just another uninspiring, uninformative standing meeting—we wanted municipalities to be able to point to specific projects or outcomes that resulted from what they learned or gained in IDEAL Vermont, because local-level equity work is a necessary component of any statewide vision or planning.

In your interviews and informational materials, we stated the meetings would be monthly and in-person, except for the four months a year where we deliver quarterly newsletters. Member municipalities are responsible for making sure they send representatives who can meet the program requirements, because the members of IDEAL are the *municipalities*, not the individual participants. For this reason, we want to balance the convenience of remote/hybrid work while also maintaining rigorous expectations. A quote comes to mind that sometimes makes the rounds on the internet. It reads "wherever you are, be all there." Having frequently overextended ourselves through that same multi-tasking described above, our team is acutely aware of how easy it is to be *technically* there, but not really *all there* when given the option. That's why IDEAL aims to be different from other learning communities; we don't measure success by the size of the cohort or the daily attendance sheet. We measure it by the resulting work that gets accomplished locally.

Based on your feedback, we understand you seek greater flexibility in the logistics of our gatherings. With trepidation and a lot of faith in you, we have made the following adjustment, to be implemented on a trial basis beginning with the April convening in Glover:

Instead of the current cadence of **in-person convening** - **in-person workshop** - **newsletter** we will be testing out the following model: **in-person convening** - **hybrid workshop** - **newsletter**

As always, these are all mandatory activities, and even though the workshops are hybrid, we expect participants to make every effort to be there in person when they can. The hybrid option is there for those occasional extenuating circumstances, but it is still regarded as a fallback plan, not the default. Member municipalities are asked to re-assess their lineup of representatives to ensure the team they select can meet these adjusted expectations. We are hopeful the group can maintain engagement and participation. We love that, as a statewide initiative, IDEAL Vermont brings us all over the state to visit your local businesses and support you with our presence. One of the best ways to minimize your commute is to volunteer to host an upcoming session, so let us know if you're interested and if you're aware of a space we could use. This way, we can ensure that wherever we are, we're all there.

CALENDAR & CULTURAL OBSERVANCES

THIS QUARTER IN HISTORY

JANUARY

- 04, 1962: City of Montgomery Locks Bathrooms & Plugs Water Fountains at Airport to Avoid Integration Orders.
- 06, 1959: Richard and Mildred Loving Convicted of Interracial Marriage and Banished from Virginia
- 20, 1870: White Officials Attempt to Nullify Election of First Black Senator

FEBRUARY

- 15, 1804: New Jersey Passes Law Delaying End of Slavery for Decades
- 19, 1923: U.S. Supreme Court Rules Indian Immigrants Ineligible for Citizenship
- 21, 1965: Malcolm X Assassinated During Speech in Manhattan

MARCH

- 14, 1835: Free Black People Must Apply for License to Remain in Missouri
- 18, 1831: Supreme Court Rules Cherokee Nation Is Barred from Suing to Enforce Treaties
- 24, 1942: United States Government Begins Army-Directed Evictions of Japanese Americans from Their Houses

OBSERVANCES COMING UP

APRIL

- Monthlong: Arab-American Heritage Month (USA)
- Monthlong: Celebrate Diversity Month (International)

MAY

- Monthlong: Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month (USA)
- Monthlong: Haitian Heritage Month (USA)
- Monthlong: Jewish-American Heritage Month (USA)
- Monthlong: International Civility Awareness Month (International)
- 14-20: VT Inclusion Week (VT)
- 1-7: Abenaki Recognition & Culture Week (VT)
- 3: Eit al-Fitr (International)
- 5: Cinco De Mayo (USA, Mexico)

JUNE

- Monthlong: Black Music Month (USA)
- Monthlong: Caribbean American Heritage Month (USA)
- Monthlong: Pride Month (USA)
- 11: Race Unity Day (International)
- 12: Loving Day (USA)
- 19: Juneteenth (USA)
- 20: World Refugee Day (International)

See more entries in the timeline of racial injustice here:

LEARN MORE



JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Data Manager

VT Office of Racial Equity [[see here](#)]

Executive Director

VT Legal Aid [[see here](#)]

Deputy Advocate

VT Office of Child, Youth, Family Advocate [[see here](#)]

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Equitable & Inclusive Communities

This grant is provided by the VT Community Foundation with specific consideration for IDEAL municipalities. VCF will accept and review applications on a quarterly basis. Deadlines for 2023 are April 6, June 1, July 13, and October 5. **VCF will also provide a webinar just for IDEAL municipalities on April 18th at 1:00-2:00. Look out for the calendar invitation.**

APPLY HERE

MODEL POLICY

An Equitable Approach to Trail Development

As the weather warms up, how is your municipality preparing for outdoor recreation? In this 1-hour webinar, the creators of the Circuit Trails Gap Analysis discuss the development and implementation of the Gap Analysis, including a look at their online mapping portal and recent real-world case studies.

WATCH HERE

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Why Do People Leave Vermont?

Check out this 35-min podcase episode from Vermont Public where they "hear from former Vermonters about their relationship with our state, from the love that brought them here to the disappointments that prompted them to leave."

LISTEN HERE

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"People are like stained-glass windows. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out, but when the darkness sets in, their true beauty is revealed only if there is a light from within."

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross

ENCOURAGEMENT

**A Pep Talk From Kid President To You**

On the last day of Black History Month, we shared this video in our final installation of the e-mail series. In it, everyone's favorite leader, Kid President, inspires us with a pep talk. We're sharing it here in case you didn't see it last month. If you missed any of our Black History Month e-mails, you can view the archive [here](#).

WATCH VIDEO



FULL TEXT OF WEBSITE LINKS IN THIS NEWSLETTER

Page 1:

Cornell Worker Institute Webinar

<https://www.ilr.cornell.edu/worker-institute/blog/events/watch-recording-equity-focus-webinar-series/>

Page 2:

Vermont Humanities Video on the Creation of "The Most Costly Journey" <https://www.vermonthumanities.org/programs/book-a-program/vermont-reads/vermont-reads-2022/videos/intro-vermont-reads-2022/>

Page 4:

Ladder of Inference video

https://www.google.com/search?q=ladder+of+inference&rlz=1C1CHBF_enUS992US992&sxsrf=AJOqlzUOF2c6X9DWWvpVh9_fkdz_AINe3A%3A1679165145998&source=lnms&tbm=vid&sa=X&sqi=2&ved=2ahUKewj2j6_Qkeb9AhUJFVkfFHbsRBwAQ_AUoAnoECAIQBA&biw=1280&bih=625&dpr=1.5#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:d5b15e94,vid:CsdODSBEEJAch

Build new good habits as part of your IDP

<https://foodsolutionsne.org/21-day-racial-equity-habit-building-challenge/>

Page 5:

Vermont Principles Association guidelines for equity in school athletics

<https://vpaonline.org/vpa-equity-initiative/>

100 towns adopt Declaration of Inclusion

<https://vtdeclarationofinclusion.org/wp-content/uploads/3.7.23-DOI-100.pdf/>

Middlebury College article on representation among faculty and students

<https://vtdigger.org/2023/02/15/vermont-conversation-middlebury-president-laurie-patton-on-divestment-diversity-and-resisting-censorship/>

National news: potential new US Census Categories

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/01/27/2023-01635/initial-proposals-for-updating-ombs-race-and-ethnicity-statistical-standards/>

Vermont's growing Filipino community

<https://www.waterburyroundabout.org/business-archive/as-filipino-cuisine-catches-on-vermonts-filipino-american-community-connects/>

San Francisco talks about reparations

<https://www.theroot.com/black-americans-in-san-francisco-could-collect-as-much-1850224949/>

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Racial injustice calendar

<https://calendar.eji.org/racial-injustice/dec/>

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VT Office of Racial Equity Racial Justice Data Manager

<https://careers.vermont.gov/job/Montpelier-Racial-Justice-Data-Manager-VT-05601/970454000/>

Vermont Legal Aid Executive Director

<https://www.vtlegalaid.org/executive-director-2023/>

Deputy Child, Youth, and Family Advocate

<https://careers.vermont.gov/job/Montpelier-Deputy-Child%2C-Youth-and-Family-Advocate-VT-05601/1005188900/>

Funding opportunity from Vermont Community Foundation

<https://vermontcf.org/our-impact/programs-and-funds/equitable-and-inclusive-communities/>

Model policy webinar on trail development

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ePvOkWMQr_k/

Vermont Public podcast-why do people leave Vermont?

<https://www.vermontpublic.org/podcast/brave-little-state/2022-08-04/why-do-people-leave-vermont/>

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Office of Racial Equity Black History Month archive

<https://racialequity.vermont.gov/2023-black-history-month-series-0/>

Pep talk from Kid President

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-gQLqv9f4o/>

Website: IDEAL Vermont

<https://racialequity.vermont.gov/ideal-vermont>

Contact email for IDEAL Vermont

AOA.OREidealVT@vermont.gov

IDEAL Vermont Teams channel link (will only work for IDEAL Vermont representatives who have been invited; please contact us at AOA.OREidealVT@vermont.gov if you are having trouble accessing Teams)

<https://teams.microsoft.com/l/channel/19%3aV7Bek6icd93CO1iubJjLLBtT7xBxgutsEz1ChEoPTt41%40thread.tacv2/General?groupId=c7485863-b7f4-4853-82b4-7d16d2d91bc3&tenantId=20b4933b-baad-433c-9c02-70edcc7559c6>