Benchmarking Race, Inclusion, and Diversity in Global Engagement

2021 Survey Results

June 1, 2021

CORE PARTNERS

SOCIAL IMPACT | 25 YEARS ADVANCING DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS

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NED National Endowment for Democracy | Supporting freedom around the world

SOLIDARITY CENTER

dexis consulting group

Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation | Fighting for an AIDS-free generation

BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 2020, in the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd and the unprecedented mobilization for racial justice that followed, many organizations in the international development and humanitarian assistance sector were motivated to look more closely at the state of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within their own organizations. One thing that became apparent to many in that process was that there was a startling lack of diversity data at the sectoral level. As a result, simple yet critical questions like "to what extent is the workforce of my organization similar to the rest of the sector" could not be answered. Furthermore, because the state of DEI was not empirically documented, any systemic problems were unaddressed. This realization motivated a handful of organizations (Social Impact, IREX, Humentum, and the WILD Network) to come together, leverage their respective strengths, create a working group of partners (Dexis Consulting Group, EGPAF, InterAction, National Endowment for Democracy, Orbis International, Solidarity Center), and take a step towards filling this data gap. The outcome of their effort was Benchmarking Race, Inclusion, and Diversity in Global Engagement (BRIDGE), an institutional survey, with a primary focus on developing a snapshot of diversity at the staff, senior management, head of organization, and board levels, in United States (US)-based headquarters of international development and humanitarian assistance organizations.

The survey had three purposes:

Provide an **industry-wide DEI benchmark[1]** of the development and humanitarian assistance industry in the US. This allows the sector to take stock of where it stands and to set a baseline against which to measure future progress.

Illustrate a **comparative lens for organizations** seeking to assess their own performance against peers.

Produce **hard data with which organizations and individuals can advocate for positive change**.

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[1] We identified several initiatives that were similar and/or complementary in nature. These include the Quantum Impact Study done by FNM Advising in 2017, the Global Mapping Survey of the team developing the Racial Equity Index, and the reports of the Global Health 50-50 initiative.

METHODOLOGY

What data did the survey capture? The BRIDGE survey was designed to capture data on four key DEI outcomes: (i) workforce diversity at the staff, leadership team, head of organization, and board levels, (ii) transparency of DEI outcomes, (iii) the existence and nature of DEI policies and practices, and (iv) the nature and extent of DEI investments. An organizational profile module captured institutional information for purposes of disaggregating findings.

Where was the survey disseminated? The survey was disseminated to US-based organizations in the international development and humanitarian assistance sector. It focused only on the headquarters operations of these organizations. The aim of the consortium was to start small with big aims. The idea was that future iterations of the survey would build on the initial round and expand in a variety of ways, such as including country offices.

Who received the survey? Having determined the target organizations, the consortium pursued two strategies to develop a robust sampling frame. First, membership lists from associations representing the US international development and humanitarian assistance sector (Humentum, InterAction, CIDC) were aggregated and the survey was disseminated via email to each organizations' chief executive and head of human resources (HR). Second, to capture organizations unaffiliated with professional associations, the consortium marketed the survey through social media and personal networks. Surveys were administered in an anonymous manner over a four-week period, during which senior members of HR completed the forms on behalf of their organization. Each organization submitted one response.
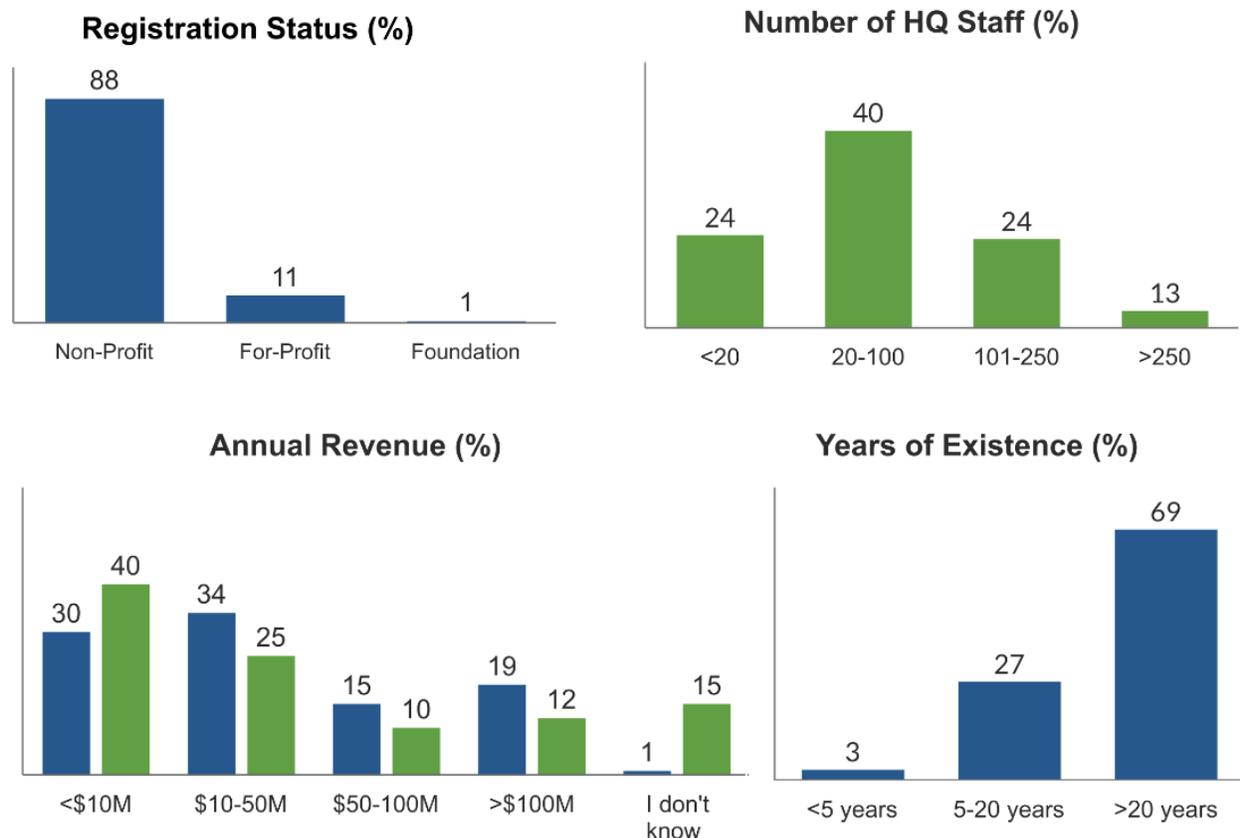
RESPONDENT PROFILE

The survey was disseminated to 381 organizations and a total of 166 organizations completed the survey. This represents a 44 percent response rate, which is considered above average for a survey of this type. Three-fourths of institutional respondents reported having a focus on international development, while one-third reported working in humanitarian assistance (Figure 1 illustrates the organizational profiles). The sample was predominantly comprised of non-profit organizations, with for-profits and foundations making up the balance. Most organizations reported having been in existence for 20 years or more. The sample was well-balanced on organizational size, with a diversity of headcounts and self-reported annual revenue among participating organizations closely tracking that of the sample frame constructed from membership lists.

Figure 1: Mission/Purpose of Participating Organizations

Mission/Purpose	
Development	76%
Humanitarian	33%
Advocacy	31%
Research	23%

Note that organizations could choose more than one Mission/Purpose category.

Figure 2: Organizational Profile of BRIDGE Survey Respondents

Registration Status (%)
- Non-Profit: 88
- For-Profit: 11
- Foundation: 1

Number of HQ Staff (%)
- <20: 24
- 20-100: 40
- 101-250: 24
- >250: 13

Annual Revenue (%)
- <$10M: 30 / 40
- $10-50M: 34 / 25
- $50-100M: 15 / 10
- >$100M: 19 / 12
- I don't know: 1 / 15

Years of Existence (%)
- <5 years: 3
- 5-20 years: 27
- >20 years: 69

FINDINGS

WORKFORCE DIVERSITY

The survey examined four facets of workforce diversity: race, gender, disability, and religion. Organizations were asked to report whether they capture any data on these four employee characteristics, and if so, what categories they track.

Survey responses show significant variation, with one in four organizations not capturing any race data, one in six not capturing any sex data, and one in two not capturing any disability data. Only eight percent of organizations capture data on faith or religious affiliation. Among organizations that track these metrics, the level of detail varied greatly. For example, the number of racial categories utilized by organizations ranged from one to 11 (average of 6.7), while sex categories ranged from one to six (average of 2.6). Almost all organizations that tracked disability did so in a binary (with/without disabilities) manner.

RACIAL COMPOSITION

STAFF

The distribution of headquarters staff across racial categories closely reflected the US population, with two important exceptions.[2] Latinx/Hispanic employees are underrepresented in the industry as compared to the population, by a factor of two to one (19 percent of the US population as compared to nine percent of staff). Conversely, Asian employees were overrepresented, making up ten percent of surveyed organization's staff compared to six percent of the US population.

LEADERSHIP

The representativeness of the workforce does not hold as we look at higher levels in the organizational hierarchy. The proportion of White individuals represented at these levels increased from 63 percent of staff to 67 percent of boards, 73 percent of leadership teams, and 84 percent of organization heads. Non-profit organizations had higher proportions of White employees at all four levels, as compared to for-profit organizations. The discrepancy was most acute at the chief executive

Figure 3: Percentage of White Individuals as Organization Heads, Leadership, & Boards

84% Organization Heads are White

73% of leadership teams are White

67% of Board members are White

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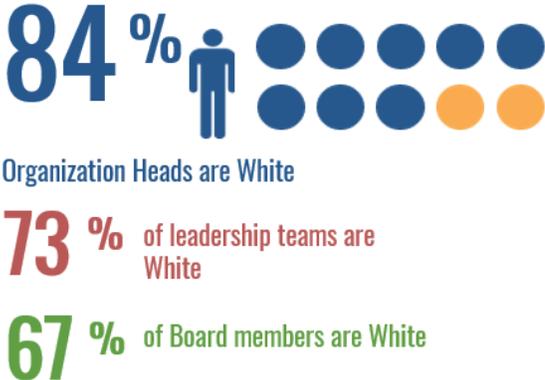
[2] U.S. Census Bureau; Population Estimates Program and American Community Survey, Table: Population estimates, July 1, 2019, (V2019), https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045219.

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level, where White individuals accounted for 86 percent of leaders at non-profits and 67 percent of leaders at for-profits.

Figure 4: Racial Composition by Organizational Hierarchy
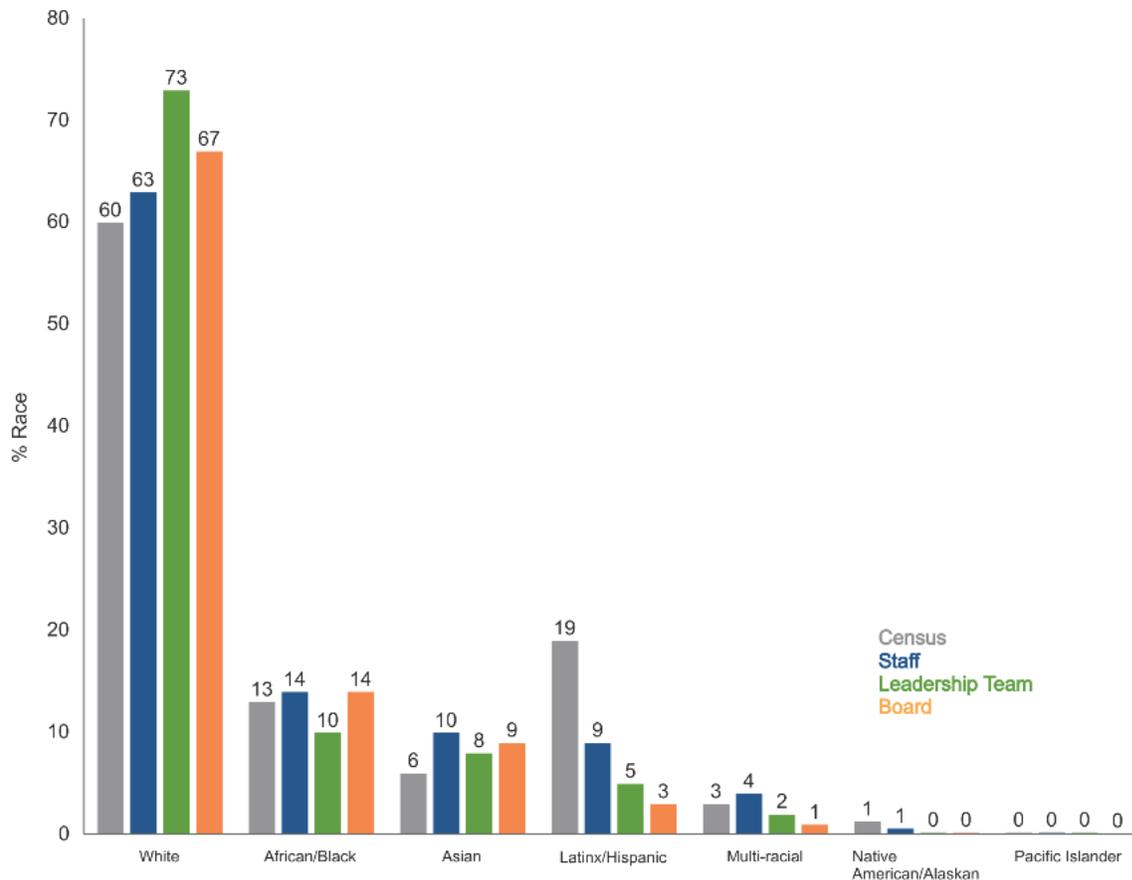
GENDER COMPOSITION

With the average organization reporting that only one-third of its headquarters workforce is male, the development and humanitarian assistance sector is disproportionately comprised of women. However, while females are overrepresented relative to the population at the staff level,

Figure 5: Female Representation at Organizational Levels

Female Representation at Organizational Level:
50% of Chief Executives
49% of Boards
58% of Leadership
68% of HQ Staff

their participation rates decrease substantially at higher organizational levels (Figure 5).

Larger organizations reported lower female representation rates across all four organizational levels (Figure 6). These findings were consistent for both annual revenue and total number of staff.

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Figure 6: Proportion of Female Employees by Organizational Level and Annual Revenue
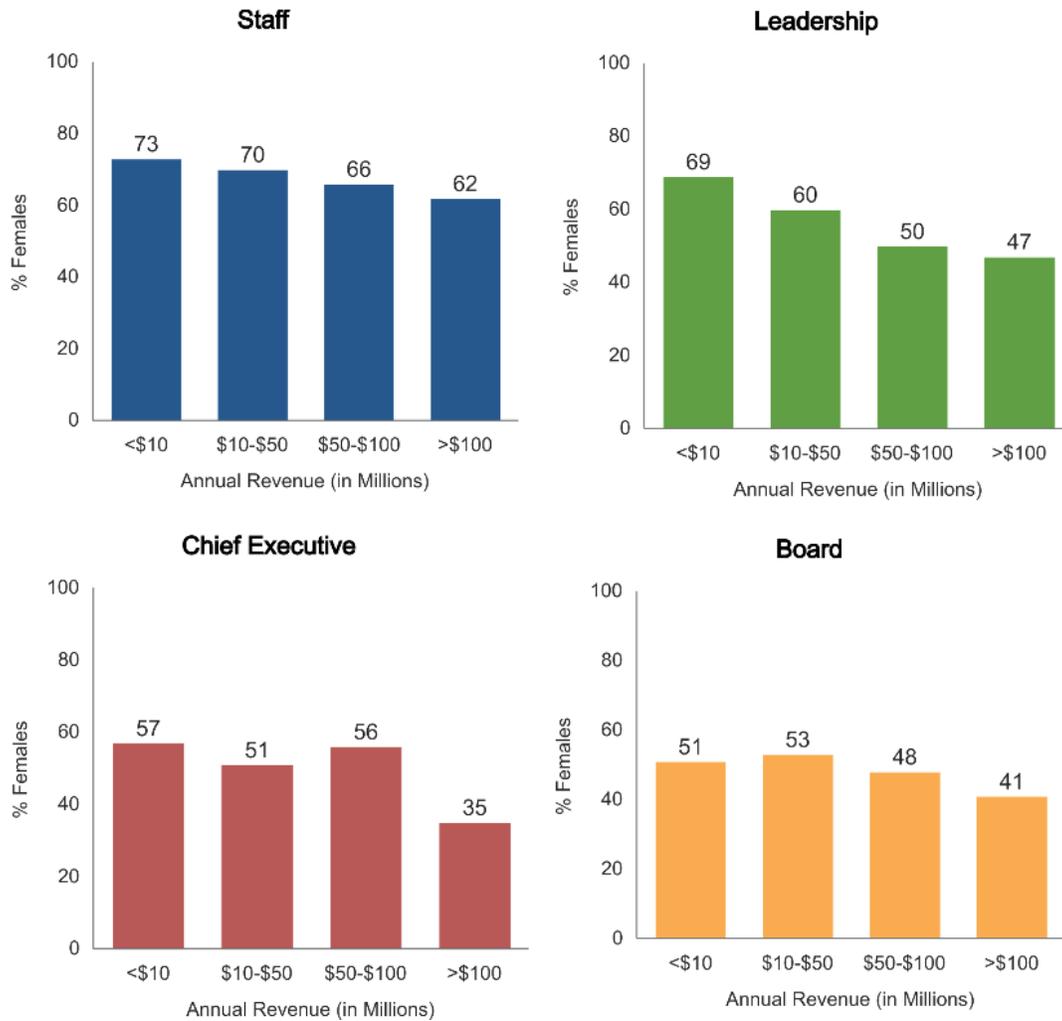
THE INTERSECTION OF GENDER & RACE

As noted above, organizational leaders are strongly overrepresented by White individuals but balanced between males and females. However, the intersection of these identities evidenced an extremely large representation gap. Whereas female Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) make up 20 percent of the US population,[3] only four percent of organizational leaders in the sector represented this background.[4]

Figure 7: Percentage of Chief Executives who are BIPOC Women

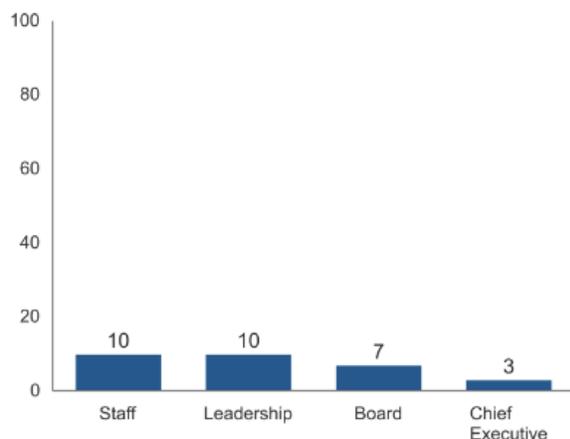4% of Chief Executives are BIPOC Women

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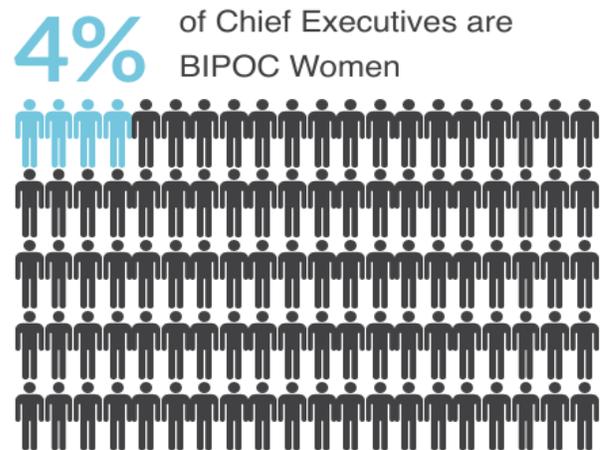
[3] Ibid.

[5] Sample size varies for each organizational level: staff n=43, leadership n=37, board n=19, chief executive n=166

DISABILITY COMPOSITION

While half of organizations **capture data on employee disability status,** among those, almost all (93 percent) captured a simple yes-no categorization. Across the full sample, only three percent of organizations captured detailed disability data, which includes distinctions of physical, mental, neurological, or other types of disabilities.

Of the organizations that captured disability data, roughly 90 percent[5] of staff, leadership, and board members did not have a disability. Only three percent of organizational chief executives identified as having a disability.

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

Organizations were asked if they capture data on the faith or religious affiliation of their staff. Only a very small minority (eight percent) reported that they do.

TRANSPARENCY

Organizations were asked whether they shared data on workforce diversity composition and compensation levels, within their institutions as well as externally. If an organization reported not sharing this information, they were asked if they would be willing to do so in the future.

Transparency around diversity is limited in the sector. Most organizations did not share workforce composition data internally (40 percent shared information on race or sex, and 12 percent did so for disability status). Even fewer (20 percent), reported sharing race or sex composition data externally. Finally, only one in ten organizations shared any data internally on how compensation compares across any of these dimensions of employee diversity. Across both phenomena, non-profits were much more likely to share data than for-profit organizations.

While the current level of transparency is low, survey responses indicated that many organizations are willing to be more transparent in the future. More than half of respondents reported a willingness to share diversity composition data internally, while a further 33 percent said they did not know whether they would be willing to do so. Since the survey would typically have been completed by a head of HR, the combination of willingness to share and uncertainty whether these data could be shared suggests that there is potential for far greater transparency if organizational leaders advocate for it.

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[5] Sample size varies for each organizational level: staff n=43, leadership n=37, board n=19, chief executive n=166

DEI PRACTICES

1/4 of organizations have a DEI Policy

Organizations were asked about their DEI strategies, policies, statements, and tools. By reviewing DEI practices, we were better able to understand the actionable steps organizations took to foster DEI within their organizations, the extent of leadership buy-in, and the existence of internal DEI goals and targets. 85 percent of organizations reported having implemented at least one concrete initiative to advance DEI internally. These included, but were not limited to, conducting organizational culture surveys, providing staff with DEI training, systematic tracking of diversity data, and utilizing the expertise of consultants.

Though these steps are promising, we also found that formal DEI policies remain rare in the sector. DEI policies are important because they are an enduring, signal intent to act and are a means by which organizations can be held accountable. Only one-quarter (43) of organizations reported having a DEI policy at the time of the survey. One-third (12) of these were published after the beginning of the protests sparked by George Floyd's murder in Spring 2020.

Figure 10: Focus of DEI Policies

In the minority of organizations that have DEI policies, more than 75 percent of policies targeted equitable hiring practices, fostering an inclusive organization, promoting equitable compensation practices, and promoting equitable performance appraisal practices (Figure 10). A similarly high percentage also focused on gender and race composition of their headquarters staff. However, only around 60 percent of organizations with DEI policies, less than 16 percent of all organizations, focused on the gender and racial composition of leadership teams and boards.

INVESTMENTS IN DEI

Organizations were asked about the investments they had made in support of DEI in the last year. Most organizations reported having made investments in both staff time as well as consultants. Over 60 percent of organizations reported spending staff time on DEI. Among those organizations that tracked this spending, 60 percent valued their investment at greater than $5,000. 80 percent invested in outside consultants. with 56 Among those organizations that tracked this spending, 56 percent invested more than $5,000 and 21 percent invested more than $50,000.

Table 1 below details organizational spending on staff and non-staff labor, such as spending on consultants, in support of DEI initiatives in 2020.

Table 1: Spending on DEI Initiatives in 2020

Spending on DEI Initiatives in 2020			
Staff Labor (%)		Non-Staff Labor (%)	
<$5,000	25	<$5,000	37
$5,000-$25,000	18	$5,000-$25,000	22
>$25,000	18	$25,000-$50,000	7
Organization does not track	24	>$50,000	18
I don't know/Skip	16	I don't know/Skip	16

CONCLUSIONS

DATA

The ability to address problems begins with our ability to identify them. The fact that many organizations do not even capture data on the diversity composition of their workforce is an impediment to the sector's ability to measure progress towards diversity.

POWER

Among organizations that collect this information, the study shows an inverse association between racial diversity and seniority. While headquarters staff composition is broadly in alignment with the US population, the higher up the organizational ladder one looks, the more disproportionate the share of White employees. This culminates in an industry dominated by White executives.

Analysis of sex data reveal a similar representation gap. With a labor force comprised two-thirds of females, the sector is heavily skewed relative to the general population. However, the proportion of females in higher levels declines sharply, mirroring the racial (mis)representation trend. The combination of these two phenomena underscores a strong divergence between the makeup of development and humanitarian assistance professionals and their leaders.

Data at the intersection of race and gender show that only four percent of Chief Executives identify as BIPOC women in our sector. By comparison, BIPOC women account for 20 percent of the general population.

TRANSPARENCY

Only a minority of organizations share information about the racial, sex, and disability composition of their workforce. Transparency on the diversity composition of compensation data is shared even less. However, survey responses indicate an openness to increasing transparency. Sharing diversity data is a mechanism by which organizations, and by extension the sector, can hold themselves to account.

DEI PRACTICES

On one hand, the fact that only one in four organizations reported having a DEI policy a year after the social upheavals of 2020 could be interpreted as a lack of the sector's dedication to these critical issues. However, the rapid growth in the prevalence of DEI policies after the protests following the murder of George Floyd by the police, and the widespread use of various DEI practices suggests that, at least among certain segments of the industry, recognition and resolve

is growing. Finally, while 60 percent of organizations with DEI policies disclosed that their policies cover gender and racial composition at the board and leadership teams, this represents only 16 percent of all organizations in the sector. Given the significant underrepresentation of racial minorities at leadership, head of organization, and board levels, this suggests a gap in the existing policy framework that should be addressed as a matter of priority.

INVESTMENTS IN DEI

The fact that the majority of organizations have made investments of their own staff time as well as to hire consultants is a positive finding. It shows that organizations prioritized DEI in tangible ways and did not just pay lip service to the issue.

CALL TO ACTION

These data from this survey can be a powerful force for change. We believe it can be a catalyst for positive action at the organizational, industry, and funder levels.

At the organizational level, we recommend that **leaders**:

Study the sector data to draw comparison with their own organizations. This can be an entry point to determine what their own strengths and weaknesses are in relation to the sector. Organizations can then take actions to build on their strengths and address weaknesses.

Develop and implement plans to achieve greater diversity including, as applicable, dimensions of diversity that go beyond the focus of this study, particularly at leadership levels. Diversity Boards need to own this issue, including addressing diversity within the board itself. Because senior positions turn over more slowly, intentional and potentially drastic measures might be needed, such as:
- Succession planning with a diversity and equity lens for both Board and senior leadership.
- Active sponsorship, coaching, and mentoring for under-represented individuals to enter and succeed in the leadership track.
- Term limits for boards and CEOs.

Create mechanisms to ensure that power shifts are real and not just symbolic. Thus, the plan for diversifying the top needs to transition actual decision-making and budget authority.

Craft a DEI policy that is accountable and enforced. Even organizations that already have a policy should review it in light of these new sectoral data and their own data to make sure it addresses the actual challenges and gaps the organization faces.

Ensure sufficient frequency and granularity of DEI data capture to enable identification of representation gaps, target setting, and measurement of institutional progress.

Commit to transparency. If organizations in the sector would be willing to share their diversity data publicly, this transparency would create pressures to shift the needle in the direction of greater equity. This will undoubtedly be a steep hill to climb since the majority of respondents reported that they do not currently share these data even internally. However, these data also suggests that there is a willingness to consider greater transparency.

At the industry level, we recommend that **International Development and Humanitarian Assistance organizations**:

Collaborate to identify industry level barriers based on BRIDGE's initial benchmarking data and implement solutions.

Commit to participating in an industry-wide compact for change.

At the funder level, we recommend that **funders**:

Leverage their funding to create incentives for real change in the workforce composition and DEI practices of development and humanitarian assistance organizations.

Bring a DEI lens to procurements especially SOWs and Key Personnel (KP) requirements.

Promote greater diversity within their own organizations and grant marginalized groups more authority, agency, and access to leadership roles.

For more information about the BRIDGE survey, please see the website, or direct questions to BRIDGE@socialimpact.com.