



DIVERSITY & INCLUSION IN THE GLOBAL SANITATION SECTOR'S LEADERSHIP

This research investigates Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in the global sanitation sector. It is generally understood that older white males from High-Income Countries (HICs) sit in positions of power, despite a majority of the work affecting Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) in Low-Middle Income Countries (LMICs).

HQs Far From Programmatic Focus

100 Organizations Studied



55 Orgs
with HQs not in a country or continent they work in



22 Orgs
with HQs in one of their targeted countries



18 Orgs
with HQs based in the sole country of focus



5 Orgs
with HQs on the same continent as their work

88 HQs in HICs **12 HQs in LMICs**

Of the 88 organizations in HICs, a majority headquartered in the USA (39), France (9), Germany (9), the UK (8), Switzerland (8), and the Netherlands (7). Over half of the organizations were headquartered outside of countries they work in. This further strengthens HICs role in the direction of the sector, and the absence of diverse, local voices that perpetuates cycles of programs based on certain perspectives.

HIC Educated Dictate Direction

1,220 Individuals Studied

Researchers ranked universities by the prevalence of degrees and analyzed the highest 30%, for simplicity. The most prevalent universities were:



- Harvard University (53 degrees)
- University of Oxford (34 degrees)
- Georgetown University (32 degrees)

American universities dominated the quantile, with **67%** of degrees obtained in the USA. Institutions based in HICs were most prevalent in this quantile.

This study's results confirm what sanitation professionals know - that western knowledge, perspectives, funds, and people determine the sector's global direction.

Whiteness in Position of Powers

105 Organizations Studied

Leadership Teams

1447 Individuals

White Males



White Females



BIPOC Males



BIPOC Females



60% | Male 40% | Female

Board Members

709 Individuals

White Males



White Females



BIPOC Males

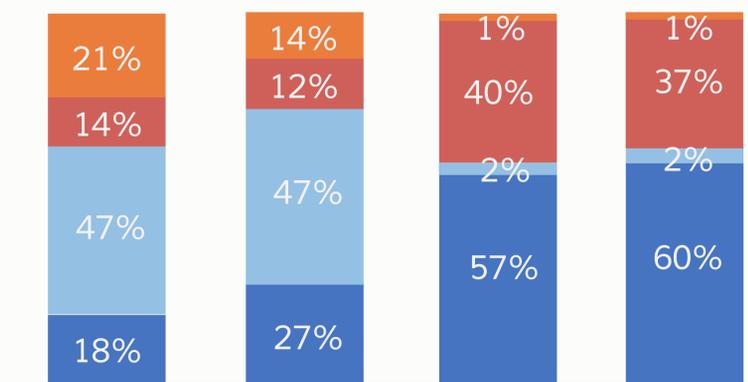


BIPOC Females



65% | Male 35% | Female

Overall Demographics



Legend: HIC Men (dark blue), LMIC Men (light blue), HIC Women (red), LMIC Women (orange)

Sanitation leadership and board positions were overwhelmingly white and male. White men from HICs held over a third of all leadership positions in the study. White people were also 8.7 times more likely to be a leader or on the board for more than one sanitation organization than BIPOC.

This creates an even larger platform for white voices in a sector operating in BIPOC majority countries, underlining the clear preference for whiteness in positions of power.

International development is critiqued to varying extents for its ties with colonialism, capitalism, and neoliberalism. The sanitation sub-sector needs to take responsibility for its global history and overwhelming lack of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in its governance and management.

Methodology

The research team developed a list of 105 key global sanitation organizations, including funders, implementers, researchers, partnerships, advocates, and bilateral and multilateral institutions. The research team collected demographics for 1472 individuals who were board members or a part of leadership/ sanitation teams. Professional public data is only a snapshot of one's experiences and background. Despite using several different data points (appearance, education origin, work experience, and current location) to infer an individual's background and race, this method can be inaccurate, especially when compared to a self-selecting survey. Due to time constraints and the goal being to understand the general DEI landscape in the sanitation sector, the research team developed a methodological framework and decision-making process when determining an individual's race and ethnicity.

Discussion

Despite progress in women leadership, BIPOC females were the least represented group across all levels of leadership. BIPOC females face multiple barriers within the workplace system that prevent them from attaining leadership positions. So long as BIPOC females are absent or tokenistic in leadership, the sanitation sector lacks authentic and experienced voices that could add valuable programmatic insights.

There also exists a 'glass-ceiling' preventing national staff from rising the ranks in sanitation organizations. This crisis also represents an opportunity. Some organizations are adjusting to address the negative power implications of having white international staff in top management and are moving towards appointing nationals through hiring policies and wider development strategies. However, this does not go far enough to address the systemic causes of the status quo with global organizations headquartered in HICs and led by white staff.

Some LMICs have successfully created more local sanitation leadership representation. India and Kenya were strongly represented across data sets; however, the gender balance remains heavily male (74% and 66% male, respectively), which is problematic. Overall we can attain SDG 6 more effectively if organizations make significant steps in inclusive development to provide BIPOC women with equal opportunity to achieve their potential over the long term.

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Key Terms

BIPOC: Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color • HIC: High Income Country • LMIC: Low-Middle Income County