

AFP'S INCLUSION AND PHILANTHROPY FELLOWSHIP

# An Analysis Of Diversity & Inclusion In The Workplace

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Focused on Toronto Non-Profit Organizations

**GOLDBERG, HAVA; RUMBLE, TANYA; SEHASOTHY, THIVIYAA**

2016 Fellows, Cohort 2

*The Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) recently cited that perhaps the most significant barrier to fostering diversity and inclusion in the charitable giving sector is the confounding lack of information on the number of people from diverse communities who currently identify as fundraising practitioners.*

\* <http://www.afpnet.org/Audiences/ReportsResearchDetail.cfm?itemnumber=36954>

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The Inclusion and Philanthropy Fellowship provided a great platform to address this issue and it resonated closely with the 3 of us. Each of us had experienced lack of inclusion and diversity in organizations that we wanted to address and the fellowship provided a wealth of resources and guidance to get started.

Through personal and shared stories it was unanimous within our group that although the Fundraising sector is a close tight-knit group, there is little knowledge about non-profit organizations and determining the culture and fit prior to a new role. When one applies for a new role or considers prospective employers, information about key aspects regarding employee and workplace culture, diversity practices, employee satisfaction is unknown. This is a challenging and important concern for new hires, those looking for new employment, or recent graduates. A particular discussion about the difficulty of implementing strategies to diversify the donor base within many non-profit organizations in Ontario was a common frustration. One can argue that if an organization has strong diversity and inclusion practices, the ease of opening dialogue about expanding the donor base to a diverse group and/or community can be easier.

Perhaps the most important consideration when a prospective employee is researching their employer is "fit". Amongst the criteria that talent reviews, weighs and assesses when making a determination about pursuing a career with a prospective organization is the role, the manager, compensation, the values of the organization and of course the organizational culture. Of the aforementioned criteria, most information can be gleaned in the job posting, a search of LinkedIn and the Human Resources staff whom you interface with through the recruitment process. What can be more challenging to ascertain is the often intangible culture in the organization. Many organizations espouse the value of work life balance, but in speaking with employees you may learn that management expects that the balance comes when all the work is complete and don't place a high premium on employee wellness. While other employers who espouse the same value would have employees that emphatically state that the organization systematically promotes and supports the concept of work life balance consistently. This information can be difficult to source when meeting with HR and prospective managers and hence *Glassdoor*. *Glassdoor* is a website where employees and former employees anonymously review companies and their management. Over the years *Glassdoor* has collated a large database of information from an employee perspective on the companies included in the database providing a less biased, crowd sourced perspective on what it is like to work in the organization. Such a platform does not exist specifically for the charitable sector and there is a dearth of readily available organizational culture and HR information on the charitable sector writ large in Canada and more specifically in Toronto. As it relates to diversity and inclusion, there is even less transparency. AFP recently cited that perhaps the most significant barrier to fostering diversity and inclusion in the charitable giving sector is the confounding lack of information on the number of people from diverse communities who currently identify as fundraising practitioners. Transparent information about the cultural practices in Toronto area not-for-profit organizations would go a long way to

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attracting diverse talent.

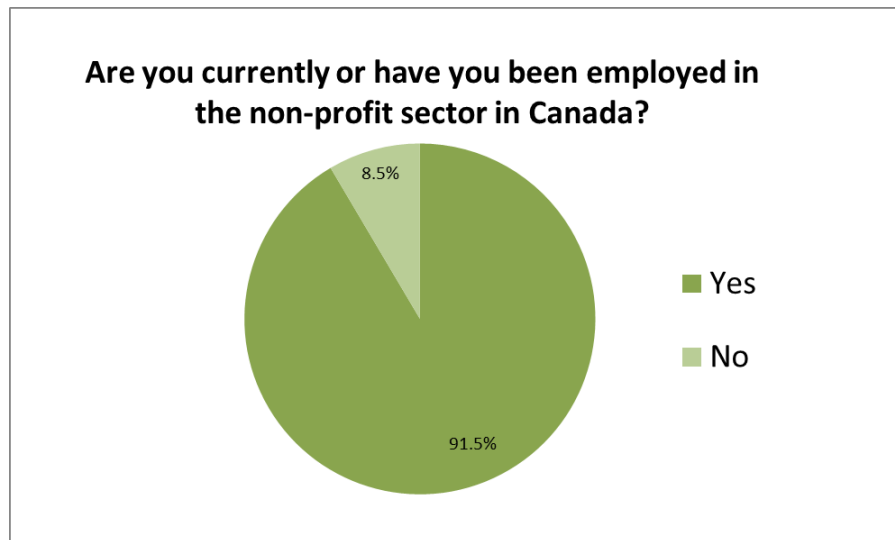
## **Importance of the Work & Intended Impact**

Far too often fundraising professionals who are seeking new roles have lamented that it is difficult to know the true colours of an organization where they are interviewing. We hope that our project will aid in mitigating this challenge in several ways; firstly we hope that it will allow us to take the temperature of Toronto's fundraising sector. By having a minimum of 40 professionals at medium and large sized fundraising organizations fill out our survey, we plan to pinpoint some of the trends and issues facing our sector with regards to diversity & inclusion in the workplace. Secondly, our goal is to provide our peers with the opportunity to voice both negative and positive constructive feedback regarding organizations where they have worked. This will allow them to feel heard and respected for their experience. It will create the foundation for a platform where this information can be shared online via a Glassdoor like platform. And lastly, we hope that in the long term such a ongoing project will hold organizations to a higher standard of accountability when it comes to living up to their living up to their diversity and inclusion goals.

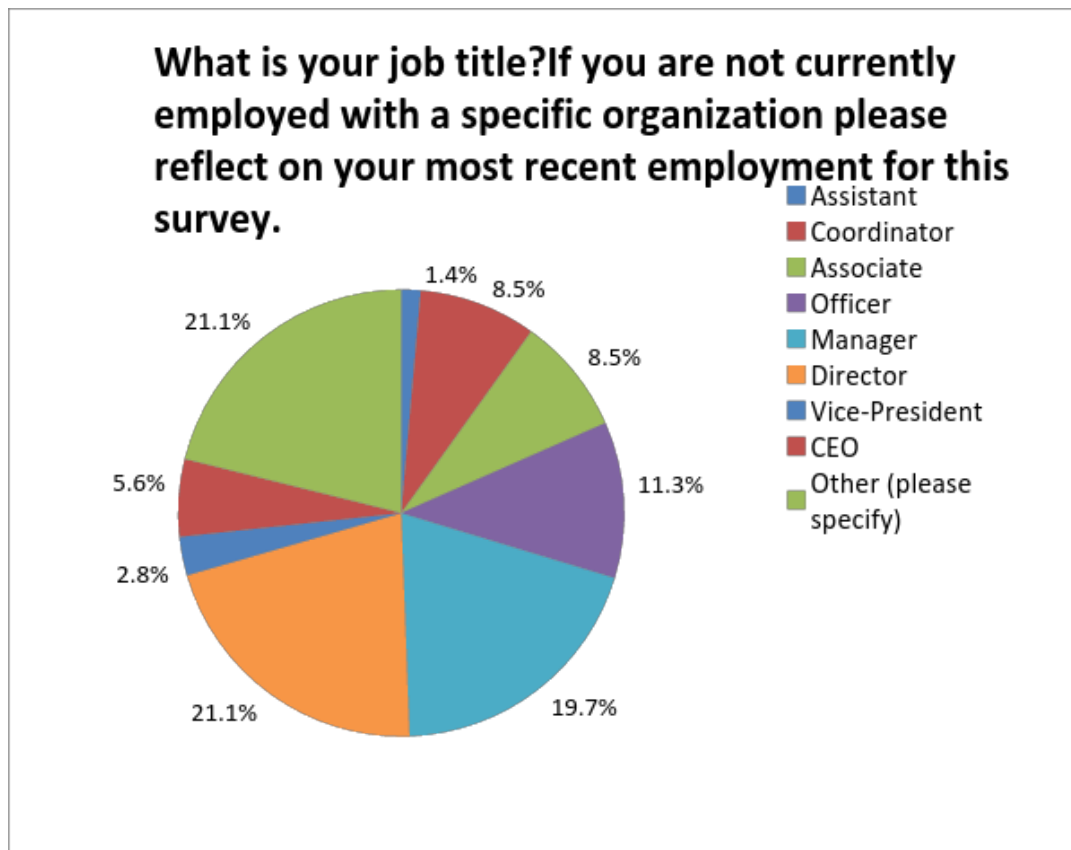
## **Our work plan**

Our project began with an environmental scan of resources available on the issues regarding diversity in the workplace and connections within the fundraising sector regarding diversity and employee engagement. Utilizing this information we were able to narrow down our focus on the questions and areas of concerns through 3 areas in our survey: demographic, employment culture and diversity and inclusion. Our survey was launched throughout our networks - utilizing social media such as Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook, our direct connections at our workplace and peers and our network within the Fellowship. Lastly, we did a final push during AFP's Congress in November 2016. We had a total of 71 respondents who worked within the non-profit sector and provided information in all 3 categories. Please keep in mind, although our demographic range in types of organization, title and organization size, and our analysis is not statistically significant. However it is a good start as a jumping off point. In the next few pages we will provide our analysis and results of our survey.

## Survey Demographic

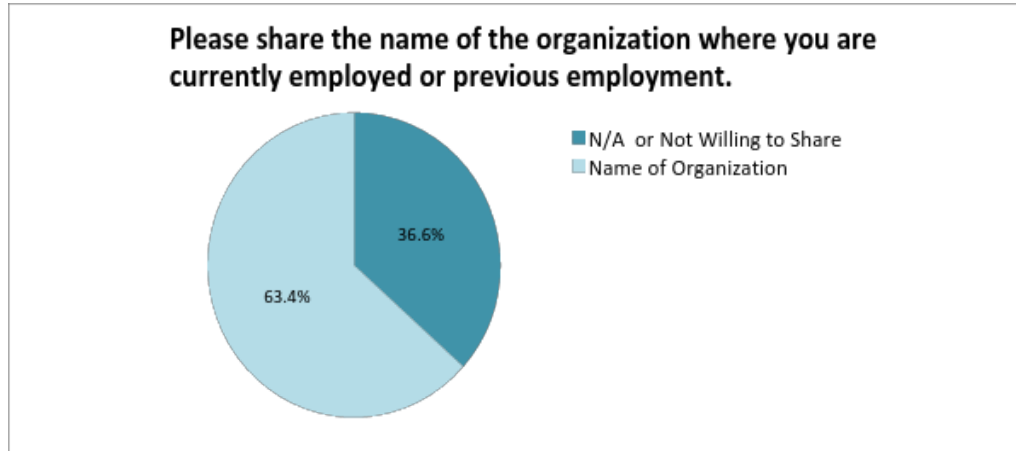


All respondents in the survey were employed in the non-profit sector. Those who responded no would skip to the end of the survey.



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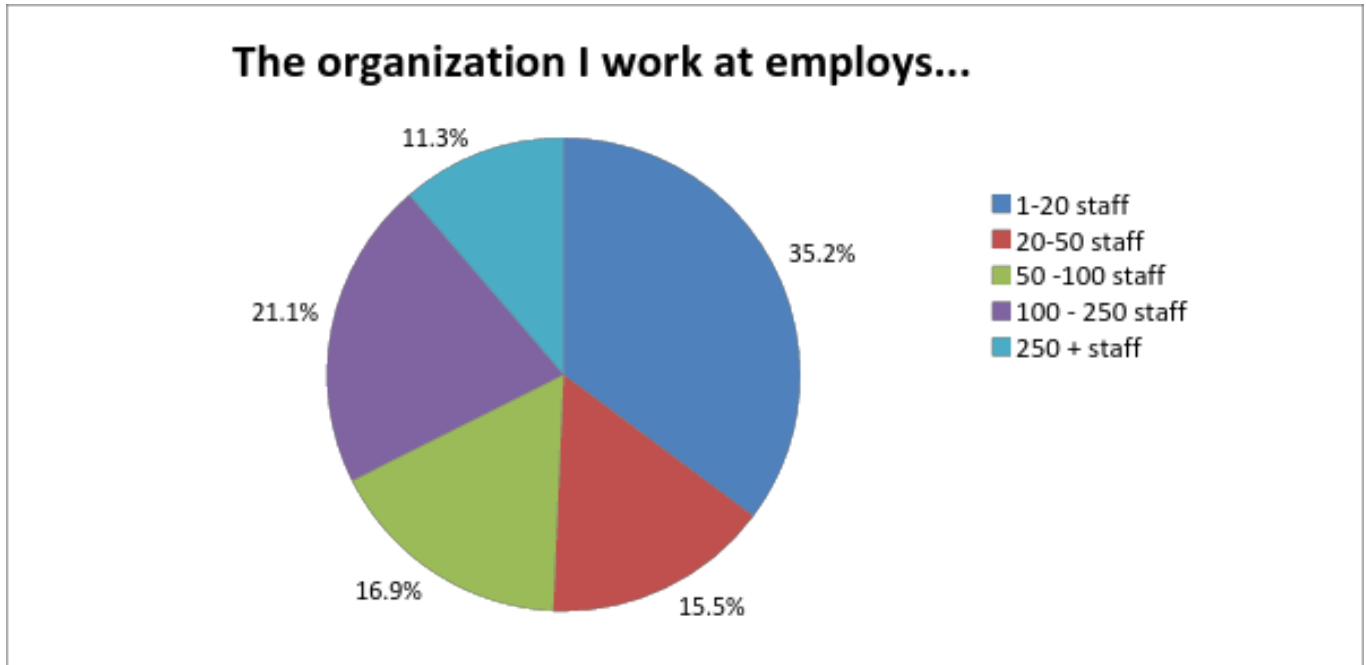
We had a total of 70 respondents and the level of seniority varied throughout.



### Name of Organization

Aizen Academy  
Arthritis Society  
Bayview Glen Independant School  
Beth Tzewdec Congregation  
Canada's National Ballet School  
CanTYD  
Catherine Donnelly Foundation  
Chai Lifeline Canada  
Children's Aid Foundation  
Dalla Lana School of Public Health, U of T  
Foundating Fighting Blindness  
Good Shepherd Hamilton  
Habitat for Humanity Canada  
Heart & Stroke Foundation (3)  
Idrf  
JDRF Canada  
Leap

Leukemia & Lymphoma Society of Canada  
LHH  
March of Dimes Canada (2)  
MaRS DD  
MGH  
Miles Nadal JCC  
Ontario Trillium Foundation (3)  
Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School  
Prostate Cancer Canada (2)  
SickKids Foundation  
South Asian Women's Centre  
SPCA  
Toronto Foundation (4)  
UNICEF Canada (2)  
United Way Toronto & York Region  
Volunteer Toronto  
You Can Play



## **Employee Culture**

Very little research exists regarding the organizational culture and Human Resources practices of the charitable sector in the GTA and in Canada writ large. In this section of the survey, our goal was to gain a better understanding of the overall workplace satisfaction of GTA non-profit employees. We sought to quantify and better understand some of the more intangible elements of workplace culture.

The following are the questions which were included in this section of the survey:

- **How happy are you in your current role in the organization?**  
Very unhappy/Somewhat unhappy/Neutral/Somewhat happy/Very happy
- **I would recommend working at this organization to a friend?**  
Yes/No
- **Does your organization have an HR department?**  
Yes/No
- **Do you feel your HR department is a safe and confidential space to speak about your concerns and issues?**  
Yes/No

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- **Do you approve/disapprove of your organization's CEO/Executive Director/senior most leader's leadership capabilities/style?**

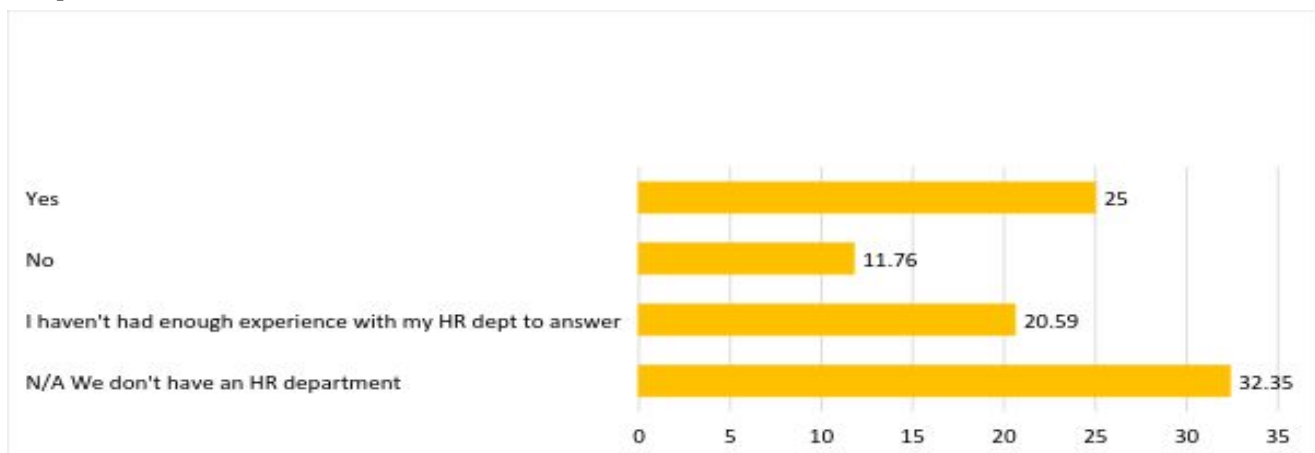
Approve/Disapprove

- **How happy are you with the opportunities for advancement with your current employer?**

Very unhappy/Somewhat unhappy/Neutral/Somewhat happy/ Very happy

When asked how happy they are in their current role, over 70% of respondents reported being either somewhat or very happy with their employer (37.10% somewhat happy, and 35.48% very happy). Furthermore, an overwhelming majority of respondents agreed that they would recommend their workplace to a friend (83.82%). Based on this, we can infer that overall Toronto's non-profit sector functions well. This also demonstrates that the organizations represented in the survey generally provide a positive workplace culture. Additional questions regarding the organization's mission, interpersonal relationships with colleagues, work-life balance and compensation could have helped us delve deeper into the specific elements that lend to employee satisfaction.

Human Resources professionals often play an important role in creating a positive and inclusive workplace environment. An organization's diversity and inclusion policies are often the purview of its Human Resources professional or department. However, it is evident from our research, that many non-profits do not have the resources to employ HR professionals. More than 43% of respondents indicated their organization does not have an HR department. It does not come as a surprise that 90% of those respondents worked at an organization with 50 or less employees. Furthermore, 72% of respondents expressed that they haven't had a need to go to the HR department, don't have one, or don't feel it is a safe and confidential space to address their concerns and issues. This seems to indicate that the vast majority of the non-profits surveyed do not prioritize or invest in Human Resources.





Accordingly, 41% of respondents indicated HR is responsible for leading D&I in their organization. This begs the question, in the 43% of workplaces that do not have HR departments, are any efforts to promote diversity and inclusion being made? When asked if they have been made aware of a diversity and inclusion policy in their workplace, more than 50% of the professionals surveyed answered that there was either little to nothing formally being done to address diversity and inclusion. It appears that many GTA non-profits still have a long way to go when it comes to developing and implementing diversity and inclusion policies

## **Responses: Diversity & Inclusion**

Discussions amongst our peers in the Fellowship further highlighted that GTA non-profits vary greatly in the manner in which they address diversity and inclusion in their organizations. The questions in this section were developed in order to pinpoint some of the trends and issues facing our sector.

The questions answered by respondents were:

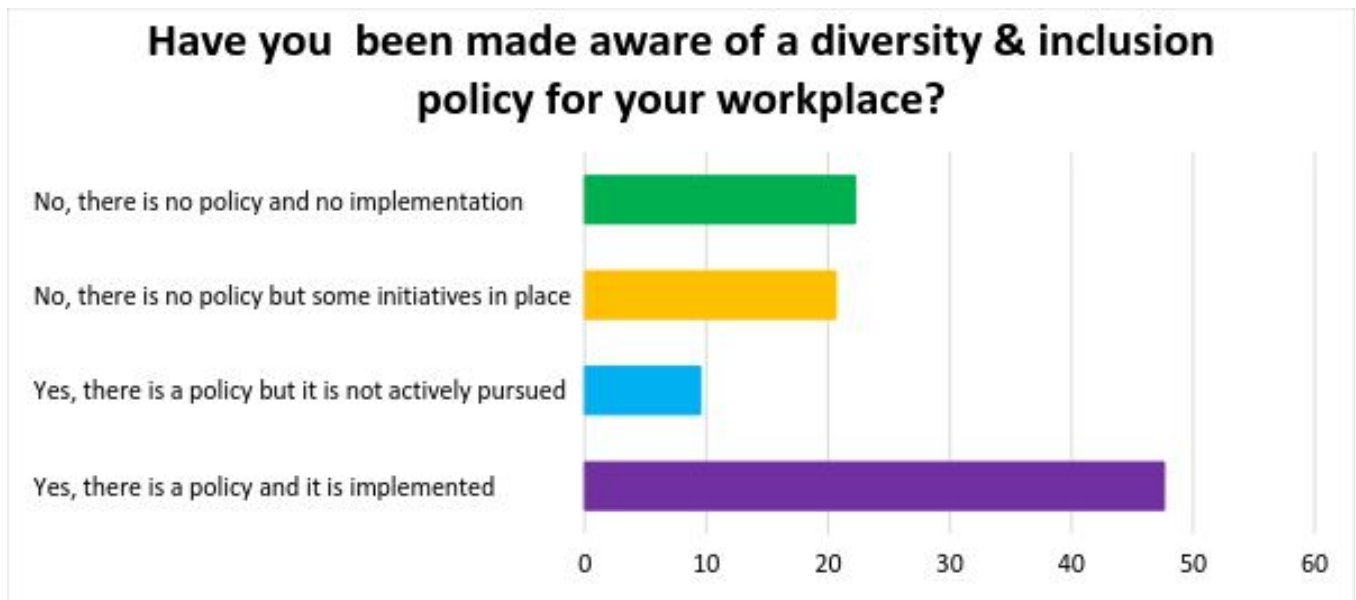
- **Is diversity and inclusion important to your personal brand and values? (Y/N)**
- **Have you been made aware of a diversity & inclusion policy for your workplace and does your organization actively partake in initiatives to ensure diversity and inclusion in the workplace?**  
Yes, there is a policy & it is implemented/Yes, there is a policy but it is not actively pursued/No, there is no policy but some initiatives in place/No, there is no policy and no implementation
- **Who is responsible for leading diversity and inclusion initiatives in your organization?**  
HR/CEO/Senior Management team/Diversity committee or council made up of employee/Board led diversity committee/Board of Directors/No one/It is unclear who is responsible/Other
- **On a scale of 1-10, how comfortable do you feel sharing information about your personal background in your workplace?**  
1-I do not share at work, 5-I share some details, 10-Eager to share with others as they are open and interested
- **If a comment or joke that you are not comfortable with is made in your workplace,**

**what primary action would you feel comfortable taking?**

Report it to HR/Address it directly with the individual who said it/Tell your supervisor/Do nothing/Talk about it with others but not with the person who made the comment

- **Do you feel that the senior management of your organization take diversity and inclusion into account in the following situations:**  
Hiring process/Onboarding/Day to day culture/Staff events/Professional development
- **I feel that I am treated fairly in my organization**  
Y/N
- **If you are a person from a diverse background, do you feel you are asked to be a proxy or represent others of diverse experiences?**  
Y/N/NA

It was positive to see that nearly all of the respondents (96.8%) feel diversity and inclusion is important to their personal brand and values. This clearly indicates this is an important issue for the GTA fundraising sector; however more than 50% of organizations either don't have a policy, or it is not fully implemented.



Encouragingly, despite the absence of formal policy and practice, it appears that GTA non-profits are generally positive places to work. Most respondents indicated that they feel comfortable sharing details of their own personal background at work. Over three quarters answered that if they were in a situation where a colleague made an inappropriate joke or comment, they would feel comfortable addressing it directly with the person. Additionally, more than 85% of

respondents feel they are treated fairly by their organizations.

It is also clear that there is progress to be made when it comes to ensuring all aspects of an employee's professional life are in line with diversity and inclusion best practices. More than 65% of respondents felt that their workplaces take diversity and inclusion into account when hiring and in day to day culture. But onboarding, staff events and professional development are all areas where respondents felt diversity and inclusion was not always taken into account.

When asked if they feel their organization uses them as a proxy for all those from diverse backgrounds, more than 50% of respondents answered that this question was not applicable to them. This suggests these respondents do not identify as part of a diverse ethnocultural or racial group. Further research is required to fully understand the broader implications of this answer and gain a better understanding of the backgrounds of professionals in the GTA's non-profit sector.

## Quotes

In completing a survey like this, some of the most powerful and illustrative data often comes from the qualitative responses. The words often convey more impact than what the numerical data tells us. In the case of this study it was no different. We ended our survey with a simple, yet evocative question: What is the biggest obstacle to an inclusive work environment with your current employer? Within the responses a number of themes were identified:

### **1. That diversity and inclusion was not a priority to senior management, and even that the identities and values that senior management hold is antithetical to making diversity and inclusion a priority.**

- *"Perceptions of what our organization needs to be successful (i.e., focusing on one community to the exclusion of others). This perception advances a narrative within the workplace that some groups are more vital than others, and this filters down to staff."*
- *"Homogenous and tight knit upper management."*
- *Simply put: "lack of leadership"*
- *"Previously, it was senior management just did not see it as an issue. this has now changed considerably. "*
- *"Lack of shared understanding of how this is important for success across all job functions. "*
- *"It feels like a boy's club. The board has one woman I think and is just a bunch of white men and it also doesn't seem like there is any effort to change this. Even in our marketing there is talk of making things more diverse but images of white people are always used. I am really disappointed by it. I even heard that our CEO wasn't open to diversifying the board."*

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- *"A very white senior team; a reluctance to discuss issues of diversity, inclusion, and exclusion with seriousness; a fear of the controversial."*

**2. That there was no mechanism by which to embrace D&I as a priority i.e. the absence of the capacity; person(s), policies; or procedures by which to enact this as a priority.**

- *"Time to have discussions with the full staff team."*
- *"HR talks about diversity as a value but policies don't reflect Eg refer to 'maternity leave' vs 'parental leave'."*
- *"No one responsible and no policy."*
- *"HR falls to the office of the COO. However, there is no formalized, structured, or active human resources department. An active diversity policy should be championed by this department. The current biggest obstacle to creating and implementing an active diversity policy is the resources needed to create a formal and staffed HR department."*
- *"Capacity to implement."*
- *"Understanding systematic discrimination."*
- *"Budget, which is related to the organization's capacity to provide such an environment."*

**3. Another theme was that due to the focus of their agency (incl. the population being served), the broader issues of D&I from an employee perspective are not prioritized.**

- *"Because we are entho-specific there are some restrictions when it comes to diversity in hiring staff that work directly with youth, since knowing the Tamil language would be an integral part of the role, esp when working with the parents of the youth that often are limited in English. However, we have non-tamil employees that work with marketing, bookkeeping and counselling. We diversify the professional experiences that our staff bring to the table as much as possible though."*
- *"Working for an arts organization that supports and celebrates a field that has for longtime been associated with a largely female craft tends to have more female participants and supporters naturally."*
- *"Inclusion of women is becoming less of an issue but there are jewish legal norms at stake. LGBT inclusion seems to not be an issue. Inclusion of differently abled people seems to not be a significant issue, but I haven't seen inroads to specifically hire someone who fits this mold."*
- *"We work in a very specific field of philanthropy, so it's a challenge to find those who are in the space, who represent a wide-range of backgrounds and have the skills and*

*capabilities to excel in the position."*

**4. The idea that identifying and hiring diverse candidates emerged in the responses a number of times:**

- *"Finding diverse, qualified, experienced people to fill vacant roles."*
- *"Limited only by the available talent pools in the markets where my employer operates."*
- *"Hiring committee, made up of employees and Board with an over-reliance on academic credentials."*

**5. Encouragingly, a number of respondents felt their organizations were succeeded in this area:**

- *"I think we are a very diverse and inclusive organization, and I think we are likely a great example of equal opportunity for race and gender alike. I am proud to work at xx (organization's name removed to avoid identification)."*
- *"Nothing at this time."*
- *"There does not seem to be an issue with inclusive work at this organization."*

**6. Another theme that emerged was that the age of staff equated to them not being taken seriously, i.e. that age discrimination was a significant challenge in their work environment.**

- *"Perceived minimum age when it comes to promotions. "*
- Succinctly written: *"Age"*
- **Finally, and perhaps most poignantly:** *Intrinsic bias, invisible racial perception is just that - intrinsic and invisible. It's hard to do any education without people feeling threatened or insulted."*

## **Recommendations**

With so much quantitative data and qualitative data at our disposal, having engaged our networks in this exercise it would seem prudent to make some recommendations, so as to not fall into the trap of surveying for surveyings sake. To this end we have identified three specific recommendations for the GTA fundraising sector to consider - given D&I has been identified as a priority by AFP, it is imperative that fundraising professionals consider seriously what is truly needed to make this priority a reality.

### **1. Policy**

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- It was evidenced in the qualitative and quantitative responses that D&I is important to nearly all respondents personal brands - it is clear that education and awareness at the individual level is not required. However at the organizational level, many organizations are ill equipped to address D&I in a systematic way, particularly when it comes to recruitment. There is a dearth of both skilled capacity and practical resources to support implementation of D&I policies in non-profit organizations. We recommend two strategies to address this:
  - Similar to the Donor Bill of Rights, developing a D&I framework that AFP Canada member organizations could sign on to - as a symbolic gesture and public declaration of their commitment to D&I.
  - Beyond the declaration AFP Canada should provide training and support resources to organizations to enable them to realize these declarations in the form of webinars, policy toolkits, and even a grant process to support organizations in doing this important work.
- It would be a shame to have an AFP Fellowship program, that supports talent development, but a sector that doesn't have the capacity and tools to appreciate and leverage this talent pool.

### **2. Supportive Environment**

- All evidence suggests a diverse talent pool yield best results for achieving organizational goals. However that is the end result. Merely trying to get a more colourful workforce requires time, a commitment to change, and ultimately a supportive environment. Policies are a great, but if the workplace culture is in vehement opposition to those policies one can assume that a policy only approach will be unsuccessful. It will require organizations to do the hard work of identifying intrinsic bias and barriers in their culture, policies and leadership - and a willingness to change them in a holistic, sustainable way to get to the end goal of a workforce that reflects the community. In practical terms it may mean hiring a skilled consultant, so as to not burden the racialized or otherwise diverse staff from speaking on behalf of a cadre of different groups, and/or asking them to employ expertise they may not have. It also means asking for allies, and looking for talent within that can act as enablers to addressing those barriers, and empowering them to have those conversations when things that are racist or otherwise represent an 'icsm' are said, and how to address in constructive ways.

### **3. Resources for Frontline Fundraisers**

- Finally, all these efforts are for not, if there isn't a concerted effort to develop

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talent from diverse and disparate groups. It is imperative to leverage the experience of diverse fundraisers to attract students, new grads and young professionals to the profession. A clear and prescriptive opportunity to do this is the AFP Fellowship. All obvious bias aside, this is a evidenced-based approach to enhancing the fundraising talent pool and equipping emerging leaders with the tools and resources required to 'change' the face of fundraising in the GTA and beyond. Continued funding for this program, along with permanent staff would allow programs like the mentorship aspect of the fellowship to continue, and perhaps expand outside the cohort of fellows. To provide support to these fellows and their organizations in this complex and gratifying work of D&I.

### **Conclusion**

We hope our research and dive into the issues regarding diversity and inclusion within the non-profit sector has created a great start in continuing the dialogue for the future. A huge thank you to AFP's Fellowship of Inclusion and Philanthropy. As Fellows, we were provided the great opportunity to tackle a sensitive issue with confidence and without push-back. Without the guidance, resource and great mentors available in the mentorship, we would not be able to come together as a group to address this issue. We wish AFP all the best and we are proud to champion diversity and inclusion.

As young professionals, we look forward to a future where a platform similar to Glassdoor is available for the non-profit sector and strongly believe the information it is apparent this resource would benefit the sector and career paths for many.