DEI Compact Baseline Survey

How NGOs are taking concrete steps to incorporate DEI principles.

InterAction
A United Voice For Global Change

BRIEF SYNOPSIS & ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This survey report was written by Noam Unger, InterAction's Vice President for Development Policy, Advocacy, and Learning. It details key highlights from a late-2022 baseline research exercise associated with "The DEI Compact: INGO Commitments toward Greater Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion," an initiative of InterAction. The development, execution, and results synthesis for the survey would not have happened without the considerable contributions of Michelle Neal, who served as InterAction's Interim Senior Manager for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) when this survey took place.

CONTEXT

In 2022, InterAction developed and launched the DEI Compact, our community's response to the calls across many institutions and industries throughout the U.S. and around the world to do more to address systemic and systematic issues of racism, sexism, tribalism, inequality, and inequity. The DEI Compact, designed by and for the INGO community, includes a set of baseline commitments to begin or improve actions on critical areas within organizations—operations, programs, engagement and advocacy, learning, and communications—and across the INGO sector as a whole.

In addition to shaping and vetting a set of acknowledgments and commitments that drew 77 signatory organizations from among InterAction's broader membership, InterAction designed the Compact to also serve as a support mechanism by providing resources for practical implementation to help guide organizations' progress, regardless of where they might be in their DEI journey. In this vein, InterAction took several initial concrete steps beyond coordinating the core set of shared commitments. The InterAction team published an initial set of working papers on topics ranging from diversifying the sector and anti-Blackness, to disability and inclusion and mental health. We also established a new standing subcommittee of our Public Policy Committee focused on DEI advocacy and hosted a series of events through our Evaluation & Program Effectiveness Community of Practice on "Decolonizing Evaluation and Research."

Moreover, as outlined in the signatory document of the DEI Compact, specifically in the "learning" section, it is expected that all participating organizations engage in an annual collective progress-monitoring survey to evaluate the advancements made across the various commitments of the coalition.

In 2022, we took the initiative to develop and oversee a baseline monitoring survey for the Compact. This survey serves as the focus of the present report and provides a foundation of essential data against which we will assess the collective progress, or potential lack thereof, in the coming years.

METHODOLOGY NOTES

The survey was designed using the Qualtrics platform to capture data on the key commitments of the DEI Compact. On October 4, 2022, InteAction disseminated the survey to designated points of contact representing the 77 InterAction Member organizations that signed the DEI Compact. Only one representative per signatory organization was authorized to respond on behalf of their respective organization. The deadline for survey completion was November 4, 2022.
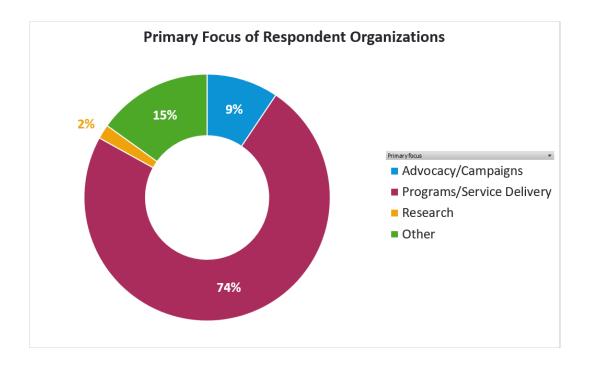
The signatory organizations self-selected the designated survey respondents, resulting in a diverse pool of respondents encompassing both leaders (such as CEOs, executive directors, and vice presidents) and operational staff members (including DEI-specific personnel, human resource officers, and program managers). A total of 53 organizations participated in the survey, with a completion rate of 100% for the section dedicated to demographic information. Notably, 49 respondents completed the entire survey, while a small subset of 4 individuals partially completed the survey.
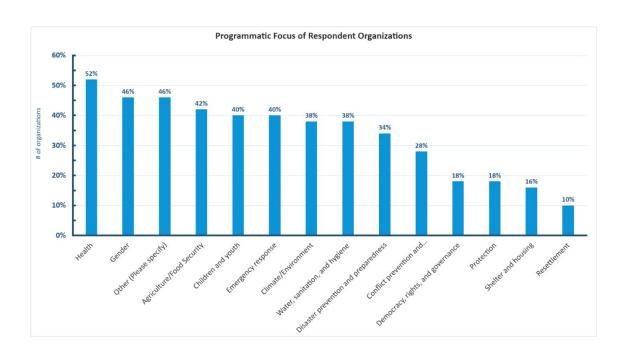
ORGANIZATION TYPE

To gain insights into the survey participants, we included questions about organizational staff size and focus areas. The responses shed light on the composition of the participating organizations. Specifically, 20 organizations (38% of respondents) were classified as "small," having fewer than 100 employees. Meanwhile, 16 organizations (30% of respondents) fell under the category of "medium," with staff counts ranging from 100 to 1,000. Finally, 17 organizations (32% of respondents) were classified as "large," having a workforce exceeding 1,000 individuals.

A substantial majority of 69% operated on an international scale, while the remaining 31% focused their staffing domestically within the United States. It is noteworthy that within this latter group, 12 respondent organizations (23% of survey respondents as a whole) did not employ any international staff.

Finally, participants were asked to identify their primary focus area, and the majority (74%) indicated a strong emphasis on programs and service delivery. Advocacy and campaigns were the primary focus for 9% of respondents, while research garnered 2% of the responses. Additionally, 15% of respondents selected the "other" option, explaining that their organization's focus spanned multiple areas, with most including programs and service delivery.

Primary Focus of Respondent Organizations

Primary focus

- Advocacy/Campaigns
- Programs/Service Delivery
- Research
- Other

(Donut chart values: 9% Advocacy/Campaigns, 74% Programs/Service Delivery, 2% Research, 15% Other)

Programmatic Focus of Respondent Organizations

# of organizations

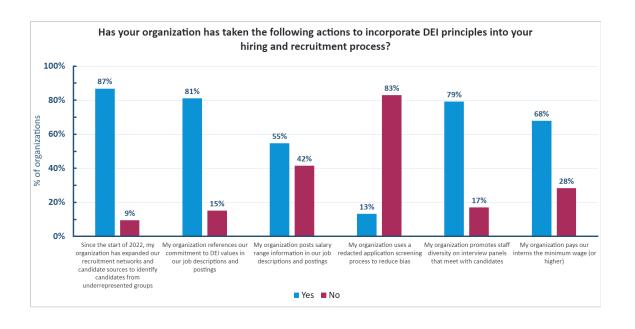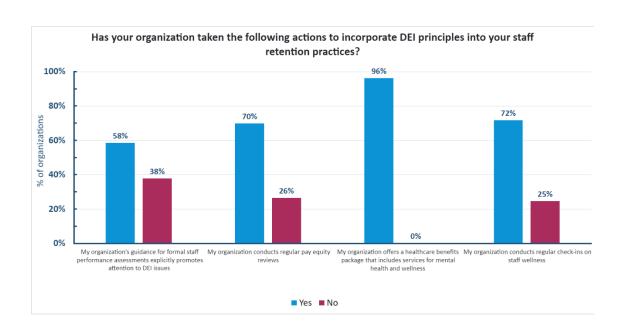| Category	%
Health	52%
Gender	46%
Other (Please specify)	46%
Agriculture/Food Security	42%
Children and youth	40%
Emergency response	40%
Climate/Environment	38%
Water, sanitation, and hygiene	38%
Disaster prevention and preparedness	34%
Conflict prevention and...	28%
Democracy, rights, and governance	18%
Protection	18%
Shelter and housing	16%
Resettlement	10%

Commitment Area 1: Operations

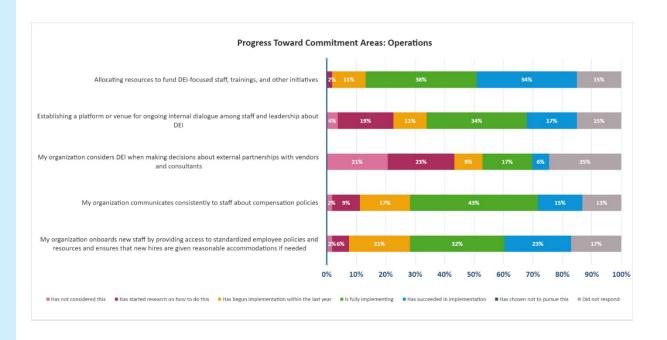The Compact commitments about organizational operations are as follows:

- Establish targets, including for diversity at leadership levels, with organizational data on diversity and staff perceptions of inclusion and belonging to accurately inform metrics and identify gaps.
- Explore and unpack how implicit bias, white dominant cultural norms, and saviorism complex show up in recruitment, hiring, and operational practices.
- Help teams understand why diversity is core to achieving their goals and identify what diverse representation means for them, integrating DEI as a factor in performance evaluation at all levels.
- Reform recruitment and hiring practices by consciously tracking associated demographic data systematically and by taking concrete steps such as expanding networks and sources for recruitment, reinforcing DEI values in job descriptions, posting salary range information, redacting applications to reduce bias, representing diversity through interview panels, reducing bias in interviews, and ensuring recruitment practices incorporate meaningful accommodations for people with disabilities.
- Support retention of diverse staff through proper onboarding, continuous reinforcement of an inclusive workplace (including through mentorship programs and employee resource groups, as appropriate), and equitable and transparent performance evaluation and compensation policies (including regular pay equity reviews).
- Support efforts across the sector to accelerate the advancement of young professionals and emerging INGO leaders from underrepresented groups (for example, through leadership fellowships and paying interns to ensure greater equity and diversity across the talent pipeline).
- Apply a DEI lens to organizational governance structures and approaches, as well as to partnerships, vendor relationships, and associated policies and procedures.

Most respondents (87%) indicated their organization had taken concrete steps to incorporate DEI principles into their hiring and recruitment process. An overwhelming response (83%), however, stated their organization does not use a redacted application screening process to reduce bias.

Most respondent organizations indicated that they have taken concrete steps to incorporate DEI principles into staff retention practices. 51 respondents (96%) to a question indicated that their organization offers a healthcare benefits package that includes services for mental health. Most organizations collect organizational data inclusive of disability status, gender identity, and race and ethnicity. However, 70% of organizations reported that they do not collect data on religion and 62% do not collect data on sexual orientation. Most organizations have hired DEI expert consultants or designated staff to evaluate gaps in current organizational practices (69%), created an internal team (67%), and communicated to their Board or equivalent governing body about budgeting for DEI (82%). However, 53% of organizations have not established targets for diversity within the organization or at the leadership level.

Has your organization has taken the following actions to incorporate DEI principles into your hiring and recruitment process?

% of organizations

Category	Yes	No
Since the start of 2022, my organization has expanded our recruitment networks and candidate sources to identify candidates from underrepresented groups	87%	9%
My organization references our commitment to DEI values in our job descriptions and postings	81%	15%
My organization posts salary range information in our job descriptions and postings	55%	42%
My organization uses a redacted application screening process to reduce bias	13%	83%
My organization promotes staff diversity on interview panels that meet with candidates	79%	17%
My organization pays our interns the minimum wage (or higher)	68%	28%

■ Yes   ■ No

Has your organization taken the following actions to incorporate DEI principles into your staff retention practices?

% of organizations

Category	Yes	No
My organization's guidance for formal staff performance assessments explicitly promotes attention to DEI issues	58%	38%
My organization conducts regular pay equity reviews	70%	26%
My organization offers a healthcare benefits package that includes services for mental health and wellness	96%	0%
My organization conducts regular check-ins on staff wellness	72%	25%

■ Yes   ■ No

Progress Toward Commitment Areas: Operations

Commitment Area	Has not considered this	Has started research on how to do this	Has begun implementation within the last year	Is fully implementing	Has succeeded in implementation	Has chosen not to pursue this	Did not respond
Allocating resources to fund DEI-focused staff, trainings, and other initiatives		2%	11%	38%	34%		15%
Establishing a platform or venue for ongoing internal dialogue among staff and leadership about DEI	4%	19%	11%	34%	17%		15%
My organization considers DEI when making decisions about external partnerships with vendors and consultants	21%	23%	9%	17%	6%		25%
My organization communicates consistently to staff about compensation policies	2%	9%	17%	43%	15%		13%
My organization onboards new staff by providing access to standardized employee policies and resources and ensures that new hires are given reasonable accommodations if needed	2%	6%	21%	32%	23%		17%

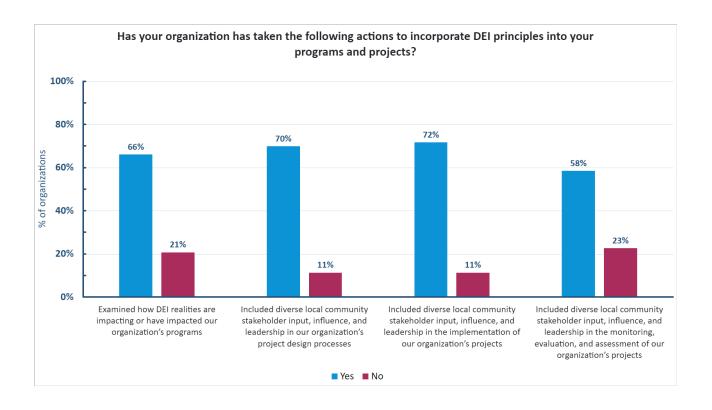# Commitment Area 2: Programs

The Compact commitments about organizational programs are as follows:

- Prioritize mainstreaming and institutionalizing DEI principles and commitments into all stages of programming. For example, including diverse local community stakeholder input, influence, and ideally leadership in project design, implementation, and subsequent monitoring, evaluation, and assessment of projects.
- Ensure that the voices from communities we serve, especially women, youth, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized groups, are informing and leading our programs.
- Apply an intersectional, inclusive lens to the existing approaches, tools, and processes our organizations use to develop and deliver programs from conception to funding to implementation.
- Implement new standards and processes to help center local partners in policy and funding discussions.

The baseline survey results showed that most organizations collect disaggregated program statistics on the inclusion of disabled people, gender identity, and race and ethnicity. However, 83% indicated that they do not collect information regarding sexual orientation of program participants. Most organizations indicated that they had taken the listed actions within the survey to incorporate DEI principles into their programs and projects.

Has your organization has taken the following actions to incorporate DEI principles into your programs and projects?

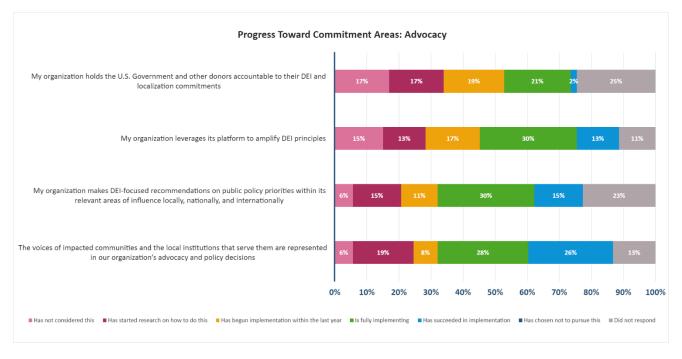|	Examined how DEI realities are impacting or have impacted our organization's programs	Included diverse local community stakeholder input, influence, and leadership in our organization's project design processes	Included diverse local community stakeholder input, influence, and leadership in the implementation of our organization's projects	Included diverse local community stakeholder input, influence, and leadership in the monitoring, evaluation, and assessment of our organization's projects
Yes	66%	70%	72%	58%
No	21%	11%	11%	23%

Most organizations are in the implementation stage when it comes to progress toward incorporating DEI principles into programs, except when it comes to making decisions about external partnerships with vendors and consultants. 21% of respondents indicated that their organizations had not considered the action, and 23% of organizations have started research on how to implement the action.

Commitment Area 3: Engagement & Advocacy

The Compact commitments about engagement and advocacy are as follows:

- Improve understanding among our constituents, donors, governing bodies, vendors, corporate partners, and staff of the challenges of global inequities and persistent injustices, including how they connect to the effective delivery of international development and humanitarian aid.
- Strategically work to make DEI-focused recommendations relevant to public policy priorities within our organizations' relevant areas of influence locally, nationally, and internationally.
- Ensure that the voices of impacted communities and the local institutions that serve them are represented in advocacy and policy decisions.

Based on the baseline survey, the majority of organizations have actively communicated the importance of DEI to key stakeholders. These include individual supporters and donors (73%), institutional donors (77%), the Board of Directors or equivalent governing body (100%), corporate partners (67%), and staff (98%). Notably, almost all organizations (98% and 100%, respectively) have effectively communicated with their staff and board members regarding DEI. However, the survey revealed a gap in communication with vendors and consultants. Only 45% of respondents reported having communicated the importance of DEI to these external partners, while 55% admitted they had not done so. 17% of respondents to the overall survey did not answer that specific question. Additionally, most organizations are currently in the implementation stage when it comes to incorporating DEI into their advocacy efforts, indicating ongoing progress but further work ahead (see the following chart for more details).

Progress Toward Commitment Areas: Advocacy

My organization holds the U.S. Government and other donors accountable to their DEI and localization commitments — 17% | 17% | 19% | 21% | 2% | 25%

My organization leverages its platform to amplify DEI principles — 15% | 13% | 17% | 30% | 13% | 11%

My organization makes DEI-focused recommendations on public policy priorities within its relevant areas of influence locally, nationally, and internationally — 6% | 15% | 11% | 30% | 15% | 23%

The voices of impacted communities and the local institutions that serve them are represented in our organization's advocacy and policy decisions — 6% | 19% | 8% | 28% | 26% | 13%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ Has not considered this   ■ Has started research on how to do this   ■ Has begun implementation within the last year   ■ Is fully implementing   ■ Has succeeded in implementation   ■ Has chosen not to pursue this   ■ Did not respond

Commitment Area 4: Communications

The Compact commitments about communications are as follows:

- Speak credibly and openly about DEI goals, progress, and outcomes internally and externally.
- Ensure DEI is explicitly incorporated into internal and external communications responsibilities, enabling consistent and aligned inclusive communications.
- Establish venue(s) for ongoing internal dialogue with employees around DEI questions and issues.
- Help the people we serve tell their authentic stories, centering our storytelling in their voices whenever possible, so they can be seen and heard for their aspirations and contributions instead of their circumstances.

The baseline survey shows most organizations reported that they do or have taken four out of five of the listed actions when it comes to incorporating DEI principles into internal and external communications:

- My organization communicates about the importance of DEI in our work (87%);
- My organization has made a public statement about our commitment to DEI (81%);
- My organization has conducted a content audit of our digital and traditional marketing collateral to ensure that it depicts people and their stories with dignity in line with DEI best practices (55%);

- My organization emphasizes individuals' and communities' strengths, aspirations, and contributions by using language that focuses on people's assets (79%).

What particularly stands out from this part of the baseline survey results is that 83% reported that their organizations do not maintain a clear process to ensure that all published content is collected and used ethically, truthfully, thoughtfully, and with respect.

Most organizations indicated they are in the implementation stage when it comes to progress toward incorporating DEI principles into internal and external communications, assessing the following statements:

- My organization explicitly incorporates DEI into the responsibilities of the staff focused on internal and external communications(27% have begun implementation within the last year, 31% are fully implementing, and 10% stated they have succeeded in implementation);
- My organization's management maintains ongoing internal communications with employees around DEI questions and issues (31% have begun implementation within the last year, 39% are fully implementing, and 14% stated they have succeeded in implementation);
- Communications practices empower the people my organization serves to tell their authentic stories in their own voice whenever possible (20% have begun implementation within the last year, 39% are fully implementing, and 30% stated they have succeeded in implementation).
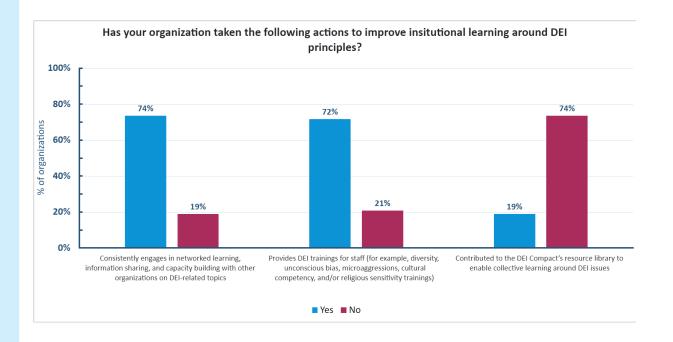
Commitment Area 5: Learning

The Compact commitments about learning are as follows:

- Learn about and create new decolonial approaches, tools, and processes in international development and humanitarian work to better examine practices, lessons learned, and experiences of harm associated with our work and enable us to more equitably and inclusively deliver on our missions.
- Work collectively through InterAction at multiple levels across our coalition of organizations to better advance DEI issues throughout organizations' programming, operational management, and advocacy.
- Engage in networked learning, information sharing, capacity building, and training opportunities while also participating in and benefiting from shared resources such as a resource library, peer-to-peer engagement and working groups associated with the implementation of this Compact.
- Participate in annual collective progress-monitoring surveys to measure coalition-wide advances across the set of commitments.
- Review our set of DEI Compact commitments in 2027 (after five years) to continue to advance the agenda and ensure strategic renewal of our approaches since the nature of the DEI realities we are operating under do evolve over time.

Over 70% of respondent organizations consistently engage in networked learning, information sharing, and capacity building with other organizations and provide DEI trainings for staff. However, only 19% have contributed to the DEI Compact's [resource library](#).

When asked to select topics that "would most support your organization's ability to implement the DEI Compact commitments over the next 12 months," 71% of responding organizations indicated that communications best practices (with a DEI focus) would most support their ability to implement the DEI Compact commitments over the next 12 months. Contending with unequal Global North/South power dynamics was the second most selected choice at 57%. Retaining diverse staff was third with 53%.

Has your organization taken the following actions to improve insitutional learning around DEI principles?

Chart: % of organizations

- Consistently engages in networked learning, information sharing, and capacity building with other organizations on DEI-related topics: Yes 74%, No 19%
- Provides DEI trainings for staff (for example, diversity, unconscious bias, microaggressions, cultural competency, and/or religious sensitivity trainings): Yes 72%, No 21%
- Contributed to the DEI Compact's resource library to enable collective learning around DEI issues: Yes 19%, No 74%

Legend: ■ Yes ■ No

ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

In addition to the annual progress survey, most organizations (83%) would be willing to participate in focus group discussions, and 64% said they would be willing to conduct an annual phone call with InterAction staff to talk through organizational success. Most respondents were also interested in networked learning opportunities, including training from outside experts and other Members, and a resource library in collaboration with partners (73%).

Encouragingly, 40% of respondents reported changes within their organization due to deliberating about and then signing the DEI Compact.

Comments about this effect included the following:

"The board members are opening the door to listening and willing to see the internal improvement seriously."

"Increased commitment from leadership to advancing and resourcing DEI."

"Yes. Recognition by board members of the many aspects that comprise DEI (not just a singular characteristic). Thank you for maintaining and sharing the library of resources so I could point to it and share it."

"Signing the compact has elevated our DEI work, allowed senior leadership as well as staff members to recognize the importance of this work, and signaled that we are accountable for our commitments. As the DEI leader in the organization, I feel it's given me more influencing authority."

"We are intentionally working to operationalize the values laid out in the compact."

"We've started implementing a lot of the compact and are working it into our overall strategy. It's providing us with clear checkpoint items to get done."