

# GLOBAL FOOD 50/50

## Inaugural 2021 Report

A review of the gender- and equity-related policies and practices of 52 organizations active in the global food system

GLOBAL HEALTH 5050  
TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY IN GLOBAL HEALTH



INTERNATIONAL  
FOOD POLICY  
RESEARCH  
INSTITUTE

IFPRI



# Acknowledgments

Global Food 50/50 is a joint initiative of Global Health 50/50 and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).

Global Health 50/50 was co-founded by Professors Sarah Hawkes and Kent Buse. Collective members who contributed to this report include: Valeria Bello, Tiantian Chen, Mireille Evagora-Campbell, Fizza Fatima, Sophie Gepp, Unsia Hussain, Lara Hollman, Jagnoor Jagnoor, Ekatha Ann John, Treasure Udechukwu, Kate Williams, Zahra Zeinali, and David Zezai. Sonja Tanaka and Anna Purdie coordinate and manage the GH5050 collective. The data presented in this report were collected by Global Health 50/50 with funding from the Wellcome Trust.

The engagement of the International Food Policy Research Institute in the Global Food 50/50 initiative is supported by USAID. At IFPRI, the process has been led by Jemimah Njuki and Hazel Malapit with inputs from the wider Gender Team. The early thinking on Global Food 50/50 was also informed by the UNFSS Gender Lever team, composed of Susan Kaaria, Reema Nanavaty, Kalpana Giri Wanjiku Chiuri, Kawinzi Muiu, and Ndaya Beltchika. Editing and layout support was kindly provided by IFPRI's Communications and Public Affairs Division.

Data reported in the Global Food 50/50 Report 2021 are licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution NonCommercial 4.0 International License held by Global Health 50/50.

**Suggested citation:** *Global Health 50/50 and the International Food Policy Research Institute, 'The Global Food 50/50 Report 2021', 2021.*

# Foreword

Gender equality is critical to equitable and sustainable food systems, but until now we have lacked much of the data needed to understand where gender inequities in food systems exist or how to address them. As gender equality has been prioritized, so too has the demand for timely information and accountability mechanisms determined to accelerate progress.

Global Food 50/50 aims to address this knowledge gap. By collecting and reporting key data on the gender dimensions of the leadership, policies, and work of organizations active in food systems, the Report will help ensure a sustained commitment to gender equality in food systems and accountability for organizations as they deliver on their goals.

Tracking progress and ranking performance is not enough – we also require new tools to address inequalities. In response to this need, the Report provides relevant actors with the information, analysis, and resources essential to achieving equality goals.

We must seize the momentum that has emerged through the Secretary-General-convened UN Food Systems Summit and use this moment to elevate the voices of women in food systems and correct structural gender inequalities.

The Global Food 50/50 Report challenges all actors in the global food system to respond to this call. With the knowledge and analysis it provides, we can make meaningful progress toward food systems that are more just, equitable, and sustainable.



**Amina J. Mohammed**

Deputy Secretary-General  
of the United Nations

# Preface

Over the last 18 months, the world's food systems – and the lives and livelihoods that depend on them – have been severely disrupted by the coronavirus pandemic. Lockdowns, disruptions to transport, restrictions on movement of labor, and other efforts to control the spread of the virus have increased poverty and hunger, and exposed weaknesses in our food systems, with an outsized impact on vulnerable groups. The pandemic has also highlighted the role that gender plays in determining health, life opportunities, employment, access to food, and overall well-being. In many places, women – who often earn their livelihoods through informal value chains and are responsible for putting food on their families' tables – suffered the greatest setbacks, losing employment, income, and access to nutritious foods.

The major international forums planned for the coming months, including the [UN Food Systems Summit](#), the [Nutrition for Growth Summit](#), and the [COP26](#) on climate change, offer a remarkable opportunity to transform our food systems in ways that address the need for greater resilience, equity, and well-being. International food organizations will be called on to play a key role in driving gender-equitable and human rights-based food systems transformation. Rigorous evidence that enables better accountability is needed to catalyze progress toward this goal.

Global Health 50/50 and IFPRI are delighted to embark on a new partnership, beginning with this report, that will provide vital indicators of the progress made by food organizations not only in bringing women into leadership and decision-making positions but also in putting gender equity at the heart of their work. The need for greater equity in our food systems is widely acknowledged, but many institutions have only just begun to address it. This report represents the first extension of the Global Health 50/50 model – from the health sector to the food sector – and has the potential to inform and drive fundamental institutional change where gender equity is lagging. Now is the time to move beyond rhetoric toward action that ignites real change.



**Kent Buse**

Co-Director, Global Health 50/50



**Johan Swinnen**

Director General, IFPRI



**Sarah Hawkes**

Co-Director, Global Health 50/50

# Executive Summary

## A NEW AND NECESSARY ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISM FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Gender equality is a precondition for achieving the world's shared ambitions of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, including delivering sustainable food systems. Gender is intricately linked to all aspects of food systems. From production to marketing and consumption, gender – representing the distribution of power and privilege – is woven throughout the fabric of food systems. As a result, gender inequalities are both a cause and an outcome of inequitable food systems that contribute to unjust food access, production, and consumption.

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed grave weaknesses in the global food system and severely threatens the world's ability to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal of ending hunger by 2030. The world saw a dramatic worsening of hunger in 2020, with an estimated one-tenth of the global population undernourished. At this critical juncture, stakeholders – farmers, health advocates, indigenous people, consumer groups, governments, UN agencies, businesses, and others – are scaling up commitments to advance food security and nutrition by transforming food systems.

This year, stakeholders are gathering at the UN Food Systems Summit, one year after the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which served as a global blueprint for gender equality and women's rights. The Food Systems Summit features action commitments collectively developed by thousands of actors, including commitments to confront discrimination and gender inequality across the global food system.

The primary aim of the Global Food 50/50 Report is to catalyze faster progress in this journey by enabling enhanced accountability driven by rigorous evidence. A second aim is to increase recognition of the role that gender plays in the food system for everybody – women and men, including transgender people, and people with nonbinary gender identities. This Report presents measures of how well an initial sample of global food system organizations are acknowledging and addressing gender as a determinant of opportunity, access, and participation in the global food system.

This inaugural 2021 Global Food 50/50 Report reviews the gender- and equity-related policies and practices of 52 global food system organizations as they relate to two interlinked dimensions of inequality: inequality of opportunity in career pathways inside organizations and inequality in who benefits from the global food system. The Report shows that organizational commitment to gender equality is high, and that over half of the organizations are transparent about their policies for shaping diverse, inclusive, and equitable working environments. The data also suggest, however, that rhetoric may be used as a substitute for action. Organizational leadership – CEOs and board chairs – remains disproportionately male and dominated by European and North American nationals. In the face of multiple global crises, a global food system dominated by individuals and institutions in high-income countries forgoes essential talent, knowledge, and expertise, with serious implications for progress toward a sustainable and equitable global food system.

The Report further finds that gender, as a key social dynamic that influences opportunity, access, and power in the global food system, remains under-appreciated, under-counted, and under-addressed. The data in this inaugural report can equip leaders at all levels – from communities to workforces to boards – to take concrete action, drive change, measure progress, and hold those in power accountable to their commitments to advance gender equality and transform food systems. A fairer, more gender-equal system will be best placed to end hunger, poverty, and inequality around the world.



**Women play key roles in food systems, and their empowerment is critical if we are to transform food systems to be sustainable, equitable, and just. Food systems stakeholders must remain accountable to ensuring women's agency and leadership. I am glad that this Global Food 50/50 Index and annual report provide a mechanism for them to do so. We as stakeholders must all stand and be counted – there are no two ways about this!**



**Dr. Agnes Kalibata,  
Special Envoy, UNFSS 2021**



# Key findings

**The 2021 report assesses organizations on 11 variables across 4 dimensions. Key findings include:**

**1. Most global food system organizations actively state that gender equality matters to their work**

- Over 90% (48/52) of organizations in the sample commit to gender equality.
- Half (27/52) of these organizations state what they mean by “gender,” while half are not seizing the narrative power of defining gender in their policies and strategies.

**2. Despite strong rhetoric, 1/3 of organizations lack transparent gender equality policies and diversity and inclusion policies**

- Gender equality policies were accessible for 67% (35/52) of the organizations.
- Diversity and inclusion policies, beyond those on gender diversity, were accessible for half of the organizations (27/52).
- Just a fifth of organizations have transparent board diversity and inclusion policies. Governing boards are among the most influential decision-makers in the global food system, yet four in five do not make available specific policy measures to advance diversity and inclusion.

**3. Gendered and geographic privilege in global food leadership is evident**

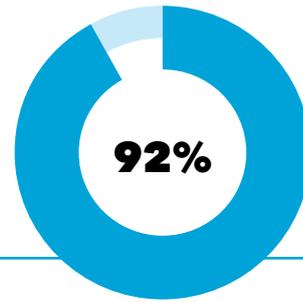
- Men held 73% (74/101) of CEO and board chair positions.
- For one-third of the organizations, women represent fewer than 34% of their senior management and governing bodies.
- Nationals of Europe and North America held 71% of CEO and board chair positions; nationals of all high-income countries held 78%.
- Just 6% (6/97) of leaders were women from low- and middle-income countries.
- Similar geographic power trends are observed in headquarters locations, with almost 80% (41/52) of the organizations headquartered in Europe or North America.

**4. Gender-responsive measures are common in organizational strategies, but only half of organizations report sex-disaggregated data**

- 60% (31/52) of the organizations position the work they do in relation to transforming gender norms and gendered systems and structures that stand in the way of better outcomes; another 30% integrate a gender lens in their work.
- 54% (28/52) of the organizations publish data on their programmatic delivery broken down by sex.

# OVER 90% (48/52)

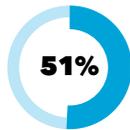
of the organizations commit to gender equality



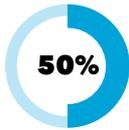
Fewer organizations, however, have transparent policies to promote diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplaces.



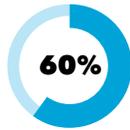
organizations with gender equality policies



organizations with diversity and inclusion policies



organizations with sexual harassment policies



organizations with parental leave policies

Even fewer see policy commitments to workplace equality translated into equitable outcomes in power, parity, and pay.

Among CEOs and board chairs...

73% are men



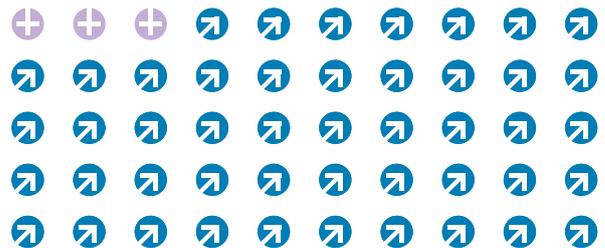
78% are nationals of high-income countries



91% were educated in high-income countries



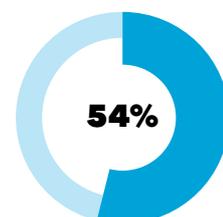
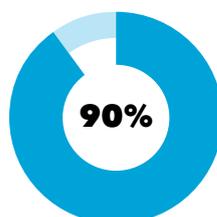
## Just 6% of leaders are women from low- and middle-income countries



Most organizations recognize the role of gender in influencing their programmatic outcomes, but fewer publish sex-disaggregated data that would allow for analysis by sex.

90% of the organizations address the role of gender and gender norms in their programmatic strategies,

while 54% of the organizations publish data broken down by sex.



# SECTION 1

## WHY GENDER MATTERS

Gender has a fundamental bearing on how power and privilege are distributed and maintained in every society, institution, organization, community, and family around the world. Gender norms determine opportunities across the life-course, including access to healthy food – with its attendant impact on health and well-being – and the likelihood that systems of land ownership and resources for food production will be distributed fairly. Gender also acts as a gateway to revealing and understanding opportunity, expectations, and achievements along other socially constructed identities, such as class, geography, ethnicity/race, migration status, age, and (dis)ability.

Together, these constructions influence whether people – men and boys, women and girls, including transgender people, and people with nonbinary gender identities – can realize their fundamental human rights, including their rights to health, to safe and nutritious food, and to freedom from hunger.

In this way, gender justice and food justice are closely linked. Gender inequalities are both a cause and an outcome of unsustainable food systems and unjust food access, production, marketing and promotion, and consumption. Evidence shows that unequal access and rights to important resources in food systems undermines women’s empowerment and productivity. Unequal food systems also make women and girls more vulnerable to chronic food and nutrition insecurity as well as to shock-induced food insecurity. As the world’s attention falls on redesigning food systems to deliver safe and healthy food, livelihoods, and sustainable environments for all, it is equally important to ensure that the human rights of half of its producers and consumers – women – are not denied.

Inadequate attention and action on gender norms prevent global food system organizations from delivering results that leave no one behind and from building more equitable, innovative, and effective workplaces.

Food system organizations must be part of creating a just and equitable food system: One in which women’s roles move from being invisible to being visible, and women’s voices are heard and their leadership amplified. One where the food system roles, responsibilities, opportunities, and choices available to women and girls, men and boys, and people with nonbinary identities are not predetermined by restrictive gender roles, and social and cultural norms and power imbalances are not entry barriers for many women and girls.

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

The establishment of the Global Food 50/50 initiative is a response to broad stakeholder demand for a global food system that is accountable for measurable and meaningful progress toward gender equality. This global mechanism will monitor progress and hold food system organizations accountable for achieving gender equality in leadership, adopting gender-equitable internal workplace policies, and implementing strategies that advance progress toward gender-just and equitable food systems.

This new mechanism emerges from the existing Global Health 50/50 (GH5050) initiative. Each year since its launch in 2018, GH5050 shines a light on whether and how organizations are addressing two interlinked dimensions of inequality: inequality of opportunity in career pathways inside organizations and inequality in who benefits from the global health system. The experience of GH5050 demonstrates that rigorous independent analysis placed in the public domain and amplified by narratives about what is acceptable (and unacceptable) in society can drive progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals and validate the decisive role that gender equality plays in their achievement.

Global Food 50/50, a joint initiative of GH5050 and IFPRI, aims to achieve a similar impact in the global food system and act as an entry point for a cascade of changes throughout food systems. This report urges actors and organizations to question systems of power – global, national, and local, interpersonal, and institutional – and how they undermine an equitable and sustainable global food system. It also urges an assessment of how social, economic, and political structures intersect with one another to drive vulnerability and marginalization among those with less power. The Global Food 50/50 initiative argues that a combination of gender-responsive programming, gender-equitable institutions, and diversity in leadership will lead to more effective organizations and more equitable and inclusive food systems.

This Report presents findings on the gender- and equity-related policies and practices of 52 global organizations active in the food system from the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors around the world. Data are drawn from a snapshot of publicly available information collected between October 2020 and February 2021. These data were originally reported as part of a larger sample of 201 organizations in the 2021 Global Health 50/50 Report. Full details of the methodology are provided in Annex 1. The detailed scorecard for each organization is provided in Annex 2. Results for each organization can also be found on the interactive Gender and Food Index: <https://globalfood5050.org/gender-food-index/>.

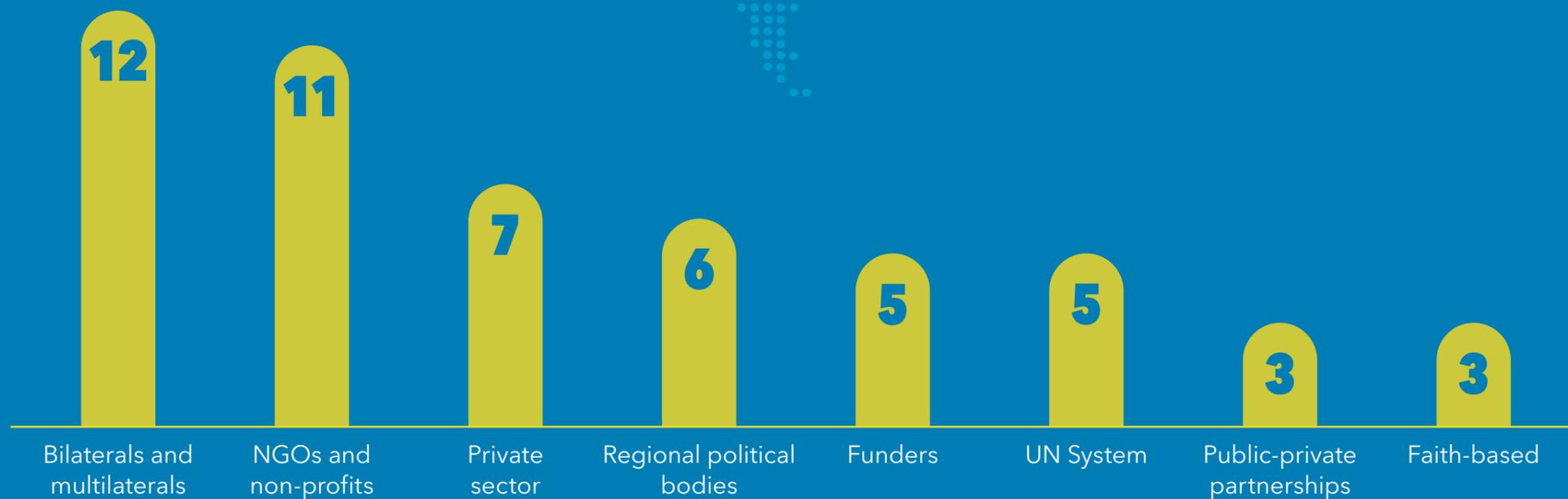
# Global Food System Organizations

## Where is power concentrated? Headquarters location of 52 global food system organizations included in this report

The 52 organizations reviewed are headquartered across 20 countries, and six of the seven global regions. Nearly half are headquartered in Europe (46%), and 33% are headquartered in North America. 56% of organizations are headquartered in just three countries: the UK, the US, and Switzerland. No organizations are headquartered in the Middle East and North Africa Region.



## Organizations by sector



# Framework of the 2021 Global Food 50/50 Report

Organizations are assessed on 11 variables across 4 dimensions.

Dimension	Variable
<p><b>1: Commitment to redistribute power</b> Organizational commitment to gender equality and an official definition of gender that is consistent with global norms.</p> <p><b>Page 13</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Organizational public commitment to gender equality</li> <li>2. Organizational definition of gender</li> </ol>
<p><b>2: Policies to tackle power and privilege imbalances at work</b> Responsive policies that promote equality in attracting and retaining people, contribute to safe and respectful work environments, and are family-friendly.</p> <p><b>Page 16</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Workplace gender equality policy</li> <li>4. Workplace diversity and inclusion policy</li> <li>5. Sexual harassment policy</li> <li>6. Parental leave policies and flexible working options for work-life balance</li> </ol>
<p><b>3: Gender and geography of global food leadership</b> Outcomes in terms of gender balance in senior management, governing bodies, and leadership and the gender pay gap.</p> <p><b>Page 23</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Gender parity in senior management and in the governing body</li> <li>8. Gender, nationality, education, and age of the executive head and chair of the governing body</li> <li>9. Gender pay gap</li> </ol>
<p><b>4: Addressing the gendered power dynamics of inequalities in outcomes</b> Global programs and monitoring that account for gender as a determinant of inequitable health outcomes.</p> <p><b>Page 26</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Gender-responsiveness of global programs</li> <li>11. Sex-disaggregated monitoring and evaluation data</li> </ol>

# SECTION 2

## OUR FINDINGS: GENDER POLICIES, PRACTICES, AND OUTCOMES IN THE GLOBAL FOOD SYSTEM

Results for individual organizations can be found in Annex 1 and in the Gender and Food Index:<sup>1</sup> <https://globalfood5050.org/gender-food-index/>.

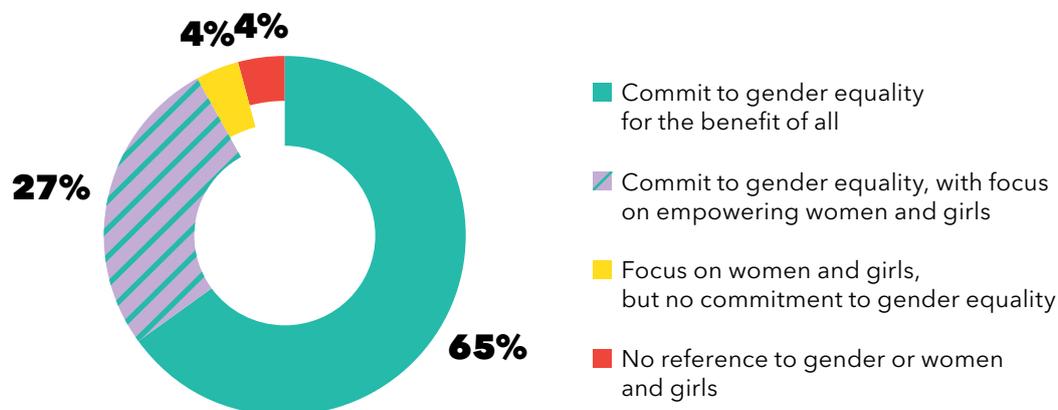
### Commitment to redistribute power

#### Stated commitment to gender equality is high

The visions, missions, and core strategy documents of organizations are reviewed to identify whether organizations commit to gender equality, a crucial first step in organizations’ accountability for their progress in redistributing power and privilege.

Most organizations in the sample – 92% (48/52) – have made a public statement of commitment to gender equality. This includes those organizations that commit to gender equality for the benefit of all people as well as those that commit to gender equality with a specific focus on empowering women and girls. Four organizations made no mention of gender equality.

#### Commitment to gender equality



<sup>1</sup> While the subset of organizations presented here is drawn from the larger GH5050 sample, the subset differs in notable ways, particularly in terms of sectoral distribution and the proportion of large organizations represented. Therefore, these results should not be compared to the aggregate findings of the full sample in the 2021 GH5050 report.

## Definition of gender



**Defining gender in a way that is consistent with global norms is a political act – in that it confronts efforts around the world that try to manipulate the term, hijack it or erase it entirely. Anti-gender movements are visible across most regions. Their core assertions – particularly that the very concept of gender sows confusion and destabilizes the traditional family and the natural order of society – have been embraced and recited by leaders and political parties at the highest levels of power.**

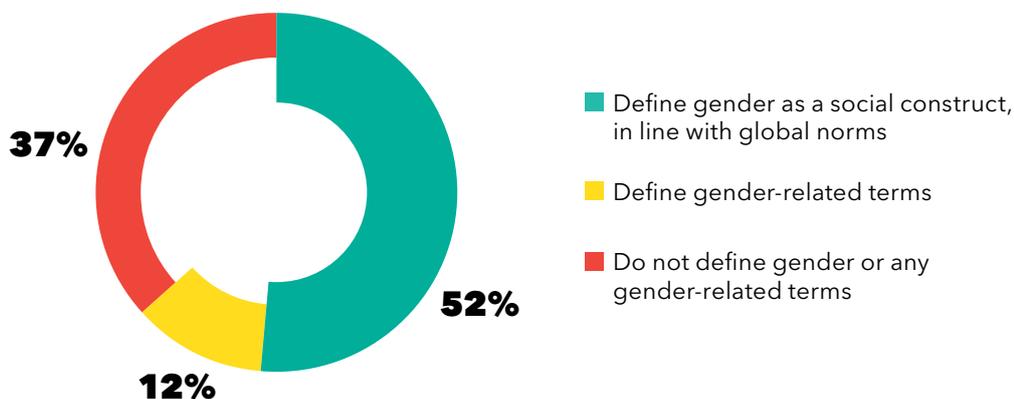


### 2020 Global Health 50/50 Report

The use of the term “gender” remains contested in many global spaces. It is therefore essential for global organizations to be clear and consistent in their definition of gender as a social construct rooted in systems, culture, norms, behaviors, and mindsets. Understanding gender as a social construction (rather than a biological trait, for example) reveals the ways in which gendered power relations permeate structures and institutions across all societies.

Of 52 organizations, 27 (52%) define gender in a way that is consistent with global norms (applying UN Women’s definition), while 12% (6/52) define only gender-related terms. Only 14% (7/52) have definitions that are explicitly inclusive of transgender and nonbinary gender identities.

### Defining gender



## Definition of gender: Example from Nutrition International



**Sex and gender are sometimes used interchangeably, but have different meanings and implications:**

**Sex refers to a set of biological attributes. It is primarily associated with physical and physiological features including chromosomes, gene expression, hormone levels and function, and reproductive/sexual anatomy. Sex is usually categorized as female or male but there is variation in the biological attributes that comprise sex and how those attributes are expressed.**

**Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, expressions and identities of girls, women, boys, men, and gender diverse people. It influences how people perceive themselves and each other, how they act and interact, and the distribution of power and resources in society. Gender is usually conceptualized as binary (girl/woman and boy/man) yet there is considerable diversity in how individuals and groups understand, experience, and express it.**



**Program Gender Equality Strategy,  
Nutrition International 2018**

## Policies to advance equity and tackle power and privilege imbalances in the workplace

A working environment that embraces equality of opportunity and is inclusive of all staff relies both on committed leadership and empowered staff, supported by a comprehensive set of policies that aim to address the complex and structural nature of inequality. These policies are the building blocks that provide rules, standards, and guidelines for organizations' ways of working, and are the means through which organizations can be held to account for gender equality.

Most organizations under review operate in countries with legal frameworks that protect workers against discrimination, including equal employment opportunity laws and equal pay laws. Yet while such laws are essential, they are insufficient to level the playing field when individual bias and institutional discrimination that disadvantage women continue to reinforce existing systems of power. Advancing equality requires facing up to historical injustices, identifying how they are perpetuated through existing power structures, and taking action. For example, this could mean putting specific measures in place to support the careers of historically underrepresented groups, including women.

This Report presents findings on which organizations are translating their commitments to gender equality into practice through action-oriented, publicly available workplace policies. It identifies which organizations go beyond minimum legal requirements and implement affirmative policies and programs with specific measures to actively advance and correct for historical inequalities.

These include:

- Gender equality policy/plan
- Diversity and inclusion policy/plan
- Board diversity and inclusion policy
- Anti-sexual harassment policy
- Parental leave policy
- Support to parents returning to work
- Flexible working arrangements

### Access the policies

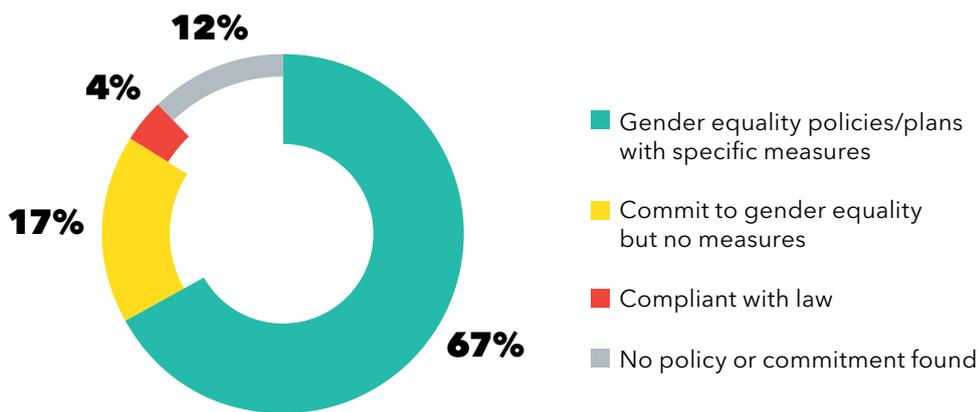
To read all publicly available workplace policies and plans that were reviewed for this report, go to: <https://globalhealth5050.org/2021-policy-links/>

## Workplace gender equality policies

67% (35/52) of the organizations were found to have publicly available workplace gender equality policies or plans that contain explicit targets, programs, or measures to guide and monitor progress. Specific measures found included: gender-responsive recruitment and hiring processes; mentoring, training, and leadership programs; targets for women’s participation at senior levels; gender analysis and action in staff performance reviews and staff surveys; regular reviews of organizational efforts toward gender equality; and reporting back to all staff.

A further 17% (9/52) of the organizations lack specific measures but commit to gender equality in the workplace, while no mention of a commitment to gender equality in the workplace was found for 16% (8/52) of organizations.

### Workplace policies to promote gender equality

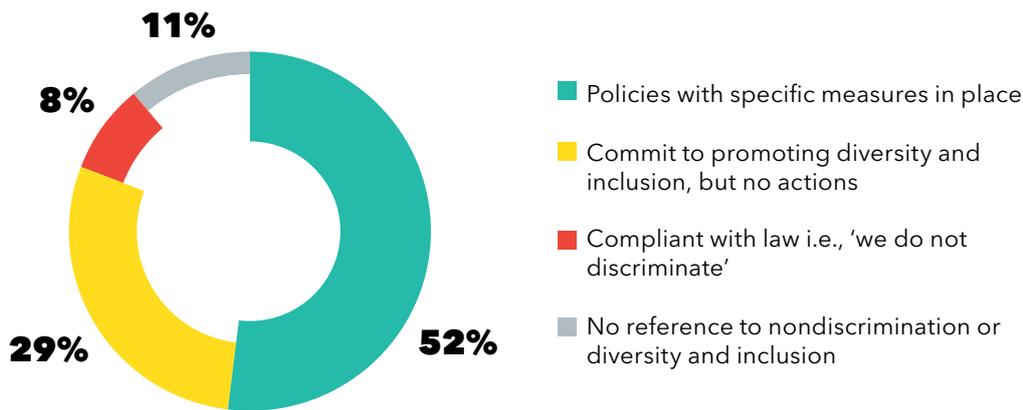


## Workplace diversity and inclusion policies

Recognizing the dynamic interconnectedness of gender with other social identities and stratifiers is integral to understanding privilege and disadvantage in the workplace, and thus to developing solutions that benefit all women and men, including transgender people, and people with nonbinary gender identities, and to building a truly diverse workforce.

52% (27/52) of the organizations were found to have policies that contain specific measures to advance diversity and inclusion – beyond gender – in the workforce. A commitment to diversity and inclusion in the workplace was found for an additional 29% (15/52) of the organizations. No reference to diversity and inclusion was found for 19% (10/52) of the organizations.

## Workplace policies to advance diversity and inclusion

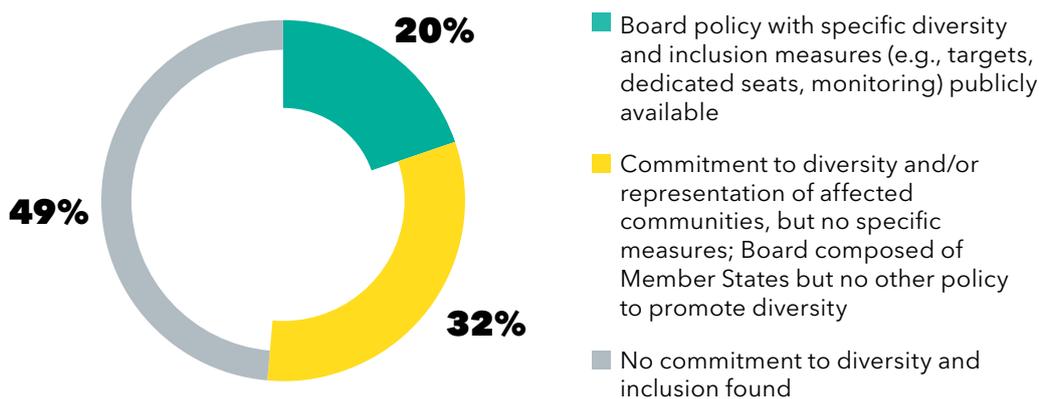


## Board diversity and inclusion policies

Boards of directors are arguably the most influential decision-makers in the global food system. They often nominate an organization’s leadership and determine organizational goals and strategies. Yet continued lack of diversity in boards means that they lack the perspectives of key stakeholders, including the communities they are mandated to serve.

Of the 52 organizations reviewed, only 20% (10/52) have publicly available policies to promote diversity and inclusion in their governing bodies. No commitment or specific measures to advance diverse representation in their governing body were located for half (49%) of the organizations.

## Board diversity and inclusion policies



## Anti-sexual harassment policies

Working environments globally continue to be beset by problems of sexual harassment and abuse of power. A comprehensive and transparent sexual harassment policy is a fundamental tool to prevent and address sexual harassment and to contribute to the creation of a work environment that is based on dignity and respect.

Global Food 50/50 assesses whether organizations make their anti-sexual harassment policies available to the public. Policies are then reviewed to determine the presence of four best practice elements. This framework draws on existing global norms (including the United Nations Model Policy), a range of public and private sector guidelines, and peer-reviewed publications (see Box).

## **GH5050 four best practice elements of a comprehensive sexual harassment policy**



### **COMMITMENT & DEFINITION**

Does the policy: state the organization's zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment; and sufficiently define sexual harassment and/or provide clear examples of sexual harassment?



### **CONFIDENTIALITY & NON-RETALIATION**

Does the policy guarantee: confidentiality of the investigation; and non-retaliation for complainants?



### **TRAINING**

Does the policy guarantee mandatory training for all staff?

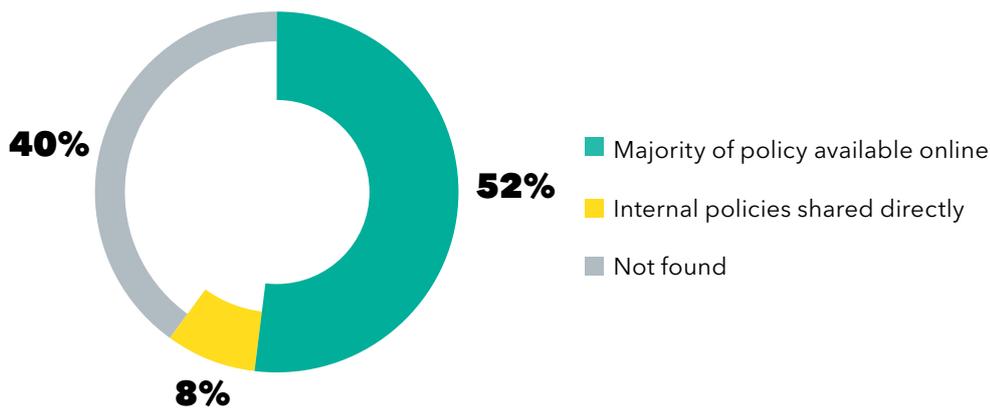


### **REPORTING & ACCOUNTABILITY**

Does the policy describe: the formal and informal reporting processes; the sanctions that will apply to those who commit sexual harassment; how complaints will be investigated; and whether the results of investigations will be reported back to all staff?

Half (27/52) of the organizations published their anti-harassment policies online. Four organizations shared and consented to the assessment of their internal anti-harassment policies. No references to tackling workplace harassment were identified for 40% (21/52) of the organizations.

## Anti-sexual harassment policies



Of the 31 public and internal organizational policies reviewed, 21 (67%) were considered to perform adequately by including at least two of the four essential best practices. This includes 11 policies that had all four elements.

## Anti-sexual harassment policies with best practice elements (of 31 reviewed)



## Parental leave policies

Equitable paid parental leave policies are critical to fostering gender transformative norms around shared family care duties, promoting women’s equality in career opportunities, compensating women for their reproductive labor, and closing the gender pay gap. Such entitlements further contribute to better recruitment results, higher employee morale, and increased productivity, as well as benefiting the health and well-being of families.

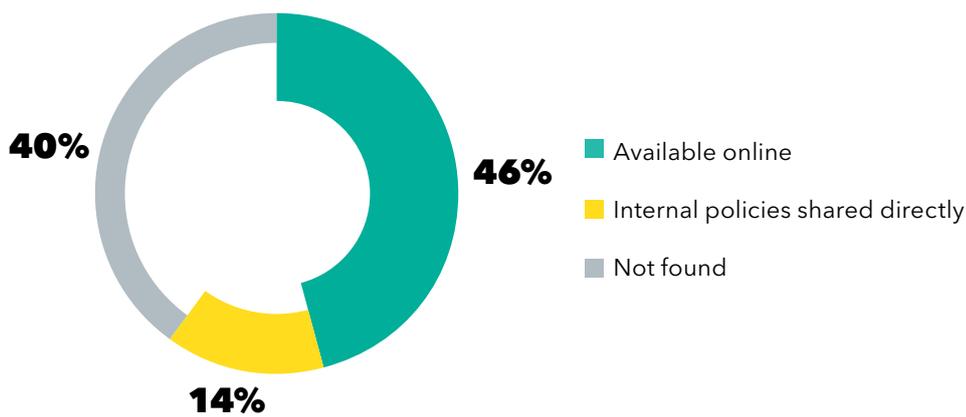
GF5050 assessed the number of paid weeks of leave available to primary and secondary caregivers as well as options for parental and shared parental leave. It also reviewed whether organizations offer support to parents returning to work, such as flexible transitions back to work, reduced or part-time working hours, facilities for breastfeeding mothers, and/or childcare support.

**For definitions of many of the terms used here, including maternity leave, paternity leave, parental leave and flexible working, visit <https://globalhealth5050.org/glossary/>.**

Parental leave policies were found online for 46% (24/52) of the organizations. An additional 14% (7/52) of organizations did not have policies available online but shared internal parental leave policies. For 40% (21/52) of organizations, no parental leave policies were found.

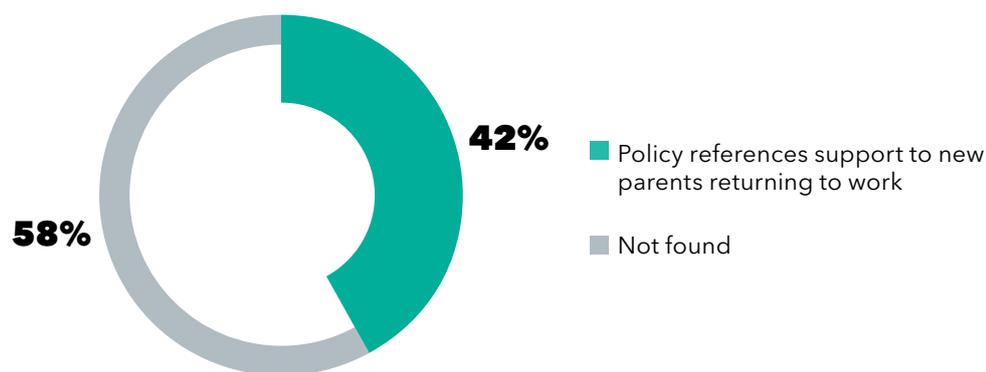
The 31 policies reviewed vary widely, in part because they respond to the standards set by national and subnational legislation in the countries where the organizations are located. Among the policies reviewed, guaranteed paid leave for primary and secondary caregivers ranged from 0 to 68 weeks.

### Parental leave policies



Comprehensive parental leave policies are insufficient in promoting equitable working environments and career pathways without support to new parents returning to work. Policies that include support for new parents returning to work, such as on-site breastfeeding facilities, childcare support, transitional flexible working arrangements, and mentoring programs, were found for 42% (22/52) of organizations.

### Policies to support new parents

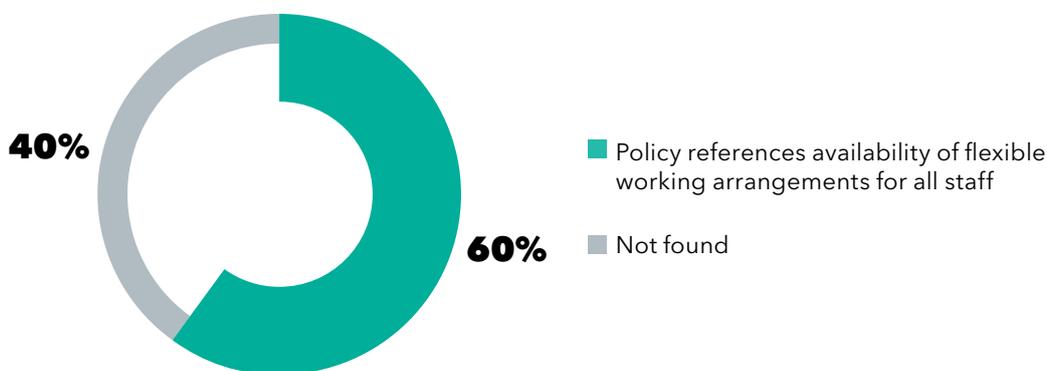


## Flexible working arrangements

As has been made starkly visible in the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, major caring responsibilities are not equally or equitably divided across society. The major burdens of homecare and home-schooling responsibilities have fallen on women. Employee control over how many hours they work and when has become essential to allow for these responsibilities. In some [countries](#), all workers have a legal right to request flexible working arrangements, and employers are legally obliged to deal with these requests “in a reasonable manner.”

Beyond the pandemic, younger generations have greater expectations of flexibility, autonomy, and work-life balance than their predecessors. 60% (31/52) of the organizations had policies that referenced flexible working arrangements for all staff members. Flexible working policies were not found for 40% (21/52) of organizations.

### Flexible working arrangement policies



**The Global Food 50/50 Report promises to be an invaluable way to support food system organizations in the public and private sectors to walk the talk on gender equity. For GAIN, the report will help us to continue to improve our gender balance in organizational development and programmatic focus. It will hold up a mirror and help us identify where and how we can do better to transform gender power relationships: for women, for food systems, for everyone.**



**Dr. Lawrence Haddad, Executive Director,  
Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition**



# Gender and geography of leadership in the global food system

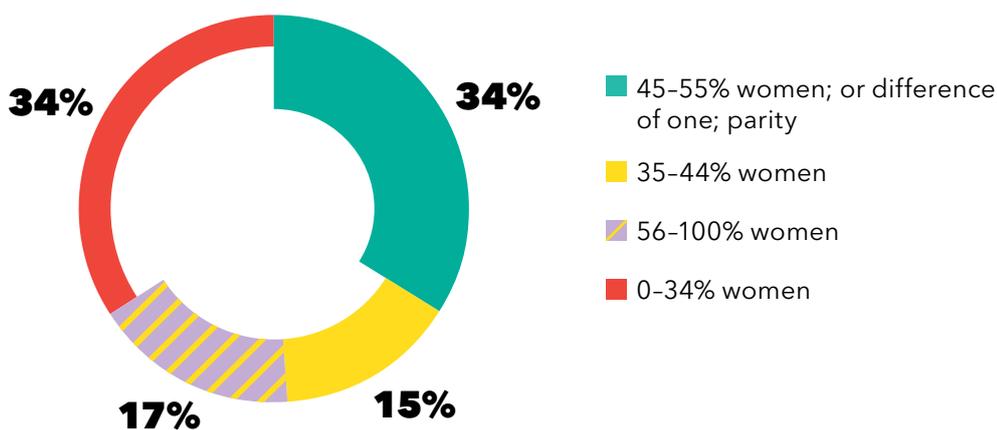
The demographics of who holds positions of authority provide a strong measure of the progress organizations are making in fostering equity in career advancement, decision-making, and power. It also shines a light on the people and perspectives that are glaringly absent in global food system leadership. To capture the intersection of gender with other characteristics, publicly available demographic information on CEOs and board chairs is gathered, including nationality, highest educational degree attained, university where that degree was attained, and approximate age. These proxy measures provide some insight into who holds power and privilege in global food organizations.

## Gender parity in senior management and governing bodies

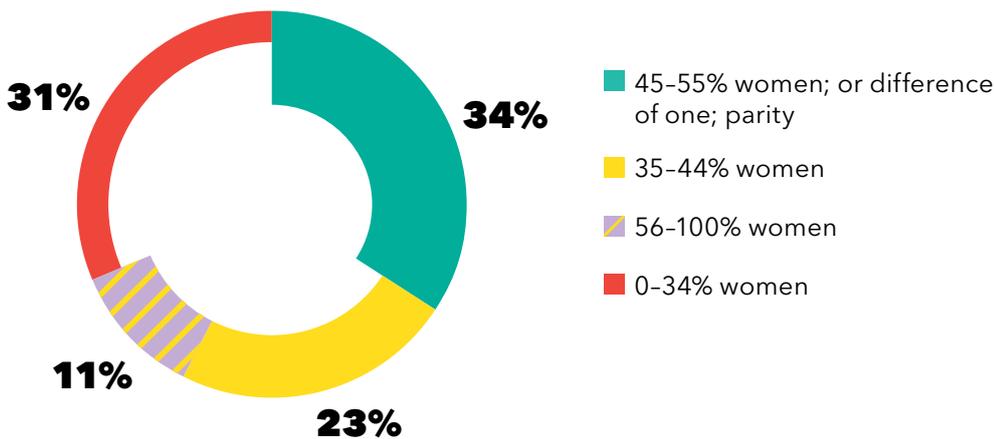
The number of women and men in positions of authority provides a strong measure of equity in career advancement, decision-making, and power. While the professional world operates at the end of a long pipeline littered with obstacles for many people, organizations can decide whether to passively reinforce or actively seek to correct historical disadvantage and inequality.

One in three organizations have gender parity in their senior management (16/47) and in their governing bodies (12/35). In the same proportion of organizations – one in three – women account for less than 34% of the senior management and governing bodies.

### Gender parity in senior management



## Gender parity in governing bodies



## Gender pay gap

Comparing the average hourly pay of men and women provides a clear measure of power and privilege. Typically, the gender pay gap reflects the gendered distribution of employees across the levels of an organization – if an organization has more men in senior positions and more women in lower-paid posts, it will have a wider gender pay gap.

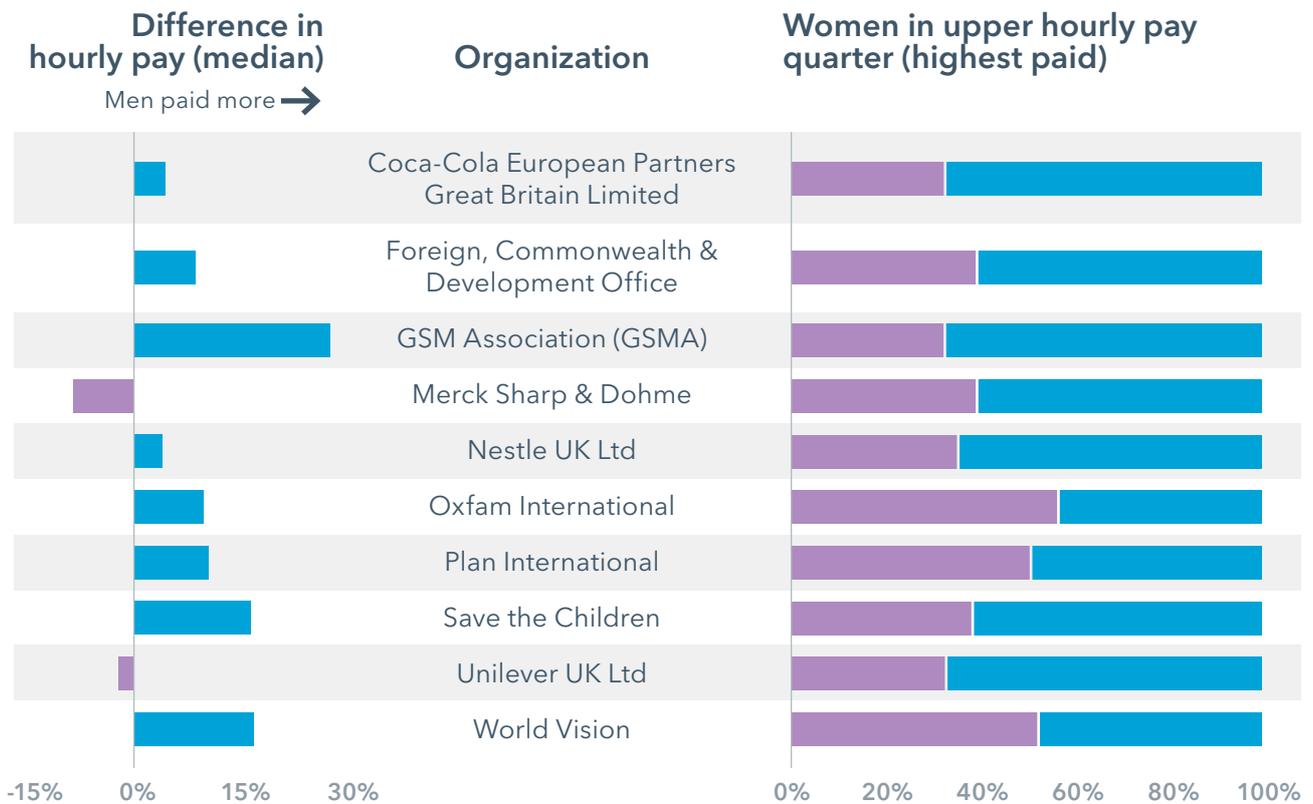
In this period of the COVID-19 pandemic’s continued and unprecedented disruption of working lives, major increases in the burden of unpaid care, and evidence of women’s financial hardship and increased poverty at higher rates than men, measuring the gender pay gap takes on a new urgency.

Among the 52 organizations reviewed, 12 (23%) were found to publicly report their gender pay gap data. Ten organizations are required to report under UK law, and one organization is required to report under French law. Just one organization voluntarily calculates and publishes its gender pay gap data in the absence of statutory requirements (Care International).

Given that most of the available gender pay gap data are published by UK-based organizations, our analysis focuses on these data.

Among the 10 organizations required to report under UK law, there was a significant gender pay gap in the latest data reported, with a range from –8.4% (in favor of women) to +27.3% (in favor of men). Median pay is higher for men in 8 of the 10 organizations reporting.

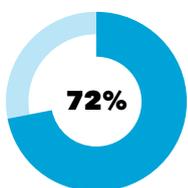
## Gender pay gap and percentage of women in highest pay quarter of organizations required to report under UK law



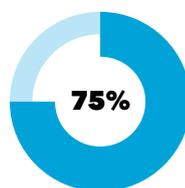
## Gender and nationality of CEOs and board chairs

Demands to end power and privilege imbalances and ensure greater diversity in leadership reached new heights in 2020. Yet among the sample of 52 organizations, 72% of CEOs and 75% of board chairs are men.

### Gender of CEOs and board chairs



72% of executive heads are men (38/53<sup>2</sup>).



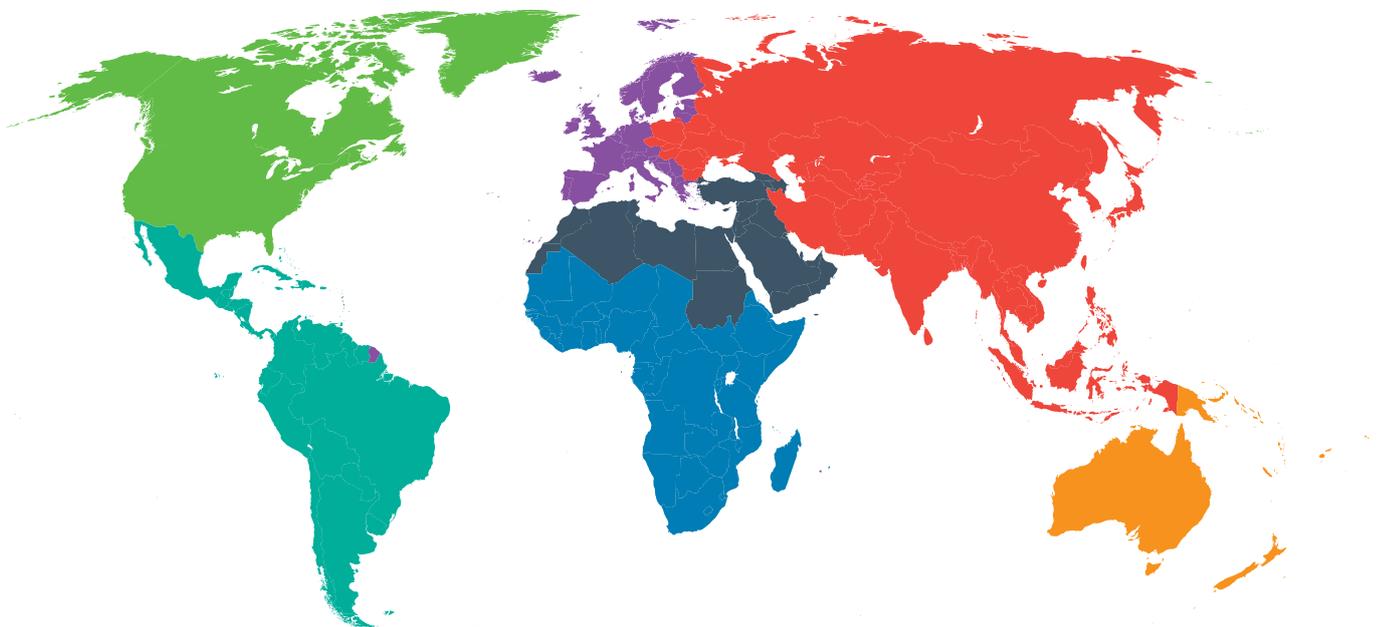
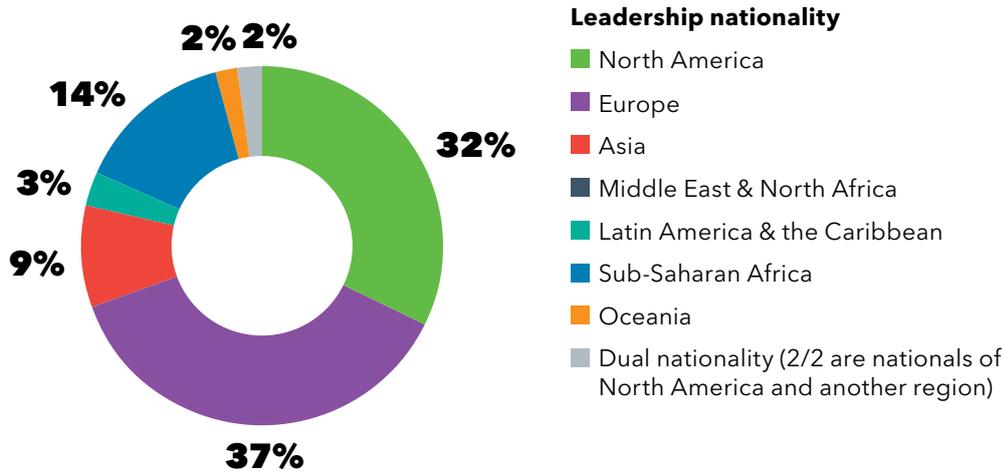
75% of board chairs are men (36/48).

Nationals of North America and Europe dominate the top leadership positions of the sample of global food organizations. 71% (69/97) of all CEOs and board chairs whose nationality could be determined are nationals of these two regions.

Just 22% of leaders are nationals of low- and middle-income countries, although these countries are home to 83% of the world’s population. Only 6% of CEOs and board chairs are women from low- and middle-income countries.

<sup>2</sup> One organization in the sample has two executive heads.

### Nationality of 97 CEOs and Board Chairs



## Taking a gender-responsive approach to improving food systems

Inadequate attention and action on gender norms prevents global food system organizations from delivering results that leave no one behind.

A gender-responsive approach requires organizations to implement strategies that advance progress toward gender-just and equitable food systems – from gender-transformative planning, investment, and programming to promoting changes in the norms and power structures that influence food access, consumption, and production.

## Gender-responsiveness of global food programs

A total of 60% of the organizations (31/52) promote gender-transformative approaches in their policies and programs, meaning they not only recognize the root causes of gender inequality but also foster strategies and policies to promote progressive change.

An additional 37% (19/52) of the organizations were found to be gender-sensitive or gender-specific. Gender-sensitive approaches (3 organizations; 6%) recognize gender norms but do not propose remedial actions to address gender inequities. Gender-specific approaches (16 organizations; 31%) take gender norms into account, usually by targeting a specific group of women or men to meet certain needs. These organizations stop short, however, of addressing the underlying causes of inequities and fostering progressive changes in the gendered power relationships between people. As such, they are not considered gender transformative. 4% (2/52) of the organizations reviewed were entirely gender blind.

The majority of organizations that consider gender (31/50, 62%) specify a particular focus on women and girls. No organization specified a focus on men and boys in their programmatic work, and just 3 of these 50 organizations (6%) state a focus on transgender populations.



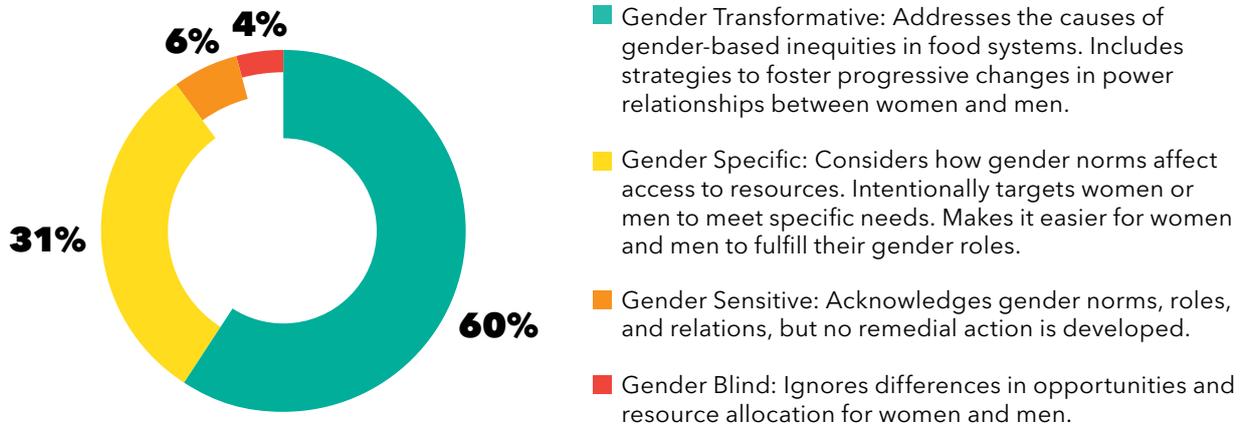
**The Global Food 50/50 report is precisely the kind of clarion call we need on gender equality and women's empowerment in food systems. The gender gaps in leadership of organizations working in food systems are enormous and this needs to change. And this matters most where people are hungry and malnourished – women in local food systems have extensive capacities and are both able and willing to step into community and national leadership roles if they are given the opportunity. Gender policies can help but only if they are ambitious and seek transformation at every level. The report will also act as an important accountability tool for those of us in food systems organizations. This is not just about numbers but about profound changes in the way women and men reflect and act upon power relations, inequity and injustice.**



**Michelle Nunn,**  
President and CEO of CARE USA



## Gender-responsiveness of organizational approaches (applying the WHO Gender-Responsiveness Scale)

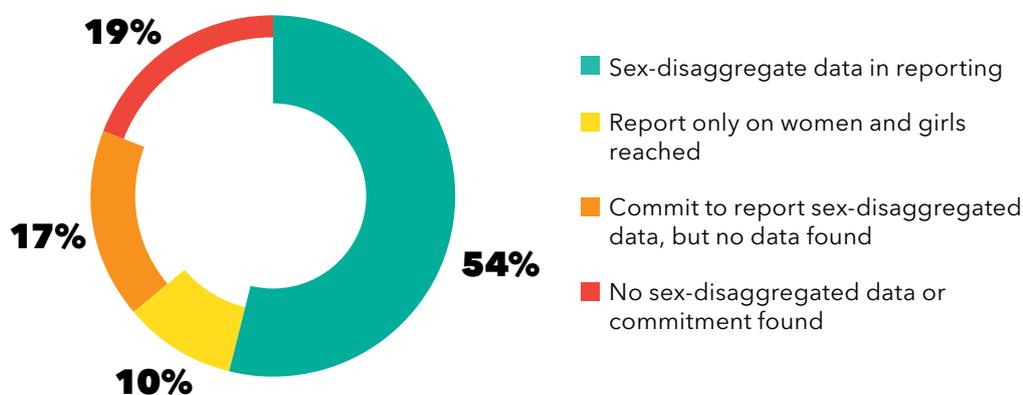


## Do organizations report sex-disaggregated data on their programmatic activities?

Sex-disaggregated data combined with gender analysis contribute to identifying disparities in food systems, including in access, consumption, and production. Such data helps in the design of policies and programs to close gaps and reduce inequities and allows for the monitoring and evaluation of whether the benefits of policies and programs are distributed equitably (i.e., according to need).

Just over half – 54% (28/52) – of the organizations were found to be providing data on their programmatic delivery broken down by sex. For 36% (19/52) of the organizations, no sex-disaggregation of data was found.

## Organizations that sex-disaggregate their programmatic data



# Conclusions

This inaugural report from Global Food 50/50 has revealed a sector and system characterized by a broad commitment to issues of equality, social justice, and inclusion. However, despite the pledges and commitments, organizations in the global food system nonetheless lack consistent and comprehensive policies to promote the much-needed rebalancing of power and privilege across the sector. The findings from this first report reveal a sector with good intentions in place but highlight the need to move to accountable action and impact.

With less than a decade left until 2030, the skewed distribution of power and privilege is undermining global efforts to reach the Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 2 to end hunger and SDG 5 to achieve gender equality. More representative and diverse global food system organizations are likely to be more effective in providing support to communities and countries to create fairer and healthier societies.

Global Food 50/50 encourages leaders at all levels, staff, and all stakeholders to take ownership of the demand for gender equality. The data in this inaugural report can equip leaders at all levels – from communities to workforces to organization boards to take concrete action, drive change in closing these gaps, and hold those in power accountable.

# Annex 1. Methodology for the 2021 Report

The Global Food 50/50 Report reviews 52 global food system organizations. These are global organizations (operational in more than three countries). Data are drawn from the 2021 Global Health 50/50 Report, which reviews 201 organizations active in global health, including those that aim to influence global health policy even if it is not their core function. The sample covers organizations from 10 sectors, headquartered in 37 countries, which together employ over 4.5 million people.

A short web review was carried out to determine which organizations in the GH5050 sample also have activities in food systems, including agriculture, fisheries, nutrition, trade, and consultancy in the food sector among other activities. Based on this analysis, 52 organizations from 8 sectors (see page 10) were selected for inclusion.

Data are derived through a rigorous [methodology](#) that is consistent with established systematic review research methods. At least two reviewers extract each data item independently, and a third reviewer verifies the data. Data are coded according to content, using a traffic light system.

Most data come from publicly available websites, though organizations are invited to share some internal human resource policies confidentially for review. Transparency and accountability are closely related – by relying on publicly available data, the report aims to hold organizations to account, including for having gender-related policies accessible to the public. Following completion of data collection, each organization receives their preliminary results and is invited to provide any additional information, documentation, or policies to review. Results are shared again with all organizations before publication for verification.

# Annex 2. Gender and Food Index: Organizational scores

## Scoring key

\* An asterisk indicates that a score is based on information that is not publicly available.

### Commitment to gender equality

<b>G (green)</b>	Commitment to gender equality/equity with gender referring to men and women, gender justice, or gender mainstreaming in policy and planning
 <b>GP (green/purple)</b>	Commitment to achieve gender equality, with focus on empowering women and girls
<b>A (amber)</b>	Organization works on women's health and well-being, but makes no formal commitment to gender equality; commitment to social justice and health equity, but makes no formal commitment to gender equality
<b>R (red)</b>	No mention of gender
<b>+</b>	Commitment is inclusive of LGBTQI

### Definition of Gender

<b>G (green)</b>	Consistent with WHO definition
<b>A (amber)</b>	Define gender-related terms and/or with a focus on women and girls
<b>R (red)</b>	No definition found
<b>+</b>	Definition is in relation to health and refers to LGBTQI.

### Workplace gender equality policy

<b>G (green)</b>	Gender-equality affirmative policy with specific measure(s) to improve gender equality and/or support women's careers
<b>GE</b>	Gender-equality affirmative policy with specific measure(s) to improve gender equality and/or support women's careers; EDGE certified (external validation)
<b>A (amber)</b>	Stated commitment to gender equality and/or diversity in the workplace (above the legal requirement), but no specific measures to carry out commitments; and/or is an Affirmative Action employer (US federal funds), but does not state what specific measures are in place to promote equality/diversity; reporting on gender distribution of staff
<b>R (red)</b>	Policy is compliant with law but no more = "we do not discriminate"
<b>NF</b>	Not found/no information available

+	Specific mention of no discrimination based on gender identity/other mention of inclusion of transgender or gender diversity
NA	Not applicable. For organizations with 10 or fewer FTE staff, scored as NA given that we would not expect organizations (nor did we find any) of this size to develop gender, diversity and/or inclusion plans (although they are expected to be complying with nondiscrimination laws).

---

**Workplace diversity and inclusion policy**

G (green)	Organization committed to promoting diversity/inclusion/equality and has specific measures in place
A (amber)	Commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion evidenced by a) aspirational comments and b) listing protected characteristics; and/or is an Affirmative Action Employer (US federal funds), but does not state what specific measures are in place to promote equality/diversity; some reporting on diverse characteristics among staff
R (red)	Minimal commitment to nondiscrimination, consistent with national laws
NF	No public references to nondiscrimination, or diversity and inclusion
NA	Not applicable. For organizations with 10 or fewer FTE staff, scored as NA given that we would not expect organizations (nor did we find any) of this size to develop gender, diversity and/or inclusion plans (although they are expected to be complying with nondiscrimination laws).

---

**Board diversity policy**

G (green)	Board policy with specific measures (e.g., targets, dedicated seats, monitoring) to promote diversity and inclusion, and representation publicly available
GW	Board policy with specific measures (e.g., targets, dedicated seats, monitoring) to promote gender diversity/representation of women only
MS (member states)	Governing body representation determined by country affiliation - "member states"; no other policy to promote diversity and inclusion
A (amber)	Policy in place includes commitment to diversity and/or representation of affected communities made, but no specific measures to advance diversity and inclusion; some summary reporting on board composition, but no policy to advance diversity and inclusion
R (red)	Publicly available policy or commitment about board composition/role but no commitment to principles of diversity and inclusion
NF	No information about board policy regarding composition and/or role (regardless of whether current Board members are published)

**Gender-responsive programmatic strategy**

1	Gender unequal
2	Gender blind, i.e., pays no attention to gender
3	Gender sensitive, notices gender or sex, treats as a sex difference, but doesn't act on it; does not address inequality generated by unequal norms, roles, or relations.
	Gender specific, considers gender norms, roles and relations for women and men and how they affect access to and control over resources; makes it easier for women and men to fulfill duties that are ascribed to them based on their gender roles
4	For private sector companies, commit to avoiding harmful gender stereotypes in marketing
	Gender transformative, notices and acts on gender through policies, programs, etc. across all genders; addresses the causes of gender-based health inequities; fosters progressive changes in power relationships between women and men
5	

Gender focus indicated by W=women, M=men, T=Transgender

*Based on the WHO Gender-Responsiveness Scale*

**Sex-disaggregated M&E reporting**

G (green)	Policy commitment and full sex-disaggregation of programmatic delivery data (i.e., reported as men/women and boys/girls); report gender analysis of the impact of their work; or require disaggregation in the programs they support
G1	Report disaggregated data but no policy/commitment for disaggregation found
A (amber)	Disaggregated reporting limited to what percentage of beneficiaries are women and girls
	A1 Stated commitment to disaggregate data, but data not reported
R (red)	No evidence of data disaggregation or policy on disaggregation
+	Sex-disaggregate data and report on transgender people
NA	Not applicable, organization does not collect/report any programmatic data

**Gender parity in senior management and governing bodies**

G (green)	45-55% women represented; or difference of one
A (amber)	35-44% women represented
 A (amber/purple)	56-100% women represented
R (red)	0-34% women represented
NF	Not found

**Gender of CEO and board chair**

<b>W</b>	Woman
<b>M</b>	Man
<b>MW</b>	Two individuals, one man and one woman
<b>X</b>	Nonbinary; undefined
<b>NA</b>	Not applicable/no current executive head
<b>NF</b>	Not found

**Scorecard**

Organization	Commitment to gender equality	Definition of gender	Workplace gender equality policy	Workplace D&I policy	Board D&I policy	Parity in senior management	Parity in governing body	Gender of executive	Gender of board chair	Gender in programmatic approach	M&E sex-disaggregation
Abt Associates	G	G+	GE+	G	NF	G	A	W	M	5	G1
Africa Population and Health Research Centre (APHRC)	G	G	G	A	A	G	G	W	W	5	A1
African Union Commission (AUC)	GP	G	G	A	MS	G	R	M	M	4W	G
Africare	A	R	R	R	NF	G	R	M	M	3W	R
Aga Khan Foundation (AKF)	GP	G*	G*	A	NF	R	NF	M	NF	5W	G
Agence Française de Développement (AFD)	GP	G	G	G	R	R	A	M	W	4W	R
Aliko Dangote Foundation (ADF)	A	R	A	A	A	R	NF	M	M	2	R
Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)	GP	R	NF	NF	MS	R	NF	M	M	4W	A1
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	GP	R	A	A	NF	A	R	M	M/W	4W	A
CARE International	G	G	G	G	G	A1	G	W	W	5W	G
Caritas Internationalis	G	R	A	A	A	R	NF	M	M	4W	A
Catholic Relief Services (CRS)	G	G	G	A	NF	R	R	M	M	5	G
China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA)	R	R	NF	NF	NF	R	R	M	M	3W	R
Coca-Cola	GP	R	G+	G	NF	R	A	M	M	4	R

Organization	Commitment to gender equality	Definition of gender	Workplace gender equality policy	Workplace D&I policy	Board D&I policy	Parity in senior management	Parity in governing body	Gender of executive	Gender of board chair	Gender in programmatic approach	M&E sex-disaggregation
Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)	GP	R	NF	NF	NF	A	NF	M/M	NF	5	R
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)	G	G+	G	G	GW	G	G	W	M	4W	G1
European Commission	G	A	G	G	GW	G	R	W	M	4W	G
Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO)	G	A	G	G	MS	G	NF	M	M	5W	G
Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office	G	R	G+	A	NF	G	R	M	M	4W	A1
Global Affairs Canada	GP	G	G	A	NF	A1	NF	M	NF	4W	G
Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN)	G	G+	G+	G	A	A	A1	M	W	5	A1
Global Financing Facility (GFF)	GP	R	G	G	G	G	A1	M	M/W	4W	G
GSMA	GP	R	G	G	GW	A	R	M	M	4W	G
International Center for Research on Women (ICRW)	G	A	A	A	A*	A1	A1	W	M	5	G1
International Food and Beverage Alliance (IFBA)	G	R	NF	NF	NF	NF	NF	M	M/M	2	R
International Labour Organization (ILO)	G	A	G+	G	G	R	NF	M	M	5	G
Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)	G	G	G	G	NF	R	R	M	M	5	A1
Merck	G+	R	G+	G	A	R	G	M	M	3W	A
Mercy Corps	G	G	G	G	NF	G	G	W	M/W	5	G
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Italy	R	R	NF	NF	NF	R	NF	M	NF	4W	R
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands	G+	R	G+	G	NF	NF	NF	M	NF	5W	A
Nestle	G	R	G	G	G	R	A	M	M	4W	R
Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad)	GP+	G+	G	NF	NA	A1	NF	M	NF	4W	A1

Organization	Commitment to gender equality	Definition of gender	Workplace gender equality policy	Workplace D&I policy	Board D&I policy	Parity in senior management	Parity in governing body	Gender of executive	Gender of board chair	Gender in programmatic approach	M&E sex-disaggregation
Nutrition International	G	G+	G	A*	NF	G	A	M	M	5	G
Oxfam International	GP	A	A+	A	NF	NF	NF	W	M	5W	A
Pacific Community	G	A	NF	R	NF	A	NF	M	NF	4	G1
Plan International	GP	G+	G+	A	G	NF	A1	W	M	5WT	G1
Promundo	G	G+	A*	A*	NF	G	A	M	M/W	5	G1
Rockefeller Foundation	G	R	A	A	R	A	A	M	M	5	R
Save the Children	G	G*	G	G	G*	G	G	W	W	5	G*
Scaling Up Nutrition	G	G	G	G	G	A1	G	W	W	5W	G
Southern Africa Development Community (SADC)	G	G	A	R	NF	G	NF	W	NF	5	A1
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)	G	G	G+	G	A	A1	G	W	W	5W	G
UN Women	GP	G	G+	G	MS	A1	G	W	M	5WT	G
Unilever	G+	G	G+	G	A	R	G	M	M	5	G
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	G	G	G+	G	MS	A1	G	M	M	5W	G
United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)	G	G	G	G	MS	NF	A	W	M/M	5W	G
United States Agency for International Development (USAID)	G	G	A	G	NF	R	NF	M	NF	5W	G
World Bank Group	G+	G	GE	G	MS	G	R	M	NA	5WT	G
World Economic Forum	G+	R	G+	G	NF	A	R	M	M	5W	A1
World Food Programme	G	G	G	G	MS	G	NF	M	M	5	G
World Vision	G+	R	R	R	NF	R	G	M	W	5	A1

**Global Health 50/50** is an independent research and advocacy initiative that promotes far-reaching transparency, action and accountability to advance gender equality and health equity.

**For more information:**  
[Globalhealth5050.org](http://Globalhealth5050.org)

**Contact:** Sonja Tanaka,  
[sonja.tanaka@globalhealth5050.org](mailto:sonja.tanaka@globalhealth5050.org)

The **International Food Policy Research Institute** provides research-based policy solutions to sustainably reduce poverty and end hunger and malnutrition in developing countries. Established in 1975, IFPRI currently has more than 600 employees working in over 50 countries.

**For more information:** [ifpri.org](http://ifpri.org)

**Contact:** Jemimah Njuki,  
[J.Njuki@cgiar.org](mailto:J.Njuki@cgiar.org)

The Global Food 50/50 report is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).

This publication has not been peer reviewed. Any opinions stated herein are those of the author(s) and are not necessarily representative of or endorsed by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).

The boundaries, names, and designations used in this publication do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the authors, IFPRI, or its partners and donors.

**Photo:** [i\\_am\\_zews/Shutterstock.com](https://www.shutterstock.com/user/i_am_zews/)

