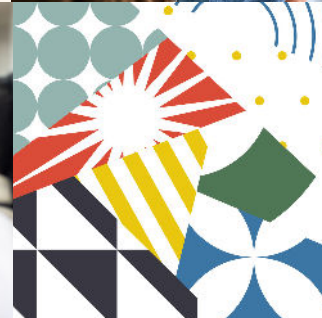
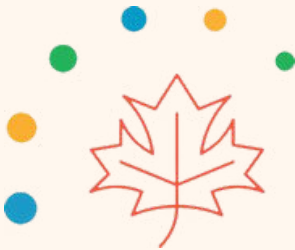


Assessing Board Diversity and Leadership Commitment to GBA Plus



Diversity within your organization's leadership, including among your board members, is a key consideration in assessing your organization's readiness and capacity to incorporate GBA Plus, as well as organizational commitment to the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion, more generally. As Bernstein and Fredette (2024) explain,



building and retaining diverse leadership and governing groups is important, not just to demonstrate compliance with employment law and funder expectations (Bradshaw & Fredette, 2013; Miller-Millesen, 2003), or to improve ideation and decision-making (Forbes & Milliken 1999), or to expand stakeholder relationships and community understanding (Brown, 2005; Herman & Renz, 1998), but also because leadership diversity signals moral and ethical commitment to equity by legitimizing the value of underrepresented communities (Guo & Musso, 2007), and promotes engagement with and participation in power-redistribution efforts (Ray, 2019).¹



1. Ruth Sessler Bernstein and Christopher Fredette, 2024, "Decomposing the Impact of Leadership Diversity Among Nonprofit Organizations," *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 53(1), pp.81-82.

Prioritizing diversity and inclusion within your organization's leadership, and the work they undertake can have a strong impact on the level of broader organizational buy-in to equity-focused work, such as incorporating GBA Plus throughout organizational operations. This is because the “tone from the top” signals what is important.”² There is a critical link between diversity within nonprofit leadership and the equity work done by organizations.³ A recent study found that “responding BIPOC-led organizations were [...] markedly more likely to have programs designed to serve equity-deserving communities” (Lasby 2023, p.9). In the settlement context, strong consideration should be given to including those with lived experience as newcomers at all levels of your organization, including within leadership positions, to ensure that their valuable perspectives are included at all stages of the work your organization does.

Assessing the current level of diversity—both in terms of social identities and experiences represented within organizational leadership, as well as the skillsets that people are bringing into these roles—is an important step as it creates a baseline reading that can serve to both show you what communities and groups are already represented, as well as if there any representation gaps that need to be addressed. These gaps can help inform your organizational recruitment practices moving forward by allowing you to focus on the areas where your board can be strengthened and to target your recruitment efforts accordingly. This matrix should be updated as board composition and organizational needs change to ensure that representation gaps continue to be addressed.

To assist with this process, a settlement-sector-focused board diversity matrix template (with an accompanying board survey template) has been provided below. These templates can be adapted to reflect your organizational context. They are meant to serve as a tool to help track the representation of various skills, experiences, and social identities on your organization's board. If you find that there are gaps in certain areas once you have completed the matrix, this is okay (and to be expected). No board will 100% represent every aspect of the template. That said, ensuring as much diversity as possible will mean a stronger board because of the different perspectives and experiences being brought to the table. The matrix can help you visualize where the gaps lie and in doing so, can provide a starting point for addressing them. It should also be acknowledged that there can be challenges to diversifying organizational boards, including, but not limited to institutional structure and by-laws, availability of candidates, and relatedly the competition faced by non-profits for board members. However, even in these cases, it is worth considering how your board composition can be more diverse and what changes you can make to work toward this.

2. Wendy Cukier and Nancy Mitchell, 2022, “Diversity in Leadership,” Charity Village, presentation slides are available at: <https://charityvillage.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/50-30-Toolkit-For-Nonprofits.pdf>

3. Lasby, 2023.

While board diversity is critical, it is also important that you ensure that all board members feel included once they are at the table. As Cardozo asserts,



There is a significant body of evidence suggesting that the sharing of diverse perspectives will always lead to stronger decisions. That said, I believe that focusing only on diversity will be meaningless unless we pay equal attention to all the aspects of inclusion at the board table. Without meaningful inclusion, a strategy to build a diverse board will, indeed, end up as an exercise in window dressing (Cardozo and Fullbrook, 2021, p.3, emphasis in original).



Meaningful inclusion and participation of board members will ensure that the diverse perspectives that you have assembled inform the work that your organization does.

Boards must think of diversity and inclusion as separate, but equally important, elements for organizational leadership. As WGOB explains,



Diversity is about representation; it describes who is invited around the boardroom table. Inclusion, however, is the act of ensuring that everyone at the table can fully participate in the discussions and decision-making that happen in the boardroom. It's through inclusion that everyone in the boardroom is able to share their unique perspectives and experiences, a process which improves discussions and ultimately benefits the organization. "Inclusion is the superpower that unlocks diversity."⁴



4. Women Get on Board (WGOB), n.d., Inclusive Boards: Unlocking the Power and Benefits of Diversity. Emphasis added.

A board focused on fostering a culture of meaningful inclusion “welcomes and celebrates differences, ensures that all board members are equally engaged and invested, [and] shares power and collective accountability for the board’s work, the organization’s mission, and its purpose.”⁵ Fucci and Cooper (2019) outline the five primary functions of boards, including strategy, governance, talent, integrity, and performance, and offer a thoughtful account of how to integrate meaningful inclusion within each of these areas of work.⁶ As you consider what meaningful inclusion should look like within your organization, this resource can serve as a helpful starting point.

Additional Resources

- L. Robin Cardozo and Matt Fullbrook, 2021, “Not-for-Profit Board Diversity & Inclusion: Is it Essentially Window-Dressing,” Rotman School of Management – The David and Sharon Johnstone Centre for Corporate Governance Innovation, University of Toronto. Available at: https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/124595/1/Not_For_Profit_Board_Diversity_And_Inclusion.pdf (accessed 25 June 2024).
- Christopher Fredette, 2012, “Leadership Diversity in the Nonprofit Sector: Baby Steps, Big Strides, and Bold Stances,” a DiverseCity Counts Research Report available at: <https://continuing.torontomu.ca/upload/obc/diversecity-counts-5-full.pdf>
- DiverseCity, “Diversity in Governance: A Toolkit for Nonprofit Boards,” available at: <https://bcfarmersmarket.org/app/uploads/2020/09/Diversity-on-Non-Profit-Boards-Toolkit.pdf>
- David Lasby, 2023, “Shifting Power Dynamics: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in the Nonprofit Sector,” Imagine Canada, available at: https://www.imaginecanada.ca/sites/default/files/Shifting-Power-Dynamics-Equity-diversity-and-inclusion-in-the-nonprofit-sector_0.pdf
- Mike Fucci and Terri Cooper, 2019. The Inclusion Imperative for Boards: Redefining Board Responsibilities to Support Organizational Inclusion. Deloitte Insights. Available at: <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/topics/value-of-diversity-and-inclusion/redefining-board-responsibilities-to-support-organizational-inclusion.html>
- Women Get on Board (WGOB), n.d., Inclusive Boards: Unlocking the Power and Benefits of Diversity. Available at: <https://womengetonboard.ca/inclusive-boards-unlocking-the-power-and-benefits-of-diversity/#:~:text=But%20what%20makes%20a%20boardroom,are%20equally%20engaged%20and%20invested>

5. Ibid.

6. Mike Fucci and Terri Cooper, 2019. The Inclusion Imperative for Boards: Redefining Board Responsibilities to Support Organizational Inclusion. Deloitte Insights.



Settlement Sector Board Member Survey

Part I:



Instructions for completing the board member survey

- 1.** Have the Board Chair tailor the board member survey to your organizational context. You can choose to omit some of the included skills and competencies, and/or add others. This template is meant to serve as a starting point for you to adapt to your needs. If a particular experience, skill, etc. listed is not relevant to your board now, you can select the “not relevant at this time” option so board members know that they do not need to indicate anything for that item.
- 2.** Have the Board Chair designate someone within the organization to administer the survey, collect the responses, and aggregate the data in the board diversity matrix (Part II). This person should ideally not be a board member.
- 3.** To best ensure the anonymity of board members, have the person designated to administer the survey print hard copies of the survey and provide them to board members to complete. If this is not possible, discuss as a team what other options exist to keep the responses anonymous.
- 4.** Have all board members complete the survey anonymously, including the Board Chair. For each item listed, board members should indicate if they have that skill, competency, or experience, or self-identify with the diversity factor listed. If they do not possess a particular skill, competency, or experience, or self-identify with the diversity factor listed, then no selection is necessary.
- 5.** Have the person who has been assigned to administer the survey collect the anonymous survey responses, aggregate the data, and enter this information into the board diversity matrix (see instructions in Part II), recording how many board members selected each option.
- 6.** Once the data has been aggregated, the survey responses should be shredded to protect board members’ privacy.

Note: Depending on the size of your organization’s board, it may not be possible to ensure that survey responses will be entirely anonymous.

Settlement Sector Board Member Survey

LEVEL OF CURRENT REPRESENTATION ON THE BOARD

COMPETENCY / EXPERIENCE	CHECK IF APPLICABLE	not relevant at this time
Governance (e.g. chaired a board or committee)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Entrepreneurship or business development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strategic planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Healthcare	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poverty reduction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Immigration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Frontline settlement sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research and higher education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fundraising	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marketing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Experience working with marginalized communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Risk management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public relations or communications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Program and event evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non-profit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Industry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Large-scale funding proposal submissions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knowledge of IDEA, ARAO, or GBA Plus	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PREVIOUS BOARD EXPERIENCE	CHECK IF APPLICABLE
Nonprofit	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corporate	<input type="checkbox"/>
Government (municipal, provincial, or federal)	<input type="checkbox"/>

KNOWLEDGE OF COMMUNITIES	CHECK IF APPLICABLE
Community leader	<input type="checkbox"/>
Experience working in rural areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Experience working in small centres	<input type="checkbox"/>
Experience working in urban areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lived experience as a newcomer	<input type="checkbox"/>

SOCIAL IDENTITIES	CHECK IF APPLICABLE
Women	<input type="checkbox"/>
Men	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non-binary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ethno-racial	<input type="checkbox"/>
Persons with disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Youth	<input type="checkbox"/>
2SLGBTQIA+	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seniors	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indigenous peoples	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diverse faith groups:	
Christian	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sikh	<input type="checkbox"/>
Muslim	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jewish	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hindu	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buddhist	<input type="checkbox"/>
No religion or secular perspectives	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other religious or spiritual traditions – please specify	<input type="checkbox"/>



Settlement Sector Board Diversity Matrix

Part II:

Instructions for aggregating the board member survey in the board diversity matrix

- 1.** The person designated in Part I to administer the survey and aggregate the data—ideally not a board member—should begin by indicating in the matrix what items, if any, the board decided to select as “not relevant at this time” and omit the same items in the board diversity matrix.
- 2.** Then they should fill out each category of the matrix using the data from the board member surveys, tallying how many board members, if any, selected each option.
- 3.** Once complete, provide the completed board diversity matrix to the Board Chair.
- 4.** At the bottom of each section there is a scale (from left to right) that reads: strong representation, some representation, more work needed, or diverse, somewhat diverse and increased representation needed. As Board Chair, determine the place that your board best fits on this continuum within each category. If you feel that your organization fits somewhere between the three provided options, you can select from the points between these options. You can also expand on this in the notes section included at the end of each session if needed.
- 5.** At the bottom of each section, below the scale, there is also a space to provide some reflection on the aggregated data provided through the surveys. Use this space to reflect on how well you feel your organization is doing regarding board representation in each category. Do you have adequate representation? Is there more work to be done to increase representation and diversity in these areas?
- 6.** Share back the completed board diversity matrix with board members. Use this as an opportunity to engage them in this reflection exercise.
- 7.** Determine how will you go about addressing any representation gaps—if any—identified through the matrix moving forward.
- 8.** Determine when/how frequently you will administer the survey and update the board diversity matrix.

Settlement Sector Board Member Survey

LEVEL OF CURRENT REPRESENTATION ON THE BOARD

COMPETENCY / EXPERIENCE	# CURRENTLY ON BOARD	not relevant at this time
Governance (e.g. chaired a board or committee)		<input type="checkbox"/>
Entrepreneurship or business development		<input type="checkbox"/>
Management		<input type="checkbox"/>
Strategic planning		<input type="checkbox"/>
Healthcare		<input type="checkbox"/>
Poverty reduction		<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing		<input type="checkbox"/>
Immigration		<input type="checkbox"/>
Frontline settlement sector		<input type="checkbox"/>
Research and higher education		<input type="checkbox"/>
Information technology		<input type="checkbox"/>
Human resources		<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial management		<input type="checkbox"/>
Fundraising		<input type="checkbox"/>
Marketing		<input type="checkbox"/>
Experience working with marginalized communities		<input type="checkbox"/>
Legal		<input type="checkbox"/>
Risk management		<input type="checkbox"/>
Public relations or communications		<input type="checkbox"/>
Program and event evaluation		<input type="checkbox"/>
Non-profit		<input type="checkbox"/>
Industry		<input type="checkbox"/>
Large-scale funding proposal submissions		<input type="checkbox"/>
Knowledge of IDEA, ARAO, or GBA Plus		<input type="checkbox"/>

strong representation **some representation** **more work needed**

Notes:

LEVEL OF CURRENT REPRESENTATION ON THE BOARD

PREVIOUS BOARD EXPERIENCE	# CUTRRENTLY ON BOARD
Nonprofit	
Public	
Corporate	
Government (municipal, provincial, or federal)	
<p>strong representation some representation more work needed</p> <p>I ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ I</p>	
Notes:	

KNOWLEDGE OF COMMUNITIES	# CUTRRENTLY ON BOARD
Community leader	
Experience working in rural areas	
Experience working in small centres	
Experience working in urban areas	
Lived experience as a newcomer	
<p>strong representation some representation more work needed</p> <p>I ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ I</p>	
Notes:	

LEVEL OF CURRENT REPRESENTATION ON THE BOARD

SOCIAL IDENTITIES

CURRENTLY
ON BOARD

Women

Men

Non-binary

Ethno-racial

Persons with disabilities

Youth

2SLGBTQIA+

Seniors

Indigenous peoples

Diverse faith groups:

Christian

Sikh

Muslim

Jewish

Hindu

Buddhist

No religion or secular perspectives

Other religious or spiritual traditions – please specify _____

very diverse

somewhat diverse

increased representation needed

Notes:



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