The United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA) has developed a set of principles of effective governance for sustainable development. The essential purpose of these voluntary principles is to provide interested countries with practical, expert guidance on a broad range of governance challenges associated with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. CEPA has identified 62 commonly used strategies to assist with the operationalization of these principles. This guidance note addresses promotion of public sector workforce diversity, which is associated with the principle of non-discrimination and can contribute to strengthening the inclusiveness of institutions. It is part of a series of notes prepared by renowned experts under the overall direction of the CEPA Secretariat in the Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

In reading this guidance note, individuals in government ministries and agencies who are less familiar with the topic will be able to understand the fundamentals. Those who have perhaps taken initial steps in this area with limited follow-through or impact will be able to identify how to adjust elements of their practice to achieve better results and to better embed and institutionalize the strategy in their organizations. Those who are more advanced in promoting public sector workforce diversity will be able to recognize the practices which contribute to its success.

Understanding the strategy

Workforce diversity has become a strategic dimension of organizational success in public and private organizations. Promoting public sector workforce diversity is urgent given that there is still much work to do to achieve diverse, equitable and inclusive public workplaces.[1] Progress has been slow and insufficient: the representation of women, ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities in senior levels of the public sector remains low; levels of perceived harassment and bullying remain high for certain groups; and data reflecting complex issues are too limited.[2]

In its broadest meaning, public sector efforts to promote workforce diversity aim to move the needle within a continuum from exclusion to inclusion of members of underrepresented groups in public employment.[3] A diversity strategy contributes both to correct discriminatory human resources policies, and to create conditions for equitable and inclusive work environments that are likely to enhance organizational performance, benefiting service recipients and the public in general.

An effective workforce diversity strategy is in reality, a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) strategy.[4]

Diversity in DEI addresses proportionate representation of people across certain dimensions of human difference to reduce discrimination and its negative social outcomes.[5] *Equity* addresses fair treatment, access and opportunity for all independent of social characteristics.[6] *Inclusion* addresses employees' experiences of belonging that motivate genuine and empowered participation.[7]

Considering these three dimensions makes public workforce diversity strategic while supporting public values. *Diversity* highlights the normative idea of representative bureaucracy as a condition of good governance.[8] Social *equity* emphasizes the fair, just and equitable

[1] OECD, Grand Duchy of Luxembourg-Presidency of the Council of the European Union, and European Public Administration Network. (2015). *Managing a diverse public administration and effectively responding to the needs of a more diverse workforce - 2015 EUPAN Survey.* https://www.eupan.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/2015_2_LU_Managing_a_Diverse_Public_Administration_and_Effectively_Responding_to_the_Needs_of_a_more_Diverse_Workforce.pdf.

[2] Nolan-Flecha, N. (2019). *Next generation diversity and inclusion policies in the public service: Ensuring public services reflect the societies they serve* (OECD Working Papers on Public Governance, No. 34). OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/k9vq.

[3] Ospina, S. (2001). Managing diversity in civil service: a conceptual framework for public organizations. In UN DESA and IIAS, *Managing Diversity in the Civil Service*, (pp.11-31). IOS Press and Ohmsha; Mor-Barak, M.E. (2022). *Managing Diversity: Toward a Globally Inclusive Workplace (5th ed.)*. SAGE Publications, Inc.

[4] McCandless, S., Bishu, S. G., Gómez Hernández, M., Paredes Eraso, É., Sabharwal, M., Santis, E. L., and Yates, S. (2022). A long road: Patterns and prospects for social equity, diversity, and inclusion in public administration *Public Administration,* 100(1): 129–148.

[5] Mor-Barak (2022); Yeo, J., and Jeon, S. H. (2023). Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in Recent Public Administration Research: A Systematic Review of the Literature Since George Floyd." *Journal of Policy Studies*, 38(2): pp. 33–54.

[6] Pandey, S. K., Newcomer, K., DeHart-Davis, L., McGinnis Johnson, J., and Riccucci, N. M. (2022). Reckoning with Race and Gender in Public Administration and Public Policy: A Substantive Social Equity Turn. *Public Administration Review,* 82, 386-395.

[7] McCandless et al. (2022).

[8] Dhillon, A. and Meier, K. J. (2022). Representative bureaucracy in challenging environments: Gender representation, education, and India. *International Public Management Journal,* 25:1, 43-64.

distribution of public services, and fairness in public management and policy implementation.[9]
Inclusion broadens the sources of leadership beyond formal authority, thus promoting the full engagement of employees, service recipients and the public at large in tackling public problems.[10]

The public sector's role in promoting workforce diversity, equity and inclusion

The public sector can proactively promote workforce diversity by fostering overall institutional change via administrative orders and legislation that elevates workforce DEI as a public priority. For instance, many countries have introduced permanent hiring and pay parity laws to foster gender equality. Iceland's 2018 pay parity law requires all organizations with more than 25 employees to demonstrate that equal wages are being paid for equal work.[11] Governments can also develop initiatives to advance DEI in their workplaces by designing independent DEI programs for targeted populations (such as a mentoring program for women or for Indigenous peoples).

This Strategy Guidance Note discusses DEI efforts in public agencies.[12] Legislation that encourages a representative, equitable and inclusive workplace serves as a lever to support the implementation of the strategy in public institutions. For example, strategies to attract and retain women public servants will not work as well in the absence of equal pay laws and laws addressing sexual harassment.

From a sustainable development perspective, promoting workforce DEI represents a strategy that directly supports the 2030 Agenda. First, it relates to the Member States' commitment to *leave no one behind* when eradicating poverty, reducing inequalities, and ending discrimination. Second, it supports the 2030 Agenda's aspiration for inclusive public institutions at all levels, as articulated in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 – peace, justice, and strong institutions.[13] For instance, public workforce DEI efforts afford progress toward achieving SDG target 16b (to promote and enforce nondiscriminatory laws for sustainable development). Fair recruitment and appointments of diverse employees can help reduce clientelism, politicization and corruption in the public workforce (SDG target 16.5). A public sector workforce composition that reflects the socio-demographic make-up of the population

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[9] Guy, M. E., and McCandless, S. A. (2021) Social Equity: Its Legacy, Its Promise. *Public Administration Review*, 72(S1), S5–S13; Cepiku, D. and Mastrodascio, M. (2021). Equity in Public Services: A Systematic Literature Review. *Public Administration Review,* 81(6): 1019-1032.

[10] Nolan-Flecha (2019); Ospina, S. M., and Foldy, E. G. (2015). Enacting Collective Leadership in a Shared-Power World. In J. Perry & R. Christensen (Eds). *Handbook of Public Administration*. 3d Edition. Jossey Bass. 2015: pp: 489-507.

[11] For further information see: https://www.government.is/topics/human-rights-and-equality/equality/equal-pay-certification/.

[12] Riccucci, N. M. (2021). *Managing Diversity in Public Sector Workplaces (2nd ed)*. Routledge, p. 23.

[13] For further information see: https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal16#targets_and_indicators; SDG indicator metadata document for Indicator 16.7.1. https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/files/Metadata-16-07-01b.pdf.

contributes to more responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels (SDG target 16.7).[14]

A DEI workforce strategy also supports other SDGs – it helps reduce inequalities (SDG 10), promoting inclusion for all without distinction (10.2) and equal opportunity and equalities of outcome, eliminating discriminatory laws and promoting new legislation (10.3). In many countries some forms of public sector employment offer relatively better conditions compared to the informal sector, thus opening access to better jobs for the disadvantaged (8.5 and 8.6). Equality of opportunity in the public sector serves as a counterweight to the distribution of wealth, power and jobs in the private sector. Fair employment practices for all can also support anti-poverty efforts (1). Finally, the strategy promotes gender equality, including the crucial goal of equal representation of women in leadership (5.5).[15]

From a public administration perspective, a diverse public workforce that also experiences equity and inclusion enhances organizational performance:

- by generating synergies when drawing from diverse cultural repertoires, external networks and sources of information; more chances to discover and use new knowledge and to correct errors effectively; and flexibility, creativity and innovation to respond to the new governance environments requiring more collaboration; and
- by leveraging diverse talents and perspectives for creative public problem solving; and by tapping diverse capabilities and sensitivities to best serve a diverse population.[16]

Box 1 summarizes research-based claims about the impact of public service workforce DEI on organizations and society. This evidence supports the public workforce diversity literature's claims about the societal, organizational and human benefits of DEI outcomes: greater trust and legitimacy of public institutions (representation, responsiveness, and citizen support); improved organizational climate, overall performance, and competitiveness for talent attraction; and more engaged employees, legal compliance and reduced discrimination litigation.

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[14] Public sector workforce diversity measurement (2030 Agenda): the proportions of positions (by age group, sex, persons with disabilities and population groups) in public institutions (national and local), including (b) the public service, compared to national distributions with a focus on eight occupational categories relevant to the public service (SDG indicator 16.7.1b).

[15] United Nations. (2023). *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/publications/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf; UN DESA. (2022a). Global Review of Good Practices for Promoting Women's Access to Leadership Positions in Public Administration. https://publicadministration.desa.un.org/projects/building-capacities-promoting-presence-and-leadership-women-within-public-institutions; UN DESA. (2022b). Global Review of Existing Legislation and Organizational Policies and Analytical Framework for Promoting Women's Access to Leadership Positions in Public Administration.https://publicadministration.desa.un.org/projects/building-capacities-promoting-presence-and-leadership-women-within-public-institutions. Women's engagement in leadership roles at national and subnational levels has advanced, but the aspiration of SDG indicator 16.7.1 has not yet been attained.

[16] Riccucci (2021); Ospina, S., and O'Sullivan, J. (2002). Working together: Meeting the challenges of workforce diversity. In S. Hayes & R. Kearney (Eds.), *Public personnel administration: Problems and prospects* (4th ed., pp. 238-255).

Box 1. Evidence of the impact of public service workforce DEI

Workforce DEI contributes to conflict resolution and peaceful coexistence: Kenya, Niger, and South Africa illustrate how broadening participation in the public sector to historically disadvantaged groups has helped maintain stability.[17]

Workforce DEI correlates with an increase in performance and innovation: by way of diverse knowledge, competencies, and experiences;[18] by implementing effective diversity management strategies and leadership;[19] and by generating inclusive organizational climates.[20]

Workforce DEI correlates with a more inclusive organizational climate: gender and minority ethnic representation is associated with higher perceptions of inclusion and "lower levels of discrimination and bullying," as reported in the United Kingdom.

A workforce reflecting proportional representation of the population is associated with higher levels of trust in public institutions: people connect inclusive policymaking with reduced vested interests' influence over decision making and more quality and fairness in policy decisions.[21] Top leadership diversity can enhance the procedural justice expectations of vulnerable citizens in organizations with poor reputations, enhancing their standing.[22]

Constitutional and legislative frameworks that support workplace diversity, equity and inclusion

Promoting workforce DEI is a moral and legal obligation for private and public employers, based on strong constitutional and social agreements and a robust body of laws developed over time. Anti-discrimination and equal opportunity legislation increased worldwide since the 1950s, with a new legal global landscape offering extensive protections against workplace discrimination. The United Nations' 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights drove this trend, followed by the 1960s struggles for equal opportunity (in the global north) and anti-

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[17] For further information see: World Bank and United Nations. (2018). Chapter 6 Country Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict. In *Country Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict*. (pp.185-232). https://doi.org/k9v6; and UNDP Oslo Governance Centre. (2021). *SDG 16 Policy Brief Advancing Inclusive Decision-Making for Sustainable Development: Representation in the Public Service through SDG 16.7.1.* https://www.sdg16hub.org/system/files/2021-06/Brief_SDG%20Indicator%2016.7.1B_-%20FINAL%20DRAFT.pdf.

[18] For further information see: Baniamin, H. M., and Jamil, I. (2023). Effects of representative bureaucracy on perceived performance and fairness: Experimental evidence from South Asia. *Public Administration*, 101(1), 284–302; and Fernandez, S., Koma, S., and Lee, H. (2017). Establishing the link between representative bureaucracy and performance: The South African case. *Governance,* 31: 535–553.

[19] OECD. (2017a). *Fostering Innovation in the Public Sector.* OECD Publishing. http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264270879-en.

[20] While diversity yields both beneficial and detrimental outcomes, a strategy that promotes a climate of inclusion is consistently associated with positive outcomes (Mor-Barak, 2016).

[21] OECD. (2017b). Trust and Public Policy: How Better Governance Can Help Rebuild Public Trust. O*ECD Public Governance Reviews.* OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/k9vs.

[22] Dantas Cabral, A., Peci, A., and Van Ryzin, G. G. (2022). Representation, reputation and expectations towards bureaucracy: experimental findings from a favela in Brazil. *Public Management Review* 24(9): 1452-1477.

colonial movements (in the global south); and by numerous constitutional reforms at the turn of the century that fostered laws to protect the rights of diverse peoples.[23] The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) prohibit discrimination, affirm freedom from discrimination as a right, promote the right to equality between men and women, and the right to participate in public affairs, among others.

Multiple human rights frameworks have generated a strong body of international standards, reaffirming employment conditions on equal ground for a representative public sector workforce, as shown in Box 2.

Box 2. Selected international standards supporting the promotion of a diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace [24]

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 (Article 21)

International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, 1966 (Article 6)

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966 (Article 25)

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979 (Article 7)

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, 1965 (Article 5)

Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156)

International Convention on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, 1990 (Article 7)

Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, 1992 (Article 2)

Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, 1995 (Chapter III.D)

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006 (Articles 27 and 29)

Comparative assessments drawing on International Labour Organization (ILO) data[25] highlight constitutional, anti-discrimination or equal rights legislation applicable to employment and work. The most common type of anti-discrimination and equal rights legislation (with more than 88 percent of the countries reviewed providing at least one of the following) included protections based on gender or sex, equal remuneration, race, ethnicity,

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[23] The UN International Bill of Human Rights includes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, two Covenants and optional protocols. The Declaration, to be realized through international cooperation, assures human dignity for every person. Relevant to employment are the rights to: social security, work, equal pay for equal work, rest and leisure, and a living standard conducive to health and wellbeing. See Mor-Barak (2022).

[24] Box 2 is adapted from: UNDP Oslo Governance Centre (2021) p.2.

[25] The ILO's database (NATLEX) includes more than 55,000 national laws about employment, social security, and associated human rights. For further information go to: www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex_browse.home/.

or country of origin, religious beliefs, physical disability, and sexual orientation.[26] Most countries prohibit job discrimination based on gender, race, and ethnicity.[27] This landscape underscores legal developments motivated by the global moral imperative of just treatment of individuals independent of their social group, with an emphasis on fair employment.

And yet, despite national laws emerging around the world, legislation is still lacking or insufficient in some countries, and there is non-compliance and only partial law enforcement in others. These circumstances reinforce the need to address the challenges associated with designing, implementing and managing a strategy to promote public sector workforce DEI.[28]

Designing a workforce strategy and managing DEI efforts

Public service diversity efforts should be part of a government-wide strategic framework to determine diversity objectives, the targeted social groups, and the tools or means to attain such goals. It will specify how the efforts will be coordinated and by whom, the human and financial resources needed and the criteria to be used for evaluating results.[29] All available data should be used for workforce DEI decisions, from recruitment to retirement. Guidelines for implementing and sustaining the strategy should be communicated to all staff members, with accountability mechanisms in place for managers. Knowledge of the legal framework will ensure that organizations and public servants are bound to pursue diversity as well as to protect individual privacy.

Each public agency should perform an audit to assess its current situation and where it fits within the broader strategy. For example, is the workforce still quite homogeneous or does diversity exist only at the bottom of the pyramid? At the other end, does the organization have a relatively diverse workforce at all levels of the system, and a diversity strategy to manage it? An organizational culture audit also enables assessing the diversity climate and public servants' experiences, workplace values and rules that may undermine inclusion and fairness and derail DEI efforts.[30]

Workforce diversity efforts may include equal employment opportunity and affirmative action programs (often linked to existing legislation) to prevent and rectify discrimination and redress prior exclusions. These are necessary, but not sufficient to achieve this aim: the right

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[26]Mor-Barak (2022). Additional protections in some countries include HIV status or health status, marital status, pregnancy, aboriginal status, political affiliation, and family status.

[27] Others also include characteristics like age, caste, social class, sexual orientation, and disability. For details see Mor-Barak (2022) p. 24-25.

[28] For UN DESA's suggested entry points to non-discrimination in the workplace see: Ainbender, L. (2022). Promoting non-discrimination in public administration: some entry points (Policy Brief No.136). UN DESA. https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/publication/PB_136.pdf.

[29] OECD. (2009). Fostering Diversity in the Public Service. https://www.oecd.org/gov/pem/paper-fostering-diversity-public-service.pdf, p. 21.

[30] Rice, M. (2015). Teaching public administration education in the postmodern era: Connecting organizational culture to diversity to social equity. In M. F. Rice (Ed.), *Diversity and Public Administration: Theory, Issues and Perspectives* (pp. 120-139). Routledge.

conditions must be in place for all employees to feel they are treated fairly and can expect to be offered resources and opportunities as they perform effectively.[31]

Expecting seamless assimilation into an unchanged employment system built for a homogenous workforce culture ignores the barriers members of excluded social groups encounter after they enter into employment.[32] Inclusive leadership is necessary to ensure a positive organizational climate[33] and the conditions that will motivate employees from underrepresented groups to remain in the organization, to want to perform at their best and to expect performance-based opportunities for advancement.[34]

Altogether, the most revealing indicator of success in an organization's long-term workforce DEI strategy – reflecting its coherence – a notable progress over time in diversifying the top management group. Promoting deserving employees from underrepresented groups to top leadership positions reflects a decisive diversity management strategy. Their presence denotes a level playing field for access to, and inclusion in prime organizational positions that carry resources and power, regardless of social group.[35] Likewise, a diversified management group is more likely to be committed to diversity management toward achieving the DEI strategy.

Furthermore, top management support, commitment, and accountability are necessary conditions for implementing a successful diversity strategy. Managers must be ready and able to practice *inclusive leadership*,[36] that supports full engagement of all employees in multicultural workplaces. Inclusive leaders are able to ameliorate the potential negative effects of increased workplace diversity and of the change efforts associated with achieving diversity, such as communication challenges across cultures; tensions stemming from divergent perspectives or value differences; and anxiety around change processes.[37] This requires new competencies to facilitate inclusion, value diversity and navigate uncertainty. Incorporating inclusive leadership capabilities in existing competency frameworks helps design effective leadership development programs and enhance leadership performance evaluation systems to support a diverse workplace.[38]

Patterns of workforce diversity vary considerably worldwide because meanings associated with diversity and underrepresented social categories vary by historical and socio-cultural

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[31] Baker, D. T., and Kelan, E. K. (2015). Policy and practice of diversity management in the workplace. In J. Syed and M. Ozbulgin (Eds.), *Managing Diversity and Inclusion: An International Perspective* (1st ed. pp. 78-105). SAGE Publications; Riccucci (2021).
[32] Riccucci (2021); Nolan-Flecha (2019).
[33] Mor-Barak (2022).
[34] OECD et al. (2015); Mor-Barak (2022).
[35] Dobbin, F., and Kalev, A. (2022). *Getting to Diversity: What Works and What Doesn't.* The Belknap Press of Harvard University; Riccucci (2021); UNDP and University of Pittsburgh (2021). *Gender Equality In Public Administration.*
https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2021-12/UNDP-UPitt-2021-Gender-Equality-in-Public-Administration-EN3.pdf.
[36] OECD et al. (2015); Syed, J. and Ozbulgin, M. (eds). (2015). *Managing Diversity and Inclusion, an international perspective.* SAGE.
[37] Nolan-Flecha (2019); Riccucci (2021); Ospina and Foldy (2015).
[38] Denmark's Public Service Management Commission offers toolkits aimed at enhancing competencies to facilitate inclusion and "diversity of thought." The Senior Executive Leadership Capability Framework of the Australian Public Service Commission (APS) has incorporated some of these. See Nolan-Flecha (2019) p. 25-27.

situations.[39] Furthermore, countries have their own rules, regulations, employment systems and even their own national public service job classifications. DEI management efforts are thus context specific. Leaders must devise and manage strategies that are most likely to take hold in each particular context.

Ultimately, the success of diversity efforts in the public sector also depends on factors outside of the public administration, such as the presence of conducive labor laws; prevalent social norms; the accessibility, relevance and quality of educational institutions; the availability of social services, such as child and elder care; inclusive transportation; pensions systems; and workspace accessibility, among others.

The targets of workforce diversity management

Workforce diversity refers to "the division of the workforce into distinction categories that (a) have a perceived commonality within a given cultural or national context, and that (b) impact potentially harmful or beneficial employment outcomes such as job opportunities, treatment in the workplace, and promotion prospects—irrespective of job-related skills and qualifications."[40] Hence, a DEI strategy specifically focuses on social diversity as the core identity marker associated with fair or unfair, inclusive, or exclusive workplaces. Workforce DEI efforts address organizational needs and gaps that result from the absence of employees from particular social groups in the workplace. Their absence makes the institution less representative, fair, and inclusive; their presence adds new perspectives and redresses prior exclusion. This definition helps leaders determine specific social groups to target in a given context, while ensuring some degree of standardization in a DEI workforce strategy.[41]

Within the context of the 2030 Agenda, guidelines are in place to consider which social groups require the most attention to achieve the SDGs. Indicator 16.7.1 measures how much the composition of the public service mirrors the various socio-demographic groups in the national population.[42] The prioritized categories are sex, age, disability and nationally relevant population groups.

Other SDG indicators suggest additional social groups for a DEI workforce strategy. For example, indicator 10.2 from Goal 10 addresses the socio-economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex or disability, and then adds, race, ethnicity, origin, religion and economic or other status. Furthermore, international bodies like the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and United Nations institutions like the International Labour Organization, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

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[39] McCandless et al. (2022).

[40] Mor-Barak (2022) p.151.

[41] Kuklenski, Jennifer. (2021). *Diversity and Organizational Development: Impacts and Opportunities.* Emerald Publishing Limited. https://doi.org/k9vp; Mor-Barak (2022).

[42] 16.7.1 is part of Target 16.7 (ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels) within Goal 16 (promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels). For further information, see SDG indicator metadata document for Indicator 16.7.1.

(OHCHR) and UN Women include sexual orientation and identity when discussing workforce diversity, using the social category LGBTIQ+ to refer to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer persons.[43] Any social group that is subject to harmful employment outcomes by virtue of their membership (yielding exclusion and underrepresentation in public institutions) becomes a potential DEI target whose presence enhances workforce diversity.

Intersectionality has become increasingly recognized when considering target populations to prioritize. Several social identities in a person may converge to produce more negative social outcomes defining their workplace experience (and opportunities). For example, an Indigenous woman may experience discrimination on the basis of both her sex and her Indigenous status, as these social categories intersect in ways that can produce deeper barriers and increase experiences of discrimination or harassment.[44]

While a DEI strategy directs attention to the needs and capabilities of underrepresented social groups, managers and employees from dominant groups also require nudges to get on board. To illustrate, when considering gender diversity, DEI managers must devise interventions specifically for women (such as leadership training), while also promoting gender mainstreaming into all organizational functions and processes, which requires diversity sensitivity from all employees. For instance, the National Program for Public Administration Reform (2019-2030) in Cambodia included a Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan led by the Ministry of Civil Service which mandated efforts of gender-responsive budgeting *and* mandatory gender sensitivity training for new and existing employees and senior management.

Finally, in terms of diversity management, leaders, managers and employees must develop sensitivity toward members of populations who have experienced social exclusion and discrimination and engage them appropriately. However, it is important to avoid essentializing individuals, that is, treating them exclusively through the lens of specific labels or categories, or merely as representatives of a social group.

Public sector situation and trends

Motivations to start public sector workforce diversity initiatives range from social, legal and regulatory pressures associated with the fight against discrimination and the protection of human rights, to changes in labor market demographics.

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[43] For further information regarding the legal obligations of States to protect LGBTIQ+ people see: https://www.ohchr.org/en/topic/lgbti-people. For concepts and terminology see: ILO. (2022). *Inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) persons in the world of work: A learning guide.* https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/publication/wcms_846108.pdf; UN Women (2022a). *LGBTIQ+ Equality And Rights Internal Resource Guide.* https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-06/ap-LGBTIQ%2BINTERNAL-RESOURCE-GUIDE.pdf.

[44] For discussions of intersectionality as a social experience of importance to diversity management, especially in the context of the SDGs, go to: UNDP and University of Pittsburgh (2021); UNPRDP and UN WOMEN. (2022). *Intersectionality Resource Guide And Toolkit– Practical framework and tools for reducing compounded and intersecting inequalities.* https://sdgintegration.undp.org/intersectionality-resource-guide-and-toolkit-0.

Unexpected circumstances that may require more flexible employment rules (like a health crisis) often reduce barriers for entering and remaining in public service. The recent COVID-19 pandemic served to highlight the work of underrepresented groups and the benefits of more representative public administrations for decision-making in service delivery and to respond to underserved groups. It also underscored that, if institutionalized, gender-inclusive care policies reduce current barriers to attract and retain women workers.[45] However, COVID-19 disproportionately affected historically discriminated people and exacerbated pre-existing socio-economic and gender disparities. It unveiled the current unequal distribution of care work, a burden predominantly borne by women (especially from low-income backgrounds), migrants, and racial or ethnic minorities, demonstrating barriers to access, retention, and participation under equal conditions in the labor market and in leadership positions.[46]

Capturing public service workforce diversity information

The state of public service workforce diversity reflects wide variation and insufficient data across and within countries. Reasons may include the broad approach taken to diversity, the lack of systematic and disaggregated data collection on the public workforce's composition, and of international standards for diversity measurement.[47]

Recent developments suggest progress. First, the OECD Pilot Index for the Development of a Diverse Central Government Workforce (2020) has collected data to compare 34 countries across three dimensions: workforce diversity, the collection of relevant data, and tools used to foster a diverse and inclusive public service.[48] Figure 1 illustrates the rich information generated, which shows leading countries in data collection and its use for diversity assessment and decision-making.[49] From this repository we know, for example, that Australia, Austria, and Colombia rank high in keeping centralized, standardized records of workforce data disaggregated by age, gender, disability or educational level,[50] demonstrating what is possible.

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[45] UN Women (2022); Finkel, M., and Hughes, M. (2023). Gender Equality in Public Administration: A New Normal for Governments Three Years into the Pandemic. In the UN DESA, *World Public Sector Report 2023.* https://publicadministration.desa.un.org/publications/category/World%20Public%20Sector%20Reports.

[46] For further information go to: UN Women and UNDP (2022).*Government Responses To Covid-19: Lessons on gender equality for a world in turmoil.* https://www.undp.org/publications/government-responses-covid-19-lessons-gender-equality-world-turmoil.

[47] UNDP Oslo Governance Centre (2021).

[48] Nolan-Flecha (2019) p.141.

[49] OECD. (2021). Diversity and inclusion in the Public Service. In *Government at a Glance 2021*. OECD Publishing. https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/1d754cfc-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/1d754cfc-en#.

[50] OECD (2021) p.140.

Figure 1. OECD pilot index for development of a diverse central government workforce, 2020
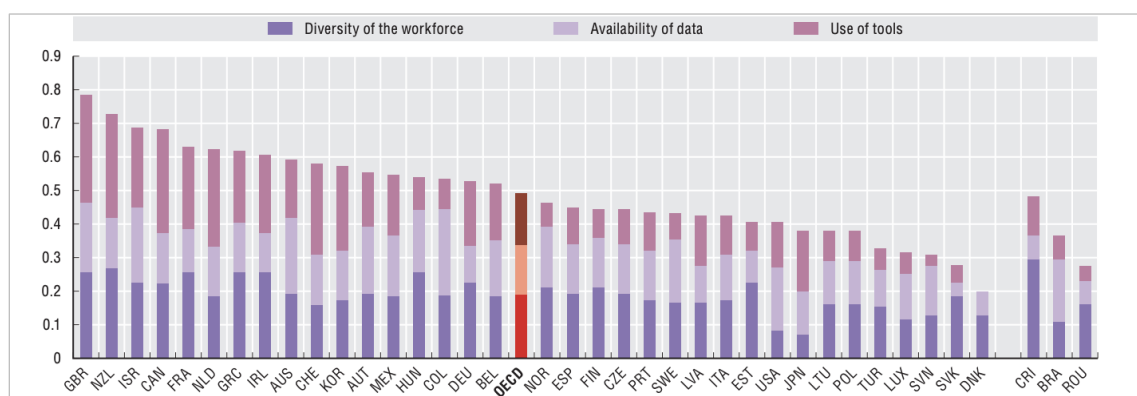
Source: OECD (2020), Public Service Leadership and Capability Survey; OECD (2020), Survey on the Composition of the Workforce in Central/Federal Governments. StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934258021.

Expectations about results from workforce diversity data collection and strategies must be realistic given the complex and developmental nature of the process. For instance, vision statements for the diversity policies of several OECD countries reflected the governments' political commitment to promote workforce diversity in support of sustainable development goals. Yet a 2015 OECD country survey concluded that most governments prioritized a narrow set of targets, mostly women and people with disabilities. Among countries reporting diversity strategies, only a few had action plans to implement them, and even fewer had targets and accountability measures. Finally, data collected to monitor diversity were seldom used for managerial decision-making.[51]

A 2021 UNDP policy brief describing efforts in different countries still reported that many countries do not collect data to monitor or assess their implementation or results.[52] While the monitoring framework of the 2030 Agenda encourages States to produce disaggregated data on their public sector workforce since 2021 (as denoted in indicator 16.7.1b of the SDGs),[53] this has not yielded new information yet.[54] Any attempt to present an integrated picture of the current public service workforce situation worldwide is partial.

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[51] OECD et al. (2015).

[52] UNDP Oslo Governance Centre (2021). This document offers many examples of country experimentation to advance the measurement of indicator 16.7.1b, but it is too soon to report on results.

[53] For further information see the SDG indicator metadata document for Indicator 16.7.1. Retrieved 4 December 2023, from https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/files/Metadata-16-07-01b.pdf.

[54] As of 2023, the analysis is limited to age and gender equality. For further information, see: UNDP. (2023). *Global Progress Report on Sustainable Development Goal 16 Indicators: A Wake-Up Call for Action on Peace, Justice and Inclusion.* https://www.undp.org/publications/global-progress-report-sustainable-development-goal-16-indicators-wake-call-action-peace-justice-and-inclusion..

Current situation

Table 1 (from the Pilot Index) offers an overview of diversity efforts worldwide.[55] It demonstrates, for example, the wide variation in policies by country, and confirms an emphasis on women and people with disabilities. It also showcases countries demonstrating leadership in their strategy, as well as those that are lagging behind.

Table 1. Use of policies and specific targets to improve gender balance and the representation of under-represented groups in central government, 2020

	Women	People from disadvantaged social backgrounds	Ethnic minorities	Indigenous peoples	People with disabilities	People with migrant background	Young professionals	LGBTI	Veterans
Australia	■	⊙	□	■	■	□	□	□	⊙
Austria	■	⊙	⊙	⊙	■	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Belgium	◆	■	⊙	⊙	■	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Canada	■	⊙	■	■	■	⊙	□	⊙	□
Colombia	◆	□	□	□	■	⊙	■	⊙	⊙
Czech Republic	■	□	□	⊙	■	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Estonia	□	□	□	⊙	■	⊙	□	□	⊙
Finland	■	□	□	□	□	□	⊙	⊙	⊙
France	■	■	⊙	⊙	■	■	■	■	■
Germany	■	⊙	□	⊙	■	□	□	□	⊙
Greece	□	□	□	□	◆	□	□	□	□
Hungary	■	■	■	⊙	■	⊙	■	⊙	⊙
Ireland	◆	□	■	■	■	□	⊙	□	⊙
Israel	■	⊙	■	⊙	■	□	⊙	⊙	⊙
Italy	□	⊙	⊙	⊙	■	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Japan	■	⊙	⊙	⊙	■	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Korea	■	■	⊙	⊙	■	■	■	⊙	■
Latvia	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Lithuania	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	■	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Luxembourg	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	■	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Mexico	◆	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	⊙
Netherlands	◆	⊙	□	⊙	■	□	□	□	⊙
New Zealand	■	⊙	■	■	□	■	⊙	□	⊙
Norway	□	⊙	□	⊙	■	□	⊙	□	⊙
Poland	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	■	⊙	■	⊙	⊙
Portugal	◆	⊙	⊙	⊙	□	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Slovak Republic	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	□	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Slovenia	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Spain	◆	⊙	⊙	⊙	■	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Switzerland	■	□	□	⊙	■	□	■	□	⊙
Turkey	⊙	■	⊙	⊙	■	⊙	⊙	⊙	■
United Kingdom	■	■	■	⊙	■	⊙	⊙	⊙	■
United States	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	■
OECD Total									
■ Yes, targets for whole central/ federal administration	14	6	6	4	24	3	6	1	5
◆ Yes, but the targets are only for senior level public servants	7	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
□ No specific targets, but policies in place	4	8	11	4	5	10	7	10	2
⊙ No policies or targets in place	8	19	16	25	3	20	20	22	26
Brazil	⊙	⊙	■	⊙	■	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Costa Rica	■	■	■	■	■	■	⊙	■	■
Romania	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	■	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙

Source: OECD (2020), Survey on the Composition of the Workforce in Central/Federal Governments. StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934258040.

Women in public administration

Most countries assess women's public service participation. The 2021 Global Report on Gender Equality in Public Administration (GEPA)[56] shows an average global participation of 46 percent for women across 139 countries, with only one-third reaching gender parity. Europe and North America, Eastern and Southeastern Asia and Oceania, and Latin America
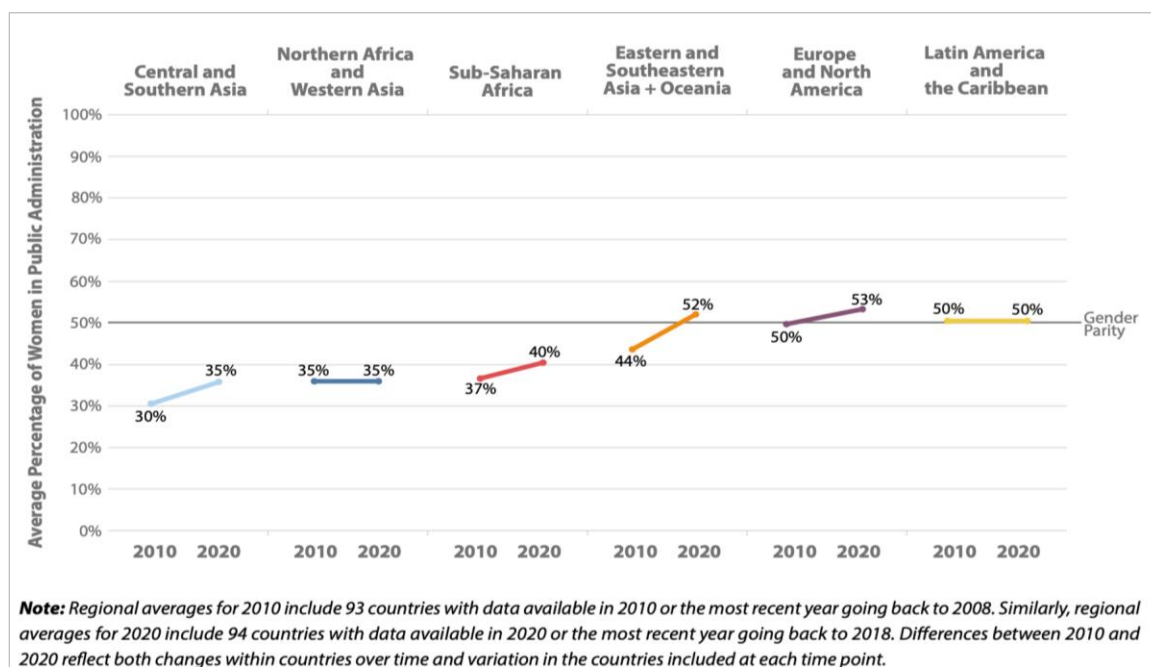
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[55] OECD (2021), p. 139.
[56] UNDP and University of Pittsburgh (2021).

and the Caribbean are at or near gender parity. Sub-Saharan Africa, Northern Africa, Western Asia, and Central and Southern Asia have lower rates. Figure 2 illustrates progress by showing increased women's participation in public administration over a decade in most regions, even in those without gender parity.[57]

But the underrepresentation of women in senior decision-making levels persists globally.[58] Among countries with available data by 2020, on average women constituted 38 percent of managers and 30 percent of senior managers.[59] As of 2023, women made up 22.8 percent of Cabinet members leading Ministries, and only in 13 countries did women occupy 50 percent or more of the Cabinet Minister positions (responsible for leading policy areas).[60] Research on women's presence and leadership in public administration highlights the negative impact of stereotypes about women: viewing leadership as a male domain and reinforcing masculine organizational cultures that exclude women from power and opportunities limit women's roles, retention and career advancement opportunities.[61]

Figure 2. Regional change in participation in public administration by sex, 2010-2020

Note: Regional averages for 2010 include 93 countries with data available in 2010 or the most recent year going back to 2008. Similarly, regional averages for 2020 include 94 countries with data available in 2020 or the most recent year going back to 2018. Differences between 2010 and 2020 reflect both changes within countries over time and variation in the countries included at each time point.

Source: Gender Parity in Civil Service (Gen-PaCS) dataset, December 2020.

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[57] UNDP and University of Pittsburgh (2021), p. 32.
[58] UNDP and University of Pittsburgh (2021), p. 43-58.
[59] UNDP and University of Pittsburgh (2021), p. 48.
[60] UN Women. (2023). Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan 2011, as amended to 2013, Article 16. In Global Gender Equality Constitutional Database. https://constitutions.unwomen.org/en/countries/africa/south-sudan.
[61] For further information, see: UN DESA (2022b).

There are also gender sector imbalances. The top leadership positions held by women are overrepresented in health, education and social services agencies worldwide, while they are less likely to be in finance or defense, (where women's top positions range between 2 percent and 3 percent.)[62] In addition, women's public administration employment opportunities are often limited in conflict-affected countries; and, reflecting the dynamics of intersectionality, women with disabilities and from ethnic, racial, and Indigenous backgrounds, face higher barriers to civil service participation, especially in reaching top leadership roles.[63]

Finally, gender representation in public service varies substantially across regions and countries. For instance, the Democratic Republic of Congo's share of women in public service is 7 percent, while in the same region, Botswana's is 60 percent. In Latin America, 64 percent of the countries are near parity–more than in any other region. In terms of variations in decision-making levels, by 2020, Greece, Iceland, Latvia, Poland and Uruguay were the only five countries with gender parity in senior manager positions. Japan, Nepal and Saudi Arabia had the lowest levels in these roles (ranging from 1 percent to 5 percent).[64]

Persons with disabilities

So far, 185 countries have ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).[65] Article 27 stipulates an obligation for states to actively promote employment for persons with disabilities and motivates the public sector to recruit persons with disabilities, thus leading by example. In national legislation, 171 countries have disability laws and acts against the discrimination of persons with disabilities, which contribute toward implementing the CRPD.[66] And yet, a 2023 survey conducted in 132 countries by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction reported that respondents view local governments' commitment and capacity to disability inclusion as low. In the same survey, 57 percent of respondents did not know whether there was an official appointed position (at any level of government) "for inclusive disability, access and functional needs;" and 27 percent reported its absence.[67]

Quota schemes for persons with disabilities represent the most common mechanism to provide employment opportunities per a 2019 ILO study. Of 100 countries, two-thirds have quotas for both sectors, and 24 apply this scheme only to the public sector.[68] Among OECD countries, 73 percent of them used targets to hire persons with disabilities in 2020 (an increase from 37 percent in 2016).[69]

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[62] Paxton, P., Hughes, M. M., and Barnes, T. D. (2020). *Women, Politics, and Power: A Global Perspective* (4th ed.). Rowman & Littlefield, cited in UNDP and University of Pittsburgh (2021).
[63] UNDP and University of Pittsburgh (2021), p. 93-103.
[64] UNDP and University of Pittsburgh (2021), p. 30 and p. 49.
[65] https ://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/crpd.
[66] For further information, see: https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/disability-laws-and-acts-by-country-area.html.
[67] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. (2023). *Global Survey Report on Persons with Disabilities and Disasters*. https://www.undrr.org/media/90432/download?startDownload=true, p. 17.
[68] ILO. (2019a). *Promoting Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities Quota Schemes* (Vol. 1) https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/disability-and-work/WCMS_735531/lang--en/index.htm.
[69] OECD (2021).

Data regarding the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the public service are scarce. Particularly lacking are statistics regarding women civil servants or racial or ethnic minorities with disabilities. Despite limited data, among 170 countries analyzed in the GEPA global report (2021), the most common occurrence of disaggregated data for gender and disabilities is in North Africa and Western Asia (16 percent of countries from both regions) and in Sub-Saharan Africa (9 percent). Countries in Central and Southern Asia do not report these intersectional data.[70]

Youth

Workers are on average older in the public sector than in the private sector,[71] and in numerous countries, public sectors are facing the challenge of attracting young workers. Among OECD countries for instance, only 7 percent (56 out of 756) of Cabinet members were under 40, and only 2 percent were aged 35 or under in 2022.[72] The percentage of employees aged 55 and older in central governments experienced a marginal increase from 25 percent to 26 percent between 2015 and 2020, on average. However, there are variations among OECD members. For example, for this same period, Spain experienced an increase from 35 percent to 46 percent, and Greece from 27 percent to 37 percent. In contrast, in Australia, Hungary, Israel, Japan, Luxembourg, South Korea and Turkey the percentage of employees aged 55 and older is under 20 percent. Also, the percentage of young employees increased by 1 percentage point, reaching 19 percent of the central government workforce, with notable increases observed in Denmark, Israel and South Korea.[73] Young women's access to public administration also varies. For instance, in 2020, out of 170 countries, Lao PDR had the highest percentage of women under 30 in public administration, and Slovenia had the lowest (2 percent of total public administration employees).[74]

Initiatives to attract young employees are gradually increasing in France, Serbia, South Africa, South Korea, Sri Lanka, and the United Kingdom. Some countries are changing upper and lower age limits for civil service recruitment, such as Denmark, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden. Overall, understanding the factors that impact young individuals' decisions to pursue public sector careers requires additional public sector age-disaggregated data analysis.[75]

Information about other social groups

Data on public service representation for Indigenous peoples and racial, ethnic, or other nationally relevant population groups remains very limited[76] (except in Australia and Canada),

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[70] UNDP and University of Pittsburgh (2021).
[71] OECD et al. (2015), p. 14.
[72] OECD. (2023a). *2023 Annual Diversity and Inclusion Report.* Human Resources Management.
https://t4.oecd.org//careers/work/annual-diversity-inclusion-report.pdf.
[73] OECD (2021), p. 106.
[74] UNDP and University of Pittsburgh (2021).
[75] UNDP Oslo Governance Centre (2021).
[76] UNDP Oslo Governance Centre (2021).

as well as that on sexual orientation. European countries have not traditionally collected data on ethnic background, disability status, sexual orientation or educational background, which makes it difficult to assess the situation and make evidence-based diversity decisions.

The United Kingdom is an exception, collecting since 1991 ethnic background and disability status data, and very recently also on sexual orientation, as part of civil service diversity and inclusion statistics.[77] This outlier's ability to describe its situation and progress illustrates the benefits of this practice for understanding workforce diversity. According to the latest figures in its Civil Service diversity and inclusion dashboard, 54.2 percent of civil servants are women, 14.3 percent are ethnic minorities (in line with the proportion of the working population) and 13.6 percent are disabled (only slightly underrepresented compared to the population proportion). Overall, 5.6 percent of civil servants are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or recorded their sexual orientation as 'Other,' in 2021, and it is mentioned that the overall percentage has increased over the last three years.[78]

The dashboard also reports that persons with disabilities from an ethnic minority background or women civil servants are more likely to be in more junior roles, yet the proportion in more senior roles has been increasing since 2010 (in the feeder grades for the Senior Civil Service the proportions have risen for disabled staff from 4.9 percent to 9.7 percent; for ethnic minorities from 6.9 percent to 12.1 percent; and for women it is close to achieving gender parity).[79]

In regard to LGBTIQ+ persons, countries are gradually adopting legislation prohibiting public service workplace discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation, which reflects the public sector's leadership compared to the private sector.[80] But most governmental efforts happen at the societal level of action (with anti-discrimination legislation and legal recognition of gender diverse people), not at the workplace level. As of 2022, 73 States had legislation banning employment discrimination based on sexual orientation or other non-binary gender identities, despite weak implementation yielding persistent inequities.[81] Laws to include a third classification for gender identity in official documents have been adopted slowly over the last 20 years in Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Canada, Germany, Iceland, India, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Uruguay and parts of the United States. Gender affirmation laws also exist in Cuba, Norway and Taiwan, and are under discussion in Viet Nam.

Measuring gender identity remains at an early stage in many countries, but some are engaged in new efforts to develop concepts and methods to collect official statistics that go beyond the female-male binary. For instance, Kenya, Nepal and Pakistan have introduced variables on

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[77] OECD et al. (2015).

[78] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-diversity-inclusion-dashboard/civil-service-diversity-and-inclusion-dashboard/

[79] Ibid.

[80] ILO (2022); World Bank. (2021). Access to the Labor Market. In *Equality of Opportunity for Sexual and Gender Minorities*. https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/cb4c99b99a691f68198f1cd4a776122e-0200022021/original/EQOSOGI-77-95.pdf.

[81] Mor-Barak (2022).

gender identity in their censuses. After a four-year process of consultation, testing and validation with various gender identity-based groups, Canada introduced in its 2021 census standardized questions on sex at birth and gender status.[82]

Methods of implementation

Three broad phases–developing, implementing and evaluating the strategy–create recurring learning cycles that generate feedback loops over time to advance the DEI workforce strategy. Increased international labor flows, the speed of knowledge exchange, and transnational benchmarking practices encourage drawing on the experience of peers in other regions to adopt good practices. These practices can be linked to mission-oriented results, leaving space for experimentation and innovation to ensure context-specificity. Examples of good practices are featured below.[83]

Developing the strategy

Developing and equipping a diverse workforce to support national sustainable development objectives requires a long-term horizon and strategic leadership. National strategies can be all-encompassing (such as the United Kingdom's entire Civil Service system strategy)[84] or can target separate efforts for specific social groups, (such as Australia's separate diversity strategies on gender equality and on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander).[85] Audits can take a national look or they can be agency specific, and the timing can also vary. For instance, the United Kingdom's National Audit Office produced a civil service national audit in 2015;[86] in contrast, the National Cohesion and Integration Commission of Kenya conducts annual ethnic audits in public universities and agencies to assess the underrepresentation of certain ethnic groups.[87]

Implementing the strategy

Implementing the strategy requires a dual approach that supports on-going strategic recruitment while designing and setting up other initiatives that support and retain employees.

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[82] UNDP Oslo Governance Centre (2021).

[83] A caveat: an effort to source evidence globally and find examples from diverse geographical contexts suggests that most evidence of good practices is published from countries in the global north. More systematic research to articulate good practices in countries from the global south (which may have not been captured, systematized, or disseminated), is needed.

[84] See UK Government. (2022). *Government Civil Service Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2025*. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6256c55ce90e0729fd14bcbd/civil-service-diversity-inclusion-strategy.pdf.

[85] For the gender strategy, see Australian Public Service Commission. (2021). *Gender Equality Strategy 2021–26*. https://www.apsc.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-12/APSC%20-%20Gender%20Equality%20Strategy.pdf. For the aboriginal and TSI strategy, see Australian Public Service Commission. (2020). *Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020-2024*. https://www.apsc.gov.au/working-aps/diversity-and-inclusion/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-workforce/commonwealth-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-workforce-strategy-2020-2024.

[86] UK National Audit Office. (2015). *Equality, diversity, and inclusion in the civil service*. https://www.nao.org.uk/reports/diversity-equality-and-inclusion-in-the-civil-service/.

[87] OECD et al. (2015), p.14.

Enabling the right recruitment, selection, and placement of underrepresented employees

A diverse pool of candidates to select employees requires systematic outreach with multiple advertisement outlets (through networks, associations and professional groups), and incentivizing employees to encourage their contacts to apply. The branding strategy and job postings must communicate the right signals to nudge targeted social groups, (such as women, ethnic groups or junior or senior applicants). The selection and hiring process must reflect diverse perspectives (for example, gender-balanced search committees), and its members must receive diversity sensitivity training to reduce biases and stereotypical assumptions).

Job descriptions must reflect neutrality and welcoming language to enable a good fit. For instance, Ireland revised its recruitment and promotion practices to eliminate requirements that could directly or indirectly discriminate against some social groups; it reframed job description attributes to avoid discrimination based on sex, gender, disability, or ethnicity.[88]

Disaggregating workforce data in national statistics units or other offices contributes to adjusting recruitment and selection policies. For instance, Kyrgyzstan's new legal framework requires agencies to recruit a qualified applicant of the less-represented sex, everything else being equal.[89] India has pioneered efforts to disaggregate data on public service gender identity by introducing a transgender option within the civil service examination form's gender category.[90]

The United Kingdom's Civil Service graduate development program, the Fast Stream, illustrates efforts to address recruitment barriers for applicants with lower socio-economic backgrounds (SEB) to future leadership positions based on identified bottlenecks. A two-year action plan included: clarifying senior leadership diversity responsibilities; an Applicant Tracking System to improve data collection; mobilizing program participants to engage in recruitment; shortening and adjusting recruitment and testing processes; adding regional assessment centers; and developing a civil service-wide SEB workforce census to help develop strategy and targets toward socio-economic diversity.[91]

Incentives and mandated quotas for members of specific underrepresented groups to enter public service yield positive results. For example, an employment target of 3 percent introduced in 2005 for persons with disabilities in Ireland has been gradually increased with the goal of reaching 6 percent by 2023. In Malaysia, requiring women to fill 30 percent of senior positions has increased their representation at the premier grade level from 18.8 percent in 2004 to 32.2 percent in 2010.[92]

Incentives and quotas are common. Costa Rica, France and Mexico have established gender parity laws, which go beyond quotas and guarantee equal access to certain elected positions.

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[88] UNDP Oslo Governance Center (2021).
[89] Ibid.
[90] World Bank (2021), p. 8-9.
[91] Nolan-Flecha (2019), p. 36.
[92] Ibid.

Political parties must then observe the principle of gender parity in the composition of candidates' lists for elective office. South Sudan's constitution requires a 25 percent quota to promote women's representation at all levels of legislative and executive bodies. North Macedonia requires an agency's annual employment plan to identify and address ethnic representation gaps by comparing workforce distribution to census information.[93] Ecuador has implemented affirmative measures to reinforce indigenous minority group recruitment.[94] Sri Lanka and the Republic of Korea have youth employment quotas.[95] At least 90 countries have quota requirements (between 1 percent and 15 percent) for persons with disabilities. Uruguay and Argentina reserve job quotas for transgender individuals.[96] Other countries focus on quotas for top leadership positions. Colombia requires a 30 percent quota for women in decision-making positions in national and subnational government agencies (it also mandates gender balance in selection processes).[97]

Examples of other proactive ways to attract, support and retain underrepresented employees into civil service include Ethiopia's disability-specific preferential right in recruitment, promotion and deployment;[98] Uganda's 'Guidelines for Mainstreaming Gender' into HRM policies;[99] Serbia's temporary work placement of Roma youth in public service and civil society organizations for skill development;[100] and the United States' *Govern for America* fellowship program, recruiting graduate applicants from traditionally underrepresented groups.[101]

Enabling the environment for retaining, developing and promoting underrepresented employees

Once hired, workplaces must continue to support recruited employees. Three broad categories of practices (described below) enable the right environment: adjusting HRM policies to implement the initiatives; creating governance mechanisms to expand leadership; and offering learning and development programs to expand capacity. Some practices apply to all employees, others to specific targets, with content varying accordingly.[102]

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[93] UNDP Oslo Governance Center (2021).

[94] OECD et al. (2015).

[95] UNDP Oslo Governance Centre (2021).

[96] For further information: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship, Argentina. (2020). *Equal opportunities: the Argentine government establishes a trans labor quota in the national public sector.* Argentina Embassy in the US. https://eeeuu.cancilleria.gob.ar/en/equal-opportunities-argentine-government-establishes-trans-labor-quota-national-public-sector; Ministerio de Desarrollo Social de Uruguay. (2017). *Personas trans e inclusión laboral en Uruguay: Un análisis de la aplicación de cuotas en programas públicos de inserción laboral.* Investigaciones en Derechos Económicos, Sociales y Culturales Dirección Nacional de Promoción Sociocultural – Ministerio de Desarrollo Social- https://www.gub.uy/ministerio-desarrollo-social/sites/ministerio-desarrollo-social/files/documentos/publicaciones/personas_trans_inclusion_laboral_uruguay.pdf.

[97] UN Women (2021).

[98] ILO (2019), p. 11.

[99] UNDP Oslo Governance Centre (2021).

[100] Ibid; UN Volunteers (2019, December 19). *Strengthening the social inclusion of young Roma through UN Community Volunteer opportunities.* UN Volunteers. Retrieved October 26, 2023, from https://www.unv.org/Success-stories/strengthening-social-inclusion-young-roma-through-un-community-volunteer.

[101] https://www.govern4america.org/become-fellow.

[102] Riccucci (2021).

Adjusting HRM policies to implement diversity initiatives

Examples of good practices that may require HRM policy adjustments include broadening opportunities for promotion to decision-making levels; creating a system for monitoring and ensuring pay equity; and ensuring diversity-friendly benefit packages (for example, family, childcare, leave, domestic partner, disability-related and cafeteria-style benefits–where employees can make choices).

Supporting the promotion of underrepresented groups—such as women—to leadership roles requires acknowledging that existing HRM practices are not gender-neutral. Policies should be re-designed to actively promote equal opportunity and remove biases and organizational narratives that block women from moving up to leadership positions.[103] Work-life balance organizational practices (such as flexibility in schedule and work location, or childcare at work) illustrate effective gender-cognizant HRM policies that weigh work and care responsibilities and facilitate equitable work environments. For instance, Bhutan implemented an affordable childcare program for public employees after assessing women's needs via a survey. In China, a care leave system supports elder care responsibilities of one-child families. Pakistan's rotation policy (public servants must work outside their home province) exempted women, enabling them to stay close to their families while pursuing a public service career.[104]

Simple policy adjustments yield flexibility in working arrangements and careers. Examples include part-time work, sabbatical leave, flexible working hours, telework and job sharing; as well as flexible career paths, re-entry programs, job rotation, mid-career programs or second career opportunities. Corporate health management, working-time accounts, life cycle HRM frameworks, and alternative career opportunities may also require procedural changes.[105] Adjustments may be required when incorporating diversity measures in the performance standards for leadership positions, which are then integrated into the organization's performance management systems.[106]

Developing formal procedures to make and to address complaints (e.g., sexual and other harassment policies) may not require an HRM policy adjustment but an expansion for certain categories not considered before. For instance, Canada and Uruguay have reporting mechanisms for filing discrimination claims related to LGBTIQ+ persons in both public and private sectors.[107]

Policy adaptations may also consider the end of employment. The German Employment Agency's Life Cycle-oriented HRM policy adds a phase called "Active retirement" focusing on lifelong learning, knowledge exchange and transfer programs.[108] In Australia, high-

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[103] UN DESA (2022a).
[104] UNDP (2021).
[105] OECD et al. (2015).
[106] Nolan-Flecha (2019).
[107] World Bank (2021).
[108] OECD et al. (2015).

performing older workers are retained longer to capture and transfer critical knowledge before retirement. Approaching retirement, flexible work options are offered, like alternative jobs with the same or lower salary; reduced responsibility; purchase leave; leave without pay; and transition to retirement. Retirees continue to transfer knowledge via alumni network participation.[109] At the other side of the spectrum, policies focusing on young staff members may translate into internships, young associates' programs, and junior professional officer programs.[110]

Creating governance mechanisms to expand diversity leadership

Diversity champions activate social accountability in leaders and employees by observing and monitoring employment decisions and behaviors. Assigning formal champions represents an important diversity intervention, even if no budget or formal authority to act are bestowed.[111] Granting authority, resources and a strategic location inside or close to the circle of power can only increase their impact.

Creating a diversity task force or a comprehensive network may yield useful alternative governance structures, especially if civil service law prevents additional formal positions. The Table on DEIB Groups and Diversity Champions in Canada is a federal level networked mechanism to ensure DEI coherence and accountability. A pan-Canadian group of experts and the Table on DEI offer high-level strategic advice. An appointed Deputy Minister champions networks for Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, and other minorities, with the participation of employee representatives to advance the strategy. Linking champions from all levels, this mechanism engages authority and accountability from the top down and the bottom up,[112] and has produced measures to assess diversity results for people with disabilities and a public service-wide training curriculum on Indigenous awareness for middle and senior management.[113]

Employment Resource Groups (ERGs) or diversity networks enhance diversity efforts.[114] These sanctioned, volunteer, employee-organized communities connect employees who share interests or backgrounds and offer spaces to discuss work experiences. For instance, the United Kingdom's civil service has cross-government race, disability and "LGB&Ti" networks as well as a civil service blog with a dedicated section on diversity and inclusion.[115] The National Indigenous Australians Agency, an agency-level network, supports six staff-run diversity networks: the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Network; the Culturally and

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[109] Nolan-Flecha (2019).
[110] OECD (2023a).
[111] Dobbin and Kalev (2022).
[112] UN DESA (2022a).
[113] Nolan-Flecha (2019).
[114] For a recent review, see Welbourne, T.M., Rolf, S. and Schlachter, S. (2017), The case for employee resource groups: A review and social identity theory-based research agenda. *Personnel Review*, 46 (8), 1816-1834.
[115] Further information at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-staff-networks.

Linguistically Diverse Network; the Disability Network; the Pride Network; the Wellbeing Network; and the Women's Network.[116]

Benefits of ERGs and networks include:

- For employees – having a voice; a sense of belonging; and greater opportunities;
- For the organization – intercultural understanding and effective, collective communication of concerns.[117]

A selection of the OECD's ERGs and their articulated aims further illustrates these benefits:

- *Dialogue on Inclusion, Cultural Diversity and Equity (DICE)*: a platform where multicultural communities advocate for guidelines and staff diversity policies;
- *GLOBE*: an association for LGBTIQ+ people and their allies;
- The *OECD Group on Parenthood*: a forum to share and raise awareness of balancing family and work challenges, advocating for clear policies to benefit all employees.

ERGs do not replace public agencies' responsibility to ensure that their cultures work well. They broaden the sources of leadership and accountability around diversity, with informal authority to advocate for change toward an inclusive workplace. For example, the OECD Staff Association's Working Group on Diversity advocated in 2020 for broadening the diversity policy beyond gender and nationality.[118]

Offering learning and development programs to expand capacity

Formal training programs offer either diversity related content (DEI training) or training on relevant work skills and capabilities, often targeting members of underrepresented groups; in addition, other non-classroom developmental opportunities, like mentoring, are relevant to diversity efforts.

Formal DEI training develops awareness and capacity to address workplace diversity situations, and to cultivate an organizational climate that fosters inclusive values and behaviors. Yet the assumption that awareness changes behavior has been challenged.[119] Research on cognition shows that unconscious bias training, a popular tool to prevent or address workplace incidents, at best generates learning that erodes over time, and at worst creates a backlash among employees. But other research on women's presence and leadership in public administration highlights that stereotypes about women continue to be a major force in limiting their roles, thus affecting their retention and advancement opportunities.[120]

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[116] https://www.niaa.gov.au/niaa/careers/diversity-and-inclusion.
[117] Adapted from https://www.togetherplatform.com/blog/the-ins-and-outs-of-employee-resource-groups.
[118] OECD (2023a).
[119] Dobbin and Kalev (2022).
[120] UN DESA (2022a) and (2022b).

The solution is to use training strategically so that it generates learning about diversity that builds competencies for effective performance, rather than for the sake of diversity alone. For instance, the OECD offers a virtual training program called "The Art of Decision" to employees responsible for conducting panel interviews. Participants practice interview scenarios, receive feedback on potential bias influencing their candidates' evaluation, and learn techniques to reduce them.[121] Training to address work challenges associated with workforce diversity is thus strategic, and can be offered to employees at all levels, including top managers.

Diversity-specific training works well for certain topics, such as sexual harassment, especially if it generates tangible results. For example, the National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia performed workplace harassment training that yielded gender action plans to prevent future instances.[122] Diversity-specific training can also help existing and prospective leaders develop inclusive leadership capabilities. Leadership development programs must help managers learn competencies to foster positive interactions within heterogeneous groups, address tensions productively, nurture common ground by reframing narratives, view difference as a resource, and foster team adaptive behavior to face change constructively. Inclusive capabilities also incentivize managers to promote change in the organizational culture and ensure coherent policies and practices. Leadership development programs that are part of a diversity strategy must be designed to avoid perception of remedial education, framed instead as learning opportunities to lead transformative processes toward an inclusive workplace.[123]

In contrast to DEI training, work-related training focuses on enhancing employee capacity for effective performance. Often, training is targeted to members of specific underrepresented groups. For instance, Mongolia's gender equality law mandated the proportional recruitment and training of women administrators to prepare them for leadership roles. Its Civil Service Council implemented a five-year training program across the country, identifying women already in the system and offering management training, a mentoring opportunity and career coaching.[124] Solomon Islands' 2019 National Action Plan mandate for women's access to decision-making positions required training for leadership roles in justice, peace and security areas–with topics like leadership in post-conflict processes, policing and security governance.[125]

Instead of being mutually exclusive, DEI and work-related training create synergies. For instance, in Malaysia, the civil service offers women career development opportunities that include formal training and on-the-job learning initiatives. They can also participate in special leadership development training about women in management and leadership and organizational analysis and policy development, among others. In addition, women are

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[121] OECD (2023a).
[122] UNDP (2021).
[123] Nolan-Flecha (2019).
[124] UNDP (2021).
[125] Solomon Island Government. (2020). *Solomon Islands Voluntary National Review Report*. United Nations.https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26795VNR_2020_Solomon_Report.pdf.

encouraged to join a network where they find supportive role models and engage in peer-to-peer learning. Malaysia's systematic developmental efforts to bring women into leadership positions are widely recognized. By 2018, women represented 36.1 percent of the country's public service leadership, exceeding the original 30 percent target.[126]

Mentoring systems represent a key developmental diversity management intervention for all employees. For instance, Austria has had a cross-mentoring program since 2005 that links ministry staff members from various levels to senior mentors from other ministries. Cross-cultural matching works, as long as the core pairing criterion is *interest,* thus reflecting real work, and avoiding overload for mentees of underrepresented groups, given their scarcity at the top. The NSW Public Service Commission in Australia has created detailed guides for implementing mentoring programs.[127]

Evaluating the strategy

Top leadership, HRM staff and official diversity management officers share the responsibility of assessing diversity management initiatives and progress. Once disaggregated baseline data is in place, a variety of monitoring methods, including staff surveys, HRM dashboards, diversity scorecards, benchmarking and certification, help to track progress by organizational level. Some countries have started to apply the methodology to measure SDG indicators. For instance, in 2017, Bangladesh launched the SDGs Tracker platform to monitor the implementation of SDGs and implemented guidelines aligned with the 16.7.1b indicator.[128] Most public sector assessments include employee surveys. In Portugal, for example, to better understand the experience of its target groups, employee survey data is used to analyze seniority, legal employment relationships, and disability.[129]

Civil service censuses are another important tool. Rwanda's Civil Service Census became the foundation for the 2011 Gender Monitoring Report, generating a baseline to assess the status of women in public service. By 2018, women in Rwanda held 34 percent of managerial positions, 33.5 percent of chief executive positions and comprised 34.5 percent of the workforce in senior official legislative roles in government.[130] Currently, Rwanda leads sub-Saharan Africa representation of women in cabinet positions (women represented 50 percent compared with 36.8 percent in 2014). The Vision 2020 national strategy plan continues to use gender monitoring to guide and assess progress.[131]

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[126] Government of Malaysia. (2019). *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Malaysia Progress Report 2014-2019.* https://www.asiapacificgender.org/sites/default/files/documents/Malaysia%20.
[127] Nolan-Flecha (2019).
[128] UNDP Oslo Governance Centre (2021).
[129] OECD et al. (2015).
[130] United Nations. (2019). Rwanda Voluntary National Review (VNR) Report 2019. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23432Rwanda_2019_VNR_Final_Draft___17_06_2019.pdf.
[131] UN DESA (2022a).

Certifications and benchmarks assess where the organization is and provide context-specific considerations for adjusting diversity management practices. For example, the French government's certification process, *Label Diversité* (for public and private organizations),[132] draws from France's legal definition of discrimination to prioritize its diversity targets (age, disability status, country of origin, sexual orientation and identity, trade union activity and religion). Several institutional approvals, and a two-year renewal requirement ensure compliance, foster a continuous improvement process and keep organizations accountable for their diversity efforts.

These assessments can target specific groups. For instance, the OECD undertakes the EDGE certification process on gender equality, which assesses representation, pay equity, career development policies and employee perspectives. The process also involves benchmarking, with comparisons, in this case, against international organizations like the Inter-American Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and UNDP, among others.[133]

Identifying solutions to lack of progress requires awareness of the factors that stifle DEI strategies in public agencies: external to the diversity strategy include economic crises and government austerity measures; and cultural barriers (social norms and gender mores perpetuating unequal outcomes; agency culture's narratives and practices shaping negative behavior). Factors internal to design and implementation include perceptions of 'window dressing' (when ignoring employees' perspectives); poor data collection to evaluate and inform strategy (due to poor data science skills, legal constraints, and privacy considerations); absence of governance mechanisms for cross-level accountability and strategy coherence; and poor leadership.[134]

Case studies

Australia and South Africa illustrate comprehensive public service transformations aimed at creating a more diverse, inclusive and equitable public service.

Australia

The Australian Public Service (APS) has successfully advanced diversity and inclusive public workforce strategies to attract, recruit, and retain women and employees from Aboriginal and Torres Islander, disability, and LGBTIQ+ groups.[135] According to the Development of a Diverse Central Government Workforce Pilot Index, Australia is ranked 9th among OECD member states in terms of the diversity of the workforce, availability and use of data and the

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[132] Nolan-Flecha (2019), p. 38.
[133] OECD (2023a).
[134] Nolan-Flecha (2019).
[135] Australian Public Service Academy. (n.d). *Diversity and Inclusion.* https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/national-agreement.

use of tools to create a diverse and inclusive workforce.[136]

The DEI strategy encompasses numerous initiatives across government agencies, such as executive senior officers serving as Diversity and Inclusion Champions tasked with raising awareness of diversity issues. Employee-led DEI networks facilitate knowledge sharing, career advancement opportunities, and flexible working arrangements. Simultaneously, efforts are directed toward progressively building institutional capacity to collect and analyze gender-disaggregated data and advance ongoing monitoring and evaluation processes.

As of 2021, women occupy 60 percent of APS roles, in contrast to 1968, when men dominated the APS, and only one in four employees were women. The percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander public service employees has risen from 2.2 percent in 2015 to 3.5 percent, and employees with disabilities have increased from 3.5 percent in 2015 to 4.0 percent in 2020. The APS aspires to achieve a target of 7 percent representation of people with disabilities by 2025, as outlined in the 2020-2025 Disability Employment Strategy. Additionally, by 2020, 22.1 percent of APS employees were born overseas and 4.8 percent identified as LGBTIQ+.[137]

Recent initiatives aim to overcome persistent challenges, such as low diversity in leadership roles, limited strategies to ensure employee retention (not just concentrating on recruitment), and reports of bullying and sexual harassment in the workplace.[138] For instance, the 2021-2026 Gender Equality Strategy's main objectives include the creation of respectful and safe workplaces; and the 2020-2024 workforce strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people focuses on improving and embedding their culture in the workplace, within the "Closing the Gap" national framework that addresses the inequalities these groups experience in the country.[139]

South Africa

In this country, the Constitution and supportive legislation for all was the starting point, given the general level of exclusion of a large portion of the population. National legislation was formulated in the mid-1990s, including affirmative action policies to ensure equal treatment for all, while addressing remedial action to support previously excluded groups. The 1994 Public Service Act reflected a commitment to building a representative civil service from the start. It addressed issues like equality at work, workforce diversity, diverse representation, economic development, and redressing discrimination. The 1998 Employment Equity Act and the 2003 Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) act followed, promoting a

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[136] OECD (2021), p. 140.

[137] Australian Government (2022). *Diversity and Inclusion Champions.* https://www.apsc.gov.au/working-aps/diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-inclusion-news/diversity-and-inclusion-champions.

[138] Inside Policy. (2019). *An Evaluation of the Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy: Final Report.* https ://0288c694-3633-4216-9551-9961861d65b2.filesusr.com/ugd/b81571_b3e5e3dc262641e1ba9f2c52bd1fe92a.pdf.

[139] https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/national-agreement.

shift in the racial composition of the country's workforce and more opportunities (including business ownership) for Blacks, women, and members of rural communities.[140]

Since then, South Africa has aimed to make its public service reflect the composition of its population and has achieved significant progress through robust public sector reforms within the context of reconciliation, reconstruction, and development after apartheid.[141]

Public sector transformations were advanced by applying several affirmative initiatives, legislative instruments, and enforcement tools. Specifically, the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (1995), the 1996 Constitution, and the Public Service Act (Procl. 103/1994) outlined strategic and legal frameworks to achieve broad representation in the public service. The Affirmative Action in the Public Service (1998) paper set mandatory requirements for national and provincial departments to develop employment equity targets within a specified period; collect employees' statistics disaggregated by gender, race, and disability information; conduct surveys to assess the needs, priorities, and perceptions of staff; and develop a monitoring system. In addition, a series of policies and guidelines have been implemented to promote gender equality and enhance employment opportunities for youth and people with disabilities.[142]

In 1995, Blacks represented 63.6 percent of the public service, but 83 percent of those positions were in the lowest pay categories, while senior and managerial positions were mainly occupied by Whites.[143] As of 2022, the representation of Blacks in the public sector rose to 82.4 percent, dominating senior management levels. In 2019, the percentage of women in the public sector workforce reached 49 percent and by 2022, 1.1 percent of public service employees were persons with disabilities, of whom 54.6 percent were women. Overall, in 2022 the public service was 82.4 percent Black, followed by 8.6 percent of so-called coloureds, 6.7 percent White, and 2.4 percent Asian. Despite progress, the targets of 50 percent of women in Senior Management Services and 2 percent of persons with disabilities across all levels of public service had not been reached by 2022.[144]

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[140] Lewis, C. and Tatli, A. (2015). Leadership and Diversity in a Global Context. In Syed, J. And M. Ozbulgin (eds), *Managing Diversity and Inclusion, an International Perspective* (pp. 47-77). SAGE Publications, Inc.

[141] Cameron, R. and Miln, C. (2011). Representative bureaucracy in the South African public service. *African Journal of Public Affairs,* 4(2): 19-35, 2011.

[142] Department of Public Sector and Administration Republic of South Africa. (1998). Affirmative Action in the Public Service [White Paper]. https://www.dpsa.gov.za/dpsa2g/documents/acts&regulations/frameworks/white-papers/affirmative.pdf.

[143] Fernandez, S., and Lee, H. (2016). The transformation of the South African Public Service: Exploring the impact of racial and gender representation on organisational effectiveness. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 54(1), 91-116.

[144] Department of Public Sector and Administration Republic of South Africa. (2022). *Annual Report on employment equity on public service.* https://www.dpsa.gov.za/dpsa2g/documents/ee/2023/Annual%20Report%20on%20Employment%20Equity%20in%20the%20Public%20Service%202021%202022.pdf.

Peer-to-peer learning and research

Examples of resources offering insights to conceptualize, design and develop public service workforce DEI efforts include:

- successful peer-to-peer networks sharing diversity-related efforts, or producing professional knowledge in the field;

- institutions producing research (practice oriented and academic) to understand and promote workforce diversity; and

- international development cooperation institutions producing research materials to support the implementation of workforce diversity efforts around the world.

Peer-to peer networks

Collaboration between civil society organizations and public service leaders has yielded efforts to attract, develop and support the talent of young and underrepresented groups. Fellowships build capacity and offer access to diverse networks of public servants across a country or an entire region's ecosystem, who become trusted sources of support to each other while navigating the challenges of civil service and public leadership. These programs offer successful models that may be considered in other regions of the world.

Governing America in the United States and the Pan-African Emerging Public Leaders program illustrate this resource. The latter supports university graduates and young public service professionals entering or transitioning into public jobs, with the goal of building a regional network of public servants that enhances "good governance and equitable prosperity in Africa."[145] In Brazil, the Ubuntu program[146] recruits and supports Black and Indigenous public service professionals who want to develop anti-racist actions in their organizations, aiming to consolidate and expand power and influence of members of underrepresented groups. They also join Rede Vector Brazil[147] a peer-to-peer network connecting public sector professionals involved in innovative public projects around the country.

Peer-to-peer networks concerned with data collection and usage challenges are valuable research resources. For instance, under the auspices of the United Nations Statistical Commission, voluntary consultation groups with national statistical public agencies contribute to international standards and methods to assemble statistics and data. Drawing from government technical and practical experience around the world, these informal networks are known as "city groups", whose names are based on locations of the first meeting.[148] Of particular interest for diversity efforts are the city groups mentioned in Box 4.

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[145] Emerging Public Leaders. (2023). *Strategic Plan 2023-2025.*
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oGtNZueCi46iHlNYqE_wibXpw2kMTJOm/view
[146] https://www.vetorbrasil.org/service/ubuntu/.
[147] https://redevetor.vetorbrasil.org/.
[148] https://unstats.un.org/unsd/methodology/citygroups/.

Box 4. United Nations Statistical Commission city groups of particular interest to workforce diversity efforts

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The **Washington Group on Disability Statistics** develops disability measures and coordinates international cooperation to create world-wide comparable information. The *Short Set on Functioning (WG-SS)* offers six disability measures suitable for censuses, sample-based national surveys or other statistical instruments that contribute to equalize opportunities.

The **Titchfield Group on Ageing Statistics** compiles statistics and data on the major dimensions of ageing and age-disaggregated data across the life cycle and collaborates with institutions concerned with ageing and age statistics.

The **Praia Group on Governance Statistics** studies and recommends internationally comparable indicators of non-discrimination and equality, participation, openness, access to and quality of justice, responsiveness, absence of corruption, trust, and safety and security. The United Nations Statistical Commission endorsed its *Handbook on Governance Statistics for National Statistical Offices* in 2020.

Institutional research

Research on workforce diversity and inclusion is extensive yet skewed toward the private sector. However, much of it is applicable to public service with the right adjustments. Many private consultancies advise public organizations on their diversity and inclusion strategies. Some private and non-profit entities produce reports that can inform both sectors, including EY, McKinsey & Company,[149] Deloitte, and The Conference Board.

Inclusion Nudges, an online non-profit peer-to-peer exchange, applies insights from behavioral and social science to achieve inclusion in organizations. Annual *Inclusion Nudge Guidebooks* describe actions that lessen bias by steering people to act differently. They help enhance diversity capability and influence culture in agencies and in the SDGs, offering excellent diversity training material. A "Free Quick Guide" features educational examples and resources.[150]

Other non-profits develop knowledge for specific social groups through certification. For example, gender equality certification at the EDGE (Economic Dividends for Gender Equality) foundation[151] includes benchmarking against similar industry organizations. Organizations advance to higher levels with more complex analysis through renewals, such as

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[149] For example, the Global Parity Alliance is a multinational coalition dedicated to advancing DEI globally. It was launched by the World Economic Forum's Centre for the New Economy and Society in partnership with McKinsey and Company. Its DEI Lighthouse Program seeks to share the lessons learned to support DEI efforts across companies and institutions. For further information, see: https://www.globalparityconsortium.org/home.

[150] https://inclusion-nudges.org/.

[151] https://www.edge-cert.org/.

intersectional issues between gender and ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and disability.

Research on workforce diversity specifically focusing on the public sector is more limited to academia via the public administration, management and HRM fields. Australia, Canada, China, India, Israel, the United States, and European countries represent the geographic focus on recent public service DEI academic production,[152] disseminated via journals. For example, in 2022, *Public Administration Review* published the "Race and Gender Symposium" in collaboration with the Consortium of Race and Gender Scholars.[153] Social equity research in the United States links societal and organizational workforce diversity issues.[154] Box 5 features two resources with multidisciplinary and global focus.

Box 5. Two valuable repositories of academic diversity knowledge

The **Handbook on Diversity and Inclusion Indices: A Research Compendium**[155] offers 23 indices on DEI benchmarking and progress tracking, covering six categories: global development; diversity and employment; gender; sexual orientation and gender identity; migrants and multiculturalism; and religion.

The **Oxford Handbook of Diversity in Organizations**[156] features leading diversity scholars examining the debates and foundations of managing diversities with multidisciplinary, intersectional, and critical analyses.

International development organizations' research contributions

Research in multilateral organizations inform and support diversity efforts worldwide.

The **OECD** collects data and analyzes policy on public sector workforce diversity. Its reports on fostering public sector diversity (2009)[157] and on managing diversity (2015)[158] are widely cited; its publications on gender equality and gender mainstreaming (2015)[159] include diversity in public administration and the judiciary.[160] Recent Working Papers on Public Governance include a 2019 update on next generation diversity and inclusion policies in the public service.[161]

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[152] Yeo and Jeon (2023).
[153] Pandey et al. (2022).
[154] See, for example, Guy and McCandless (2021); and Cepiku and Masrodascio (2021).
[155] Ng, E. S., Stamper, C. L., Klarsfeld, A., and Han, Y. J. (2021). Handbook on Diversity and Inclusion Indices: A Research Compendium. Edward Elgar Publishing. https://searchworks.stanford.edu/view/13967084.
[156] Bendl, R., Bleijenbergh, I., Henttonen, E., and Mills, A. J. (Eds.). (2017). T*he Oxford Handbook of Diversity in Organizations.* Oxford University Press.
[157] OECD (2009).
[158] OECD et al. (2015).
[159] https://www.oecd.org/gov/2015-oecd-recommendation-of-the-council-on-gender-equality-in-public-life-9789264252820-en.htm.
[160] OECD. (2023b). *Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality 2023*. OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/3ddef555-en; https://stats.oecd.org/.
[161] Nolan-Flecha (2019).

The **ILO** offers data to inform inclusive and non-discriminatory workplaces. While not public sector specific, information on ending discrimination (with data on gender, race, ethnicity, Indigenous status, disability, HIV status and sexual orientation and gender identity) is relevant. Illustrative publications and guides address disability inclusion, ethnic workplace diversity, gender diversity good practices, women in leadership, the Future of Diversity, and LGBTIQ+ inclusion.[162] ILO produces data on public sector workforce composition (ILOSTAT[163] collects labor-related statistics in 150 countries, including government employees). The Global Care Policy portal, launched in 2023, presents 60 indicators on maternity protection, parental leave, care services, and non-discrimination policies in more than 180 countries.[164]

The **United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs** (UN DESA) supports conferences, commissions research and performs collaborative inquiry through technical support projects[165] (a project on capacities to promote women leaders in public organizations in four developing countries has produced two analytical reports).[166] UN DESA's World Public Sector Report is published every two years (most recently in 2023). UN DESA manages the United Nations Public Administration Network which strengthens public servants' knowledge and capacities, fostering online communities of practice around the SDGs.[167]

The World Bank compiles the Worldwide Bureaucracy Indicators, a cross-national database on public sector employees' characteristics (sex, age, education, location), wages, and occupation, covering 132 countries since 2000.[168] The organization's research on other relevant topics can also inform a diversity strategy (such as access to labor markets by social groups, with a 2021 report on equal opportunity for sexual and gender minorities).[169]

International development cooperation

The United Nations system champions the principles of diversity and inclusion as indicative of

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[162] For further information, see (in the order of topics listed above): ILO. (2016a). The win-win of disability inclusion. *ILO Info Stories.* https://www.ilo.org/infostories/stories/employment/the-win-win-of-disability-inclusion#the-win-win-of-disability-inclusion; ILO. (2015). *Promoting Equity - Ethnic Diversity in the Workplace: A Step-by-Step Guide*. International Labour Standards Department and Governance and Tripartism Department. https://www.ilo.org/declaration/info/publications/eliminationofdiscrimination/WCMS_340481/lang--en/index.htm; ILO. (2017). *Gender diversity journey: Company good practices.* https://www.ilo.org/actemp/publications/WCMS_578768; ILO. (2019b). *Women in leadership bring better business performance.* Women in Business and Management. https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_701767/lang--en/index.htm; ILO. (2021). *The future of diversity.* https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_831316/lang--en/index.htm; ILO. (2022). Appendix 1: Language, concepts and terminology. In *Inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) persons in the world of work: A learning guide* (pp.67-75). https://www.ilo.org/global/WCMS_846108/lang--en/index.htm.
[163] https://ilostat.ilo.org/.
[164] https://www.ilo.org/globalcare/.

[165] For further information, see: https://desapublications.un.org/publications/category/Public%20Administration.
[166] UN DESA (2022a and b); https://publicadministration.desa.un.org/projects/building-capacities-promoting-presence-and-leadership-women-within-public-institutions.
[167] https://unpan.un.org/.
[168] https://datacatalog.worldbank.org/search/dataset/0038132/Worldwide-Bureaucracy-Indicators.
[169] https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/equality-of-opportunity-for-sexual-and-gender-minorities.

respect for human rights. Its agencies provide guidance and capacity development support to Member States, but there is a limited focus on public administration. Nevertheless, it has contributed significantly to the progress of diversity-related governmental efforts, for instance on gender balance and women's full participation in public life and decision-making.[170]

UN DESA fosters intergovernmental collaboration and supports capacity building in areas directly related to promoting public sector workforce diversity. For example, a current project builds women's public sector leadership capacities in Bhutan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mauritius and Senegal to enhance gender equality action plans, women's public sector career advancement, and South-South knowledge transfer (in partnership with the Economic Commission of Africa (ECA), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and local regional coordination offices, along with UNDP and UN Women.[171]

UNDP has a Gender Equality in Public Administrative (GEPA) initiative aimed at expanding women's participation in public institutions and increasing access to gender equality data to inform policy and decision making, thus addressing the gender parity gaps in public administration. Phase 1 yielded a global report and 13 country case studies.[172] A second global report was published in 2021 in collaboration with the UNDP Gender Team, the Democratic Governance Group and the University of Pittsburgh's Gender Inequality Research Lab (GIRL).[173] This collaboration produced a global database with statistics from 170 countries, Gender Parity in Civil Service (Gen-PaCS).[174] UNDP has also supported countries' production of statistics on public service, in line with SDG 16.7.1b indicator to promote a more inclusive and representative public service.[175] UNDP also supports the Gender Equality Seal: A Certification Programme for Public and Private Enterprises.[176]

OHCHR works on equality and non-discrimination across various topics, including employment. The OHCHR supports States compliance with international human rights treaties and obligations, monitors human rights violations, and raises awareness about the human rights of children and youth, LGBTIQ+ people, Indigenous people, ethnic minorities, and persons with disabilities, among others.[177]

The **OECD** produces policy guides for managing workforce diversity and inclusion (see prior section). It has its own diversity strategy that yields the OECD Annual Diversity and Inclusion

[170] United Nations, Economic and Social Council, "Resolutions and Decisions of the Economic and Social Council," E/1990/90 (1990) and Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II, para 182.
[171] https://publicadministration.desa.un.org/projects/building-capacities-promoting-presence-and-leadership-women-within-public-institutions.
[172] https://www.undp.org/publications/global-report-gender-equality-public-administration-gepa.
[173] https://www.undp.org/publications/global-report-gender-equality-public-administration.
[174] Hughes, M. M., Kökten Finkel, M., and Howell, B. (2022). Gender Parity in Civil Service (Gen-PaCS-Version 1.1.) [Dataset]. Gender Inequality Research Lab, University of Pittsburgh. https://girl.pitt.edu/gen-pacs-data.
[175] UNDP Oslo Governance Centre (2021).
[176] bit.ly/3RDXyz3.
[177] https://www.ohchr.org/en/topics.

Report, a source of good practices for other diversity efforts.[178] OECD launched the "Pilot Index: Development of a diverse central government workforce" based on the 2020 Public Service Leadership and Capability survey and the 2020 OECD Survey on the Composition of the Workforce in Central/Federal Governments. OECD's editions of *Government at a Glance* provide data and analysis on ageing and gender in the public sectors of OECD and other countries.[179]

The **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)** supports governments' promotion of diversity. Its Ljubljana Guidelines on the Integration of Diverse Societies[180] stresses a representative civil service and urges states to address discrimination and promote inclusion. OSCE offers governments training, research, data collection and analysis, and recommendations on diversity, with an emphasis on gender and national minorities in the civil service and justice systems.

In Latin America, the **Centro Latinoamericano de Administración para el Desarrollo (CLAD)**[181] offers training to public servants and provides technical assistance to countries on priority issues related to state and public administration reform in the region, which often include issues of diversity, with an emphasis on women.

Acknowledgements

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[178] OECD (2023).
[179] OECD (2021).
[180] https://www.osce.org/hcnm/ljubljana-guidelines.
[181] https://clad.org/.