



WOMEN *in* FOREIGN POLICY

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Report: H1 2021

WIFP's mission and diversity, equity and inclusion strategy

Women in Foreign Policy (WIFP) believes that there can be no equitable foreign policy workforce without first dismantling systemic racism, ableism, transphobia, classism and sexism and eliminating antiquated discriminatory policies in the institutions, organisations, NGOs and companies responsible for shaping and implementing our foreign policy. Only then can we hope to build just and equitable systems both at home and abroad.

In early 2021, WIFP recruited a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) team in order to develop a strategy, assess progress towards key goals and build partnerships around larger anti-racist and DEI initiatives in the foreign policy, national security, peace and development fields. The five women who make up the team: Tejal Jesrani, Venessa Hanson, Clara Diamond, Angela Muruli, and Dara Dillon, come to WIFP from various careers, with a shared priority to create a diverse, equitable, and inclusive space for young professionals entering the foreign policy workforce. In coordination with other WIFP teams, we are working closely on DEI issues -- both in-house and external -- and provide consistent data and analysis on gaps in our inclusion efforts of volunteers, contributors and professionals featured. Our DEI strategy started by

looking at our own practices in-house, especially in the diversity of our volunteer team and the voices we feature in our media: our Interviews section, The Zig Zag career blog, our podcast, newsletter and event speakers.

WIFP is also a proud member of the OrgsinSolidarity network, a partnership among more than 300 organizations and individuals who are signatories to the Women of Color Advancing Peace, Security, and Conflict Transformation ("WCAPS") United States or United Kingdom Standing Together Against Racism and Discrimination Statements (Solidarity Statements). OrgsinSolidarity seeks to combat racism and discrimination in all of its manifestations as individuals and in our organizations and in so doing, diversify the fields of peace and security, foreign policy, and national security, making our work more inclusive and equitable. One of our key commitments as a partner in OrgsinSolidarity is to develop meaningful DEI strategies and to collect and report on progress towards DEI goals.

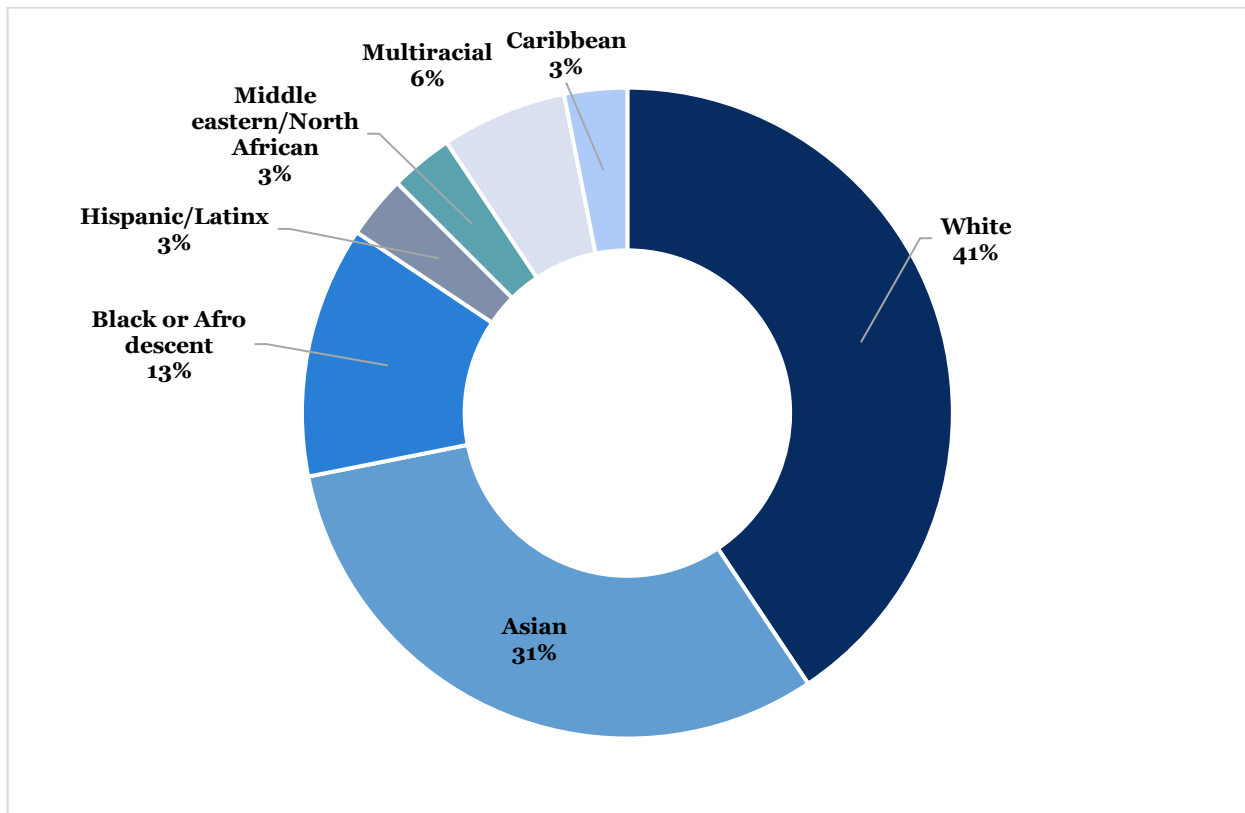
Without proper data collection, analysis, and sharing, it is impossible to evaluate if and where progress is being made towards our DEI goals at WIFP. With this in mind, the DEI team developed a voluntary and anonymous questionnaire for all staff of the organization and voices we include in our media, covering the time period from January - June 2021. The current report is the third of its kind and includes data on race and ethnicity, and for the first time, data on gender and sexual orientation, age, disability, and minority status. Questions intended to assess feelings of inclusion at WIFP have also been included in order to highlight these goals as well as to initiate a discussion on the meaning of inclusion and how it can be evaluated, measured and increased.

In designing this research, WIFP recognized that racial and ethnic categories are not standard. Such designations have been largely dependent on national context and have changed over time. An ethnic designation that is considered a minority in one country will likely be a majority in another, and yet the experiences of structural inequities in the fields of foreign policy or international relations may be similar among the two groups. Multiple forms of discrimination also intersect and increase the impact on lives and careers. Particularly in an international organization, such as WIFP, questions about the correct use and analysis of inclusive ethnic, racial, gender, sexual orientation and ability designations remain matters of discussion and concern. WIFP is committed to continuing to work towards bringing conceptual clarity to analysis of DEI in global organizations and advocating for the inclusion of all underrepresented persons in the field of foreign policy.

Women in Foreign Policy volunteer team

Everyone working at Women in Foreign Policy, including our founder, is a volunteer. Obviously, this is in itself an inclusivity issue, and WIFP regularly revisits this topic. We are currently applying for registration as a Community Interest Company (CIC) in the UK so that we may receive funds and increase our capacity as an organization to support women and other underrepresented groups in the foreign policy sector. For the moment, we are open to varying time commitments and are always flexible in the way volunteers want to work with us. Having said this, inclusivity and representation have been two key Women in Foreign Policy values since our inception nearly seven years ago. In the current survey, the WIFP Volunteer team were asked to identify which racial and ethnic groups they belonged to. The majority of the team (41 per cent) identified as white, while a sizable minority (31 per cent) identified as Asian.

Figure 1: Shares of WIFP volunteer team by racial and ethnic identity, H1 2021



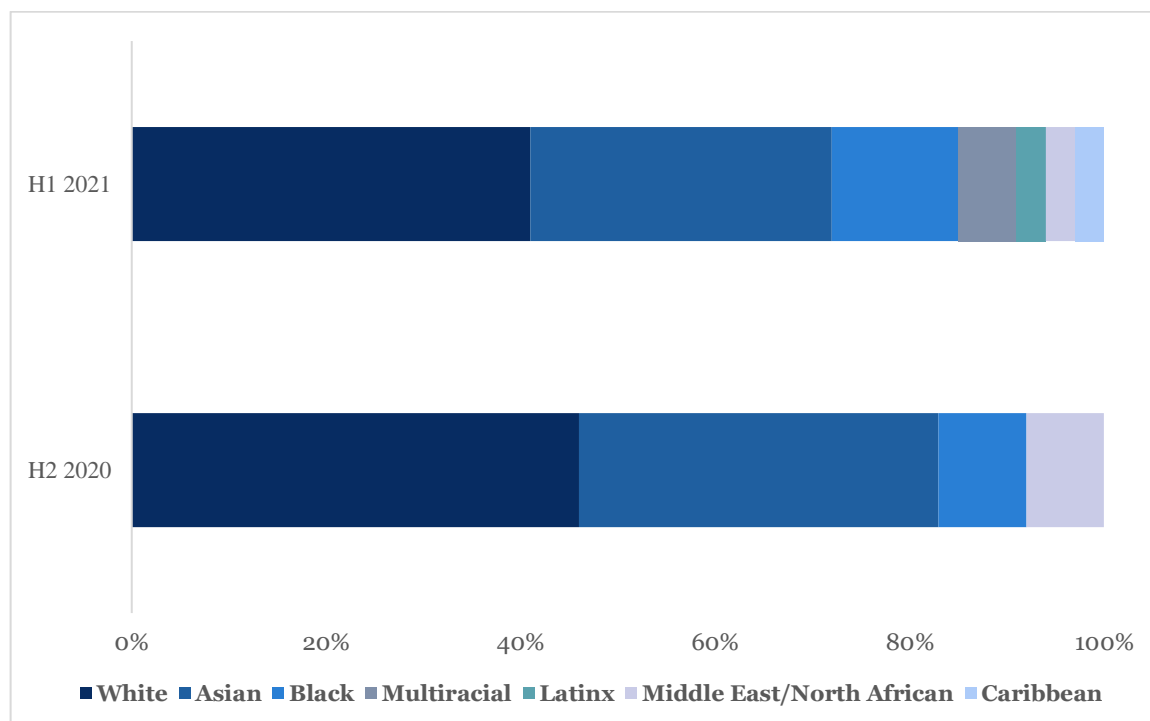
The survey also had room for longer answers to elicit further details about DEI issues at WIFP and overall. One member reflected that:

Arab Americans regard themselves as a minority group belonging to the BIPOC community. While the US consensus regards us as 'White' and not a minority.

This response underlines the dissonance between national minority designations and the lived experiences of minority identity in a national context.

In terms of changing staff composition from 2020 to 2021, WIFP increased its diversity significantly, adding Latinx, Caribbean and Multiracial members to its volunteer team since the last report. Part of the reason for this may have been that in 2021, the team was asked to self identify, leading to a more diverse collection of identities. **However, the decreased representation of Middle East and North African members and Black/Afro descent members points to efforts needed to proactively reach out to these groups.**

Figure 2: Share of WIFP volunteers in H2 2020 and H1 2021 by racial and ethnic identity

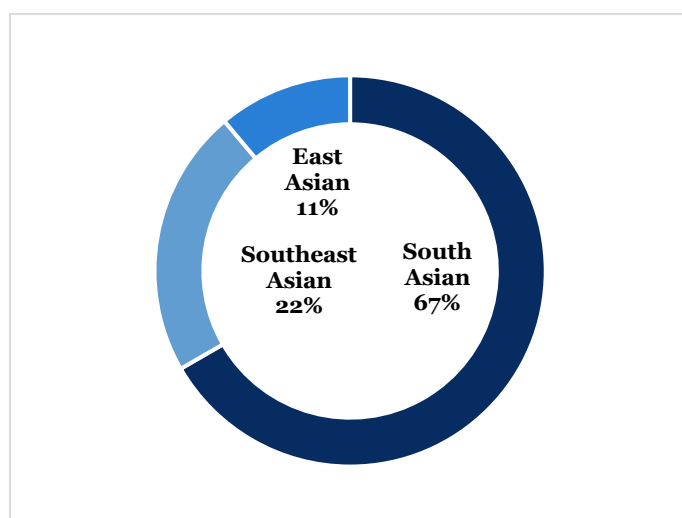


The designation of Asian within the volunteer team at Women in Foreign Policy had an additional breakdown into East Asian, Southeast Asian and South Asian. One respondent noted:

I am a non-white (East) Asian living in a white country with low understanding and recognition of Asian people in this country.

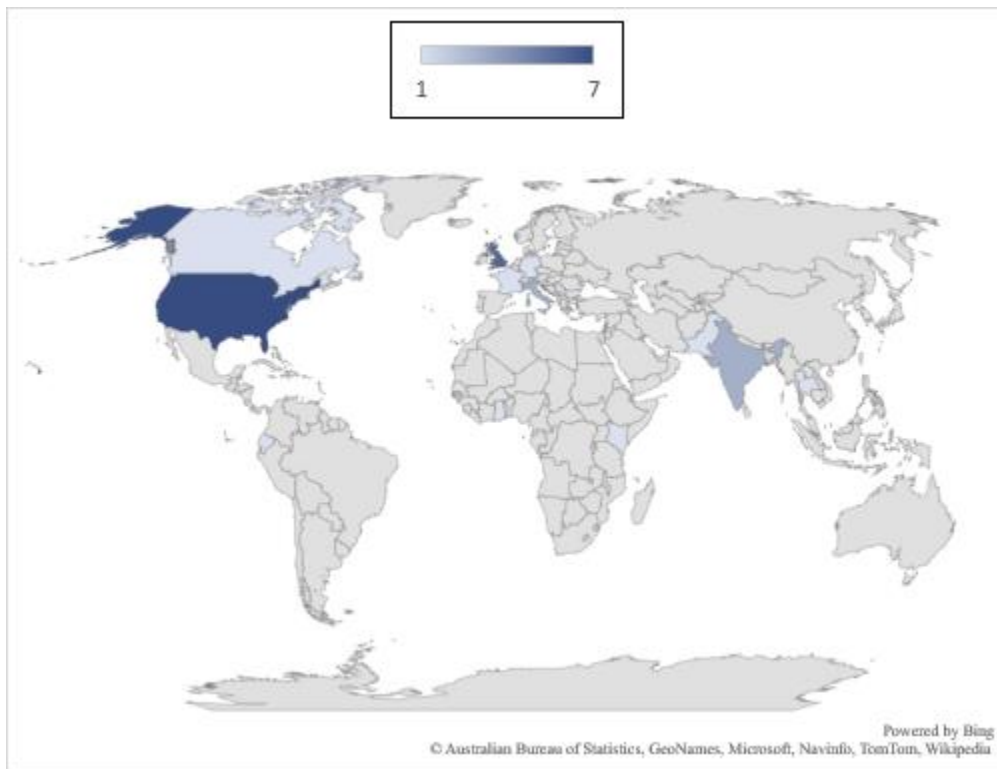
Particularly in light of increasing hate crimes and attacks against Asian minorities during the Covid-19 pandemic, negative impacts on mental health among Asian peoples has become a topic of concern and discussion.

Figure 3: Share of WIFP volunteers by Asian subregional racial or ethnic identity, H1 2021



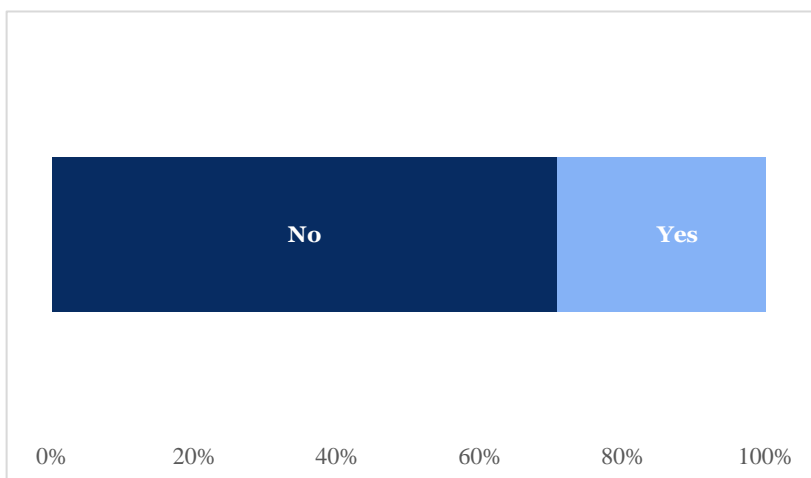
The volunteer team were also asked about their country of origin. The countries most commonly named were the United States (n=7), the United Kingdom (n=6), Italy (n=3) and India (n=3). Other countries from which our team originate are Bulgaria, Canada, Ecuador, France, Germany, Ghana, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Pakistan, Palestine, Saint Lucia, Singapore, Switzerland, Taiwan and Thailand (1 person each). Five respondents identified more than one country as a country of origin.

Figure 4: Distribution of WIFP volunteer team by country of origin, H1 2021



The WIFP volunteer team were asked if they identified as members of a minority group in their country of origin. More than 70 per cent did not identify as a member of a minority.

Figure 5: Designation by WIFP team as a minority in country of origin, H1 2021



Some respondents provided rich qualitative information in regard to this question, reflecting the complexity of minority status:

In Jordan I am regarded as a Jordanian of Palestinian descent. Approximately 60% of Jordanians identify as such. We are not considered as a minority, but we are reminded of our non-indigenous ties especially in civil service spaces (through micro-aggressions and insensitive comments). In Palestine, among Palestinians- I am considered indigenous, but I'm a minority. In the eyes of Israel - I'm just an 'Arab' belonging to the non-Jewish population.

This response highlights how identity can be fluid depending on the context, which may change frequently (even daily) during one's professional career. Particularly when serving in civil service, as many in the foreign policy field do, indigenous and other marginalized statuses can take on a host of meanings and connotations. In a related comment, another respondent noted the need for “**greater focus on inclusion of indigenous communities and using indigenous names of countries alongside western translations,**” which reflects the desire to question the hegemony of the Global North in the foreign policy space.

While minority status is not always immediately visible, some respondents reflected on forms of discrimination based on obvious markers, such as the following:

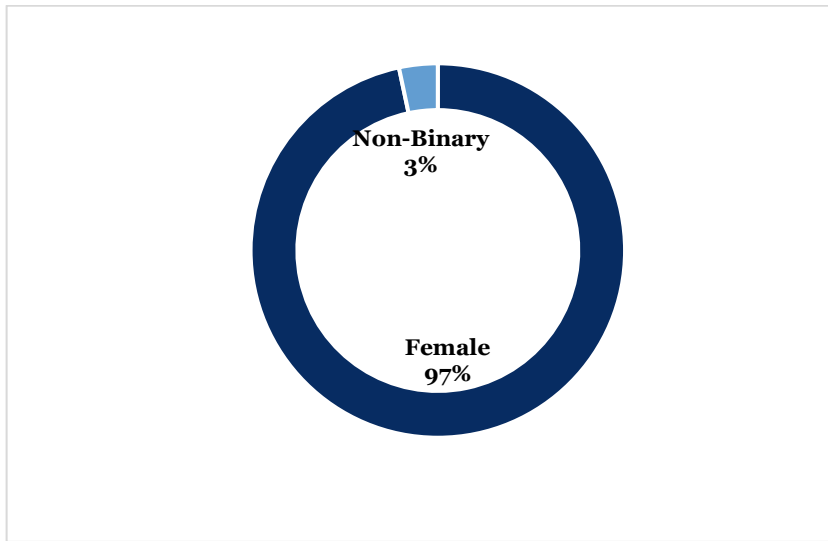
In Italy I am part of the black minority and as such face discrimination for the colour of my skin.

The same respondent contrasted the lived experiences of discrimination in two countries of the Global North, emphasizing how endemic such behaviour is:

The minority group I belong to in Italy and the discrimination faced there applies in England too, with different nuances and in different ways.

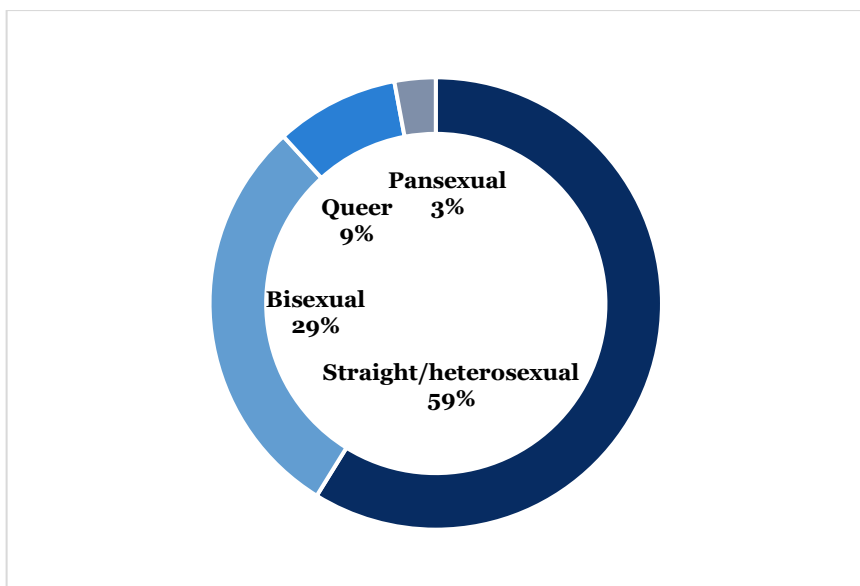
The vast majority of the volunteer team at WIFP identified as women (97 per cent), while just 3 per cent identified as non-binary. Respondents also noted “**includ[ing] more non-binary and trans representation within the teams**” as an issue of priority for WIFP. **Better outreach initiatives targeted to marginalized genders will need to be implemented during the next reporting period.**

Figure 6: Share of WIFP volunteer team by gender identity, H1 2021



Although the representation of those identifying with a variety of sexual identities/orientations in the volunteer team seems quite diverse, respondents cited a **“need for more stories of women identifying with a variety of sexual identities”** in our media. This has indeed been an area of concern for the WIFP team and there is an ongoing effort to increase the representation of such voices in our content.

Figure 7: Share of WIFP team by sexual identity/orientation, H1 2021

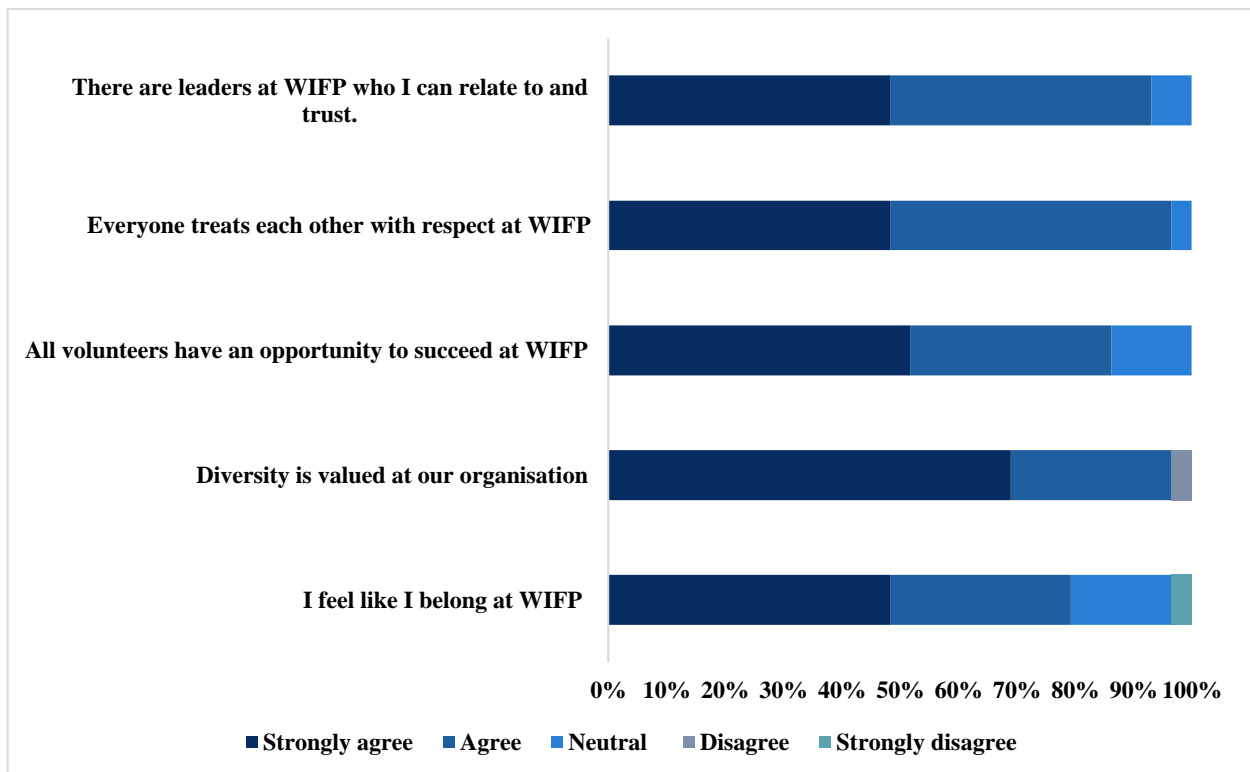


One team member of WIFP out of the 24 who answered the question identified themselves as a person with a disability or a person with accessibility needs. This again points to a clear need for the organization to increase outreach to this underrepresented group.

Assessing inclusion within the WIFP Team

The DEI survey concluded with five questions intended to measure the volunteer teams’ feelings of inclusion and belonging at WIFP on a sliding scale. In general, these questions elicited positive responses, with most respondents agreeing or agreeing strongly with the statements. However, there were two very clear areas for improvement: DEI being valued at the organization and feelings of belonging at WIFP. In each case, one respondent disagreed or disagreed strongly, respectively, with the statement. This is crucial information for the DEI and volunteer experience teams and senior leadership at WIFP in terms of our programming going forward.

Figure 8: Volunteer teams’ feelings of inclusion at WIFP, H1 2021



In terms of qualitative information on DEI issues within WIFP, many team members made thoughtful and powerful contributions. Regarding language, one respondent noted:

I feel like something that can be done with the language regarding verbal communication. As a non-native English speaker, I have found myself sometimes lost in verbal conversations at meetings of WIFP due to the speed, vocabulary or accents. Even though I have lived in the Netherlands and used English as my primary language for almost three years, I haven't experienced difficulty to this degree understanding spoken English outside of WIFP. I have the impression that most WIFP volunteers either are native English speakers or speak English almost as native. I am not aware of if there are other non-native speakers and if they have similar issues

This is a key observation for an organization that seeks to be international and also caters to a foreign policy workforce. **Being able to communicate and be understood while taking cultural sensitivities and language abilities into consideration is obviously crucial to smooth interactions, particularly in the foreign policy space.** Another respondent echoed this sentiment:

Linguistic diversity might help - English is a lingua franca but it also means we only have team members from areas/backgrounds that lead to speaking English.

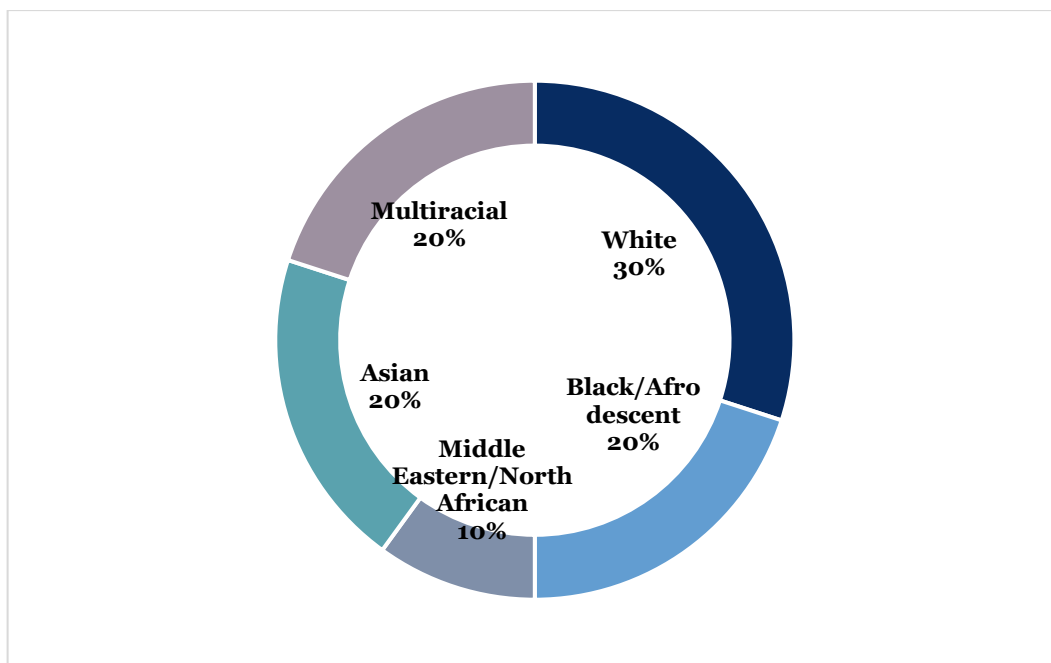
Respondents also had important input on making the volunteer experience at WIFP more rewarding and inclusive. One respondent requested **“greater visibility of the various development opportunities for our volunteers internally within our organisation** (e.g. with regards to taking on different projects or learning other skills).” Another team member expressed a similar desire for *“better check ins on what can be done to better integrate people into their roles and their teams. And to use peoples talents and interests.”* WIFP’s new Volunteers Experience Team is working on ways to address the needs of the volunteers more fully, including an improved on-boarding package and regular check-ins. Finally, one respondent suggested to **“create more space for open discussions where people with differing views and opinions feel welcome to join.”** Exposing oneself to different viewpoints and opinions and learning from others is one of the great benefits of engaging in foreign policy and international work, and WIFP will double its efforts to make those with different viewpoints feel included.

Voices represented in WIFP content

The multi-platform presence of Women in Foreign Policy is an award-winning source of free, practical advice for foreign policy aspirants and professionals. WIFP believes in creating change in three key ways through our media: by presenting role models, highlighting and discussing intersectionality and maintaining impartiality. It's hard to become what you can't see. WIFP features inspiring women and marginalized genders in foreign policy to prove to everyone out there that they have a seat at the table and a future in decision making. We are intersectional by nature. Across our media, we make a point to feature women from different races, sexual orientations, class, disabilities and backgrounds. Lastly, WIFP doesn't hold any political affiliation. We believe equality of genders, races, religions, abilities and backgrounds is a non-partisan issue.

Women in Foreign Policy interviews include mini mentoring sessions with over 250 women in foreign policy at large, ranging from diplomacy to journalism, from development to the private sector.

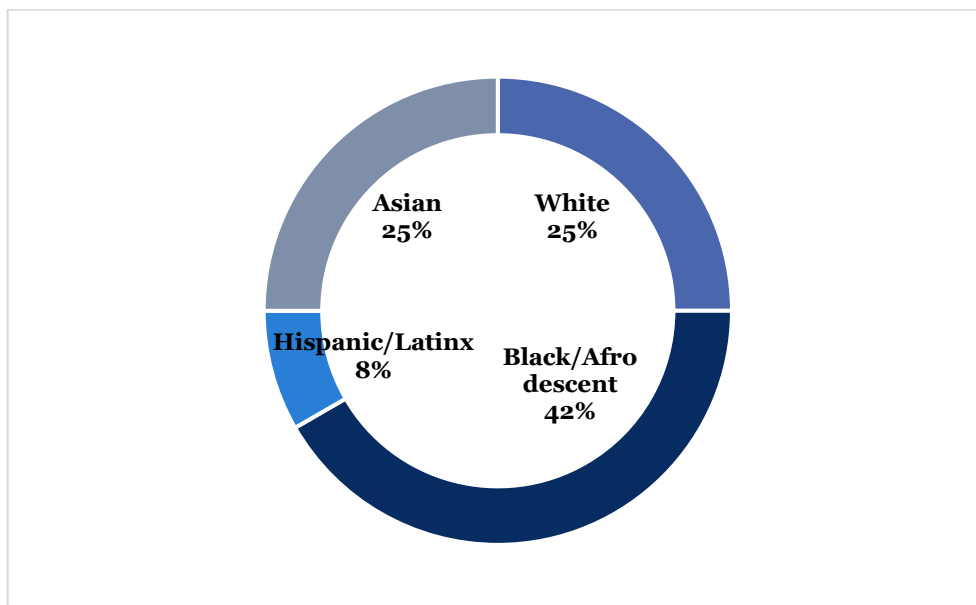
Figure 9: Share of WIFP Interviewees by racial/ethnic identity, H1 2021



In addition to our comprehensive, free-to-access digital content, WIFP runs a busy schedule of high-quality events. They tend to be in small settings, as we value the quality of the discussions and connections. We keep ticket costs affordable to make

sure that finance isn't a barrier to attendance. Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have moved our events online, focusing our efforts on specific advice applicable to job seekers during COVID-19.

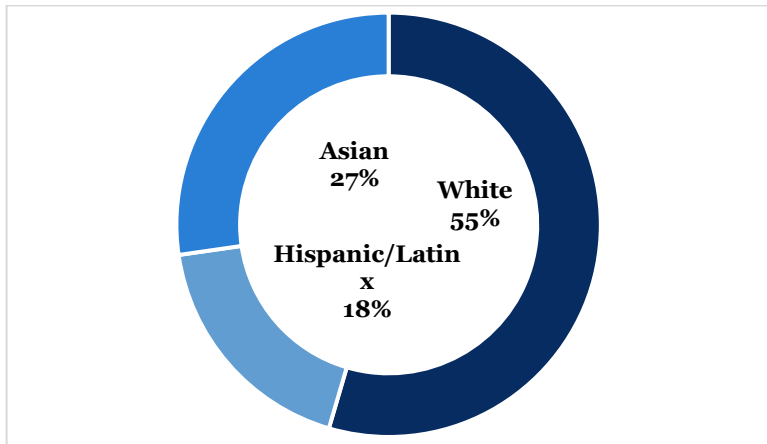
Figure 10: Share of WIFP Events panelists by racial/ethnic identity, H1 2021



The Zig Zag, WIFP's career blog, provides a platform that highlights the experiences and research of women and marginalized genders in the foreign policy sector at large, addressing specific career concerns rarely discussed online. The Zig Zag recognizes that each individual's journey is unique, rarely linear. Women and marginalized genders in foreign policy sectors face differing barriers and opportunities, joys and surprises.

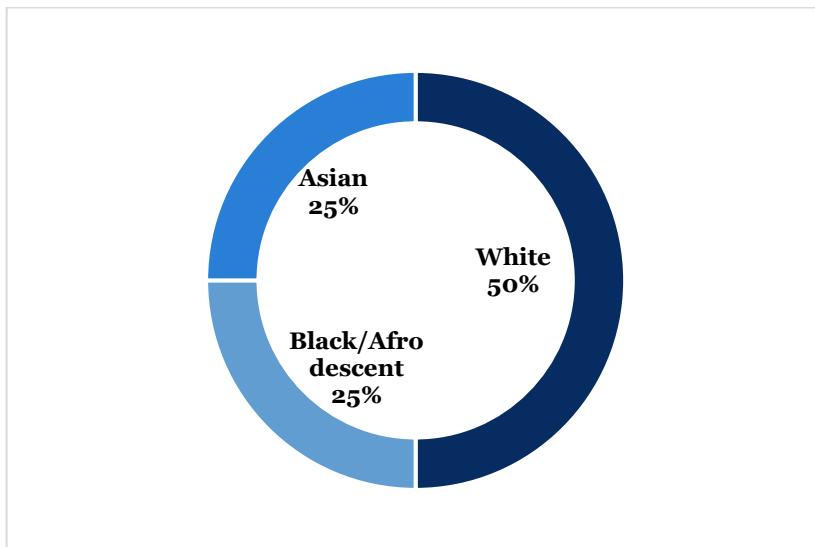
The blog's mission is intersectional in nature, ensuring that it provides all readers, including but not limited to People of Colour, LGBTQIA+, people with disabilities, and people from underrepresented classes, with actionable advice on their career questions.

Figure 11: Share of WIFP The Zig Zag contributors by racial/ethnic identity, H1 2021



Every month, womxn from across foreign policy come together to discuss their career trajectory in a specific sector and share what they learnt in the WIFP podcast.

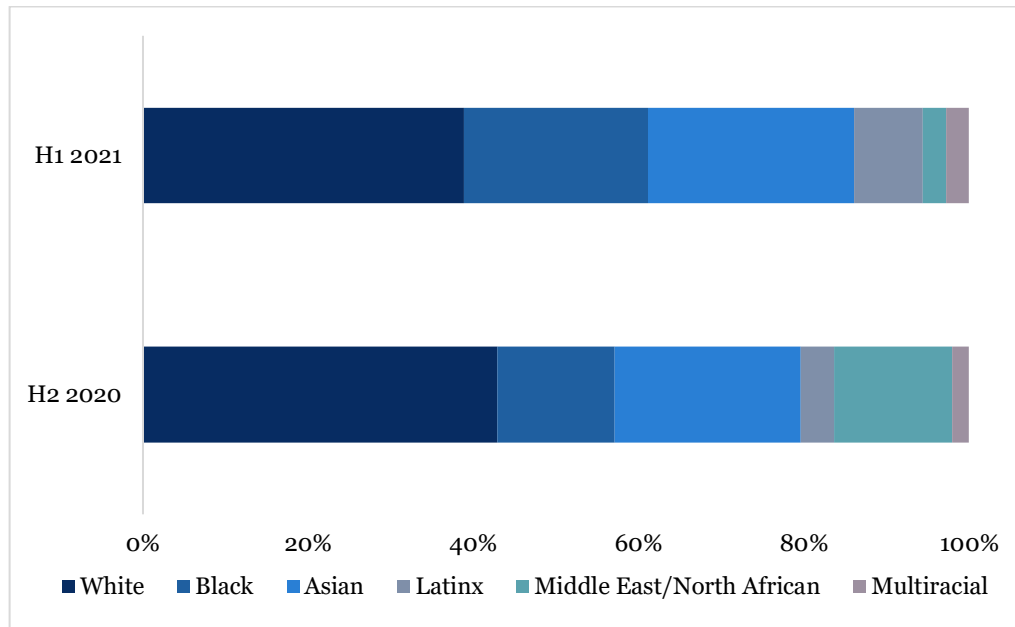
Figure 12: Share of WIFP Podcast guests by racial/ethnic identity, H1 2021



When looking at all external contributors to WIFP content and comparing the ethnic and racial designations from the last reporting period to the current one, some progress has been made in terms of increasing diversity. However, major improvements that can be made going forward. **While representation of Black/Afro descent and Hispanic/ Latinx contributors increased in 2021, voices of**

those from Middle East/North Africa decreased during the same period. The share of White contributors still far outnumbers all other groups.

Figure 13: Share of all voices featured in WIFP content in H2 2020 and H1 2021, by racial and ethnic identity



The WIFP team made several important observations about increasing diversity among the voices we feature in our media, with calls for increased representation of non-binary individuals, as well as those from Southeast Asian countries, Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Latinx contributors and readers. There was also a general call to “*continue to champion and feature WoC and raise awareness of international issues.*”

Conclusion

Although measuring something is a first step to improving it, the process cannot stop there. This analysis of this data showed some clear signs of improvement for WIFP, which will be addressed actively by different members of the team. In terms of the representation among the volunteer team, the majority is still White. **Efforts should be made to increase representation particularly of Middle East and North African members, Hispanic/Latinx and Black/Afro descent members. Members also pointed to the need to have a greater focus on inclusion of indigenous communities and stressed the need to include more non-binary and trans representation within the teams.** Better outreach initiatives targeted to

underrepresented groups and marginalized genders will be undertaken during the next reporting period.

In terms of feelings of inclusion in the team, **attention should be paid to welcoming differing language abilities and differing viewpoints.** As an organization dedicated to improving the equity within the foreign policy space, being able to communicate while taking diverse opinions, cultural sensitivities and language abilities into consideration is crucial. These points will be discussed as an organization with a view to finding practical solutions. **Team members also expressed the desire for greater visibility of the various development opportunities for our volunteers internally within our organization,** which is being addressed by the Volunteers Experience Team.

In terms of voices we feature in our content, the share of white contributors still far outnumbered all other groups. While representation of Black/Afro descent and Hispanic/Latinx contributors increased slightly in 2021, voices of those from Middle East/North Africa decreased. **There is a clear need to reach out to and include the voices of women from Middle East/North African as well as Hispanic/Latinx backgrounds as well as the need for more stories of women identifying with a variety of sexual identities.**

The DEI team at WIFP recognizes that although the organization has progressed in its DEI strategies and initiatives, this is a long-term effort. Continuous data collection and analysis will allow the team to regularly review the inclusiveness and gaps in demographics of our media contributors and volunteer team. Along with this data analysis and reporting, the DEI team will ensure to provide in-house training for all WIFP staff to discuss current DEI issues, assess the organization's recruitment strategies, and work to broaden our media outreach to reflect the values of social inclusion and equity. WIFP remains committed to an inclusive and intersectional approach to these DEI efforts and a diverse foreign policy workforce.