



INTERNATIONAL
RESCUE
COMMITTEE

DIVERSITY, EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT | OCTOBER 2021

| For any questions, please contact IRC.Equality@Rescue.org

Change is difficult, and even more so when it involves systems, practices and a culture that have persisted for decades and are inextricably embedded in a sector in which we play an important role, but do not have control over. Despite this, over the last year, building on our progress towards our Gender Equality commitment, the International Rescue Committee has taken critical steps toward achieving meaningful change and becoming a more diverse, equitable and inclusive organization.

The IRC staff and leaders recognize the discomfort of having difficult conversations on diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) with staff members in Resettlement, Asylum and Integration (RAI) Europe and Crisis, Response, Recovery and Development (CRRD) departments, but it is important to note that we are actively promoting such dialogue—the result of over 100 listening sessions, the formation of the DEI council and the engagement of 1,600 staff who attended the DEI Strategy presentation sessions. Currently we are discussing what DEI means to diverse groups in various locations, how the DEI strategy can be employed in diverse contexts across the world and how this agenda intersects with our commitment to Gender equality.

As an organization, we accepted and acknowledged our gaps, and we established a clearer vision about what needs to change; the goals and commitments outlined in the DEI Strategy document provide the overarching direction for us. Throughout the year, we have built momentum to work together toward achieving those goals, including the establishment of leadership diversity goals and resourcing offices and regions so that they will be able to lead their own DEI initiatives; and the creation of a representative DEI Council. We are also launching organization-wide efforts such as the IRC People Survey, an HR equity assessment, a plan for a dedicated People & Culture function on our Leadership Board, and the creation of a permanent Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Unit.

We believe it is important to balance the pace of change with precision in order to avoid causing harm. We must respect the complexity and diversity of the contexts in which we operate and provide opportunities for all voices to be heard, particularly those that have not always had space or power in the organization. IRC staff expect change and we hold ourselves accountable to these expectations.

This progress report highlights the incremental steps noted above as well as others we have taken this year. There is much more to do in order to build an inclusive working environment that embeds DEI in all of our work, decision-making processes and behaviors. This will be our focus for the coming year.

I would like to thank all IRC staff and leaders across the organization in particular the HR team, the GE unit and the DEI council members for their incredible engagement and dedication to advancing the DEI agenda. We cannot and will not achieve change without you. Thank you for always pushing the IRC to do better.

—Cica DADJO, Interim DEI team Lead

Dr. Ruth Grace Babirye at the IRC's protection center in the Bidi Bidi refugee settlement in Uganda.



Diversity, Equality and Inclusion at the IRC

Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI) is a key component of the IRC's strategy and vision, and has been identified as a core global priority for our new strategic plan, Strategy100, that will guide our work as we approach the 100th anniversary of the IRC's founding in 1933. Over the past year, the IRC has made significant investments in DEI, and taken concrete actions to deliver on our DEI commitments. More remains to be done, but the IRC is committed to reporting on our progress towards our overarching DEI Vision and the pillars articulated below that underpin this vision.

VISION

At the IRC, our diverse clients, partners, and staff have the power, voice, and agency to shape programs and operations. Within the IRC, we actively work to end all forms of systemic discrimination and foster an inclusive working environment where everyone feels respected, heard, valued, and supported. Our programs seek to reduce disparities in outcomes that are driven by systemic inequality.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

CLIENT-CENTERED

INTERSECTIONALITY

DECOLONIALITY

ACCOUNTABILITY

ENGAGEMENT

DEI STRUCTURES

- **Developed staff-led DEI priorities** to be incorporated in the IRC's Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (GEDI) Action Plan.
- **Launched the IRC DEI Unit** and currently recruiting a Chief GEDI Officer.
- **Launched the DEI Council of the International Rescue Committee** to provide diverse constituencies a meaningful opportunity to deliberate the best ways to address the issues they believe require the attention of IRC leadership, in order to make the IRC more diverse, equitable and inclusive.

The IRC conducted over

110 listening sessions

across the organization with more than 2,000 participants.

GOAL 1: "WHO WE ARE"

- **Finalized leadership diversity goals** related to gender identity, race/ethnicity and nationality; by 2026 50% of our global and regional senior leaders identify as races/ethnicities underrepresented in global power structures.
- **Improved recruitment practices** to attract more diverse talent and hired a recruiter to focus on interns, early career, and diversity efforts.
- **Launched HR policies and practices assessment** (including pay practices) and developed a global DEI demographic all-employee survey.
- **Launched self-identification campaign in Workday** to include race/ethnicity, citizenship, sexual orientation, gender identity, and disability status.

Grew representation of national and Women staff in-country management roles by 10% and 2%

(respectively) between FY20 and FY21

GOAL 2: "WHAT WE DO"

- **Reiterated our commitment** to channeling 25% of our funding to local and national responders (by 2024) and made new commitments, such as increasing our resources to local partners by half in 2021 (compared to 2020) and continuing to build partnerships with local actors, half of whom will be women-led/focused.
- **Piloting client engagement models** across 60% of our Resettlement, Asylum and Integration (RAI) offices, including but not limited to participatory design, client advisory bodies, focus groups and office panels.
- **Embedded GEDI in the IRC's program quality standards** and committed to documenting plans for including GEDI in country-program work with clients and partners as part of their strategic planning processes.

Increased funding delivered through local partners as a percentage of total spending by 50% (compared to the same period in FY20), matching the commitment specified at the beginning of the year.

GOAL 3: "WHAT WE SAY AND HOW WE ENGAGE"

- **Closed gaps in access to information** by increasing internal investment in translation resources, including live-translation resources for critical announcements.
- **Created internal RescueNet page dedicated to equality** for global staff updates and links to employee resource groups.
- **Strengthened our messaging and imagery guidelines** to ensure our narratives and imagery depict people with dignity and agency.

Completed **40 trainings for 410 staff**

on inclusive brand guidelines.

Detailed Appendix

PROGRESS TOWARDS BUILDING DEI ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

The IRC Leadership Board allocated the highest discretionary investment budget for FY21 to items related to DEI. A significant portion of this investment was allocated directly to office and country programs and to fund global DEI initiatives. Another portion was allocated to hiring a team of ten experienced and highly-skilled IRC staff chosen from across the IRC regions and teams to form an IRC Interim DEI Team. The team, led by Cica DADJO gathered information using insights from:

- **Over 110 listening sessions across the organization with more than 2000 participants**
- **90 key informant interviews**
- **Eight regional dialogues where feedback was collected from staff (including frontline staff)**
- **Internal IRC documents**
- **Statements/reports from peer organizations**
- **ERG and DEI Council reconsiderations**

The Interim DEI Team then proposed a series of recommendations based on the findings of their six-month research and learning phase. These recommendations were widely disseminated across the organization in the format of learning reports, and hundreds of colleagues provided feedback to inform priorities. This formed the basis for defining a DEI strategy document, including staff-led DEI goals and objectives.

In addition to setting up the DEI team and developing the DEI strategy document, the IRC also set up the DEI Council of the International Rescue Committee. The council is an important forum for IRC colleagues to come together to identify shared concerns, and will provide meaningful opportunities to deliberate the best ways to address issues they believe require the attention of IRC leadership.

Finally, the IRC has committed to developing a permanent Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (GEDI) Unit which will finalize an organization-wide GEDI Action Plan (launched on Oct 1, 2021). The IRC is actively recruiting a Chief GEDI Officer, part of a highly inclusive hiring process begun in March 2021. The process has included blind résumé reviews and written assignments, along with input from a diverse group of volunteers representing Crisis Response, Recovery & Development (CRRD) staff, Resettlement, Asylum, & Integration (RAI) staff, headquarters staff, and the DEI Council. The IRC Board of Directors has also begun creation of a new “People Committee” to be chaired by Mona K. Sutphen.

Below, please find the IRC's progress toward achieving the DEI Strategy's three goals and corresponding objectives.

PROGRESS AGAINST GOAL 1: "WHO WE ARE"

Diversity is important to the IRC, as is evident in the communities we serve and the people who are dedicated to this service. The IRC has committed to an inclusive organizational culture where diversity is championed and represented at all leadership levels. We will have zero tolerance for discrimination, harassment, bullying and retaliation in any form.

Objective 1.1: The IRC has a compensation and benefits program that ensures the entire workforce is categorized and compensated equitably.

The IRC has launched an HR policy and practices equity assessment. An external consultant has been hired to assist with the international/national pay practices review. The resulting recommendations will inform specific IRC policy and practice changes in order to ensure all staff are treated and compensated equitably. We expect this work to be completed in FY22.

The IRC aggregated all existing DEI-related HR policies into a new anti-discrimination policy and updated standards and guidelines; these include health and safety for IRC worksites and a living quarters policy to ensure that all IRC employees receive support in promoting work/life balance, health, hygiene and well-being for themselves as individuals and for their team environment. The IRC also introduced minimum standards and guidelines for global IRC worksites and living quarters to support the health, safety and well-being of all staff regardless of remote locations and contextual challenges. This was done with significant input from colleagues. The IRC, GEDI, and safety and security teams will participate in scheduled updates of the guidelines to further integrate the IRC priorities around protection, gender, diversity and inclusion via worksite standards.

The IRC made improvements to its internship program to further our commitment to a diverse and inclusive internship experience and to promote career paths in humanitarian work for BIPOC and/or immigrant populations. The Pathways to Careers in RAI Scholarship Opportunity is a new resource to diversify and enhance the talent pipeline, specifically targeting RAI U.S. internships. After receiving 35 applications from RAI U.S. interns, eight interns have been selected to receive a \$5,000 scholarship.

Objective 1.2: The IRC has diverse leadership that reflects the places we work and people we serve; key roles in all our departments are based closer to the regions where we work.

The IRC has committed to the following leadership diversity goals by the end of FY26:

- **Global and regional senior leaders.** We aspire for 50% of our leaders to identify as Black, Indigenous or Native Peoples, Hispanic/Latinx, Middle Eastern, North African or Asian/Pacific Islander. We also aspire for at least 30% of these leaders to come from countries in our CRRD regions.
- **Senior leaders in CRRD country programs.** We aspire for the clear majority (60% to 80%) to be from the country or community they serve. We recognize the expertise that international staff bring. We aspire for the clear majority of our international staff (75%) to be from countries in our CRRD regions.
- **Senior leaders in our RAI offices.** We aspire for at least 30% to identify as Black, Indigenous or Native, Hispanic/Latinx, Middle Eastern, North African or Asian/Pacific Islander.
- **All leadership groups.** We want to reach or maintain 50% who identify as women, both for the group as a whole and within the targeted nationalities or races/ethnicities.
- **The IRC has committed to incremental progress** toward the leadership diversity goal for this fiscal year.

The IRC has committed to improving our recruiting strategy to meet our leadership diversity goals; we have hired a diversity and campus recruiter and initiated a strategy to help increase the diversity of new hires. This effort comprises:

- **Partnerships.** We've engaged several vendors that help promulgate our job postings to people from underrepresented race/ethnicities, people with disabilities, members of the LGBTQIA+ community, and veterans. Specifically, we initiated the expansion of on-campus recruiting efforts with an emphasis on diversity recruiting, particularly at City University of New York (CUNY) and at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).
- **Innovation.** We have enlisted HR operations to analyze data that will help the IRC identify opportunities to create equity in our recruitment process. For example, we edited our job description templates to make degree requirements flexible and added that language skills such as English, French, Arabic and Spanish are bona fide requirements for the role. We have also partnered with our PRIDE employee resource group to identify ways to be more inclusive of nonbinary applicants during the recruiting process.
- **Representation in the recruitment process.** Recruiters are actively encouraging hiring managers to diversify their interviewer slate. Global recruitment has also added team members who will amplify the already diverse set of locations, languages and backgrounds on the team.

The IRC made policy updates to improve our ability to hire globally. Specifically, we updated the Permanent Resident (Green Card) Sponsorship Policy. To expand our hiring scope worldwide, and to build talented, diverse, high-performing teams, the IRC has ended the employee cost-sharing requirement for applications; instead, the IRC will pay in full and require repayment only if employees leave the organization before two years on the job.

The IRC worked with an external specialist to undertake a comprehensive talent management review to assess strengths and gaps in our training and coaching programs and make improvements. As a result, the IRC has developed a plan to invest in high-potential staff who share identities that are underrepresented in senior leadership levels. This includes completing a pilot “Talent Dialogues” initiative aimed at creating professional development opportunities for identified staff, and continuing to regionalize the country program regional vice president role. The IRC currently has four Talent Dialogue pilots planned, with the first one scheduled for October 2021 and continuing into 2022. The tools and process to conduct the Talent Dialogue pilots have been vetted and finalized.

Objective 1.3: The IRC leadership and management take responsibility for creating an inclusive organizational culture where every staff member feels safe, respected, valued, supported and encouraged to bring their full authentic selves to work.

The IRC launched voluntary listening sessions to ensure our DEI work was grounded in staff concerns, ideas and experiences. This included Leadership Board and Senior Leadership Group listening sessions; language-specific leadership sessions in Spanish, French and Arabic; and RAI-office and country-specific listening sessions. The IRC provided leaders with a listening session toolkit, translated into French, Arabic and Spanish, to enable them to host these sessions as effectively as possible, and identified a roster of internal staff who could either support leaders to conduct listening sessions or do it in their place if necessary.

The IRC’s program departments created additional formal pathways for two-way communication with leaders on DEI topics. The IRC Leadership Board has established a monthly engagement session with employee affinity groups to hear and discuss their concerns. The IRC’s RAI departments established DEI focal points to connect with offices and act as communication channels and sounding boards for staff and leaders. Members of The IRC’s CRRD departments formed a Diverse Leaders Group to support senior leaders in discussions on DEI needs and priorities. Offices are encouraged to create context-relevant initiatives that nurture a culture of service to clients. For example, the RAI office in Boise, Idaho, created a Humanitarian in Racial Justice series where, on a monthly basis, colleagues can study systemic racism, history and the lived experiences of new arrivals to the U.S.

The IRC has invested in DEI learning and leadership standards. The IRC continues to expand its library of DEI learning content and encourage groups to support context-relevant DEI trainings and discussion groups. To date, 100 staff have completed Equality in the Workplace training, and 72 staff have completed or enrolled in the Cornell DEI certificate program. The IRC Talent Management team has completed a review of the IRC leadership standards, resulting in a change from “Creating a Collaborative Culture” to “Creating an Inclusive Culture.” The IRC has invested in 3500 courses of the Harvard Business Publishing DEIB training module for managers to create and foster an inclusive environment (to be released in FY22). Human resources is working on an accompanying toolkit and support to further learning. The IRC created a translated, online DEI module and a manager’s toolkit containing materials, information and scenarios that can be adapted to local context and situations.

The IRC has made significant investment in developing an IRC People Survey.

The survey, scheduled for release in early 2022, is 90% complete and under review by various stakeholders across the organization. The IRC ensured an inclusive and collaborative approach to the development of the survey. The team dedicated time and energy to conducting over 20 rounds of review, discussion, reflection and revision so as to build the survey to a scale reflecting the data. This data comes from 40-plus countries across 16 time zones, translated from 19 languages of 15,000-plus staff living with varying degrees of security and risk concerns in dynamic settings across the globe. The survey will help us to better understand the diversity of our global employees and provide valuable insights into how employees feel about inclusion and engagement across the organization. The data will help inform our priorities to improve diversity, equality and inclusion in different contexts. It will help us implement our GEDI Action Plan, and can be used by leaders around the world to support local DEI efforts with their teams.



Falmata, who runs SAFE sessions, teaches her students about gender equality in roles at home.



On May 8/9, 2019, members of the IRC's Refugee Voices program went to Washington, DC, for a two-day event hosted by the Refugee Council USA (RCUSA), the International Rescue Committee (IRC), and other partner organizations to demonstrate their support for refugee resettlement. Refugee Voices (from left to right).

PROGRESS AGAINST GOAL 2: “WHAT WE DO”

At the IRC, our program design and delivery approach maximizes power for the communities we serve through effective collaboration with clients, partners and staff. We strive for equal outcomes for diverse populations by using our deep understanding of local power imbalances to ensure equitable access to services.

Objective 2.1: Building on our GE tools, the IRC mainstreams DEI in our program design and delivery and in our process and accountability mechanisms.

The IRC is drafting a GEDI conceptual framework to mainstream DEI in program design and delivery.

We plan to workshop the framework to ensure that we are setting clear expectations for programs embedding GEDI. The IRC has committed to developing GEDI markers that are intended to ensure that programs are designed to be transformative. We will also work closely with the Governance Unit to ensure that our context analysis tools incorporate intersectionality.

The IRC has invested in new DEI program tools. To expand the influence and empower the decision-making of clients in our programs, RAI has invested in a spectrum of client engagement models across 60% of our offices, including but not limited to participatory design, client advisory bodies, focus groups, and office panels. The pilot program is aligned with S100’s “Impact Ambition.” Participating offices will contribute to a final report on outcomes that will inform best practices on client engagement.

The IRC’s program departments have included concrete GEDI actions in their Strategy Action Plans (SAPs) and the IMPACT program quality standards that govern program delivery. SAPs are required to commit to further gender equality and DEI in their country programs, with goals that take into consideration clients, partners and workforce. The Transformative Standards of the IRC’s new program quality standards, or IMPACT (Informed, Measure, Partner, Adapt, Client-centered, and Transformative), support our S100 ambitions to tackle gender and power inequalities. These standards ensure that at minimum our programs are inclusive and target actions that will address gender and other systemic inequalities.

Objective 2.2: The IRC's program design is rooted in rigorous intersectional context analysis by engaging clients, partners and staff to drive decision-making about the type of programming we do.

The IRC has included plans in our Strategy100 implementation to ensure that our context analysis tools incorporate intersectionality. The IRC's Strategy100's partnership ambition exemplifies our commitment to localization, which we understand as maximizing power for people and organizations affected by crisis to influence, participate in and lead programs, organizations and systems that achieve better outcomes for their communities.

The IRC reiterated our commitment to channeling 25% of our funding to local and national responders by 2024 and made new commitments, such as increasing our resources to local partners by half in 2021 (compared to 2020) and continuing to build partnerships with local actors, half of whom will be women-led/focused. As at the end of FY21 Q3, we are on track to meet that target.

The IRC is currently undertaking the third in-depth review of the PEER System, IRC's institutional policy, guidance, process and tools for effective partnerships. We have commissioned a review of PEER to identify improvements to promote the core principle of equality in practice. The review aims to strengthen the extent to which PEER drives an anti-racist and feminist approach to our work promoting priorities within organizations. Degan Ali is leading the review, co-managing with the NEAR network of global south actors. The outcomes of the review will shape the next version of PEER, to be released (and made available as open source) in 2022. This is a key component of our institutional commitment to improve the quality of our partnerships under Strategy100.

The IRC is partnering with the NEAR network of global south actors to explore collaborative design, with a focus on collaboration between INGOs (like the IRC) and civil society, government and private-sector actors. NEAR members and IRC staff and partners globally are researching which approaches and methodologies are effective, and exploring the impact of various contextual and relationship factors. Results are reflected in a draft guidance targeting NEAR members and IRC staff and partners, currently in the piloting phase.

PROGRESS AGAINST GOAL 3: “WHAT WE SAY AND HOW WE SAY IT”

We aspire to build an organizational culture that encourages open and honest conversations by ensuring all staff have equal access to internal communications. Our external communications will illustrate the resilience of the diverse people we serve, ensuring that the IRC’s client, staff and partner voices and experiences inform the organization’s priorities.

Objective 3.1: Staff at the IRC have equal access to information, and our internal communication is inclusive and reflective of diverse languages, contexts, lived experiences and voices.

The IRC closed substantial gaps in access to information. We have increased investment in translation resources, including internal communications and live translation for critical announcements. This investment continues through FY22. We have also worked to improve the quality of our interpretation and translation, developing a DEI lexicon in multiple languages to ensure key terms are accurate.

The IRC created internal resources to update staff on DEI progress. Our DEI team publishes monthly DEI digests and maintains an internal RescueNet page dedicated to equality for global staff updates. This page includes the latest news and updates, plus links to employee resource groups and external resources. Other departments launched additional internal pages to ensure staff are kept up-to-date on relevant initiatives.

The IRC created mechanisms for ongoing two-way communication. This includes an IRC Equality Inbox designed for all global colleagues to share questions, comments, suggestions, ideas and advice as we take short-, medium- and long-term actions on the state of equality at the IRC; and a Global Questions & Comments document that collects the posts and responses on our RescueNet equality page over the past year. All comments and questions are been posted as submitted, unedited.

The IRC has invested in strategic communications for DEI. The IRC will fund a full-time DEI internal communications role in FY22. The IRC also contracted with DEI communications experts to inform our approach to internal communications and ensure a globally sensitive approach.

Objective 3.2: The IRC's external communications reflect our DEI vision and commitment to promoting and ensuring that the resilience and lived experiences of the diverse people we work with are accurately illustrated while preserving their dignity and agency.

The IRC strengthened our brand guidelines defining the use of imagery and language as it portrays our clients. We have completed 40 training sessions for over 410 staff, consultants and agencies to ensure our narratives empower and depict people with dignity and agency. More sessions will be held in FY22.

The IRC completed an inclusive, participatory step in the process to develop a refreshed visual identity. We completed 18 consultations with staff at various levels to ensure feedback was reflected in the visual identity refresh work. Twenty-plus hours of consultations included staff from program teams; headquarter teams in the U.S. and globally; our DEI team, the DEI council; and the IRC Strategy Assembly (a representative body of IRC staff). Additional sessions with client-facing program staff are being planned for FY22.

The IRC joined a working group with six peer organizations to develop ways to decolonize imagery and to “instead highlight the agency, capacities and complex realities of people and communities supported by international aid.” The objective is to develop a Pledge for Change by December 2021 outlining ways to measure progress toward goals. While many organizations in the working group, including the IRC, have internal commitments in place, the intent of this initiative is to provide momentum across our sector to make changes toward more inclusive narratives.

The IRC has partnered with Refugee Voices on our World Refugee Day campaign, and will continue to seek their guidance on forthcoming external campaigns to ensure that we are accurately representing the stories and the experiences of refugees. When we encounter policies or “moments” that touch on our work, but can't speak to lived experience or public policy expertise directly, we elevate and promote the voice of external organizations that can. For example, we highlighted racial justice organizations on the anniversary of George Floyd's murder, and the Black Alliance for Just Immigration when data showed disproportionate expulsions of Black migrants at the U.S. southern border.

Objective 3.3: The IRC's external engagement (communications, marketing, fundraising and advocacy), decision-making, and prioritization focus on the needs of our clients, staff and partners.

The IRC has published articles, op-eds and papers on DEI and the needs of our clients, staff and partners. Some examples include:

- **The IRC published the diversity, equality and inclusion page** on Rescue.org.
- **In response to the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, the IRC quickly released a call to action, highlighting the heightened challenges and dangers that women are enduring in Afghanistan.**
- **Our commitment to local partnerships** featured in the IRC's **paper on the Grand Bargain** calls for a more equitable distribution of power with our clients and local actors.
- **The IRC submitted a response to the House of Commons' International Development Committee** inquiry into "The philosophy and culture of aid: racism in the aid sector." The submission builds on various internal policies and strategies on DEI and incorporates feedback from the IRC's staff-led Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) Network.
- **The IRC reinforced our commitment to DEI by externally publishing a number of articles,** including **"The story of Bayard Rustin," "DEI 100 day progress at the IRC,"** and **"A refugee leader shares his thoughts on the Black Lives Matter movement."**

The IRC has committed to make more space for regional, country-program and national-staff voices to speak directly to policy makers and influencers in global capitals on key advocacy priorities. The IRC continues to look for every opportunity to give country programs and national staff platforms to represent our work and our clients in global capitals.

In September 2021, the IRC Board of Directors unanimously passed a resolution to endorse its commitments to supporting global DEI work at the IRC. The board committed to:

- **Taking steps** so that board members self-identify 50% as women; 33% as a race/ethnicity typically underrepresented in global power structures; and 20% as having a lived refugee experience that shaped their identity (either personally or through an immediate family member).
- **Ensuring each of the board's 12 committees actively supports the IRC's DEI work** in a way that is relevant to that committee's mandate.

PROGRESS AMONG OUR REGIONAL TEAMS

In addition to our global DEI progress, each region has also made significant progress on context specific initiatives, many of those initiatives were built on existing gender focused efforts.

ASIA REGION



Launched MASAWAT (Equality in Urdu) card games among staff and client:

These games are part of an interactive package developed by the GE unit, with support materials including a colorful website, that offers a fun and flexible way to advance Gender and DEI learning by engaging staff in thought-provoking discussions about gender, power, culture and the workplace.

Increasing awareness on DEI through the “Cholo Shobai!” process in Bangladesh:

“Cholo Shobai!,” which means “Let’s Go Together!” in Bangla, is a peer-led collective learning process aimed at transforming organizational culture. Through seven four-hour sessions, participants engage in intensive, creative, self-reflexive explorations leading to transformational learning. “Cholo Shobai!” addresses issues such as systemic inequality, power, gender, the process of change, and value-based leadership.

Decolonizing our practices in Asia:

The Asia regional DEI working group has engaged an external consultant to begin developing a conceptual framework and approach for GEDI at IRC Asia. The consultant will take diverse Asia staff through interactive discussions of key components of the draft framework, exploring what racism, religious oppression, gender/sexuality discrimination look like in specific country and local contexts; how we can decolonize knowledge practices; and ideas for practical actions.

EAST AFRICA REGION



Supporting LGBTQI+ refugees in Kenya:

The IRC is collaborating with Jinsiangu, a local nonprofit, to support LGBTQI+ refugees, specifically with psychosocial services and essential materials. In addition, we will conduct training on affirming and respectful care that comprehensively addresses the risks and vulnerabilities to LGBTQI+ refugees and maximizes opportunities for restoring dignity.

Increasing awareness of DEI in Somalia:

The Somalia country program conducted four in-person and one virtual DEI awareness sessions that were attended by 130 of 178 staff members.

Establishing baby friendly rooms in local offices in Uganda:

The IRC Uganda country program is establishing baby friendly rooms throughout their local offices. These rooms will be equipped with floor mats, cots/mattresses, changing tables and toys to further the IRC's commitment to supporting lactating mothers by providing them safe spaces.

EUROPE REGION



Testing and funding staff-led approaches:

Europe established a Diversity and Inclusion Innovation Fund that provided seed money to test and pilot staff-led ideas on furthering the GEDI agenda locally.

Launching DEI action plans at the country level to implement Europe's GEDI commitments:

Our offices in the larger European markets launched DEI action plans to drive the implementation of our global GEDI commitments and location-specific initiatives in various jurisdictions.

Increasing awareness and knowledge of DEI in IRC offices in the U.K.:

IRC UK has hired an expert D&I consultant who held listening sessions and delivered unconscious bias training to U.K. staff, UKMT, and U.K. Board of Trustees. In the same time, the IRC-UK D&I Action Plan for FY21 and supporting activities tracker were approved and put in place, with 13 themes and 100-plus actions.

Conducting DEI assessments of operations and practices in Germany:

IRC Germany conducted a DEI diagnosis of its operations, which led to a three-year strategy with an FY22 action plan.

GREAT LAKES REGION



The IRC's Women @ Work initiative started in Burundi in 2011.

The Great Lakes region has continued to invest in this critical space for solidarity and collective action and now has a strong network of Women @ Work (Femmes au Travail) groups across countries, offices and sites in the region. This year, W@W have continued to influence policy and practice of country teams and contributed to creating a more inclusive and equal working environment for women from all backgrounds.

The IRC Tanzania has developed a highly active DEI committee.

The committee undertook an analysis of staff concerns and developed an action plan to address issues including well-being, housing, access to transport, and learning and development, all of which have been addressed and/or prioritized in the country SAP.

The IRC CAR will be hosting a DEI day.

On Sept. 30, IRC-CAR dedicated the day to celebrate differences and diversity, and to build understanding about what diversity means in practice in their context.

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA REGION (MENA)



Launching listening sessions and surveys:

The MENA region embarked on a learning journey comprised of 47 hiwar (listening sessions) and a power-dynamic survey with a 48% response rate, with which they developed goals and an action plan.

Investing in tailored learning programs:

The region launched a learning series focused on feminism and LGBTQI+ tailored to MENA context.

CP and regional leadership:

MENA solidified mandatory DEI sessions for country and regional leadership to ensure understanding of our commitments and to develop ideas on building trust to improve our working environment.

UNITED STATES REGION



Creating a Refugee Advisory Council:

The **Cultural Orientation Resource Exchange** developed and started recruitment for a Refugee Advisory Council; a formal paid space for formerly resettled refugees to provide targeted feedback on initiatives that will contribute to improvement of Cultural Orientation for future clients resettled to the United States.

Enhancing Diversity Recruitment and HR Infrastructure:

RAI-US updated job descriptions and postings to include DEI statements & employ best practices in diversity recruitment and streamlined and enhanced HR reporting infrastructure such as implementing workday self-reporting demographic record fields

Promoting Career Paths through Internships:

In FY21, RAI-US launched the Pathways to Careers in Resettlement, Asylum, and Integration Scholarship Opportunity which aims to promote career paths in humanitarian work for BIPOC and/or immigrant populations and further our commitment to a diverse and inclusive internship experience. In addition, RAI created principles to be followed for paid internships wherever possible.

WEST AFRICA REGION



Creating spaces for staff to engage in DEI conversations and learning in Liberia:

In March 2021, 41 staff members of the Liberia country program engaged in a two-day retreat with an external consultant on local and international DEI concepts. The staff members participated in live training and a DEI survey while incorporating the IRC and external DEI policies into the conversation.

Supporting workplace culture and inclusion by partnering with existing affinity groups in Mali:

The Mali country program is collaborating with current affinity groups to implement approved action plans at country level.

Developing a gender-equality training for staff across Nigeria:

The Nigeria country program engaged approximately 300 staff members in small group trainings. The training was done in the BAY states and Abuja in groups of 15 to 20 staffers.

Assessing the DEI readiness of staff to create DEI training programs in Chad:

Country-program staff were surveyed to understand DEI readiness and the meaning of DEI in local context. The information from the survey will contextualize the training courses schedule for late 2021.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Q1

OCTOBER

- Formed a DEI Interim Team comprised of nine staff members with diverse lived experiences and professional backgrounds from program departments CRRD and RAI and HQ departments.
- Finalized commitment to increasing our resources to local partners by half in 2021 (compared to 2020)

NOVEMBER

- Created DEI working groups in CRRD region
- Launched the DEI Digest, a monthly internal newsletter highlighting DEI progress and initiatives

DECEMBER

- Launched the DEI Council of the International Rescue Committee to provide diverse constituencies of IRC colleagues a meaningful opportunity to deliberate the best ways to address the issues they believe require the attention of IRC leadership, in order to make the IRC more diverse, equitable and inclusive
- Completed 110-plus listening sessions, 90 key informant interviews and 8 regional dialogues that provide feedback on the DEI experiences of thousands of staff (including frontline staff)



Rosa is the coordinator of the triage hotel, a temporary shelter where migrants and asylum seekers can access food, hygiene products and medical care.



Mohammed Al Tayib, an IRC health worker washes his hands to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 at a health center in Tunaybah refugee camp in East Sudan.

Q2

JANUARY

- Hired a U.S.-based diversity-and-campus recruiter to support DEI recruiting strategy and execution
- Created the Respect at Work policy and the anti-discrimination policy
- Launched DEI fund for country programs and RAI

MARCH

- Launched search for chief GEDI officer

Q3

APRIL

- Launched HR policies and practices equity assessment
- Published internally the **IRC DEI Strategy**, including staff-led DEI goals and objectives across three main pillars

MAY

- Finalized leadership diversity goals related to gender identity, race/ethnicity and nationality, noting that 50% of our global and regional senior leaders identify as races/ethnicities underrepresented in global power structures.

JUNE

- Published the DEI lexicon
- Released the IRC Way online module with DEI module
- Developed a GEDI framework and three-year business strategy and budget to support its implementation

Q4

AUGUST

- Completed 26 briefing sessions across all departments and regions to share updates on the DEI Strategy document, the Leadership Diversity Goals, and other ongoing DEI initiatives (these sessions brought together over 1,675 colleagues from across the organization)

SEPTEMBER

- Signed agreement with Harvard Business Publishing DEIB training module for managers on how to create and foster an inclusive environment (to be released in FY22)
- Secured \$3.4 million to support the newly formed GEDI Unit



Rahima, an IRC volunteer, and her five children lived in Moria refugee camp in Greece after fleeing from Afghanistan.



Zainab is a Somali refugee and member of the Women Steering Committee in Ethiopia's Helowyn camp. She raises awareness about women's rights.