

Funders & Philanthropies (Funders)



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INCLUDING METHODS



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- Courts
- Commissions
- Intergovernmental organisations
- International NGOs
- Law Firms
- Legal professional associations

About:

Global 50/50 is an independent think tank that informs, inspires and incites action and accountability for gender justice. Global Justice 50/50 is part of this mission, assessing organisations' public commitments, workplace policies, leadership representation, and data reporting practices through a gender justice lens.

The full 2026 Global Justice 50/50 Report examines 171 global and regional law and justice organisations across 30 countries. Here we report on 19 funders and philanthropies in the sample (see page 16 for full list).

The wheel and the will
Accra, Ghana. 2025.
Emmanuel Osei-Owusu

Amid street life, a young disabled girl sits on a makeshift wheelchair, load balanced on her head. Her calm, steady look resists pity, insisting instead on presence and visibility.



At a glance

Our research reveals that access and authority remain concentrated in the hands of a few in organisations responsible for directing global resources. The fair and equitable flow of funding depends on who gets to shape priorities – and whose voices remain excluded.

Broad commitments:

Funders generally recognise the importance of gender equality, but public commitments were not found for all organisations.

While many make public commitments, this is far from universal. The funding landscape uses the language of equality, but not all organisations have aligned their values with action.

Among 19 funders



13 have a public commitment to gender equality

Partial policies:

Some funders have publicly available workplace policies, but clear implementation measures are limited.

Workplace policies on gender equality, fairness and equity with specific measures were publicly available for only a small number of organisations. Commitments without actionable policies risk becoming symbolic rather than transformative.

Among 17 funders



6 have gender equality workplace policies



2 have commitments to gender equality, but with no specific measures to carry these out

Sparse governance guidance:

Equitable board representation and inclusion is not yet widely formalised through policy.

Only a handful of funders have formal policies to ensure representative and inclusive boards, limiting opportunities to diversify decision-making and strengthen accountability. Without such standards, leadership equity is unlikely to advance.

Among 18 funders



3 have publicly available board representation and inclusion policies

Concentration of power:

Leadership roles are evenly distributed by gender, but positions are dominated by nationals of high-income countries.

Women from low- and middle-income countries remain severely underrepresented across senior roles. This imbalance underscores a deeper inequity in who holds authority and whose perspectives shape the flow of resources to the justice sector.

Among 162 CEOs, board chairs, and board members



7% (11/162) are women from MICs

1% (1/162) are women from LICs

Data deficits:

Most funders do not systematically track or report sex-disaggregated programmatic data or commit to gender analysis.

Without this information, the gendered impacts of funding remain hidden, making meaningful accountability impossible. In the absence of data and gender analysis, equitable outcomes cannot be measured, monitored, or improved.

Among 19 funders



2 have a commitment to report sex-disaggregated data or undertake gender analysis



Gender parity in the law and justice sector benefits everyone by

Delivering
Better Gender
Justice Outcomes

Improving the
Quality of Judicial
Decision-Making

Increasing
Public Trust
in the Sector

Enhancing
Organisational
Performance and
Profitability

Expanding Access
to Justice and Equity
in Service Delivery

Assessing the funders

The 19 funders in our sample represent some of the most influential organisations investing in legal development, justice reform, and rights-based advocacy globally. They include large private foundations and public interest philanthropies whose grantmaking reaches organisations across all regions and multilateral systems. These funders were selected based on the scale of their grant portfolios, global reach, and demonstrated influence in shaping agendas across the law and justice domain.

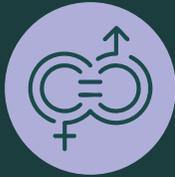
Global 50/50 only assesses publicly available information, a method that promotes transparency but is not without its limitations. Public commitments and policies do not always reflect internal practice, just as their absence does not necessarily indicate a lack of internal action, particularly in the context of the current global anti-gender backlash. The value of our approach, however, lies in offering a clear, comparative snapshot of how organisations publicly present their commitments and policies at a given moment in time.



Table 1. Variables reviewed: Funders



Does the organisation make a public commitment to gender equality?



Are workplace gender equality and/or fairness and equity policies publicly available?

Are policies on board representation and inclusion publicly available?



What is the gender and nationality of leaders,

INCLUDING

CEOs

Board chairs

Board members

Senior managers



Are policies available on reporting data disaggregated by sex or on undertaking gender analysis?



Box 1.

What we measure for each variable.

We assessed organisations' websites for publicly available information on the following:

<p>1 Public statement of commitment to gender equality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Commits to gender equality/equity, gender justice, or gender mainstreaming in policy and planning. ● Work on women's rights, social justice, human rights, and/or access to justice, but makes no formal commitment to gender equality. ● No mention of gender or social justice.
<p>2 Policies with specific measures to promote gender equality in the workplace</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Policy with specific measure(s) to improve gender equality and/or support women's careers. ● Stated commitment to gender equality and/or diversity in the workplace (above the legal requirement) but no specific measures to carry out commitments; and/or reports on gender distribution of staff. ● Policy is compliant with law but no more = "we do not discriminate". ● No reference to gender equality or non-discrimination in the workplace found.
<p>3 Policies with specific measures to promote fairness and equity in the workplace</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Policy with specific measure(s) to improve diversity, inclusion, fairness and/or equality. ● Commitment to promoting fairness and equity evidenced by a) aspirational comments and b) listing protected characteristics; and/or some reporting on characteristics among staff. ● Policy is compliant with law but no more = "we do not discriminate". ● No reference to equality or non-discrimination in the workplace found.



4 Policies with specific measures to promote representation and inclusion in governing boards

- Policy with specific strategies and measures (e.g. targets, dedicated seats, monitoring) to promote diversity, inclusion and representation of the board publicly available.
- Commitment to diversity and/or representation of affected communities on board found, but no specific measures to advance diversity and inclusion; and/or some summary reporting on board composition, but no policy to advance representation and inclusion.
- Publicly available policy and/or information on board rules but no commitment to principles of representation and inclusion.
- No information on board policy or rules regarding composition and/or role (regardless of whether current board members are published).

5 Gender parity in senior management and in governing boards

- 56-100% women represented.
- 45-55% women represented; or difference of one individual.
- 35-44% women represented.
- 0-34% women represented.

6 Gender and nationality of the head of the organisation and board chair

There is no traffic light scoring for this variable; we only report on the aggregate numbers.

7 Policy on sex-disaggregated data and gender analysis

- Policy or organisational commitment found to regularly report sex-disaggregated data and/or to undertake gender analysis.
- Project-specific commitments to report sex-disaggregated data and/or to undertake gender analysis.
- No policy or commitment found.



Finding 1. Most funders publicly state a commitment to gender equality, but room remains to raise the bar

Public commitments to gender equality signal institutional recognition of its importance and provide a foundation for accountability in practice. We reviewed whether funders had stated such a commitment on their websites.

Thirteen (13/19; 68%) funders had a public commitment to gender equality.

Figure 1. Public commitments to gender equality found, funders (n=19)



13/19
funders have
a public commitment
to gender equality

Box 2. Organisational examples

Example of funder commitment to gender equality

The world needs effective, democratic governments that are equipped to respond to the escalating challenges of today. They must be accountable to all their citizens, not only elites and corporations.

In the face of these challenges, progressive movements are demanding action and advocating for profound systemic change. People power offers our greatest hope towards ensuring that governments put people above profits, protect and strengthen democracy, stop abuses of power, achieve gender and racial justice, and protect the planet while there is still time.

Wallace Global Fund (WGF)¹



Finding 2. Half of funders publish workplace policies on gender equality, fairness and equity, but fewer include specific measures

Workplace policies on gender equality, fairness and equity policies with specific measures are important for setting clear standards and translating commitments into concrete, accountable actions. Six (6/17; 35%) funders had published policies on gender equality, and on fairness and equity, with specific measures.

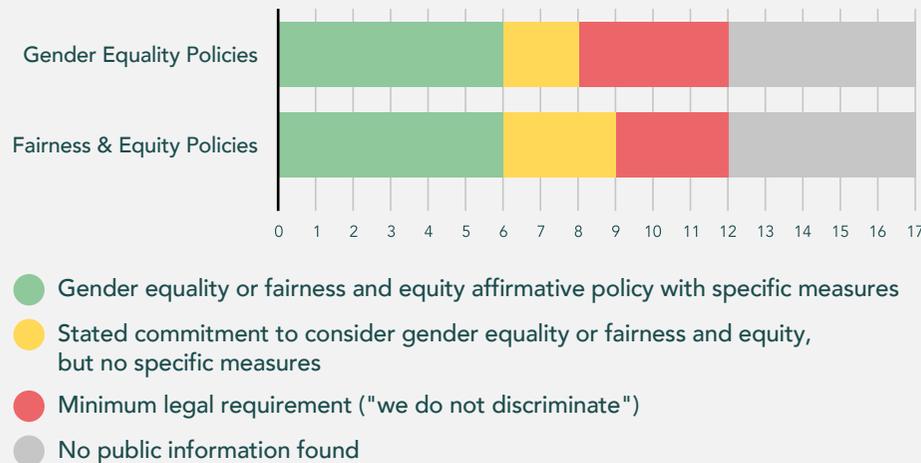
Examples of specific measures for promoting gender equality included: gender-responsive recruitment and hiring processes; mentoring, training, and leadership programmes; targets for women’s participation at senior levels; gender analysis and action in staff performance reviews and staff surveys; regular reviews of organisational efforts towards gender equality; and/or reporting back to all staff.

Specific measures for advancing fairness and equity included: inclusive recruitment processes; mentoring, training, and leadership programmes; targets for representation; fairness and equity analysis and action in staff performance reviews; regular reviews of organisational efforts towards fairness and equity; and/or employee resource groups.

We do not assess the performance of small organisations – those with 10 or fewer staff – for these variables (unless they are hosted by a larger organisation). We would not expect organisations (nor did we find any) of this size to develop

gender equality, fairness and equity plans. However, we continue to encourage them to, at a minimum, make a public commitment to gender equality, fairness and equity.

Figure 2. Gender equality and fairness and equity policies found, funders (n=17*)



* n=17 as 2 funders have fewer than 10 full-time employees.



6/17

funders have publicly available gender equality policies



6/17

funders have publicly available fairness and equity policies



Box 3. Organisational examples

Examples of funder gender equality, fairness and equity policies



GENDER EQUALITY POLICY WITH SPECIFIC MEASURES:

One of our goals this year is to monitor diversity as we have defined it – to have more inclusive categories for gender and race/ethnicity and to include categories such as disability, LGBTQA+ status, religion, and others outlined in our definition. Our goal in doing so is to better reflect and more openly discuss the full scope of the diversity we value as an organization.

Overall, the foundation’s gender representation has been increasing to more closely align with the representation of women in the philanthropic sector. Specifically, women now comprise 64% of our total staff, up from 58% five years ago, as compared to an average of 68% in our sector.

Ford Foundation²



FAIRNESS AND EQUITY POLICY WITH SPECIFIC MEASURES:

Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) are foundation-supported, employee-run internal communities that are open to all employees. Our first five ERGs were established in 2013. Since then, the number has grown to 14, each providing critical connections, learning opportunities, and perspectives that support our culture and community.

- Africa Employee Resource Group
- Allies for Racial Justice
- Black Philanthropic Partnership
- Cultural Confluence
- D.C. Inclusion Council
- Disabilities Advocacy Group
- Gates Asians in Philanthropy
- Jewish Cultural Connection
- Latinos in Philanthropy
- Native American Network & Allies

Gates Foundation³



Finding 4. Gender parity masks the under-representation of women from low- and middle-income countries in leadership roles

Across leadership roles, we found that women are relatively well-represented overall. We collected gender data on 20 CEOs across 19 organisations, with one organisation having joint CEOs. Twelve (12/20; 60%) CEOs were women.

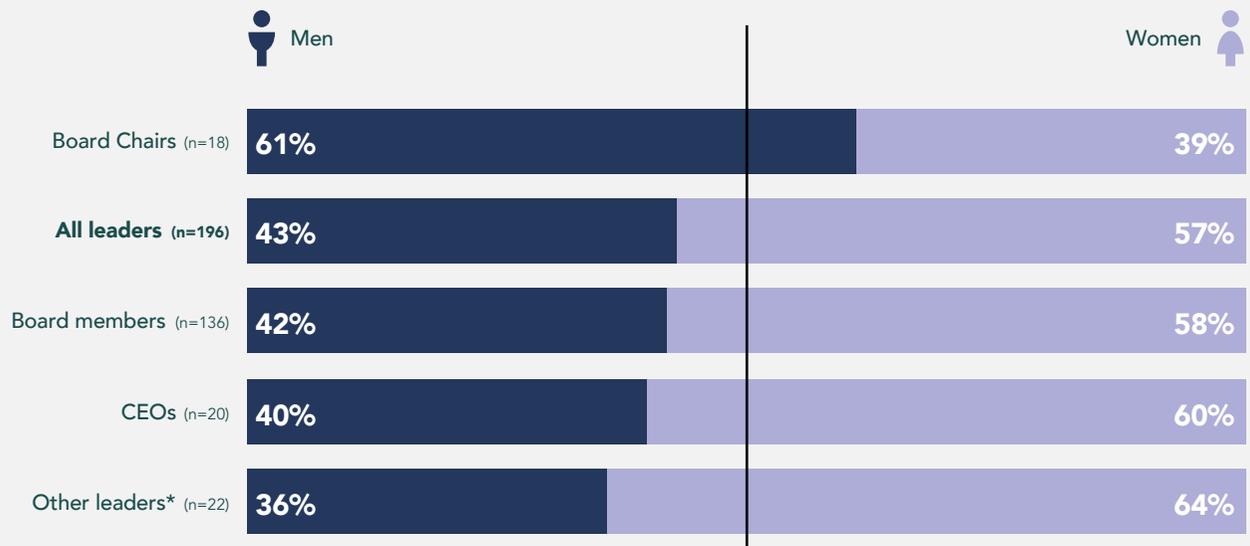
We collected data on 15 board chairs, with three organisations having joint board chairs. For three funders, no board chair information could be found, and one funder was excluded as they do not have a governing body. Seven (7/18; 39%) board chair seats were held by women.

Across boards, women made up 79/136 (58%) of members, with the same trend across other leaders including Executive Vice Presidents, Senior Vice Presidents and Vice Presidents, of whom 14/22 (64%) were women.

Among 20 CEOs,
12 are women

Among 18 board chairs,
7 are women

Figure 4. Proportion of men and women among power holders, funders (n=196)



* Other leaders includes Executive Vice Presidents, Senior Vice Presidents and Vice Presidents.

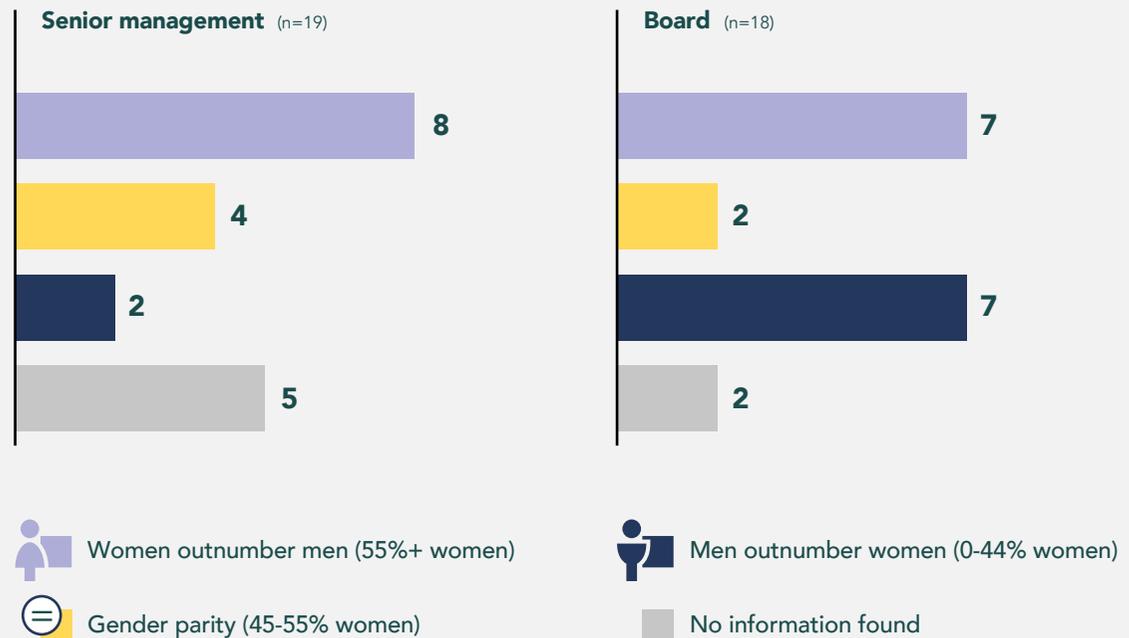


We also collected gender data on 227 senior managers across 14 funders and assessed how many organisations had achieved gender parity at this level. No information was found for five (5/19; 26%) funders.

Eight (8/19; 42%) funders have a senior management team where women outnumbered men (55%+ women), with a further four (4/19; 21%) at gender parity (45-55% women).

We collected data on 183 individuals across 16 governing boards and assessed how many organisations had achieved gender parity. No information was found for two (2/18; 11%) governing boards, and one organisation was excluded due to lack of a board structure. Seven (7/18; 39%) boards had women outnumbering men, while two (2/18; 11%) had achieved gender parity (45-55% women).

Figure 5. Funders with gender parity in senior management (n=19) and boards (n=18)



FUNDERS

READ THE FULL REPORT →

Distribution of Gender and nationality in leadership roles among funders

Despite overall gender balance, leadership is heavily skewed by geography. Nationality data, categorised by income classification, were found for 19/20 CEOs, 17/18 board chairs, 133/136 board members and 22/22 other leaders. Of these, eleven are classified as dual nationals.

Most CEOs (16/19; 84%), board chairs (16/17; 94%), board members (108/133; 81%), and other leaders (16/22; 73%) are nationals of high-income countries (HICs). Three (3/19; 16%) CEOs, one (1/17; 6%) board chair, 17 (17/133; 13%) board members, and two (2/22; 9%) other leaders are nationals of middle-income countries (MICs), while one (1/133; 1%) board member is a national of a low-income country (LICs); no nationals of LICs were represented at CEO, board chair, and other leader levels.

CEOs
(n=19)

- 🌐 **HICs:** 37% (7) men and 47% (9) women.
- 🌐 **MICs:** 5% (1) men and 10% (2) women.
- 🌐 **LICs:** No men and no women represented.

BOARD CHAIRS
(n=17)

- 🌐 **HICs:** 65% (11) men and 29% (5) women.
- 🌐 **MICs:** No men and 6% (1) women.
- 🌐 **LICs:** No men and no women represented.

BOARD MEMBERS
(n=133)

- 🌐 **HICs:** 35% (46) men and 47% (62) women.
- 🌐 **MICs:** 7% (9) men and 6% (8) women.
- 🌐 **LICs:** No men and 1% (1) women.

OTHER LEADERS
(n=22)

- 🌐 **HICs:** 32% (7) men and 41% (9) women.
- 🌐 **MICs:** 5% (1) men and 5% (1) women.
- 🌐 **LICs:** No men and no women represented.

HICs: high-income countries
MICs: middle-income countries
LICs: low-income countries

GENDER (IN)JUSTICE?

Fragmented faces
New Delhi, India. 2021.
Hardeep Singh

Fragmented facial features and moving hands explore Deaf communication, gender fluidity, and embodied expression. Evoking sign language and symbolic code, the digital work blends aesthetics and advocacy in a powerful act of self-determination.



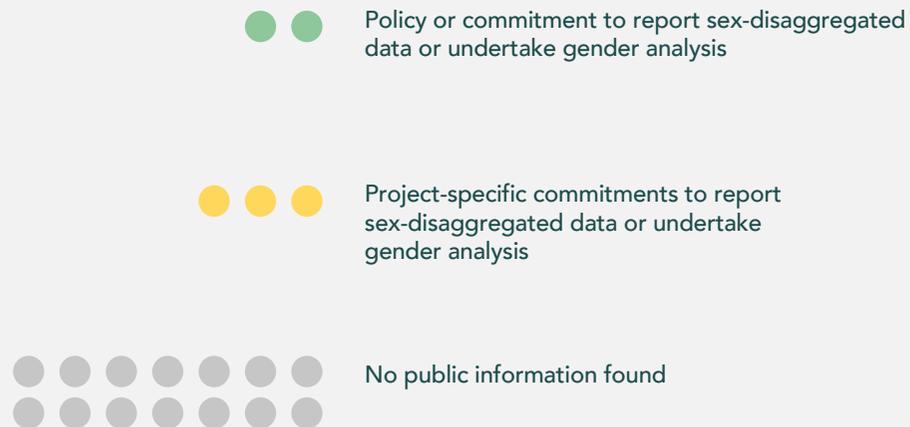


Finding 5. The potential of data disaggregated by sex alongside gender analysis is still unrealised among most funders

Sex-disaggregated data and gender analysis are essential for understanding who benefits from funding, who participates in funded initiatives, and where gender gaps persist. For funders, disaggregation of programmatic data by sex enables tracking of whether resources reach women and men equitably, supports accountability to gender equality commitments, and informs more effective, inclusive investment strategies. Without such data, assessing the gendered impacts of funding remains largely speculative.

Two (2/19; 11%) funders had a policy or commitment to regularly report sex-disaggregation of data or to undertake gender analysis.

Figure 7. Policies or commitments to report sex-disaggregated data or undertake gender analysis found, funders (n=19)



2/19

funders had a commitment to publicly report sex-disaggregated data or undertake gender analysis



Box 3. Organisational examples

Example of funder policy to sex-disaggregate data or undertake gender analysis

We ask for voluntary reporting of demographic data from people we work with to help hold ourselves accountable to our strategic goals.

MacArthur collects demographic information across a range of its activities, including with respect to our Staff, Board, grantees, vendors, impact investments, and investment managers. We hope this information will help inform and explain what we seek to collect, why we collect such information, and how we use the information.

We seek to collect demographic information on a voluntary basis across a range of characteristics, including racial, ethnic, gender, sexual identity, and disability status.

MacArthur Foundation⁵

Dias eternos

Granja penitenciaria de Izalco, El Salvador. 2021. Ana María Arévalo Gosen

A woman bathes her daughter in the El Salvador's only maternal sector of its prison system. The image reflects the harsh realities faced by incarcerated mothers in raising children behind bars.

Towards a gender-equal global law and justice sector

Achieving gender justice in the law and justice sector demands more than incremental improvements. It requires a fundamental shift in how institutions confront power, accountability, and inclusion. As this chapter shows, progress is possible, but only when organisations commit to transparency, embed equity in workplace culture, and ensure leadership that reflects the diversity of the communities they seek to serve. The path forward

calls for bold action: adopting and publishing robust gender equality, fairness and equity policies, investing in disaggregated data, and putting commitments into practice.

Global 50/50 provides tools, evidence, and guidance to help institutions move beyond rhetoric towards systemic, sustained change. The moment for decisive action is now, and the sector has both the responsibility and the opportunity to lead.

EXPLORE RESOURCES TO HELP YOU TAKE ACTION





Funders in the Global Justice 50/50 sample

- Channel Foundation
- Ford Foundation
- Foundation for International Law for the Environment (FILE)
- Fund for Global Human Rights
- Gates Foundation
- Global Fund for Women (GFW)
- Levi Strauss Foundation
- MacArthur Foundation
- Oak Foundation
- Open Society Foundations (OSF)
- Overbrook Foundation
- Rockefeller Brothers Fund (RBF)
- Skoll Foundation
- The David and Lucile Packard Foundation (Packard Foundation)
- The Pew Charitable Trusts
- Wallace Global Fund (WGF)
- WellSpring Philanthropic Fund (WPF)
- William & Flora Hewlett Foundation (Hewlett Foundation)
- Yield Giving



Endnotes

- 1 Wallace Global Fund. (nd). Mission. <https://wgf.org/mission/>
- 2 Ford Foundation. (2021). Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Annual Report 2021. <https://www.fordfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/dei-2021-report-with-memo-ff-website-07062021-double-single-spread-final.pdf>
- 3 Gates Foundation. (nd). Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. <https://www.gatesfoundation.org/about/diversity-equity-inclusion>
- 4 Rockefeller Brothers Fund. (nd). Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. <https://www.rbf.org/about/diversity-equity-inclusion>
- 5 MacArthur Foundation. (nd). Why We Collect Demographic Data and How It Is Used. <https://www.macfound.org/about/our-policies/demographic-data>