Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in the Communications Sector

TED ROGERS SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

DiVERSITY INSTITUTE

Partners

The Diversity Institute undertakes research on diversity in the workplace to improve practices in organizations. We work with organizations to develop customized strategies, programming and resources to promote new, interdisciplinary knowledge and practice about diversity with respect to gender, race/ethnicity, Indigenous Peoples, abilities and sexual orientation. Using an ecological model of change, our action-oriented, evidence-based approach drives social innovation across sectors.

The authors wish to acknowledge and credit the essential role that the financial contribution and support of the Government of Ontario, Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade and the Ontario Research Fund - Research Excellence program has played in the creation of this report.

Funder

Authors

Sharon Broughton
Senior research associate, Diversity Institute

Katlynn Sverko
Director, research – special projects, Diversity Institute

Wendy Cukier
Founder and academic director, Diversity Institute

Contributors

Dike Ike
Research associate, Diversity Institute

Contents

Executive Summary

While federally regulated sectors subject to the Legislated Employment Equity Program tend to have better track records on the representation of women, racialized people, Indigenous Peoples and persons with disabilities when compared to other sectors, there is more work to be done. Research shows significant gaps in representation in leadership roles, access to opportunities, and feelings of inclusion and fairness. Not all equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) strategies are effective. Research has helped us understand what works for whom and using a systems approach helps identify the levers that can enable change.

Through the Workplace Opportunities: Removing Barriers to Equity (WORBE) project, the Diversity Institute, in collaboration with our corporate partners from the financial services and banking, communications and transportation sectors, aims to:

- Increase the representation of women, racialized persons, Indigenous Peoples and persons with disabilities in eight to 10 federally regulated organizations;

- Increase the understanding among stakeholders of industry-specific barriers to EDI and effective practices to accelerate progress on EDI;

- Develop and adopt new inclusion tools and guides tailored to industry-specific needs.

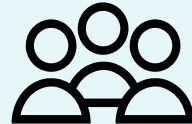As a starting point, this report provides a snapshot of the status of EDI within the communications sector through an analysis of representation data and it examines promising EDI practices within the sector.

In assessing the representation of women, racialized people, Indigenous Peoples and persons with disabilities, a key benchmark with which to gauge the sector's performance is labour market

availability (LMA). An employer's workforce is considered representative of the labour market if the representation of each designated group is equal to the group's LMA. Labour market availability data can lag current representation data somewhat, but remains a useful benchmark to evaluate workplace representation against. An analysis of the 2021 Employment Equity Sector data and 2021 Employment Equity Form 2 company reporting finds:

> The communications sector performs well with respect to the overall representation of racialized persons at 25.8%, exceeding the Canadian LMA and sector LMA of 21.3% and 24.8%, respectively.

> Among middle managers, the representation of racialized persons is 26.2%, signaling a strong pipeline for senior management; however, inequality is greatest at the top, with racialized persons representing only 11.8% among sector senior managers.

> Persons with disabilities represent 5% across all sector employees versus the Canadian LMA of 9.1% and sector LMA of 11%; representation declines further at middle and senior management levels.

> The recruitment, retention and promotion of Indigenous Peoples should also be a priority for the sector, at all job levels. The representation of Indigenous Peoples is 2.2%, compared with a 4% Canadian LMA and 2.5% sector LMA.

> Across the sector, women's representation is 35.6%, which is significantly lower than their 2021 Canadian LMA and sector LMA, at 48.2% and 44.1%, respectively.

> Women's representation varies by occupation and job level. They represent 74.3% of administrative and senior clerical personnel, 37.7% of middle managers and 29.5% of senior management.

> If we consider the four largest media and telecommunications companies, Rogers, Telus, Bell Media and Shaw, women's representation ranges from 31.2% to 38.6% overall and from 22.8% to 31.6% at the senior management level.

> Recent TSX and Canada Business Corporations Act reporting has shown a positive trend at the executive level. In 2023, women represented 34% of communications sector executives and 32% of board directors; a 10-point increase was realized between 2022 to 2023.

*In the **four largest media and telecommunications companies**, Rogers, Telus, Bell Media and Shaw, **women's representation ranges from 31.2% to 38.6%** overall and from **22.8% to 31.6% at the senior management level***.

Overall, the recruitment and retention of women, Indigenous Peoples and persons with disabilities appears to be a challenge for the sector and representation is below LMA. The sector and the four largest media and telecommunications firms have been relatively more successful at advancing women and racialized persons into middle management positions; however, the low representation of women overall indicates a pipeline issue. Acknowledging that recruitment challenges may exist creates the need for targeted programs and community engagement to expand the pool and ensure Indigenous Peoples, women and persons with disabilities participate in this key sector. It is also important to prioritize mentorship, development and promotional opportunities for diverse candidates.

A desk review leveraging the Diversity Institute's Diversity Assessment Tool (DAT) framework was employed to identify promising practices. This framework examines (1) Leadership, Governance and Strategy with respect to representation and the tone from the top; (2) Human Resources Practices and the degree to which they incorporate EDI considerations; (3) Culture and Values as evidenced through the design of policies and corporate values that create an organizational culture in which women and diverse employees feel like they belong; (4) EDI Measurement and Tracking activities and the evaluation of organizational efforts to advance inclusion; (5) Diversity Across the Value Chain, including procurement, product design, communications and customer service; and (6) Outreach and Expanding the Pool to create new opportunities for equity-deserving groups in the sector. Examples of promising practices include:

> Rogers Communications has signaled its commitment to EDI by registering for the Government of Canada's 50 — 30 Challenge. By becoming a signatory to the 50 — 30 Challenge, Rogers has publicly committed to achieving 50% gender diversity and 30% representation of other equity-deserving groups on its board and/or executive management team. The organization maintains a skills matrix based on the industry and functional experience required across the board. Within its board policy, Rogers details the need for its board nominating committee to incorporate gender diversity as an important consideration.

> CBC committed that one-half of new hires for senior leadership and executive positions would be Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities or racialized persons and that it would double the retention and promotion rates for these groups. As of 2021, it had achieved 43.8% of new hires from these groups (double its previous track record) and a 31.5% promotion rate (versus 21.5% before making this commitment). Supporting its efforts, CBC's recruitment policy requires diverse selection committees and candidate shortlists with 50% of candidates from the three targeted groups.

> Bell Canada Enterprises offers a leading mental health package, with unlimited coverage for mental health providers and team members and leadership training on mental health.

> The Telus Work Styles program is flexible and enables team members to work when and where they will be most effective.

> Bell reports its annual progress on corporate responsibility initiatives, including EDI initiatives and metrics.

> Telus ensures its products and services are accessible and trains staff to engage with individuals of all abilities. It offers many free or low-cost products and services to increase tech and health access for persons with disabilities, in-need families, low-income seniors and/or youth aging out of care. Examples include its Internet for Good, Mobility for Good, Tech for Good and Health for Good products and services.

> Telus and Rogers participate in the TRIEC mentoring partnership, wherein their employees mentor newcomer professionals across the country. This program develops leadership and cross-cultural understanding among employees, increasing their awareness and support for newcomer talent. The program aids newcomers in their search for commensurate employment by expanding their networks and understanding of Canadian workplaces and industries.

> Rogers is a founding partner of the Cybersecurity Catalyst with Toronto Metropolitan University. The program aims to build a diverse and inclusive cybersecurity workforce. Fifty-four percent of graduates identify as women or another gender, and 85% of 2022 admissions identified as members of a racialized group.

The communications sector has made progress in advancing EDI; however, gaps remain. Across the sector, women, Indigenous Peoples and persons with disabilities are under-represented and racialized persons remain under-represented within management. The continuing significant opportunity and imperative for the sector to attract and engage the talents of women, Indigenous Peoples and persons with disabilities at all job levels, confirms that recruitment challenges exist. It is also notable that individual firms have demonstrated strengths in some areas and our desk research revealed many promising practices across the sector. As we collaborate with our WORBE partners to advance EDI, we look forward to the opportunity to explore new solutions and generate results.

Introduction

While federally regulated sectors subject to the Legislated Employment Equity Program tend to have better track records on the representation of women, racialized people, Indigenous Peoples and persons with disabilities compared to other sectors, there is more work to be done. Research shows significant gaps, in representation in leadership roles, access to opportunities and feelings of inclusion and fairness. Additionally, not all equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) strategies are effective. Research has helped us understand what works for whom and utilizing a systems approach helps identify the levers that can enable change.

Through the Workplace Opportunities: Removing Barriers to Equity (WORBE) project, the Diversity Institute (DI), in collaboration with our corporate partners from the financial services and banking, communications and transportation sectors, aims to:

> Increase the representation of women, racialized persons, Indigenous Peoples and persons with disabilities among senior and middle managers, professional roles and administrative and clerical personnel in eight to 10 federally regulated organizations.

> Increase stakeholder understanding of industry-specific barriers to diversity and inclusion and effective practices to accelerate progress on EDI.

> Develop and adapt new inclusion tools and guides tailored to industry-specific needs.

Federally regulated organizations have a significant impact on economic development and equity that extends beyond their direct workforce. Communications companies shape not only access to infrastructure (and the digital divide) but also stereotypes and assumptions through broadcast and online content. For this reason, it is essential to view EDI within a larger societal context.

This report begins by providing a snapshot of the status of EDI within the communications sector through an analysis of representation data. Next, we identify promising practices with attention to this broader perspective on EDI, from examining organizational leadership to the products and services communications sector organizations offer to their advertising and efforts to engage communities.

The State of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in the Communications Sector

The communications sector includes radio and television broadcasting and telecommunications services. This analysis in this report is based on the 2021 employment equity sector data[1] and 2021 Employment Equity Form 2 company reporting.[2] Large companies dominate the sector. In 2021, the communications sector employed 117,123 individuals, representing 16% of the federally regulated private-sector workforce.[3] Figures 1, 2 and 3 detail the representation of each of the four designated groups across the sector and within the workforce of the largest media and telecommunications firms. A key benchmark to gauge the sector's performance is labour market availability (LMA).

An employer's workforce is considered representative of the labour market if the representation of each designated group is equal to the group's LMA.[4] Employment and Social Development Canada calculates the Canadian and sector LMA statistic, leveraging Statistics Canada 2016 Census data and the 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability. It is worth noting that LMA is a lagging indicator that is likely to understate actual LMA. For example, Canada welcomed over 1.3 million newcomers between 2016 and 2021, with immigrants as a percentage of the population increasing by 1.1%[5] and racialized individuals representing 83% of recent newcomers.[6] The rate of growth in the Indigenous population in Canada has far exceeded that of Canada's non-Indigenous population.[7] A 2016 statistic will thus understate the representation of these cohorts. Despite these limitations, LMA is the most common point of comparison and our analysis of the state of EDI in the communications sector leverages LMA.

Women's representation

> Across the sector, women make up 35.6% of the total and 35.3% of people in full-time permanent employment. This is significantly lower than the 2021 Canadian LMA of women and the sector LMA at 48.2% and 44.1%, respectively.

> Women's representation varies by occupation and job level, representing 74.3% of administrative and senior clerical personnel and 29.5% of senior management.

> If we consider the four largest media and telecommunications companies, Rogers, Telus, Bell Media and Shaw, women's representation ranges from 31.2% to

38.6% overall, and the gap is greater at the senior management level. In 2021, Rogers and Shaw reported women's representation at 31.6% of senior management, with Bell at 31% and Telus at 22.8%.

> Senior management representation matters as it is the precursor to executive and board of director positions. In 2023, women represented 34% of communications sector executives and 32% of board directors[8] based on TSX and Canada Business Corporations Act (CBCA) disclosures. This result placed the sector among the top three in women's representation among executives and board directors, realizing a 10-point increase between 2022 and 2023.[9]

> Representation within middle management is also important, signaling the pipeline for senior leadership. Here, the sector performs relatively better, with women representing 37.7% of sector middle managers, and 38.3% and 37.9% of middle managers at Rogers and Bell, respectively.

> There are opportunities for improvement when we consider the intersection of gender and racialization. Among women in professional and middle management roles at the four largest communications companies, on average 36% and 27%, respectively, are racialized. However, 19% of women in senior management at these companies are racialized, indicating the need to address barriers to the advancement of racialized women into senior management.

> Overall, the recruitment and retention of women appears to be a major challenge for the sector and representation is below availability. The sector and the four largest media and telecommunications firms have been relatively more successful at advancing women into middle management positions; however, the low representation of women overall indicates a pipeline issue. There continue to be barriers to entry for women and barriers to organizations leveraging the business benefits of having a gender-diverse workforce.

> While the sector will affect women's under-representation in engineering and computer science, it is also important to note that many enter information and communications technology (ICT) jobs through alternative pathways, as the focus shifts from creating technology to adopting it. Further, with AI's impact on coding (e.g., low-code, no-code), a growing number of sector jobs do not require computer science or engineering.

> A critical theme in recent DI research is how definitions of expertise can not only limit the participation of women and diverse individuals, but also limit innovation. DI research has exposed organizational preferences toward the builders of technology. This narrow definition of expertise has a negative impact on women's representation and ability to influence decisions and advance, given that women are underrepresented in science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields. It would be important for the sector to interrogate definitions of expertise and how such definitions can bias job and organizational design in ways that perpetuate gender inequality.

Representation of racialized persons

> The sector performs better with respect to the overall representation of racialized persons at 25.8% overall and 25.4% among full-time permanent employees, exceeding the Canadian LMA and sector LMA of 21.3% AND 24.8%, respectively.

> Among middle managers, the representation of racialized persons is 26.2%, signaling a strong pipeline for senior management. However, once again, we see that inequality is greatest at the top, with the representation of racialized persons at 11.8% among senior managers.

> At Canada's largest telecommunications and media companies, racialized persons represent 21.3% to 35.8% of middle management; however, there is a steep decline in representation at the top at 12.9% to19% among senior managers.

Representation of persons with disabilities

> The recruitment and retention of persons with disabilities appears to be another challenge for the sector and representation is below the Canadian LMA.

> Persons with disabilities represent 5% across all sector employees versus the Canadian LMA of 9.1% and the sector LMA of 11%.

> At the management level, representation declines, with persons with disabilities representing 3.8% and 2.3% of middle management and senior management, respectively.
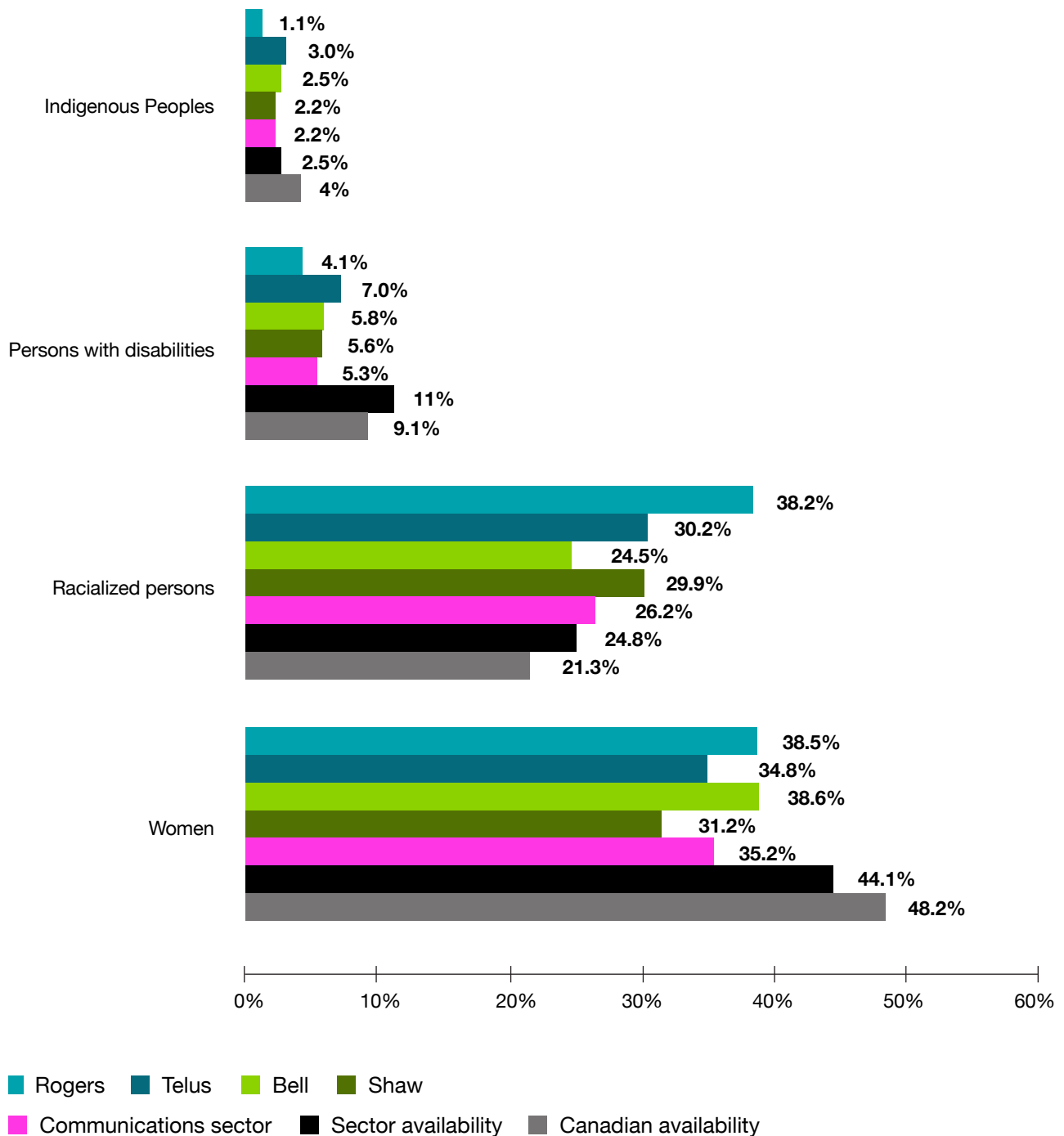
> Among the four companies, Telus has been most effective at attracting persons with disabilities to its organization. This group represents 7% of its employee base; however, this drops to 4.4% within middle management and 0% within senior management.

Representation of Indigenous Peoples

> The recruitment, retention and promotion of Indigenous Peoples should also be a priority, at all job levels. Across all occupations in the sector, Indigenous Peoples are represented at 2.2%, compared with 4% of the Canadian LMA and 2.5% of the sector LMA.

> Indigenous Peoples across the sector are represented at 1.5% in middle management and 1.9% among senior managers.

> If we look only at the largest communications firms as a group, representation reflects the gaps in the sector overall.

> Acknowledging that recruitment challenges may exist, as with women and persons with disabilities, there is a need for targeted programs and community engagement to expand the pool and ensure Indigenous Peoples participate in this key sector.
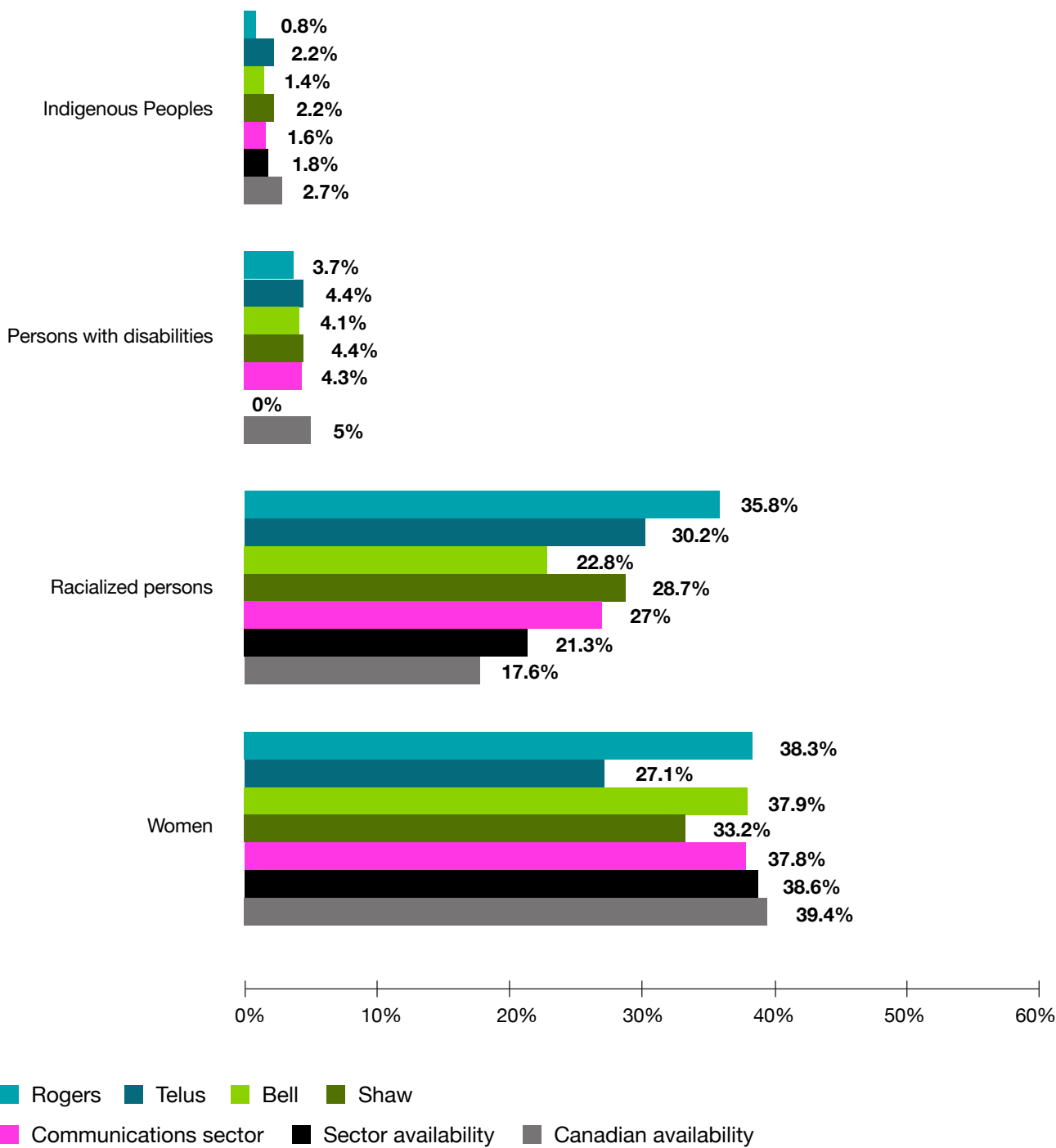
FIGURE 1
Representation of equity-deserving groups among all employees, communications sector (2021)

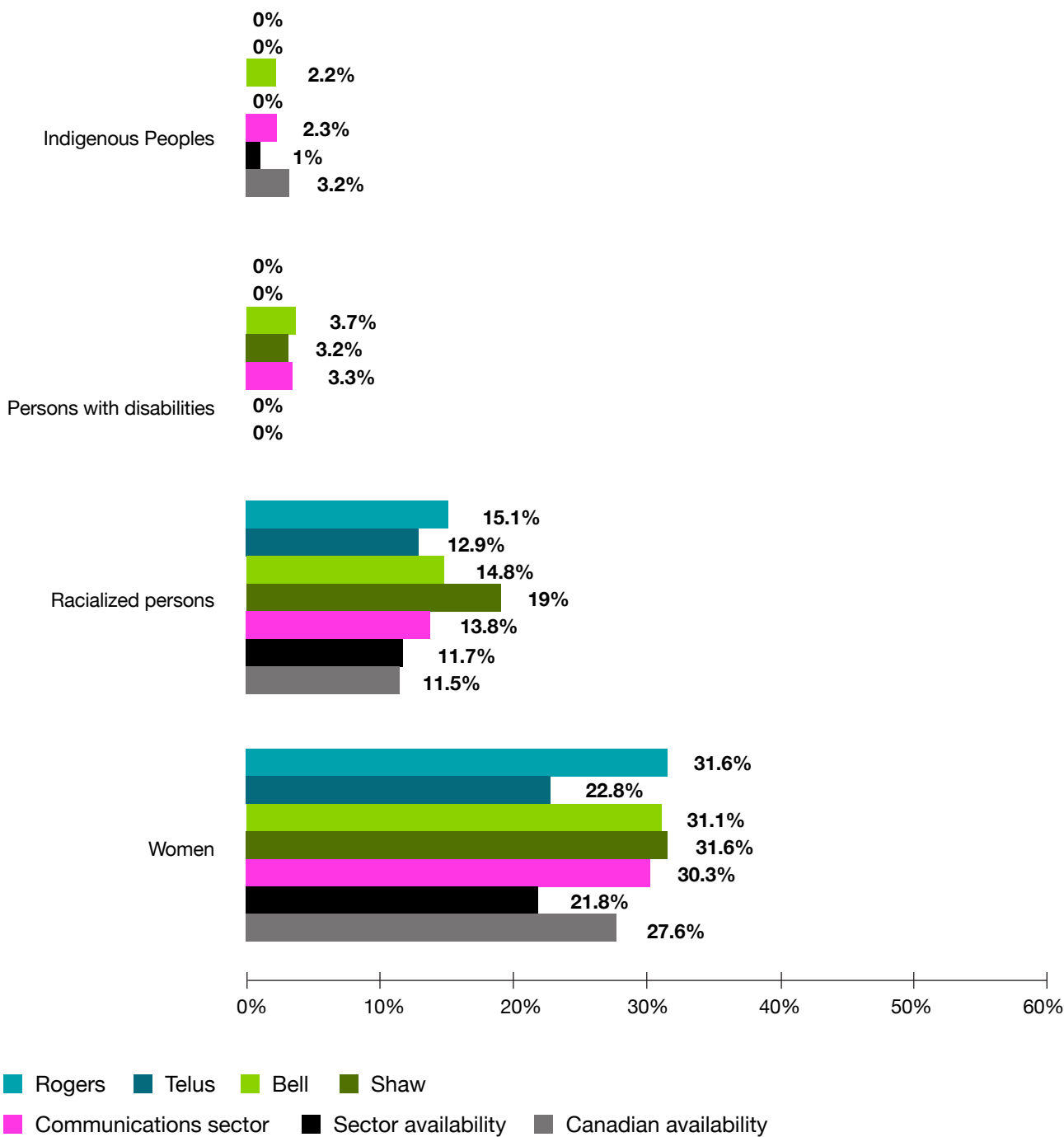
Source: Government of Canada (2021).

FIGURE 2

Representation of equity-deserving groups among middle managers, communications sector (2021)

Indigenous Peoples
- 0.8%
- 2.2%
- 1.4%
- 2.2%
- 1.6%
- 1.8%
- 2.7%

Persons with disabilities
- 3.7%
- 4.4%
- 4.1%
- 4.4%
- 4.3%
- 0%
- 5%

Racialized persons
- 35.8%
- 30.2%
- 22.8%
- 28.7%
- 27%
- 21.3%
- 17.6%

Women
- 38.3%
- 27.1%
- 37.9%
- 33.2%
- 37.8%
- 38.6%
- 39.4%

Legend: Rogers · Telus · Bell · Shaw · Communications sector · Sector availability · Canadian availability

Source: Government of Canada (2021).

FIGURE 3

Representation of equity-deserving groups among senior managers, communications sector (2021)

Indigenous Peoples
- Rogers: 0%
- Telus: 0%
- Bell: 2.2%
- Shaw: 0%
- Communications sector: 2.3%
- Sector availability: 1%
- Canadian availability: 3.2%

Persons with disabilities
- Rogers: 0%
- Telus: 0%
- Bell: 3.7%
- Shaw: 3.2%
- Communications sector: 3.3%
- Sector availability: 0%
- Canadian availability: 0%

Racialized persons
- Rogers: 15.1%
- Telus: 12.9%
- Bell: 14.8%
- Shaw: 19%
- Communications sector: 13.8%
- Sector availability: 11.7%
- Canadian availability: 11.5%

Women
- Rogers: 31.6%
- Telus: 22.8%
- Bell: 31.1%
- Shaw: 31.6%
- Communications sector: 30.3%
- Sector availability: 21.8%
- Canadian availability: 27.6%

Legend: Rogers, Telus, Bell, Shaw, Communications sector, Sector availability, Canadian availability

Source: Government of Canada (2021).

Wage gaps in the communications sector

While the Employment Equity Program data does not assess the level of pay equity for comparable jobs, it does highlight the substantive wage disparities within the sector. Barriers to representation at management and executive levels and under-representation within the job categories attracting higher remuneration (e.g., ICT and engineering roles) may, among other factors, contribute to this gap.

FIGURE 4

Mean hourly wage gaps for equity-deserving groups, communications sector

Earnings per $1.00 earned by non equity-deserving groups

Source: Government of Canada (2021).

Promising Organizational Practices

A desk review leveraging the Diversity Institute's Diversity Assessment Tool (DAT) framework was employed to identify promising practices. This review involved a web search of companies operating in Canada's communications sector. Publicly available documents were leveraged, allowing us to explore various organizations to identify the processes, policies and actions employed to advance EDI within the sector and beyond.

The analysis focuses on six aspects of organizations based on a comprehensive framework derived from international research and standards, including recently developed Canadian guidelines:[10, 11, 12, 13]

1. **Governance, Leadership and Strategy:** This includes measures to set targets and improve the representation of equity-deserving groups in leadership and governance. It also involves applying an EDI lens to the processes of leadership, strategy development and setting the "tone at the top."

2. **Human Resources:** Actions at every step of the HR process, including job design, recruitment, selection, training and development, management and employee engagement.

3. **Values and Culture:** The phrase "culture eats strategy" underscores that an organization's culture is often the most critical and challenging aspect of change. It is crucial to implement initiatives that ensure policies and procedures reflect and reinforce EDI and embed them into the organization's core values and work environment.

4. **Measurement and Tracking of EDI:** "What gets measured gets done." This includes a series of benchmarks mapped to each dimension of the corporation's EDI strategy to set targets, track progress and promote transparency and accountability.

5. **Diversity across the Value Chain:** This evaluates whether the organization has embedded EDI across its core systems, and whether an organizations applies an EDI lens to their end-to-end processes, including procurement, research and development, product and service design, marketing and sales and service.

6. **Outreach and Expanding the Pool:** This refers to how an organization engages and shapes its ecosystem through government relations, philanthropic and community partnerships and helps use its influence to advance EDI more broadly.

7. **Outreach and expanding the pool:** This refers to how an organization uses its influence to advance EDI more broadly. This includes how it engages and shapes its ecosystem through government relations, as well as philanthropic and community partnership.

Governance, leadership and strategy

Women, racialized people, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities and 2SLGBTQ+ communities are underrepresented on boards and senior leadership positions across corporate Canada. Barriers to the full and equal participation of women and equity-deserving groups may include bias and stereotypes around what makes a "good" leader, a lack of awareness and understanding of disparities, exclusionary recruitment and promotion processes and inadequate access to mentorship and professional development, among others. Diversity in leadership not only signals who belongs; it is also linked to better organizational performance. Studies show that diverse organizations outperform less diverse ones, leading to increased innovation, revenue generation, better governance and improved decision-making by applying a variety of perspectives.[14]

Advancing EDI starts with leadership and can be facilitated by practices such as having a skills matrix and a strategy to identify, recruit and nominate diverse Board members and a diverse senior management team (i.e., including women, Indigenous Peoples, persons living with disabilities, racialized people and those identifying as 2SLGBTQ+). Organizations can also signal their commitment to EDI by having an organizational mission, vision or purpose statement and goals tied to diversity and inclusion and by creating a diversity and inclusion committee or a senior leadership role responsible for advancing EDI.

In this regard, several communications sector firms have made progress in demonstrating the priority of EDI from the top. For example:

> Rogers Communications has signaled its commitment to EDI by registering for the Government of Canada's 50 — 30 Challenge. By becoming a signatory to the 50 — 30 Challenge, Rogers has publicly committed to achieving 50% gender diversity and 30% representation of other equity-deserving groups on its board and/or executive management team.[15] The organization maintains a skills matrix based on the industry and functional experience required across the board. Within its board policy, Rogers details the need for its board nominating committee to incorporate gender diversity as an important consideration.[16]

> Rogers has operationalized a five-year Inclusion & Diversity (I&D) plan that includes targets in aggregate and by line of business for representing each equity-deserving group. Leaders at the Director level and above are performance on their EDI scorecard and KPIs.[17] As at Dec. 31, 2022, women's representation was 27% among senior executive officer positions (below the sector average of 34%), 33% among vice-president roles and above and 40% among the Manager to senior director level.[18, 19] Rogers has an Inclusion & Diversity Council that champions EDI strategies and advocates for inclusion and diversity across the organization. It has a Black Leadership Council that

ensures issues of anti-Black racism and bias are addressed and works in partnership with the I&D Council.[20]

> Bell Media has a maximum board tenure limit of 12 years and, in keeping with its board composition and diversity policy, requires that the list of potential Board candidates maintained by the Governance Committee include gender-diverse candidates, racialized persons, Indigenous Peoples and/or persons with disabilities within the pool of candidates considered.

> Corus Entertainment's leadership has communicated the importance of EDI through its Diversity, Equity

Rogers Communications is a signatory to the government of Canada's 50 — 30 Challenge aiming to achieve gender parity and 30% representation of other equity-deserving groups on its board and senior management. To support its talent pipeline it has representation goals for each equity-deserving group within each line of business.

Source: Government of Canada (2024). The 50 — 30 Challenge your diversity advantage.

and Inclusion Mission and Vision and related accountabilities. The CEO and the executive vice president, People & Communications, share responsibility for EDI and an EDI team, including full-time dedicated leadership and staff, responsible for developing and implementing the EDI strategy and working with the lines of business to achieve it.[21]

> All the large sector employers have well-developed website content detailing their EDI programs and progress and signaling their commitment to EDI.

Human resources practices

Equity, diversity and inclusion considerations can be prioritized in practices, including employee recruitment, selection, training, development and promotion. Research shows us that without attention to EDI, bias is often embedded in the job design, hiring and advancement processes.[22] For example, equally qualified applicants with "foreign-sounding" last names were found to be 30% less likely to receive a call for an interview when applying for jobs in the Greater Toronto Area. Job requirements with strict degree requirements can fail to recognize the impact of unequal access, whereas intellect and talent can come through alternative pathways.

The attraction bias is also a well-known issue in selection decisions – leaders tend to give higher rankings to candidates like themselves. This unconscious bias, combined with a lack of diversity at the leadership level, can disadvantage diverse candidates and lead to organizations making the wrong hiring decisions. Canada Post has developed recruitment channels focused on EDI, supported by partnerships with the

Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion, the Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work, the Employment Accessibility Resource Network and others.

An examination of EDI reports and website content within the sector indicates many organizations are sensitive to these factors and have taken steps to mitigate bias and attract diverse candidates. For example:

> Rogers has implemented several initiatives to broaden the talent pipeline and increase leadership diversity. The company requires a 50/50 diverse shortlist for all open roles, the mandatory posting of roles on diverse job boards and all hiring managers and recruiters to complete "inclusive recruitment" training.[23]

> CBC committed that half of new hires for senior leadership and executive positions would be Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities or racialized persons, and that it would double the retention and promotion rates for these groups.[24] As of 2021, it had achieved 43.8% of new hires from these groups (double its previous track record) and a 31.5% promotion rate (versus 21.5% prior to making this commitment).[25] As of 2021, retention continued to be an issue for the organization; however, CBC's disaggregated EDI objectives and tracking should support its ability to advance solutions in this area.

> Bell Media launched an inclusive leadership development program for executives and unconscious bias training for all leaders. The training raises awareness and equips leaders with the tools to disrupt unconscious bias and create an inclusive and accessible workplace.[26]

> Bell has also developed partnerships to expand its sources for attracting diverse talent, such as Indigenous Careers, Indigenous Link and Indigenous Works. The company also worked with BIPOC TV & FILM on HireBIPOC, to increase the hiring of individuals who identify as Black, Indigenous and People of Colour.[27]

> Many organizations have incorporated statements of reasonable accommodation on job postings.

> Having a diverse hiring committee involved in candidate screening, interviewing and selection, using a standardized interview process and the inclusion of case study work assignments, testing (e.g., coding tests) and other work sample evaluations are other practices companies can incorporate to mitigate bias.[28]

Apart from the technical skills required for the job, social-emotional skills and cross-cultural understanding are essential for onboarding and fostering a positive work environment. Formalized development, mentorship and coaching have been proven to have a significant impact on the career outcomes of employees.[29] For example:

> Rogers has an Accelerated Development Program for women that focuses on building a pipeline of women in senior positions. It is a highly targeted sponsorship program that supports women directors with various customized development opportunities. Rogers also offers an organization-wide 1:1 Mentoring Program focusing on equity-deserving groups.[30]

> Bell Canada offers extensive employee learning and development opportunities, including leadership development for

high-potential employees. Women represent about 44% of the program's overall usage. Bell offers programming to prepare women to advance into executive roles (e.g., The Judy Project and the International Women's Forum Fellows Program).[31] Development for all people leaders includes training on mental health and awareness, diversity and inclusion and other related topics.[32]

Organizations must invest in such programs for women and other equity-deserving employees. Incorporating gender and diversity considerations within exit interviews can also support continuous learning and improvement. As mentioned previously, given the low representation of women and diverse candidates in engineering and computer science fields and the privilege of such skills across technically oriented organizations, advancing EDI means interrogating prevailing definitions of expertise. Prioritizing all the skills required for innovation, organizational design and job re-design may support this endeavour.

FIGURE 5

Human resources processes

| Recruitment | Selection | Training, Retention, Promotion | Separation |

Employee Recruitment & Selection

CBC/Radio-Canada's Policy on the hiring process discusses requirements for diversity on the selection committee. Both at the candidate screening and interview stages candidates are scored against requirements. For pay bands 8 and up, the candidate short-list must be composed of 50% individuals who are racialized persons, Indigenous Peoples and/or persons with disabilities.

EDI Training for Leaders

Bell implemented an inclusive leadership development program for executives and middle management, focused on disrupting unconscious bias, creating an inclusive and accessible workplace, and supporting the development and advancement of diverse talent.

Source: CBC (2023) Rules and Procedures on the Hiring Process.
Source: Bell Canada (2022). Supporting diversity, equity and inclusion in our communities.
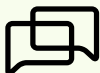
Culture and value

The purposeful design of an organization's policies and values can create a culture where women and diverse people in the workplace feel they belong. This can involve provisions for flexible working arrangements, support for employee resource groups (ERGs), inclusive policies, access to mental health counseling, considering diverse needs when planning social events and building a culture free of discrimination.

Examples of companies' measurement and tracking activities

Flexible Work Policy

The Telus Work Styles program is a flexible work program that enables team members to work when and where they will be most effective.

Mental Health Benefits

Bell Canada Enterprises offers a leading mental health package, with unlimited coverage for mental health providers and team member and leadership training around mental health.

Source: Telus (2024). Enabling flexible work with unified communications.
Source: BCE (2023). 2023 ESG data summary (our people worksheet).

> CBC, for example, has an Equity, Diversity & Inclusion and Prevention of Discrimination Policy, a Health and Safety Policy, a Prevention of Workplace Harassment and Violence Policy and a Code of Conduct.[33] The company has a multi-year accessibility plan[34] and details its commitment to accommodation in its Employment and Workforce Policy.[35]

> To further EDI in the workplace, Bell supports and empowers ERGs, including the Black Professionals at Bell, Pride at Bell and Women at Bell networks. A total of 4,500 members participate in ERGs, and the organization builds awareness, spotlights member accomplishments, and provides learning and networking opportunities.[36]

Equity, diversity and inclusion measurement and tracking

Research supports the development of EDI targets, plans and actions to make them a reality and timelines and ongoing measurement to track organizational progress.[37] These targets and plans can be embedded into each organization's strategic plan and reporting and incorporated into the position responsibilities of those involved in employee selection and promotion. This effort should also focus on leadership development and succession planning. As with any key performance indicator, EDI targets also serve an educational function and provide opportunities to foreground the evidence on why diversity and inclusion is needed. For example:

> Bell reports its annual progress on corporate responsibility initiatives, including EDI initiatives and metrics.[38] Its

annual performance versus its targets for gender representation among board directors and executives, representation of Indigenous Peoples, Black peoples and racialized persons among senior managers and graduate and intern hires and its annual employee engagement survey scores are validated by an external auditor and linked to corporate compensation and executive pay.[39] Bell Canada reports on its pay equity audits and year-over-year progress by job level and segregates its results by gender and representation of Indigenous Peoples, Black people and racialized people.[40]

> CBC / Radio-Canada's 2022-2025 EDI Plan lists its key objectives, activities and outcomes.[41]

EDI Targets, Measurement & Tracking

The Globe and Mail tracks the representation of senior managers, other managers, and individual contributors by gender (men/women), Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities and racialized people and compares this with a baseline representation of the metropolitan area of the City of Toronto.

Source: The Globe and Mail (2022). Diversity Equity & Inclusion Annual Report.

Diversity across the value chain

Bringing an EDI perspective to business processes is critical to connecting an organization's EDI strategy with its corporate strategy. This action acknowledges an organization's larger impact on individuals and society beyond its workforce. For example, marketing communications, television and media can further entrench inequities by reinforcing stereotypes, or they can serve to promote a more inclusive society. Product and service design in the telecommunication space can similarly perpetuate historic inequities with respect to access to technology and opportunities, or organizations can aim to ensure the products they develop reverse systemic bias and advance access for equity-deserving groups. Organizations should consider their procurement processes, research and development, product and service design, and delivery (e.g., accessibility), marketing and communications. Many organizations in the sector are taking this broader perspective to advance EDI. For example:

> Bell's Supplier Diversity Program encourages the inclusion of businesses 51% owned and managed by Indigenous Peoples, racialized persons, women, 2SLGBTQ+ people, veterans and persons with disabilities.[42] The procurement team has corporate memberships with five Canadian supplier diversity certifying organizations (e.g., Canadian Council for Indigenous Business, Women Business Enterprises Canada). Bell sponsors and participates in numerous supplier diversity industry networking events annually. It maintains access to a certified diverse supplier database to build awareness with Bell's buyers.[43]

Examples of companies embedding diversity across the value chain

Diversity Across the Value Cain

CBC's online platforms are designed and developed in consultation with individuals who use assistive technologies. Their team of accessibility specialists are focused on continuous improvement and innovation in accessibility. Employee training is offered around digital and content accessibility.

Supplier Diversity

Cogeco has established a formal supplier diversity program to provide a fair opportunity for diverse suppliers to bid on contracts and to enhance their ability to do so. The program applies to businesses majority owned, managed and operated (51% or more) by women, racialized persons, Indigenous Peoples, members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community, military veterans or persons with disabilities.

Source: CBC (2024). Our Approach to Improving Accessibility.
Source: Cogeco (2024). Supplier Diversity Program.

Further, it tracks its performance and reports quarterly on the program.

> CBC's feedback web page shows that accessibility is considered constantly to improve products at CBC/Radio-Canada.[44]

> CBC's update on its key gender parity measurements for the 2019—2020 broadcast year included an analysis of the number of productions with 50% or more women in key TV production roles (i.e., producer, director, writer, showrunner).[45] This important initiative highlights how representation, or a lack thereof, can shape Canadian news and popular culture—dictating whose stories are told and how diverse individuals are represented. Telus ensures its products and services are accessible and trains staff to engage with individuals of all abilities.[46] It offers many free or low-cost products and services to increase tech and health access for persons with disabilities, in-need families, low-income seniors and/or youth aging out of care. Examples include its Internet for Good, Mobility for Good, Tech for Good and Health for Good products and services.[47]

Outreach and expanding the pool

Outreach and Expanding the Pool is about the organization's role in creating opportunities for equity-deserving groups across society. This dimension examines how organizations build partnerships and work with other stakeholders to advance EDI through philanthropic activities, corporate social responsibility (CSR) or, for example, through partnerships with educational institutions to develop the next generation. To address systemic inequities in the workforce, it is often necessary to take this broader approach. For example, the fact that some groups have historically been disadvantaged or shut out of post-secondary education and corporate Canada has implications for an organization's ability to recruit diverse talent today. Addressing recruitment challenges necessitates engaging with these communities to understand the barriers and working with them to develop a path forward. For the communications sector, this is important with respect to the recruitment, retention and promotion of women, Indigenous Peoples and persons with disabilities at all job levels, and with respect to racialized persons in leadership roles. Examples of the sector's efforts in this area include:

> Rogers and Telus are signatories to the BlackNorth CEO pledge, with their commitment to address anti-Black systemic racism by creating opportunities for members of the Black community. The two organizations have made various commitments to increase the representation of Black employees and leaders and engage with the community. As part of its pledge, TELUS has committed to giving 3.5% of its

Executive and Board positions to Black leaders by 2025.[48] Rogers' focus on removing internal systemic barriers has included actions such as unconscious and anti-bias training and implementing programs to advance Black persons within their business.[49]

> Telus and Rogers participate in the TRIEC mentoring partnership, wherein their employees mentor newcomer professionals across the country. This program develops leadership and cross-cultural understanding among employees, increasing their awareness and support for newcomer talent.
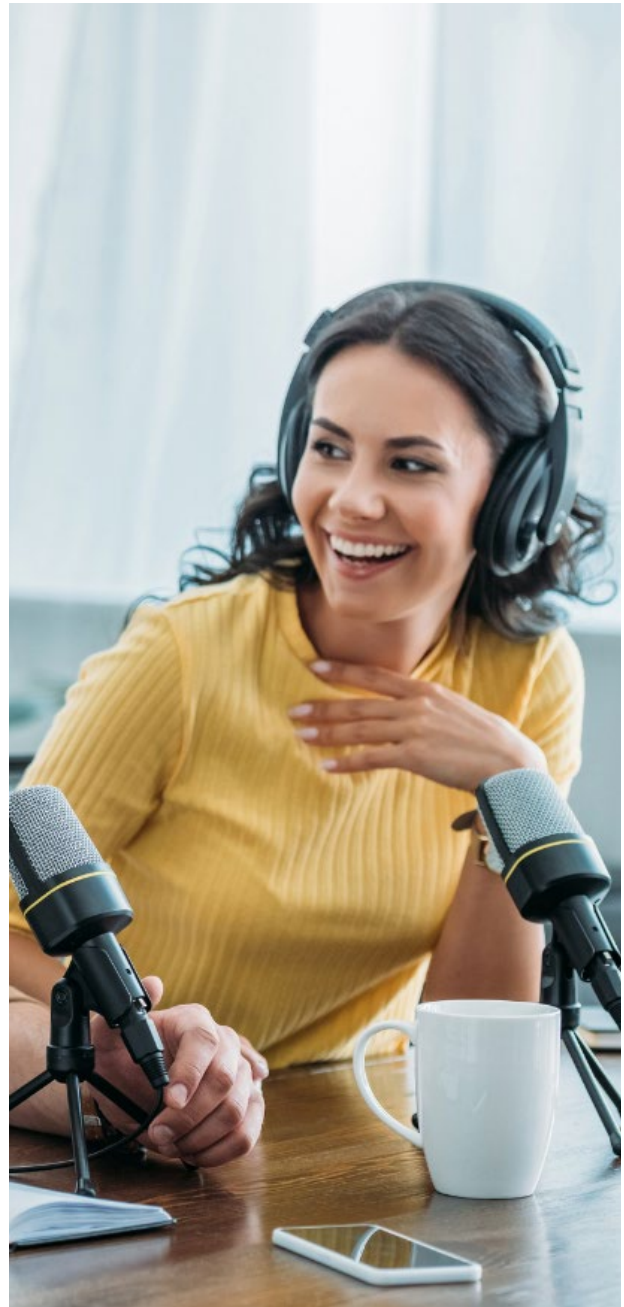
Outreach and Expanding the Pool

Bell partners with several organizations to help improve recruitment, inclusion, and engagement of Indigenous People, individuals who identify as Black and People of Colour. E.g., Bell's partnership with Indigenous Works to improve the inclusion of Indigenous peoples in the Canadian economy. They also offer internships to BIPOC* students.

*BIPOC stands for Black, Indigenous and People of Colour, and is the language the company uses to describe the equity-deserving groups of Black and racialized people, and Indigenous Peoples.

Source: BCE (2022). Supporting Diversity Equity & Inclusion in Our Communities.

The program aids newcomers in their search for commensurate employment by expanding their networks and understanding of Canadian workplaces and industries.[50]

> Rogers is a founding partner of the Cybersecurity Catalyst with Toronto Metropolitan University.[51] The program aims to build a diverse and inclusive cybersecurity workforce. Fifty-four per cent of graduates identify as women or another gender and 85% of 2022 admissions identified as members of a racialized group.[52] Bell launched a $5-million Bell Let's Talk Diversity fund to support the mental health and well-being of Canada's Indigenous, Black and racialized communities.[53]

> Rogers has committed $10 million over the next five years in pro-bono advertising and creative services to charities and small businesses supporting equity-deserving communities.[54] Its ALL-IN initiative details its pledge to embed diversity inclusion across its sports and media business and programming.[55]

Conclusion

The communications sector has made progress in advancing EDI; however, many gaps remain. Across the sector, women, Indigenous Peoples and persons with disabilities remain under-represented across sector organizations, and racialized persons remain under-represented within management. Regarding recruitment challenges, it is worth acknowledging that there continues to be a significant opportunity, and it is imperative for the sector to attract and engage the talents of women, Indigenous Peoples, Black people, racialized people and persons with disabilities at all job levels. It is also notable that individual firms have demonstrated strengths in some areas—for example, Rogers' success in recruiting and promoting racialized persons into middle management. Further, based on TSX and CBCA disclosures, the sector is among the top three with respect to the representation of women among executives and board directors, realizing a 10-point increase between 2022 and 2023.

Our research revealed many promising practices across the sector, to address inequities within each organization's workforce, to drive change and build capacity across society. Several questions remain open as we collaborate with our WORBE partners to advance EDI. Are the results and scale of existing programs commensurate with the scale of the issue? Are organizational biases toward the builders of technology limiting EDI progress and the opportunity to drive business innovation? Is there an opportunity to rethink jobs and organizational design? How might we think differently and engage equity-deserving communities to accelerate the talent pipeline? What sector-specific barriers must we understand to drive change? We look forward to this collaboration and the opportunity to explore new solutions to generate results.
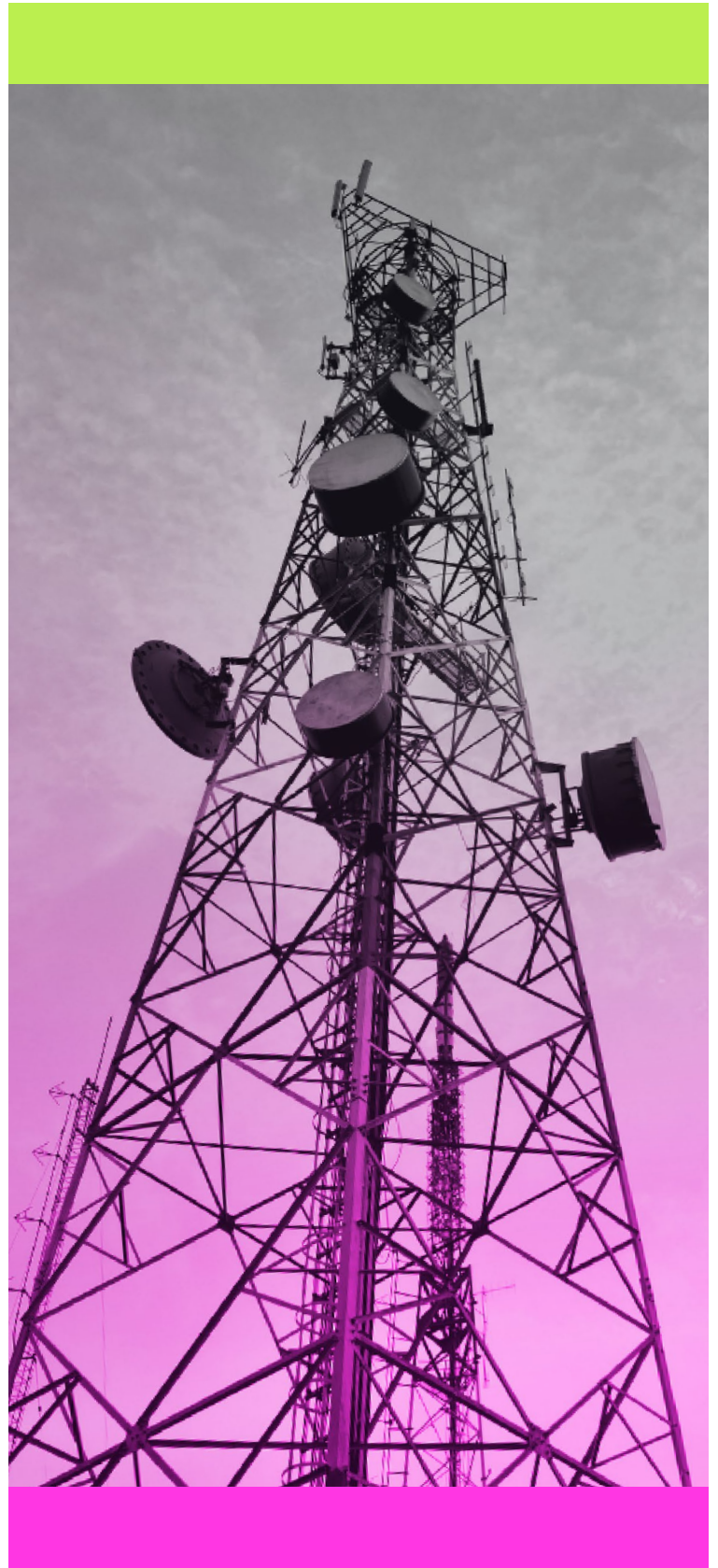
References

1   Government of Canada. (2024). *Equi'Vision: An Employment Equity Tool (2021 reporting year)*. https://equivision.services.gc.ca/?report=employer

2   Government of Canada. (2024). *Search for an employer, Form 2, Occupational groups: Permanent full-time / national.* https://equity.esdc.gc.ca/sgiemt-weims/pub/s.2.1rch@-eng.jsp?x=1&

3   ESDC. (2022). *Employment equity act annual report EEAA report 2022.* https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/portfolio/labour/programs/employment-equity/reports/2022-annual/overview.html

4   ESDC. (2022). *Employment equity act annual report EEAA report 2022.* https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/portfolio/labour/programs/employment-equity/reports/2022-annual/overview.html

5   Statistics Canada. (2021). *Focus on geography series, 2021 census of population Canada.* https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/as-sa/fogs-spg/page.cfm?lang=E&topic=9&dguid=2021A000011124

6   Statistics Canada. (2022). *The Canadian census: A rich portrait of the country's religious and ethnocultural diversity.* https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/221026/dq221026b-eng.htm

7   Statistics Canada. (2022). *Indigenous population continues to grow and is much younger than the non-Indigenous population, although the pace of growth has slowed.* https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220921/dq220921a-eng.htm

8   MacDougall, A., Valley, J.M., Armour, J., & Zigler, A. (2023). *2023 Diversity disclosure practices. Osler.* https://www.osler.com/en/resources/governance/2023/report-2023-diversity-disclosure-practices-diversity-and-leadership-at-canadian-public-companies

9   MacDougall, A., Valley, J.M., Armour, J., & Zigler, A. (2023). *2023 Diversity disclosure practices*. Osler. https://www.osler.com/en/resources/governance/2023/report-2023-diversity-disclosure-practices-diversity-and-leadership-at-canadian-public-companies

10 UN Women. (2022). *WEPs Transparency and Accountability Framework. Women's Empowerment Principles.* https://www.weps.org/resource/weps-transparency-and-accountability-framework

11 British Standards Institution. (2023). *PAS 1948:2023.* https://knowledge.bsigroup.com/products/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-in-the-workplace-code-of-practice?version=standard

12 DeMattia, A. (2023). *A mature approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion delivers real results. Enterprise Strategy Group by TechTarget & AWS.* https://aws.amazon.com/executive-insights/content/a-mature-approach-to-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-delivers-real-results/

13 Diversity Institute. (2021). *Publicly available specification (PAS): The 50 – 30 challenge.* https://diconsulting.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Di-PAS_EN_vf.pdf

14 Catalyst. (2020). *Why diversity and inclusion matter (Quick take).* https://www.catalyst.org/research/why-diversity-and-inclusion-matter/

15 Government of Canada. (2024). The 50 — 30 Challenge your diversity advantage. https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/

ised/en/50-30-challenge-your-diversity-advantage

16 Rogers. (2024). *Articles & corporate governance documents.* https://investors.rogers.com/corporate-governance/governance-materials/

17 Rogers. (2021). *Diversity report 2021.* https://about.rogers.com/wp-content/uploads/RMS_Cultural_Diversity_Report_2022_May3_Full.pdf

18 Rogers. (2024). *Articles & corporate governance documents.* https://investors.rogers.com/corporate-governance/governance-materials/

19 Rogers. (2022). *We all bring something different to Rogers, and that's what makes us stronger.* https://about.rogers.com/wp-content/uploads/2022-Rogers-ID-external-EN-final-A.pdf

20 Rogers. (2022). *Rogers Sports & Media 2021 Diversity Report.* https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/BCASTING/ann_rep/Rogers_2021_CD_Report.pdf

21 Corus. (2024). *Diversity, equity & inclusion: Mission and vision.* https://www.corusent.com/sustainability/diversity-and-inclusion/dei-at-corus/

22 Diversity Institute. (2020). *Employment gaps and underemployment for racialized groups and immigrants in Canada: Current findings and future directions.* https://www.ryerson.ca/diversity/reports/employment-gaps-and-underemployment-for-racialized-groups-and-immigrants-in-canada/

23 Rogers. (2022). *We all bring something different to Rogers, and that's what makes us stronger.* https://about.rogers.com/wp-content/uploads/2022-Rogers-ID-external-EN-final-A.pdf

24 CBC. (2021). *Diversity and inclusion initiatives: Where we stand- June 2021 Update.* https://cbc.radio-canada.ca/en/impact-and-accountability/equity-diversity-and-inclusion/edi-archives/update-june2021

25 CBC. (2021). *Diversity and inclusion initiatives: Where we stand- June 2021 Update.* https://cbc.radio-canada.ca/en/impact-and-accountability/equity-diversity-and-inclusion/edi-archives/update-june2021

26 Bell Canada. (2022). *Supporting diversity, equity and inclusion in our communities.* https://bce.ca/responsibility/key-documents/2021-supporting-diversity-in-our-communities.pdf#page=12

27 Bell Canada. (2022). *Supporting diversity, equity and inclusion in our communities.* https://bce.ca/responsibility/key-documents/2021-supporting-diversity-in-our-communities.pdf#page=12

28 Manroop, L. Boekhorst, J. and Harrison, J. (2013). The influence of cross-cultural differences on job interview selection decisions. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 24(18)*, 3512–3533. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2013.777675

29 SAP. (2022). Leveraging Technology to Maximize the Power of Mentors. https://www.sap.com/documents/2018/12/7a5a6907-747d-0010-87a3-c30de2ffd8ff.html

30 Rogers. (2022). *Connecting Canadians. 2021 Environment, Social and Governance Report.* https://about.rogers.com/wp-content/uploads/ESG_Report_2021.pdf

31 Bell Canada. (2022). *Engagement, learning and development.* https://bce.ca/responsibility/key-documents/2022-engagement-learning-development.pdf

32 Bell Canada. (2022). *Engagement, learning and development.* https://bce.ca/responsibility/key-documents/2022-engagement-learning-development.pdf

33 CBC. (2024). *Corporate policies: Human resources.* https://cbc.radio-canada.ca/en/vision/governance/corporate-policies?group=2

34 CBC. (2023). *Breaking barriers: Accessibility plan 2023-2025.* https://strategies.cbcrc.ca/media/tomlfmd4/breaking_barriers_2023-2025_accessibility_plan.pdf; https://strategies.cbcrc.ca/en/accessibility-plan/

35 CBC. (2021). *Change to HUM-2 employment and workforce policy.*

36 Bell Canada. (2022). *Supporting diversity, equity and inclusion in our communities.* https://bce.ca/responsibility/key-documents/2021-supporting-diversity-in-our-communities.pdf#page=12

37 Cukier, W., Gagnon, S., & Latif, R. (2021). Changing the narrative: Shaping legislation to advance diversity on boards in Canada. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion an International Journal, 40(7)*, 770-800.

---

38 Bell Canada. (2023). *Our corporate responsibility approach.* https://www.bce.ca/responsibility/key-documents/2022-our-corporate-responsibility-approach.pdf#page=20

39 Bell Canada. (2023). *Our corporate responsibility approach.* https://www.bce.ca/responsibility/key-documents/2022-our-corporate-responsibility-approach.pdf#page=20

40 Bell Canada. (2023). *2023 ESG data summary.* https://www.bce.ca/responsibility/our-capitals/our-people

41 CBC. (2022). *Equity, diversity and inclusion plan 2022-2025.* https://site-cbc.radio-canada.ca/documents/impact-and-accountability/diversity-inclusion/plan-2021-2023/edi_national_action_plan_2022-2025.pdf

42 Bell Canada. (2023). *Integrated annual report 2023.* https://www.bce.ca/suppliers#scrollable-content-2

43 Bell Canada. (2023). *Integrated annual report 2023.* https://www.bce.ca/suppliers#scrollable-content-2

44 CBC. (2024). *Accessibility feedback*. https://www.cbc.ca/accessibility/accessibility-feedback-1.5131151

45 CBC. (2019). *Gender parity measurement 2019-2020*. https://cbc.radio-canada.ca/en/impact-and-accountability/equity-diversity-and-inclusion/gender-parity-measurement/gender-parity-measurement-2019-2020

46 Telus. (2024). *Accessibility for everyone.* https://www.telus.com/en/about/accessibility/accessibility-at-telus?INTCMP=tcom_about_accessibility_tile_to_accessibility-at-telus

47 Telus. (2024). *Caring for communities across Canada.* https://www.telus.com/en/social-impact/connecting-canada/connecting-for-good-programs#tech-for-good?INTCMP=tcom_about_accessibility_at_telus_tile_to_tech-for-good

48 BlackNorth. (2021). *Telus-BlackNorth.* https://blacknorth.ca/blacknorth-initiative-congratulates-telus-for-setting-and-surpassing-ambitious-board-diversity-targets-for-gender-visible-minority-and-indigenous-representation/

49 Rogers. (2019). *Cultural diversity report.* https://about.rogers.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/26934_RMS_Cultural_Diversity_Report_Feb19.pdf

50 TRIEC. (2023). *Telus is changing newcomer lives through national mentoring partnership. https://triec.ca/telus-is-changing-newcomer-lives-through-national-mentoring-partnership/*; TRIEC (2023). *"Giving back where we work and live is an important part of who we are at Rogers".* https://triec.ca/giving-back-where-we-work-and-live-is-an-important-part-of-who-we-are-at-rogers/

51 Rogers. (2021). *Rogers cybersecurity catalyst.* https://about.rogers.com/cyber-security/rogers-cybersecure-catalyst/, https://cybersecurecatalyst.ca/impact/

52 Rogers. (2021). *Rogers cybersecurity catalyst.* https://cybersecurecatalyst.ca/impact/

53 Bell Canada. (2022). *Corporate governance practices.* https://www.bce.ca/investors/AGM-2022/2022-bce-corporate-governance-practices.pdf#page=14

54 Rogers. (2020). *Diversity report*. https://about.rogers.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/26934_RMS_Cultural_Diversity_Report_Feb19.pdf

55 Rogers. (2020). *Diversity report*. https://about.rogers.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/26934_RMS_Cultural_Diversity_Report_Feb19.pdf

TED ROGERS SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

DiVERSITY INSTITUTE