

PLEDGE FOR RACIAL & ETHNIC EQUITY

The **Coalition for Racial and Ethnic Equity in Development (CREED)**, represented by leaders of United States-based organizations working in international development and humanitarian assistance, pledges to build **racial and ethnic equity (REE)**. We commit to addressing REE comprehensively within our own organizations' policies, systems, and culture; and working to instill REE in international development.

We recognize the biases, discrimination, and harm caused by structural racism, and how that perpetuates inequities, exclusion, and hurt. As leaders, we take responsibility for building equity and racial justice, and promoting racial and ethnic diversity and inclusion in our organizations. We will strengthen our organizational ethos, behaviors, policies, and systems to bolster REE and build greater effectiveness. We will also support other ongoing efforts in this sector to build equity and decolonize international development with the goal of strengthening local ownership and leadership.

We acknowledge the intersectionality of social categorizations and that race and ethnicity do not exist independently of other identity markers, which often create a complex convergence of discrimination and oppression. Our actions to strengthen REE will be intersectional and inclusive of different identities and overlapping systems of inequality.

We unequivocally state that advancing racial and ethnic diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging within our own organizations and in our work is an inextricable part of our broad mission to build a more equitable world for all. To accomplish this goal, we must build awareness of and address systemic racism, institutional discrimination, western white centeredness, and white privilege in the international development and humanitarian assistance sector writ large. The specific purpose of this pledge is to document our commitment, action, and accountability for achieving REE in international development and humanitarian assistance, and specifically within our own organizations. In particular, this pledge places an explicit focus on building REE in our US offices as we must start with where the power is traditionally held and what is within the span of our control (i.e., policies, systems, and the culture within our organizations). This pledge serves as an initial step in our global commitment to building REE.

The pledge encompasses the following five components that can significantly contribute to building REE in our organizations, create evidence-based learning, and transform the sector.

Component 1: Policy and Systems – Commitment and accountability to REE in US-based organizational policies and systems.

Component 2: People, Leadership, and Organizational Structure – Racial and ethnic diversity across the organization regarding roles, responsibilities, and compensation parity.

Component 3: Organizational Culture – All staff feel respected and valued, and experience physical and psychological safety in the workplace.

Component 4: Accountability – Demonstrated implementation of REE commitments, measurement of progress in concrete ways, and regular reporting both internal and externally.

Component 5: Communications and Transparency – Leaders speak credibly and openly about REE goals, progress, and outcomes internally and externally.

Next, we present the framework for each component; define a core standard; and share the corresponding values, implementation roadmap, application, anticipated outcomes, and measures.¹ By signing this pledge, we endorse its ideals and commit to working toward achieving its standards. As leaders, we will determine the prioritization, cadence, customization, and implementation of REE activities that correspond to our respective organization's needs. Our organizations will apply this framework to reinforce REE to its maximum advantage and strengthen the achievement of our operational and programmatic goals.

Annex One provides a glossary of terms used in this pledge to build a common understanding.

Annex Two presents Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and their corresponding answers to build a greater understanding about the pledge and its operationalization.

Together, the signatories of this pledge form the CREED Learning Community and commit to sharing our achievements, strategies, and challenges on the online CREED Learning Hub to continue to advance our mutual efforts.

Ultimately, we hold our organizations responsible and accountable for building REE within our own organizations and in the international development and humanitarian assistance sector.

¹ A brief description of each element follows:

Standard – Defines the principle that this component aspires to achieve.

Roadmap – Explains and/or offers practical examples of how to implement the standard.

Application – Indicates where the standard should be applied for highest impact.

Values – Outlines the intrinsic values to be inculcated and achieved by implementing the standard.

Outcomes – Describes the key results and expected impact for implementing the standard.

Measures – Identifies the indicators for measuring progress, output, and impact in applying the standard.

COMPONENT 1: POLICY AND SYSTEMS

Standard

Commitment and accountability to REE in US-based organizational policies and systems.

Roadmap

- Criteria for defining REE policy and system integration
 - REE is explicitly addressed and applied (beyond diversity, equity, and inclusion [DEI] policies) to the organizations' policies and systems
 - REE is developed in the context of a broader organizational commitment to DEI with regard for intersectionality with other identity markers
 - Policy and systems go beyond compliance with the law and drives organizational change to integrate REE as a measurable organizational value
 - Signed annual commitment to the REE policy by leadership
- Examples of where the REE policy and systems commitment can be instituted: board and leadership representation, strategy, policy, ethics, and human resources (recruitment and retention), procurement, partnering, and internal and external communications
- Examples of implementation strategies
 - Annual recommitment to REE policy by the leadership
 - Annual audit of application of REE to organizational policies and systems
- Examples of reporting strategies
 - Internal: sharing results of pulse surveys, CEO updates, etc.
 - External: annual report outlines REE results against key organizational policies and practices, including board and leadership composition, human resources, procurement, partnering, and communications

Application

Integration of the REE policy across existing and new organizational policies and systems

Values

Accountability in fulfilling commitments, and transparency in policy and execution internally and externally

Outcomes

- Commitment for REE expressed as an organizational policy
- Application of the commitment for REE across all organizational policies and systems with corresponding accountability

Illustrative Measures

- REE policy published
- Flow-down of REE principles into organizational policies and systems, including key performance indicators for REE for all staff
- Internal reporting and public disclosure on REE policy impact
- Whistleblower mechanism in place within our respective organizations and in the international development and humanitarian assistance sector

COMPONENT 2: PEOPLE, LEADERSHIP, AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Standard

Racial and ethnic diversity across the organization regarding roles, responsibilities, and compensation parity.

Roadmap

- Enhance diversity at the leadership, senior management, and board levels to include consideration of racial and ethnic composition, underserved communities, gender, and socioeconomic background
- Ensure that processes and criteria are inclusive and do not create roadblocks to a diverse candidate pool by re-examining the following:
 - criteria for all staff and board positions (including those that require technical education versus those that may not; consider prerequisites such as education, international living, and work experience)
 - written job announcements
 - recruitment methods of staff and board members to ensure a pipeline of racially and ethnically diverse talent across roles (e.g., recruit from lesser-known/smaller organizations; community colleges; historically Black colleges and universities; and institutions serving Asian American, Hispanic, Native American, and other minority communities)
 - interviewing, selection, and onboarding processes
 - succession planning for key staff and board positions
- Develop a career progression plan for staff to ensure a pipeline of racially and ethnically diverse talent across roles that includes sponsorship for and mentorship to succeed in leadership tracks
- Eliminate salary gaps for all staff working in the same or similar roles, with a specific eye to ensuring that race and ethnicity play no role in establishing wages (e.g., build on the model of how the sector is working to close the gender gap)
- Increase transparency around diversity composition and compensation
- Review for possible “founder effects” in the organization, and consider moving senior/long-tenure staff to positions as mentors or sponsors
- Increase Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) individuals working at the chief of party or project director level
- Engage composition of BIPOC staff in organizational management and program leadership roles
- Include adherence to REE values in performance evaluations including as key performance indicators

Application

Recruitment, application, pipeline, retention, advancement, succession planning, and mentorship

Values

Inclusion, representation, fairness in opportunities for voice, roles, and responsibilities, advancement, and equity.

Outcomes

- Enhanced decision-making, productivity, morale, and retention through:
 - development of a racially and ethnically diverse leadership and governance pipeline
 - leadership, senior management, and board becoming more diverse and inclusive over a specified time bound period
 - diversity in points of view and approach leading to a more vibrant organizational culture

Illustrative Measures

- Setting, meeting, and exceeding goals for board, leadership, and staff diversity and across all functions
- Measuring and reporting on diversity metrics, including assessing change in those metrics and identifying areas of improvement over time
- Procedures/policies in place to:
 - enhance REE diversity in recruitment, interviewing, and selection
 - increase successful hiring, retention, and career progression of diverse personnel with consideration to racial and ethnic composition
 - assess and commit to compensation equity over a time-bound period
 - holding organization accountable for adherence to REE values and goals

COMPONENT 3: ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Standard

All staff feel respected and valued, and experience physical and psychological safety in the workplace.

Roadmap

- Clearly state REE principles as part of the organization's core values and make those values a lived value for all staff by translating them through defined behaviors, practices, and leadership competencies
- Increase leadership's capacity and responsibility for promoting and reinforcing an inclusive work culture
- Create safe spaces for all people to acknowledge the costs and impacts of stigma, bias, discrimination, harassment, microaggressions, and racism; and to engage in honest conversation, learning, and healing
- Raise awareness and seek to change mindsets through ongoing internal capacity building for staff to be sensitized to the issues and increase REE competencies through trainings and staff resource groups
- Develop meaningful action plans that are informed by staff experiences and perceptions, include self-reflection, and establish measures of progress
- Employees demonstrate respect for each other and value for each other's contributions and opinions
- Demonstrate through feedback mechanisms, performance management processes, and decision-making opportunities how staff can be heard and have their voices valued

Application

- Apply at all levels of the organizations' structures, including leadership, human resources, operations, management, business development, technical, and other divisions
- Incorporate all staff, including project- or country-based staff where applicable, in all organizational REE efforts
- Board members and senior management must demonstrate commitment continuously through actions as well as internal and external messaging

Values

Safety, respect, belonging, value, and organizational need for diversity.

Outcomes

- Increased equity and inclusion in organizational culture improve morale and productivity over time
- Organizational culture to impact international development and humanitarian assistance sector culture over time

Illustrative Measures

- Appropriate resources, including funding and paid staff time, dedicated to implementing REE initiatives are transparently tracked and reported
- Data from ongoing pulse surveys are collected, analyzed, and incorporated into action plans, with data disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, and other social factors.
- Review of exit surveys, with objective reviewers, and clear action plans developed to address needed areas of improvement
- Board, leadership, and senior management participation in REE capacity-building activities and feedback processes

COMPONENT 4: ACCOUNTABILITY

Standard

Demonstrated implementation of REE commitments, measurement of progress in concrete ways, and regular reporting both internally and externally.

Roadmap

- Include key performance indicator for REE as part of the standard organizational performance and appraisal systems for all staff
- Establish additional key performance indicator requirements for REE for leadership and managers
- Set organizational metrics for REE and inclusion (beyond diversity), including regular review of metrics, and proactively use the metrics to address identified REE-related challenges
- Report on and share REE metrics internally and externally
- Commit and utilize funds for REE initiatives, including for level of effort for staff and consultants

Application

- Create, implement, and demonstrate REE progress to staff, board, partners, and other stakeholders through feedback loops and reporting mechanisms
- Public accountability to uphold its commitments

Values

Integrity, transparency, diversity of perspectives, and action-oriented and evidence-based progress

Outcomes

- Agility and adaptiveness to organizational and staff needs
- BIPOC staff retention
- Increased morale, staff retention and advancement, and trust in the organization
- Enhanced cultural sensitivity and better outcomes in programs and delivery
- External public recognition of the organization's commitment to REE
- Organizational effectiveness

Illustrative Measures

- Key performance indicators are analyzed and reported at both organizational and staff levels
- Appropriate resources, including funding and paid staff time, dedicated to implementing REE initiatives are transparently tracked and reported
- Systemized ongoing data gathering and reporting process instituted internally and externally and progress on REE metrics regularly shared with internal and external audiences
- REE metrics achieved across the organization

COMPONENT 5: COMMUNICATIONS & TRANSPARENCY

Standard

Leaders speak credibly and openly about REE goals, progress, and outcomes internally and externally.

Roadmap

-
- Build REE communications as a leadership responsibility
 - Create feedback loops with staff and externally with other organizations with intentional focus on racial and ethnic communities based on inclusive, equitable, and intersectional principles
 - Build cultural sensitivity and fluency to understand and address power dynamics, ethnocentric behavior, bias, microaggressions, harassment, discrimination, and intersectionality
 - Identify, pursue, and enact opportunities, across the organization, to increase diversity of thought and respect for all voices

Application

-
- Leadership takes responsibility for setting, communicating, and modeling the standards, behaviors, and tone, both internally and externally
 - All staff act as ambassadors for company culture and communications on REE across the organization, including country and project offices
 - Pledge signatory organizations participate in the CREED Learning Hub to promote adoption of REE practices and support a sector-wide shift toward greater REE in international development and humanitarian assistance

Values

Respect, inclusion, sensitivity, accountability, and dedication

Outcomes

-
- Build REE both within organizations and the sector by contributing to and participating in the CREED Learning Hub and other related communities of practice
 - Organizational cultures that consistently and unambiguously reinforce REE
 - Sector-wide collaborative and participatory effort towards REE is mobilized

Illustrative Measures

-
- Conduct surveys to analyze:
 - Staff's, leadership's, and board's awareness and understanding of REE goals and progress
 - Whether and how feedback loops are working, and actively address gaps
 - Staff are aware of whistleblower and anti-retaliation policies, and demonstrate knowledge of how to access these policies
 - Create feedback loop mechanisms such as all-staff meetings or small focus groups with a set time for questions and answers
 - Post REE goals and progress on commitments externally

ANNEX ONE: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The CREED glossary defines terms used in this pledge and selected additional terms related to the pledge to build mutual understanding and a common base from which to operationalize the pledge. It is not intended to be a comprehensive list of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)/racial and ethnic equity (REE) terms. The definitions are based on how these terms are used in the context of DEI/REE in the United States at the time of drafting the pledge.

BIAS

Bias is a prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way that's considered unfair. Biases may be held by an individual, group, or institution and can have negative or positive consequences.

- **Conscious or explicit bias** is when individuals are aware of their prejudices and attitudes toward certain groups. Positive or negative preferences for a particular group are explicit biases. Overt racism, discriminatory behavior, and racist comments are examples of explicit biases.
- **Unconscious or implicit biases** are social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside their own conscious awareness. People can hold unconscious beliefs about various social and identity groups, and these biases stem from the tendency to organize social worlds through categorizing those groups.

Unconscious bias is far more prevalent than conscious bias and is often incompatible with one's conscious values. Certain scenarios can activate unconscious attitudes and beliefs, and individuals may be unaware that biases, rather than facts, are driving their decision-making.^{2,3}

BIPOC

The acronym BIPOC refers to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.

People of Color (POC) is an umbrella term that refers to all people who are not white.

BIPOC adds recognition of Black people and those who identify as African Americans, as well as Indigenous people, including Native Americans. This term is intended to recognize and acknowledge the experiences and relationship to white supremacy for all POC, or non-white people, within the context of the United States.^{4,5}

The shift in terminology from POC to BIPOC is important for two reasons. First, the term BIPOC centers the experiences and identities of Black and Indigenous People, rather than defining a group based on their relationship to whiteness. Second, POC is a broad umbrella term that fails to capture the separate struggles and experiences of people with a range of racial and ethnic backgrounds, so the inclusion of Black and Indigenous attempts to expand recognition of this diversity. We acknowledge the limits of capturing all experiences of diverse people using one term.

² UCSF Office of Diversity and Outreach. (n.d.). Unconscious bias. <https://diversity.ucsf.edu/resources/unconscious-bias>

³ US Department of Justice Community Relations Service. (n.d.). Understanding bias: A resource guide. <https://www.justice.gov/file/1437326/download> <https://www.justice.gov/crs/file/836431/download>

⁴ The BIPOC Project. (2016). *The BIPOC project: A black, indigenous, & people of color movement*. <https://www.thebipocproject.org/>

⁵ Clarke, C. (2020, July 2). BIPOC: What does it mean and where does it come from?" *CBS News*. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/bipoc-meaning-where-does-it-come-from-2020-04-02/>

DECOLONIZING INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The international development and humanitarian assistance sector has begun to reckon with the colonial, racial, social, cultural, political, and economic dynamics, history, language, and frameworks embedded in its institutions, processes, and power structures.

The process of decolonizing international development and humanitarian assistance includes reflecting and “interrogating” humanitarian aid and development through the lenses of colonization, systemic racism, and socioeconomic interdependencies to develop new processes, practices, and systems that recenter the power structures of development and humanitarian work.⁶

The practice of decolonizing international development and humanitarian assistance includes dismantling racist organizational and communications practices, acknowledging and understanding the colonial histories in contexts where development work is conducted, and valuing and centering the knowledge and expertise of local partners and experts.^{7,8}

DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination is the unjust or prejudicial treatment of individuals or groups based on characteristics such as race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex and gender (including gender identity/expression [see “Gender”]), age, marital and parental status (including pregnancy), disability, sexual orientation, or genetic information.⁹ Discrimination puts burdens, obligations, or disadvantages on some individuals or groups that are not put on others and/or denies or limits their access to resources, opportunities, and advantages.

Discrimination can take various forms, such as the following:

- **Direct discrimination** is when an explicit distinction is made between groups of people that results in individuals from some groups being less able than others to exercise their rights.
- **Indirect discrimination** is when a law, policy, or practice is presented in neutral terms, with no explicit distinctions, but disproportionately disadvantages a specific group or groups.
- **Intersectional discrimination** is when several forms of discrimination combine to leave a particular group or groups at an even greater disadvantage.¹⁰
- **Institutionalized discrimination** refers to the unjust and discriminatory mistreatment of an individual or group by society and its institutions as a whole through unequal intentional or unintentional bias or selection as opposed to individuals making a conscious choice to discriminate. This type of discrimination stems from systemic stereotypical beliefs (such as racist beliefs) that are held by the majority of people living in a society where stereotypes and discrimination are the norm. Such

⁶ Kertman, M. (n.d.). Do what I say, not what I do: Decolonizing language in international development. Annotations Blog, Journal of Public and International Affairs. <https://jpia.princeton.edu/news/do-what-i-say-not-what-i-do-decolonizing-language-international-development>

⁷ Trialogue. (2020, October 14). *Decolonising international development*. <https://trialogue.co.za/decolonising-international-development/#:~:text=Decolonising%20international%20development%20is%20anti-racism%20work%20and%20means,of%20the%20countries%20that%20you%20are%20working%20in>.

⁸ Cheney, C. (2020, January 6). INGOs can help dismantle development’s ‘white gaze,’ PopWorks Africa founder says. *Devex*. <https://www.devex.com/news/ingos-can-help-dismantle-development-s-white-gaze-popworks-africa-founder-says-96237>

⁹ US Department of the Interior. (n.d.). What are discrimination, harassment, harassing conduct, and retaliation? Equal opportunity and workplace conduct. <https://www.doi.gov/employees/anti-harassment/definitions>

¹⁰ Amnesty International. (n.d.). Discrimination. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/discrimination/>

discrimination is typically codified into the operating procedures, policies, laws, or objectives of such a society's institutions.¹¹

DIVERSITY

Diversity is about recognizing and valuing individual and group differences across various visible and invisible dimensions. These dimensions include race, sex and gender, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, age, and physical ability. They also include personal life, educational, and work experiences; geographic and socioeconomic roots; thinking and communication styles; cultural knowledge; language abilities; and religious or spiritual perspectives.¹²

In international development and humanitarian assistance, diversity includes ensuring that all staff, both in the US and country offices, are free from discrimination, and that our engagement and programming respects and integrates the principles of diversity.

EQUALITY

Equality is the state of balanced power relations that gives equal rights, responsibilities, opportunities, and decision-making authority to all people. It occurs when no group is routinely privileged or prioritized over another, and all people are recognized, respected, and valued for their capacities and potential as individuals and members of society.¹³

EQUITY

While diversity refers to recognizing and valuing individual differences, equity is about creating fair access, opportunity, and advancement for all without bias.¹⁴ Equity is the fair treatment of all people according to their respective needs and the historic constructs and constraints associated with particular groups of people. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different by group but equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations, and opportunities. To ensure fairness, strategies and measures may be necessary to compensate for the historical and social disadvantages that prevent people from otherwise operating equally in society.¹⁵

ETHNICITY

Ethnicity is a socially constructed concept that categorizes people according to common sociocultural characteristics and identities. Specific characteristics associated with ethnicity include ancestry, culture, customs and traditions, history, language, nation of origin, and religious and tribal affiliations.

¹¹ Institutionalized discrimination. (n.d.). Wikipedia. Retrieved September 10, 2021, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Institutionalized_discrimination#:~:text=Institutionalized%20discrimination.%20Institutionalized%20discrimination%20refers%20to%20the%20unjust,to%20individuals%20making%20a%20conscious%20choice%20to%20discriminate

¹² Adapted from Mercy Corps' Gender Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion Strategy (2020-2023), Glossary of Terms.

¹³ Adapted from ACIDI/VOCA Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Policy (2020) Glossary of Terms and Mercy Corps' Gender Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion Strategy (2020-2023) Glossary of Terms.

¹⁴ Ideal. (n.d.). What diversity, equity and inclusion really mean. <https://ideal.com/diversity-equity-inclusion/>

¹⁵ Adapted from ACIDI/VOCA Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Policy (2020) Glossary of Terms and Mercy Corps' Gender Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion Strategy (2020-2023) Glossary of Terms.

GENDER^{16,17}

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles and expectations of each *sex* (see below) within a given society. Although gender roles vary across contexts, gender is nearly always linked to power within societies—almost always unequally. Understanding gender and gender dynamics (including power imbalances) is a crucial component of development programming, as transforming gender norms is frequently critical to facilitating equality.

Gender is *not* a synonym for sex, and a person's *gender identity* and *gender expression* do not always align with their sex. Gender is also not limited to binary terms (i.e. man and woman, boy and girl), and it can change over time.

- **Sex** or **biological sex** or **sex assigned at birth** is the classification of a person as male, female, or intersex, as determined at birth, usually based on the appearance of external anatomy, although it is a reflection of a combination of characteristics, including chromosomes, hormones, reproductive organs, and secondary sex characteristics.
- **Gender identity** refers to a person's internal sense of their gender, which may or may not align with their sex and which is not necessarily externally visible.
- **Gender expression** refers to the ways a person manifests their gender—including their name, pronouns, clothing, hair style, behaviors, voice, and body characteristics—which a society identifies as feminine, masculine, or a combination (i.e., androgynous).

HARASSMENT

Harassment is a form of employment discrimination. Legally, harassment is unwelcome conduct that is based on race, color, religion, sex (including sexual orientation, gender identity, or pregnancy), national origin, older age (beginning at age 40), disability, or genetic information (including family medical history). "Harassment becomes unlawful when (i) enduring the offensive conduct becomes a condition of continued employment or (ii) the conduct is severe or pervasive enough to create a work environment that a reasonable person would consider intimidating, hostile, or abusive. Offensive conduct may include, but is not limited to, offensive jokes, slurs, epithets or name calling, physical assaults or threats, intimidation, ridicule or mockery, insults or put-downs, offensive objects or pictures, and interference with work performance."¹⁸

INCLUSION

Inclusion refers to how diversity is leveraged to create a fair, equitable, healthy, and high-performing organization or community where all individuals are respected and feel engaged and motivated and where their contributions toward meeting organizational and societal goals are valued.¹⁹

¹⁶ Agarwal, A., & Golwalkar, R. (2021). EngenderHealth language guide for gender, sex, and sexuality. <https://www.engenderhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Gender-Sex-and-Sexuality-Language-Guide-English.pdf>

¹⁷ EngenderHealth. (2021). Gender, youth, and social inclusion (GYSI) analysis framework and toolkit. <https://www.engenderhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/GYSI-Analysis-Framework-and-Toolkit.pdf>

¹⁸ U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. (n.d.). Harassment. Retrieved September 9, 2021, from <https://www.eeoc.gov/harassment>

¹⁹ O'Mara, J., & Richter, A. (2014). *Global diversity and inclusion benchmarks: Standards for organizations around the World*. http://www.omaraassoc.com/pdf/GDIB_2014_Standard_A4_Version.pdf

Social inclusion is the process of improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of people discriminated against based on their identity to take part in society.²⁰ Participation and respect are key elements of inclusion and are pathways to REE, but inclusion alone is not equity.

INDIGENOUS

Indigenous describes any group of people native to a specific region. It is estimated that there are more than 370 million indigenous people spread across 70 countries worldwide who practice unique traditions and retain social, cultural, economic, and political characteristics that are distinct from those of the dominant societies in which they live. There is vast diversity among indigenous peoples, so the United Nations recommends identifying rather than defining indigenous peoples using criteria such as the following:²¹

- “Self-identification as indigenous peoples at the individual level and accepted by the community as their member.
- Historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies
- Strong link to territories and surrounding natural resources
- Distinct social, economic or political systems
- Distinct language, culture and beliefs
- Form non-dominant groups of society
- Resolve to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities.”

INTERSECTIONALITY

Intersectionality, a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw more than 30 years ago, is defined as “the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups.”²² Recognizing intersectionality is important for understanding how individual and group economic, political, and social identities compound one another and affect power structures, including power imbalances, resulting in different experiences of privilege or marginality. Examples of social categories that may intersect in this manner include age, class, caste, disability, ethnicity, gender, geographic location, migration status, physical appearance, race, religion, sex, sexuality, and sexual orientation.²³

MICROAGGRESSIONS

Microaggressions are everyday actions and behaviors that harm historically excluded groups. A microaggression is a subtle behavior—verbal or non-verbal, conscious, or unconscious—directed at a member of a marginalized group that has a derogatory, harmful effect. The perpetrator of a microaggression may or may not be aware of the harmful effects of their behavior. While microaggressions are sometimes conscious and intentional, on many occasions, microaggressions may

²⁰ World Bank. (2013). *Inclusion matters: The foundation for shared prosperity*.

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/16195/9781464800108.pdf>

²¹ United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. (n.d.). Factsheet.

https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/5session_factsheet1.pdf

²² Columbia Law School. (2017, June 8). Kimberlé Crenshaw on intersectionality, more than two decades later.

<https://www.law.columbia.edu/news/archive/kimberle-crenshaw-intersectionality-more-two-decades-later>

²³ Merriam-Webster (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/intersectionality>) and the additional explanation builds upon guidance from EngenderHealth’s Gender, Youth, and Social Inclusion (GYSI) Analysis and Framework Toolkit (<https://www.engenderhealth.org/pubs/gender-equity/>).

reflect the perpetrator's implicit biases about marginalized groups. Whether intentional or not, researchers have found that microaggressions negatively affect their recipients.²⁴

PARITY

The state of being equal, especially in relation to placement, position, responsibility, and pay.²⁵ Parity is a quantitative indicator of equity in an organization.

PRIVILEGE

Privilege includes advantages, benefits, entitlements, and opportunities afforded to certain individuals or groups and not to others.

Those with privilege may be unaware that they hold privilege and be resistant to acknowledging it or the power that supports it. Further, a person may experience advantages for one social characteristic, such as race, while concurrently experiencing disadvantages for another social characteristic, such as gender or economic status (see “Intersectionality”).

- ***Social privileges*** are linked to social characteristics or memberships in particular groups related to age, appearance, class, caste, disability, ethnicity, gender, migration status, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. Social privileges are often associated with characteristics and memberships that are static and unearned (such as those previously listed), but in some cases, they may be alterable (e.g., educational attainment, wealth status). Social privileges often favor a majority group (for example, cisgender, heterosexual, white men) who act as powerholders and can disadvantage minority group members.
- ***White privilege*** describes the societal advantages that white people have over BIPOC people. The term white privilege was first developed by Peggy McIntosh in 1988 in her paper “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” where she described white privilege as the unspoken advantage that members of the dominant culture have over other people.²⁶ White privilege extends to white people having rights and structural and social advantages that other racial and ethnic groups do not, with white being seen as “normal” or the default state.²⁷

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

Psychological safety is the belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with regard to one's ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes. At work, it is a shared belief held by members of a team that no one on the team will embarrass, reject, or punish a member for speaking up. It means that people

²⁴ Hopper, E. (2019, July 3). What is a microaggression? Everyday insults with harmful effects. ThoughtCo. Retrieved September 10, 2021, from <https://www.thoughtco.com/microaggression-definition-examples-4171853>

²⁵ Cambridge English Dictionary. (n.d.). Parity. Retrieved September 11, 2021, from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/parity?q=PARITY>

²⁶ Cuncic, A. (2020, August 25). “What is wWhite pPrivilege?”, *Very Well Mind*. Retrieved, August 25, 2020 (accessed January 12, 2022, from) <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-white-privilege-5070460>

²⁷ Racial Equity Tools. (n.d.). *System of wWhite sSupremacy and wWhite Privilege.*, Racial Equity Tools, Retrieved January 12, 2022, from <https://www.raciaequitytools.org/resources/fundamentals/core-concepts/system-of-white-supremacy-and-white-privilege> (accessed January 12, 2022)

feel comfortable being themselves and can be authentically themselves in the work environment without fear of repercussions. Psychological safety is grounded in feelings of trust and belonging.^{28, 29}

RACE

Race can be defined as a competition to determine an outcome. Race is also a socially constructed concept that categorizes people based on characteristics of their physical appearance (such as skin color) and ancestry. Race is *not* a biological or genetic categorization.

RACIAL AND ETHNIC EQUITY

Racial and ethnic equity (REE) builds equality, parity, and justice specifically for BIPOC individuals. In the United States, it addresses power dynamics between white and BIPOC people and builds equity to ensure fair access, opportunity, and advancement for BIPOC people on systemic, institutional, interpersonal, and individual levels, without bias and discrimination.

RACIAL JUSTICE

Racial justice is the systematic fair treatment of people of all races that results in equitable opportunities and outcomes for everyone. The goal of racial justice is for all people to achieve their full potential in life, regardless of race, ethnicity, or the community in which they live.³⁰

RACISM

Racism is the belief that humans are divided into racial categories defined by perceived physical characteristics (see “Race”); that these physical traits are linked to behavior, intellect, morality, and personality; and that certain racial groups are inherently superior to others.

Racial superiority and associated racial hierarchies have been reinforced throughout history through slavery, colonization, and discrimination. Racism manifests at different levels:

- **Individual racism**, also known as **interpersonal racism** and **personally mediated racism**, is what people most frequently associate with the broader term of racism. Individual racism reflects the attitudes, beliefs, prejudices, actions, and behaviors of an individual—conscious and unconscious, active and passive—that perpetuate inequality and inequities. Individual racism ranges from microaggressions, such as the telling of a racist joke, to violence enacted against a person based on race.
- **Institutional racism** occurs *within* institutions (e.g., a school, a business, a government or policymaking institution, a professional association, a religious institution) and is demonstrated in biased policies and practices that chronically favor or discriminate against select racial groups and routinely result in increased disparities among racial groups. For instance, a school or workplace policy that prohibits select hairstyles commonly associated with Black students or staff (see also “Institutional Discrimination”) is a type of institutional racism.

²⁸ Center for Creative Leadership. (n.d.). What is psychological safety at work? <https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/what-is-psychological-safety-at-work/>

²⁹ McKinsey & Company. (2021, February 11). Psychological safety and the critical role of leadership development. <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/psychological-safety-and-the-critical-role-of-leadership-development>

³⁰ Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2021, April 14). Equity vs. equality and other racial justice definitions. Retrieved September 10, 2021, from <https://www.aecf.org/blog/racial-justice-definitions>

- **Structural racism**, also known as **systemic racism**, exists *across* institutions and society as a feature of overarching social, economic, and political systems. Structural/systemic racism reflects a system of common institutional practices and public policies that perpetuate racial inequalities. Examples of structural/systemic racism in the United States include the racial income and wealth gaps that are the results of a history of discriminatory policies, such as those related to employment and salary, housing, and savings and investments.³¹

STIGMA

Stigma is the disapproval and/or devaluing of an individual or group based on certain characteristics—real or perceived. Stigma occurs when a society categorizes and labels individuals, conceives or upholds stereotypes associated with those labels, and discriminates against people associated with those labels based on those stereotypes. Stigmas are commonly linked to prejudices related to social characteristics, such as age, appearance, class, caste, culture, (dis)ability, economic status, educational attainment, ethnicity, gender, health status, migration status, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation.

There several types of stigma, including the following:

- **Self-stigma** refers to feelings of negativity or guilt and internalized shame that people hold about themselves.
- **Anticipated** or **perceived stigmas** are negative associations that an individual or group believes others hold against them.
- **Public stigma** refers to negative and/or discriminatory attitudes that individuals and groups hold against other individuals or groups.
- **Institutional stigma** is systemic and includes the institutional policies (of governments or private entities) that intentionally or unintentionally discriminate against certain groups.

WESTERN WHITE CENTEREDNESS

White centeredness is a form of privilege (see “Privilege”) in which the beliefs, expectations, feelings, interests, norms, perspectives, and values of white people are assumed as the default and standard in processes and/or outcomes. Western white centeredness is predicated on the fact that Eurocentric standards and beliefs related to white supremacy prevail as ideals in global and multiculturalist settings to the disadvantage of BIPOC people.³² Although these types of power imbalances were historically manifested through colonialism and slavery, they persist today at individual, institutional, and systemic levels (see “Racism”).

In international development and humanitarian assistance, western white centeredness, and associated white exceptionalism and white fragility, is demonstrated in how the “Global North” (also referred to as “the West” or the “first world and second world”) or western white individuals apply their bias (consciously or unconsciously) both in their own organizations and where they work in the “Global South” (also referred to as “developing countries” or the “third world”). This dynamic is also predicated on the power that the Global North retains over the Global South and the imbalance of power between western white people and BIPOC people.

³¹ Per the US Department of Labor, as published July 2021 in the Usual Weekly Earnings of Wage and Salary Workers report, “among the major race and ethnicity groups, median weekly earnings of Blacks (\$799) and Hispanics (\$779) working at full-time jobs were lower than those of Whites (\$1,012) and Asians (\$1,281).” For the current report, visit: <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/wkyeng.pdf>

³² Weller, R. C. (Ed.). (2017). *21st-Century narratives of world history: Global and multidisciplinary perspectives*. Springer. doi:10.1007/978-3-319-62078-7

ANNEX TWO: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

1. Why sign a racial and ethnic equity pledge now?

Although equity has long been a dream of many, since 2020 the world, and particularly the United States, has seen a renewed and urgent call to address the systemic, structural, and personal impact of racism, neo-colonialism, and neo-dependency in all our social institutions and interactions. Racial and ethnic equity (REE) has become part of our common lexicon. The international development and humanitarian assistance sector and community are represented by organizations and individuals who are committed to fairness and justice in our missions, visions, and values. This pledge, and the resulting actions and change it will engender, will help organizations in this community hold ourselves accountable for what is within our power to improve.

Strengthening DEI, and specifically building REE, is a journey for societies, governments, organizations, and individuals to participate in and contribute to according to our roles and interests. Setting strategic and meaningful goals, agreeing on the urgency reflected in time-bound achievements on agreed responsibilities, and holding ourselves accountable with agreed metrics is the only clear path to a more equitable future for us all.

Tackling equity in measurable outcomes requires understanding the root causes that produce inequity. Despite our limited power to change societies rapidly given the weight of history, we all have power within our organizations and in our communities to effect meaningful change. Change begins with taking the first step.

2. What is the difference between DEI and REE? Why do we need to do REE if we are doing DEI?

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and REE are related but different terms.

DEI describes organizational policies and programs that promote the representation and participation of different groups of individuals, including people of different ages, races, and ethnicities; abilities, gender identities; religions; cultures; and sexual orientations as well as people with diverse backgrounds, experiences, skills, and expertise.

REE describes a goal of realizing equality, parity, and justice specifically for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) in the United States. In particular, in the United States, policies and programs that address REE focus on power dynamics between western white and BIPOC individuals, and build equity to ensure fair access, opportunity, and advancement for BIPOC individuals on systemic, institutional, interpersonal, and individual levels that are free from bias and discrimination. While the international development and humanitarian assistance industry has made progress in addressing some aspects of DEI, REE has been an area of particular historical imbalance and exclusion and little targeted focus or progress has been made to date. A 2021, the Benchmarking Race, Inclusion, and Diversity in Global Engagement (BRIDGE) Survey assessing DEI practices among United States-based international development and humanitarian assistance implementers found that only 6% of BIPOC male and 4% of BIPOC females were in leadership positions (<https://socialimpact.com/bridge/>). CREED aims to move the needle forward on this important issue.

3. What is the business case for pursuing REE? What is the connection between our work and building REE?

CREED would like to include the broadest range of organizations in our sector, by business type, size, and mission. As leaders in our community and organizations, we want to lead into a better future. We have all participated in the longstanding debate on Aid Effectiveness, and we all want to have a positive impact beyond winning the next opportunity. However, we cannot wait on clients, market forces, and incentives to commit to this journey, which goes beyond laws and regulations. This commitment will be held as an essential feature of our license to do the work that we are all so passionate about.

There is a compelling business case for organizations in our industry to embark on this journey. Desirable outcomes include improved organizational culture, business outcomes (e.g., productivity, win rates and market share), enhanced program effectiveness, more meaningful partnerships and greater strategic impact. Although the representations and certifications we make to our clients on REE are evolving, we have no doubt that momentum is in this direction.

Part of our knowledge sharing and learning will focus on how commitments to DEI and REE can transform our sector.

4. How do we adapt the pledge for smaller organizations?

CREED does not attempt to set specific, internal work plans or goals for organizations. Rather, we present a broad set of commitments and outline processes and steps by which organizations are able to include and measure REE internally, which contributes to advancing REE in the international development and humanitarian assistance industry generally. Smaller organizations can and should participate by reviewing and adapting these commitments and goals to their missions and operations.

CREED recognizes that all organizations are different with respect not only to mission, size, and approach, but also their current level of engagement with addressing equity and inclusion. We do not expect every organization to implement all of the commitments immediately, nor in the same manner, but to identify the pathway that meets their reality and begin the journey with us as part of a learning community.

5. Why is this pledge focused on the US-based organizations' policies, systems, and culture?

The past two years has seen a massive reawakening to the presence, characteristics, and expression of persistent structural and individual racism and racist violence in the United States. More than 150 years after Reconstruction following the Civil War, the true impact of this persistent racism is visible in all aspects of our lives and economy. At every level—individual, community, organization, and society—we must work to change this.

The United States is also, as the world's largest economy, the largest contributor to overseas development assistance both bilaterally and multilaterally. Our organizations represent a broad community that has developed over the past 50 years to implement the soft power objectives of the United States' bilateral and multilateral relations and to share the goodwill of the American people. It is both our responsibility and our obligation to embrace and embark on this journey. We must start with what is within the span of our control (i.e., policies, systems, and the culture within our organizations) and help lead our industry. Positive change from within will transform the sector and have global impact.

6. Why doesn't this pledge address programming?

Although many of our members implement both US and international work, we believe that starting with how we lead, manage, and staff our own organizations is fundamental to addressing equity and inclusion in how we design, program, and implement our work as well as transform our sector.

How we implement our work in countries is contingent on a complex mix of factors that we need to be clear-eyed about, including considering how our own ethnocentric organizational policies, systems, practices, and behaviors may contribute to low levels of racial and ethnic diversity and equity in our industry. By advancing equity and inclusion in our administration, operations, staff composition, and culture, we will be better equipped to ensure diversity of background and thought, and ultimately design and implement more impactful, equitable, and inclusive programs worldwide. Before we can influence improved programming, we need to get our own house in order.

7. Why is the pledge only focused on the US-based offices? How does this pledge apply to non-US or country offices?

We believe that we should start with our United States based offices since that is where the power currently lies. Many of our organizations are already implementing efforts to do better in their work and country offices, but how diversity initiatives play out in South Africa, Sri Lanka, or Guatemala, for example, requires engagement with related issues in those places, and the application of global metrics must go through a process of adaptation.

We should be aware that many of the DEI and REE terms and classifications that we use in the United States are developed for enumeration in the United States census, which evolved, and will continue to evolve, over time, and cannot be applied to other societies. We do not wish to share our distortions with the world, but we can share our commitment to the principles, processes, and practices of DEI.

Accordingly, CREED values prioritizing and focusing on REE in our United States based offices to build equity and inclusion as a first step to building organizational DEI and REE.

8. What is outside the scope of the pledge?

CREED offers recommendations and does not dictate to Pledge signatories which REE-specific actions and measurements to adopt or adapt. Although CREED does not provide implementation resources, CREED surfaces and shares best practices through the CREED Learning Hub. Operational, program, or technical guidance/operating procedures and partnering/vendor/supply chain approaches are best done internally, with grounding in best and promising practices that CREED will help to share.

The pledge is provided as a framework and can be customized according to the size of the organization (by revenue, people count, or country presence, for example) to maximize pathways or solutions by organizations themselves.

9. What is the cost of operationalizing the REE pledge?

CREED believes that this commitment will be business critical to organizations in our sector going forward and be resourced at a level deemed appropriate by each organization's leadership.

We have no doubt that the return on investment in DEI and REE is tangible and substantial, and part of our learning going forward will be to find the best ways to document and share these methods.

10. What is the best way to start working on implementing the pledge?

Organizations can start by signing the REE pledge, joining the learning community (CREED Learning Hub), and then determining their own process to build REE internally. Openness and participation is a good way to start our collective journey. The pledge provides a framework and examples as well as measures that organizations can choose to adopt that suit their organization. Internal conversations about REE and organizational culture relative to the CREED commitments can help you understand where to begin.

11. Will CREED share an implementation guide or a toolkit? Will CREED share the names of experts who can be retained to provide REE-related services?

The pledge is intended to be a commitment to action over time. Organizations are not expected to have implemented **all** of the pledge components/actions at the time of signing. Signing the pledge is a commitment to the REE goals and to work toward achieving the standards set forth in the pledge. Our shared goal is for pledge participant organizations to be part of a learning community (CREED Learning Hub) where implementation strategies, lessons, and guidance developed and implemented by organizations are shared with the REE pledge community.

12. Will CREED provide minimum standards or specific metrics to build REE? How do we hold ourselves accountable?

Good practices for metrics and holding ourselves accountable will be shared through the CREED Learning Hub. A good place to start is with the BRIDGE survey.

The pledge components do not include specific measurements or minimum standards. Instead, each pledge component includes a set of illustrative indicators that organizations can emulate to operationalize the pledge. Our goal is for organizations of many sizes, types, and missions to be able to determine how best to proceed in achieving the pledge commitment with the context of their own organization. We expect that the signatories will monitor progress within their own organizations against the commitment made and in keeping with their established metrics.

CREED, through the Learning Hub, will invite and share success stories that demonstrate measurable progress and quantitative results.

13. How will the CREED Learning Hub and Learning Community work?

CREED will also serve as a forum and platform to exchange information, discuss emerging topics, and interact.

At its most fundamental level, this will involve sharing information, including best and promising practices for organizations. The CREED community will gather together in-person (we can dream) or virtually to share experiences and lessons. CREED may also interact with clients, partners and other

stakeholders and channel relevant information and good practices for REE. Our goal is not to duplicate work being done by any existing organizations but rather to complement and provide opportunities to access useful resources.

14. The pledge components have been framed in the context of having a standard, roadmap, application, values, outcomes and measures? How are these elements defined?

The description of what each element covers in the components framework is as follows:

- *Standard* – Defines the principle this component aspires to achieve.
- *Roadmap* – Explains and/or practical examples for how to implement the standard.
- *Application* – Indicates where the standard should be applied for highest impact.
- *Values* – Outlines the intrinsic values to be inculcated and achieved by implementing the standard.
- *Outcomes* – Describes the key results and expected impact for implementing the standard.
- *Measures* – Identifies the indicators for measuring progress, output, and impact in applying the standard.