

2021 Equity Report

Fora, formerly known as G(irls)20, was launched in 2009 to ensure the inclusion of underrepresented voices. We take our mandate seriously by ensuring that all experiences and insights shared by the Fora community are heard. Through program check-ins, focus groups, surveys, and community feedback, we work to immediately integrate changes to our programs, events and experiences; when not possible, we prioritize research and learning to advise our next steps. (You can read more about this in our [Girls on Boards Evaluation](#) blog.)

In June 2020, the #BlackLivesMatter movement called forth an undeniable reckoning for justice. For decades, Black activists and organizers have been highlighting how systemically entrenched anti-Black racism endangers the safety, wellbeing, and livelihoods of Black individuals and their communities. The immense labour undertaken by Black activists resulted in a global reflection on individual and societal complicity in anti-Black racism, as well as how systematic racism continues to marginalize and enact violence.

The Movement for Racial Justice emphasized that justice for Black lives also means Indigenous justice, gender justice, racial justice, disability justice, and 2SLGBTQ+ justice. Just as justice and liberation are intersectional, discrimination and oppression are intersectional as well. The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized that those with intersecting marginalized identities face disproportionate inequities, such as Black women, Indigenous women, and women of colour. These disproportionate inequities include worsened health outcomes, increased rates of domestic violence, and economic difficulties.



In July 2020, Fora released a [statement of support](#) for the #BlackLivesMatter movement. In our statement, we wrote: “In the coming months, we will examine and adjust our operations and programs to further amplify the voices of Black (as well as Indigenous) women.” Through our past evaluations and new feedback, we launched a process to better understand how we can remove additional barriers facing BIPOC women in our programming and operations. We published an [Equity Action Plan](#) in August 2020 which was implemented immediately to adjust operations and address the equity gaps throughout the organization.

We are accountable to our community. We want to be transparent and provide clear, informed updates about the changes we are making within our organization.

Today we are sharing an update to our Equity Action Plan to highlight the ways in which we have progressed towards our goals of enhancing equity and inclusion within our organization. We are also sharing our goals for the next year. This report is a reflection of our ongoing commitment towards improving the equity of our programming, operations, and organization as a whole. We recognize that though measures have been implemented, critical reflection, collection of feedback, and ongoing improvements will continue to be necessary as we strive towards creating an equitable community for all individuals.

LEADERSHIP AND STAFFING

Our commitment / *Timeline from August 2020: 12-24 months*

- Ensure nominations of Black and Indigenous women onto the Fora Board of Directors.
- Build succession plans to ensure the leadership team at Fora is representative of diverse communities, including diversity of race, religion, culture, gender, ability and more.
- Organize anti-oppression/anti-racism training for all staff and board directors.
- Build better HR practices to recruit and retain more BIPOC staff.



Our progress:

- Throughout the recruitment and selection process for the Fora Board of Directors at our AGM in July 2021, we prioritized individuals from diverse backgrounds who better represent our community. We are pleased to welcome Minora Arnold, Chauntae De Gannes, and Nadia Theodore as our newly elected Board Directors, as well as Dr. Rumeet Billan as our new Board Chair.
- We have increased diversity on the senior leadership team through internal promotion.
- Anti-oppression/anti-racism training has been delivered to all staff in 2021. Fora staff also received Introduction to 2SLGBTQ+ Inclusion Training, providing new knowledge and practices for fostering 2SLGBTQ+ inclusive environments. This training will be delivered on an ongoing basis moving forward.
- Improved Human Resources practices are underway that reflect ONN's Decent Work program which aims to build "a culture of equality and inclusion at work, and [to ensure] everyone's voices are valued and heard". This includes offering stable employment, providing fair incomes, creating opportunities for development and advancement, and flexible work hours.
- In 2021, Fora undertook activities to remove barriers in the recruitment process including conducting outreach to employment organizations and professional associations working with communities marginalized by society.

Our commitments for the year ahead:

- Continue to remove barriers in the recruitment process.
- Senior Leadership staff will participate in an equitable recruitment training program to ensure a progressively more equitable approach to hiring.
- Ongoing anti-oppression/anti-racism training to staff and board to improve knowledge of and increase support to communities marginalized by society.
- Continue to provide a flexible work environment, offer mental health days, and support other accessibility needs of staff.



PROGRAMS

Our commitment / *Timeline from August 2020: Immediate – 12 months*

- Provide additional support and assistance to delegates from historically or politically marginalized and oppressed backgrounds.
- Hire a mental health professional operating with an anti-racist, anti-colonial, and 2SLGBTQ+ framework for consistent, on-site support.
- Research and implement strategies to reduce power dynamics between ‘global north’ and ‘global south’.
- Consult on program design and delivery with advisory group of Ambassadors, ensuring representation from as many diverse regions and identities as possible.
- Greater diversity among workshop facilitators.



Our progress:

- During the 2020 Global Summit, we mobilized to respond to the different realities of our delegates worldwide. This included providing internet stipends, laptops, child-support stipends and increased calendar flexibility for participants with special extenuating events.
- We hired mental health professionals operating with an anti-oppression framework who gave virtual support and an educational workshop during the Summit. Jhanelle Peters, Registered Psychotherapist, was hired to lead a training on mental health, and Prabhleen Sidhu, Clinical Psychologist, provided one-on-one support services.
- [Two steering committees](#) were recruited for the Global Summit and Girls on Boards, and are composed of young women from various regions and intersecting identities. This includes Black and Indigenous leadership among the Chairs and Vice-Chairs on both committees.
- To ensure greater diversity among workshop facilitators at the Summit, we hired exclusively Black women and women of colour to educate and train our delegates. For the workshops facilitated by our partners, we ensured that they identified regional facilitators, including industry professionals from Europe, Africa, Middle East, and Asia.
- Provided mandatory training to Girls on Boards stakeholders on anti-oppression, anti-racism, tokenism and microaggressions.

Our commitments for the year ahead:

- We will begin researching strategies to reduce power dynamics between 'global north' and 'global south' as part of our advocacy strategy in 2022, including in communications and programming.
- Redesigning the 2022 Summit to end the global power imbalances created by the G20 to ensure equitable representation from all global regions.
- Co-designing the 2022 Summit programming, recruitment and evaluation with a committee of individuals with diverse regional lived experiences, including Black women, Indigenous women and women of colour.

COMMUNICATIONS

Our commitment / *Timeline from August 2020: Immediate – 12 months*

- Consistently providing a platform to BIPOC program participants.
- Highlight Black and Indigenous role models and mental health professionals.
- Promote advocacy efforts of BIPOC community partners.
- Provide 3 months' lead time for participants and community partners to use Fora platform and to provide advice for important dates, such as: Black History Month, UN Indigenous People's Day, National Indigenous History Month.

Our progress:

- The Fora communications team has developed a communications strategy to ensure the consistent amplification of BIPOC women through our digital presence.
- We have committed to posting a minimum of 4 posts per month that amplify BIPOC women's voices. Since this commitment, we have shared over 55 Instagram posts that amplify the voices and lived experiences of BIPOC women.
- Over the last year, Fora has promoted advocacy efforts of BIPOC community partners on UN Indigenous People's Day, National Indigenous Peoples Day, Earth day, and throughout Black history month. We also promoted a number of advocacy events held by other organizations by and for BIPOC.
- We have collaborated with Black thought-leaders and program participants to create digital content and share resources, such as with our Black History Month Instagram Live Series.
 - Michelle Smith and Nadia Theodore: [Black women and leadership](#)
 - Amal Elmi and Jhanelle Peters: [Black women and mental health](#)
 - Love Afia Kyeremah-Darko and Angela Bruce-Raeburn: [Anti-Black racism and charities](#)
 - Cindy Karugia and Malia Baker: [How to use your platform for activism](#)
- In August, for the organization's rebrand, Fora recreated our website according to guidelines for visual accessibility outlined by the Web Content Accessibility Guide and the Canadian National Institute for the Blind.
- We will continue to pursue this strategy to amplify racialized voices in our newsletter and all social media content, including Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. To ensure that all contributors are acknowledged and paid for their participation, we offer stipends to all guest speakers at Fora events.

Our commitments for the year ahead:

- Continue to amplify the voices and lived experience of Black, Indigenous, and women of colour through our communications.
- Collaborate with different communities to mobilize and share Fora's social capital.
- Improve digital, visual, audio, and web accessibility on all communications platforms to increase content accessibility.



The Fora Board of Directors and staff are deeply committed to doing better for Black, Indigenous and women of colour through this ever-evolving approach.

In the meantime, we thank the many young women from our community for their participation and feedback as these changes will create better programs and a better organization for everyone.

**Sincerely,
The Fora Team**