

# Inclusion's next wave

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A future trends report from Wunderman Thompson Intelligence

# Welcome to the next wave of inclusion

**Meaningful action on inclusion is the new imperative for brands and businesses.**

A grassroots push from historically marginalized communities (who are increasingly willing to self-identify as such) is aligning with rising employee activism and consumer expectations. In a global survey for Wunderman Thompson, 90% say equality is now everyone's business, and 75% say companies and brands must play a role in solving big societal challenges such as equality and social justice.

The COVID-19 pandemic was a pivotal moment; it exposed and intensified existing inequalities. People with disabilities and immunocompromised individuals suffered a triple impact: susceptibility to the disease itself, plus



■ We are Fluide. Image courtesy of Laurence Philomene.



■ Wheel the World offers comprehensive guides to accessible travel experiences for people with disabilities.

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**As culture shapers, brands have a powerful role to play in building a truly inclusive world, and reaping the rewards of doing so.**

severely reduced access to healthcare and social opportunities due to shielding. The Black Lives Matter movement ignited a global wave of protest, followed by a wave of pledges—some more authentic than others—from businesses to finally tackle longstanding inequity.

Communities that have endured discrimination have long called for their voices to be heard. Now the global conversation on inclusion is gaining momentum. Younger generations, taking up the charge from their forebears, have higher expectations of social justice and equity. There is now a cohort who won't work for businesses that don't prioritize diversity, equity and inclusion. The world over, populations are becoming more diverse, not less. And there's a global audience of millions ready to co-create the future of inclusive design, experiences and marketing.

While consumer, cultural and business trends flow in one direction, there are tides pushing back. This is still a biased world; one in which 86% of Fortune 500 CEOs are White men and less than 1% identify as LGBTQ+. Governments and institutions are rolling back hard-won freedoms in a backlash against so-called "woke" culture. To genuinely deliver on equity, brands must be empathetic to marginalized communities' real-world struggles and use their power to dismantle systemic discrimination and oppression.

As culture shapers, brands have a powerful role to play in building a truly inclusive world and reaping the rewards of doing so. Businesses can leverage their influence to break down barriers and drive equitable opportunity. This report explores how they can do so. Read on to discover how the power of inclusion shapes better brands and businesses, and, more importantly, a better world and a better future for all of us.

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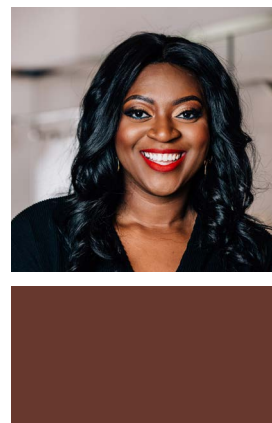
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# Introduction

# Defining inclusion: Expert takes

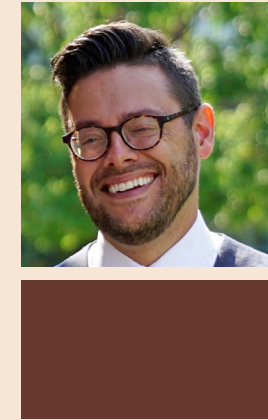
Meet all of our expert contributors on page 135.



## Making space at the table

“When I think of inclusion in the workplace, it is truly allowing someone, regardless of who they are, to have a seat at the table, to really make sure that they feel like they’re part of something, that they belong. Your immediate team has such a big influence because those are the people that you work with day to day. But the organization must also support that mission and that progress. It can’t just be talking about it, it must also be walking it, seeing it.”

**Ezinne Okoro, global chief inclusion, equity and diversity officer, Wunderman Thompson**



## Respecting and valuing identity

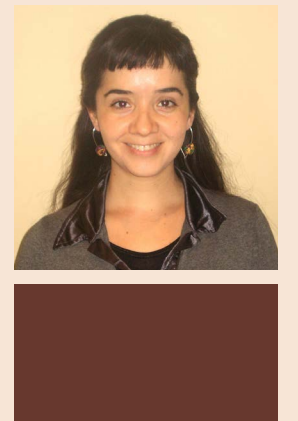
“Inclusion starts with my own identity and finding out where and how I can amplify my voice among a larger chorus. ‘Nothing about us, without us’ is a rallying cry and framework for recognizing exclusion and a path toward inclusion. Inclusion is about being respected and valued fully for who you are. Trust, transparency, safety and access shape inclusion into shared belonging, commitments and successes.”

**Josh Loebner, global head of inclusive design, Wunderman Thompson**

## Reversing inequity

“The word inclusion is ideologically charged, and its meanings are slippery. I believe that, as well as its counterpart, exclusion, inclusion as a positive action goes hand in hand with the concept of diversity and, more fundamentally, with that of (in)equality. Inclusion—the actions and policies of inclusion—are necessary to reverse the situations of inequality to which different individuals belonging to certain groups or population groups are historically exposed.”

**Eva Lamborghini, anthropologist, University of Buenos Aires**





### The impact of decisions

“When I make my decisions, I need to think about how someone else might experience them. If you don’t do that, it leads to exclusion. And studies have shown exclusion is as painful as getting punched in the face.”

**Christina Mallon, director of inclusive design, Microsoft**

### Leveling the playing field

“Inclusion is the act of making processes or structures inclusive to other people. It’s not just about adding another chair to a table—it might be about redesigning that table. It’s making sure that you create an environment that is a level playing field.”

**Leng Montgomery, senior DE&I consultant**



### Avoiding assumptions

“Inclusion is about respect. People have different needs and expectations. When you are designing or building anything, you have to have the humility to understand that you don’t feel the same as others. You don’t feel their problems, you can’t assume anything.”

**Alexandre Silveira, head of CX and strategic design, Wunderman Thompson Brazil**

“**Studies have shown exclusion is as painful as getting punched in the face.**”

**Christina Mallon, director of inclusive design, Microsoft**

### A deep way of thinking

“Reflecting about which cultures and people we marginalize, what we silence, and why we classify certain groups and their cultures as subaltern is what we need right now. We can hire people from all over the world, but if we don’t look at what we’re considering and what we keep marginalized, we’re not really talking about inclusion and diversity.”

**Vivian Zeni da Silva, communications director and inclusion, equity and diversity lead, Wunderman Thompson Brazil**



# What's driving the next wave of inclusion

## The COVID-19 lens

The pandemic both highlighted and exacerbated existing economic and health inequalities for many marginalized communities. It created space for global protest, including the surge in Black Lives Matter, the world's biggest social justice movement, Stop Asian Hate rallies, and protests from disability rights advocates. Pandemic lockdowns proved the benefits of a more flexible workplace but increased the childcare burden for many, especially women.

## Technology

The pandemic pivot to digital has unlocked accessible experiences and democratized remote access to work and play. Social media continues to amplify the visibility of oppression, while also providing a route to community-building and a means of protest. Automation is changing the

shape of the global economy, eliminating many blue-collar roles, while artificial intelligence threatens to encode bias into decision-making algorithms.

## Great expectations

People now expect brands to do more than just make a profit. Today, 78% say it's good when brands step up to support marginalized communities; and 60% say brands that do not deliver on inclusion will become irrelevant. Underserved groups are more vocal too, says Mallon, who has seen an uptick in the demand for inclusive brands.

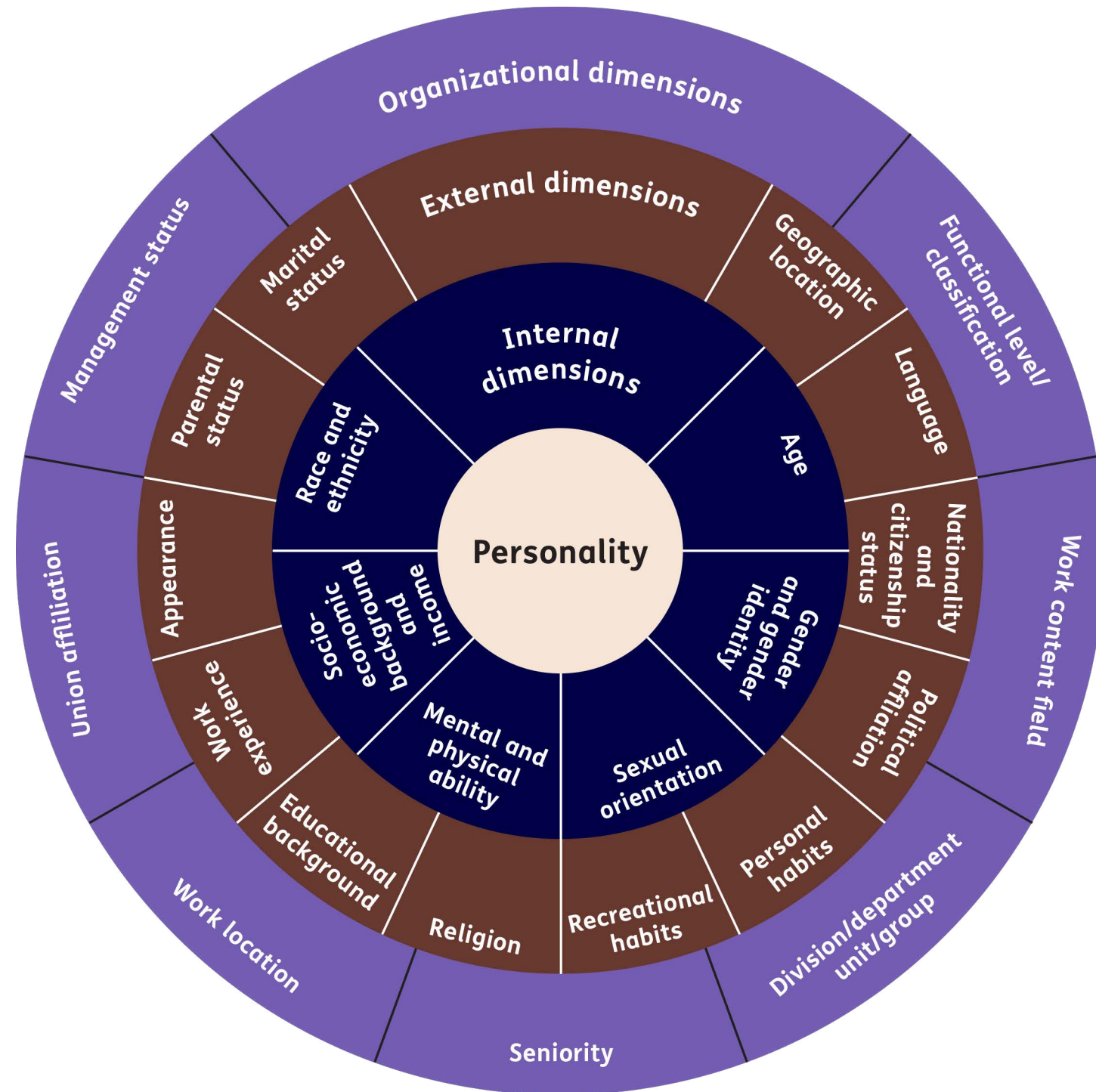
## Employee power

2022 has already seen outbreaks of strikes and drives for unionization around the world. Employees—especially younger ones—are demanding that companies respect social justice, evidenced by mass walkouts at Google, Disney and other organizations. On top of this, the pandemic has triggered widespread calls for remote and flexible working to be a standard benefit available to all. Okoro tells us: “They’re pushing the envelope. They’re forcing that change and forcing conversations like this to happen.”

## Political power struggles

Authoritarian governments around the world are pushing back on advances in inequality and clamping down on freedoms, using practices that include voter suppression and restrictions on abortion rights. This is mobilizing more protest: pro-choice rallies are multiplying in the United States and across Latin America, from Colombia to Argentina.

# Inclusion starts with identity



Inclusion begins with identity. It's how we represent ourselves, personally or professionally.

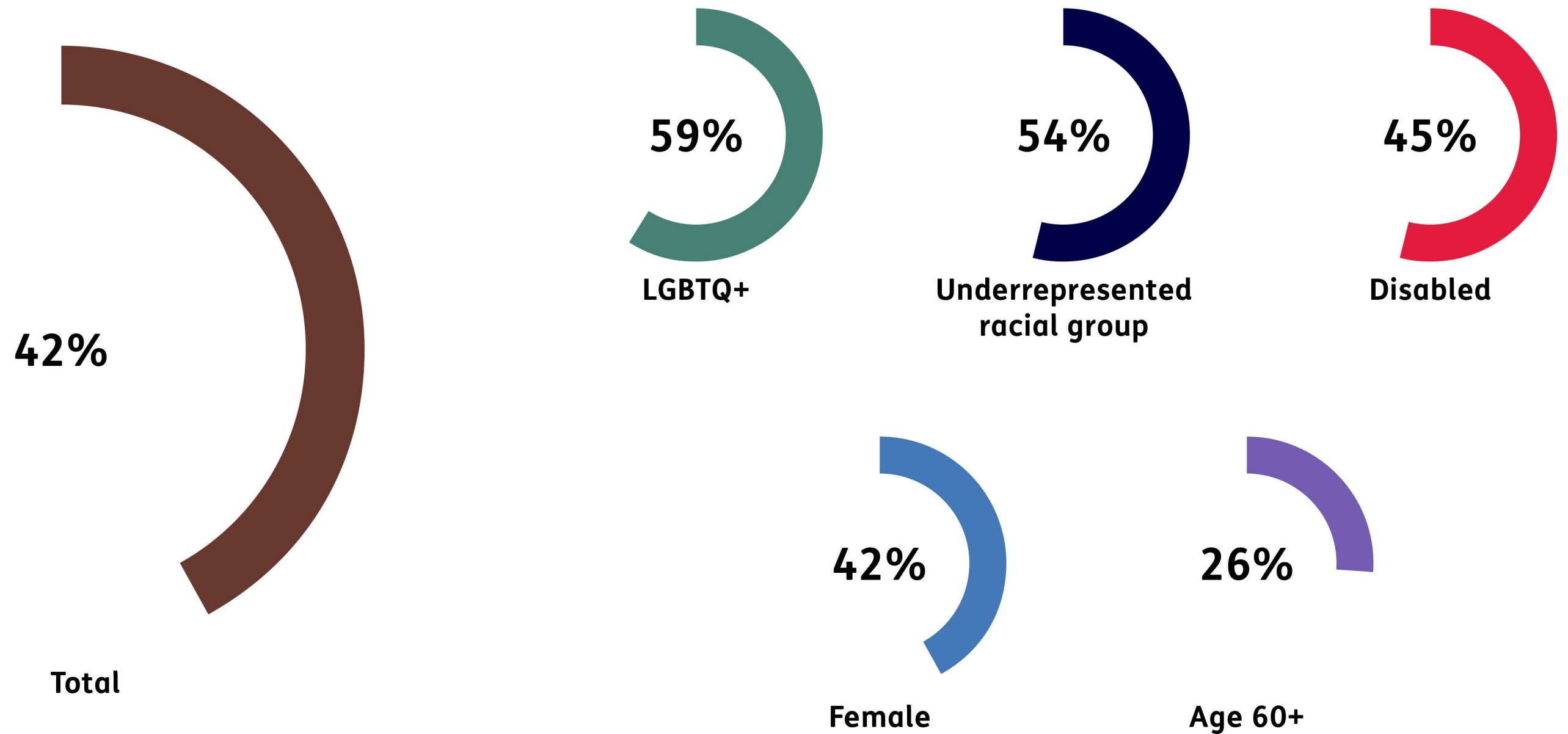
Identity encompasses multiple dimensions, as this graphic shows. The internal dimensions at the center of the wheel—age, race, gender, et cetera—are often most central to personal identity and our current life experience. But there are also external and even organizational dimensions that come into play. All of these can play a role in how an individual experiences discrimination, whether positive or negative.

Josh Loebner, global head of inclusive design at Wunderman Thompson, explains further: “Self-identification and how we identify ourselves is nuanced. Openly disclosing one’s identity may be precarious, leading some to hide their identity and code-switch, or adjust behaviors, appearances, and language, among other traits, to avoid perceived negative consequences.”

Identity is also fluid. People may move into, and out of, communities depending on how they choose to self-identify. People are more comfortable with the idea of fluid identities today. In our survey, 67% agree that gender identity can change over time, and many of the identity dimensions we explore are mutable.

Most importantly, we know that people do not fit neatly into categories: identities are, of course, intersectional, overlapping in multiple ways.

# Brands have made me feel unwelcome because of my gender, race, age, religion or sexuality



# Intersectionality matters

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**Could someone describe you in just one word? Identity is much more nuanced than that.**

As Rhonda Hadi, associate professor of marketing at the Saïd Business School at the University of Oxford, explains: “We should be thinking about people in a much richer, three-dimensional way, acknowledging that people rarely fit into neat categories.”

The concept of intersectionality was originally coined by the civil rights advocate and critical race theory scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw, and it provides a lens through which to view the many ways that oppression or privilege can converge and be amplified. For instance, a Hispanic disabled woman faces layers of oppression that a White cisgender man does not (cisgender refers to a person whose gender identity corresponds with their birth sex).



■ **WeThe15 is a global sports movement to end discrimination against disabled people.**

Jenny Davis, senior lecturer in sociology at the Australian National University, advises that “when we’re thinking about intersectionality, it’s critical to understand how identities combine into something greater than the sum of their parts. Creating equitable and inclusive spaces means accounting for the ways social position can organize both opportunity structures and the lived experiences of everyday life.”

The complexities of conducting research across multiple markets and identities mean that the dimensions of marginalization on which we can report are simplified in this research. We analyzed our survey data according to six dimensions of identity: gender, race, age, sexuality, disability and income. But the true, lived experience of individuals is, of course, more intricate.

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**Read more about the complexities of identity and the current issues facing key marginalized populations in our [Unpacking Identities](#) section on page 79.**



**Intersectionality is so important because people don't realize that groups of people can be marginalized in a multitude of ways. So while we're all very conscious about diversity, equity and inclusion, sometimes it can be narrowly focused on one dimension over the other.**

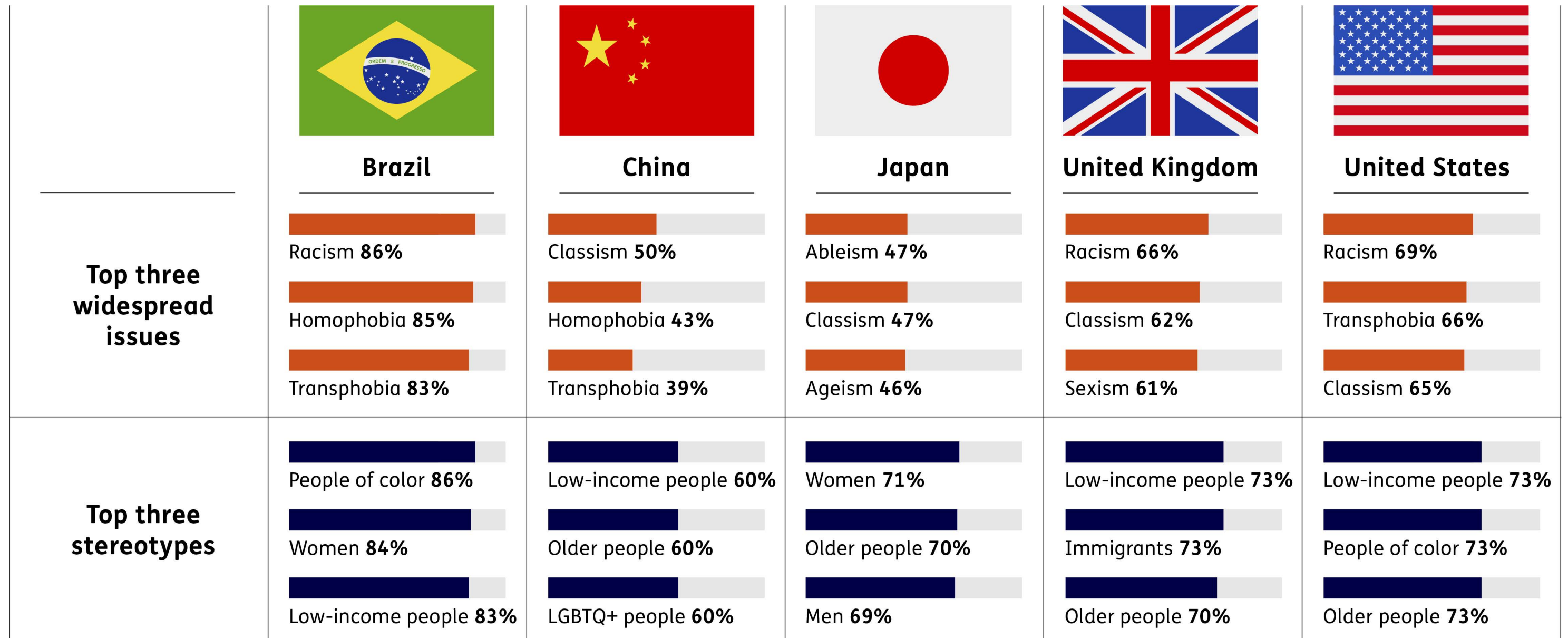
**Madeline Di Nonno, president and CEO, Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media**

# By the numbers

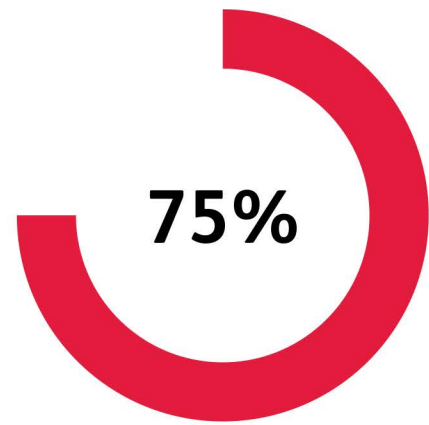
Original consumer data collected by Wunderman Thompson Data among 5,001 adults aged 18+ in Brazil, China, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States. The research fielded in March and April 2022.

■ In The Fathoms Below 2 by Charlie French.  
■ Unless otherwise stated, all findings in this report were collected by Wunderman Thompson.

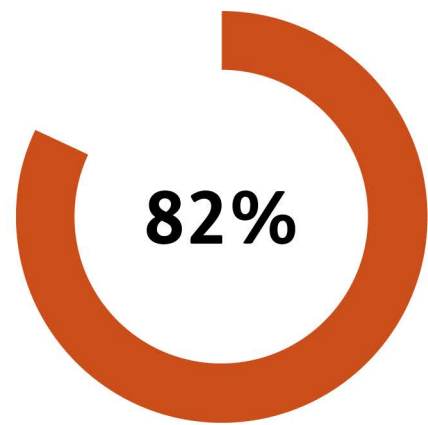
# Inclusion looks different around the world



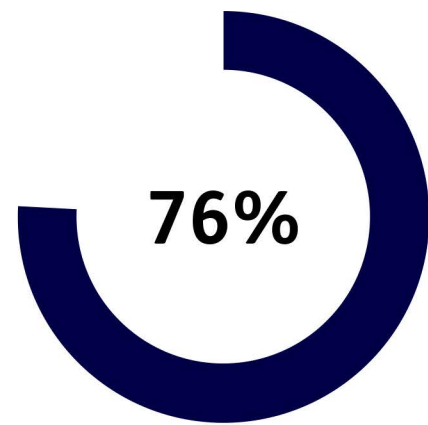
# Consumers are demanding businesses and their leaders step up



I expect businesses to play their part in solving big human challenges, like equality or social justice

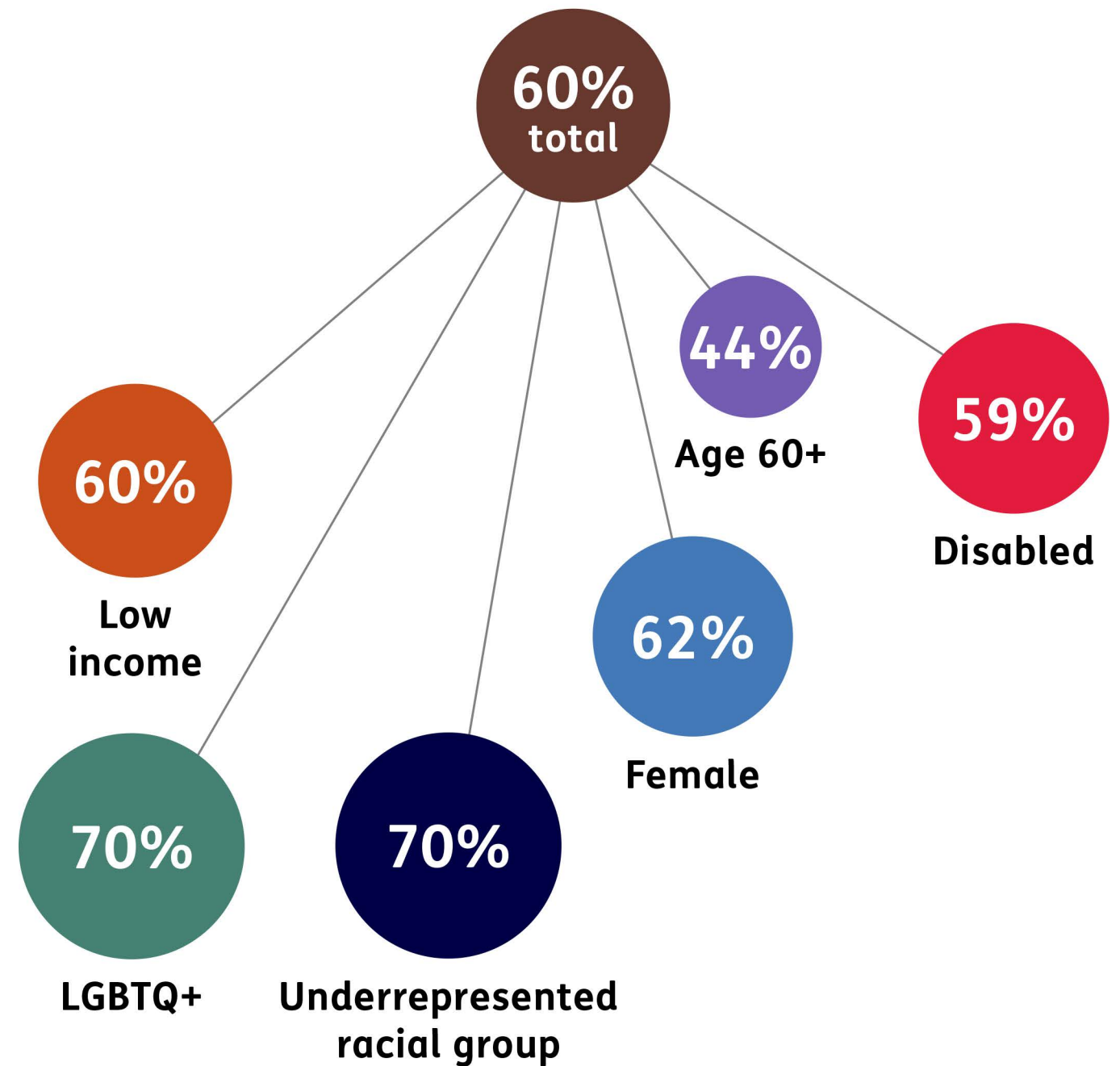


Actions on inclusion and equality mean nothing unless they are integrated throughout the entire organization/business



If businesses don't deliver on inclusivity for their customers and their employees, the leadership should be held accountable

Brands that do not deliver on inclusion will become irrelevant



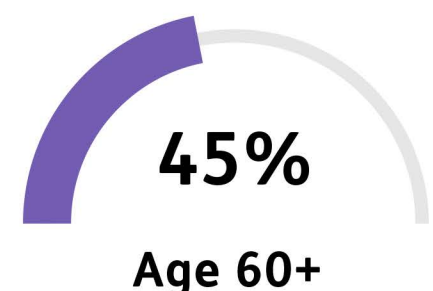
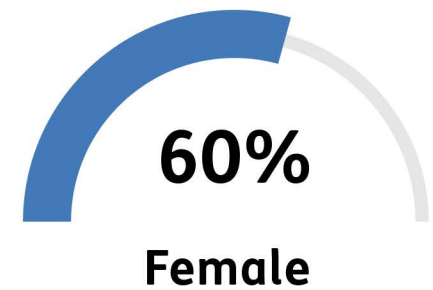
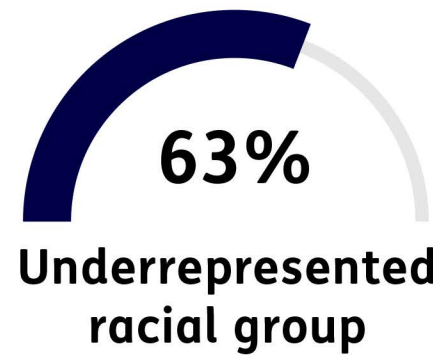
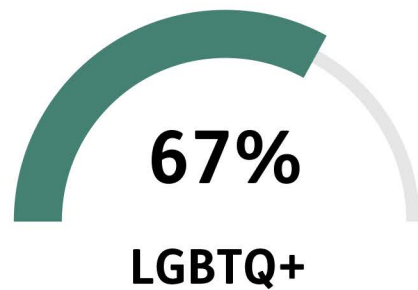
Q. How much do you agree with the following statements? % agree by marginalized population

# People want meaningful action and tangible impact

Brands should be genuinely political—not dance around on the fringes of conversations on race and equality



Total



Brands who want to support disadvantaged groups should work with them not just for them



Total

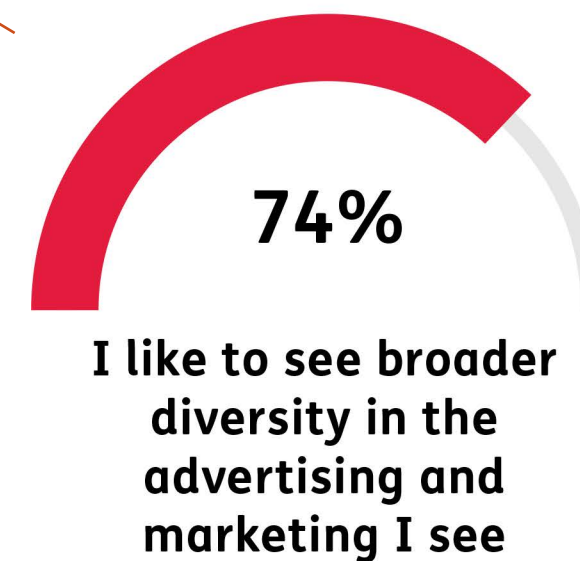
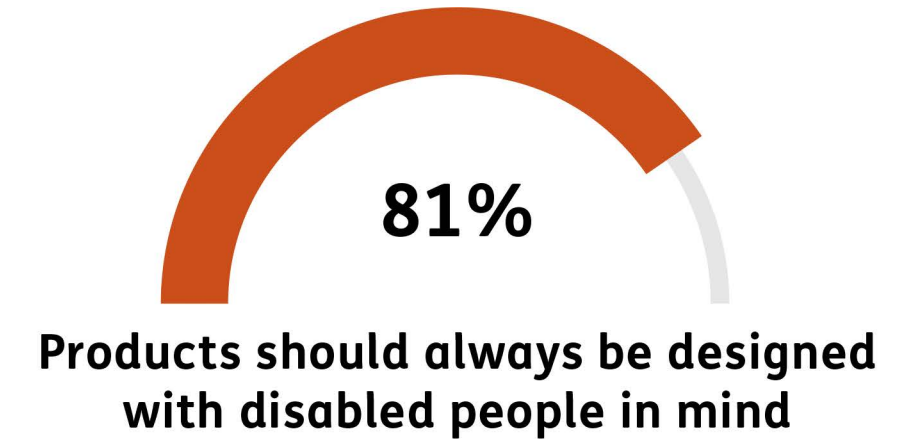
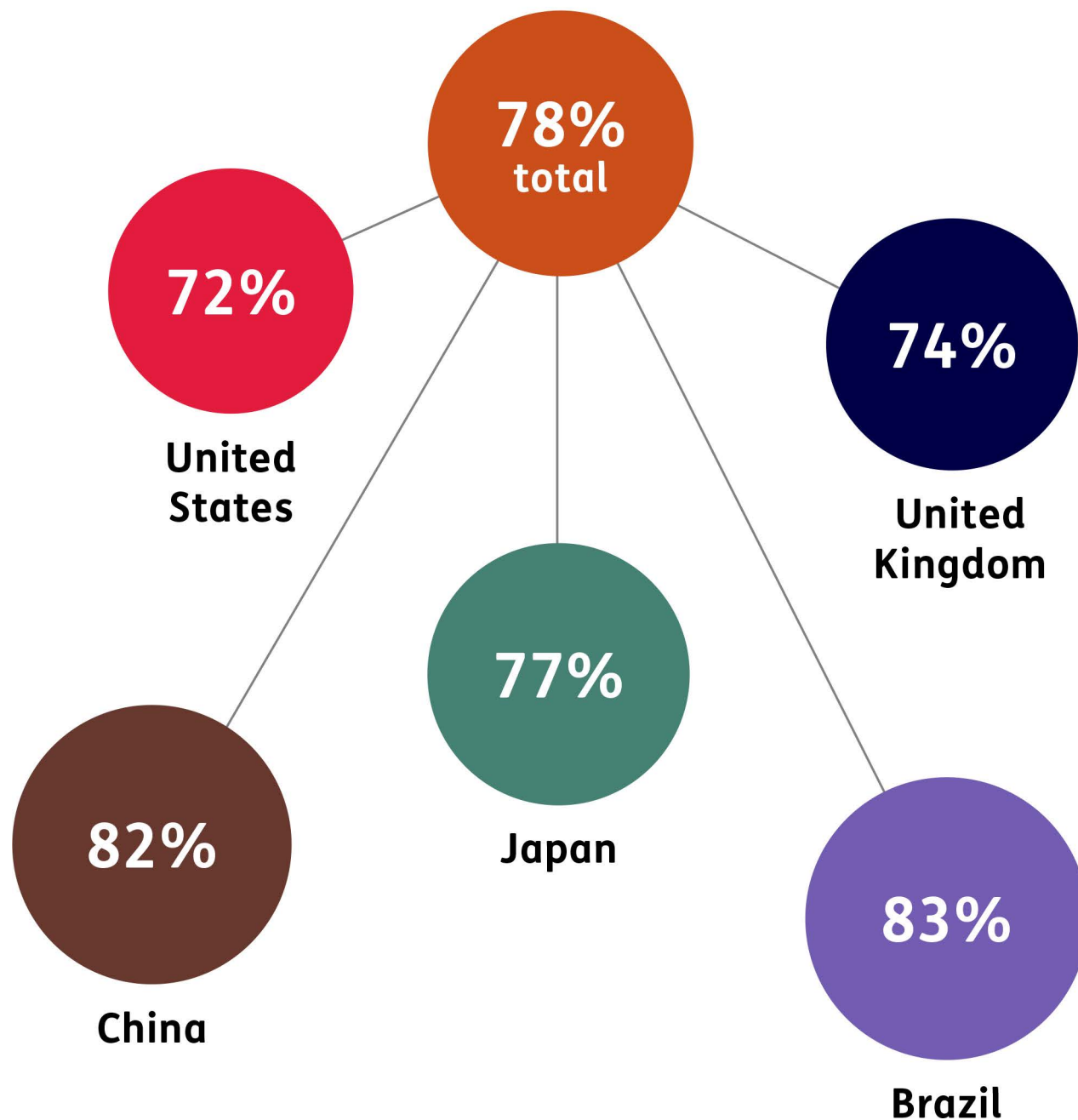
Brands that want to support disadvantaged groups need to deliver long-lasting impact (beyond specific events in the news or celebration days)



Total

# Inclusive brands have universal appeal

It's a good thing when brands step up to support marginalized communities



# Consumers will reward brands that deliver on inclusion

## What would influence your purchase decision?



If the business/brand has made efforts to make its products and services accessible to all



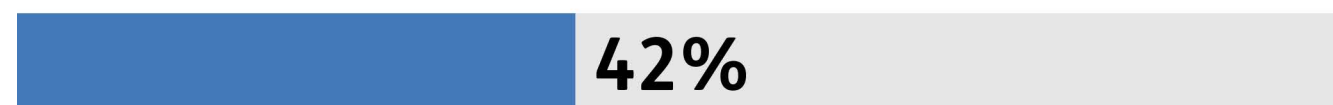
If the business/brand has made strong commitments to equality and social justice



If the business employs a diverse workforce and has an inclusive employment policy



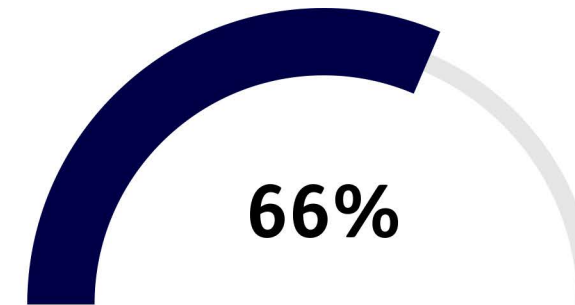
If the business aligns with my point of view on social issues like Black Lives Matter, women's empowerment, etcetera



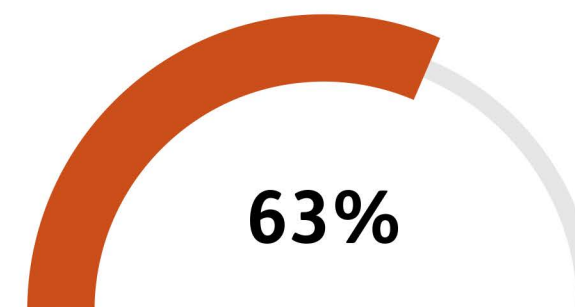
If the brand is owned by women, minorities, people in the LGBTQ+ community, etcetera



Q. When shopping for products or services, how much does each of the following influence your purchase decisions, if at all? % would influence a lot or a little, by total population



When I hear a company speak out on issues of equality and inclusion, it makes me more inclined to buy from them



If brands made more effort to represent people like me, I would be more likely to buy from them

Q. How much do you agree with the following statements? % agree by total population

# Trends

■ Baby's Breath 2 by Charlie French.



# Intersectional storytelling

**Diversity goes beyond the screen as the focus shifts to change behind the scenes too.**

Stories matter, along with who gets to tell them. They shape our reality and perceptions, influencing how we see ourselves, and how we see others. While progress is being made towards diversity both on screen and off, stubborn pockets of inequity remain.

Wunderman Thompson Data (see page 25) finds that people who are neurodiverse, or who have a disability or mental-health condition, are less likely to feel represented on screen. As for the industry, the “Hollywood Diversity Report 2022” finds that women and people of color are underrepresented among directors and in the writing room. The UK’s Diamond diversity monitor, which tracks representation in TV production, reports that disabled people are the most underrepresented group, followed by the over 50s and transgender people.



■ Marvel Studios' Ms Marvel premiered on Disney+.



■ Iman Vellani in the lead role of the Ms Marvel series on Disney+.

Representation can change opinions; the participation of a transgender woman, Linn Da Quebrada, in *Big Brother Brasil 2022* provoked a national conversation on transphobia. Representation can also inspire resilience. Dr Jonathan Paul Higgins, also known as DoctorJonPaul, a writer and social justice educator focused on gender, race and media, tells Wunderman Thompson Intelligence that when they feel represented on screen “it really is a signal to me to keep going. And to let me know that the pain and the strife that I’m currently going through to find my voice in this industry will have a major payoff one day.”

Conversely, tokenistic or stereotyped representation is damaging, shrinking aspirations and even harming life outcomes. Writer Wajahat Ali explains: “At best, you’re a stereotype, a villain, or a sidekick, not a hero. That corresponds to your role in the country and how you’re treated. And so you self-police your dreams and your ambitions.”

Yet research proves that diverse content sells, all over the world: films with more diverse casting enjoyed higher global box office receipts in 2020, according to the “Hollywood Diversity Report 2021.”

Testament to that, Marvel’s *Black Panther*, released in 2018 with a 90% Black cast, is among the highest grossing superhero movies of all time, with global box office receipts of \$1.3 billion. 2022 sees the release of a sequel, *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever*, signaling that the benefits of shifting the gaze are now resonating with Hollywood studios. Elsewhere in the Marvel Universe, another inclusive superhero debuted this June: Ms Marvel, the first Muslim superhero, played by Iman Vellani, who appears in a series of the same name. She follows Makkari, the first deaf superhero, played by Lauren Ridloff, who debuted in 2021’s *Eternals*.



■ **Country Love is Wapah Ezeigwe's directorial debut**

Another box-office hit, Disney's *Encanto*, featured an entire Latino/Hispanic cast and was broadly celebrated for showcasing a non-stereotyped view of Colombian culture. Many of the actors are of Colombian heritage, and the filmmakers are of diverse Latin American descent.

Beyond Hollywood, we're seeing cinema reflect the nuanced lives of marginalized communities. Nigeria's *Country Love* features a femme male protagonist, countering the dominance of more masculine representations of gay men. In India, directors such as Mrittika "Mou" Sarin and screenwriters such as Sulagna Chatterjee are paving the way for mainstream LGBTQ+ stories in Bollywood and beyond. Malaysia is also starting to see a trend towards post-racial film; *Ceroboh (The Screaming Sky)*, directed by Feisal Azizuddin, is a multi-ethnic dystopian survival thriller that offers no explanation why a young woman might have a brother who looks ethnically unrelated to her.



■ **Disney's Encanto features an entire Latino/Hispanic cast (both images).**



Stories are so important. If stories weren't important, you wouldn't see people trying to ban them.

Wajahat Ali, columnist for the *Daily Beast* and author of *Go Back To Where You Came From*



■ Country Love reflects the nuanced life of its femme male protagonist.



■ Above (top): For Channel 4's Black to Front Project, AJ Odudu and Mo Gilligan host *The Big Breakfast*. Above: Channel 4's all-star disabled presenting team at the Beijing 2022 Paralympic Winter Games.

The next step is to level the playing field off screen. Ofcom, the UK's communications regulator, found that in 2020-2021, 59% of those working in broadcasting grew up in a "professional" household, compared to a UK benchmark of 33%, and 72% are White. British broadcaster Channel 4 was founded to cater to a diverse society and has been a trailblazer in this space for more than 40 years. Its Black to Front Project commits to improving industry representation of Black talent and the 2021 launch featured a full day of Black programming, created by Black talent on screen, behind the camera, and led by a senior Black commissioner.

Driving better Black representation in filmmaking is also the goal of the Converse Create Next Film Project, fronted by the activist and actor John Boyega. Fellow actor Riz Ahmed is partnering with the Pillars Fund to up Muslim representation in the entertainment industry via a funding and mentoring initiative.

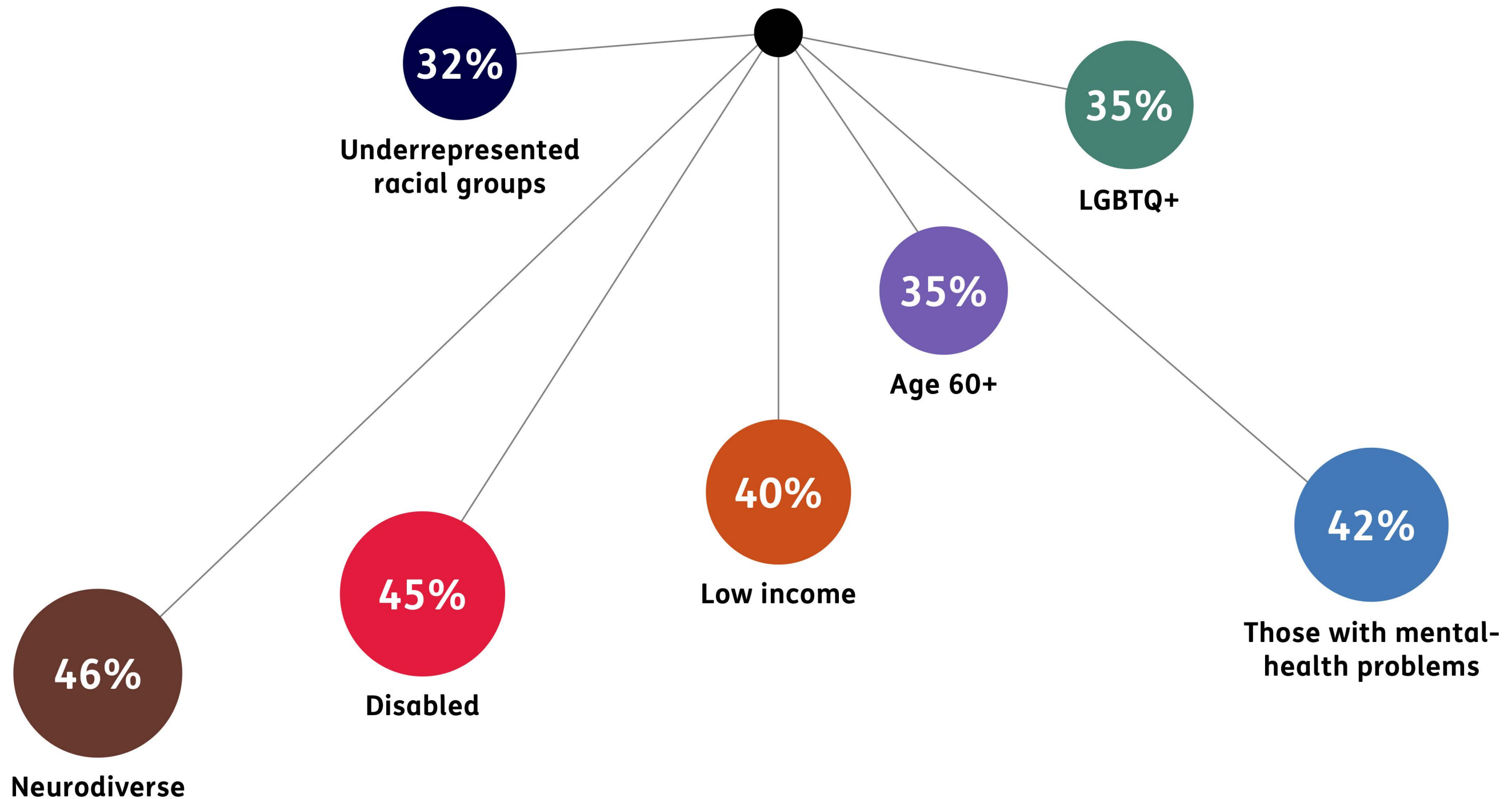
Another Channel 4 first cast an all-disabled presenting team for its coverage of the Beijing Paralympics. Zaid Al-Qassab, chief marketing officer and inclusion and diversity director at Channel 4, says the broadcaster's own research shows that having disabled presenters and characters helps audiences value disabled people more. "It helps them move away from stereotypes and oversimplification to think more about the range and nuances of disability."

### Why it's interesting

Storytelling has a powerful influence on culture and even life outcomes. Ensuring that diverse narratives are centered on screen is crucial, while greater diversity behind the scenes, among content creators, commissioners and financiers, will deliver authenticity and better reflect the real world.

# On-screen representation

People in the following groups who feel their community is underrepresented on screen



# Amplifying diverse creators

**Brands are upping their collaborations with marginalized creative talents, bringing them in as creators, artists and influencers.**

A wave of brands is pledging to work with more diverse talent, uplifting marginalized creators and giving their work a bigger platform.

In April 2022, Häagen-Dazs collaborated with Black illustrator Jade Purple Brown on its new City Sweets range. The Brooklyn-based artist designed custom artwork for the packaging of each new flavor. The campaign is an offshoot of the brand's That's Dazs project, a \$1.5 million commitment to supporting the next generation of marginalized and underserved creators.



■ The Vans 2022 project “These Projects are Ads for Creativity” featured non-profit Stoked (above, top) and Surf Ghana (above).



■ Asian Creators Index by The Secret Little Agency; image credits belong to the respective artists, [asiancreatorsindex.com](http://asiancreatorsindex.com).

In a similar vein, PepsiCo's water brand Lifewtr is driving representation of marginalized artists. Through its "Life Unseen" campaign, the brand commissioned 20 artists to create packaging designs. The campaign was accompanied by a study that explored the diversity makeup of creatives across various industries, highlighting the problem of underrepresentation across art, fashion, music and film. Some brands are even setting targets to address the problem: Vans has pledged to cast and collaborate with 50% Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) artists and ambassadors in its global campaigns.

To showcase diverse creators in APAC, Anak, the Singapore-based design and branding arm of The Secret Little Agency (part of the Mother group),



■ Martyn Sibley is the cofounder of the Purple Goat agency.

launched the Asian Creators Index. The open-access list features both established and breakthrough multidisciplinary creators from across the region, showcasing their talent to brands and agencies around the world. The #YouTubeBlackVoices Creator Class of 2022 initiative supports and upskills 135 Black creators, including 26 from Africa.

Other initiatives are helping brands collaborate with more diverse influencers. Purple Goat agency in the United Kingdom specializes in marketing for the disabled community and connects brands with people with lived experience who can help with campaign relevance and authenticity. People with disabilities make up 15% of the global population, according to the World Health Organization, yet according to our research,

// You need authentic voices in the room. If Beyoncé can find 41 Black horn players, you can find five or six people to come into the room to tell you how to make something authentic.

DoctorJonPaul, writer and social justice educator



■ VMLY&R's Dear Black Talent initiative.

more than half of disabled respondents say they don't pay attention to advertising because it doesn't seem relevant.

Looking agency-side, VMLY&R's Dear Black Talent is one of a number of industry initiatives seeking to open doors for creatives from underrepresented racial groups. The platform, which launched globally in December 2021, aims to help Black people kickstart their careers in the industry.

### Why it's interesting

By working with diverse creators, brands can elevate marginalized talent, support communities and drive better representation, while ensuring that their marketing resonates and hits the right note—a quadruple win.

# Inclusivepreneurs –

**Entrepreneurs from underserved communities are innovating for themselves.**

Microsoft director of inclusive design Christina Mallon explains that the disabled community describe themselves as “the original hackers” because they navigate a world not designed with their needs in mind. Architect Germane Barnes told *Deem Journal* that “most things Black people do these days are invented because they have to be.” Underserved communities are driving a wave of inclusive entrepreneurship, devising products and services that address the unmet needs of their communities.

Inspired by personal travel frustrations, the Canadian photographer and activist Maayan Ziv, who lives with muscular dystrophy and uses a wheelchair, has founded an accessibility mapping app called AccessNow. The startup crowdsources accessibility information about parks, trails and buildings globally.

Costa Rican María Luisa Mendiola founded her MIGA Swimwear brand after feeling self-conscious at the beach because of a foot disfigurement. She aims to overcome the stigma endured by people with disfigurement, disabilities and chronic illnesses. US-based MIGA collaborates with people



■ Disability activist and entrepreneur Maayan Ziv (pictured front row, fourth from right) is the founder of AccessNow.

with disfigurement to design fashionable yet functional swimsuits that encourage the wearer to feel more confident.

Another brand tapping community co-creation is US-based queer wellness brand For Them. The brand, which makes breathable chest binders, hosts a Discord channel with over 3,000 members as of June 2022. The channel hosts discussion to refine existing pieces and conceive new product ideas. This collaborative approach ensures designs truly meet the needs of users.

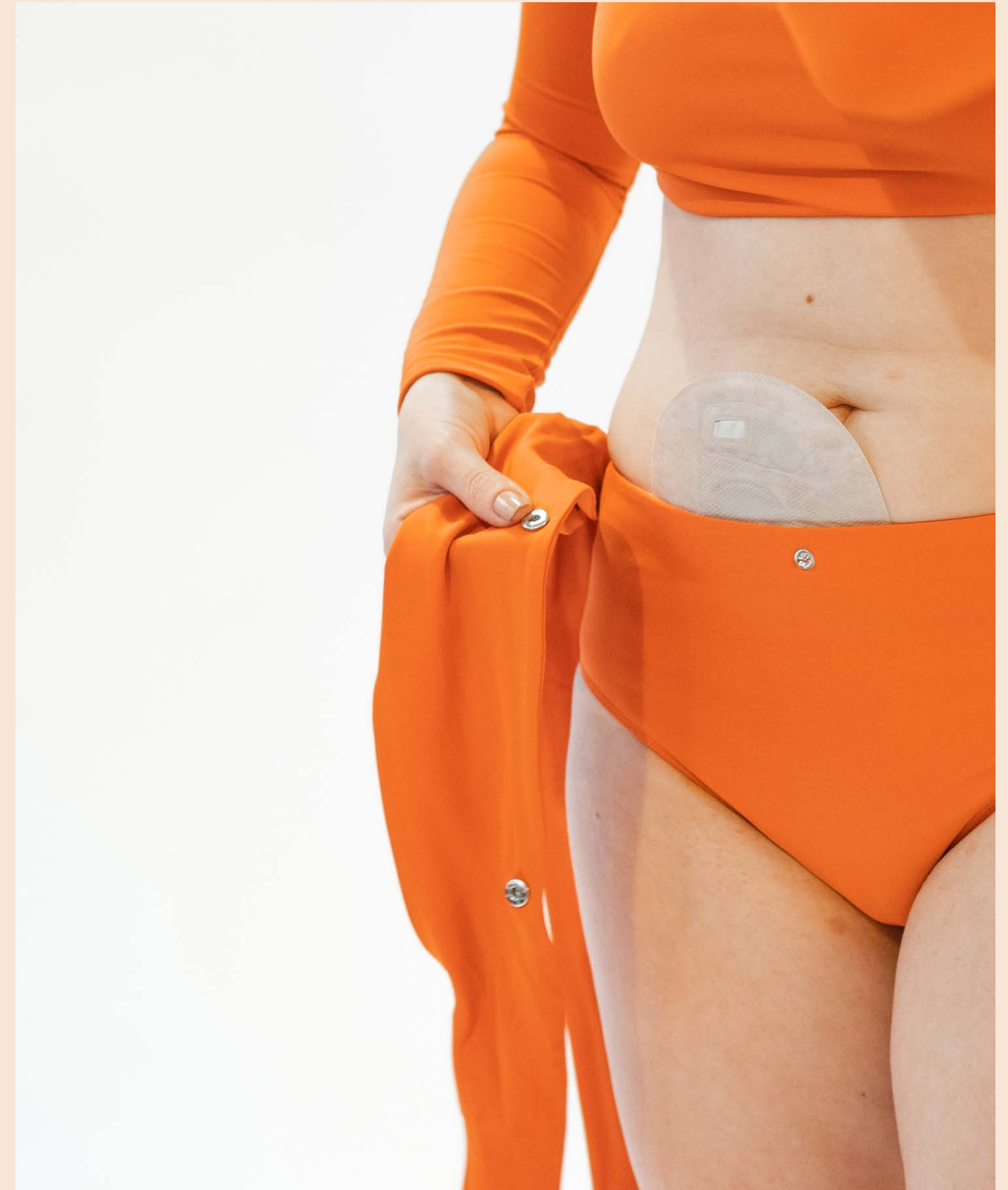
Yet aspiring entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds often struggle to access finance, support services and networks, something the Included VC program seeks to address. The fellowship provides education and mentorship in venture capital for people from less privileged backgrounds. Wunderman Thompson Intelligence spoke to Imtiyaz Basharat, a 2022 venture capital fellow at Included VC, who explains that the program is intended to disrupt the insular nature of VC and drive more inclusive funding, solving “a disconnect between the investors, the founders and the end users.”

A growing trend sees businesses also channel support to inclusivepreneurs. Amazon, Sky, Apple and Uber Eats are among those launching funds backing Black-owned businesses, while Mastercard’s Strivers initiative seeks to raise the visibility of Black female business owners.

### Why it’s interesting

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Inclusivepreneurs are shaping a new generation of businesses, designing with and for their own communities. Companies and brands can offer support by collaborating with them, adding them to supplier rosters, or investing in them.



■ MIGA Swimwear.



■ MIGA Swimwear.

//  
Women who have been excluded from accessing capital have gone on to set up syndicates that focus on female founders, and increase education around helping women-led businesses access alternative forms of capital.

Imtiyaz Basharat, venture capital fellow, Included VC

# Democratizing desire

**Traditional beauty standards are being upended. Brands are empowering all individuals to feel beautiful and desirable.**

Beauty and fashion have long obsessed over youth, fair skin, and conventionally proportioned bodies, but today, consumers are calling for change. Sixty-eight percent of people surveyed globally (and 79% of LGBTQ+ people) believe that beauty standards in marketing and advertising are too rigid.

Some accuse the beauty industry of perpetuating inequity. “While some people have the economic freedom and class standing to engage in beauty work, others are left with the stigma of ‘ugliness,’” wrote Ellen Atlanta for *Dazed Beauty* in a May 2022 article exploring beauty’s class divide. Our research finds that people from low-income households are less likely to feel they have the right to feel sexually attractive than their counterparts in high-income brackets (53% vs. 72%).



■ The diverse range of models for Victoria’s Secret Love Cloud includes MaryAnn Elizabeth.

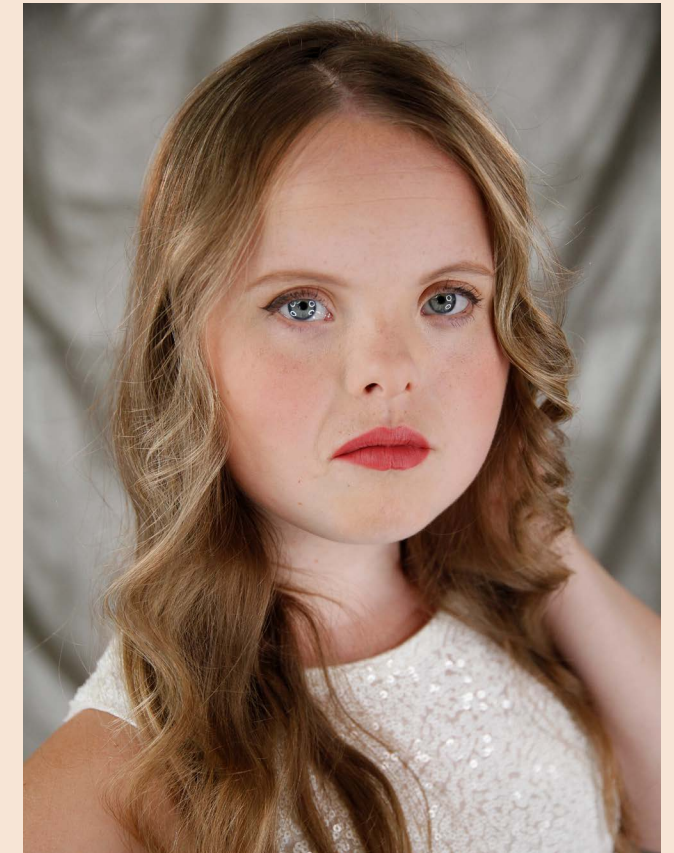


# There is a problem with the desirability of disabled people, especially when society thinks of what is beautiful, what is cool, and what is dateable.

**Christina Mallon, director of inclusive design, Microsoft**

People with disabilities have also long been excluded. Culturally, explains Christina Mallon, director of inclusive design at Microsoft, “there is a problem with the desirability of disabled people, especially when society thinks of what is beautiful, what is cool, and what is dateable.” While inequities clearly remain, brands are working to welcome those formerly erased from this space.

Following in the footsteps of Savage x Fenty’s highly celebrated 2018 inclusive fashion show, US lingerie retailer Victoria’s Secret tapped a diverse cast of models to launch its Love Cloud collection in February 2022. The roster included Miriam Blanco, a disabled actress, transgender model Valentina Sampaio and Sofia Jirau, a Latina with Down syndrome.



■ Model Beth Matthews was signed by Zebedee Talent, which seeks to improve representation for transgender and non-binary people, and those with disabilities.

Another model with Down syndrome, Beth Matthews from Wales, has been signed to the Zebedee agency and has already featured in *Vogue Italia*. In China, lingerie brand Neiwai has launched multiple campaigns around the theme “No Body Is Nobody.” The campaigns elevate the voices of models from different age groups, ethnicities and body sizes “to show the world that all women are innately beautiful.”

For its 2022 Valentine’s “Born This Way” campaign, Indonesian beauty brand Skin Game featured models with facial differences. The models, who had all previously faced discrimination due to their appearance, teamed up with the brand to highlight that beauty is in fact a state of mind. (See our profile of Skin Game model Sabrina Fellani on page 99.)



■ Skin Game, image courtesy of Sabrina Fellani.



■ Harkoi is a leading clean beauty and lifestyle brand.

In India, where skin lightening is big business, clean beauty brand Harkoi is leading the fight against colorism by instilling pride in every skin tone. Avon's "This Is My Color" campaign for its relaunched beauty portfolio aims to educate on the breadth of Black skin tones in Brazil.

And, proving that age should be no barrier to beauty, in February 2022, Canada's 19/99 Beauty launched "There Is No Magic Number," a campaign focusing on expression and embellishment rather than correction. The brand is seeking to shift the narrative on aging by narrowing the generational beauty gap.

But the exclusion of marginalized communities extends beyond representations of beauty into the realm of sexuality, again centering on the question of who gets to be desirable. Historically, people with disabilities have been excluded from the cultural conversation on sexuality.



■ Liberare adaptive lingerie.



■ Liberare adaptive lingerie.

Kelly Gordon, who has chronicled her experiences of sex and relationships as a disabled woman, believes that the problem starts early, with poor sex education. “It’s not how to enjoy pleasure. It’s not consent. It’s not different bodies,” Gordon (profiled on page 101) tells Wunderman Thompson Intelligence. “It should be focused on the different kinds of bodies that you might encounter when having sex. And the different partners that you could be, and should be, open to.”

Some brands are taking on the taboo. In Australia, Bump’n has created the first line of sex toys designed for and by people with disabilities. Launched in December 2021, the Bump’n Joystick has been engineered for people with hand limitations. Also designed by and for the disabled community, Liberare, formerly named Intimately, is disrupting the sexless stereotype of disability with its adaptive lingerie line. The brand, which secured \$1 million in seed funding in February 2022, fills a gap in the market for attractive intimates that are easy to put on.

### Why it’s interesting

For brands in beauty, fashion and wellness, the goal is clear: everyone must be welcome. This means not just broad-based inclusive representation but also proper provision of products and services for all audiences. Dial up inclusive desirability by embracing the full spectrum of diversity.

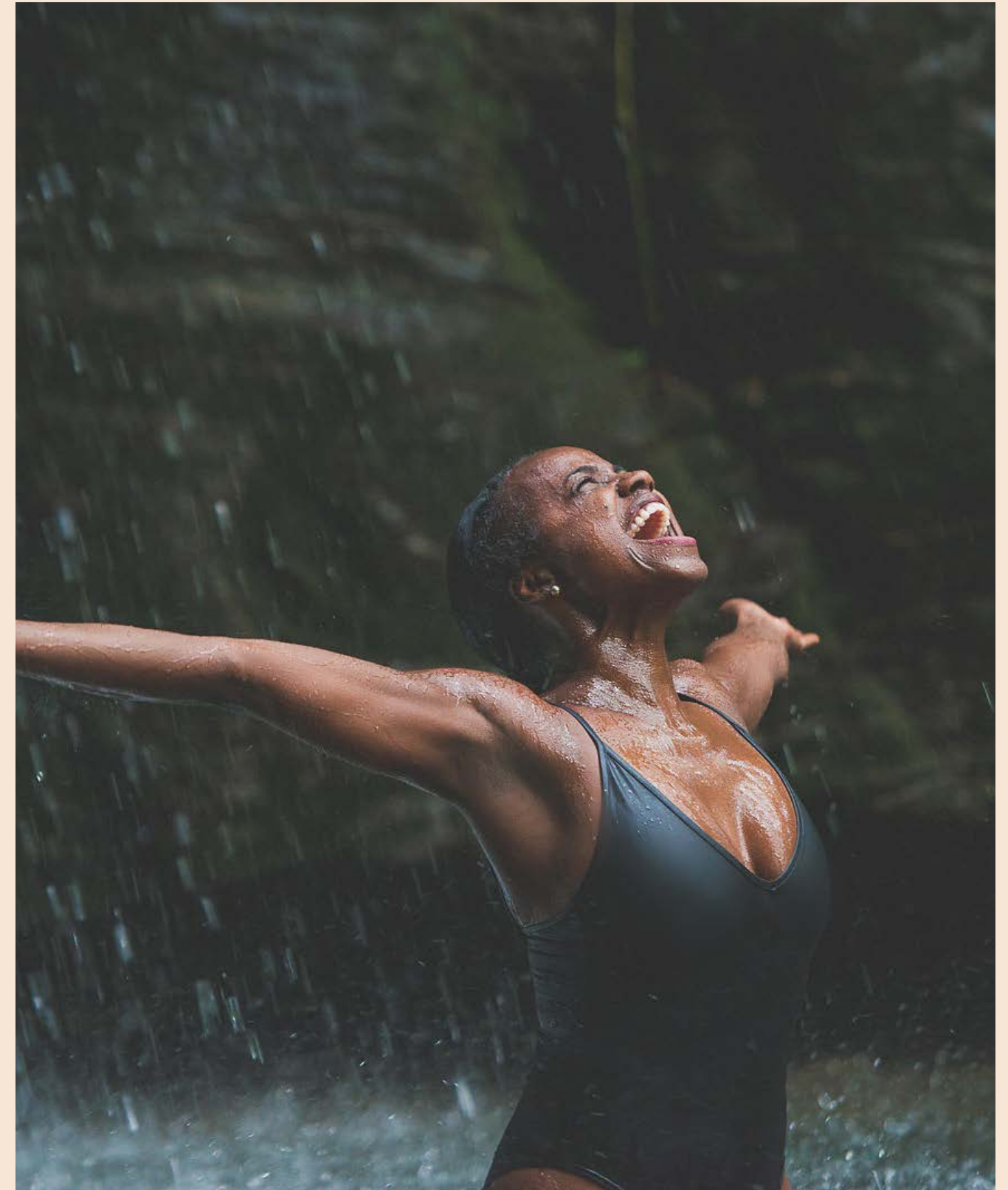
# Revolutionary rest

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**A host of community influencers are advocating a slower approach to life.**

Exhausted from constantly fighting their corner, marginalized communities are giving themselves permission to focus on rest. A growing movement centers rest and recovery as a radical tool to combat trauma, stress and discrimination, and promotes permission to take time for restoring selfcare. Brands need to understand and reflect the nuanced meaning of wellness to truly connect with their audience's needs.

“As a minority, you have to do everything harder, better, faster, stronger,” writer Wajahat Ali tells Wunderman Thompson Intelligence. As a Black, non-binary person, social justice educator DoctorJonPaul echoes this sentiment: “I have to deal with all of the microaggressions around what my success looks like. That’s why I’m tired. It’s not just the work I have to do to be successful. It’s also having to navigate all the little minefields of microaggressions and macroaggressions on top of everything else.”



■ Locations for OMNoire's wellness retreats for women of color include Grenada.



■ OMNoire's retreat in Arizona is a collective, luxury experience.

Marginalized groups the world over must also navigate deeply unequal labor markets. The pandemic exacerbated existing inequities; our data shows that those from underrepresented racial and LGBTQ+ groups were also more likely to have been obliged to take on additional caregiver duties.

On top of that, our data also reveals a cultural burden: 56% of underrepresented racial and ethnic groups, and 45% of LGBTQ+ people, are often required to explain or correct people's misunderstandings about their identity, culture or heritage. In both cases, eight out of 10 find that exhausting.

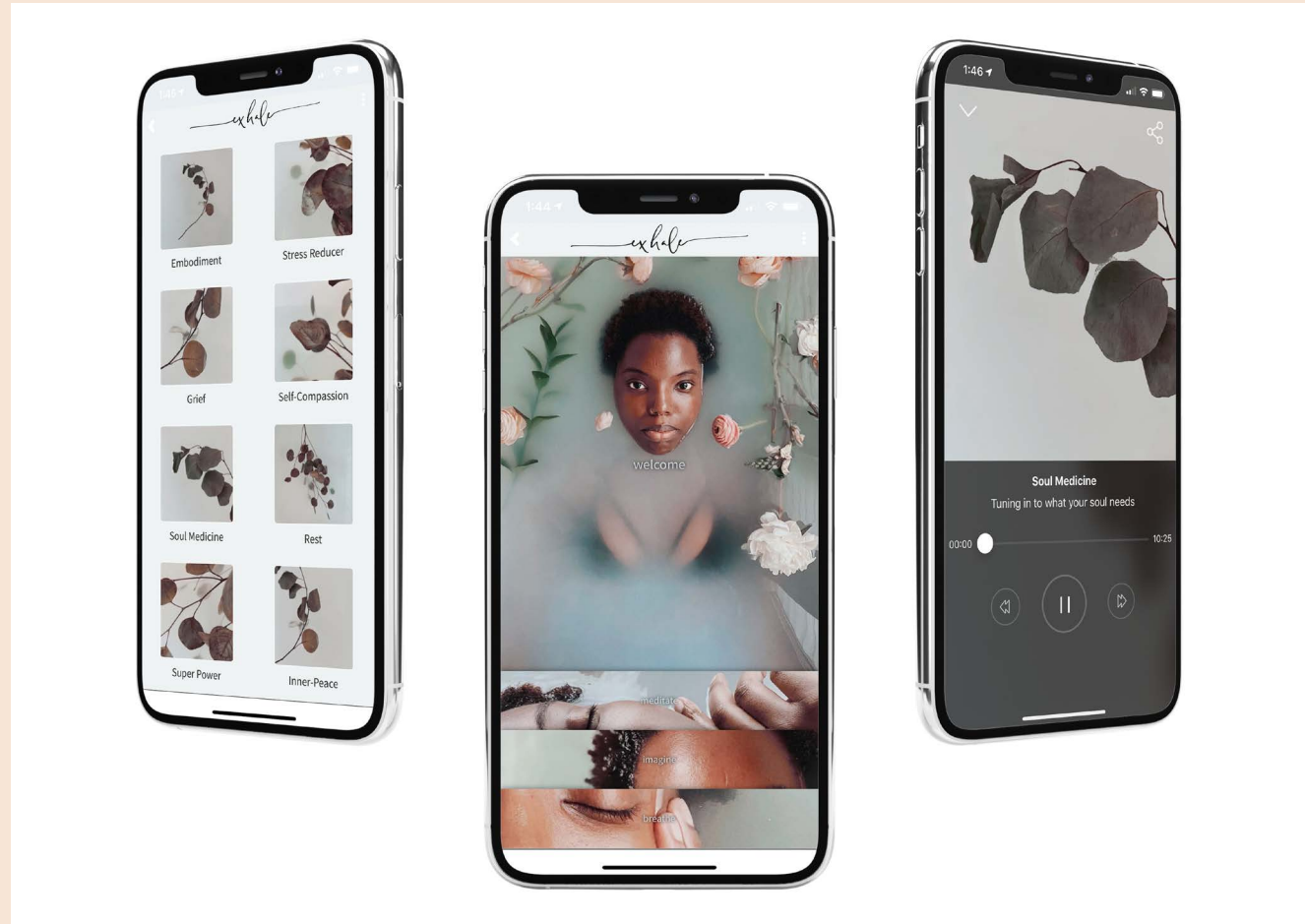
The Nap Ministry is an organization that "examines the liberating power of naps." Founder Tricia Hersey will release her *Rest as Resistance* manifesto in October 2022 in the United States. The book, like the organization, advocates for rest as a form of selfcare that is vital to be able to sustain the fight against systemic issues such as racism.

In March 2022, Planned Parenthood in the United States launched Tone, a playlist consisting of shortform wellness audio content aimed at Black women, Latinas and LGBTQ+ communities. The culturally authentic content encourages listeners to practice selfcare so they can continue fighting for the causes they believe in.

OMNoire takes a collective approach, offering luxury social wellness for Black women and women of color. In 2022, the company will host more than 30 global OMNoire Retreats dedicated to rejuvenation and healing. The Goddess Unplugged Retreat in Tulum, Mexico, invites guests to find the "courage to rest in a world that values hustling and grinding."



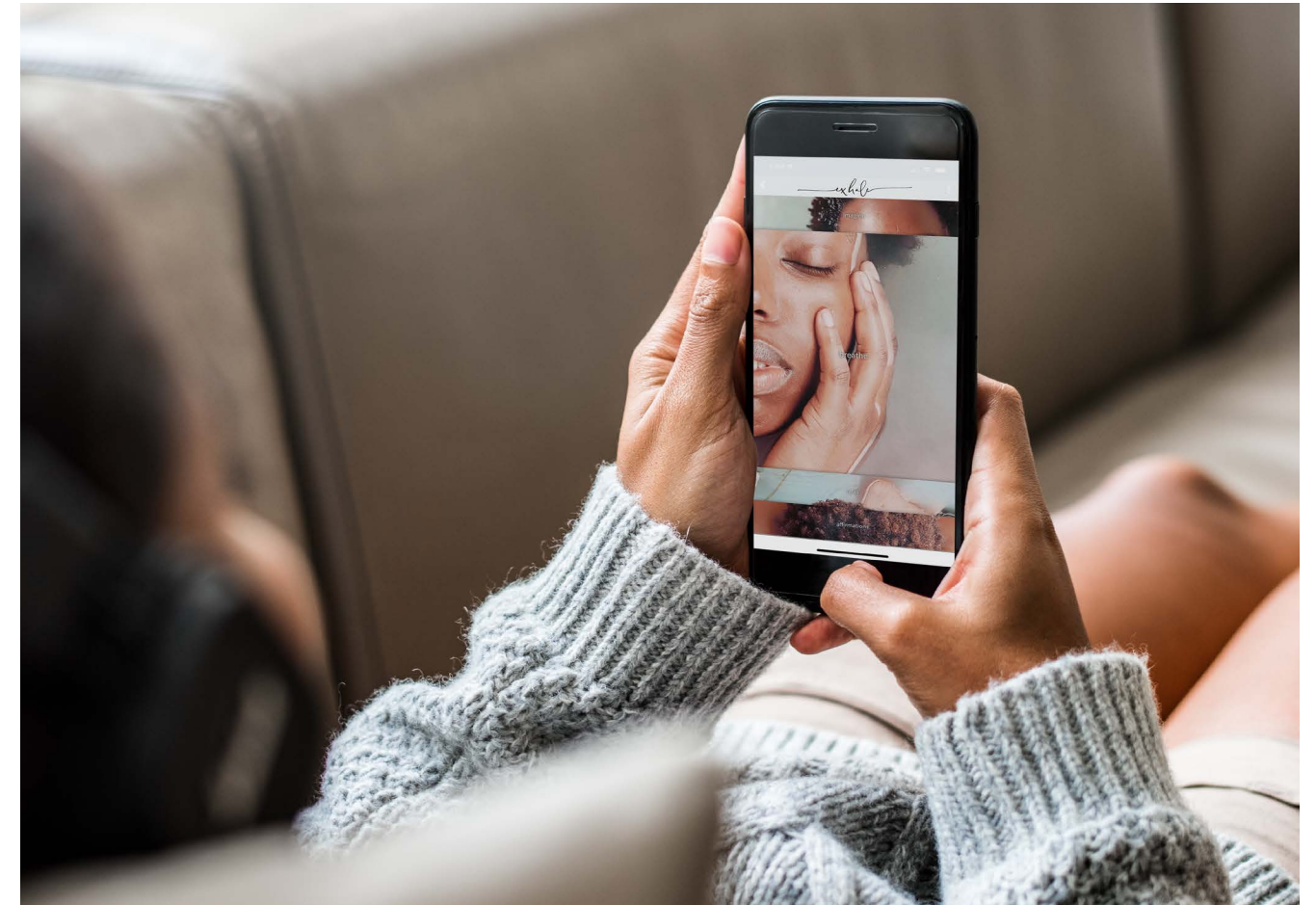
■ Activities at OMNoire's retreats include yoga.



#### ■ The Exhale app.

The Exhale wellness app was launched in response to the social unrest during the summer 2020 to provide a refuge for Black, Indigenous and Women of Color (BIWOC). The app offers guided meditations, affirmations, visualizations and breathwork exercises to promote healing.

Colombian musician and mental health advocate J Balvin will launch Oye (“listen”), a bilingual mental wellness app aiming to empower the Latin community with accessible wellness tools. The app, which will launch in fall 2022 to coincide with Hispanic Heritage Month, plans to offer guided reflections, expressive movement exercises and other wellness practices.



#### ■ The Exhale app.

There's evidence that mindfulness itself might combat inequity. In her 2021 book *The End of Bias*, Jessica Nordell cites early research that finds “subjects who participate in mindfulness meditation show less implicit race and age bias.”

#### Why it's interesting

Mainstream wellness has long catered primarily to White middle-class women, but the media's focus on social justice over the past two years has driven a wave of innovation in tools, programs and community spaces that center the experiences of marginalized people. Authentic, targeted offerings foster a sense of belonging, allowing people to relax, reset and recharge.

# Men's mental-health challenge

Twenty-six percent of men aged 16-29 in the United Kingdom experienced depressive symptoms in 2021, according to the Office for National Statistics. The National Center for Health Statistics in the United States says that 23% of men reported symptoms of anxiety and depression in the first four months of 2022. As the conversation around mental wellbeing grows more mainstream, men's mental health is becoming more prominent. While 57% of our survey respondents say that in their culture men are not encouraged to speak about their emotions, there is a growing movement to tackle men's mental wellbeing with a focus on meditation and mindfulness. In November 2021, Jamaican-born British professional football player Raheem Sterling advocated the benefits of taking time to reflect, becoming a global ambassador for the mindfulness app Headspace.



■ Raheem Sterling for Headspace. Image credit: Lauren Maccabee.

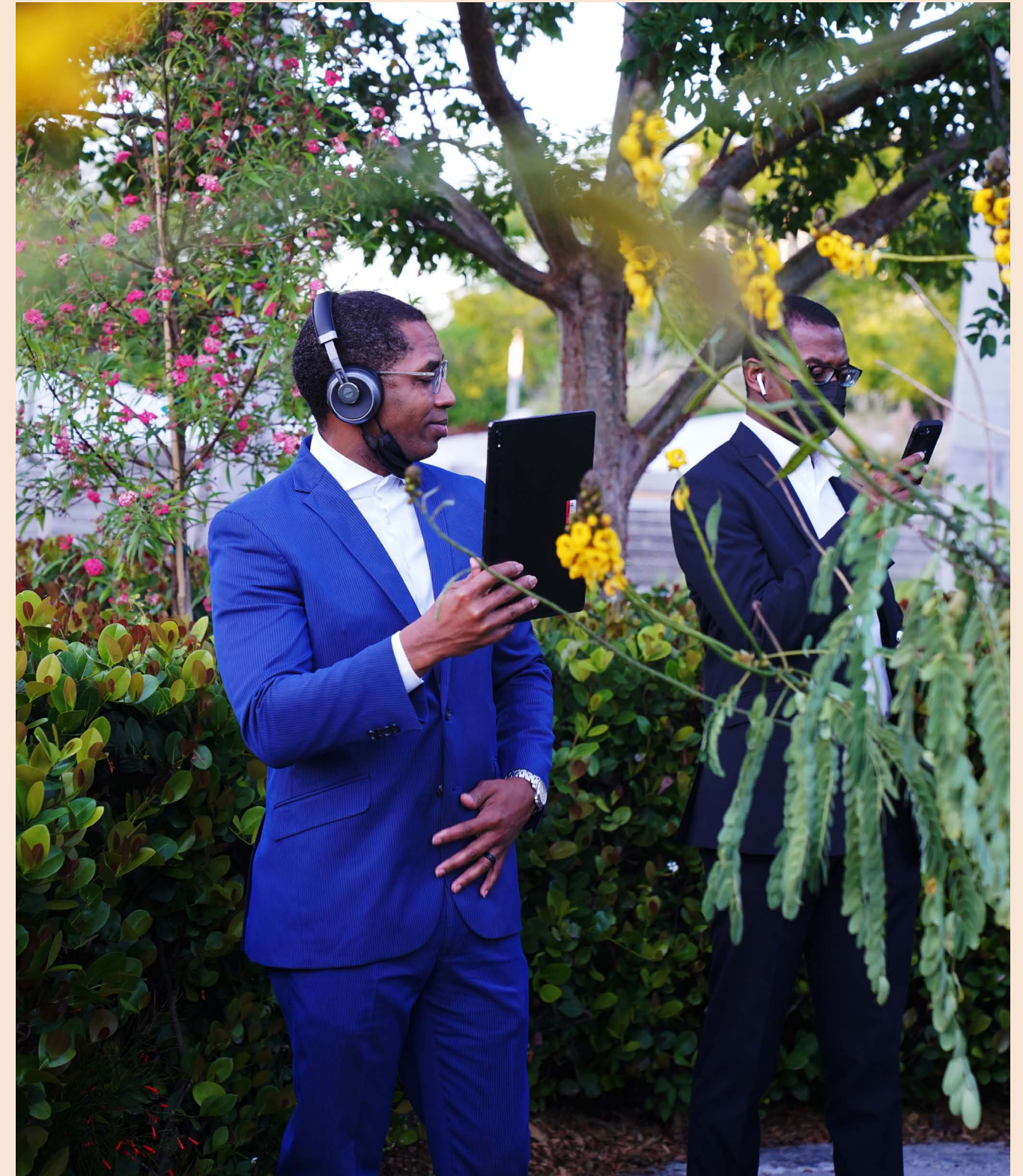
# Digital sanctuaries

**Digital safe spaces that foster connection and self-expression are welcoming a wider array of communities.**

The concept of safe spaces was popularized among the LGBTQ+ community in the 1960s. Today, these are places—physical and digital—where marginalized people can feel free to express themselves culturally and politically without fear of hostility.

Supportive communities do exist on major online platforms like TikTok and Twitch, and China's video-sharing platform Bilibili has a thriving community of LGBTQ+ streamers. But the open internet is prone to toxicity. In our survey, 74% of LGBTQ+ respondents express concern over the lack of safe digital spaces for their community. Along with other marginalized groups, they often face significant hostility online.

In 2021, Nigerian LGBTQ+ users of the audio chat app Clubhouse reported being deliberately lured into homophobic chats. LGBTQ+ and women



■ Breonna's Garden at the Pérez Art Museum Miami.  
Image courtesy of Julian Morales.



■ Breonna's Garden is an augmented reality experience.



■ The Black Trans Archive by Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley includes the 2020 interactive artwork *We Are Here Because of Those Who Are Not*.

streamers on Twitch contend with “hate raids” of coordinated harassment from anonymous users. An April 2022 study from the Center for Countering Digital Hate found that major tech platforms failed to act on 89% of anti-Muslim or Islamophobic posts, even when reported. In response, communities are claiming and defending their own digital turf.

Breonna’s Garden is an augmented reality experience that honors the life of Breonna Taylor, a young Black medical worker who was shot and killed by police in Kentucky in 2020. The project was led by digital art curator Lady PheOnix in collaboration with Ju’Niyah Palmer, Taylor’s younger sister. Palmer was subjected to death threats and vicious hate speech on social media in the wake of her sister’s death. The digital garden was created so that Palmer and her friends and family could explore and share their grief in a hopeful space. A virtual reality version of the experience, which premiered at SXSW 2022, now brings the same healing space to a wider audience.

To combat online hostility towards transgender people, UK digital artist Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley has created the Black Trans Archive, a choice-driven journey that preserves and centers the experience of the Black trans community. As Brathwaite-Shirley explained in an interview with *Deem Journal*, developing and owning the space allows the community to create its own rules and aesthetics. The experience of viewing the archive changes according to identity, and cisgender visitors to the archive must agree to use their privilege to support the community before accessing the work.

Gaming has long battled a toxic reputation. A 2021 study by market research consultancy Reach3 found that 77% of female gamers in the United States, China and Germany have experienced gender-based

# 80%

of those who have heard of the metaverse agree that if a crime occurs (harassment, abuse, violence, theft) in a digital space or the metaverse, it is just as serious as a physical or real-world crime

discrimination; something a new platform, Paidia, is looking to address. Founded by Jill Kenney and Stephanie Pelozo, Paidia is dedicated to an inclusive and respectful gaming experience for women, LGBTQ+ people and their allies. Central to its mission is the requirement for every member to sign the Paidia Pledge, a promise to denounce harassment and abuse of any kind. The site, which launched in late 2021, had attracted more than 20,000 users as of June 2022.

### Why it's interesting

Brands can empower marginalized communities by supporting and elevating the safe spaces they create. Brands should also ensure that the digital spaces in which they operate reflect their values and are safe and welcoming to all users, exerting their influence as advertisers to call for more effective moderation and protections on mainstream digital platforms.



■ Paidia Gaming.

# Access all areas

**Businesses are creating environments that meet the requirements of users with a broad spectrum of needs and abilities.**

In late 2021, Shanghai blogger Zhao Hongcheng posted a video that went viral, detailing her frustrations simply trying to visit a bookstore, a gallery and a comedy event as a wheelchair user. It's a tale that could be told of many cities. People with disabilities often face exhausting barriers to participation in physical experiences.

According to Wunderman Thompson Data, 89% globally want businesses to design physical environments so they are accessible to all. While some countries have accessibility legislation in place, it is no guarantee.



■ American Sign Language banner, Starbucks Signing Store in Washington, DC.



■ Ability Fest. Image courtesy of Chloe Hall.

The landmark Americans with Disabilities Act was passed in 1990, yet in 2021, the *New York Times* reported that violations of its standards are “widespread.” Consider the needs of a wheelchair user compared to a neurodiverse or vision-impaired person: even spaces that boast accessibility certifications may only be suitable for some types of disability.

Creating universally accessible spaces can be done, says Christina Mallon, Microsoft’s director of inclusive design. “It’s really just checking to make sure your experiences are accessible and disability-inclusive—and co-collaborating with the community, because you might be thinking about disability in a way that’s not representative of the community.”

Here’s our round-up of some of the latest accessibility innovation we’re seeing in two key categories: leisure and retail.

### Leisure

Eliza Hull, musician, writer and disability advocate, says brands can unlock opportunity by making venues more welcoming to disabled people. She tells Wunderman Thompson Intelligence that “by creating more access, whether that be having interpreters, captioning, image descriptions, relaxed spaces for autistic people, relaxed events, relaxed shows, you will see a huge difference. We have money to spend, are just like everybody else, and want to be included. Once you start inviting us by creating these accessible parts to your product or event, we will come. Watch it, we will come.”

Hull cites Melbourne’s Ability Fest as a leader in universally accessible events. Founded by the disability activist, tennis champion and Paralympian Dylan Alcott, the music festival offers level pathways, ramps, elevated



■ A digital rendition of the Paris 2024 Olympics Opening Ceremony, which will take place along the river Seine.

viewing platforms, dedicated sensory areas and quiet zones. Ticket holders can also bring along an essential companion free of charge.

For the 2024 Summer Olympics, the Paris organizing committee is planning the most accessible games ever and hopes to be the first to have a common standard ensuring accessibility to venues and events. The opening ceremony will take place along the banks of the Seine, with access for half a million spectators, much of it free.

Other leisure venues are taking steps toward greater inclusion. In 2021, the American cinema chain AMC announced that it would offer open captions at 240 theaters across the country, benefiting not just those with hearing problems, but also people with English as a second language. For kids, the Aventura Parks zipline adventure park in Dubai is the first Certified Autism Center in the UAE (meaning that at least 80% of staff are highly trained to assist autistic people). Children with disabilities can visit the park free of charge.

Yet there's more to be done. At the Olivier Awards in London in April 2022, the disabled actor Liz Carr called for socially distanced COVID-safe theater performances for immunocompromised guests. Wunderman Thompson data finds that 57% agree that people who are disabled or shielding have been sacrificed in the rush to open post-pandemic, rising to 66% of disabled respondents.

### Retail

A growing number of retailers are designing a more independent shopping experience for people with disabilities. In France, Carrefour is teaching employees to use sign language to better welcome deaf shoppers.

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# 83%

**agree brands should not use digital spaces as an excuse to avoid providing accessible spaces in the real world**

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■ Aventura Parks is a Certified Autism Center.

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**We have money to spend,  
are just like everybody else,  
and want to be included.  
Once you start inviting us,  
we will come. Watch it.  
Watch it and we will come.**

**Eliza Hull, musician, writer and disability advocate**



■ The Starbucks Signing Store in Washington, DC.

This follows the supermarket's introduction of a quiet hour that provides a welcoming atmosphere for different sensory abilities, now a growing trend in global retail.

Demensvenligt Danmark (Dementia-friendly Denmark) is raising awareness of shoppers with dementia, providing retailers across the country with materials to educate their store staff, while Japanese grocer Kasumi has launched a mobile supermarket service offer in cities across eastern Japan, catering to elderly people who struggle to make it to stores. In the United States, grocery store Trader Joe's has partnered with Magnusmode, a lifeskills app, to create virtual tutorials that help shoppers with cognitive and intellectual disabilities tackle shopping tasks.

Starbucks is upgrading its commitment to inclusive physical and digital experiences, pledging to opening or converting 1,000 new Community Stores globally by 2030. The company is already piloting speech-to-text technology (which provides a live transcript for customers and staff conducting orders) and order status displays. In March 2021, Starbucks partnered with the Aira app, which connects blind or low-vision customers with live agents who can describe their environment or read out menus.

### Why it's interesting

Brands are leaving money on the table by failing to make their spaces universally accessible. People with disabilities and their friends and families are responsible for \$13 trillion in consumer spending, according to the "Global Economics of Disability 2020" report from Return on Disability. Even small steps, like better staff awareness training or quiet shopping times, could unlock opportunities for growth.



■ Microsoft's Surface Adaptive Kit.

## Digital accessibility

Accessibility isn't just about physical space. Online access is still frequently determined by geography, income and disability status. Densely populated regions have higher levels of internet adoption than rural areas, low-income households can struggle to access higher bandwidths, and people with disabilities face technical obstacles.

In response to the inequalities of internet use, web accessibility, also referred to as e-accessibility is gaining momentum. The process involves reviewing and testing websites and mobile applications for user accessibility.

Developers must build clear and consistent navigation into their websites: this includes ensuring that all interactive links and buttons are easy to identify.

Designers must prioritize readability and legibility by finding the right balance between font size and line length. It's also essential that they create sufficient contrast between background colors and text.

Relying on visuals alone excludes some audiences, so alternative (alt) text should always be included to convey the why and what of visuals and media to individuals who are unable to see them. Sites that apply the relevant accessibility standards will benefit everyone, being more operable for those with low bandwidth, while supporting users with access needs and those using assistive technologies.

# Mass inclusive design

**Accessible products and services are hitting the mainstream as brands target mass distribution.**

Seventy-two percent of global respondents believe that we don't need to fix disabilities; we need to fix the world for disabled people. The business case is evident: over 1 billion people worldwide have a disability, and thus they are the largest marginalized population. On top of this, inclusive design often reaches even wider audiences. The curb-cut effect describes features designed with disability in mind that are welcomed by a wider audience: like curb cuts, which benefit wheelchair-users and also those using bicycles, strollers, or simply walking. Attention to accessibility leads to excellent design.



■ Tommy Hilfiger's Tommy Adaptive range includes childrenswear.



■ Islabikes Joni 20 and Joni 24 bikes are designed for people with dwarfism.

However, as Christina Mallon, Microsoft’s director of inclusive design, tells Wunderman Thompson Intelligence, “A lot of the negative experiences of being a disabled person come from the lack of inclusive products.” Now inclusively designed products are moving from concept stage or limited editions to reach the mass market.

Fashion is blazing a trail with brands from Tommy Hilfiger and Marks & Spencer to Veja launching adaptive fashion collections in recent years. These aren’t just one-offs: Tommy Hilfiger is aiming to have adaptive options across its entire range by 2025. Relieving a key

pain point for amputees, online retailers like Zappos.com in the United States and Tmall in China have added capabilities to their websites that allow people to purchase single shoes from big-name brands like Converse, Reebok and Puma.

In the mobility space, Islabikes, a UK-based cycling manufacturer, has launched its first bike for people with dwarfism and made it available on its website. Easy online purchase options for the Joni bike were crucial to the brand’s target audience, as identified by research with the Dwarf Sports Association UK, which helped to design and test the new bikes. Looking to bring down the cost of its mobility solution, South Korean-based Guru IoT is using digital-twin mapping to help with wheelchair navigation rather than expensive internet-enabled wheelchair sensors.

Bespoke products and inclusively designed packaging one-offs are nothing new, but big-name brands like Kellogg’s are rolling them out across their whole portfolio on a permanent basis. As of 2022, Kellogg’s cereal packaging across Europe will include a NaviLens code readable by a smartphone, allowing ingredients, allergen and recycling information to be enhanced or read aloud by the device, to assist people with visual impairments.

### Why it’s interesting

Inclusive design has never mattered more: the number of disabled people around the world is vast and growing, according to the World Health Organization. By delivering accessible and inclusive products on a mass scale, brands can have meaningful impact on people’s lives. But to ensure design hits the right note, brands should ensure they work with disabled people, not for them.

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# 81%

of people feel that products should be designed with disabled people in mind

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■ The Tommy Adaptive clothing range from Tommy Hilfiger.

# Elevated workplace belonging

**Companies are moving from pledges to real action, to make all employees feel they belong.**

First there was D&I (diversity and inclusion), then there was DE&I (diversity, equity and inclusion) and DEI&A (diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility), and now there is DEI&B (diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging), all aiming to help companies improve the employee experience—and the bottom line. Acronyms aside, more and more businesses are considering how to create a better sense of belonging. According to our data, it's the number one way that a company can demonstrate it is inclusive (see page 60).



■ Gap's Pride T-shirts are one of the ways the brand supports Pride month and the LGBTQ+ community.



■ Above (top): Channel 4's Culture and Anti-Values 2020 report. Above: Gap launched the Personal Advancement and Career Enhancement (PACE) learning program for female garment workers around the world.

### Investing in action

According to Ezinne Okoro, Wunderman Thompson's global chief inclusion, equity and diversity officer, if businesses genuinely want to create and foster inclusion and belonging, they need to pay more than lip service. "Good is really putting action to your words, so not just saying 'we're committed,' but really showing how you're committed. I want you to put a dollar amount next to it. Because it's going to cost."

Investment is about money, of course, but it's also about making an intentional and ongoing commitment to inclusion as a business practice. Social justice educator DoctorJonPaul explains, "I think people think they can just hire a DEI person and that the work is done. So, you've started the work, but what's the long game?"

Pioneering businesses look not just to hiring targets, but also to tackling issues in retention and promotion too. For Zaid Al-Qassab, chief marketing officer and inclusion and diversity director at Channel 4, it's about setting targets at every stage of the employee lifecycle. "You have to know exactly where you are going if you want to not just hire numbers, but also bring a level of inclusion, happiness and retention." Gap Inc, ranked first on the Refinitiv index of the 2021 Top 100 Most Diverse & Inclusive Companies, now publishes a standalone "Equality & Belonging" report, openly sharing progress on its commitments.

Tangible change may depend on what business leaders are willing to put on the line or even relinquish. In some businesses, including Starbucks, Amex and McDonald's, performance on DE&I is now being linked to executive pay and incentives, a policy our panel supports: 76% agree that if businesses don't deliver on inclusivity, leadership should be held accountable.

Going even further, in 2020 Alexis Ohanian resigned from the board of Reddit, asking to be replaced by a Black executive.

### Driving employee equity

Company benefits that are meaningfully aligned with individual needs are another way to signal belonging. Argentinian ecommerce company Mercado Libre is supporting trans employees by paying for up to 70% of the costs of gender reassignment surgeries and legal counseling for name and gender changes. Acknowledging the prohibitive costs of healthcare for the elderly, China's Alibaba pays for an annual check-up for the parents of employees, as well as their children.

A nascent trend sees businesses compensate employees for extracurricular work related to inclusion. Our data shows that one in 10 employees say they do inclusion-related work on top of their day job. Now a handful of businesses, including LinkedIn, Autodesk and Twitter, are paying the global leads of their employee resource groups, on top of their salary.

True equity acknowledges existing disadvantage. In a bid to close the gender pay gap in tech, Netherlands-based Femture, a coding bootcamp, gives female-identifying participants a 14% bonus on top of a competitive salary.

### Belonging culture

Hiring targets are futile if employees don't feel they belong. Our global survey shows that 69% of employees don't feel able to freely express all aspects of their identity at work (disclosing their sexuality, disability, or class background, for instance). One in 10 is considering switching jobs because they feel they don't belong in their current workplace.

Yet there are many straightforward actions companies can take to build trust. For example, gender identity can be a tricky subject to broach; misgendering, whether on purpose or accidentally, is hurtful, according to a third of LGBTQ+ people in our study. Gently encouraging disclosure, for instance by offering staff optional nametags featuring gender pronouns, as Marks & Spencer in the United Kingdom and Alaska Airlines in the United States have done, is a possible solution.

According to Leng Montgomery, senior DE&I consultant and LGBTQ+ and Trans\* specialist, actions like this can be impactful: "Workplaces need to



■ The Femture coding bootcamp for female tech talent.



■ Alaska Airlines introduced an optional pronoun badge for employees.

**Good is really putting action to your words and showing how you're committed. I want you to put a dollar amount next to it. Because it's going to cost.**

**Ezinne Okoro, global chief inclusion, equity and diversity officer, Wunderman Thompson**

Did you know...

Nearly 900,000 women have quit their jobs due to the menopause?

Support the campaign today!

Supported by 

#MenopauseWorkplacePledge



■ The Wellbeing of Women charity launched the Menopause Workplace Pledge.

implement active things that make it very clear that you are welcome. Even in job applications, for example, making it clear that gender identity, but also gender expression are welcome, like seeing Mx as an option.”

Ant Jackson, creative head at Space, advocates a culture of psychological safety: “Make sure you're creating an open culture where people don't feel ashamed if they get something wrong. Encourage people to share diverse perspectives and celebrate these. It will encourage others to do the same.”

This means initiating sensitive conversations that foster learning and understanding. More than 600 UK companies have signed up to the Menopause Workplace Pledge, which trains managers and employees to actively support affected workers. For employees with disabilities, seven UK broadcasters, including the BBC and ITV, collaborated on access and inclusion passports to encourage them to share their adjustment needs with line managers. Crucially, the passports are transferrable, so if an employee moves to another team, they don't need to repeat the process.

Finally, people need to feel that their opinions matter, says Rhonda Hadi, associate professor of marketing at the Saïd Business School at the University of Oxford. “Diversity means little if people don't feel they have a voice in the organization or don't feel included enough to speak up and have their opinions heard.”

### Why it's interesting

To win the race for talent, policies and pledges will not be enough; action, accountability, meaningful investment and measurement are all necessary to create an inclusive company culture in which everyone feels a sense of belonging.

## Elevated workplace belonging

### What inclusive companies offer (top three ranking)

|    | Brazil       | China        | Japan       | United Kingdom | United States |
|----|--------------|--------------|-------------|----------------|---------------|
| 01 | Belonging    | Belonging    | Adjustments | Belonging      | Belonging     |
| 02 | D&I policies | Compensation | Reporting   | D&I policies   | D&I policies  |
| 03 | Adjustments  | D&I policies | Belonging   | Adjustments    | Adjustments   |

■ ... makes everyone feel like they belong

■ ... has clear policies on diversity and inclusion

■ ... commits to delivering reasonable adjustments (online and physical) for employees with disabilities

■ ... compensates employees for doing work to promote equality (eg via employee resource groups)

■ ... provides transparency around diversity targets and continuously reports on performance

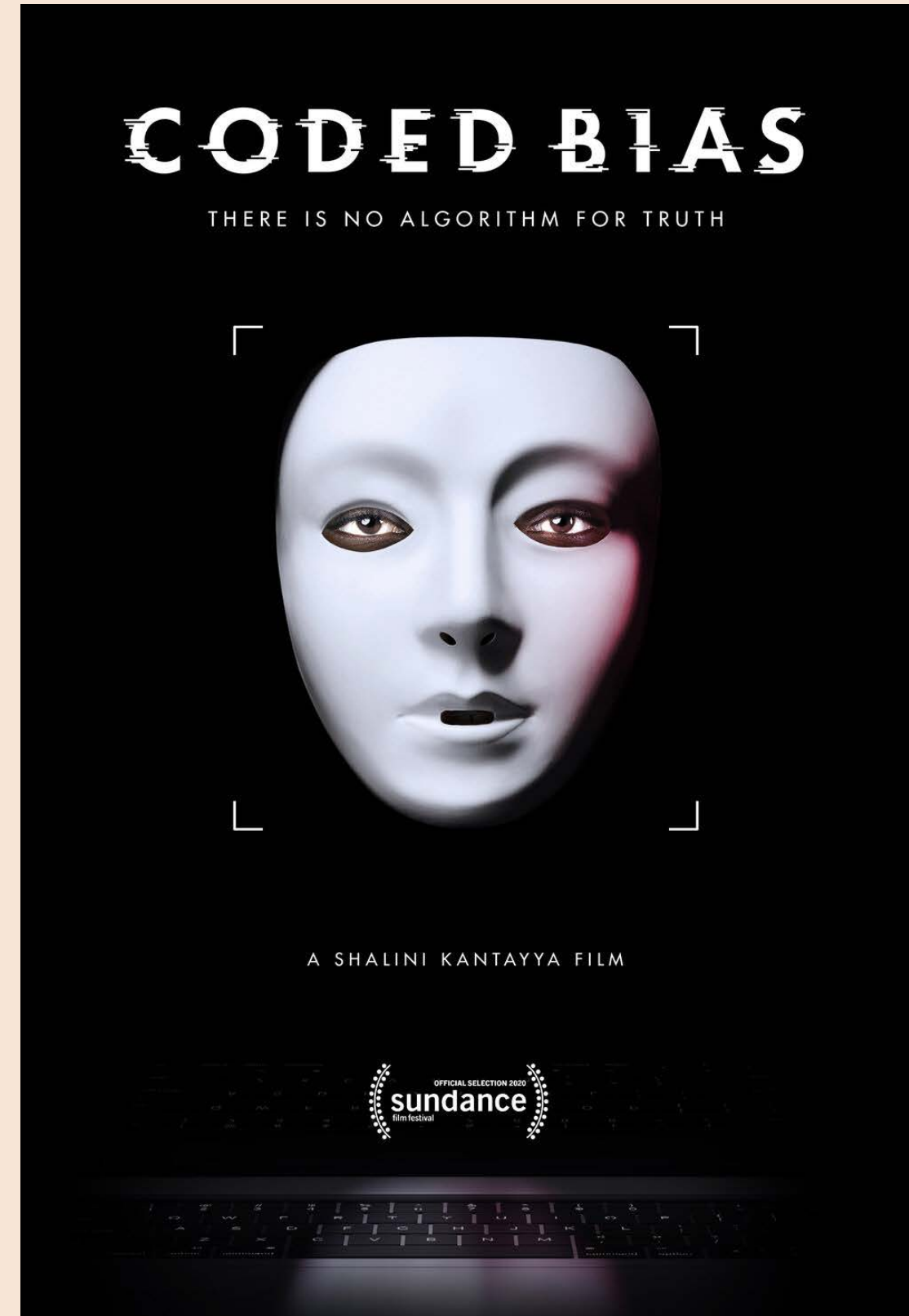
# Unbiasing data

**Brands and technology companies are taking steps to address, correct and prevent data bias.**

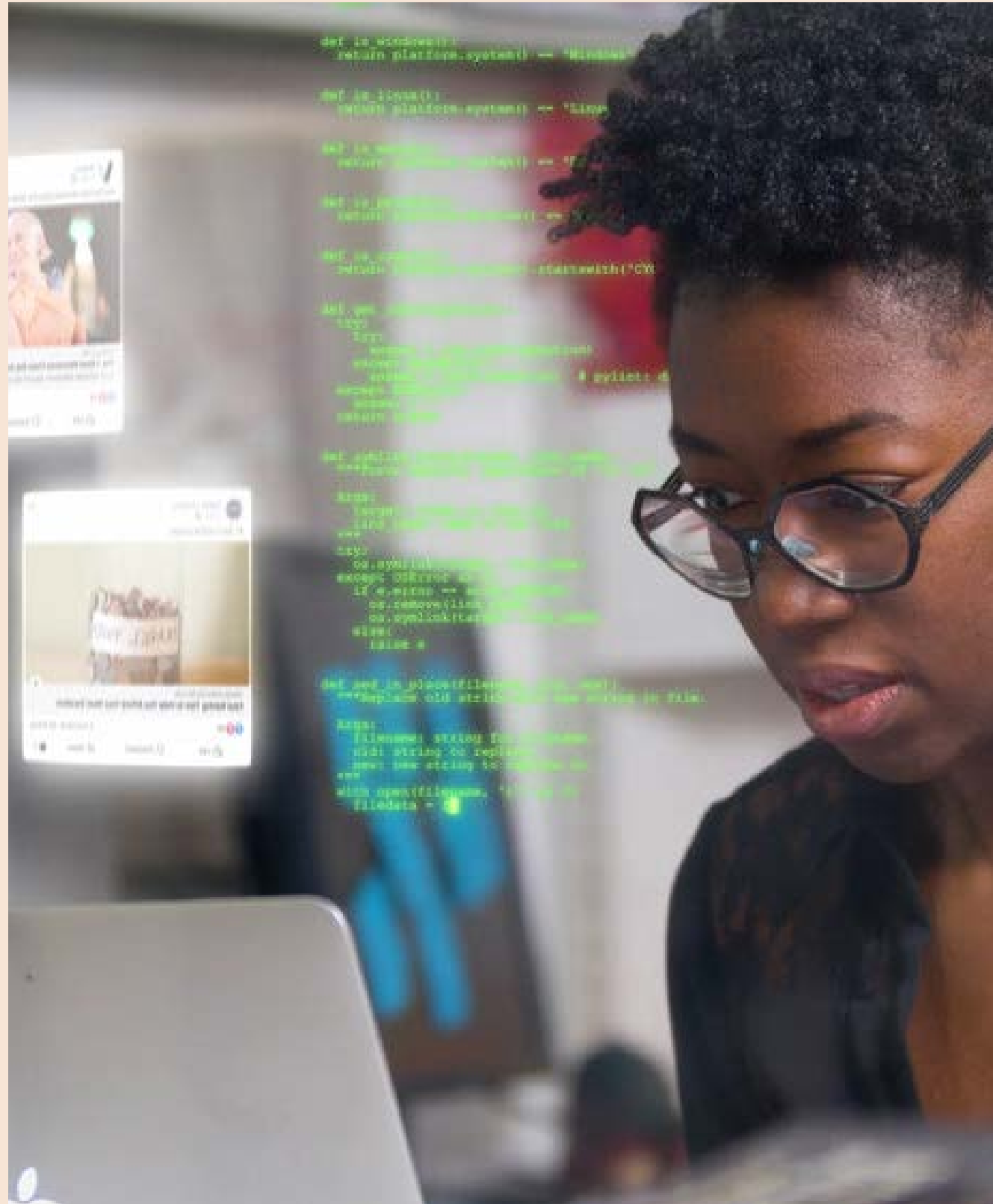
“Data embeds the past,” says mathematician Cathy O’Neil in the 2021 documentary *Coded Bias*, a 7th Empire Media production streamed on Netflix. Human bias is natural—and reproduced in algorithms it can be harmful, especially to those already subject to discrimination. Data-insight corporation Gartner predicts that in 2022 “85% of artificial intelligence (AI) projects will deliver erroneous outcomes owing to bias in data, algorithms or the teams responsible for managing them.” A growing movement looks to correct inequitable data by recruiting diverse coders and counteracting bias from within its web of algorithms and artificial intelligence.

## Correcting the data

In recent years researchers have raised the alarm on discrimination rooted in algorithms and data sets, from racism to ageism to ableism. The 2022 BBC documentary *Computer Says No* demonstrated how recruitment algorithms show bias against neurodiverse candidates, while in 2021, Twitter’s image cropping algorithm was found to favor younger, slimmer faces with lighter skin.



■ The Coded Bias documentary explores the effect of inequitable data.



■ Coded Bias features computer scientist Joy Buolamwini.

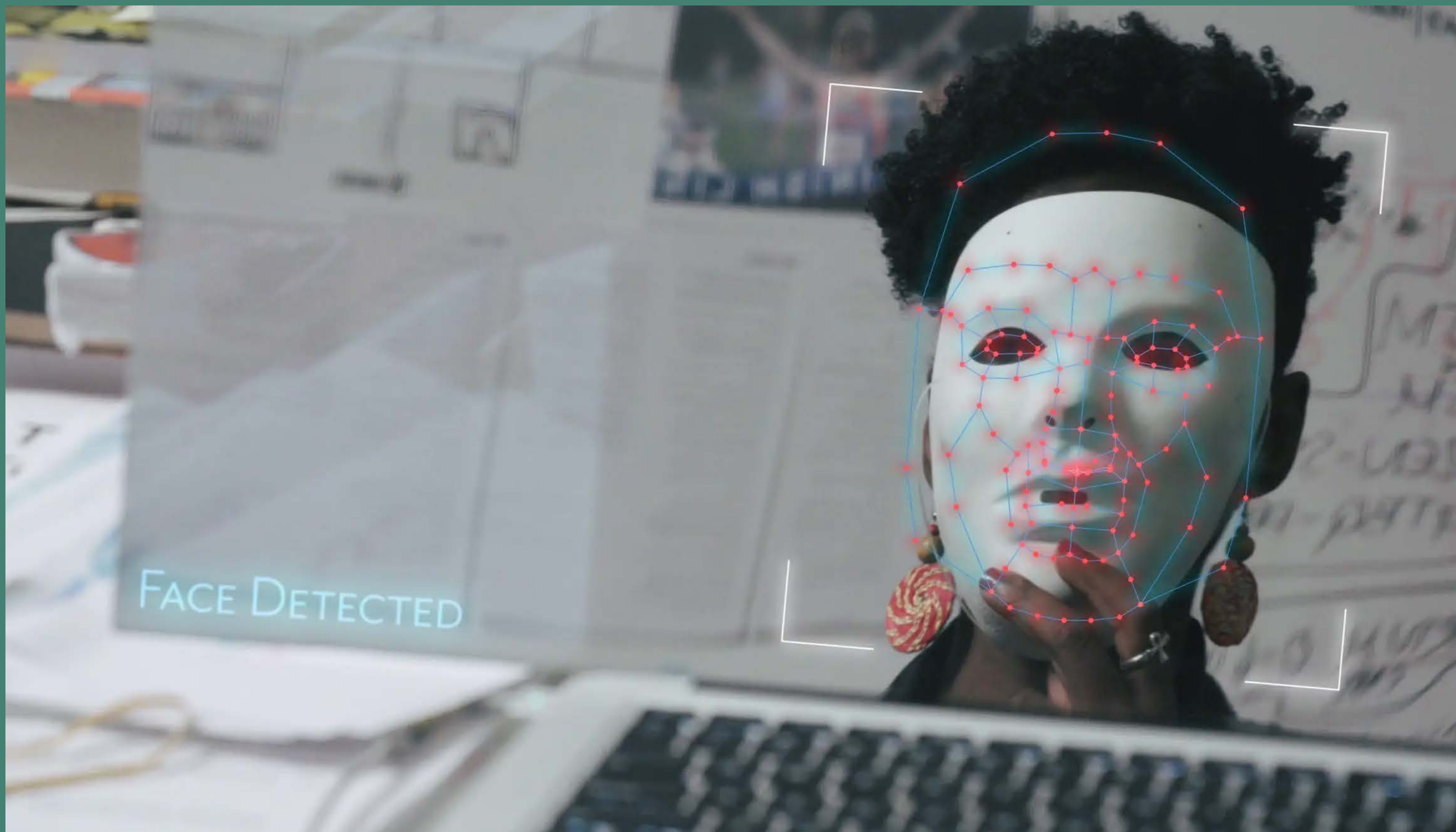
Algorithms used for predictive policing and sentencing in the United States have been repeatedly accused of racial bias.

Despite this, 71% of our survey participants have faith that technology could be a way to solve bias and discrimination in society. Academics from the Australian National University and Harvard's Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society have begun that work by forming the Humanising Machine Intelligence project. Jenny Davis, chief investigator on the project, tells Wunderman Thompson Intelligence that its theory of "algorithmic reparations acts on the assumption that, instead of ignoring, erasing or flattening demographic difference, we should pay very close attention to it. We should surge resources intentionally to those who have been traditionally disadvantaged." Companies must "rethink machine learning and AI technologies in ways that are more inclusive and equitable," says Davis.

To combat gender and race inequities in AI, inclusivity-focused beauty brand Olay is partnering with Algorithmic Justice League founder Joy Buolamwini to triple the number of Women of Color in STEM by 2030. Through the "Decode the Bias" campaign, Olay will assess its Olay Skin Advisor tool for bias, and is also working with the nonprofit Black Girls Code. Buolamwini states: "We want the world to remember that who codes matters, how we code matters, and that we can code a better future."

### Protecting the data

Further criticism of AI development centers on its skew to countries that already dominate Big Tech. New Zealand Indigenous couple Peter-Lucas Jones and Keoni Mahelona's goal to revitalize the Māori language led to advances in natural-language processing and data sovereignty:



■ In Coded Bias, Joy Buolamwini wears a white mask so her face can be detected.

the latest example of Indigenous resistance, and pursuit of control of their own data. “Data is the last frontier of colonization,” Mahelona stated in the *MIT Technology Review* April 2022 series on AI colonialism.

Facing the challenge, governments around the world are now considering legislation. This year, a revised US Algorithmic Accountability Act was proposed, to “require private companies to assess the impacts of automated systems, ensure transparency, and empower consumers to make informed critical decisions.” The European Commission has proposed a legal framework of AI, which could go into effect by the end of 2022. In September, the “Promoting Gender Equality in Artificial Intelligence Algorithms” report was released and reviewed in Shanghai, where a panel of data technology experts, including representatives from Xinye Technology Group, discussed the next steps to address gender inequality in AI algorithms.

### Moving forward

Davis believes technology can form part of the solution to some instances of data inequality, but involving people from marginalized communities is vital. “The biggest thing that companies can do is centralize and fully integrate voices from underrepresented groups. This means not just consultation, but also empowerment into leadership positions in ways that tangibly—and financially—value diverse perspectives,” says Davis.

### Why it’s interesting

With conscious programming, algorithmic accountability, and more diversified coding personnel, perhaps technology could bring an end to its own bias. For brands, keeping a critical eye on the data sets they leverage is crucial.



■ Joy Buolamwini for the DecodetheBias campaign, image courtesy of Olay.

# Meta-inclusion

**The metaverse is primed for ultra-connective engagement, but can brands ensure virtual utopias that are inclusive, diverse, and accessible to all?**

According to Wunderman Thompson Data, 82% of those who have heard of the metaverse believe that companies should make special efforts to ensure digital worlds are accessible to everyone.<sup>1</sup> Seventy-one percent believe brands need to work just as hard to create inclusive spaces in the metaverse as they do offline. With more representative avatars, more diverse digital creators, and more accessible platforms for users with different abilities and resources, the metaverse could truly become a place for all. Christina Mallon, director of inclusive design at Microsoft, believes this is a great opportunity, but, she says, “it really falls on the companies that want to partake in the metaverse that they do the research and put the time in to ensure that it’s accessible.”



■ The Pastel Persons NFT project.



■ **A metaverse focus group at Wunderman Thompson.**

Unilever deodorant brand Degree acted on its pledge to provide accessible, inclusive products and spaces by hosting a marathon in the metaverse, advocating for accessibility in the virtual realm. Participants in the Degree Metathon could create avatars with a range of prosthetics, running blades, or a wheelchair to take part in the race, which had accessible ramps and considerations for avatars with different abilities.

Participants in a metaverse focus group led by Wunderman Thompson SONAR™ showed interest in similar instances of representation and visibility for their avatars. One female participant aged 23 called for “the option to have a wheelchair or to represent yourself authentically in whatever way that looks like to you.” She went on to say, “It’s really important to have different representations. Black hairstyles are typically very underrepresented or very basic.”

Initiatives to address this are already in motion. The first free feminist, anti-racist 3D model database is currently under development by Open



■ **Degree Metathon advocates for accessibility in the virtual realm.**

# 57%

**of those with lower incomes who have heard of the metaverse believe it will be elitist, only open to those who can afford to access it**



■ The Pastel Persons NFT project.

Source Afro Hair Library. Expected to launch in June 2023, it will record 3D models of Black hair textures and styles for avatar design and development. Many NFT projects, such as the female-led Pastel Persons and NFT strategy leader Daz 3D's Non-Fungible People, are releasing deliberately diverse collections created to ensure the representation of a range of likenesses in the metaverse.

Rhonda Hadi, associate professor of marketing at the Saïd Business School at the University of Oxford, tells Wunderman Thompson Intelligence that many issues around diversity “stem from a people problem: who is developing and creating?” According to a 2021 report by Statista, 61% of game developers were men, 30% were women, and only 8% identified themselves as non-binary, gender fluid or transgender.

In the quest for inclusive virtual worlds, Maxine Williams, Meta's chief diversity officer, announced a plan in February 2022 to invest \$50 million in partnerships that will incorporate inclusive perspectives into the tech giant's future immersive experiences. The organizations participating in the research initiative include the Africa-based Electric South immersive media lab, Women in Immersive Tech, Howard University (a historically Black university), Seoul National University, and the University of Hong Kong.

### Why it's interesting

Daren Tsui, CEO of the blockchain innovation company Together Labs, believes “creating a new online society but doing it right from day one” is possible in the metaverse. Brands must continue to pool their expertise in the digital realm to collect data, invest in solutions, and take actionable steps to build a truly collaborative and inclusive digital space from the get-go.

**//**  
**To build inclusivity, one, understand that that's what you're trying to do from the beginning. And two, really centralize value and set as leaders the people who are probably most at risk of being excluded.**

**Jenny Davis, senior lecturer in sociology, Australian National University**

# The wokelash

**Across the world, a backlash is building in response to gains by marginalized groups. For brands, taking a political stance will not be plain sailing.**

“We’re in for a rough ride,” writer Wajahat Ali tells Wunderman Thompson Intelligence. As brands step up to visibly support marginalized groups, they may face opposition.

Around the world, the rights of women, LGBTQ+ people, and racial and ethnic groups are being challenged. Books are being banned from schools. Many countries are seeing a worrying rise in hate rhetoric, or worse, hate crimes. In June 2022, the UN proclaimed the first International Day for Countering Hate Speech to raise awareness of the problem.

Brands face mounting pressure to advocate for the rights of marginalized groups in some countries. Fifty-nine percent of our respondents say brands should be genuinely political on issues like race and inequality, rising to 69% of generation Z.



■ Trans Day of Visibility by We Are Fluide features the trans model Sophia Hernandez. Image courtesy of Landyn Pan.



# It's not all plain sailing, even though companies are becoming more attuned to it. There are worrying trends in terms of homophobia, racial hate crimes and misogyny.

**Zaid Al-Qassab, chief marketing officer and inclusion and diversity director, Channel 4.**

The pressure is not just coming from consumers, but company employees too, as evidenced by staff walkouts over political issues at Disney, Netflix, Exxon and others. Shareholders are also holding bosses to account; during Disney's spring 2022 AGM, 59% of shareholders demanded that the company report on gender and racial pay gaps.

Yet brands that do act may face opposition, particularly from right-leaning governments. When Disney promised to back the repeal of Florida's Parental Rights in Education bill (known as the Don't Say Gay bill), the local government passed a law which revoked the company's long-standing tax privileges in the state. In Texas, state legislature has threatened to prevent

Citigroup from underwriting municipal bonds in the state unless it reverses its policy to cover travel expenses for workers who seek out-of-state abortions, a key reproductive rights issue across the US in the wake of the overturning of Roe v Wade.

Further, consumers are not universally supportive of brands that speak out on social issues: 29% of panelists strongly agree that society is "obsessed with being woke these days."

Can brands walk the line? Some are choosing not to. Netflix has told employees if they don't like the company's content they can quit, following a staff walkout in 2021 from staff who objected to the anti-transgender views aired in a Dave Chappelle show.

But perhaps companies can't afford not to take a stance: 61% of panelists say they will only work for a company that has made strong commitments to inclusion. This rises to 69% of gen Z, 70% of people who identify as neurodiverse, and 77% of LGBTQ+ respondents, suggesting that it may be a prerequisite for businesses to hit their DE&I goals.

## Why it's interesting

Brands who take a political stance on behalf of marginalized communities may face backlash. To mitigate opposition, it could be helpful to frame the conversation in terms of the universal gains, by explaining that equality is not a zero-sum game and that we can all benefit in a fairer world. Leng Montgomery, senior DE&I consultant, advises brands to "be unapologetic" in their support and to prepare for objection handling: "You're going to have a lot of angry wasps, so think about what cups you're going to have ready to pop them under."

# Conclusions

# Why inclusion matters

**Diverse, equitable, accessible and inclusive businesses deliver multiple advantages, but those who dwell solely on the financial benefits are missing a trick.**

**Most importantly, it's the right thing to do**

As Ant Jackson, creative head at Space, explains: "Whether directly or indirectly, many brands have profited from the exploitation of marginalized communities for centuries. The world's economy isn't equal, the privileged get more privileges, and there are massive systemic issues that will take years to tackle. We shouldn't implement true inclusion because it's better for business, we should implement true inclusion because it's better for everyone."



■ The Drag Syndrome drag troupe features performers with Down syndrome. Photography by Scallywag Fox.

//  
**I always tell people who reject diversity, not only is diversity delicious, literally, it's smart business.**

**Wajahat Ali, columnist for the *Daily Beast* and author of *Go Back To Where You Came From***

### **Inclusive design is simply good design**

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History shows that inclusive design can bring universal benefits and unlock more opportunity. Devices and technologies originally created for people who need adjustments often make life easier for all of us. In her book *Mismatch: How Inclusion Shapes Design*, Kat Holmes, SVP of product design at Salesforce, cites the example of curb cuts, which were originally designed to make sidewalks and crossings accessible for wheelchairs, but also benefit people with strollers, suitcases or bicycles. As the saying goes, "When you design for the edges, you get the middle for free."

### **People feel closer to brands that are inclusive**

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Rhonda Hadi, associate professor of marketing at the Saïd Business School at the University of Oxford, who has partnered with the Unstereotype Alliance on research, tells us that "people feel closer to brands that are more inclusive in their advertisement portrayals." In fact it's becoming an expectation: 60% (and 71% of gen Z) say brands that do not deliver on inclusion will become irrelevant.

### **It's about business resilience too**

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Environmental, social and governance credentials are increasingly important in investment analysis and the way companies treat their people is under scrutiny. Linking executive pay to DE&I performance, alongside other sustainability targets, is becoming more widespread. Inclusion is good business.

### **Inclusion fights negative groupthink and drives innovation**

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When teams are not diverse, things get overlooked. Things go badly wrong. Would the financial crash have happened if that industry had been more diverse? No, says Zaid Al-Qassab, chief marketing officer and inclusion and

diversity director at Channel 4, and “the whole world suffered as a result.” Research finds that inclusive businesses drive more innovation by giving everyone a seat at the table.

### **In the fierce competition for talent, inclusion is an imperative** —

Takahiko Morinaga, president and CEO of the Japan LGBT Research Institute, tells us that “companies that properly consider diversity and inclusion are more likely to attract people.” Ezinne Okoro, global chief inclusion, equity and diversity officer at Wunderman Thompson, agrees, adding that employees now want to work for companies with purpose, which share their values. “Finding talent truly is a challenge. People are living purposeful lives and they want to be connected to something that’s changing the world. It’s no longer about just getting a paycheck. It’s more about: what’s my impact?”

### **It’s not charity, it’s good business sense** —

Businesses often see inclusion as doing good. In fact, it’s also an opportunity—one that many are leaving on the table. Marginalized communities and their allies control significant disposable income. Brands that make diverse groups feel seen, acknowledged, welcomed and served will find audiences who are ready and willing to spend. “I’m just saying, if you build it, they’ll come,” says Wajahat Ali, columnist for the *Daily Beast* and author of *Go Back To Where You Came From*.

### **But it’s about so much more than the money** —

How businesses think about inclusion makes a difference to its impact. A study by researchers Robin Ely and David Thomas in the *Harvard Business Review* found that if we only talk about inclusion in the context of economic gains, it “diminishes people’s sense that equality is itself important ... and may even increase bias.”

# 60%

**say brands that do not deliver on inclusion will become irrelevant**



■ #SwipeOutHate, TikTok.

# Takeaways: 10 inclusive actions for brands and businesses

How do authentically inclusive brands and businesses show up for their audiences? Here are 10 ways to take positive action towards a better, more inclusive world.

## 1. Think inclusive first

Inclusion is now a core business value. As such, it must be baked in to initiatives and campaigns from the beginning, not an afterthought or a box-ticking exercise. As the history of inclusive design shows, if you build inclusion in from the start, you will end up with a better product, service, experience or campaign. By planning and designing with inclusivity front of mind, you can create a better future for everyone.

## 2. Start on the inside

Businesses must take care of their own people before speaking out. In our survey, 82% agree that actions on inclusion and equality mean nothing unless they are integrated throughout the entire business. This means ensuring that diversity and inclusion are part of the culture, pursued with intent, and woven into business and brand initiatives. It's important to take a frank look at your impact, says Ant Jackson, creative head at Space. "How diverse is your workforce? How diverse is your C-suite? Are marginalized employees being paid fairly? Is your investment portfolio or supply chain ethical and sustainable?"

### 3. Be transparent: Measure, track, report

To truly deliver on DE&I commitments, brands and businesses need to transparently track progress, giving inclusion the same attention as other performance metrics, as social justice educator DoctorJonPaul explains. “There are things you do every single day to make sure that your company functions successfully. Do the same thing for your Black consumers. Do the same thing for your queer consumers. We have to make this a practice.” In some countries, reporting on diversity and inclusion is now a legal requirement, but leaders will need to go beyond compliance to drive greater success. Some businesses, such as Apple and Starbucks, now tie performance on DE&I to executive remuneration.

### 4. Prioritize diverse viewpoints

Businesses must pursue and value diverse perspectives. Sociologist Jenny Davis tells us: “The biggest thing that companies can do is centralize and fully integrate voices from underrepresented groups.” Christina Mallon, director of inclusive design at Microsoft, says, “Allies should advocate and then make space so that disabled voices can get in the room.” This means identifying and removing the bottlenecks or gatekeeping in your business, so that marginalized voices are heard as well as hired. It also means leveraging your influence to demand more diversity from your suppliers and partners too.

### 5. Remember it's a journey

Creating an inclusive culture and business is not achieved overnight. Nor is there a definitive conclusion. Inclusion is an ongoing process of continuous learning, not a project to be completed. Businesses and brands should not feel they have to have all the answers. As Ezinne Okoro, global chief inclusion, equity and diversity officer at Wunderman Thompson, advises, inclusion is a journey. “Be vocal about the progress. People are not comfortable speaking to the small wins because they don't feel there's enough to say. Any little thing is worth sharing—it's progress. This is a journey for change, and we all can do something every day to achieve equity.”

## 6. Work with, not for

To ensure they truly resonate and serve marginalized communities well, brands should work with those communities, not for them. This means bringing in those with authentic lived experience to shape design and marketing. “I can always tell you when there’s no authentic Black, queer or trans voice in the things that companies do,” cautions DoctorJonPaul. Writer Wajahat Ali adds: “When it’s done well, you get brand loyalty, because those communities realize, ‘You’re not tokenizing me or using me to sell your product. You’re speaking my language, which means you’ve done some research and you have individuals from my community consulting for you or in positions of power.’”

## 7. Embrace full-spectrum diversity

Ditch the clichés and reflect the full spectrum of identities. Not all disabled people use a wheelchair. Not all LGBTQ+ people are gay. Remember identity is intersectional. This is not about one size fits all, it’s about reflecting and celebrating real life as it is lived.

Fenty was the first beauty brand to truly understand the need to embrace the full spectrum of skin tones. Our social media research finds that the brand is also a vocal supporter of LGBTQ+ customers, carefully noting the pronouns of its models on their posts. Polaroid’s recent “Musings on Love” social media created in partnership with the digital project My Queer Blackness, My Black Queerness (MQBMBQ), highlights the diversity of Black LGBTQ+ romance.

## 8. Elevate diverse voices

Diverse representation means taking collaboration with underrepresented communities to the next level. How might your brand invest in diverse creators or artists? How might you make space to elevate and support marginalized talent? Can you use your influence to ensure that diverse talent is represented behind the scenes, as well as on screen? And how might this influence the stories that your brand tells?

While vodka brand Absolut consistently shares the voices of the LGBTQ+ community, its recent #AbsolutVoices Takeover on Instagram carves out space for diverse creators, giving a platform to artists like Berlin DJ duo Hoe\_\_mies, who actively promote female, trans and non-binary performers, and cater to an audience of color.

## 9. Be always-on

Brand support for marginalized groups can sometimes feel opportunistic, especially if it only coincides with events like Black History Month or Pride. Sixty-five percent of our panel think that most brand support is “performative” so it’s important to deliver authentic and meaningful support.

Ant Jackson cites Bumble as a brand that takes inclusion seriously. “Their vision is to create a world that’s free from misogyny, where all relationships are equal—and they stay true to this. Their ads empower, their casting choices are diverse, they’ve campaigned to change laws to make the internet a safer place, they donate to LGBTQ+ and BIPOC causes, and their recent employee leave policy has been actively written to be inclusive of LGBTQ+ people and even victims of domestic violence.”

## 10. Unapologetically strive for change

Straying into political territory may not be appropriate for every brand or in every country, and is likely uncomfortable for many, but remember that 78% of people think it’s a good thing when brands step up to support marginalized communities. The same number agree that brands that want to offer support need to deliver long-lasting impact.

Some brands are boldly advocating for social justice and political change. Ben & Jerry’s is a consistent ally, most particularly taking a stand against racism. In 2020, after the death of George Floyd, it posted an open letter calling for White supremacy to be dismantled. A November 2021 op-ed from the company founders called on White people to take a stand against police brutality. “What does ice cream have to do with structural racism and social justice?” mused Ben & Jerry’s CEO Matthew McCarthy at a 2019 conference. “Not a lot, except that we care about it.”

# Unpacking Identities

Six dimensions of identity

# Disability

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**We are all only ever “temporarily abled,” as Christina Mallon, director of inclusive design at Microsoft, puts it. In designing for disability, we are also designing for our future selves.**

Designing for people with disabilities means adjusting for a spectrum of needs, whether physical, cognitive, sensory or mental-health related. This means ensuring that products, places and experiences—both physical and digital—are accessible, inclusive, and can be easily enjoyed by anyone. For brands, this means fighting existing ableist mindsets and getting intentional on inclusion by bringing in those with lived experience as collaborators. As the saying goes: “Nothing about us, without us.”

For brands, it's crucial to note that disability has a broad spectrum. Its most-used symbol is the wheelchair, yet according to the World Health Organization (WHO), the proportion of wheelchair users among disabled people globally is just one in 10. This is just one stereotype faced by this exceptionally diverse community among whom disabilities may be apparent and non-apparent.

It's also about empathy. Disability has an image problem, according to Mallon, that affects everything from employment to dating. She condemns the charity model that pities disabled people and paints them as either “inspiration porn” or as the beneficiaries of ableist generosity. Eliza Hull,



■ Wheel the World (both images).



■ WeThe15 (both images).

# 4%

**of companies include disability in their D&I initiatives, even though 90% say they prioritize diversity and inclusion.**  
— **Return on Disability**

a musician, writer and disability advocate, relates that when she became a mother she was perceived as irresponsible and incapable of taking care of her child. Ninety percent of disabled respondents say that too often they are defined by their disability alone and 73% say they are often patronized. In fact, there is a pride in this community that is growing.

Disabled people are exposed to further marginalization via financial hardship due to the costs of managing their disability. “Eighty percent of persons with disabilities live in developing countries,” observes the United Nations Development Programme; in such countries these challenges are magnified.

In the workplace, many disabled people may lack the right support, in part due to low levels of disclosure. A 2021 study by Valuable 500 and Tortoise Media found that not one executive in the FTSE 100 has disclosed a disability. Self-disclosure can promote a better work experience by ensuring

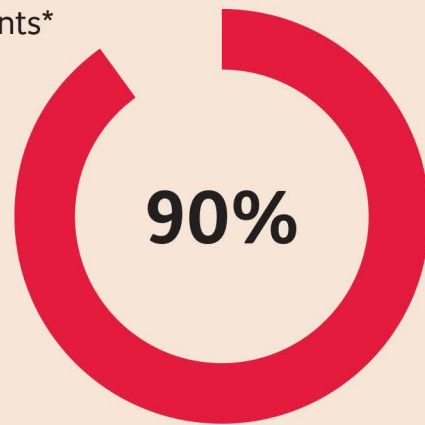
# Disability\*

**Our sample: 14%**

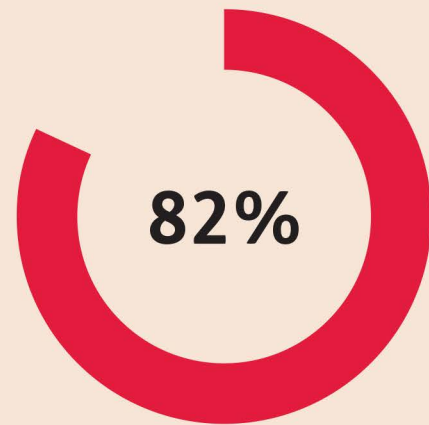
**Global population: 1.2 billion**

**Global buying power: \$13 trillion<sup>1</sup>**

% agree, by disabled respondents\*



**Too often people with disabilities are defined by their disability alone**



**Products should always be designed with disabled people in mind**



**Brands should be more representative in their marketing when it comes to including people with disabilities**

tailored adjustments, and many businesses have introduced positive initiatives to encourage it (such as employee resource groups). More remains to be done: remote working made life easier for so many, but now 66% of disabled people feel they have been sacrificed in the rush to reopen economies.

It's past time to welcome in this billion-strong community; its purchasing power is strong and growing. Hull tells us that the disabled community is growing; as stigma lessens, others, like those with neurodiverse conditions, mental-health issues and deaf people, are less afraid to self-identify. Three-quarters of disabled people say we don't need to fix disability, we need to fix the world for them.

## Two key disability models

There are several models that describe different ways of viewing disability, two of which are the social model and the medical model. The social model of disability was developed by the disabled community in the 1960s and '70s. This model says that people are disabled by barriers in society (whether policy, physical, digital or attitudinal) rather than their own impairments or differences. It seeks to remove these barriers to allow for inclusive participation in society. In contrast, the medical model sees people as disabled by their impairments or differences and seeks to treat or cure them.

<sup>(1)</sup> Return on Disability, 2020, "Design Delight from Disability"

<sup>(\*)</sup> Wunderman Thompson Data, people who identify as someone with a disability, including but not limited to a physical impairment, amputee, chronic health condition, chronic mental health condition, etc., in all countries.

# Race and ethnicity\*

The 2020 murder of George Floyd catalyzed a wave of global protest, and it felt as though the world was finally listening.

Yet just two years later, Voice of America cites 2022 data from the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at California State University, San Bernardino, pointing to a 39% surge in all hate crimes and a 224% surge in anti-Asian hate crimes in particular. Has anything fundamentally changed for people from underrepresented racial groups (URGs)?

According to our data, 28% of people from URGs have experienced interpersonal instances of racism, and 52% have witnessed them happening to others. Not all experiences of racism are overt, though. They are embedded into the fabric of institutions and society: 82% of people from URGs believe that systematic racism like this is a problem in their country.



■ “Change is Brewing” campaign, Ben & Jerry’s.



■ **Je Vais Décoller** by Sanlé Sory, 1977, © Sanlé Sory/Tezeta. Image courtesy of David Hill Gallery. Featured at V&A Africa Fashion exhibition, July 2022-April 2023.

## **BIPOC are disadvantaged across a raft of economic, health and educational outcomes, and are underrepresented in positions of power and prominence.**

Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) are disadvantaged across a raft of economic, health and educational outcomes, and are underrepresented in positions of power and prominence. To give just a few examples, according to The Sentencing Project, Black men in the United States are six times as likely to be incarcerated as White men, and Latinos are two and a half times as likely. In Australia, mental health is responsible for 10% of the health gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous Australians, according to government statistics. Wunderman Thompson's Health4Equity practice is addressing key health inequities including Black maternal health in the United Kingdom, Brazil, and the United States.

## Race and ethnicity\*

Our sample: 23%

United States buying power: \$4.9 trillion<sup>1</sup>

% agree, by underrepresented racial group\*



82%

Systemic racism is a problem in my country



78%

Companies can do a lot to drive racial equality by investing in Black/people of color/Indigenous people as employees or suppliers



72%

I am more likely to buy if the business/brand has made strong commitments to equality and social justice

While there have been symbolic instances of progress, this remains a White-centric world. This includes the workplace, where systemic barriers can become embedded in processes like hiring, promotions and development. Forty-four percent of marginalized racial groups say they have missed out on opportunities because of their race and ethnicity, versus 18% of the rest of the population in Brazil, the United Kingdom and United States.

A further dimension is colorism, privilege in favor of those with lighter skin tones over darker ones. Colorism is prevalent in many countries and communities, evidenced by a thriving \$8 billion global market for skin-lightening products, according to StrategyR research. Eighteen percent of people in URGs have experienced colorism, while 47% say it is becoming more prevalent.

Companies and brands have a role to play in dismantling the status quo: 61% of those in URGs say that companies upped their game in the wake of Black Lives Matter protests, but have slipped back since. Brands might be reticent about getting involved in issues of social justice but 63% of those in URGs (and 59% of all respondents across our five markets) say they should be genuinely political and not dance around the fringes of conversations on race and equality.

Our research indicates two potential areas of focus: 78% of people from URGs would like companies to influence the conversation on racial equity and the same number want companies to up their investment in BIPOC communities as employees and suppliers.

# Age

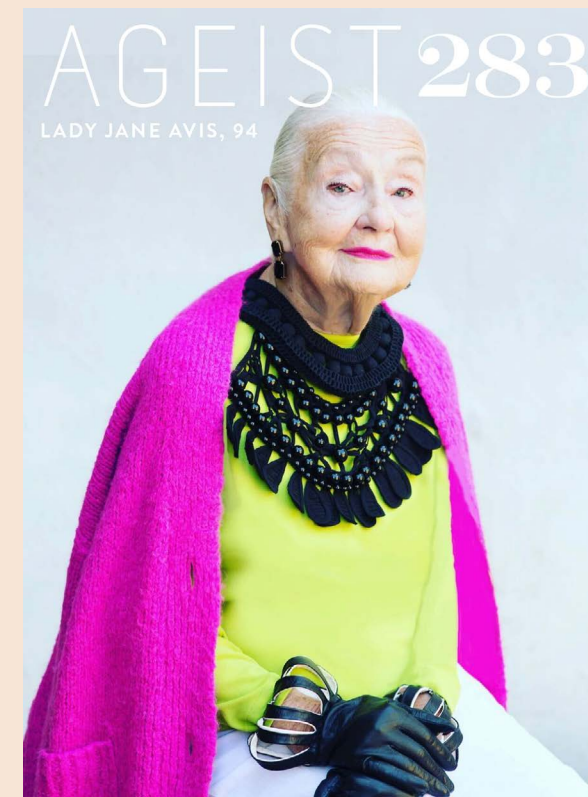
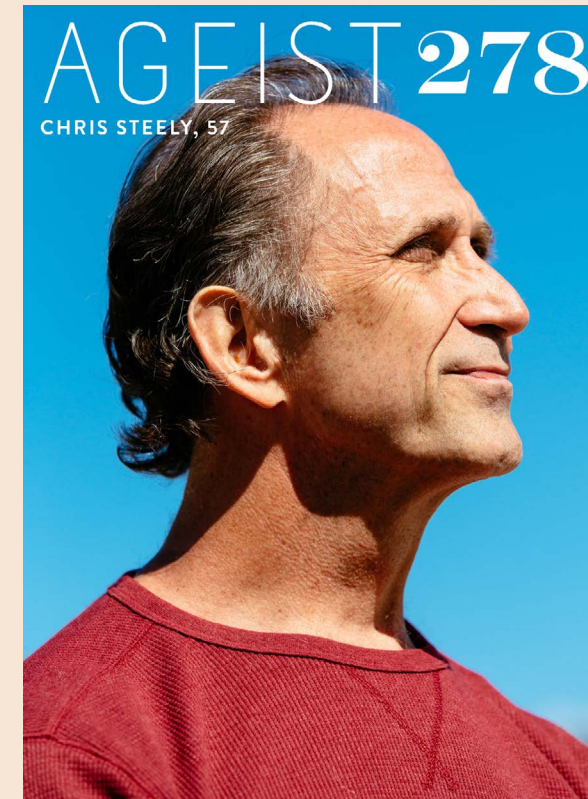
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## Ageism, said to be the last “ism” to be tackled, can strike at any age.

Young people can be unfairly assumed to be inexperienced, for instance, but broadly it becomes more overt with age. For people aged 60+, age is often correlated with disabilities like hearing or vision loss, reduced mobility, and cognitive impairments. It's also correlated with prejudice. We aspire to longer life, so designing with age in mind is a way of futureproofing for our own needs.

While reported at lower levels in Japan and China, ageism is present in every country surveyed. China's *Beijing Review* recently reported that workers in their mid-30s are referred to as “senior citizens” in some industries such as IT, and “have little hope of being promoted once they hit 35.”

Wunderman Thompson Intelligence's own trends research into older generations, “The Elastic Generation,” has found that people in their 50s, 60s and beyond perceive they are excluded by society, ignored by culture, and sidelined in the workplace. In this study, one in five people aged 60+ told us they had personal experience of ageism and 70% say that society consistently stereotypes them.

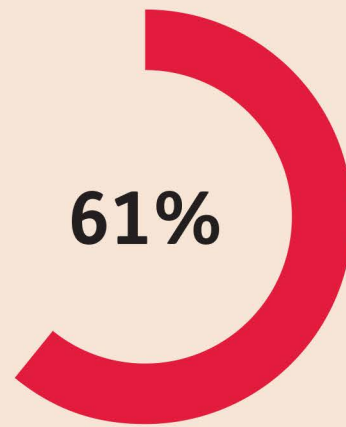


■ Ageist magazine.

# Age\*

Our sample: 18% aged 60+  
 Global population aged 65+: 727 million<sup>1</sup>  
 Global spending power 65+: \$8.4 trillion<sup>2</sup>

% agree, by age 60+\*



**I don't pay attention to advertising because it doesn't seem relevant to me**



**Ageism is common in my country**



**I believe people have underestimated me because of my age**

# 70%

**of 60+ say that society consistently stereotypes them.**

As for brands, older people are often excluded from categories like fashion, beauty, cars and travel. The *Economist* cites data from MIT's AgeLab, which estimates that just 3% of advertising expenditure in America targets people over 50. As for experiences, leisure and retail spaces are not designed with their needs in mind.

Ironically, in most countries older people control most of the household wealth. In a Brookings piece titled "The silver economy is coming of age," the World Bank economist Wolfgang Fengler explains that global seniors aged 65+ are important because they have high incomes and high needs, and they are growing in number, from 750 million now to more than 1 billion by 2030. Looking ahead, seniors in China and India, whose working lives overlapped with periods of dramatic economic expansion, will become increasingly influential too. Can brands afford to continue sidelining high-spending older generations?

<sup>(1)</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2020, "[World Population Ageing 2020 Highlights](#)"

<sup>(2)</sup> World Data Lab, 2021, cited by [Bloomberg](#)

\*Wunderman Thompson Data, those aged 60+ in all countries.

# Sexual orientation

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**The long journey towards equality for the global LGBTQ+ community continues.**

According to the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association, 69 UN-member countries still criminalize consensual same-sex activity, while Human Rights Campaign data shows that same-sex marriage is legal in just 31 countries.

Ant Jackson, creative head at Space, tells us: “Homophobia and transphobia are still destroying lives. Many LGBTQ+ people have to hide their true selves through fear of safety, and depression rates are high.” Our data aligns with Jackson’s assessment: 73% of LGBTQ+ respondents say homophobia is common in their country, and 29% have personal experience.

In some countries where rights have been secured, there are attempts to curb them. In the United States, more than 10 states are reported to be planning legislation that prevents schools discussing gender identity or sexuality, mirroring Florida’s so-called Don’t Say Gay law. In Texas, gender-affirming care for trans children has been classified as “child abuse,” criminalizing parents. According to NBC News, almost 670 anti-LGBTQ+ bills were filed from 2018 to March 2022.



**I still, in this day and age, cannot reconcile why who you are and who you love, basically the two components of LGBTQ+, are up for debate by other people.**

**Leng Montgomery, senior DE&I consultant**

In parts of the world, understanding of the LGBTQ+ community remains shallow. According to Takahiko Morinaga, president and CEO of the Japan LGBT Research Institute, “It is still common that many people confuse transgender and homosexual people. When a man says, ‘I’m gay,’ people ask him if he dresses as a woman.” In Japan, where Morinaga explains 40% of the community prefers not to disclose, companies must walk a fine line between offering support and respecting privacy.

In the workplace, more than a quarter of LGBTQ+ people have faced discrimination due to their sexuality. Perhaps as a consequence, this group is disproportionately likely to feel the need to code-switch to fit in at work.

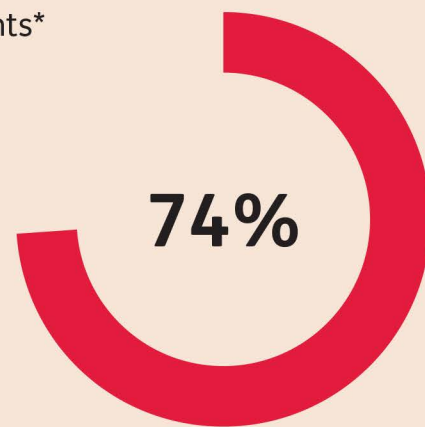
## Sexual orientation\*

Our sample: 10%

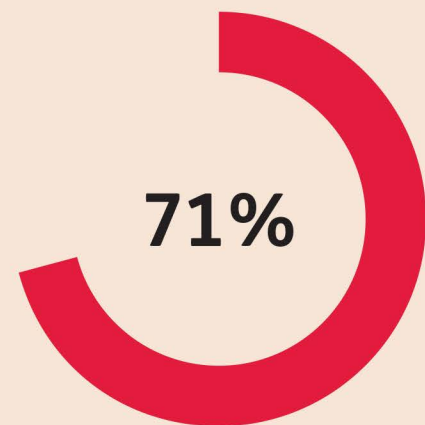
Global population: 10%<sup>1</sup>

Global buying power: \$3.9 trillion<sup>2</sup>

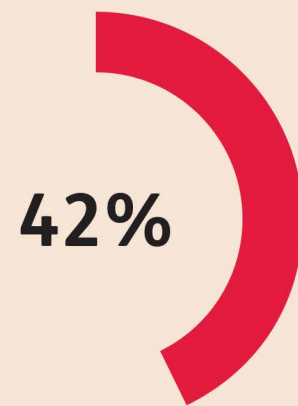
% agree, by LGBTQ+ respondents\*



**When brands include people of my sexuality in their marketing it makes me feel welcomed**



**It's important that a brand doesn't support queer-phobic political groups, politicians or institutions**



**Homophobia is becoming more prevalent in my country**

# 77%

**of transgender and non-binary youth experience symptoms of a generalized anxiety disorder—The Trevor Project.**

Research also suggests LGBTQ+ people face significant health disparities, including higher rates of anxiety and depression. More than a third told us their sexuality meant that a medical issue was not taken seriously.

This community is also a frequent target of rainbow-washed tokenistic support. A 2020 Karmarama study, in partnership with *Gay Times* and conducted by YouGov, found that just 32% of UK marketers engage with the LGBTQ+ community outside Pride month. In our study, 79% of LGBTQ+ people say that not many brands do the hard work of understanding the diversity of their community, which embraces many identities and lifestyles. Brands that do commit can expect loyalty in return: 72% of LGBTQ+ people and 58% of all respondents say they are more likely to buy from brands who consistently speak up for the LGBTQ+ community.

This group is set to grow as stigma lessens: Office for National Statistics data shows the number of UK women self-identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual or other is growing with every generation.



BASIC  
FREEDOMS  
ARE MISSING  
IN 29 STATES  
FOR LGBTQ+  
AMERICANS



**HELP PASS THE EQUALITY ACT AT [REALITYFLAG.COM](http://REALITYFLAG.COM)**

# Gender and gender identity

**Three-quarters of women see gender equality as the route to a more prosperous world, yet progress seems to be stalling.**

Gender inequities remain in work, law, education, social freedoms and more, while discrimination is widespread. Almost two-thirds of women (63%) believe gender bias and discrimination are a problem in their country, compared with 52% of men. Thirty-one percent of women feel that it's more prevalent now than pre-pandemic.

In 2022, American women's reproductive rights are under threat as the Supreme Court overturns Roe vs. Wade. In 24 countries, abortion is illegal under any circumstance, according to the Center for Reproductive Rights, meaning 90 million women in countries including Nicaragua, Senegal, Egypt and the Philippines lack sovereignty over their bodies. Some fear the symbolic shift in the United States could lead other nations to follow suit, bucking a long-term wider trend towards liberalization.

Freedoms are also curtailed for women in public spaces, says Sameera Khan, independent journalist, writer, researcher, and co-author of the book



■ "Imagine" campaign by CPB London.



■ Above (top): Trans Day of Visibility by We Are Fluide features the trans model Xóchitl Renee. Image courtesy of Landyn Pan. Above: Ariel “#ShareTheLoad” campaign, BBDO India for Procter & Gamble.

## Can we stretch the boundaries and say it's acceptable to have women's bodies in public?

**Sameera Khan, independent journalist, writer, researcher, and co-author of *Why Loiter?***

*Why Loiter? Women and Risk on Mumbai Streets*, which encourages Indian women to reclaim their right to enjoy public spaces for pleasure. She cites the example of Pinjra Tod (break the cage), a contemporary Indian feminist movement that is protesting curfews for female students at college hostels in India. In Afghanistan, women and girls are once again obliged by law to cover their faces in public, and even stay indoors where possible. And across the world, women's safety from harassment or even violence in public spaces is an urgent conversation.

In the workplace, fragile gains have been lost due to the pandemic: the World Economic Forum (WEF) says female progress has been set back a generation. Millions of women left the labor market in what has been dubbed a global “shecession.” Progress towards gender parity on pay has not just stalled but gone into reverse, according to the WEF's “Global Gender Gap Report 2021.”

## Gender and gender identity\*

Our sample size: 50%

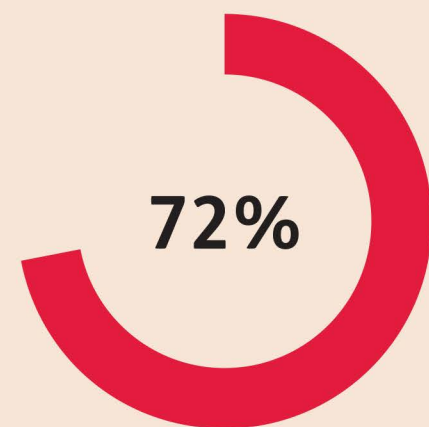
Global population: 3.8 billion<sup>1</sup>

Global buying power: \$31.8 trillion<sup>2</sup>

% agree, by female respondents\*



**Society consistently stereotypes us**



**The pandemic was much more of an issue for women than men (vs. 55% of men)**



**I am likely to buy from brands that speak out on issues of equality and inclusion**

The exodus was in part due to the pandemic, which “exponentially increased the burden of domestic work and unpaid care,” explains Eva Lamborghini, an anthropologist at the University of Buenos Aires. “This disproportionately affected women, who in Latin America already spent three times the time men spend on the same tasks daily before the pandemic.” Wunderman Thompson Data shows the same is true of women globally, who are three times more likely to do most of the housework and caring for their children than men. Seventy-two percent of women say they feel the pandemic was more of an issue for them than men because of caring or schooling obligations, and 55% of men agree.

As reported in *The Shecovery* in “The Future 100: 2022,” companies can drive gender equality with policies and benefits that support those who identify as women at every life stage. Brands should also continue the work of eradicating outdated portrayals of gender. While much work has been done to tackle gender stereotyping of women and men in advertising in recent years, 75% of women still feel they are consistently stereotyped by society.

Gender of course is no longer binary. Outside the traditional gender debate, attitudes to gender identity are becoming less rigid: 67% of total respondents say gender identity is something that can change over time.

Despite this, bias is also a consequence for those who are non-binary or transgender. The UK's *Gay Times* highlights a report stating that 63% of non-binary people have experienced discrimination just using public transport. According to TransActual, which conducted the research, in the United Kingdom in 2021 80% of non-binary individuals and 73% of trans people experienced transphobia from colleagues.

# Socio-economic background\*

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**Ranking top overall in our survey, class prejudice is perceived as the most prevalent form of discrimination of the six surveyed.**

This prejudice is a shapeshifter too, manifesting in different ways. Class resonates in Britain, and in India and other South Asian nations caste is more relevant. In the United States it's about income and education, whereas in China and Brazil there's a rural/urban divide.

Among people from lower-income households specifically, 68% say society stereotypes people like them, while 40% say that they don't see depictions of themselves on screen enough and, when they do, almost half say they are inaccurate (48%).

Yet these figures can't capture the whole story: income is just one aspect of poverty, alongside poor-quality work, health, education, living standards, nutrition and more.



■ Mumbai, Maharashtra, India. Photography by Gene Brutty, Unsplash.

## Socio-economic background\*

**Our sample: 31%**

**Global population: 61.4% low income/poor<sup>1</sup>**

**Global buying power: \$7.5 trillion<sup>2</sup>**

% agree, by respondents  
in low income households\*



65%

**I would be more likely to buy from brands that made more effort to represent people like me**



47%

**I feel advertisers ignore people like me**



21%

**I have felt personally discriminated at work because of my socio-economic background**

According to the United Nations Development Programme's Multidimensional Poverty Index, being poor is frequently correlated with other dimensions of inequity, like race and ethnicity. In India for instance, five out of six multidimensionally poor people are from lower tribes or castes. The UN also states that there is a link between poverty and disability that runs in both directions.

This is not just an issue in developing countries: research from the Office for National Statistics finds a gap in England's life expectancy between richest and poorest of more than 18 years for men and over 19 years for women.

People on low incomes do much of the precarious work, as post-pandemic discussion showed. Alexandre Silveira, head of CX and strategic design at Wunderman Thompson, calls it "invisible work" and tells us of seeing a line of food delivery drivers, backpacks on, queueing outside a church for a free meal. In Brazil, says Silveira, almost 50 million people live off a basic single minimum wage. Across Latin America, Eva Lamborghini, anthropologist at the University of Buenos Aires, reports that COVID-19 impacts hit hard for "racialized women, poor women, migrant women, and their intersections in a situation of greater vulnerability."

From a list of almost 20 societal challenges in our survey, people rank poverty and hunger as the most important to solve. As employers, producers and buyers, companies can play a key role in tackling poverty, creating opportunities, and eliminating inequities in their organizations and supply chains—in effect building a more resilient pool of future consumers.

<sup>(1)</sup> Pew Research Center, ongoing, "Are you in the global middle class? Find out with our income calculator"

<sup>(2)</sup> Euromonitor International Dashboard (subscription service), 2020, total global consumer spending for households earning \$15,000 or less.

<sup>(\*)</sup> Wunderman Thompson low-income data is indicative and covers China, the United Kingdom and the United States only; the definition of low income can vary by country and source. Due to sample limitations, we report on household income under RMB15,000/£20,000/\$35,000.

# Unpacking identities

## In their words

Stories of lived experience from around the world

# Haris Tyler

(he/him)

25, United Kingdom

Haris Tyler is an Asian British gay man who lives with his fiancé Alex and their American bulldog Ocean in the north of England. Tyler landed his first hairdressing job aged 14. He founded and now co-owns the salon Haus of Haris Tyler. He talks to Wunderman Thompson Intelligence about living authentically, problematic gay stereotypes and the toxicity of cancel culture.





**Who is Haris Tyler?** He is androgynous, a bit of a gender bender, and probably just a bit outrageous.

**It's a triple whammy** being brown, gay, and coming from a lower-class family; my younger years were extremely hard.

**Authenticity can be a struggle.** I'm a chameleon. I've got to adapt because there's not a chance I could walk through an estate in Halifax in a leather harness and stilettos. You've got to keep yourself safe.

**Labels shouldn't define us.** I want people to love me for me. Instead of "the gay one" I want people to say "You know Haris, he's that loud one. He's dead vibrant. He's that one that talks the back legs off a donkey. You know the one with the different hairstyle every day? That's who he is."



## There's not a chance I could walk through an estate in Halifax in a leather harness and stilettos.

**Not all gay men are flamboyant.** I'm friends with a gay body builder. He's absolutely massive, he's not got a feminine bone in his body. However, every time I look at advertising and marketing to do with being gay, it's colorful, it's glittery and a little bit sexualized. It doesn't always need to be that way. I'm just one quadrant of what this whole thing looks like, we need to recognize that it's a full spectrum of people.

**Marginalized voices need amplifying.** Brands need to work with these people and communities. You need people who have lived through it.

**Nobody's perfect.** I'm very forgiving. I know that when brands or companies get things wrong, they get attacked. I do not believe in cancel culture. I absolutely hate it. Why we think we can just cancel brands and people is beyond me.

**The future looks bright.** I think we're going in the right direction.

# Sabrina Fellani

(she/her)

24, Indonesia

Sabrina Fellani is a Muslim woman who was born with distinctive birthmarks. Currently living in South Jakarta, Fellani is an English education graduate of the Islamic State University of Salatiga. Her side hustle is working as an Instagram content creator (@sabrinafellani) and as a model for the beauty brand Skin Game. She talks about the power and significance of diverse representation, and why physical appearance does not signify beauty.





# When you have self-acceptance and respect, beauty will surely bloom by itself.



**I'm not easily broken.** Anyone who looks down at me or treats me badly won't get me down. I'll show them all that they can't make me fall.

**I've experienced discrimination.** When I was 21, I started to know love for the opposite gender. A lot of men that I met felt comfortable and compatible with me, but their parents were mostly against us. All they saw was the way I looked. I reacted to that with: "It can't be helped, it's OK." But deep inside I couldn't accept their prejudice. I sought to make them regret their decision, so I upgraded myself into an even better woman.

**I wouldn't call myself a role model,** I just want to give people encouragement and tips on how not to be insecure.

**There's nothing taboo about diversity.** The world is very colorful, that should be celebrated.

**Diverse representation has started to grab people's attention.** Many brands have changed their advertising standards because something different is no longer shameful.

**Beauty is more than skin deep,** in my opinion. It's all about accepting and respecting yourself. When you have self-acceptance and respect, beauty will surely bloom by itself, and others can view it.

**I will keep doing my best** and upgrade myself to be even better.

# Kelly Gordon

(she/her)

33, United Kingdom

Kelly Gordon is an entrepreneur, a consultant, and mother to two young sons. She has spinal muscular atrophy type 3, a progressive genetic condition that means she uses an electric wheelchair to get around. Gordon is the creative director and inclusion lead at sex tech brand Hot Octopuss, host of the Pleasure Rebels podcast, and cofounder and people director of the With Not For recruitment organization. She talks about the daily challenges faced by wheelchair users and how people with disabilities are excluded from the ideology of motherhood.





# I've dragged bras around lingerie shops on the back of my chair without knowing.

**People with disabilities are built to settle**, or, if we're not settling, we're reinventing things for ourselves and making our own ways.

**Getting around my local area is pretty much impossible.** When I'm going to a shop, I must consider: Is the parking flat and accessible? Is there an automatic door? Are the aisles crowded? Do they tend to be restocking shelves at certain times of day? It just fills me with anxiety.

**There's no space.** I've dragged bras around lingerie shops on the back of my chair without knowing, because I'm crashing into everything.

**Entering the world of work was difficult.** I remember being told "You can't work in retail because you're disabled. We've never had a wheelchair user working retail before and we just can't." I had a lot of solutions in my head, but nobody was prepared to make those adjustments.



**There's a lot of scaremongering when it comes to motherhood and disability.** Medical professionals didn't know how my body would deal with a natural birth, or if that was even possible. That's an anxiety-inducing experience when you're already pregnant.

**A lot of people questioned the safety of my children.** I had a threat once to say that if I needed so much support, then they'd have to get social services involved.

**Brands should consider taking initiatives to the next level** and being fully inclusive; making experiences comfortable and enjoyable for people, rather than acceptable. We should be trying to be better now: it's 2022. We're looking at moving into the metaverse and this world is not even sorted yet.

# Augustus Lewis

(he/him)

86, Trinidad

Born in Trinidad, Augustus Lewis successfully studied to become a petrochemical engineer and worked for one of the largest upstream energy refineries in the region. He emigrated to the United Kingdom as part of the Windrush generation and returned to Trinidad in the late 1990s. Now a poet who uses a wheelchair, he was previously executive officer for HM Customs and Excise, which was an early equal opportunities employer.





## Life is getting really exciting in my old age.



**I am a foreigner in my country of birth.** I am by myself most of the time; living in a middle-class area with a UK pension, I don't depend on anybody.

**As I have glaucoma I will eventually go blind,** so I am making the most of it now. When I go blind, I will deal with it in that moment. I hope I am mature enough to deal with blindness. Since I had a stroke, I still write a great deal.

**As a well-educated landlord of my brother's flat,** my education and socio-economic status meant I experienced less racism than my working-class counterparts in England's Windrush era.

**I am big on integrity and honesty.** The managers of brands must carry themselves with integrity and honesty to inspire citizens to be rooted in integrity.

**I do not think we should need to use the words "Black male" or "brown"—whatever your color.** Brands should be making everyone feel included as standard practice.

**When I think of accomplishing equality,** I think the founding tenets are discussion, awareness, being thoughtful and helpful towards each other, without being condescending.

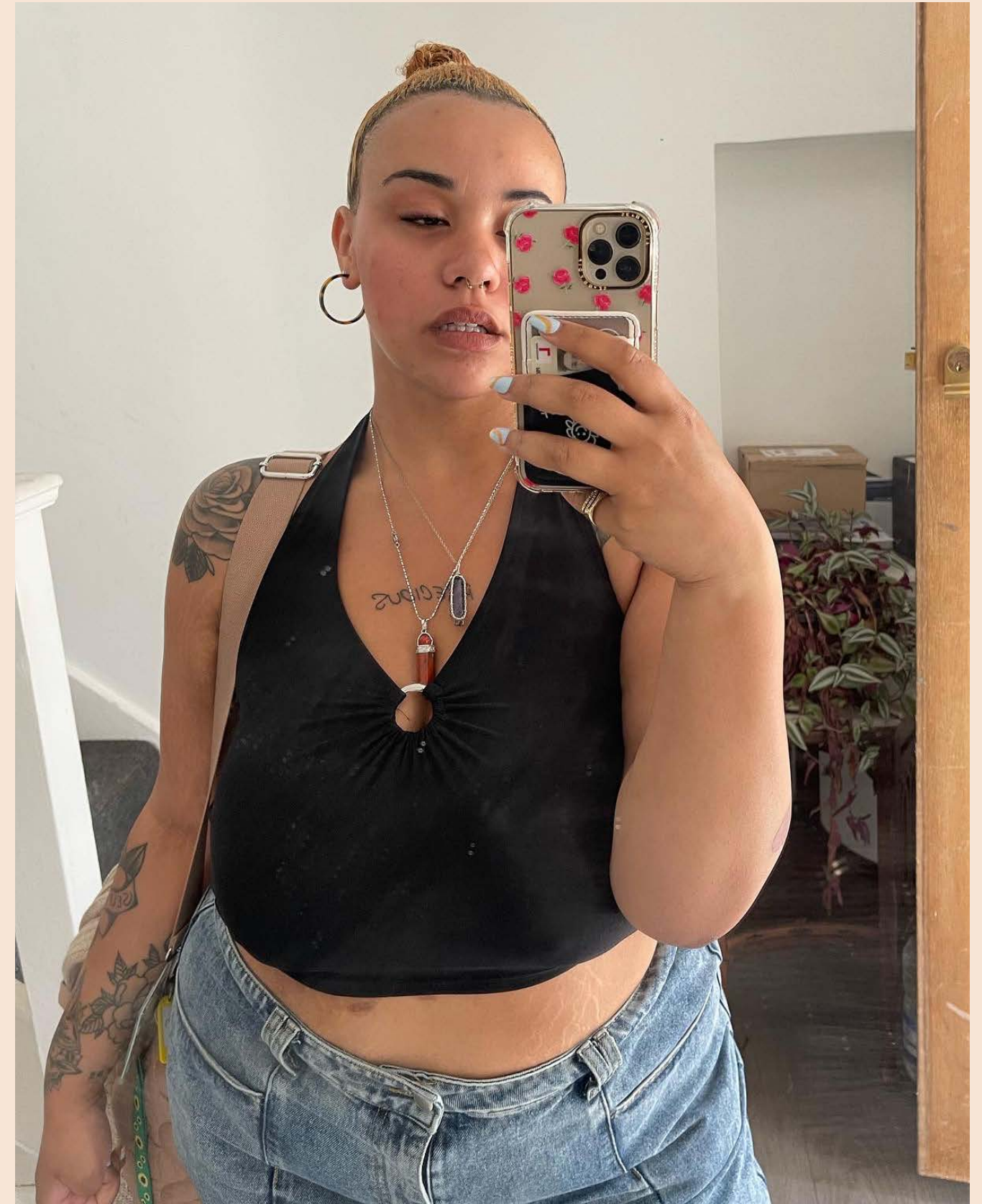
**I am an individual.** Treat me with integrity, not because I am sitting in a wheelchair but because you're listening to my logic.

# Sheyenne McCook

(she/her)

24, United Kingdom

Makeup artist Sheyenne McCook is committed to facing down taboos around her intersectional identity. A biracial social media stalwart, she uses her platform to advocate and educate on mental health and body positivity. She talks us through how brands can deliver inclusion and how her life has been shaped by racism and ableism against her apparent and non-apparent disabilities: autism, knee problems, anxiety, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and attention deficit disorder (ADD).





# Topshop refused to have a plus-size collection. Now they're not here: so that's what happens.



**Being on the spectrum** and having other learning difficulties, I view the world very differently. It can get quite difficult to navigate.

**Your condition defines you**, but it is not wholly you.

**My body was always perceived as a lot older than my classmates' bodies.** I was made to feel ashamed, so the adultification of Black girls resonates.

**No one says, "I can't imagine being depressed,"** but you would say, "I can't imagine being in a wheelchair." People see visible disabilities and sympathize. But with mental health, there's no visual representation.

**Inspiration porn is infantilization.** Disabled people can't be sexy or adult.

**We should be allowed to struggle**, make mistakes, and figure things out for ourselves; the savior complex stops the learning. Don't automatically grab the handles on someone's wheelchair to help them off the bus.

**With the rise of TikTok**, you can see more representation. You know you're not alone because there's always going to be someone like you.

**Topshop refused to have a plus-size collection**, the only high street retailer to not have one. Now they're not here: so that's what happens.

**It took Rihanna to come up with Fenty foundation.** Now everybody suddenly can make foundations in all tones!

**Brands need to be more transparent and admit mistakes.** It's okay to say, "We desperately want to feature more Black or Asian influencers."

# Momo Nakakita

(she/her)

24, Japan

Momo Nakakita identifies as a queer woman. She consults and works in corporate finance in Tokyo. Having lived in Singapore, France and the United States, this Japanese professional gives us her perspective on representation and inclusion from brands, and the impact it can have.





**When I was in France, I think I stood out and felt as if I represented the whole Asian community;** I was often the first Asian person that the local people met. When I was in the United States, it was interesting to see how, although physically I fit into that Asian-American category, I didn't share the culture.

**It really meant a lot when my local friends in France tried to understand my culture.** I think staying curious, open and respectful is important.

**In Japan, it seems as if people see racial tension as something happening abroad** and so not relevant, although there is still discrimination and racism here.

**Discrimination comes in more subtle forms in the workplace;** a senior colleague told a group that gay people exist, but they shouldn't really talk about it or make it public. My company's competitor has a CEO who is openly gay, which is very rare in Japan. I felt super-empowered that you can be recognized by being who you really are.



**When there's a movement, only the people that are interested in it get involved. But once big brands incorporate that idea into their products or ads, the whole public sees it.**

**On the surface companies are trying to make change,** but at the grassroots, it's hard to change how people think.

**It's great seeing Asian films being more recognized internationally.** Finally, we're not in sidekick roles anymore. Brands shouldn't represent minority groups in a way that reinforces stereotypes.

**I think a lot of people hide or don't acknowledge their sexuality.** It's hard to live in Japan as an openly queer or LGBTQ+ person, because you don't have a lot of protected rights. For example, same-sex marriage isn't legal.

**Within a movement,** only interested people get involved. But once big brands incorporate that idea into their products or ads, the whole public sees it.

# Youssef Hallal

(he/him)

31, UAE

Youssef Hallal was born with a dislocated hip, and medical negligence weakened the nerves in his right foot and calf muscle. He now walks with a limp. Originally from Lebanon, Hallal now lives in Dubai. He leads a digital analytics and media buying department, and seeks high-adrenaline activities at the weekend. This self-declared “humble dreamer” explains the blessing of disability, the value of diverse perspectives, and the complexities of seeking to cure physical impairments.





# It's no longer whether a brand should or should not drive inclusion. The question is: to what extent are they involved?



**I am a humble dreamer.** I believe that with the right effort and the right group of people you can turn the world into a better place.

**My disability is a blessing.** I was raised to see it every single day, accept it, and challenge myself to prove that I'm worthy, and to prove to others that I can do whatever they can. To me, it is a disability only when preventing you from accomplishing your dreams and goals.

**I turned down surgery** that could help me walk better. One of my dreams is to be a TED speaker. So, I always tell my family and friends, "If I do this surgery and I walk better, what kind of influence will I have on people? If I say I had a physical challenge, but I fixed it." I don't seek treatment, I'm proud of who I am, and it has never been an issue to me.

**Inclusion has become a selling point and an expectation.** It's no longer whether a brand should or should not drive inclusion. The question is: to what extent are they involved?

**Don't just imagine yourself in our shoes.** Have a team of disabled people working on your campaign, because they're the ones who better understand how the world would look if it were more inclusive.

**Unite people of different backgrounds.** Hearing from different perspectives can enlighten you. It's not a threat, it's a strength.

**There's too much focus on what differentiates us.** Regardless of how we talk or walk, regardless of our age, race, religion, sexual orientation, we're all human, of this Earth.


# Nadia Maddy

(she/her)

44, United Kingdom

London-born Nadia Maddy spent most of her teenage years in Sierra Leone and has traveled extensively since. A TV pioneer, her writing and producing talents were picked up by the BBC, then Channel 4, in the 2000s. She won final selection at the Black Hollywood Film Festival for her documentary *Aliens Amongst Us*, described by *Time Out* magazine as “raw, exciting and a great story.”





**//**  
**Don't shove Western feminism onto the African woman—it's a whole different ballgame. You have to sit down at the table with them; if you don't understand it, you can't improve it or change it.**

**My schoolmates in the 1970s calling me the N-word were not the problem.** It was the kid who was watching me and I didn't even see him plotting and planning my demise. That's the one to watch out for.

**The resurgence of girl-boss culture** is another unrealistic expectation for Black women; for each strong, independent woman, there are probably 300 going through a mental-health crisis.

**Don't shove Western feminism onto the African woman.** It's a whole different ballgame. You have to sit down at the table with them; if you don't understand it, you can't improve it or change it.

**Sierra Leone has aspects where feminism is needed but there is a misconception that the women are helpless creatures.** All of the women who are illiterate are self-employed women who run their own stalls: legitimate businesses, requiring vendor liaisons, numeracy. And they're in charge of the money.

**There are lots of qualified people who could be sitting at the table, so let them in.** We need a process where you can prove that their voices were heard, and it wasn't just a tick-box exercise. Ticking the box is not the answer, working with different people is.

**Diversity and inclusion means non-stereotypical representation across the board.** Diversity is putting marginalized communities somewhere you may not have thought before. Forget the strong Black woman, let's see her in a gentle role. Black people skiing, not just at the beach! And not all Black boys wear trainers. I want to see them wearing loafers too.

# Peter (Bách) Pham

(he/him)

24, United Kingdom

Born in the Czech Republic, Peter (Bách) Pham moved to Vietnam at six years old to learn Vietnamese. At age 10, he moved back to the Czech Republic, and now lives in Scotland. An Asian Czech man living with anxiety and depression, he shares the personas he identifies with his given and chosen names, and his experience with acceptance across cultures.





**I'd define myself** as some guy who's trying to do his best, sometimes failing, but he doesn't give up.

**The difference between my given name and my preferred name** is what I let people see.

**When I use Bách**, I speak my native language, which is Vietnamese. I'm not exactly fluent, so I feel very limited in how I can express myself. As Peter, I feel true to myself as to what I say and voicing my opinions.

**After the last instance of discrimination that I faced**, I felt annoyed and slightly dumbfounded that there are still people who are so closed-minded.

**I was ostracized** when I went to school in Vietnam. When I returned to the Czech Republic I faced racism and bullying.



## The difference between my given name and my preferred name is what I let people see.

**When I told my friends in the Czech Republic that I was taking antidepressants**, they were understanding. It feels nice to know they just understood, and they accepted me.

**They don't really speak to me, all the diversity and inclusion campaigns or billboards** with a person of minority being shown and advertised.

**What your company is doing**, interviewing people, essentially asking for their opinion and giving them a chance to express themselves, is a good way for brands to make me feel more included.

**When I approach people who are different from me**, I consider the personal bias that I have towards them.

**It's hard to be optimistic**. It's hard to see a better future. A future with a lot more inclusion and acceptance almost sounds utopic.



# Mona Hassanie

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(she/her)

31, UAE

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**Mona Hassanie is half Arab, half Latina. She is Lebanese, was raised in Brazil and now resides in Dubai, working as a strategy director. She discusses harmful female stereotypes, strong female role models, and how brands should go above and beyond when it comes to breaking barriers for women.**



# Gender stereotypes and misperceptions are not local problems but global ones.

**Being a third-culture kid gives you perspective.** I very quickly became aware that gender stereotypes and misperceptions are not local problems but global ones.

**The world tends to judge women harder than men** and, in a context where men historically have been granted better opportunities, this leads to a vicious cycle that reinforces stereotypes.

**Discrimination takes place in the corporate world.** Men tend to be granted opportunities based on potential, relatively more often than women—for women, achievements tend to have a higher weight.

**The world needs to become better** not only in offering equal opportunities but also in spotting equal potential. Unlocking potential depends not only on those who hold it, but also on those who can recognize it—beyond gender and other stereotypes.



**Strong female role models** are instrumental in encouraging young women to pursue leadership roles and organizations to empower them to do so.

**Having worked with brands across the globe,** I truly believe they have a major role to play in this context.

**Brands play a key role in changing perceptions.** In the MENA region, more brands have started to recognize the role they play when representing women in advertising. Campaigns in the region challenge traditional stereotypes and encourage people to see women in a different way.

**As culture creators, brands need to promote diversity and inclusion** by openly discussing them and defending them.

**People expect brands to change:** change their internal practices, change the way they communicate and change the environment they exist in.

# Patrick Kane

(he/him)

25, United Kingdom

Patrick Kane is a public speaker, writer, ambassador, and catalyst at a global creative agency and consultancy company. He has been walking on a prosthetic leg since he was 14 months old and has had a bionic arm since the age of 13, the youngest person ever to be fitted with one at that time. He tells us what disability, representation, and inclusion mean to him.





**People themselves aren't disabled, but the world has been designed in a way which disables them.**

**My disability is a huge part of who I am;** always has been, always will be. But I don't think it purely defines me as much as any one attribute can define any one person. I am many things before I'm disabled.

**I'd say being disabled has brought far more positives** than negatives.

**I tend to avoid the word normal;** everyone's normal is different.

**When it comes to the societal model of disability,** it means that people themselves aren't disabled, but the world has been designed in a way which disables them.

**It's more positive to change the impact and intention behind the word disability,** rather than trying to create something new.

**People with disabilities don't exist purely to inspire you** and no one owes you being inspirational.

**Facing discrimination makes me quite stubborn and motivated** to prove people wrong. If someone said, "Oh, you wouldn't be able to do that," I've very quickly proved them wrong.

**Inclusive design is just better design,** and we all benefit from creating products that everyone can use.

**Diversity and inclusion mean creating a place that everyone is able to participate in and feel they're welcome and valid.** In an ideal world, everyone would feel their opinion was equally valid. At the same time, it needs to be done quite actively, very consciously, because doing things unconsciously has got us to where we are today.

# Suzan Asya Yavuz

(she/her)

24, Turkey/United Kingdom

Suzan Asya Yavuz is a bisexual woman living between Turkey and the United Kingdom. She speaks about her experiences of disability, sexuality and classism as a Middle Eastern woman of a lighter complexion.



**I feel like I tick so many boxes halfway;** not fully gay, but a bit gay. Not fully ethnic, but a bit ethnic.

**In a way, my sexuality doesn't define me at all** because in my mind, at least at this point in my life, I don't think I could bring a girl home. I am straight in the practical sense of the word because my family don't really accept that kind of thing.

**I try not to let my disability define me,** but some days I remember I am chronically ill and limited because of it. Chronic illness exists in a grey area in disability and, much like mental illness, can affect many facets of life without being directly linked to it.



## Brands should lead with kindness.

**Gender defines me massively** and sexism is the most common type of discrimination I experience.

**Brands should lead with kindness.** Often there is anxiety about what might happen if they get it wrong rather than actively actually trying to do what people need.

**Discussing class with a privileged classmate,** I pointed out that we had both been accepted into this esteemed university, despite my working-class background. He replied "Yes, I know—but I don't understand how." This frustrated me because I knew how I had gotten into Oxford: I had worked so much harder to have been there because I had to get past way more socio-economic and cultural factors.

**There's a lot of push towards diversity and inclusion** because it's the "woke" thing to do or it's the fair thing to do, but there's an element of pity.

**When you are shooting an advert, shoot diverse people.** When you are marketing a thing, ask people about it and make something that's useful to more people than just who you think it should be useful to. And it's important to get more than one perspective, because one is never enough.

# Matsuhisa Imamichi

(he/him)  
75, Japan

Matsuhisa Imamichi, formerly a professional painter, now lectures at a culture center four times per month, and enjoys listening to classical music, walking, iced coffee and occasionally attending live concerts. He speaks about his experiences as society and technology have evolved throughout his life.



# The internet came along when I was around 50 and it changed my life.

**I would describe my life as “inscrutable are the ways of heaven,”** which is a Japanese/Chinese proverb, meaning it is not easy to determine whether it is lucky or unlucky.

**When I was an artist,** I was shortlisted for and won an award in a prestigious painting competition. The downsides were that my income, and therefore my life, were unstable. My efforts were not always rewarded.

**When I was younger,** I could draw and paint in detail, but with aging my eyesight deteriorated and I can no longer do it. In general, with aging, my concentration is decreasing. I want to improve my skills, but I can't focus on them easily.

**I went to a showroom the other day to look at a new car.** Cars are becoming more and more tech enabled. I feel worried that if it continues, old people like me won't be able to handle them anymore.

**The internet came along when I was around 50 and it changed my life.** I have become more aware of the different ways of thinking and views in the world.

**I think that older people are considered a kind of “old nuisance”** by younger people. But I think senior citizens in Japan are fortunate; whereas I think young people have a lot of pressure on them.

**I think many adverts portray elderly people stereotypically.** I feel unhappy about them.

**The concept of diversity and inclusion did not exist when I was younger.** I only have a neutral view when it comes to LGBT, for example.

**Companies and brands should be responsible for and address diversity and inclusion.**



# Fay Reid

(she/her)

54, United Kingdom

Fay Reid was born and lives in east London. Struck by a lack of provision, she launched her 9 to 5 Menopause project on social media and her website, [fayreid.com](http://fayreid.com), to share her own experiences as a Black woman and offer working women of all ethnicities education, tips and resources. She acts as an advisor to businesses, developing their policies and conducting lunchtime chats and workshops around the menopause. She talks to us about discrimination in the workplace, why the menopause years shouldn't mean a life of misery and being unapologetically herself.

**Fay  
Reid**  
9 to 5 Menopause





# I feel like I'm entering a new chapter and celebrating the next stage of me.



**My name's Fay Reid.** There was a massive phase during the 1980s and '90s where Black people were naming their kids Shaquan, Shaquita, and stuff. Dead giveaway, but as Fay I could walk into a job interview and see the look of surprise on their face: "Oh, you're Black."

**Since the murder of George Floyd** every workplace is putting a Black bum on a seat, it's like ticking a box. Why do you not already have Black people in place, doing the jobs?

**I started having symptoms at the age of 46** but the people who were talking about menopause were White, affluent women who didn't have a job. They recommended private clinics, nutritionists and yoga. That is not my life, I've got a job to go to. So I started 9 to 5 Menopause, because there were no women in the workplace talking about menopause.

**The menopause narrative is shifting.** The perception of the old White woman fanning herself and being over the hill because she's going through the change, is no more. There's a lot of doom and gloom, but your life isn't over. Can we just give it a bit more of a positive spin? Because I feel like I'm entering a new chapter and celebrating the next stage of me.

**Reactions to Black representation are ironic.** People are going, "God, we're only seeing Black people now, in adverts." I'm, like, "You know we existed beforehand. What do you think we were doing, living under a rock?" This is real life.

**This is who I am.** I am not apologizing for that.


# Isaac Zinman

(he/him)

24, United States

A California native, Isaac Zinman works for a tech company. A self-confessed food-lover, he is confident, and enjoys being part of his family and community. A cisgender, straight male, Zinman is an Ashkenazi Jew who passes for and defines himself as White. Recognizing his privilege, Zinman closely considers what makes diversity and inclusion initiatives more impactful, especially in the workplace.





**Judaism being an ethnicity as well as a religion, your membership is not contingent upon your religious beliefs.**



**If I were to define myself**, I'd say I'm American first. Even though my family's been in the United States for several generations, I also feel a connection to my European heritage, part Dutch, part Hungarian and, of course, most of that family is also Jewish, Ashkenazi Jewish to be specific.

**I think I've had a lot of the benefit of White privilege.** Most Ashkenazi Jews are White passing or would define themselves as White or Caucasian, myself included.

**People will often approach Judaism from the standpoint of their cultural background**, which is generally more Christian-focused. Judaism being an ethnicity as well as a religion, your membership is not contingent upon your religious beliefs.

**In school, people made jokes or assumptions** because I was Jewish. I've heard more than my fair share of Holocaust jokes and general Jew jokes.

**I feel like a bit of an old soul.** Although I'm technically part of generation Z, I don't feel I belong to the extreme digitization and social media existence as much as my perception of gen Z does. I didn't go through middle school and high school with an iPhone in my hands, like kids these days.

**When I consider diversity and inclusion**, I think of equity. I think of an effort to try to account for and correct for the imbalances that will affect someone's life trajectory from the very beginning.

**There's a very, very thin line** between diversity, inclusion, representation—and tokenization.

# Susie Lim

(she/her)

48, United States

Susie Lim, a mother and a creative director, spoke with us about her identity as an Asian American, and the experiences she and her family have faced in recent years pertaining to ethnicity, ageism, gender and language.





# Inclusion is about doing the right thing at the right moment.

**My daughter** is nine, and a model in commercials. She was once cast to have a Japanese accent. As a family, we spoke about whether we wanted her to try to speak with a Japanese accent and we chose not to, because it wouldn't be authentic to who she is.

**I don't want to be the token Asian** and that seems to always be the case.

**Being a lot older than a lot of folks**, but looking young, is a disadvantage because people don't realize the amount of experience that I have.

**I'm always very self-conscious** about my height. I'm about five feet tall and I always feel at a disadvantage in the corporate world. If you're loud you can create the same presence, but that's not natural to who I am.

**How I nurture and mentor** a creative team is different than how a male would do it, and actually I think that is my superpower. I really started to celebrate and honor that.



**From a female and an Asian perspective, I realized that I am sitting at the helm of creative.** That is why I started to speak up and get involved with our Asian American Pacific Islander employee resource group.

**A workplace microaggression made me so mad** when I gave an older White commercial director some ideas for a TV spot and he pretty much belittled me in front of the client and my own creatives. I made it clear that that's something that I don't condone and don't want to be a part of.

**Inclusion is about doing the right thing at the right moment** and equal representation across the board. But as well as brands, I think it's important for the company that you work for to address and talk about inclusion too. We should have representation within our own company.

# Mihad Kashif

(he/him)

32, UAE

Of Sudanese heritage, Mihad Kashif was born and raised in Dubai. Kashif identifies as Black ethnically and Arab culturally. His father is Nubian, and his mother is of African-Arab heritage. Kashif works as a senior social media manager and communications specialist. He talks about diversity in the workplace, the importance of tough conversations, and why being the only Black friend is exhausting.



# Open your circle, get to know people from different communities.



**I'm Black.** So that is very visible and it's probably the first thing that people usually see, and whether you live in Europe, in the Middle East or anywhere else, if you're not in a Black majority population, you're going to be singled out.

**Explaining racism is exhausting.** I've had to clash with a few friends and say: "Listen. You're exposed to the same amount of media and information as me, take a step to learn on your own."

**I love being the Black representative in some contexts** but, at the same time, you think: "Why am I the only one?"

**In the Middle East it's rare to find matters of diversity being publicly discussed.** But if things are not discussed publicly, awareness will never progress and you're not going to solve any problems.

**You need diverse teams to produce inclusive work,** whether it's in front of the camera, in the background, in the creative area, in the strategy area. If you're limited to a specific ethnicity or nationality, you're only going to produce work that's reflective of them.

**High-ranking jobs need to be more diverse** because the minute you have that vision at the top, it logically cascades down.

**Having to stick to hiring quotas** means there's something wrong with diversity in your company, that you're not achieving it.

**Open your circle,** get to know people from different communities. Get to know their culture. Get to know their food. Get to know the shows that they watch. Get to know their thoughts and values.

# Lana Kageyama

(she/her)

24, France/Japan

Lana Kageyama is a half Japanese and half French queer woman, working within Japan's publicity industry. She shares her experiences from work and home through the lens of gender and sexuality, emphasizing how necessary it is for brands to understand the full spectrum of experiences.





# Diversity and inclusion is an assurance that no one will be discriminated against—a promise that they will be in a safe place.

**Your physical appearance really matters**, especially in Japan. When you don't look Japanese, you must explain that you have other ethnic backgrounds.

**Among my colleagues, I have a privileged environment** where we can talk openly. My international bubble isn't indicative of the general experience.

**My French family doesn't know that I'm queer, purely because the opportunity has not presented itself yet**—it's not a difficult question. With Japanese people my parents and grandparents' age, it's different.

**I'm used to stereotypes and discrimination because it's something that women endure every day in Japan.** It's getting better, but we still have so many subtle negative comments; for example, about feminism. In France they're more direct, conscious, and expressive with their feelings.



**I think brands are becoming more genderless.** For example, here a razor company supported women's choice to not shave. We later found out the model's armpit hair was CGI, so the idea was progressive but the execution must also be progressive—there's room for improvement.

**Women face violence and sexual harassment** on public transportation. We have women-only carriages. I know it can be a safe space, but the need for these spaces to protect women from predators is problematic.

**Diversity and inclusion is an assurance that no one will be discriminated against**—a promise that they will be in a safe place.

**The message of the queer magazine I work on** is that diversity brings hope but must work in conjunction with media and brands, to create good representation, as opposed to being tokenistic. Commercials make a huge impact on people's lives: they're something we see every day.



**My identity is not my obstacle. My identity is my superpower. Because the truth is, I am what the world looks like. You are what the world looks like. Collectively, we are what the world actually looks like. And in order for our systems to reflect that, they don't have to create a new reality. They just have to stop resisting the one we already live in.**

**America Ferrera, My identity is a superpower - not an obstacle, TED2019, Vancouver**

# About this report

# Meet the experts

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We spoke to experts on four continents to help shape our understanding of the future of inclusion. We'd like to thank them for all their help and expertise in making this report possible.



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**Wajahat Ali (he/him), United States**

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Born in California to Pakistani immigrant parents, Wajahat Ali is a columnist for the *Daily Beast*, a public speaker, and the author of *Go Back to Where You Came From*.



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**Zaid Al-Qassab (he/him), United Kingdom**

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Chief marketing officer and inclusion and diversity director at Channel 4, United Kingdom-based broadcaster Zaid Al-Qassab is also a board member of the Creative Diversity Network and a passionate advocate for diversity within media.



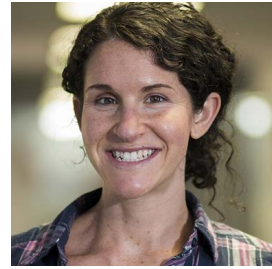
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**Imtiyaz Basharat (he/him), United Kingdom**

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London-born Imtiyaz Basharat is a 2022 venture capital fellow with Included VC. With a diverse cultural and linguistic background spanning Europe, MENA and Asia, he is passionate about social causes and has worked on social mobility projects across the MENA region, the United Kingdom and South America.

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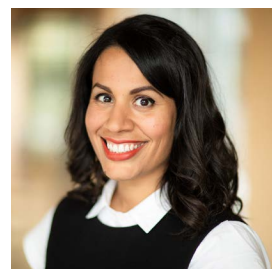
### Jenny Davis (she/her), Australia

Dr Jenny Davis is a sociologist at the Australian National University. She studies the intersection of technology and social psychology, focusing on reducing inequalities within tech systems.



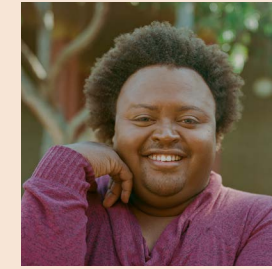
### Madeline Di Nonno (she/her), United States

Madeline Di Nonno is the President and CEO of the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, the only global research-driven organization working within the entertainment and media industries to create gender balance, foster inclusion and reduce negative stereotyping.



### Rhonda Hadi (she/her), United Kingdom

Dr Rhonda Hadi's research centers on consumer interactions with technology. She is associate professor of marketing at the Saïd Business School at the University of Oxford, and a collaborator on the Unstereotype Alliance report "Beyond Gender 2: The Impact of Intersectionality in Advertising."



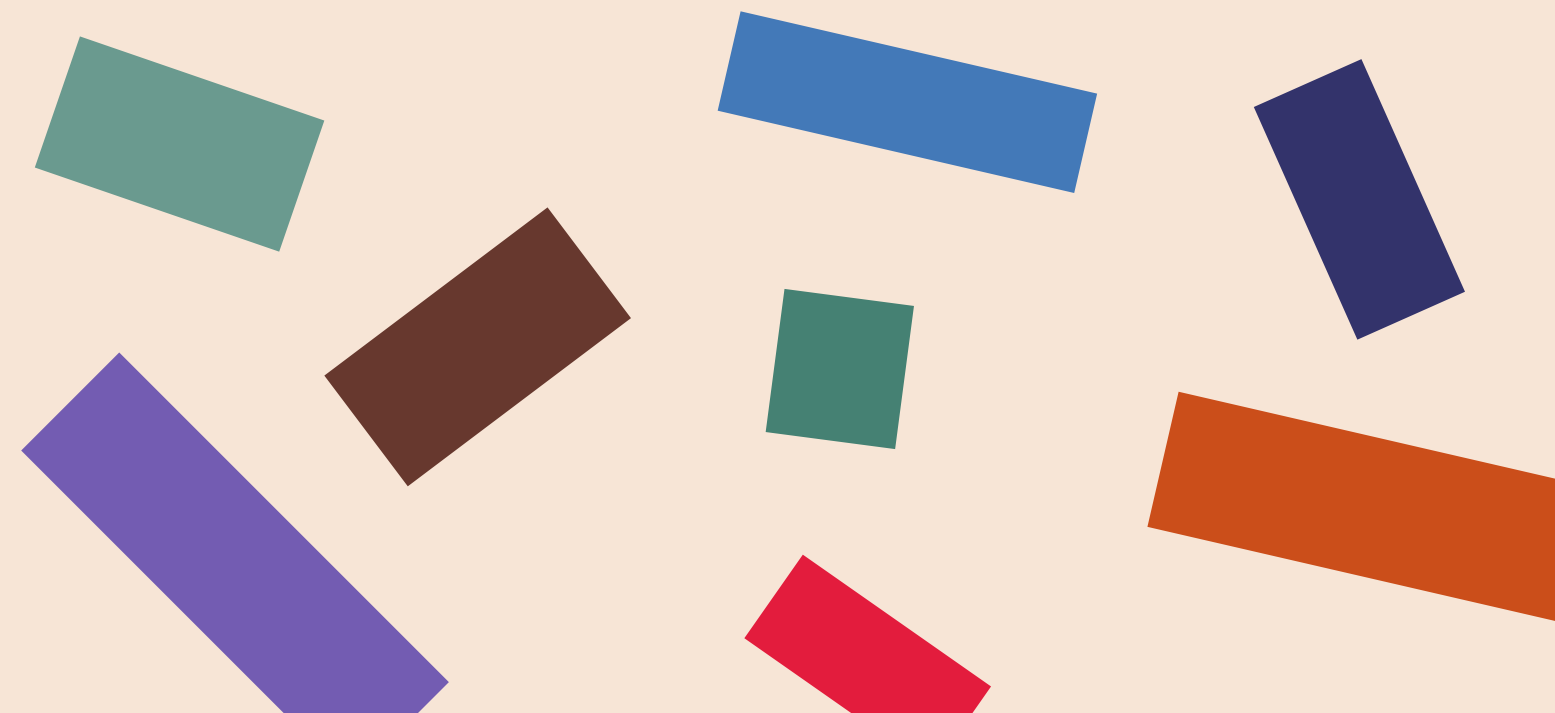
### Jonathan P Higgins (they/them), United States

Dr Jonathan Paul Higgins, known as DoctorJonPaul, is an educator, national speaker, freelance journalist, thought leader and media critic who is passionate about television and film development. They hold a doctorate in educational justice, and write and lecture about what liberation means for Black, queer, fat, non-binary people.



### Eliza Hull (she/her), Australia

Eliza Hull is a proud disabled woman who has the physical condition Charcot Marie Tooth, which she wrote about in her essay "Never Needed Fixing" in the 2021 book *Growing Up Disabled in Australia*. Her fifth studio album and her new children's book will be published in 2022.





### **Ant Jackson (she/her), United Kingdom**

Ant Jackson is senior creative group head at Space, an independent creative agency based in London. She is also a member of Outvertising and Young Creative Council, a mentor for D&AD, and has consulted for a number of organisations, including the Diversity Standards Collective.



### **Sameera Khan (she/her), India**

Based in Mumbai, Sameera Khan is an independent journalist, writer and researcher who co-authored the book *Why Loiter? Women and Risk on Mumbai Streets*. She writes about gender issues, particularly those facing Muslim women in India.



### **Eva Lamborghini (she/her), Argentina**

Eva Lamborghini is an anthropologist at the University of Buenos Aires in Argentina. Her research focuses on ethnic and racial minorities within Latin America, in particular Argentine Afro descendants. She is also a member of the Afro-Latin American Studies Group and part of the Traveling Research Seminar on Afro-Latin American Art.



### **Josh Loebner (he/him/his/disabled), United States**

Josh Loebner, PhD, is a brand, advertising and inclusive design expert and supports global brand initiatives centering on inclusive design, disability, and accessibility. Wunderman Thompson's global head of inclusive design, he is fully blind in one eye, legally blind in the other, but clearly sees the best in everyone.



### **Christina Mallon (she/her), United States**

With a background in advertising, marketing and inclusive design, Christina Mallon is the director of inclusive design at Microsoft. Diagnosed with a motor neuron disease that paralyzed her arms in her early 20s, she is a champion of disabled rights and the power of inclusive design.



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**Leng Montgomery (he/him), United Kingdom**

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UK-based senior DE&I consultant, Leng Montgomery is trans, dyslexic, and from a minority ethnic and low-income background. He is a LGBTQ+ inclusion and Trans\* specialist who helps companies and brands to develop better inclusion strategies.

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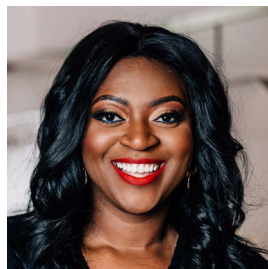
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**Takahiko Morinaga (he/him), Japan**

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Takahiko Morinaga is the president and CEO of the Japan LGBT Research Institute, which he founded in 2016. He is also a board member of the Association for the Promotion of LGBT Understanding.

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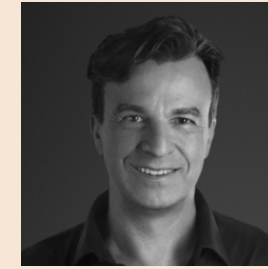
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**Ezinne (Kwubiri) Okoro (she/her), United States**

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Ezinne (Kwubiri) Okoro, global chief inclusion, equity and diversity officer at Wunderman Thompson, is an inclusive leader, change agent, thought partner, and corporate executive. Her mission is to lead with excellence, drive innovative results, champion progressive change, and advocate for those who feel muted and unseen.

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**Alexandre Silveira (he/him), Brazil**

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Head of CX and strategic design at Wunderman Thompson Brazil, Alexandre Silveira focuses on behavior design, sociology and anthropology to help companies and brands learn how to truly connect with people. He was part of a team that researched COVID-19's impact on people who live in the *periferias* (outskirts).

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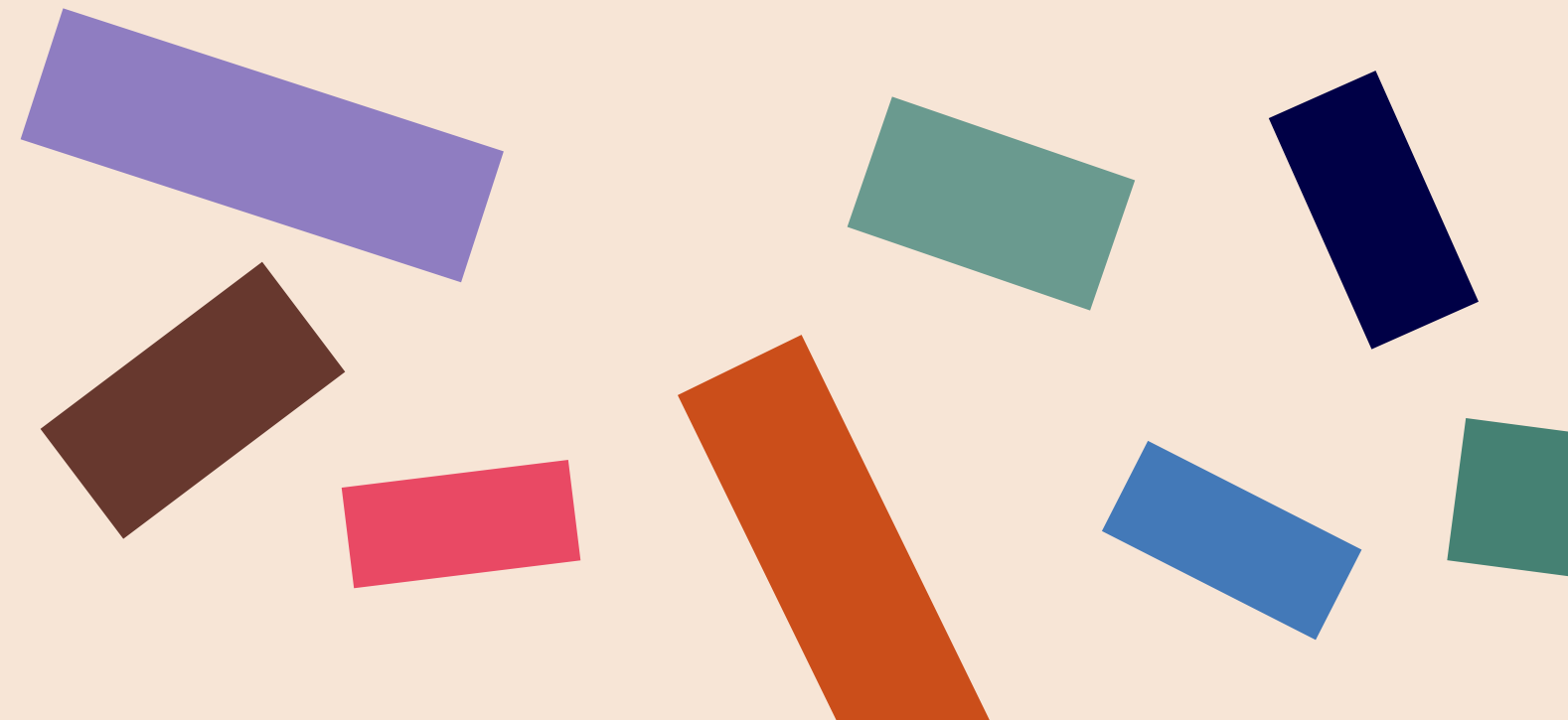
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**Vivian Zeni da Silva (she/her), Brazil**

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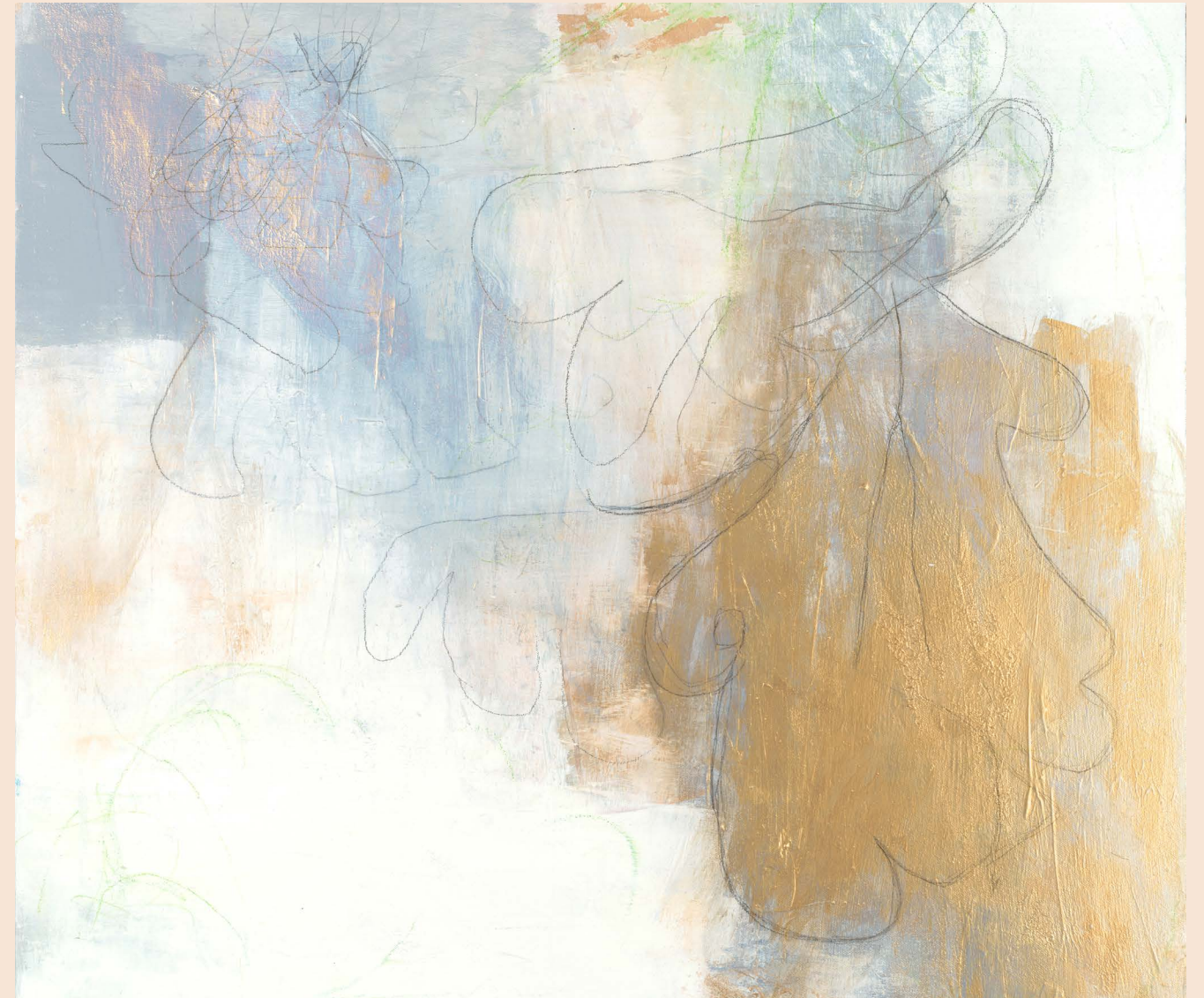
Vivian Zeni da Silva is communications director and inclusion, equity and diversity leader at Wunderman Thompson Brazil. She is a journalist and a master's student at the Center for the Study of Diversities, Intolerances and Conflicts at the University of São Paulo.

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# Meet the artist: Charlie French

**“Yes, I have Down syndrome, but I want you to see me: Charlie French. Then I want you to see my art.”**



Charlie French is an intuitive abstract artist who embraces a blank canvas as an adventure in imaginative freedom. He has studied painting in London, Dallas and Santa Fe, and his work hangs in private and corporate collections around the world. His professional purpose is to share with others the happiness he discovers daily in his painting process.

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**The artwork on the cover and divider pages of this report, which inspired our design, was created and kindly contributed by Charlie French. Follow him on his art journey @justcharliefrench**

# Methodology

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Our research comprised several methodologies and covered the period January to May 2022.

In addition to extensive desk research, we conducted a quantitative study using Wunderman Thompson Data. In March and April 2022, we surveyed 5,001 adults in Brazil, China, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States. Respondents self-identified as part of marginalized groups.

All data, unless otherwise stated, are reported for a combined total population from all five countries. In both China and Japan, we do not report on the dimension of race as the non-majority racial and ethnic population is too small. Please note that income data was only available for China, the United Kingdom and the United States.

We conducted in-depth interviews with 18 experts and thought leaders from around the world, across sectors including media and entertainment, finance, technology and marketing. Global ethnographic interviews were conducted with 18 people from key marginalized groups. In April 2022, a focus group involving five participants from the United States was led by Wunderman Thompson Data in the Wunderman Thompson Metaverse.

All data was correct and up to date at the time of writing in May 2022.

## The language of inclusion

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The language of inclusion is fast-evolving and often up for debate. Here are some brief notes on terminology we've used in this report.

### DE&I, or IE&D?

The acronym DE&I (diversity, equity and inclusion) was the most common term for these practices at time of publication but there are others in use. Some add an A for accessibility or a B for belonging; others change the order. At Wunderman Thompson we use IE&D (inclusion, equity and diversity).

### Marginalized communities

For want of better language we use this term to refer to groups that experience systematic discrimination and exclusion across economic, political, social and cultural dimensions.

### Disabled or PwD?

We use the term disabled, while acknowledging different preferences within the community for terms like people with disabilities (PwD) or regional differences (for example, in the UAE, the phrase people of determination is commonly used).

# Designing for inclusion

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## How we made this report accessible

**To make our report as accessible as possible, we followed accessibility rules throughout the design and development process.**

We worked with Wunderman Thompson accessibility experts, who used multiple accessibility measuring tools to identify usability issues. Our experts deployed color contrast checkers to verify our design palette, to help readers with color vision deficiency to clearly distinguish between text and backgrounds.

We have arranged the text to create a good reading experience. Clear typographic hierarchies of size, weight, typeface and alignment distinguish headers, sub headers and body copy. Body fonts are 14-point and captions are 12-point, for legibility. Kerning (the spacing between letters) and leading (the vertical spacing between lines) are adjusted for optimum readability.

We have added captions and descriptive alt text to all essential images, charts and graphs. This allows our audience with visual impairments to listen to the PDF document like an audiobook with assistive tools such as the Read Out Loud function offered by Acrobat Pro.

The body copy of this report uses the typeface FS Me. Designed by Fontsmith, FS Me has been researched and developed with the input of UK charity Mencap to improve legibility for people with learning difficulties. According to Fontsmith, "its features include very subtle distinguishing elements of each letter to aid the reading and comprehension of texts, and tails, ascenders and descenders that have been extended for extra clarity."

Complex data is presented in simplified visualizations within this report. We use multiple shapes in different color contrasts to present our proprietary quantitative data in an accessible format. Simple data labels have been added to aid comprehension. Complex charts also include alt text to explain the data for those using text readers.

# Acknowledgements

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**Wunderman Thompson Intelligence would like to also thank the following Wunderman Thompson colleagues for their generous contributions:**

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---

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## About Wunderman Thompson Intelligence

Wunderman Thompson Intelligence is Wunderman Thompson’s futurism, research and innovation unit. It charts emerging and future global trends, consumer change, and innovation patterns—translating these into insight for brands. It offers a suite of consultancy services, including bespoke research, presentations, co-branded reports and workshops. It is also active in innovation, partnering with brands to activate future trends within their framework and execute new products and concepts. The division is led by Emma Chiu and Marie Stafford, Global Directors of Wunderman Thompson Intelligence.

### For more information visit:

[wundermanthompson.com/expertise/intelligence](https://wundermanthompson.com/expertise/intelligence)

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