

RESEARCH REPORT

# Survey on INGO Reward Fairness 2024

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## Introduction and Aims

In 2024, Project Fair and Agenda Consulting developed and ran a short global staff survey for Project Fair members to help inform wider insights into reward within the international aid and development sector. We aimed to collect data about staff perspectives of existing reward practices to understand how reward affects employee perceptions of their organisation. Furthermore, the research enabled us to explore sector trends more broadly in order to help inform our overarching efforts to gather insights into what works well and doesn't work as well.

This research project enabled Project Fair members to get an insight into their own organisational situation, as well as a comparison with other organisations within the network and beyond.

In this report we provide an overview of the aggregated data for all participating organisations, some important learnings from the data, as well as an indication of how our data compares with organisations outside our network (both international NGOs and inter-governmental organisations).

## Participants

Eight organisations comprising a total of 666 individuals participated in the survey. The demographic information is provided below. Note that where multiple category options are provided the largest group is bolded.

Participants	8 organisations, 666 individuals
Age	1%=<25yrs, <b>36%=25-35yrs</b> , <b>39%=35-44yrs</b> , 18%=45-54yrs, 6%=>55yrs
Tenure	16%=<1yr, <b>34%=1-3yrs</b> , 15%=3-5yrs, 21%=5-10 years, 13%=>10yrs
Gender	50%=female, 48%=male, 1%=identify another way, 1%=prefer not to say
Identify as marginalised	11% yes, 82% no, 7% prefer not to say
Management level	58% not management, 42% management
Contract type	95% national/local/residential contract, 5% international/expatriate/mobile
Role	22% HQ/global role, <b>64% national/country role</b> , 14% regional role
Nationality*	<b>44% sub-Saharan Africa</b> , 14% North America, 11% South Asia, 11% Middle East

\* Given the vast number of nationalities represented, only responses greater than 10% are reported here

## Measures

Seventeen questions were included in the survey, with 15 from Agenda's existing database, and 2 bespoke questions developed specifically for this survey.

The questions were around two broad areas:

1. perceptions of current reward and recognition, and
2. perceptions of my organisation.

All of the questions were asked on a 5-point response scale (Strongly agree – Strongly disagree).

## Findings

Some important demographic differences were identified across the survey findings:

### 1. Salary packages

- a. Contract type:** *lower perceived fairness* amongst national/local/residential than expatriate/international/mobile
- b. Role:** mostly *not significantly different* (but regional and national/country sometimes perceived more fairness than global/HQ)
- c.** 5% of those surveyed reported being employed on an **expatriate/international/mobile contract**. This is reduced from a previous survey in 2010<sup>ii</sup> which found 15% of staff were on expatriate contracts. This may indicate reduced use of these contracts in the sector, over time.

**Recommendation:** this data suggests that differentiating salaries by role (i.e. content of the job) has no impact on perceived fairness, but differentiating by contract type (i.e. national vs expatriate) leads to perceptions of unfairness amongst national/local/residential staff. Therefore, ensure salaries are built around job tasks, not the person in the job.

### 2. Age and Tenure

Older employees tended to have *more positive* perceptions of fairness inside and outside the organisation. Conversely, employees with moderate tenure (3-10 years) were less positive about interactions within the organisation (e.g. feedback and judgements of their performance).

**Recommendation:** understand that employees at different ages and stages of life may have different perspectives, so ensure you consider this in your organisation. This data suggests a potential intervention point around communication and procedures for those with moderate tenure.

### 3. Ethnicity

There were *significant disparities* in perceptions based on ethnicity, with ethnic minority employees generally reporting *less favourable* perceptions than white employees.

**Recommendation:** be vigilant about pathways for employee voice, to ensure you hear from all employees. Find ways to understand and address why these disparities exist and how they can be addressed (this can be done as part of a wider Diversity/Equality/Inclusion focus).

### 4. Disability and Marginalisation

Employees with disabilities and those identifying as marginalised had *more positive* perceptions than those who did not identify in this way.

**Recommendation:** this is a positive finding. Ensure an ongoing focus on inclusion of all employee groups.

### 5. Nationality and Regional Differences

Employees from regions outside Western Europe, especially from the Americas and Sub-Saharan Africa, tended to view benefits and rewards *more positively*.

**Recommendation:** understand why this might be the case, it may be that there are different expectations in different locations. Initiatives to address fairness are likely to address age-old disparities between offices in the Global North and Global South, so ensure to include an education component in the change process to ensure that all employees understand and are on-board with new policies.

### 6. Importance of organisations

We identified important differences between organisations in terms of perceptions of fairness, indicating the importance of organisational level interventions on fairness.

**Recommendation:** while it is key to talk to other organisations in the sector to learn what they are doing, and understand what options work, every organisation should address reward fairness internally to their organisation.

<sup>ii</sup> Carr, S. C., McWha, I., MacLachlan, M., & Furnham, A. (2010). International-local remuneration differences across six countries: Do they undermine poverty reduction work?. *International Journal of Psychology*, 45(5), 321-340.

## Benchmarking against other organisations

Benchmarking against other organisations is really important for understanding individual organisational data in context. It enables us to understand where our data is in line with trends more broadly, but also to see where we are doing better, and where additional work is needed.

For this reason, we were lucky that Agenda Consulting was able to draw on their extensive database of other organisations to generate benchmark groups for comparison. We restricted our comparison to data collected within the last two years (to avoid the impact of covid), and we compared with two different groups – 37 International NGOs (INGOs), and 14 Inter-Governmental Organisations (IGOs).

Compared with the **INGO benchmark group**, Project Fair organisations were, on average, *rated slightly more positively* than this group for questions related to reward and recognition, and even more so for how the organisations were rated by their people. The questions listed below were notably higher for Project Fair members:

- This organisation is open, honest and shares information effectively
- I would willingly put in extra effort in order to help my organisation

Compared with the **IGO benchmark group**, Project Fair organisations were *rated substantially more positively* across both perceptions of reward and recognition, as well as perceptions of the organisation.

The only exception to the above was in the area of benefits, indicating this is a key area needing focus in the future.

## Conclusions

Overall, this survey of Project Fair network members suggests that organisations within our network have slightly higher staff ratings for fairness than INGOs not in our network, and substantially higher ratings than IGOs. This might suggest that our network is supporting organisations to be fairer, or it might be because our members are already committed to fairness. But either way it means our conversations occurring in the Project Fair network are supporting a move toward fairness.

The data reveals some areas for action, as indicated in the recommendations noted above. Note that it is important to explore the relevance of these in your own organisation before taking action. Overall, this data indicates that organisational policies and practices are of key importance for feelings of fairness of people working within the INGO sector.

## About Us

**Project Fair** aims to research and develop practical, equitable and evidence-based Reward approaches within the INGO sector. These are based around our Principles of Ethical Reward, Transparency, Equity, Sustainability, Compliance and Risk, which we have developed alongside INGOs to help build fair global reward systems in our sector.

**Agenda** is a Research Consultancy and global leader in Not-for-Profit Staff Engagement Surveys with a wealth of benchmarking experience across all aspects of the employee experience including Reward and Recognition.