



# EQUITY FOR IMPACT

Advancing Equity, Diversity and Inclusion to Unlimit Potential at Unilever



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# ABOUT THIS PAPER

This paper connects for the first time what we are doing at Unilever to advance equity, diversity and inclusion (ED&I) across our entire business. It provides a comprehensive overview of our strategy and actions. And it shares what we are learning as we work to deeply integrate equity into our operations, our value chain, our brands and wider society.



## HEIN SCHUMACHER

CEO

As I spend time with our teams around the world, I have seen first-hand the impact of embracing equity, diversity and inclusion in our behaviours and culture. This helps us to better understand and meet the needs of consumers, identify new commercial opportunities for growth and innovation, and attract, retain and develop the very best global talent.

At Unilever, our ED&I work isn't optional – it's a fundamental part of our company culture. This paper shares our learnings and demonstrates how we are further accelerating our progress to build a stronger, more sustainable business.

*Hein*



## NITIN PARANJPE

Chief People and Transformation Officer

Building a more equitable, diverse and inclusive Unilever requires us to shift norms and challenge misperceptions. It needs us to create safe spaces for dialogue and empower employees to contribute to strategic and operational decision making. And, we must all reflect on our own experiences with inequity – whether we have been harmed by it, benefited from it or even unconsciously helped to perpetuate it. It's a journey that takes time. As we look to further unlock the potential of our business, we must work to build an organisation where all of our people can flourish and thrive.

*Nitin*



## **ALINE SANTOS**

Chief Brand Officer and Chief ED&I Officer

Equality and equity. While they might look and sound similar, they are not. Equality looks to treat people in the same way by providing them with the same opportunities and resources. It assumes every individual has equal advantages or barriers. But in the real world, this is rarely the case. Equity recognises we do not all start from the same place and that people have different stories and circumstances. Equity is about breaking down barriers that unfairly limit people's potential so we can truly achieve a fairer world. At Unilever, our work to advance equity extends across our people, our suppliers and retailers, our consumers and wider society. We are trying not only to change the way we operate as a business, but also to change the way business is done.

*Aline*



## **REBECCA MARMOT**

Chief Sustainability Officer

Since we began our journey to advance equity, we have learnt that real progress requires global collaboration, influencing and changing systems. We are facing some of the most immediate challenges as a global society and no single organisation can tackle these alone. Our ambition to advance equity requires collective action. It takes partnerships with the people across our business, with the organisations and governments in the communities in which we operate, and with companies and coalitions across our industry. As we look ahead, we hope this paper will encourage more collective action to advance equity and create prosperity for all.

*R. Marmot*

# THE EQUITY IMPERATIVE

Strengthening our people,  
our business and society



## Imagine what could be if all people had their essential needs met.

If they were part of a community where they felt they belonged. If they could participate fully and make a meaningful contribution to the world around them. If they had the opportunity to grow, pursue their dreams and realise their full potential. Without exceptions, and without limitations.

Despite centuries of human progress, we aren't there yet. Around the world, our societies impose exceptions and limitations on billions of people because of their gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socio-economic background and more. Limitations rooted in outdated norms and stereotypes, bias and discrimination. Limitations that prevent people from fulfilling their potential.

Equity is about lifting these limitations. Bringing down the barriers that divide people to create equal opportunity for all. At Unilever, we consider equity fundamental for our people, our business and society to prosper.

### For people

Equity is vital to human dignity, psychological safety, the ability to meet one's basic needs and to invest in oneself and one's family.

### For business

Equity unlocks the benefits of a diverse and inclusive organisation, empowering everyone to contribute fully. It fuels innovation to serve neglected consumer needs and opens up new commercial opportunities. It is essential to the stability and resilience that consumer confidence and market growth depend on.

### For society

Equity is critical to social cohesion, trust in systems and institutions, civil and political stability and economic growth.

Our business, like every business, is made up of people. They are at the heart of our operations, our value chains, our markets and our communities. Ultimately, the business case for equity, diversity and inclusion is as plain as the moral one. When people thrive, so do we.

## OUR DEFINITIONS

**Equality** is about treating people the same irrespective of their identity or status.

**Equity** is about **confronting the barriers, bias and discrimination people face** so everyone has the opportunity to succeed and thrive.

**Diversity** is about representing the **full variety of perspectives, backgrounds and beliefs of the people we serve**.

**Inclusion** is about **developing a deep sense of belonging**. It's about ensuring every person feels safe to express themselves authentically and empowering them to shape the decisions that affect them.

# THE BUSINESS CASE FOR EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

## Better-performing, more innovative teams

### Inclusive teams are:

**2x** as likely to meet or exceed financial targets

**6x** more likely to be innovative or agile

**8x** more likely to achieve better business outcomes<sup>1</sup>

### Diverse and inclusive organisations are:

**70%** more likely to capture new markets and on average enjoy **19%** higher innovation revenue<sup>2</sup>

## Greater trust, brand loyalty, market share and sales

### Advertising that is free from gender stereotypes delivers:

**1.7x**   
greater brand affinity

**1.4x**   
greater ad enjoyment

**1.3x**   
greater purchase intent<sup>3</sup>

# OUR STRATEGY

Advancing equity to unlimit  
people's potential







## OUR PURPOSE

Unilever's corporate purpose is: **making sustainable living commonplace**. By sustainable living, we mean living in a way that enables people and the planet to thrive.

## OUR EQUITY AMBITION

To deliver on our purpose, we have to bring down the barriers that limit people because of who they are or where they are from, so that everyone has access to opportunity. That's why at Unilever, we are working to **unlimit people's potential**.

## OUR IMPACT AREAS

We drive impact in three areas where we are in a position to make the biggest difference as a global consumer products company, a major employer and one of the largest advertisers in the world:

- Enhancing health and wellbeing
- Expanding economic opportunity
- Confronting bias and discrimination

## OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

We are working to unlimit people's potential across our total business footprint, advancing equity for:

### Our People by:

- Building a workforce that represents the communities we serve
- Designing equitable policies, processes and practices
- Creating a culture where everyone belongs

### Our Suppliers and Retailers by:

- Aspiring to diversify our value chain
- Partnering with purpose

### Our Consumers by:

- Removing harmful stereotypes from our advertising and marketing
- Innovating inclusively to better meet consumer's needs

### Wider Society by:

- Investing in equitable community development
- Shaping industry norms and standards
- Influencing public policy

Across all our work, respecting human rights forms the foundation for what we do. Treating people with respect and dignity and providing decent working conditions are the minimum requirements of a level playing field.

# OUR EQUITY AMBITION | UNLIMITING PEOPLE'S POTENTIAL

1

**Creating positive impacts for people and society by:**



Enhancing health and wellbeing



Expanding economic opportunity



Confronting bias and discrimination

2

**Focusing on people who have been excluded or left behind based on their:**

Gender

Socio-economic Status

Sexual Orientation

Disability

Race and Ethnicity

3

**Delivered via clear ED&I priorities across our total business footprint:**

## **Our people through our operations**

- Building a workforce that represents the communities we serve
- Designing equitable policies, processes and practices
- Creating a culture where everyone belongs

## **Our suppliers and retailers through our value chain**

- Aspiring to diversify our value chain
- Partnering with purpose

## **Our consumers through our brands**

- Removing harmful stereotypes from our advertising and marketing
- Innovating inclusively to better meet consumer's needs

## **Wider community through our partnerships and advocacy**

- Investing in equitable community development
- Shaping industry norms and standards
- Influencing public policy

Respect human rights

## Targeting our actions to unlimit people's potential

**Ensuring everyone has equal opportunity to fulfil their potential means focusing first on people from communities that have historically been excluded or left behind.**

To that end, we target removing barriers to opportunity based on factors that have been used to exclude people around the world, for example: **gender, race and ethnicity, disability, socio-economic status and sexual orientation.** We also consider how the structural and systemic barriers facing people differ based on their local context and how different aspects of their identities may combine or intersect to compound any bias and discrimination they experience.

While targeted action may be designed to dismantle barriers facing members of historically marginalised groups, it often has wider benefits. This phenomenon has become known as the 'curb-cut effect'. Sidewalk curb-cuts, designed for people using wheelchairs, have also assisted people pushing strollers, wheeling luggage, riding bicycles and more.<sup>4</sup> A powerful example in our business has been flexible working hours, which have helped not only women with children but also male and female caregivers, employees navigating health challenges and those pursuing other life goals, enabling them to continue to contribute their skills and talents at work.



# OUR ACTIONS

Making an impact



# OUR PEOPLE

How we are advancing equity for people through our culture and operations



**Our work to unlimit people's potential begins inside Unilever.** We have over 128,000 employees in around 100 countries across the world. Our dedicated and talented people are the heartbeat of Unilever – when they thrive, our business thrives.

To advance equity among our people, we are:

- Building a workforce that represents the communities we serve
- Designing equitable policies, processes and practices
- Designing a culture where everyone belongs

## BUILDING A WORKFORCE THAT REPRESENTS THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE

As a major global employer, we are committed to providing equal opportunity and building a diverse workforce. We work with our people to develop each individual's skills and capabilities and grow their careers. We see that a diverse workforce, representing a wide variety of perspectives and life experiences, helps us understand the diverse needs of our consumers and fuels our ability to innovate to meet those needs.

### Building equitable talent journeys

We seek to embed equity into every stage, from recruitment and hiring to retention and career progression, to develop the senior leadership pipeline we need. For example, we are reshaping how we conduct recruitment across all roles, from internal to external, from full-time to part-time. Our hiring managers aim to use **'balanced slates'** that include suitably qualified under-represented groups in the candidate pool, and we analyse recruitment data to **understand how diverse talent progresses** through the stages of the recruitment process across markets so we can help our talent teams spot and eliminate bias.

We are also working to **attract, select, retain and progress people** from communities that have historically been excluded or left behind. For example, we are testing new guidelines to strengthen the recruitment and development of skilled Black and Brown talent in four lead markets: South Africa, Brazil, the UK and US.

**Our learnings will inform our efforts to build a repeatable model to advance racial equity across Unilever.**

### Taking targeted action locally

While we have set out to accelerate diverse representation globally, at Unilever, much of our action is locally driven. For example, our Afrolever initiative in **Brazil** targets the recruitment and development of Black people. From 2020 to 2023 the Black representation in senior management has doubled and there has been 11% growth in Black representation in junior positions in our Brazilian workforce. In **India**, where only 1 in 6 scientists nationally are women, we are aware of the need to focus on gender balance in our research and development (R&D) team, not just at entry level, but at every level. In 2022, our R&D team reached gender balance. In the **UK**, we received Stonewall's Gold award status in 2023 for being a leading LGBTQ+ employer and we are undertaking significant steps to further improve our talent recruitment and development processes to advance LGBTQ+ inclusion. This includes launching our Market Guide to Advancing LGBTQ+ Equity which offers our teams guidance on thinking about and enacting change in their country to support LGBTQ+ people and allies. And in the **US**, we have partnered with Lime Network, a resource for university students and professionals with disabilities, to build pathways to employment at Unilever for people with disabilities across our North American market.



## Reaching gender balance across Unilever

Gender equity remains a core element of our business strategy. To create a more balanced business, we include improving gender representation in our senior leaders' annual business and development targets. And we use a metric called the **Gender Appointment Ratio**, created in partnership with Harvard Professor Iris Bohnet, to present them with their track record on appointments over a five-year period to raise awareness on potential bias. We are also identifying and taking action to bring down barriers that women face to progressing in their careers at Unilever. For example, we are revising our family leave and flexible work policies, and tackling hot spot areas in business that don't have gender balance.

Women currently represent 55% of our management team and representation at other levels is increasing year on year. Our focus is now on representation at senior management level where we have reached 36%. And we are applying our learnings in gender equity to accelerate our efforts in racial equity, disability inclusion and LGBTQ+ inclusion.

## The data challenge

**Data plays a pivotal role in delivering against our equity ambition.** When we achieved gender balance in our management team, we relied on data to understand the gender make-up of our global workforce and where we were falling short. Yet as we aim to diversify our workforce beyond gender, **we need to collect and analyse our global workforce data by a broader range of demographics**, such as race and ethnicity, ability and sexual orientation. One of our biggest challenges is collecting and managing this data in compliance with local legal requirements in all the countries where we operate.

To address this challenge, **we are implementing a market-level approach** to gather a more comprehensive set of demographic data through an anonymous survey campaign. We have piloted this campaign in three countries to date: the Netherlands, South Africa and Mexico. In the Netherlands, for example, more than half of our office workforce completed the survey, providing **invaluable insights into the diversity of our local workforce, how our colleagues experience diversity and inclusion, and areas where we can improve** – such as accelerating our efforts to create a more inclusive culture for people with disabilities.

## Looking ahead, we are expanding this campaign to all our top ten markets.

We believe that this information will **enhance our understanding of representation disparities within our business, identify geographical variations and guide us in taking action to address these disparities.**

## DESIGNING EQUITABLE POLICIES, PROCESSES AND PRACTICES

To attract and retain people with a wide range of identities and backgrounds, we need to make our policies, processes and practices work for everyone. We are working to eliminate bias and discrimination and meet the needs of the widest range of people possible. We do this through compensation practices, benefits and ways of working that support employees' financial, physical and psychological wellbeing.

### Rigorously assessing how we can improve

Building equity into our policies, processes and practices begins with an honest assessment of where we may be inadvertently perpetuating inequities across our business model – so that we can do what we need to change. In partnership with EY, we have developed an enterprise-wide **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Advancement Framework** that helps us uncover systemic inequities within our business, identify their root causes and understand how they are impacting our employees' experiences. This Framework offers a standardised process for conducting deep-level diagnostics in a consistent way across our markets – enabling us for the first time to see what actions we need to take at both a global and local level to meet our ED&I goals.

For example, our first analysis uncovered inconsistencies in our recruitment processes of senior leaders, leaving space for gender bias to persist and some profiles to be selected over others. The Framework provides us with the tools and recommendations to address these inconsistencies and reduce the bias in the system. We regularly share this information with our **Unilever Leadership Executive**, our international leadership team that guides our company and our strategy, and we now assess all senior leaders' inclusive leadership behaviours and include objectives in their development plans.

### Redefining our business norms and standards

Alongside our efforts to examine how we can improve, we are taking proactive steps to put in place new policies, processes and practices that level the playing field for people from historically underrepresented groups. We aim to pay at least a **living wage to all Unilever employees** which is one way to address disparities facing people from low-income communities.

## We have been working with the Fair Wage Network since 2014 to ensure that pay for our employees is set at levels that are both fair and liveable.

Fairness in the workplace is a core pillar of our sustainability priorities and incorporates our Framework for Fair Compensation. As part of our Framework's living wage element, we aim to pay a living wage to all our direct employees\*.

We achieved full compliance with that commitment by the end of 2020, with 100% of our direct\* employees globally paid at or above a living wage. Our commitment is now enshrined in our Code of Business Principles, and we check annually that we are maintaining compliance by conducting audits in every country.

We also design policies at a global level that can be adapted to meet local needs. For example, our global **Workplace Diversity & Inclusion Design Standard** sets out the pre-conditions for ensuring inclusivity and accessibility in our work environments, with a checklist to guide local workplace design. 98 Unilever workplaces have completed the checklist to date and we reached a global average score of 75% compliance in 2023.

\*Data disclosed excludes employees who are not integrated into Unilever's global reward structure and human resources information system.



## Designing innovative employment models

Building equity into our business includes reimagining the future of work, so we can help our people keep pace with change. For example, **our innovative employment model U-Work** gives employees the flexibility associated with contract roles together with the security and benefits typically linked to regular employment.

People in U-Work don't have a fixed role. They work on varying assignments, and between assignments are free to do other things that are important to them. They get a monthly retainer and a specially designed suite of benefits whether they're working on an assignment or not. Assignments can have varying work patterns – anything from a few days a week for a few months to short concentrated bursts of full-time work with breaks in-between. And they get paid for each assignment when they're working.

This more flexible way of working brings many benefits. It helps people who want to reduce their working hours as they get older. It allows working parents to manage their time more effectively. And it allows people to travel, study or work for other businesses while maintaining a meaningful connection with Unilever. U-Work benefits Unilever too. Managers have access to skilled people who are familiar with Unilever and can hit the ground running, avoiding the hidden costs of finding freelance workers and getting them up to speed.

U-Work is now live in the UK, South Africa, Malaysia, Argentina, Mexico, the Philippines, United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Canada and India, and will be rolled out in other markets.



"I'd decided to pursue a new venture that would allow me to work from home during school hours so I could spend more time with my children while they're young. **U-Work gives me some security of income and keeps me connected to Unilever.**"

- Susanna Speirs, Senior Legal Counsel

"After 34 years as an engineering technician at the Ice Cream factory, I was at a point in my life where I needed to tail things off from full-time employment. My wife Teresa suffers from fibromyalgia and she needed more of my time to support her as her condition has worsened over the last few years. I wasn't ready to give up work completely and combined with pension changes, **U-Work meant I was able to make the move to work less, but not stop.**"

- Mark Waight, Engineering Technician

## CREATING A CULTURE WHERE EVERYONE BELONGS

A culture of inclusion is central to Unilever's philosophy to care for our people and grow with them. Inclusion is the intentional act of ensuring everyone feels welcome, safe and empowered. It goes beyond asking who is at the table, seeking to ensure everyone at the table has a meaningful voice and the opportunity to participate.

### Senior leadership commitment

Our senior leadership is committed to advancing our work on equity, diversity and inclusion. We have established a **Global Diversity Board** to steer our progress and hold us accountable to delivering on our objectives. The Board, which meets quarterly, is chaired by our CEO and comprises members of our Unilever Leadership Executive and general managers in our key markets. In addition, we **report our progress to our Unilever Leadership Executive regularly** to ensure our efforts are aligned with and help inform our business strategy – and share progress with employees company-wide, through internal forums such as employee town halls, to engage our people and nurture champions to help us accelerate our efforts.

### Learning and development

Advancing equity at an organisational level requires understanding it at an individual level. It requires our people to reflect on their own experience with inequity – whether they have been harmed by it, benefited from it or even unconsciously helped to perpetuate it – so they can be part of the solution. We invest in helping our people on this journey. For example, through our **#Unstereotype Leadership for Purpose and Performance Programme** we aimed to upskill our leadership teams to embed psychological safety, confront bias and advocate for equity, and we are **measuring our leaders' track records on inclusivity** to understand how we are doing. We also leverage Unilever's global marketing capabilities to design **#EquityIs** campaigns that spotlight the importance of equity, actively listening and acting upon our people's views to foster a more inclusive culture at Unilever.

### Empowering employees

Our **Employee Resource Groups** (ERGs) give voice to the range of communities within Unilever and help us shape inclusive policies and practices, working in partnership with Human Resources teams to drive change in their local markets.

**Our proUd network, for instance, has grown from 250 colleagues in 2018 to now more than 1,300 colleagues across 20 local networks around the world, working together to level the playing field for our LGBTQ+ colleagues.**

Similarly, **Enable** is a support network for our employees with disabilities and allies, made up of over 450 colleagues globally. It offers mentoring and advice on how to overcome any physical or emotional barriers preventing people from reaching their full potential at Unilever. Our UK & Ireland racial equity network, **Empower**, now with nearly 250 colleagues and growing, is helping foster a culture of proactive allyship, belonging and celebration for all cultures, religions and races.

## Building workplace pride in the Netherlands

Our focus on creating an inclusive culture for our LGBTQ+ colleagues in the Netherlands began over a decade ago. But it has not always been smooth sailing. In 2019, we ranked in the bottom quartile of Workplace Pride's Global Benchmark, an annual study that measures the LGBTQ+ inclusion practices of employers. Our participation that year was a wake-up call. We knew we had work to do to make our people feel safe and supported.

Our proUd network rallied on a global and local level. Our CEO signed the Declaration of Amsterdam in 2020, a global statement of support for LGBTQ+ rights. We updated our code of business principles to include gender identity and sexual orientation. We developed tools, such as our Queer-iosity Playbook, to help deepen our understanding of the experiences our LGBTQ+ colleagues face in the workplace and how we can better support them. And we stepped up our involvement in and organisation of events for LGBTQ+ colleagues and allies, both within and outside Unilever, to help foster more safe spaces for dialogue and support.

**We now hold 'advocate' status for raising our benchmark score from 25% in 2019 to over 90% in 2023**, and we have been recognised as an industry leader for LGBTQ+ inclusion in the most recent Workplace Pride Impact Awards Gala.

"While significant progress has been made on LGBTQ+ inclusion across the globe, the unfortunate truth is that our rights are not an absolute fact. There are still societies where our identities are harmed, criminalised or, worse, illegal. Until we can exist and claim equal rights without question, there is an essential role for organisations like Unilever to increase LGBTQ+ inclusion by creating safe spaces for people in the LGBTQ+ community and breaking down the harmful stereotypes we face.

To see our proUd network drive progress and thrive at Unilever is an important validation for me and everyone in the LGBTQ+ community that we are welcome and valued in this organisation. Having a safe space in Unilever allows us to feel we truly belong here and bring our best selves to work."

Jose Nava

**ED&I and Culture Lead, Netherlands**



# OUR SUPPLIERS & RETAILERS

How we are advancing equity for people throughout our value chain



**Our global value chain includes some 57,000 suppliers and millions of retailers around the world. We spend billions on raw materials and services each year, and sales of our products generate over €59 billion annually. This represents enormous economic opportunity for business owners upstream and downstream, and for the people they employ.**

We want to open up the opportunity to participate in our value chain to small-scale and diverse-owned businesses\* who have not had access in the past. After all, our partnerships with our suppliers and retailers are built on mutual benefit. When they succeed and grow, so do we.

To advance equity among our suppliers, retailers and the people who work for them, we are:

- Aspiring to diversify our value chain
- Partnering with purpose

\* We define a diverse-owned business as one that is 51% or more owned, managed and controlled by members of diverse groups and is certified by an approved certification body or has self-declared as a diverse business. That includes women, underrepresented racial and ethnic groups, people with disabilities and LGBTQ+ communities.

## ASPIRING TO DIVERSIFY OUR VALUE CHAIN

**Becoming a supplier or retailer to Unilever can be a gateway for people to grow their businesses, increase their incomes and build assets – all while creating jobs for others and serving as role models in their communities. We are working with our partners to expand access to these opportunities for more diverse-owned and small-scale businesses today and to build a stronger pipeline for tomorrow.**

### Inclusive procurement practices

In 2022, we spent €818 million on diverse-owned suppliers, rising to €1.1 billion in 2023. This includes markets where relevant policies and support services are still emerging, from Argentina to Kenya to Indonesia.

An important step in finding more diverse-owned suppliers has been to review and adjust our procurement practices in key areas, such as scouting and finance. For example, we have leveraged scouting technologies such as **Scoutbee** to seek out qualified diverse suppliers for new opportunities. In North America, the principle that at least one diverse supplier should be considered for every tender has enabled our **North America** business to meet their ambition to double their diverse spend every two years between 2017 and 2022. We also established a **preferential finance partnership with Citi** in Kenya to provide discounted financing for Unilever suppliers that qualify as diverse-owned.

However, it is not always easy to identify, assess and verify diverse ownership in countries where supplier diversity is a relatively new concept and the supporting infrastructure is nascent. To address this challenge, we partnered with expert organisations that help identify diverse-owned businesses. In Thailand, for example, we partnered with the **Office of SMEs Promotion (OSMEP)** to hold the country's first-ever diverse supplier recruitment drive.

### Capacity building

We believe one of the best ways to empower people is to invest in their business success and wealth creation. We are doing this on the supply side of our value chain, focusing on entrepreneurs from historically underrepresented groups and, on the retail side, focusing on small-scale retailers which are often owned by women.

Our **e-Route to Market (eRTM) Retail Digitisation Programme** is the cornerstone of our approach for small-scale retailers. At the end of 2023, 1.9 million small-scale retailers used our digital platforms, enabling them to purchase our products and in turn grow their businesses. For example, our **Jaza Duka partnership, started with Mastercard**, in Kenya offers retailers interest-free credit to overcome cash constraints so they can buy and sell more products – and ultimately grow their businesses. More than 25,000 retailers have enrolled, 54% of them women – and they've seen an average monthly sales increase of up to 36%. Shakti is another example. Launched in India in 2001, **Shakti** empowers women micro-entrepreneurs to sell our products to small-scale retail outlets and directly to households in their rural communities. More than 195,000 women participate in Shakti and the programme has now been expanded and adapted to six markets across Asia and Africa.

We have also helped develop the capabilities of diverse-owned suppliers with a wide range of partners around the world to increase access to skills, training, financing and networks.



## Closing the racial wealth gap through procurement

“The inequality in incomes, assets and opportunities between Black and white households in the US is known as the racial wealth gap, and currently stands at over \$11 trillion. That is unacceptable.

As a Black-founded business, with a legacy dating back to the pioneering entrepreneur Sofi Tucker who sold shea butter in Sierra Leone in 1912, SheaMoisture recognises the power of entrepreneurship to address racial inequity. We believe that commerce can bring true economic independence and we have built our purpose-driven business model to provide Black entrepreneurs with access to capital, education and community so they can build generational wealth.

Our model achieves this by approaching procurement in two ways: first, we source key raw ingredients from cooperatives in West Africa that provide women with premium wages and job development opportunities. Second, we prioritise partnerships with Black-owned businesses, especially in marketing, where they represent nearly a quarter of our total spend.

This is not just handing out dollars or donations. It’s how we create new possibilities by providing access to entrepreneurial opportunities and resources to enrich lives, families and businesses.”

Simone Jordan  
**Global Head of Purpose, Brand Partnerships  
and Experiential at SheaMoisture**

## PARTNERING WITH PURPOSE

**Our global value chain includes over 57,000 suppliers from food suppliers to logistics services to research partners, and beyond. By uniting and committing to partner with purpose, we can use our collective scale and influence to advance equity further than we could do on our own. This not only increases our impact on people – it also boosts the performance and resilience of our value chain.**

### Human rights

Respecting and upholding human rights is fundamental to how we do business. Behaving responsibly towards everyone in our value chain underpins our business's success and growth. At Unilever, we believe that business can only flourish in societies where human rights are respected and protected. We recognise that business has the responsibility to respect internationally recognised human rights and the ability to contribute to positive human rights outcomes.

All of our business partners are required to uphold fundamental human rights principles as outlined in our **Responsible Partner Policy (RPP)**. We help to drive the implementation of these principles through due diligence processes and we support our partners to address human rights issues that are identified, including through collaborations, capability building and advocacy. A fuller account of the way we are working to uphold respect for human rights in our supply chain can be found on our website.

### Living wages and incomes

We want to ensure that everyone who contributes to our business success benefits from it and, by the same token, that our business does not profit from poverty wages. As such, we are working with our suppliers to contribute towards paying at least a living wage to those in our value chain. As part of our **Responsible Partner Policy**, we have made paying a living wage a 'Future Mandatory Requirement' for our partners. To support and track partner efforts, our **Living Wage Promise** asks our suppliers to commit to pay living wages in their own operations and to advocate for living wages in the industry groups to which they belong. Nearly 100 suppliers have signed so far. We are also facilitating our suppliers' efforts to pay a living wage by supporting the development of tools that will help implementation – such as IDH's Salary Matrix Tool, the United Nations

Global Compact's Living Wage Analysis Tool, AIM- Progress's Living Wage Playbook – and by working with other businesses to support the launch of global, publicly accessible living wage data.

### Diversity and inclusion

We collaborate with our largest retail partners to celebrate diversity and promote acceptance in society through a range of **consumer-facing campaigns**. In the UK, our partnership with Superdrug exclusively offers Unilever's Pride range of Vaseline, Lynx and Simple products all year round, with each pack proudly displaying Switchboard's freephone helpline number for the LGBTQ+ community. These initiatives are attracting new consumers, increasing market share and driving mutual growth for the retailer and Unilever.

In addition, we encourage our suppliers to work with diverse businesses. Our suppliers can engage in dialogue with us, and share challenges and lessons learnt on our respective journeys. Suppliers in the US have started reporting diverse Tier 2 spend for Unilever-related contracts.

## Making our supply chains safer for women

According to the World Health Organization, **one in every three women worldwide has experienced physical or sexual violence**<sup>5</sup>. It is a hard truth that the world is simply not as physically or psychologically safe for women as it is for men – this holds true for workplaces, whether they are offices or factories or farms.

**Unilever is working to make our supply chains free from harassment and safer for women.** This begins with policies that require our business partners to treat workers with dignity and respect, and to impose appropriate disciplinary measures on anyone who subjects others to harassment or abuse of any kind. And we build on these requirements with awareness-raising and trainings that expose the root causes of gender-based violence.

**Yet we have learnt that to detect, prevent and remediate harm, due diligence must be gender-responsive and worker-led.** Gender-based violence is one of the hardest to detect, yet most pervasive, human rights issues. For this reason, we have partnered with impact technology firm Diginex to pilot a system that enables our business partners to understand where and in what ways women within their operations may be disadvantaged or at risk. The system empowers business partners to assess their own operations, while crucially elevating the voices of workers through an integrated worker-voice tool. Early results are encouraging, and we must keep up the pressure on ourselves and others to voice issues we see and work together to uproot the causes of gender-based violence.



## Supporting farmers towards a living income

Ever since Ben & Jerry's started making ice cream, its goal has been to make it in the best way possible. A big part of that is ensuring **everyone who has a hand in making its flavours gets their fair share of the profits**. All of its flavours are Fairtrade certified, which means that the smallholder farmers who produce the sugar, cocoa, vanilla, coffee and bananas it uses receive a premium on top of the regular purchase price for their crop.

But Ben & Jerry's goes further than this to help ensure its farmers earn an income that allows them to live full, dignified lives with its **Living Income Accelerator**. Developed in collaboration with Fairtrade, the Accelerator allows Ben & Jerry's to build long-term relationships with farming co-ops, get to know the specific challenges their farmers are facing and support them in overcoming these challenges.

Through the Accelerator, Ben & Jerry's has helped plant over 140,000 shade trees to protect the growth of cocoa trees in changing climatic conditions, trained over 4,000 farmers to improve the performance and productivity of their farms, and promoted income diversification activities to improve farmer incomes beyond growing cocoa. In addition, it has adopted Tony's Open Chain sourcing principles to ensure a fully traceable cocoa supply chain.

This is just the beginning. Ben & Jerry's is actively sharing its learnings with other Unilever brands and companies and continues to look for new ways to advance resilient, dignified livelihoods for smallholder farmers.



# OUR CONSUMERS

How we are advancing equity for people through our brands



**More than 3.4 billion consumers around the world use our products every day.**

Our 400+ brands cover a wide range of consumer goods: from Personal Care to Beauty and Wellbeing, Home Care, Nutrition and Ice Cream. We are determined for our products and marketing efforts to help improve people's health and wellbeing and influence society's acceptance of diverse personal characteristics and identities. Indeed when they do, our business performs better.

To advance equity among our consumers and the wider community, we are:

- Removing harmful stereotypes from our advertising and marketing
- Innovating inclusively to better meet consumer's needs

## Making inclusive marketing a priority

“Historically, advertising has often relied on and helped perpetuate harmful stereotypes. But advertising can also help break stereotypes and set new standards of empowerment, equity and equality. When brands paint an inclusive picture of society, they help redefine what is mainstream. They spark national conversations and help reshape mindsets that open up opportunities for people who have been excluded in the past.

We launched ‘Unstereotype’ in 2016 to eradicate harmful stereotypes from our advertising and to advance more progressive portrayals of people in our ads. Unstereotype is not just about one marketing campaign or a single ad spot. It is about putting equity at the heart of the entire strategic and creative development processes. From insight generation to the way we brief product design to how we represent people in front and behind the camera, Unstereotype is helping us address all forms of bias in our marketing and provoke more inclusive thinking.

We have made good progress. Today, over 90% of our tested ads are now free from gender stereotypes.

Championing inclusion is not just the right thing to do, it also drives business results. Our data shows us that progressive unsterotypical advertising delivers 94% better brand difference, 92% better brand power, and 76% better enjoyment of ads<sup>6</sup>.

Unstereotype is helping to build a more equitable and inclusive society and using the power and scale of our brands to drive real and lasting change. Inclusive marketing is no longer a choice. It is a priority.”

Aline Santos

**Chief Brand Officer and Chief Equity,  
Diversity & Inclusion Officer**



## REMOVING HARMFUL STEREOTYPES FROM OUR ADVERTISING AND MARKETING

**Fighting harmful and outdated stereotypes has never been more important. Around the world, we hear that people feel our society is increasingly divided and less tolerant. As one of the world's largest advertisers, inclusive marketing is not a choice for us. It is a business imperative. That's why we are challenging ourselves to create a marketing process that confronts bias and discrimination head on.**

### Provoking inclusive thinking

Our Unstereotype initiative aims to fight harmful and outdated stereotypes across every stage of the marketing process. As part of this work, we use tools, trainings and programmes that challenge bias and prompt more inclusive practices throughout our brands and industry. For example, our **Unstereotype Playbook** aims to educate and inspire marketers to improve representation of historically marginalised groups. This Playbook is used by all of our brands and open-sourced to our agency partners, and is complemented by resources for specific groups, such as our **Disability Inclusive Marketing Guidelines** co-created with award winning designer and disability activist Christina Mallon.

We also challenge every Unilever brand to develop an **Unstereotype Charter**, a roadmap to inclusion that defines the steps it will take to better represent and serve the needs of underserved consumers, from redefining their value proposition to redesigning their packaging and pricing. And we are eradicating any digital alterations to the imagery we use in our marketing with a **100% ban on changing the body shape, size, proportion or skin colour of the models**.

We have learnt the foundation for inclusive brand strategy and marketing lies in understanding the disparities our consumers face across and within markets. Consequently, we are **diversifying our standard consumer market research panels, databases, media lists and beyond**, to deepen our awareness of these disparities and to continue learning and improving our work to unstereotype marketing from end-to-end.

### Diversifying our production and creative teams

Just as we are aspiring to diversify our workforce to represent the communities we serve, we are diversifying our production and creative teams to better represent our current and future consumers. This includes increasing representation of people who have previously been excluded both on screen and behind the camera. On screen, for instance, our **Inclusive Casting Best Practice Guide** helps us respectfully represent society through the diversity of talent in our advertising campaigns – such as race and ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, people with disability, age, occupations, or body shape and size.

Behind the camera, we are diversifying creative teams on our productions. For example, our **Inclusive Set Commitment** ensures every master production over €100k has at least one intern or crew member with a disability on set, and our **Inclusive Production Toolkit** outlines best practices for authentically supporting people with disabilities behind the camera. These efforts are helping our brands make great strides – Rexona, for example, delivered our first fully disability-inclusive advertising production in 2022.

We also collaborate with our agency partners to track how equitable their teams are and to challenge them on whether they have a diversity of voices and lived experience in the room when developing our creative. We now monitor progress across 20 agencies in our top 20 markets with an aim to **reach marketplace diversity, including gender balance, in our agency teams by 2025**.

## HOW OUR BRANDS ARE CONFRONTING BIAS AND DISCRIMINATION HEAD ON



To deliver on its purpose of 'Equitable Skincare for All', **Vaseline** launched SeeMySkin.com, a first-of-its-kind platform designed to search conditions on skin of colour and connect patients with physicians who understand their skincare needs.

**LUX** is combating sexism through its campaigns Shut Up Sexism, which equips female virtual voice assistants with ready-made verbal comebacks to sexist behaviour, and Bouncing Back Against Labels, which inspires Chinese women to fight the sexist labels they face in society.



**Dove's** Stop the Beauty Test in India aims to raise awareness of the unspoken impact that judgments by prospective in-laws can have on girls' confidence and self-esteem. By sharing real stories, the campaign emphasises that beauty comes in all shapes, colours and sizes.



In **Calvé's** commitment to equal appreciation and attention for all athletes, it features a diverse range of the world's greatest athletes – from FIFA player of the year Lieke Martens to former para-tennis player Esther Vergeer – in its famous commercials that show how they persisted in their journey from childhood.



To help provide the UK's 2 million blind and partially sighted people with a more inclusive shopping experience, **Persil** is adding Accessible QR (AQR) codes to its laundry products which, when scanned, provide information in larger text or via audio.

## HOW OUR BRANDS ARE CONFRONTING BIAS AND DISCRIMINATION HEAD ON



**Sunsilk's** I Said It Is Possible campaign, featuring Turkish volleyball star Ebrar Karakurt, is challenging stereotypes surrounding gender roles and beauty standards in Turkey to show young women that their dreams are as personal as hair and should never be abandoned.

Through Freedom to Love, **Closeup** inspires people to turn mutual attraction into action, free from self-doubt and the judgement of others, so no barriers, internal or external, such as gender, age, race, sexual orientation, can get in the way of love.



Affirming we all deserve to enjoy pleasure, **Magnum** Ice Cream created two anime stories: 'Pleasure Tales by Magnum: Butterfly and Konnichiwa' that talk about the deep and meaningful pleasure that comes from being true to who you are – no matter who you are, where you've been or where you're going.

**LUX** is calling on broadcasters to Change the Angle of how female athletes are portrayed by focusing on their strengths and aiming the camera lens at their sporting prowess, rather than their physical attributes.



**Lifebuoy** shampoo and Pakistan's Ministry of Human Rights have come together in a joint campaign Tum Mazboot Ho (You Are Strong) to confront domestic violence and promote girls' education in the hope of raising the next generation of Pakistani daughters to become the strong and liberated women of tomorrow.

**Dove** partnered with TikTok creators to push back against the rise of the platform's controversial 'Bold Glamour' filter, which applies a heavy layer of digital makeup and alters users' facial features. Dove is encouraging people to #TurnYourBack on the filter as part of its #NoDigitalDistortion mission.



## INNOVATING INCLUSIVELY TO BETTER MEET CONSUMER'S NEEDS

**Our product portfolio has evolved over the years to serve the needs of different consumers living in different circumstances. Now, we are placing even more emphasis on developing products that meet the needs of specific consumer segments that have historically been excluded or left behind. We want our products to meet the needs of as many consumers as we can. Our business success depends on it.**

### Reconceiving our products

Designing a more inclusive product portfolio is at the heart of our efforts to better meet our consumers' needs. Our Nexxus Curl Define line, for instance, is based on a decade of research that shows the protein composition of curly and coily hair is different than that of straight hair. This research enabled us to develop targeted products like our **Sulfate-Free Curl Define Shampoo**, which won an Essence Magazine Best of Black Beauty award in 2021.

Packaging is another consideration in designing inclusive products. For example, packaging can help make our products more accessible to people with disabilities at the point of sale. To assist people with visual impairments, Persil is collaborating with **Zappara and the Royal National Institute of Blind People** to develop technology that allows a QR code to be identified both up close and from a distance of several metres away. This initiative will help scale the use of Accessible QR (AQR) codes on packaging, where space is limited.

We are working to mainstream inclusive design practices across our brands. For example, our **Polycultural Centre of Excellence** leverages an industry-leading understanding of melanin-rich skins with the insights of dermatologists and consumers of colour to create inclusive skincare products and brands. Similarly, our **Muslim Hub** develops insights we can use to develop products that meet specific needs in the Muslim community, from shampoos for hijab wearers to halal food products, and to communicate with Muslim consumers effectively.

### Promoting social behaviour change

Marketing is a powerful way to influence consumer behaviour. We have a long history of using marketing and market research to promote behaviour change. We know that successful change comes from a real understanding of people, their habits and their motivations. Our social marketing and behaviour change campaigns aim not only to raise awareness and to educate but also to make new products and practices – from hygiene to nutrition – more desirable.

For example, our **Lifebuoy** soap brand promotes handwashing throughout Asia, Africa and Latin America to help eradicate preventable disease in partnership with NGOs, UN agencies and industry peers. By 2022, Lifebuoy had reached nearly 650 million people with its handwashing messages, which we have seen improve hand hygiene behaviour in countries where our programmes are well established. Research has demonstrated that handwashing behaviour change contributes towards a reduction in preventative diseases, such as diarrhoea and pneumonia. Another example is our **Knorr** brand's work to combat iron-deficiency anemia in Nigeria with a new iron-fortified bouillon product and a campaign encouraging women and teenage girls to add it and iron-rich leafy green vegetables to stews. A randomised control trial showed this campaign achieved a notable increase in the use of bouillon products and leafy greens in stews, while simultaneously increasing Knorr's growth in Nigeria.

## Developing the world's first adaptive deodorant

People with disabilities are the largest minority group in the world. It is estimated that 16% of the world's population experiences some form of disability<sup>7</sup>, yet personal care products often overlook their needs.

In the light of these levels of disability, Degree, globally known as Rexona, created a prototype for the world's first adaptive deodorant in 2021. The deodorant, called Degree Inclusive, incorporated a hanging hook and magnetic closures that simplified the process of removing and replacing the cap for people with upper limb disabilities. The base of the deodorant featured openings that allowed for an easier grip. And a braille label was included to provide instructions for individuals with vision impairment.

Degree Inclusive received praise from the advertising community, but further testing revealed that users needed solutions that were customised to meet their individual needs, instead of a one-size-fits-all product. Degree has been on a journey ever since to improve functionality for more people.

Degree now creates personalised solutions, pioneering a range of accessories designed to attach to the 72 hour Degree Deodorant sticks that cater better to a diverse range of mobility needs. These accessories include hooks, grips and bases to assist users with turning the wheel mechanism. This change of direction in product development was a direct result of the brand engaging with consumers. It has led to a customisation solution for a wider range of people with upper limb disabilities, whether amputations, joint and bone conditions, neurological conditions or conditions affecting strength and dexterity. In doing so, Degree is learning what it takes to facilitate dignity and independence for people who would otherwise have to ask for help, igniting the confidence for people with disabilities to move more.



“Living in South Africa as a mother of two visually impaired children has been a tough journey. The education system doesn't focus on inclusive learning, like teaching braille, so I would drive my daughter to a specialised school that is nearly 75km away. The daily commute was taxing, but it's worth it to see my child edge towards an independent life. Simple features like braille on an elevator or a box of paracetamol excite her as she can read them on her own.

Watching my daughter grow has fuelled my passion for inclusive product design. I have seen first-hand the importance of co-creating products with our consumers to better meet their needs. Yet we know too well that this responsibility does not lie with any company alone. Accessibility must be an industry-wide priority to systematically reduce the barriers to independence for people with disabilities – and to open opportunities for children like my daughter to thrive.”

Saaliha Essack

**Personal Care**

**Consumer Technical Insights,  
R&D Dove Lead and Strategy, Africa**

# WIDER SOCIETY

How we are advancing equity for people through our partnerships and advocacy



**Our work to unlimit people's potential begins inside Unilever, but it does not stop there.** As one of the world's largest consumer goods companies, our success is inextricably linked to building stronger, more equitable communities and so a stronger, more equitable world.

We cannot advance equity for wider society on our own. Our partnerships and advocacy efforts help us drive change at a systems level – in our local communities, in the countries in which we operate and across industry.

To advance equity across wider society, we are:

- Investing in equitable community development
- Influencing public policy
- Shaping industry norms and standards



## INVESTING IN EQUITABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Helping to build strong, equitable communities is a core part of our responsibility to society. At Unilever, this means we actively contribute to dismantling barriers and expanding opportunities for people who have historically been excluded in the communities we serve.

### Community engagement

We leverage our skills, expertise and time to engage with the communities we serve so we can better understand and meet the needs of the people within them. For example, through community-based research conducted by Dove, we found that over 50% of girls have low body confidence, and that 8 in 10 won't see their friends or family, or even visit a doctor, when they don't feel confident in their looks. Fuelled by this knowledge, the **Dove Self-Esteem Project** has been on a mission to help young people build positive body confidence since 2004. Dove has developed no-cost educational tools and resources to help parents, educators and youth leaders better understand how to improve young people's self-esteem. Dove is also working with community service organisations around the world, such as the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, to expand our expertise and reach. Each year, we volunteer our time through our annual **Dove Day** where employees from more than 30 different countries facilitate school workshops that reached more than 18,000 young people in 2023 alone. The Dove Self-Esteem Project has reached more than 100 million children and young people globally to date and is on track to impact 250 million young lives by 2030.

### Targeted investments

Our community outreach and volunteering do not stand alone. We complement these efforts with targeted investments in communities that focus on addressing the root causes of social disparities and supporting organisations led by people from groups that have been historically excluded. In the US, for instance, **United We Stand** is our long-term, year-round commitment to improve conditions for LGBTQ+ communities, focusing on the cities that have low scores on the Human Rights Campaign's (HRC) Municipal Equality Index. Through this initiative, we fund local grassroots organisations that help improve conditions and access to critical services for LGBTQ+ people. Since United We Stand's inception in 2018, four out of five of our original partner cities have increased their HRC rankings and in 2023 we expanded in seven cities across the country.



### Ben & Jerry's Progressive Values

Ben & Jerry's is working hard in its communities around the world to fight for equity. Across Europe, for example, Ben & Jerry's supports NGO partners and movement builders to drive systematic change to protect and advance the rights of refugees and people seeking asylum. In the US it is working with those who seek to dismantle the systems and structures that perpetuate systemic racism. It is partnering with non-profits, community organisations and activists to eliminate over-policing, end mass incarceration and build a new system of public safety that invests in the health, safety and dignity of all people.

## Working towards a just and equitable low-carbon transition

Climate, nature and social issues are interconnected and interdependent. Climate change poses a risk to economic development and exacerbates social inequity, with the most severe impacts on people and communities who are already at risk. As those who have historically been marginalised are less able to participate in and benefit from climate action, inequity increases – in turn jeopardising a successful low-carbon transition.

Building strong, equitable communities means sharing the substantial benefits of a green transition widely. We are developing a climate justice and human rights due diligence tool, which will put equity at the heart of our approach to climate change mitigation. The tool will screen for human rights risks and evaluate the potential for positive social impact in our environmental programmes and partnerships. It will bring in existing assessments, for example, on gender equity, and include additional considerations such as skills development and living income.

The tool will initially be used by our Climate & Nature Fund, Unilever's €1 billion fund to support our brands as they advance our climate and nature agenda. Ultimately, we aim for the tool to be deployed throughout our business.



## INFLUENCING PUBLIC POLICY

Public policy is an essential vehicle for impact at scale, affecting entire cities, states and countries. We recognise the weight corporate voices often carry in policymaking circles and aim to use ours to support policy innovations and reforms that advance equity.

### Corporate-driven efforts

At the corporate level, Unilever is advocating for systems-level change in areas that impact people and groups that have historically been left behind. For example, we are engaging with other companies and with governments to respect the rights of migrant workers, who are vulnerable to exploitative recruitment practices that can lead to abusive working conditions and forced labour, including by promoting the **Employer Pays Principle (EPP)** – which stipulates no worker should have to pay to get a job. Similarly, in 2021 we signed a joint statement with 35 other companies, investors and business associations, encouraging the UK government to introduce a **Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence (HREDD)** law that promotes stronger human rights due diligence across the private sector.

### Brand-driven efforts

A number of our brands also engage in advocacy in partnership with others. For example, **Dove Men+Care** has been working to pass national paid family leave policy in the US, where 85% of fathers do not have a single day of paid paternity leave. Also in the US, **Ben & Jerry's** has partnered with the National Center for Transgender Equality to lobby for the Equality Act to provide broad, nationwide legal protections for trans people. In Pakistan, Lifebuoy shampoo has collaborated with the Ministry of Education, through the I am a Girl campaign, which aims to change the narrative around girl's education and revise the education system to be more gender-balanced.





## The CROWN Act

“In 2019, Dove commissioned a study which found that **Black women are 1.5x more likely to be sent home from the workplace because of their hair.** Fuelled by the countless stories and experiences of hair discrimination by the Black community, we helped champion a movement to make it illegal to discriminate against hair textures and protective styles. Together with National Urban League, Color Of Change and Western Center on Law & Poverty, Dove **co-founded a coalition to help pass the CROWN Act to prohibit race-based discrimination in the workplace and schools.** The CROWN Act (C**reating** a **R**espectful and **O**pen **W**orld for **N**atural hair) was signed into law in California in July 2019. Since then, the CROWN Act or similar legislation has been passed in over 20 states and 50+ municipalities in the US. But our work does not stop: Dove continues to raise awareness by launching new campaigns like **‘As Early As Five’**, in response to a second study which revealed Black girls experienced race-based hair discrimination as early as five years old. **We want to see the CROWN Act be the law across the country nationwide.**”

Esi Eggleston Bracey  
**Chief Growth and Marketing Officer**

## SHAPING INDUSTRY NORMS AND STANDARDS

**As one of the world's largest consumer goods companies, we understand we have a critical role to play in advancing equity across our industry. We actively engage with peer companies – individually, in coalitions and through trade associations – to help change the way business is done.**

### Advocating for equity

We encourage business coalitions of which we are a part to leverage their convening power to help build a fairer and more inclusive society. For example, we actively contributed to developing the **World Business Council for Sustainable Development's Business Commission to Tackle Inequality** agenda which provides the global business community with a clear case for business efforts to tackle inequality, as well as a holistic agenda for private sector action.

### Raising the bar in our areas of impact

We also take action to raise the bar on equity in our three areas of impact: confronting bias and discrimination, expanding economic opportunity, and enhancing health and wellbeing. To confront bias and discrimination, for instance, we co-convened the **Unstereotype Alliance with UN Women** in 2017 to banish stereotypical portrayals of gender in advertising and all brand-led content – an effort that has since been embraced by businesses and organisations championing the end of stereotypes in advertising. To expand economic opportunity, we have partnered with industry groups and coalitions focused on the living wage agenda – such as the **UN Global Compact, World Business Council for Sustainable Development, IDH – the Sustainable Trade Initiative, and AIM-Progress** – to encourage more businesses to adopt living wage and living income commitments, so that together we can raise living standards for those on low incomes. And to enhance health and wellbeing, Unilever is a founder and steering group member of the **WASH4WORK coalition**, a multi-stakeholder initiative hosted by the **UN Global Compact's CEO Water Mandate** to mobilise business action on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in workplace operations, as well as encourage work in communities where companies operate and across supply chains.

## Fuelling an Unstereotype Movement

Our vision to end harmful stereotypes in advertising cannot be achieved without collective action. That's why we co-founded the Unstereotype Alliance with UN Women in 2017, bringing together a coalition of advertising industry leaders – including WPP, IPG, Facebook, Google, Mars, Microsoft and J&J – to banish stereotypical portrayals of gender in advertising and all brand led content. Since then, the Alliance has been embraced by the industry and has proved to be an innovator in creating tools that affect positive culture change by shaping perceptions, including the Unstereotype Metric, a single measure that helps advertisers distinguish between progressive and regressive gender portrayals of characters.

In 2021, the Alliance expanded its purpose beyond confronting gender stereotypes to challenge ALL harmful stereotypes, whether related to gender, race, class, age, ability, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, language or education. Its influence in driving systemic change has also expanded. For example, in collaboration with Cannes Lions, inclusive judging criteria have been rolled out among the entire awards show to align the advertising reward system to the Unstereotype agenda. Spikes Asia, Dubai Lynx, The Loeries, the AAF's American Advertising Awards and the Effies have followed suit in rolling out unsterotyped judging criteria. Today, the Alliance represents 240 companies worldwide from advertisers to agencies and technology platforms to content creators and includes 12 national chapters across five continents.

## Putting living wage on the global agenda

“As income inequality rises around the world, it spurs unrest and threatens to rip the fabric of our society. **One of the most powerful actions we can take to combat rising inequality is to encourage the widespread adoption of living wages.**

Living wages strengthen businesses by improving employee productivity and retention – and a living wage economy would lift millions from poverty and dramatically increase consumer purchasing power. Yet according to the World Benchmark Alliance, **few of the world’s most influential companies aim to pay a living wage and many focus only on their own operations.**

Our work to ensure people earn at least a living wage does not stop inside Unilever. We are collaborating with other companies like Schneider, L’Oréal and Kering to fund WageIndicator, the largest global living wage database, to go public with their data so anyone can access it for free. We are working with the International Labour Organization to improve the credibility and global acceptance of data. And we are working with global business coalitions like the World Economic Forum and UN Global Compact to make the case for a living wage so that other companies can galvanise buy-in across their business and join in our collective fight to bring a living wage to workers around the world.

**We are moving living wage up the global agenda not just because it’s the right thing to do but because living wages create a measurable and tangible impact on our business success.”**

Anouk Heilen  
**Global Head of Sustainability, Social Equity and Inclusion**



# THE ROAD AHEAD

Doubling down on our commitment to advance equity, diversity and inclusion





## **Unlimiting people's potential. It's vital for a sustainable future – a future where all people can live in dignity and achieve what they are capable of.**

Where societies work together to tackle our common challenges and create the conditions for shared prosperity. Where businesses like ours can thrive and grow.

As we have become more deliberate in our equity work over the past two decades, we have seen our efforts make a difference. And yet we know we have much more to do.

We are committed to the rigorous and systematic work it takes to unlimit people's potential within our own business and beyond. As we look ahead, we are focused on the initiatives that we believe will create transformational impact, such as our work to increase leadership accountability, root out bias in our policies and practices, and close our 'say, do' gap; on our aim to deliver the principles of a just and equitable transition to net zero; and on our efforts to end harmful stereotypes in advertising and to make living wages the norm around the world.

Behind all of our efforts are passionate, talented employees, many going above and beyond their job descriptions to drive us forward in our journey to advance equity. We are profoundly grateful for their persistence and courage, and we will double down on our efforts to learn what is working well and what more we can do to get our own house in order.

In our interconnected world, advancing equity will take concerted effort not only from Unilever but also from the entire business community – from government and civil society as well. We will continue to work with and learn from others committed to change. And we will be seeking every opportunity to share our lessons, harness our strengths and lend our voice to turn our world into a place of unlimited potential for all.



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### CONTACT

Global Social Equity Team

[Anouk.Heilen@unilever.com](mailto:Anouk.Heilen@unilever.com)

[Sandra.Fontano@unilever.com](mailto:Sandra.Fontano@unilever.com)

### AUTHORS

Adrian Hodges Advisory Ltd (AHA Ltd), Kate Tallant, Beth Jenkins

[www.hodgesadvisory.biz](http://www.hodgesadvisory.biz)

### DESIGN

Creative Theory Agency

[www.creativetheory.agency/](http://www.creativetheory.agency/)

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