Rainforest Alberta Calgary 2022

2022 Scorecard Results and Report

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"The Rainforest is doing an amazing job with the resources they have. One organization, like the Rainforest, isn't responsible for changing the environment, instead, it needs to adapt to it and it's doing a fantastic job at that. That's the point of a Rainforest and an ecosystem! Keep going!"

-Founder, Entrepreneur, Ecosystem Builder, Startup Service Provider, 6-18 months

It is critical to reflect on the 2021 Scorecard results and identify where organizations and individuals have played a part in advancing the health of the Calgary ecosystem.

What impact have you or your organization had on improving the health of the ecosystem?

Looking back at the 2021 Scorecard Results, the following were key takeaways:

- 2021 score of 661/1000, with increased engagement from the ecosystem
- Gaps identified in Culture allow for opportunities to improve
- Ample room to increase funding & investment opportunities
- Strong appetite for mentorship
- Desire for a central repository of resources
- Growing & Attracting Talent
- The critical importance of DEI
- The start-up community welcomes more support on the challenges surfaced in this report

Recommendations included:

Connect the Experienced with the Newbies

Mind the Gap

Nurture Psychological Safety

According to the 2022 results, there were various comments on how Rainforest Alberta has made strides in improving psychological safety and shining the light on DEI in Calgary's innovation ecosystem over the past year. Through collaboration with the Calgary Innovation Coalition and other key stakeholders, Rainforest Alberta implemented various initiatives.

With a key takeaway from 2021 being a lack of trust and collaboration among Boomers, Women, and those newer to the ecosystem, it seemed timely to reevaluate how the ecosystem views Culture and the corresponding pillar of Leadership.

Rainforest challenged these perceptions through interactive Re-thinking Leadership activities during Innovation Week that had diverse individuals reimagine the characteristics of leadership through curiosity, candor, amplifying others, nurturing connections, and leading with generosity. Learning in this area will continue into 2023 with Rainforest Circles, a new relationship-based learning experience available to anyone in the ecosystem.

In response to a strong appetite for accessible mentorship, a desire for a central repository of resources, and more inclusivity, Rainforest Alberta has implemented a digital platform pilot powered by inqli. This platform democratizes access to knowledge, resources, and opportunities within the ecosystem and is being widely used by the city and extending throughout the province.

Rainforest Alberta saw an opportunity to make the Rainforest analogy and Social Contract more accessible to all audiences. As such, impactful work with Inclucity was undertaken that provided inclusive user testing of the Social Contract with further work anticipated in 2023 on implementing recommendations and testing other key messaging that might provide clarity of the Rainforest movement's role in building a culture of trust, collaboration, and diversity.

Various leaders and role models have greatly stepped up to assist with Rainforest Alberta's efforts throughout 2022.

Please reach out to Rainforest Alberta to share your contributions to the Scorecard results so we can amplify your work too.

Rainforest Alberta achieved a score of 689, demonstrating an increase in engagement from the ecosystem.

Embracing failure to build a pathway to success

Similar to 2021, engagement from the ecosystem continued to grow in 2022 with a significant number of new participants (85% had not participated in the Scorecard last year). The 2022 score rose by 28 points compared to 2021, which saw an increase in all of the pillars, with Culture seeing the most substantial lift (+8 pts).

The Calgary startup community is known for being supportive and fostering a friendly, welcoming, and inclusive atmosphere. However, there is still room for improvement in areas such as diversity, inclusiveness, and trust, as well as a need for greater transparency in service models, incubators, and investments. Despite some progress, there is still a low tolerance for failure in the community, which is not yet widely accepted as a step towards success. There is a need for a shift in mindset towards embracing failure and risk, and promoting greater diversity, in order to build world-class startups and boost self-confidence in the community.

Building a strong and lasting foundation for innovation

The foundation of the innovation ecosystem is based on policy and infrastructure, and the interactions and actions between these factors play a significant role in fostering innovation. However, the approach to technology by the government is perceived to be outdated and has resulted in challenges for companies in areas such as R&D, commercialization, and software development. Many mentioned that there is a lack of available capital and support for startups, as well as a lack of awareness among the public about the support systems in place.

To address these challenges, the government can provide better support to the start-up community, adopt a long-term vision, and take a more strategic and sustainable approach to supporting the industry. Entrepreneurs have called for direct support, but also recognize the slow decision-making process in funding allocation and the need for the ecosystem to mature further.

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The power of representation in a community

Many agree that leaders within the community are well-regarded and are a source of inspiration. While the ecosystem is striving to increase diversity and representation in leaders, it still faces challenges in finding diverse and accessible role models in senior positions.

Programs such as the Venture Mentoring Services of Alberta (VMSA) provide valuable connections, but limited availability and busy schedules can still pose a challenge for aspiring entrepreneurs.

To promote diversity and inclusivity, the ecosystem must prioritize measurable representation targets and support role models who play a critical role in inspiring and guiding the next generation of entrepreneurs and leaders.

Resource and funding shortages: Bridging the gap

The availability and accessibility of resources play a crucial role in the success of the ecosystem. However, the Calgary ecosystem faces several challenges such as a lack of private capital, limited support for mature companies, a focus on training for entry-level positions, underfunding of smaller innovators, skill shortages (i.e., sales, marketing, and customer success skills).

Possible solutions to help develop mature talent include offering targeted training programs and workshops, building partnerships with educational institutions, and providing mentorship and coaching opportunities to grow and retain talent.

Access to funding remains a significant challenge for many startups, with rigid application processes and limited opportunities hindering growth. While incubators and accelerators can provide valuable resources to startups, there may be concerns about an overabundance of accelerator programs. This saturation of the market can make it confusing and difficult for startups to navigate and receive the support they need.

Engaging and empowering the ecosystem

The ecosystem offers a range of activities that are well-received by participants, although some concerns have been expressed regarding the inclusiveness of the events.

Currently, the events tend to cater primarily to early-stage companies, with later-stage companies being underrepresented. Additionally, some participants feel that the events lack "actionable" information and opportunities for problem solving and innovation.

To address these concerns, a number of steps can be taken, including bringing in experienced and diverse experts and role models across different stages of their careers and industries, offering hands-on workshops and interactive sessions, and collaborating with grassroots events and organizations to foster more inclusivity for all members of the ecosystem.

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"Rainforest has a welcoming and positive culture that encourages people in tech to connect with each other."

-Student, 8-18 months
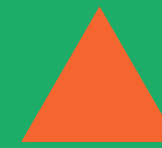
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689 / 1000

Overall score across all pillars

- Culture: 220/300 (73%)
- Leaders: 136/200 (68%)
- Policy & Infrastructure: 94/150 (63%)
- Resources: 97/150 (65%)
- Role Model: 69/100 (69%)
- Engaged Activities: 73/100 (73%)

+28 points

since 2021, largely driven by increase in culture pillar

205 new respondents

85% of respondents in 2022

241 surveys

+69 more surveys completed compared to last year

There are six pillars that make up the ecosystem. Like any natural ecosystem, having the right balance is crucial. The index is measured on a scale of 1,000 with each pillar weighted differently.

The Scorecard is a snapshot of the ecosystem in time, describing its strengths, weaknesses, and general condition.

An honest examination of the ecosystem's assets, through the Scorecard Assessment, works to identify opportunities to improve the culture of innovation in Calgary.

The Scorecard asks a series of questions within each pillar which have been thoughtfully adapted from the historical versions of the survey.

Respondents are asked to answer each question on a scale of 1-10 with 1 meaning "I see this less often" and 10 being "I see this all the time" in the ecosystem. Qualitative data is also collected for each pillar via a comment section.
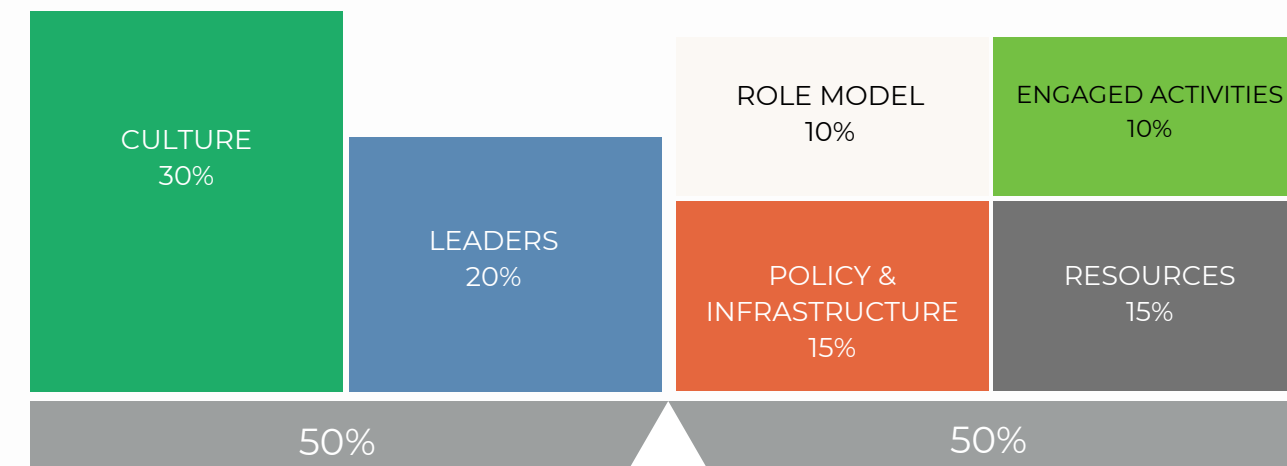
CULTURE
30%

LEADERS
20%

ROLE MODEL
10%

ENGAGED ACTIVITIES
10%

POLICY &
INFRASTRUCTURE
15%

RESOURCES
15%

50%

50%

Culture

220/300

+8 points

Culture is the foundation of any innovation ecosystem. It is the shared values and actions of ecosystem members which ultimately determine the success of ecosystem initiatives.
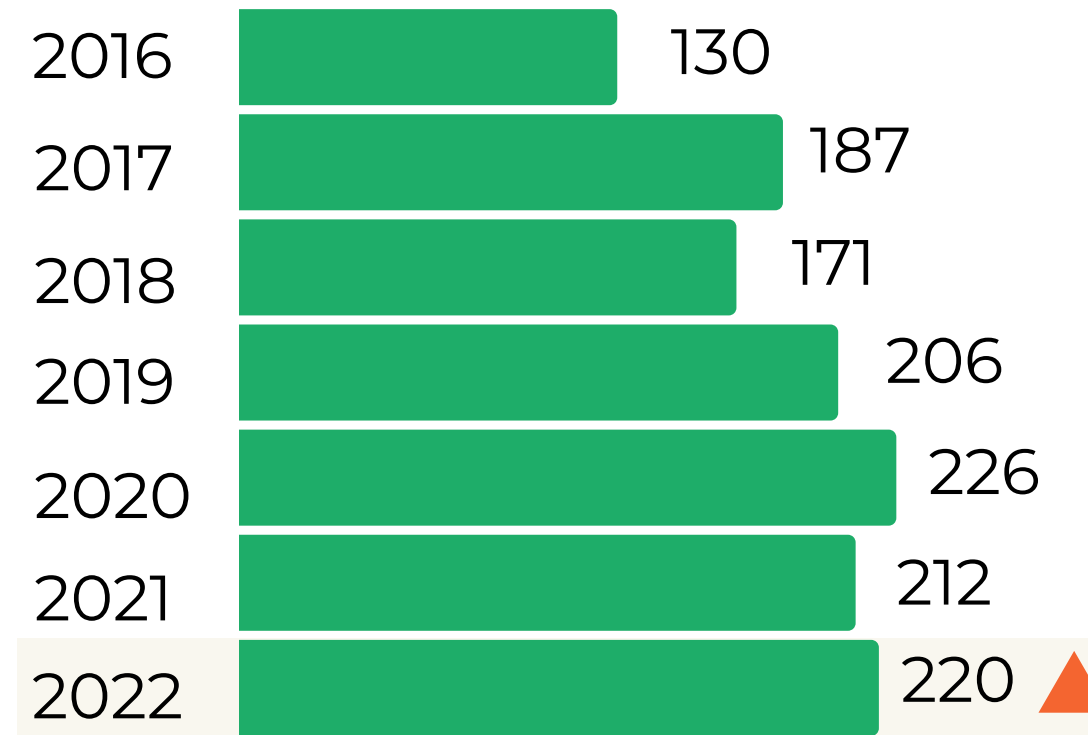
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Culture

220/300

+8 points

Year	Value
2016	130
2017	187
2018	171
2019	206
2020	226
2021	212
2022	220 ▲

SUBGROUP DIFFERENCES

Individuals born after 2003 rated Culture lowest (173/300)

CONTRIBUTING THEMES

Failure & Risk

Inclusion, & Trust

Community

16

Culture

220/300

+8 points

Failure & Risk
Despite some progress being made, there remains a low tolerance for failure among startups and investors. There is still a noticeable absence of the self-confidence required to launch world-class startups, which is attributed to a reluctance to take risks.

Some members of the community feel that bold and unconventional ideas are often met with skepticism and disbelief, which further highlights the need for a shift in our mindset towards failure and risk.

Identifying Culture Drivers
There were significant comments about the close-knit, supportive, and friendly atmosphere found within the ecosystem. Tech entrepreneurs are perceived to drive cultural change, as they embody culture more than accelerators and investment groups.

Inclusion & Trust
Driving the increase in the 2022 Culture score were individuals rating the ecosystem's welcoming and inclusivity behavior 2.65 pts higher this year.

Many respondents noted the improvements surrounding diversity, equity, and inclusion yet pointed out that there is room for improvement. There was mention of women entrepreneurs not feeling safe nor being treated fairly in the ecosystem.

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"I feel that truly 'big' and unexpected ideas often are met with confusion/shock by members of the community."

- Founder/Entrepreneur/Startup Service Provider, more than 3 years

Leaders

136/200

+5 points

Leaders, both formal and informal, are decision makers positioned to realize potential, convey perspectives, and rally groups to influence outcomes for innovation.
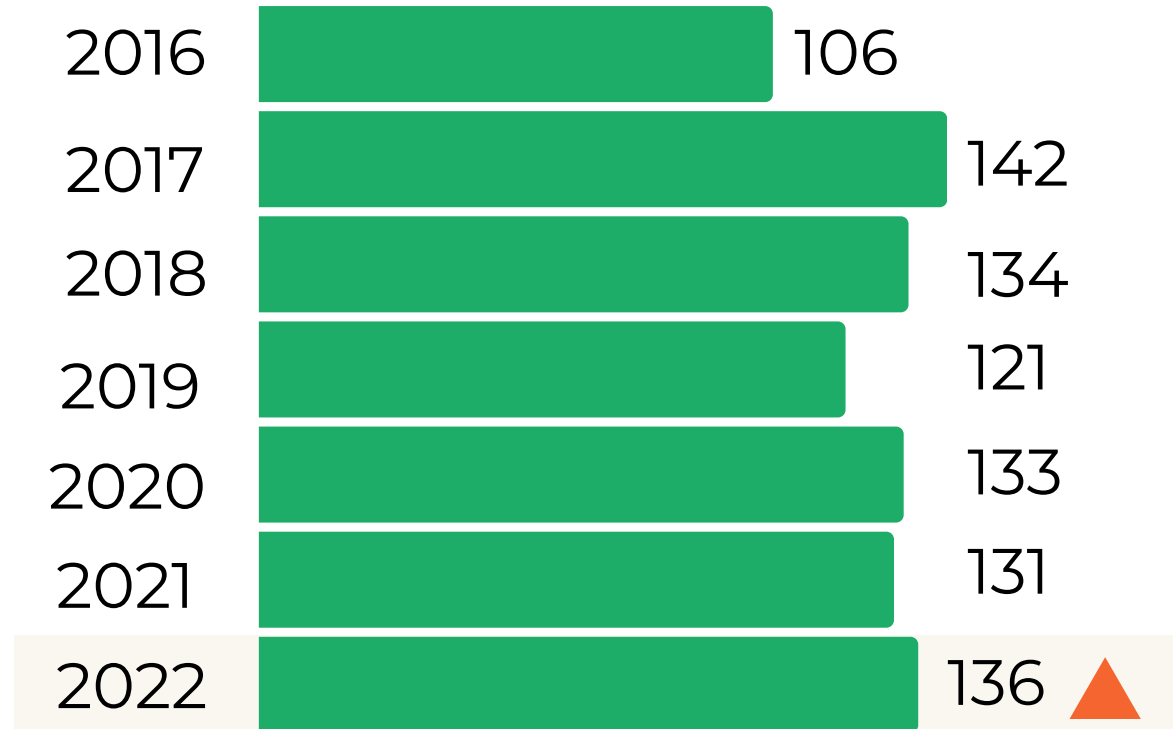
Leaders

136/200

+5 points

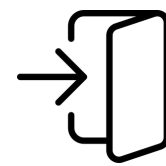| Year	Score
2016	106
2017	142
2018	134
2019	121
2020	133
2021	131
2022	136 ▲

CONTRIBUTING THEMES

Transparency & Awareness

Meaningful Action

Diversity

SUBGROUP DIFFERENCES

Those in the ecosystem for less than 6 months rated Leaders higher (161/200)

Indigenous individuals rated Leaders lower (121/200)

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Leaders

## 136/200

+5 points

Transparency & Awareness
There is a need for greater transparency in identifying the true leaders within the ecosystem, as this would enable further progress in this area.

Clear updates on leadership and more efforts to address diversity concerns would greatly benefit members of the community.

Meaningful Action
While there is a clear aspiration for greater diversity of thought, this is not backed up by substantial and effective actions.
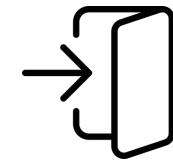
Recognized leaders within the ecosystem are approachable and have served as sources of inspiration for many, however, some members of the community perceive a discrepancy between the leaders' intentions and the actual delivery of initiatives. Additionally, mentorship from leaders is often offered with expected reciprocal benefits.

Diversity
The leaders in the Calgary tech ecosystem are becoming increasingly diverse, but there is still room for improvement, especially in regards to Indigenous representation. Perceptions persist that the executive and director level, commonly referred to as the "C-suite," remains dominated by white and male individuals. Similarly, the tech ecosystem in Calgary is dominated by white males who receive a disproportionate amount of funding.

"Those who have been around know the leaders who have come and gone, but new members may be wondering who are the actual leaders. Having some updates from the leaders in the community, to explain how they are working together can help bring the community together."

- Ecosystem Builder/Startup Service Provider, More than 10 years

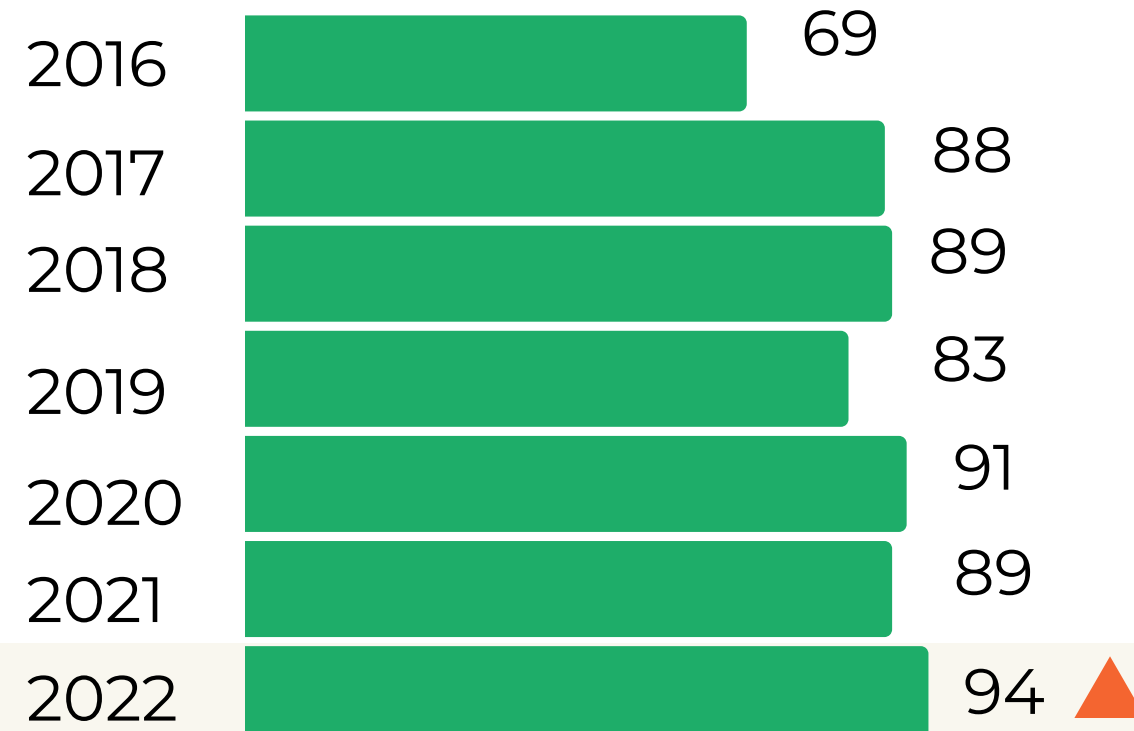# Policy & Infrastructure 94/150

+5 points

Policy and Infrastructure is the infinite, non-depleting structural landscape the ecosystem exists within. Actions and interactions between organizations, departments, physical spaces, and policies play a role in supporting innovation.

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Policy & Infrastructure 94/150

+5 points

Year	Score
2016	69
2017	88
2018	89
2019	83
2020	91
2021	89
2022	94 ▲

SUBGROUP DIFFERENCES

Similar to 2021, Indigenous groups rated Policy and Infrastructure lower (79/150)

African Canadians rated Policy & Infrastructure higher (113/150)
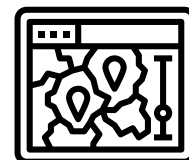
CONTRIBUTING THEMES

Government Pace

Mapping the System

Economic Diversification Skepticism

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Policy & Infrastructure

94/150

+5 points

Government Pace

It is perceived that the government's approach to technology has not kept pace with the changing times, causing challenges for companies in areas such as research and development, commercialization, and software development.

Many believe it is critical for the government to provide better support to the technology community and adopt a long-term vision that is reflected in its policies. Entrepreneurs have expressed a desire for direct support from the government with a faster decision-making process that is reflective of a startup's pace.

Economic Diversification Skepticism

There are also some skeptics who question the Alberta government's commitment to diversifying the economy. Additionally, there are concerns about the government's support for startups, particularly in regard to the allocation of tax dollars, which is under close scrutiny. A big issue is the lack of awareness among people outside of the technology industry regarding the support systems in place.
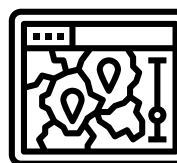
Mapping the System

There was a clear sentiment of lack of coordinated and comprehensive infrastructure for supporting and guiding entrepreneurs. There were several comments about the overload of resources, accelerators, and support organizations with many expressing the desire for a roadmap to navigate the system.

"We are hearing that there are too many accelerators (not enough deal flow). With the high number of accelerator programs in AB many founders are unsure which is best fit for them."

- Entrepreneur, Ecosystem/Builder, Educator, Startup Service Provider, More than 10 years

Resources
97/150

+5 points

Resources are a critical factor in achieving success. Resources include funding, knowledge sharing, support, organizations and service providers and talent.

A balance of resources available in quality, quantity, and origins can support innovative potential through both generation and implementation.
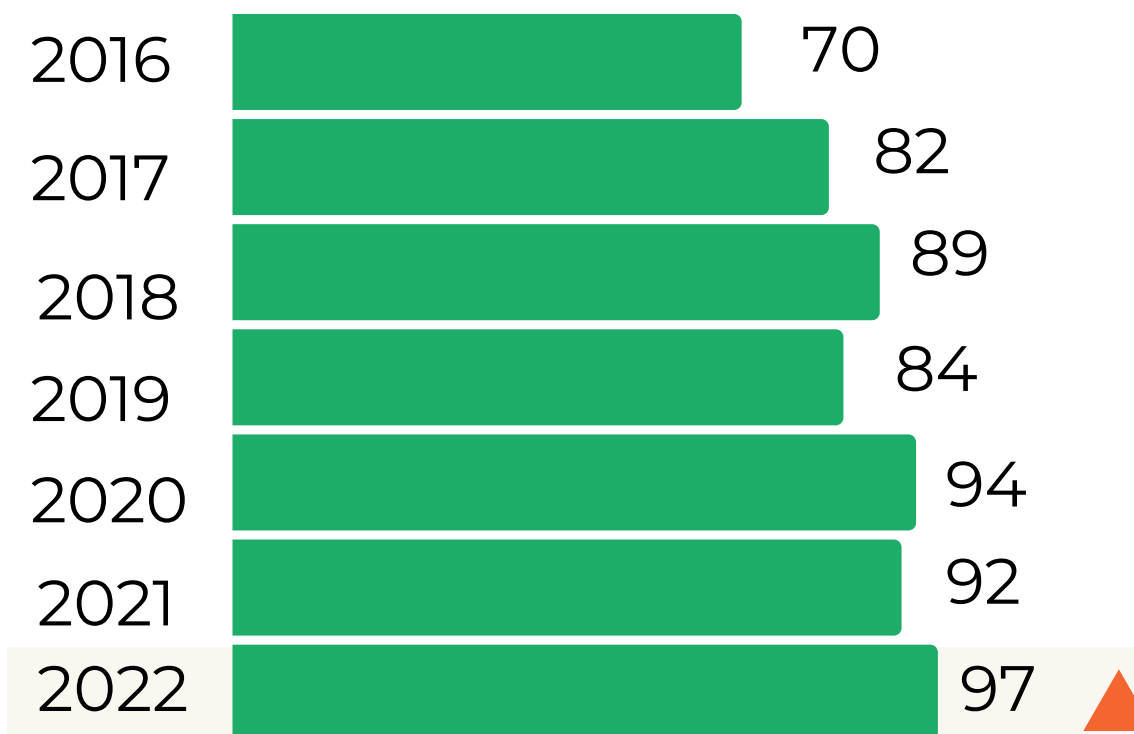
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Resources

97/150

+5 points

YEAR OVER YEAR TRACKING

Year	Value
2016	70
2017	82
2018	89
2019	84
2020	94
2021	92
2022	97 ▲

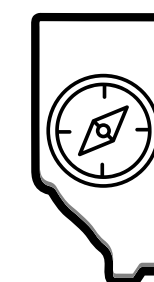## CONTRIBUTING THEMES

Funding Challenges

Skill Shortage and Need for Diverse Training

SUBGROUP DIFFERENCES

Non-binary/Gender nonconforming rated Resources higher (118/150)

Indigenous people rated Resources lower (84/150)

Individuals with one or more children and parents as dependents rated Resources lower (80/150)

Navigating Overly Abundant Resources

28

Resources

97/150

+5 points

Funding Challenges
The inaccessibility of funding is a persistent issue, with it frequently going to established players, hindering the growth of new and innovative companies. Respondents also expressed frustration with barriers within the grant process and not enough access to private capital. Several remarked that the inability to access funding is hindering our global competitiveness.

Skill Shortage and Lack of Diverse Training
Respondents marked an imbalance in prioritizing the production of entry-level talent over supporting their growth and advancement. This is contributing to a lack of mature talent in the ecosystem.
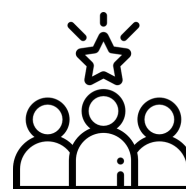
Respondents indicated skill shortages in sales, marketing, and customer success.

Solutions offered include increased partnerships with educational institutions, continuous education, and professional development opportunities, providing increased coaching, and mentorship to grow skills and investing in technologies to support skill development and knowledge transfer.
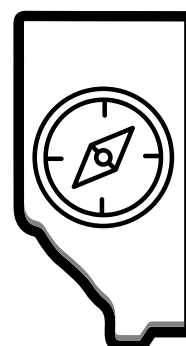
Navigating Overly Abundant Resources
Navigating the available resources in the ecosystem can be challenging, leaving individuals feeling lost and excluded from the tech community. There is clear difficulty in accessing and filtering relevant information when needed. There was also a sentiment that there is a proliferation of accelerators with unpublicized results.

"There is a wealth of information available but it can be hard to filter through it to get to the relevant content that we need "right now". For us, we've had an extremely hard time finding the talent we need for our specific needs as we grow our company. We've had to search outside of the YYC tech ecosystem to find what we need."
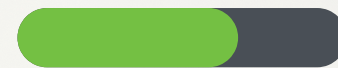
- Founder, Entrepreneur, Educator, More than 3 years

" ...large, well-known organizations continue to receive funding where smaller innovators tend to be overlooked or told to come back when they have "more examples/cases/proof". The burden on organizations trying to access funding of any kind takes very needed focus and resources away from the DOING that they need to be doing. "

- Founder, Entrepreneur, Ecosystem Builder, More than 5 years

Role models across the ecosystem are builders, influencers, and accelerators who add value to the ecosystem through inspiration; they embody characteristics that others wish to emulate. Role models can be uniquely personal and also general to the community.
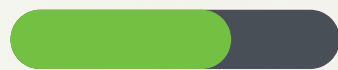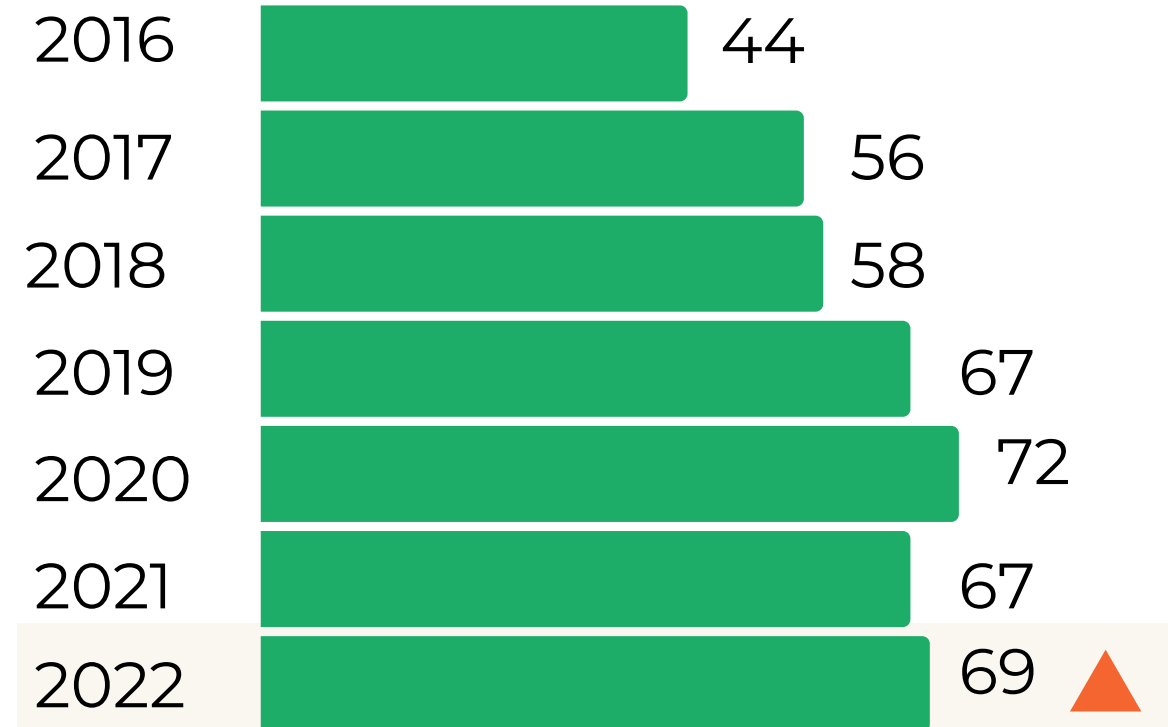
Role Model 69/100

+2 points

31

Role Model 69/100

+2 points

YEAR OVER YEAR TRACKING

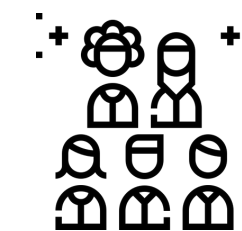| Year	Value
2016	44
2017	56
2018	58
2019	67
2020	72
2021	67
2022	69 ▲

SUBGROUP DIFFERENCES
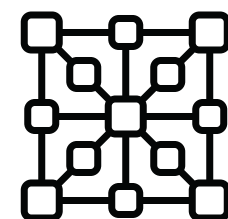
Non-binary/Gender non-conforming rated Role Models highest (127/150, 81/150)

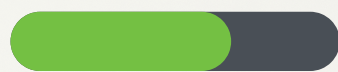## CONTRIBUTING THEMES

Desire for Increased Representation

Support for Role Model

Measurement & Transparency

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32

Role Model

69/100

+2 points

Desire for Increased Representation
The ecosystem is trying to diversify and increase representation. However, there is a shortage of diverse and accessible role models in senior positions, with a dominance of white male figures and limited representation of women and people of different ethnicities. While programs like the Venture Mentoring Services of Alberta (VMSA) help in connecting aspiring entrepreneurs with established role models, many still find it difficult to find and access role models due to limited availability and their busy schedules.
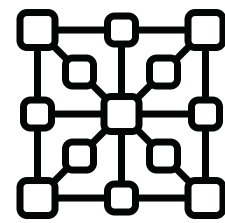
Measurement & Transparency
The absence of transparent information on who the current role models are raises questions and emphasizes the need for more inclusive representation. Respondents felt that it is important to recognize and support role model contributions to the community. It was felt that despite facing challenges such as mental health and visibility, these individuals play a critical role in inspiring and guiding the next generation of entrepreneurs and leaders.

It was also felt that many founders who are viewed as role models are too busy to be highly visible.
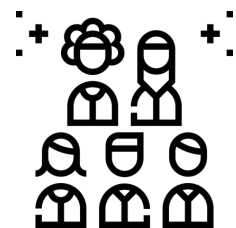
Support for Role Models
There is a desired need for a more comprehensive approach to acknowledge and support role models in the ecosystem and make their resources more accessible to aspiring leaders, particularly those from diverse backgrounds who may face additional barriers to accessing opportunities.

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Role Models in YYC

"I think we are getting better at seeing some of this but ultimately we tend to be very Calgary about things- focus on money and title versus who's actually showing leadership and kindness. Not blaming anyone - this is something we can all do better on culturally. But again, there are more than two or three VCs and successful entrepreneurs in this town to promote and look to. I think everyone is genuinely trying to diversify this though and bring more notice to a wider variety of people. "

- Founder/Entrepreneur/Ecosystem Builder/Other, More than 10 years

Activities and engagement are helpful tools to foster a vibrant and connected ecosystem. Ecosystem activities should be balanced between organizational drive (top down) and grassroots led (bottom up). Activities may include networking and learning events, job fairs, pitch events, scorecard evaluations, and other forms of collaboration.

Engaged Activities 73/100

+4 points

Engaged Activities
73/100

+4 points

Year	Value
2016	45
2017	55
2018	57
2019	68
2020	69
2021	69
2022	73 ▲
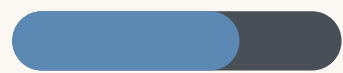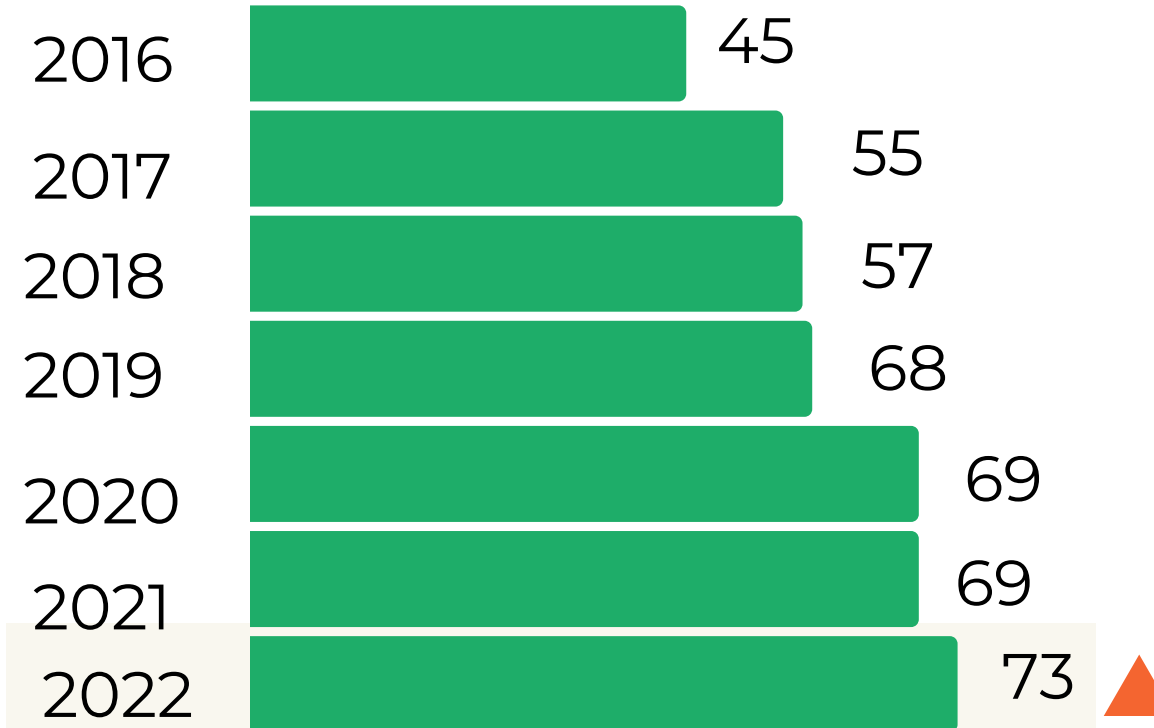
SUBGROUP DIFFERENCES

Investors rated Engaged Activities lower (65/100)

African Canadians rated Engaged Activities higher (87/150)

CONTRIBUTING THEMES

Need for Action
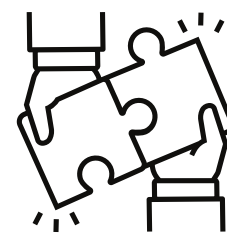
Collaboration

Content

Engaged Activities

73/100

+4 points
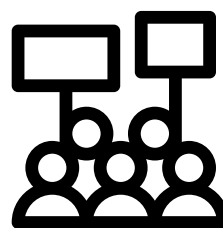
Need for Action
Some have expressed that the activities don't always provide enough "actionable" information such as facilitating problem-solving and innovation, which hinders the level of engagement.
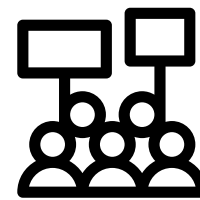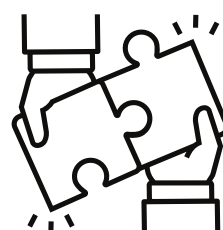
Collaboration
Respondents felt that Platform Calgary and Alberta Innovates were the main drivers of activities and stressed that collaborating with grassroots events and organizations could help increase the breadth of inclusive and valuable activities.

Content
Many participants feel that the current activities could be more inclusive of all members of the community, as they cater mostly to early-stage companies, and that later-stage companies are not as well represented. The quality of events is perceived positively overall.

Respondents would like to see more shared experiences by role models, hands-on workshops and interactive sessions, improved accessibility of events through a calendar, or portions of more relevant content for later-stage companies.

"Most of the events provide networking but the skillset is typically early or first-time founders. The experienced or high-growth companies/founders are rarely present."

- Entrepreneur/Startup Employee/Team Member, Freelance, 18 Months to 3 years

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

There is a gap of 0.65 between the degree to which DEI is important to the individual vs. the perceived importance to the ecosystem. In comparison to the gap of 1.19 in 2021, the gap between personal importance of DEI and perceived importance to the ecosystem has shrunk by 0.54.

8.86
Importance to Success of Ecosystem

8.04
Importance to Ecosystem

8.69
Importance to the Individual

0.65
the gap between personal importance and perceived importance to ecosystem. - 0.54 improvement YoY.

Year over year growth

In 4 out of the 6 Diversity & Inclusion metrics the ecosystem has seen positive YoY growth. There was slight drop in overall personal importance by 0.02 and the importance of D&I towards building a successful ecosystem remained steady at 8.86.

Diversity & Inclusion Year Over Year

Legend: 2021 (dark grey), 2022 (blue)

Categories: Important to Success of Ecosystem, Importance to Ecosystem, Importance to Individual, Ecosystem is both a Diverse and Inclusive Community, People like me are well represented throughout the ecosystem, People like me are well supported throughout the ecosystem
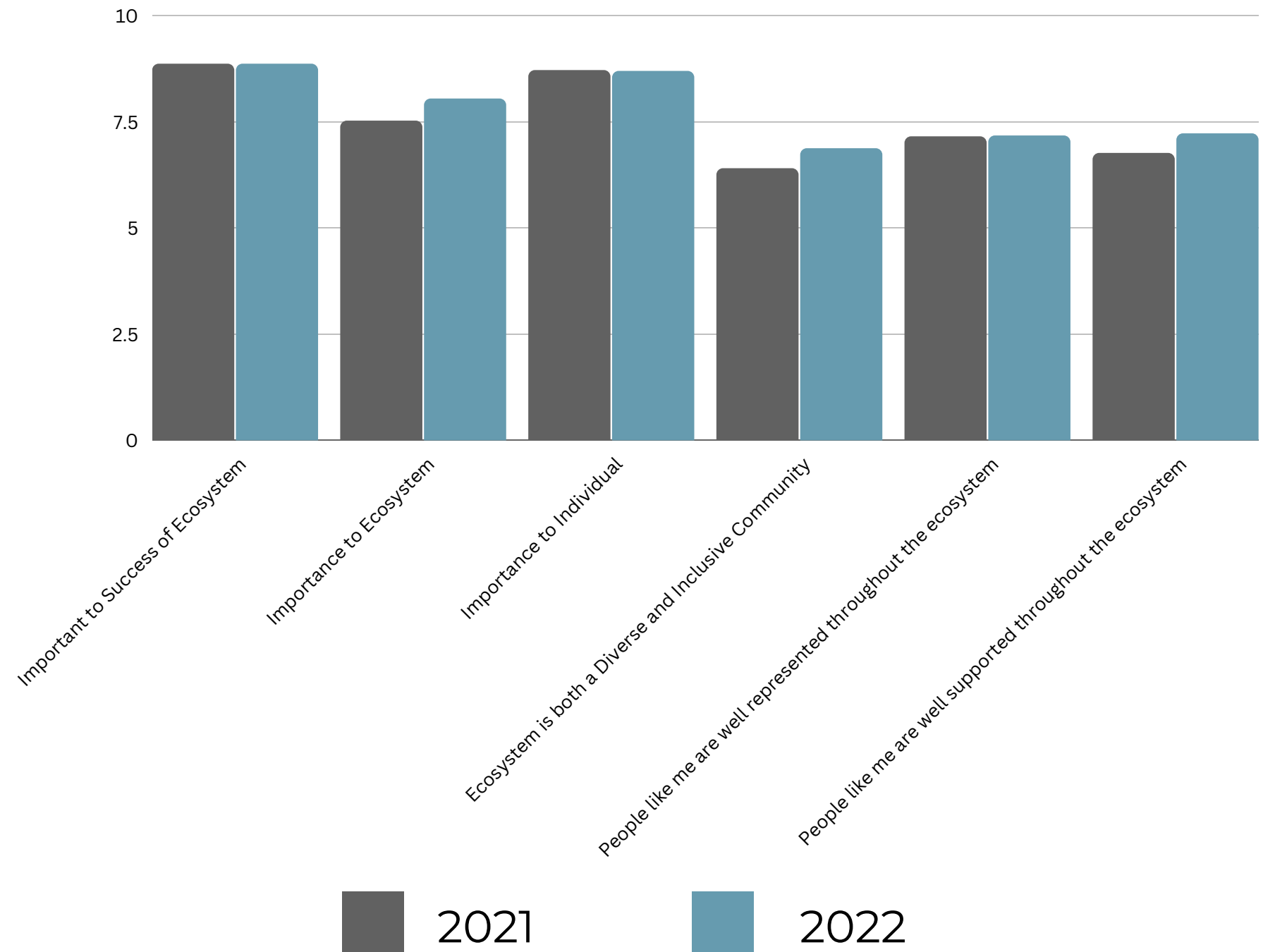
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1 **Connect the Experienced with the Newbies**

2 **Mind the Gap**

3 **Nurture Psychological Safety**

The most common roles identified are:

- Entrepreneur - 40%
- Founder - 38%
- Ecosystem Builder - 38%

Focusing on these identities as primary stakeholders when describing and designing for the ecosystem will resonate with many.

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1 Connect the Experienced with the Newbies

The opportunity prevails for Alberta to leverage the evenly matched generational populations that exist within the tech ecosystem. Between the younger and older generations there is exactly a 50 / 50 split between respondents that identified as Gen Z or Millenials and respondents that identified as Gen X or Baby Boomers.

Alberta's tech ecosystem has a defined opening to honour the values of diversity and inclusion that have become differentiating ideals of younger generations while equiping them with the valuable experience of seasoned ecosystem participants. In reverse, those who have extensive experience will benefit from the more positive outlook (noted in the table to the right) of those who are just getting started and bear the responsibility of building a thriving tech economy well into the future.

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COMMUNITY OF INNOVATORS

Participants by Generation

Gen Z (716) 10%

Boomers (670) 9%

Gen X (667) 38%

Millennials (707) 37%
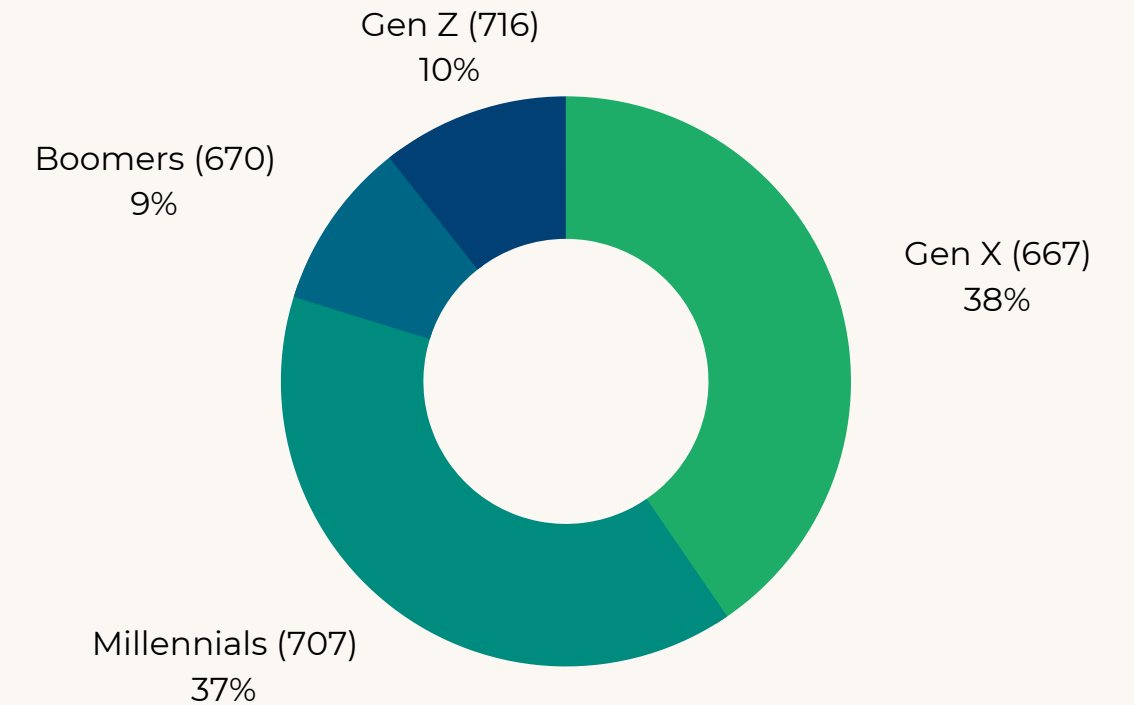
Overall Satisfaction Scores by Length of Time in Ecosystem

Satisfaction Scores (y-axis: 0, 200, 400, 600, 800)

Length of Time in Ecosystem 2021 & 2022 (x-axis: Less than 6 months, 6-18 months, 18 months-3 years, >3 years, >5 years, >10 years)

45
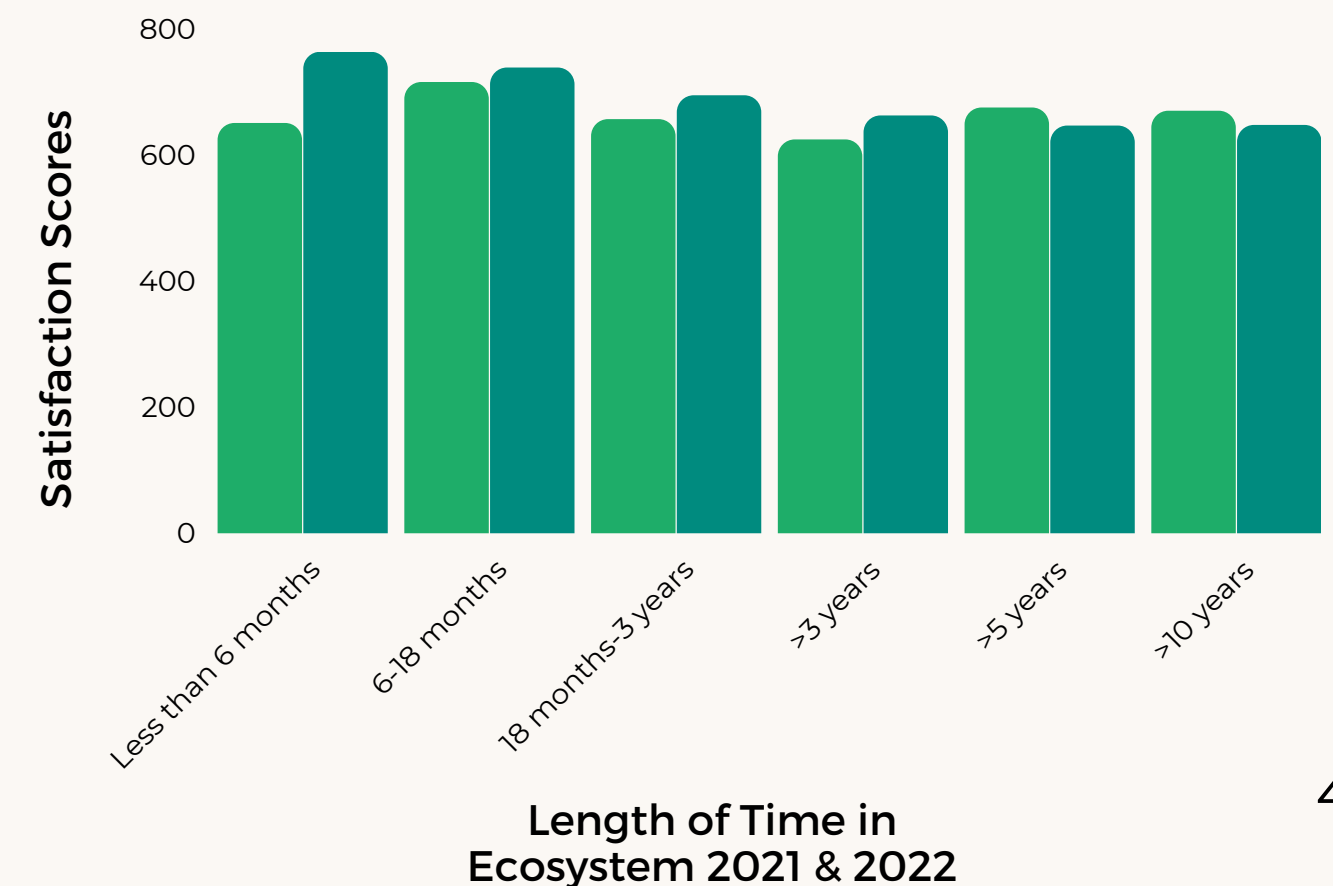
1 Connect the Experienced with the Newbies

Tactics to help action this recommendation include crafting intentionally designed collisions between the Experienced and the Newbies when curating events, filling talent gaps, or building strategies. Mentorship-matching and training programs are also a powerful tool for developing skill sets, networks, and perspectives for both the experienced mentors and newbie mentees.

27%
HAVE BEEN IN THE ECOSYSTEM 18 MONTHS OR LESS

20%
HAVE BEEN IN THE ECOSYSTEM OVER 10 YEARS

Importance of D&I

Length in ecosystem
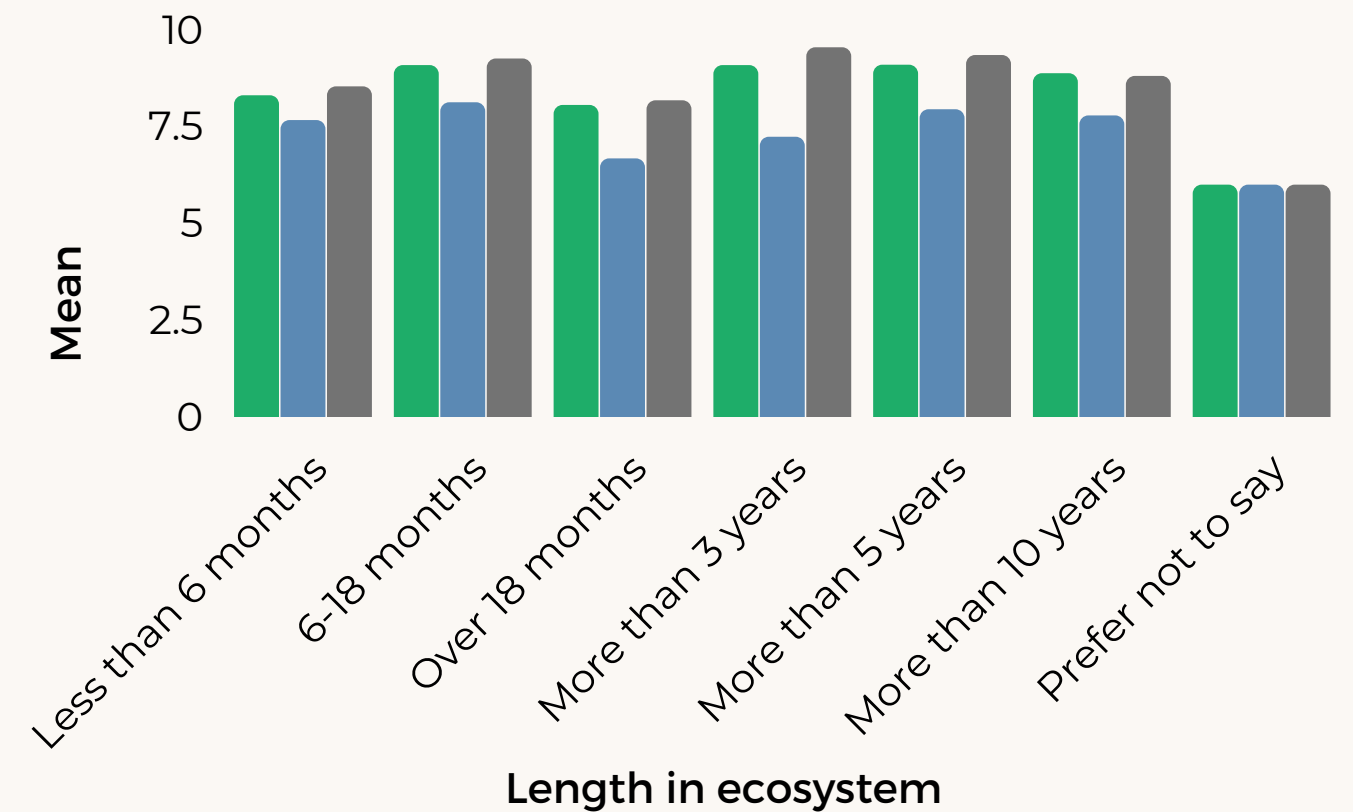
- Importance of both Diversity & Inclusion to you
- Importance of both Diversity & Inclusion to ecosystem members
- Importance of Diversity & Inclusion in building a successful ecosystem

46

2 Mind the Gap

One way to quantify a feeling of inclusion is the gap between how important Diversity & Inclusion is to a particular demographic and how important that same group feels D&I is to the population as a whole.

There are 11 groups with aggregates of 5 or more responses that indicated a gap greater than 0.95 in how important D&I is to them personally versus how important they perceive D&I being to the ecosystem as a whole:

1. Women
2. Lesbian / Gay / Bisexual / Queer
3. Primary caregivers to children and parents
4. Gen X
5. In ecosystem 1.5 to 3 years
6. In ecosystem 5 to 10 years
7. Freelancers
8. Black People
9. Visually Impaired
10. Hearing Impaired
11. People with a mental illness

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Gap between personal importance of D&I and percieved importance to ecosystem

Demographics
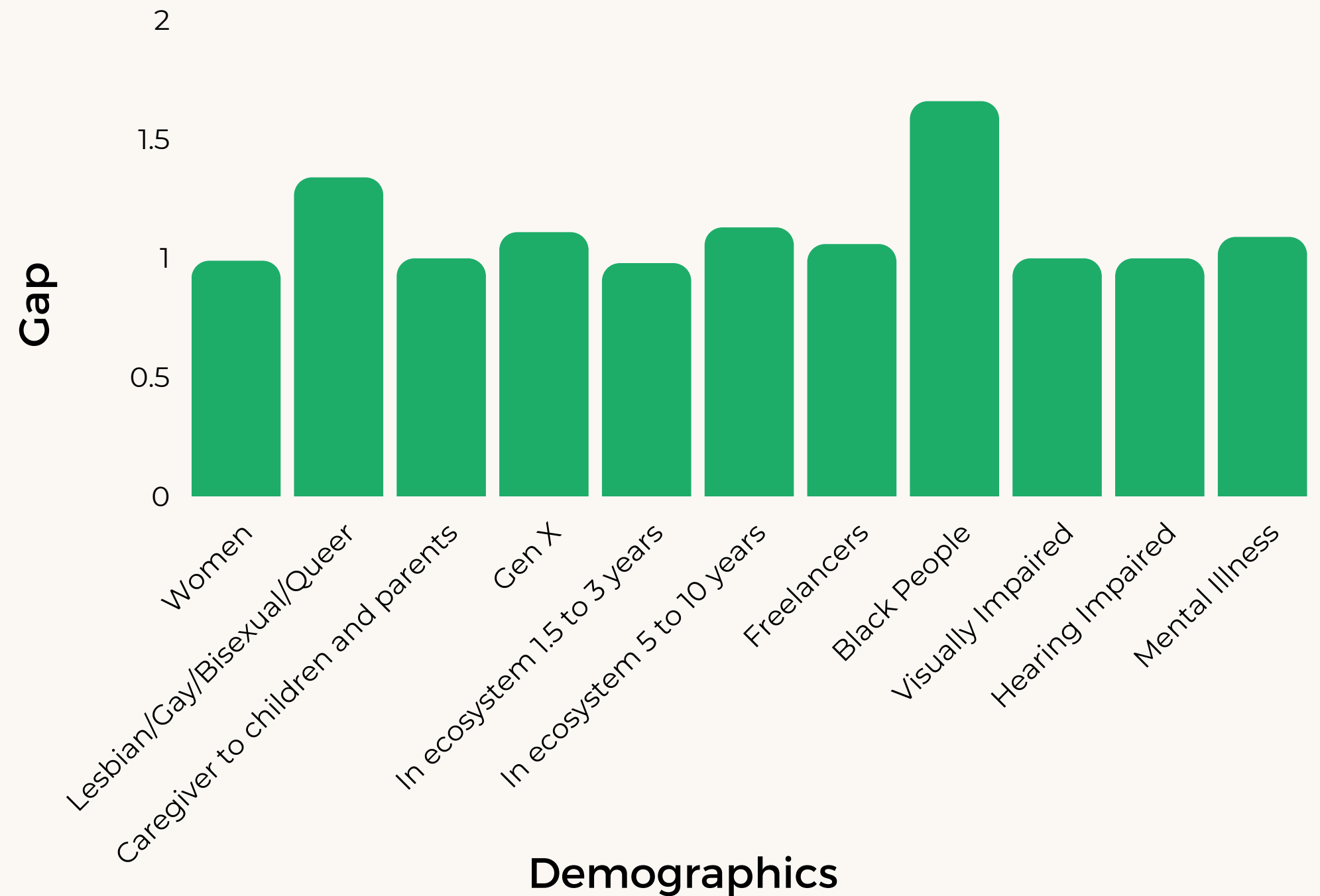
11 Groups indicated a gap greater than 0.95 between importance of D&I to them versus perceived importance to the entire ecosystem.

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2 Mind the Gap

Ensuring diverse voices are brought into the fold becomes easier when spaces, events, and tools are designed to service diverse needs - this includes accessible design for people with physical or mental disabilities and inclusive design for wide-ranging cultural perspectives based upon gender, ethnicity, care-giver status, age, sexual identity and beyond.

Focusing on existing needs of the ecosystem, such as 13% of the respondents identifying as neurodiverse and 14% as having a mental illness, will move the ecosystem from diverse to inclusive and equitable. For example, explore how the ecosystem can elevate the experience for People with Disabilities who may require specific accommodations thrive.

Additionally, when considering the 44% of the ecosystem that identifies as women, how can the community eliminate micro-aggressions and attract even more women of diverse backgrounds into Alberta's tech ecosystem? Bringing these voices directly to the leadership, strategy, and design tables will ensure valuable insights are captured.

13%
IDENTIFY AS BEING NEURODIVERSE
+3% from 2021
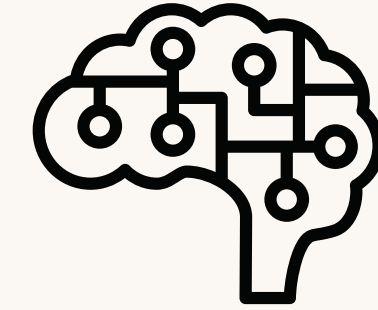
14%
IDENTIFY AS HAVING A MENTAL ILLNESS
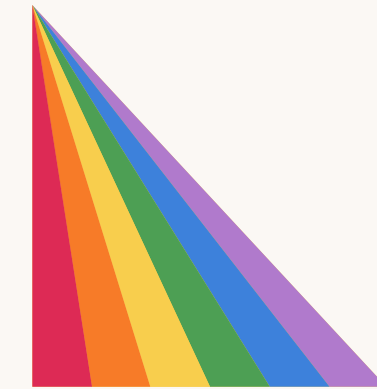
7%
IDENTIFY AS LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL OR QUEER

45%
IDENTIFY AS A PRIMARY CARE GIVER TO DEPENDENTS
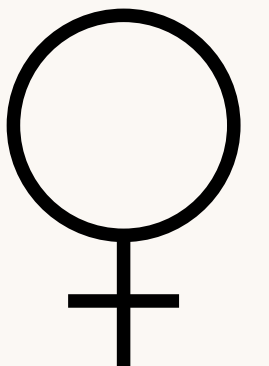
44%
IDENTIFY AS WOMEN
+9% from 2021

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COMMUNITY OF INNOVATORS

2 Mind the Gap

Additionally there are several demographic groups that feel particularly strong about the importance of Diversity & Inclusion to them personally and to the success of the ecosystem (chart shown on next slide).

Importance of Diversity & Inclusion to You
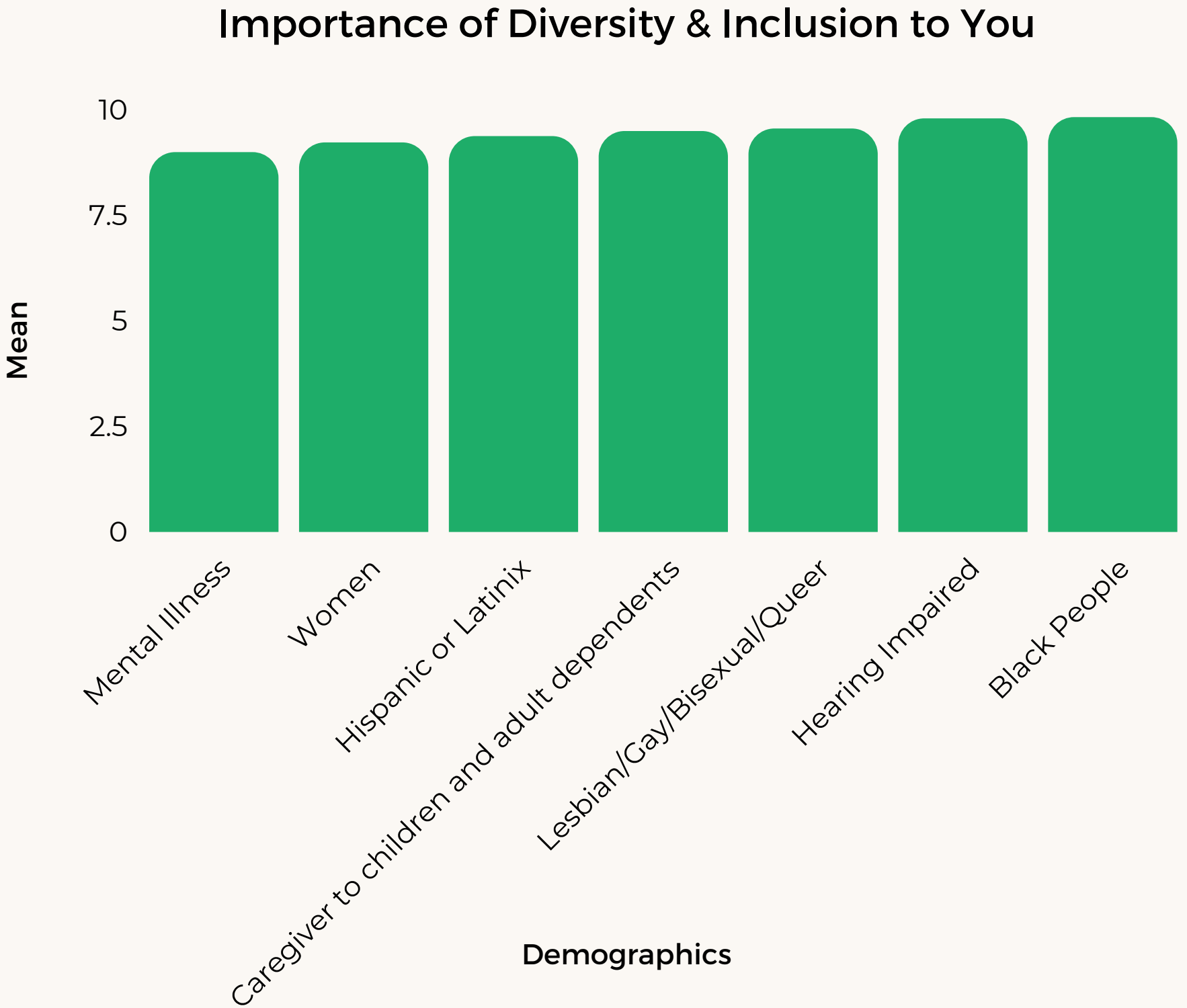
7 Groups provided higher than average ratings for feeling that D&I is important to them personally

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2 Mind the Gap

When comparing data from the annual ecosystem survey against Alberta census data, representation is lacking from several demographics including: Women, Black, Indigenous, Southeast Asian, and East Asian People.

	Alberta Rainforest Study	Alberta*
Boomer	9%	23.3%
Women	44%	50%
Black People	3%	4%
Indigenous	2%	6.5%
Southeast Asian and East Asian	8%	11%

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Source: Stats Canada, Census Profile, 2021

3 Nurture Psychological Safety

The number of Prefer Not to Say (PNTS) respondents increased significantly when asked about dimensions of diversity that are often invisible/hidden. Selecting PNTS jumped from an average of 4% to 8% for caretaker status, 9% for disability status, and 14% for sexual identity.

The inclination not to disclose hidden dimensions of diversity indicates there is room for improvement when considering psychological safety throughout the ecosystem. A lack of psychological safety is based on a belief that bringing one's whole self to the community may result in undesirable consequences such as negative judgement, damaged reputation, and/or career limitations.

The proportion of respondents who elected not to share their caregiver status, disability status, and sexual identity increased significantly compared to other demographic categories.

RESPONDENTS THAT
PREFERRED NOT TO DISCLOSE

9%
DISABILITY
STATUS
Unchanged
from 2021

14%
SEXUAL
IDENTITY
+4% from 2021

8%
CAREGIVER
STATUS
Unchanged
from 2021

51

3 Nurture Psychological Safety

Psychological safety is a key component to building inclusive and innovative ecosystems. Without psychological safety the diversity of thought that may exist within the community is suppressed and homogenized to ensure security for the less dominant demographics. Other outcomes of low psychological safety include a loss of innovative solutions, negative impacts to mental and physical health, higher rates of absenteeism and presenteeism, and overall lower engagement and sense of belonging.

Further, there were 2 demographic categories - down from 11 in 2021 - that scored under a 6.00 (on a 10-point scale) when asked if they felt well supported, under the overall average score of 7.22.

Lack Feelings of their Demographic Being Supported
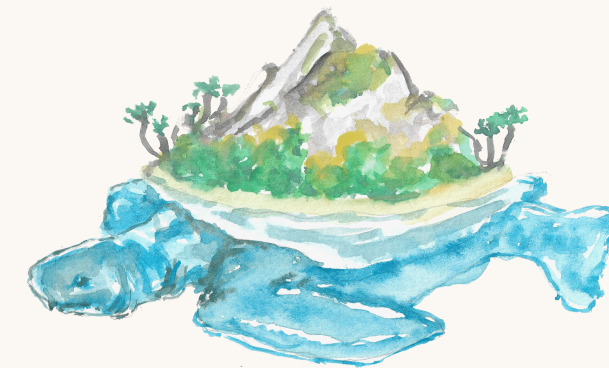
INDIGENOUS

5.4

SOUTHEAST ASIAN

5.9

52
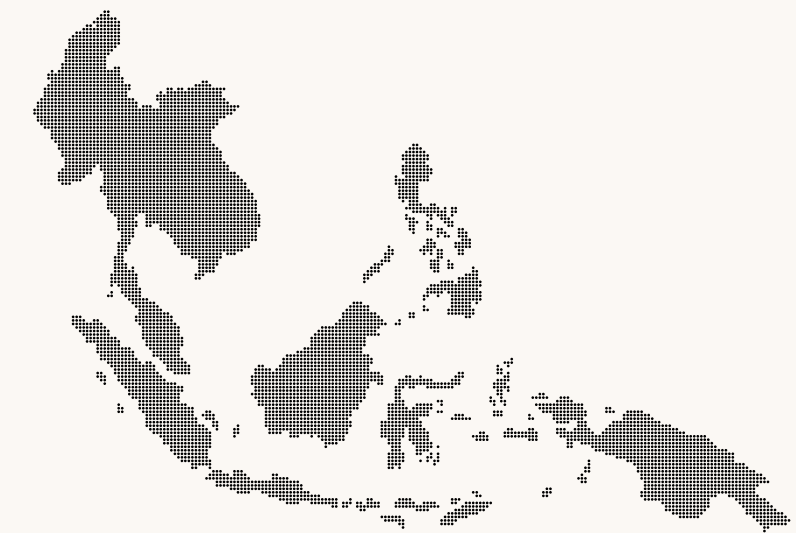
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Showcase

Continue promoting diverse first-hand storytelling through guest speakers, diversity-focused organizations, and interested team members.

Openness

Normalizing discussion about inclusion related topics and learning opportunities through 'Inclusion Moments' at the beginning of meetings.

Leadership

Commit to developing and promoting leaders with underrepresented demographics.

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Motivate

Openly reward courageous displays of allyship and honest feedback.

Cultural & Systemic Support

Actively seek ways to better support Indigenous and Southeast Asian populations. Take intentional steps to grow this community within your networks, to listen to their needs, and to show up as an *active* ally. Remember, allyship is a verb, not a noun!

Growth Mindset

Increasing the availability and promotion of Diversity & Inclusion education opportunities. Education can take many forms including: the Intercultural Development Inventory, workshops, guest speakers, the University of Alberta's Indigenous Canada Certificate, as well as actively acknowledging current events and annual historic dates.

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"The culture of inclusivity is evident in the rainforest. From event speakers to groups like YYC QIM (queer innovation meetup) , Rainforest AB has expanded its demographics."

-Educator, 6-18 months

Study Details

Year-over-year comparison & Target

2022 results demonstrate an incremental increase across all pillars since 2021.

It is encouraging to see an increasingly honest measurement of the ecosystem through an increased sample size and a large number of individuals (85%) who had not participated in the Scorecard last year.

Rainforest Alberta Scorecard
YEAR-OVER-YEAR COMPARISON

Aggregate RF Radar Score:
2016: **470/1000** | 2017: **610/1000** | 2018: **599/1000** | 2019: **630/1000** | 2020: **684/1000** | 2021: **661/1000** | 2022: **689/1000**

RAINFOREST ALBERTA | ECOSYSTEM SCORE | 2016-2020
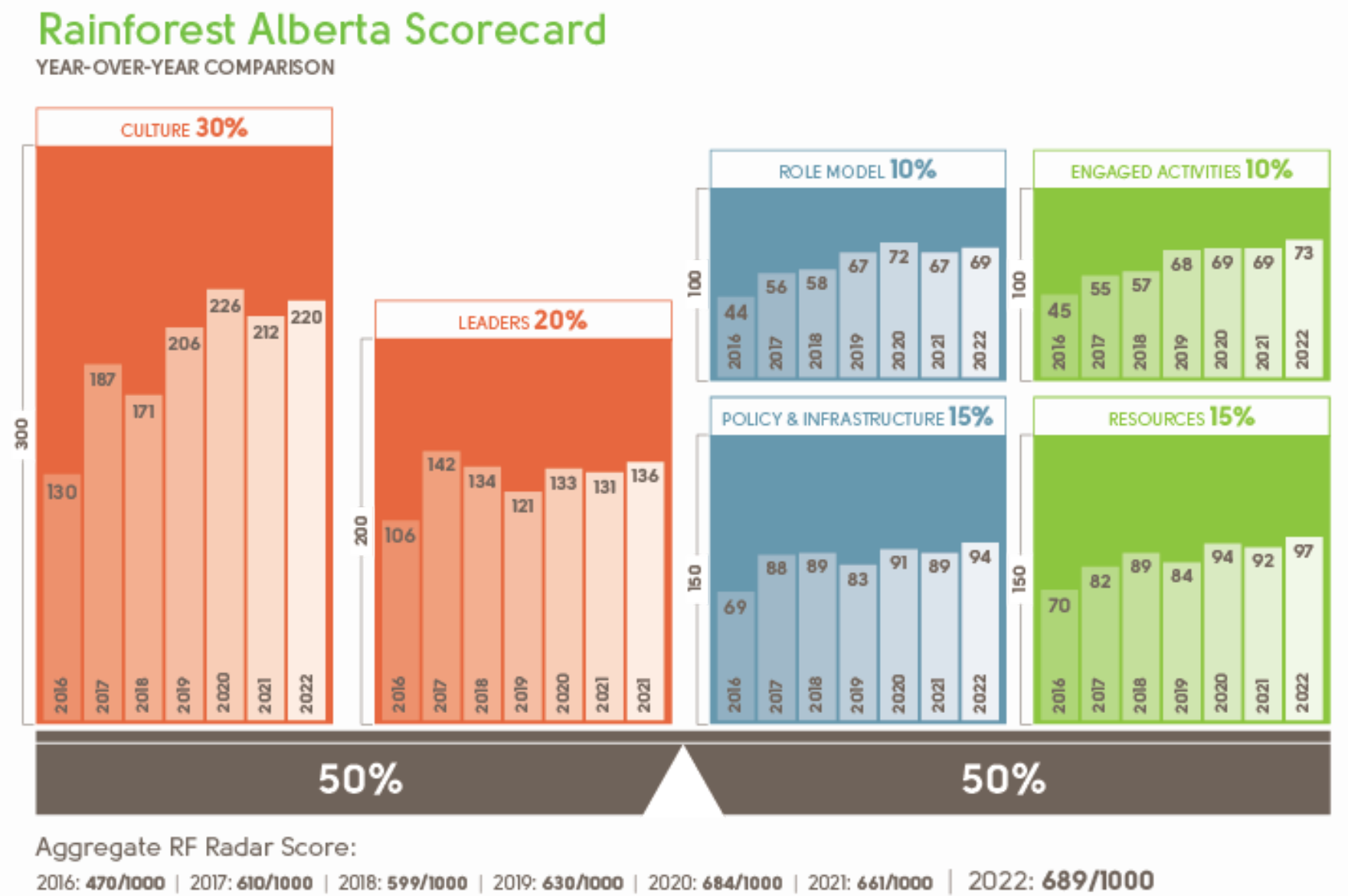
Rainforest Alberta Scorecard History

The Rainforest Alberta Scorecard Assessment was derived from the book, "The Rainforest Scorecard: A Practical Framework for Growing Innovation Potential" by Henry Doss and Alistair Brett. The framework was created to measure the innovation pillars within an organization and was further adapted through the work that Rainforest Alberta undertook with Rainforest Strategies LLP consultants between 2016-2018.

In 2019 it was identified that the Rainforest Alberta movement had evolved beyond the scope of Rainforest Strategies LLP. As a result, a large group within the community undertook a re-tooling exercise to ensure the right questions were being asked in the assessment. This approach, though collaborative, led to an ineffective survey design.

In 2020, Rainforest Alberta worked with a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) expert to include respondent demographics in the Scorecard Assessment, which provided valuable data on how various demographics experienced the ecosystem.

Rainforest Alberta Scorecard History

There was still, however, lower-than-anticipated participation in the 2020 survey.

This led to the 2021 iteration of the survey presented in this report. In order to provide the ecosystem with an effective measurement of the six pillars and valuable data, a psychometrics expert was engaged to redesign a lasting and effective 2021 iteration of the Scorecard.

In this iteration of the Scorecard Assessment, a new DEI section was created and questions throughout the survey were designed to:
- Align with the pillars
- Provide insights by splicing data demographically for questions
- Educate and prime the ecosystem
- Measure gaps between awareness, perception, and desire

The resulting analysis has informed recommendations to increase the score of the six pillars.

Gaps in Scorecard Research & Data insights

Jenelle Morgan, Psychometrics Expert

The goal of the Rainforest Scorecard is to measure the presence and quality of the ecosystem's infrastructure (i.e., the six pillars), in their facilitation of a thriving innovation community in Calgary, Alberta. Whereas the Scorecard has been critical in understanding the state of Calgary's entrepreneurial and innovative capabilities, further improvements in its design and content would provide a more accurate depiction of the ecosystem's performance.

We targeted three main areas in ensuring the Scorecard more precisely measures the ecosystem's infrastructure. The first is reconfiguring the focus to the ecosystem, rather than the community. The previous Scorecard asked respondents to evaluate the "community" on various attributes, which likely resulted in participants examining the Rainforest community, rather than the broader ecosystem that encapsulates it. The written comments provided by previous years' respondents, showed frequent mentions of "Rainforest" in their evaluations rather than the ecosystem. This highlights the importance of being more intentional about the context we want respondents to evaluate.

Meet our experts!

Experts recruited from our local community were paramount in creating an intentional survey design that produced valuable insights

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Jenelle is a PhD student in the Industrial-Organizational Psychology program at the University of Calgary. She works in the selection and recruitment lab examining the content and influence of employee voice as expressed in online organizational reviews. As a result, Jenelle has developed skillsets in using machine learning tools, univariate, and multivariate analyses, and has worked previously in survey design and creation. Further, Jenelle teaches undergraduate labs in quantitative and qualitative research analyses and methods, and privately tutors graduate students in the same area.

More generally, her goals are to determine how organizations and systems cultivate climates where persons feel supported, and how feedback can facilitate this process.

Jenelle Morgan

Psychometrics expert

Rachel Wade

DEI expert

Rachel is an award winning Diversity & Inclusion professional. She has been working in the area of Diversity & Inclusion for the last eight years from various perspectives including grassroots, corporate, public, internal and external facing, locally and internationally. Her industry experience includes healthcare, energy, tech, marketing, finance, and non-profit.

Rachel is the Founder and President of Including You Consulting where she partners with small and medium-size businesses to address their Diversity & Inclusion goals. Rachel has her BA in Communications and Culture from the University of Calgary, her MA in Professional Communications from Royal Roads, and is a Qualified Administrator of the Intercultural Development Inventory.

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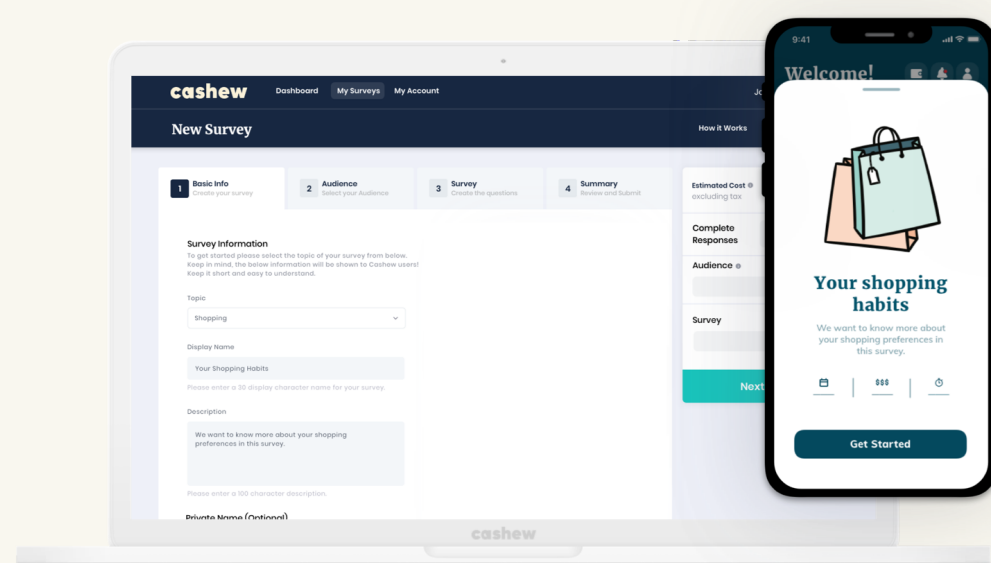
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With technology, research expertise, and a highly engaged audience community, Cashew extends itself as a true partner to all of our clients. Our ecosystem enables us to adapt and innovate solutions that specifically address your business problems, without extending your budget or timelines. We orbit your world, delivering tailored solutions that meet your needs.

What we deliver:

- Faster research applications that is better suited for your needs
- Enabling you to own a larger piece of the process and therefore control the quality of insights
- Enabling you to build solutions for your unique business practices
- Cashew acts as an extension to your insight machine

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What's Next?

The 2022 Scorecard Analysis will be distributed to Calgary Innovation Coalition members, ecosystem leaders, startups, and the broader community.

Results will be taken into consideration when developing 2023 Rainforest Alberta initiatives.

All organizations working within the Calgary ecosystem are strongly encouraged to consider Scorecard insights in their strategic planning and day-to-day work.
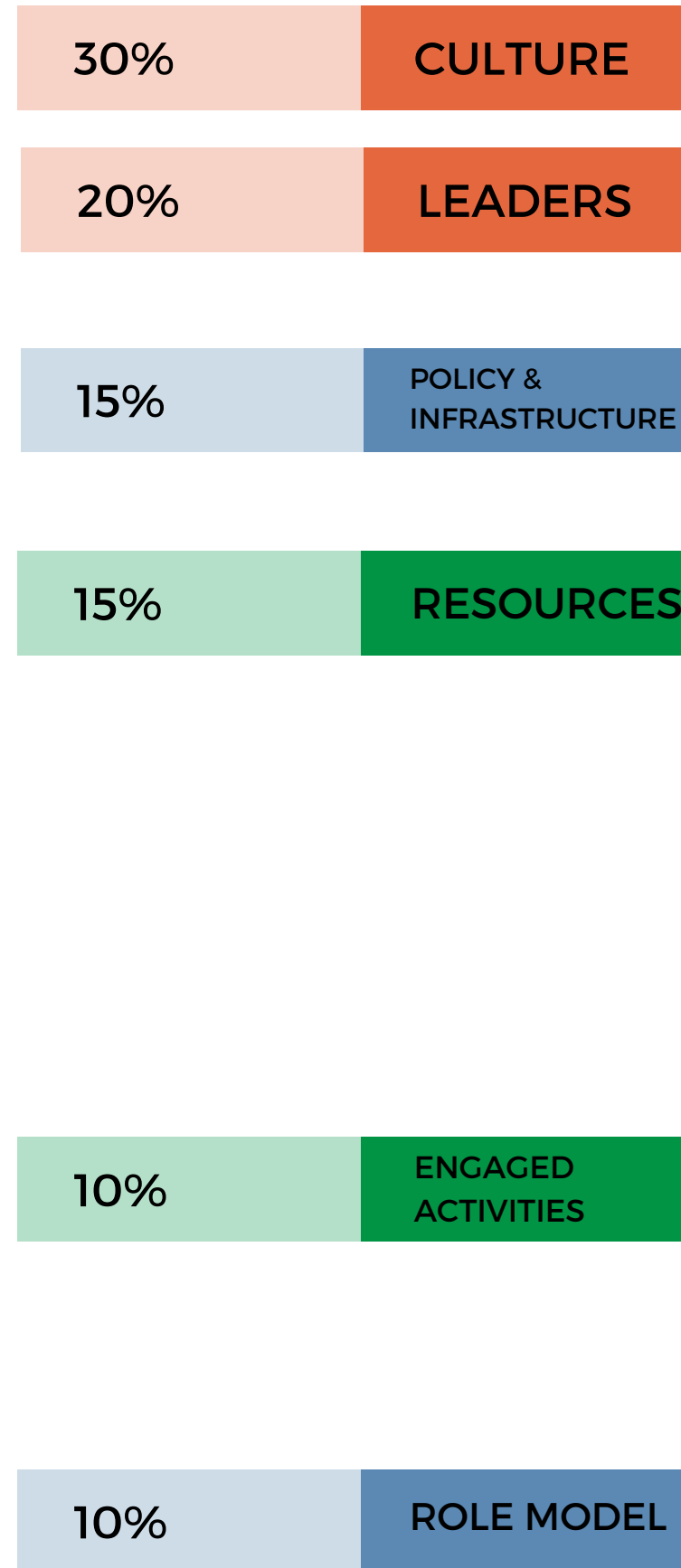
Together, we make a difference!

Have any questions or looking for more information on the data collected in this report?

Contact the Rainforest Alberta team.
info@rainforestab.ca

Appendix

What are the pillars?

30%	CULTURE

Culture is the foundation of any innovation ecosystem. It is the shared values and actions of ecosystem members which ultimately determine the success of ecosystem initiatives.

20%	LEADERS

Leaders, both formal and informal, are decision makers positioned to realize potential, convey perspectives, and rally groups to influence outcomes for innovation.

15%	POLICY & INFRASTRUCTURE

Policy and Infrastructure is the infinite, non-depleting structural landscape the ecosystem exists within. Actions and interactions between organizations, departments, physical spaces, and policies play a role in supporting innovation.

15%	RESOURCES

Resources are a critical factor in achieving success. Resources include:
1. Funding: access to funders, grants, etc
2. Knowledge sharing: publications, patents, databases, Research & Development
3. Support, organizations and service providers: programs, accelerators, incubators, work space
4. Talent: skilled labor pool and powerful networks A balance of resources available in quality, quantity, and origins can support innovative potential through both generation and implementation.

A balance of resources available in quality, quantity, and origins can support innovative potential through both generation and implementation.

10%	ENGAGED ACTIVITIES

Activities and Engagement are helpful tools to foster a vibrant and connected ecosystem. Ecosystem activities should be balanced between organizational drive (top down) and grassroots led (bottom up). Activities may include networking and learning events, job fairs, pitch events, scorecard evaluations, and other forms of collaboration.

10%	ROLE MODEL

Role models across the ecosystem are builders, influencers, and accelerators who add value to the ecosystem through inspiration; they embody characteristics that others wish to emulate. Role models can be uniquely personal and also general to the community.

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Culture is the foundation of any innovation ecosystem. It is the shared values and actions of ecosystem members which ultimately determine the success of ecosystem initiatives. Based on your experiences in the ecosystem, to what extent do you see the following occur?

1 = I see this less often .... 5 = I see this half the time .... 10 = I see this all the time

- Failure is accepted as part of the path to success, within the ecosystem.
- Individuals within the Calgary ecosystem are willing to help others without expecting something in return.
- The ecosystem actively welcomes and includes people with diverse lived experiences (i.e., gender identity, ethnic/racial backgrounds, Indigenous, sexual orientation, abilities/disabilities, age, etc.).
- Trust among individuals is evident within the ecosystem.
- Individuals within the ecosystem encourage each other to dream big.
- Individuals within the ecosystem act collaboratively instead of competitively.
- Are there any other comments you would like to share about the Culture pillar?

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Policy and Infrastructure is the infinite, non-depleting structural landscape the ecosystem exists within. Actions and interactions between organizations, departments, physical spaces, and policies play a role in supporting innovation. Based on your experiences with Policy and Infrastructure in the ecosystem, to what extent do you see the following occur?

1 = I see this less often   ....   5 = I see this half the time   ....   10 = I see this all the time

- Government policy facilitates the growth of startups.
- The physical infrastructure (e.g., accessible spaces, internet access, hardware, etc.) within the ecosystem supports innovation."
- Timely decision-making is evident across policymakers in the ecosystem.
- There are effective communication tools/platforms to share data, events, and happenings in the ecosystem.
- Entrepreneurs are able to identify ecosystem supports (e.g., mentorship and funding options) that are applicable to their current stage of growth.
- Are there any other comments you would like to share about the Policy and Infrastructure pillar?

Leaders, both formal and informal, are decision makers positioned to realize potential, convey perspectives, and rally groups to influence outcomes for innovation. Based on your experiences with Leaders in the ecosystem, to what extent do you see the following occur?

1 = I see this less often ···························· 5 = I see this half the time ···························· 10 = I see this all the time

- Leaders throughout the ecosystem represent a variety of diverse lived experiences (i.e., gender identity, ethnic/racial backgrounds, Indigenous, sexual orientation, abilities/disabilities, age, etc.).
- Leaders in the ecosystem effectively communicate their visions and objectives to other ecosystem members.
- Leaders in the ecosystem are accessible for guidance and advice.
- Ecosystem members are supportive of leaders' initiatives.
- Leaders in the ecosystem value and encourage diversity of thought from a diverse spectrum of individuals (i.e., gender identity, ethnic/racial backgrounds, Indigenous, sexual orientation, abilities/disabilities, age, etc.).
- Are there any other comments you would like to share about the Leaders pillar?

Role models across the ecosystem are builders, influencers, and accelerators who add value to the ecosystem through inspiration; they embody characteristics that others wish to emulate. Role models can be uniquely personal and also general to the community. Based on your experiences with Role Models in the ecosystem, to what extent do you see the following occur?

1 = I see this less often   ····························   5 = I see this half the time   ····························   10 = I see this all the time

- Successful innovators are viewed as role models in the ecosystem.
- There are systems to support high-potential future role models.
- Role models are accessible to the ecosystem for guidance and mentorship.
- Role models in the ecosystem inspire me to be a role model.
- Role Models throughout the ecosystem represent diverse lived experiences (i.e., gender identity, ethnic/racial backgrounds, Indigenous, sexual orientation, abilities/disabilities, age, etc.).
- Are there any other comments you would like to share about the Role Models pillar?

Resources are a critical factor in achieving success. Resources include:
- Funding: access to funders, grants, etc.
- Knowledge sharing: publications, patents, databases, Research & Development
- Support, organizations and service providers: programs, accelerators, incubators, work space
- Talent: skilled labor pool and powerful networks A balance of resources available in quality, quantity, and origins can support innovative potential through both generation and implementation.

A balance of resources available in quality, quantity, and origins can support innovative potential through both generation and implementation. Based on your experiences with Resources in the ecosystem, to what extent do you see the following occur?

1 = I see this less often .... 5 = I see this half the time .... 10 = I see this all the time

- There are widely accessible programs to train workers with needed skills for the ecosystem.
- The ecosystem's workforce is talented across a range of skill sets that support market demands.
- There are effective resources provided by organizations to support entrepreneurs through mentorship and education.
- There are helpful programs to inform industries about in-demand skilled workers (e.g., through post secondary education institutes, nonprofits, industry organizations and job fairs).
- Entrepreneurs are able to access funding at the various stages of their entrepreneurial growth.
- Relevant information from a broad spectrum of disciplines is accessible to members of the ecosystem.
- Are there any other comments you would like to share about the Resources pillar?

Activities and Engagement are helpful tools to foster a vibrant and connected ecosystem. Ecosystem activities should be balanced between organizational drive (top down) and grassroots led (bottom up). Activities may include networking and learning events, job fairs, pitch events, scorecard evaluations, and other forms of collaboration. Based on your experiences with Activities within the ecosystem, to what extent do you see the following occur?

1 = I see this less often .... 5 = I see this half the time .... 10 = I see this all the time

- There are activities within the ecosystem that support innovation.
- Ecosystem activities are designed to be inclusive of people with diverse lived experiences (i.e., gender identity, ethnic/racial backgrounds, Indigenous, sexual orientation, abilities/disabilities, age, etc.).
- Activities enable collaboration between ecosystem members from wide ranging professional backgrounds and industries.
- Activities hosted within the ecosystem create value (e.g., through inspiration, calls to action, problem-solving, and learning).
- The ecosystem encourages self-organization of events and activities.
- Are there any other comments you would like to share about the Engaged Activities pillar?

Survey Questions
Pillar: Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging

Rainforest Alberta is committed to supporting a diverse and fully-inclusive ecosystem representative of the communities that we exist within. We understand that your background may be a contributing factor to your experience with the ecosystem and want to learn more about you, your perspectives on inclusion, and your lived experience.

When considering diversity we encourage you to consider a variety of lived experiences including but not limited to: gender identity, ethnic/racial backgrounds, Indigeneity, sexual orientation, abilities/disabilities, and age.

Reminder: All individual responses will remain confidential and will be used to inform our progress, gaps, and opportunities year over year. You may choose "prefer not to say" for any of the demographic questions.

1 = Not quite important to you ·················· 5 = Moderately important ·················· 10 = Extremely important
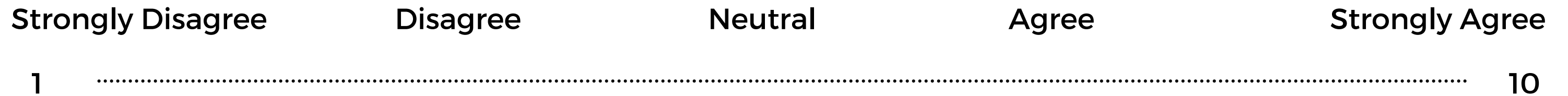
- Importance of both Diversity and Inclusion to you.
- Importance of both Diversity and Inclusion to ecosystem members.
- Importance of both Diversity and Inclusion in building a successful ecosystem.

Survey Questions
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Reminder: All individual responses will remain confidential and will be used to inform our progress, gaps, and opportunities year over year. You may choose "prefer not to say" for any of the demographic questions.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

1 ··· 10
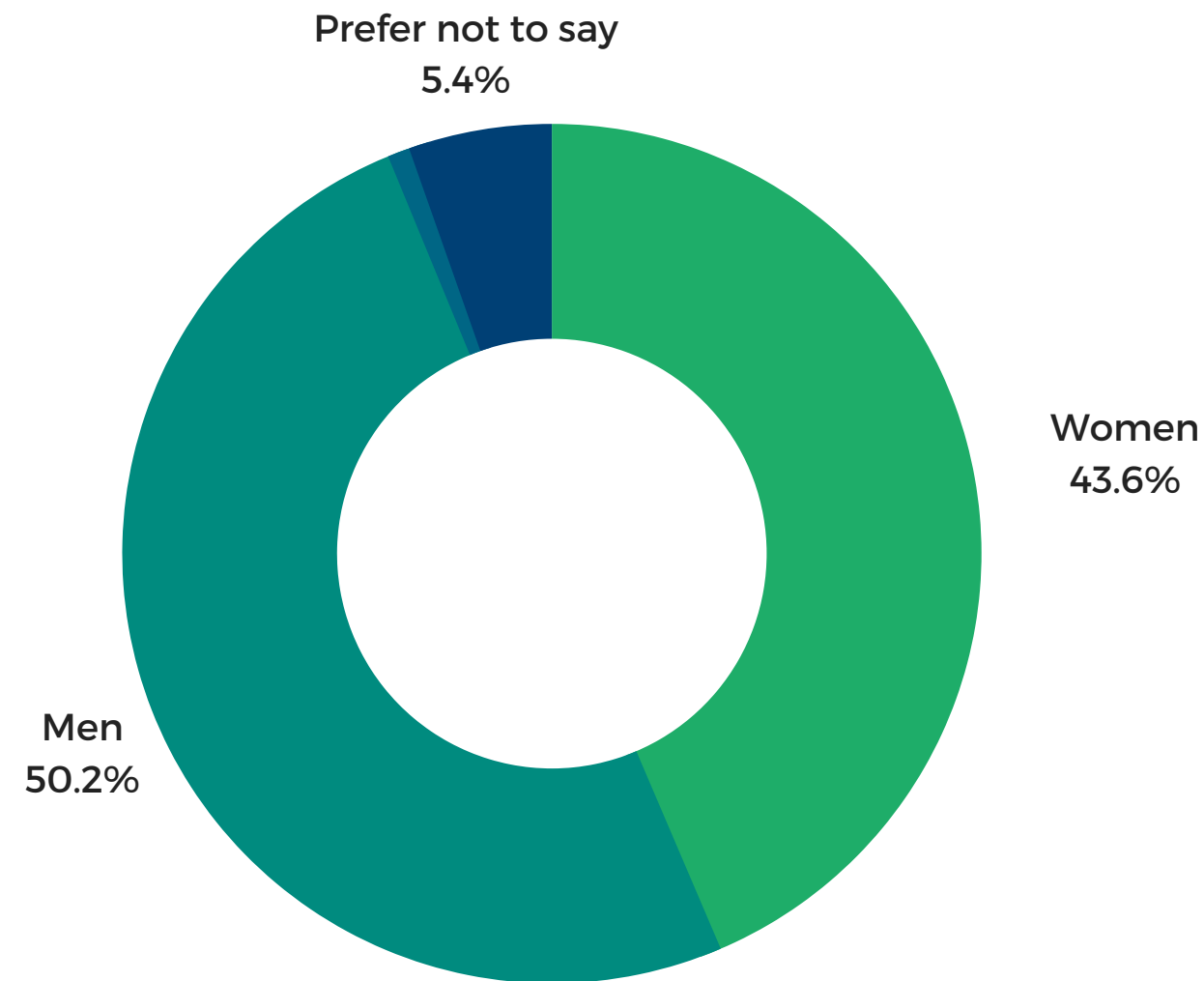
- The ecosystem is both a Diverse and Inclusive community.
- People like me are well represented throughout the ecosystem.
- People like me are well supported throughout the ecosystem.

WHO MAKES UP THE ECOSYSTEM?
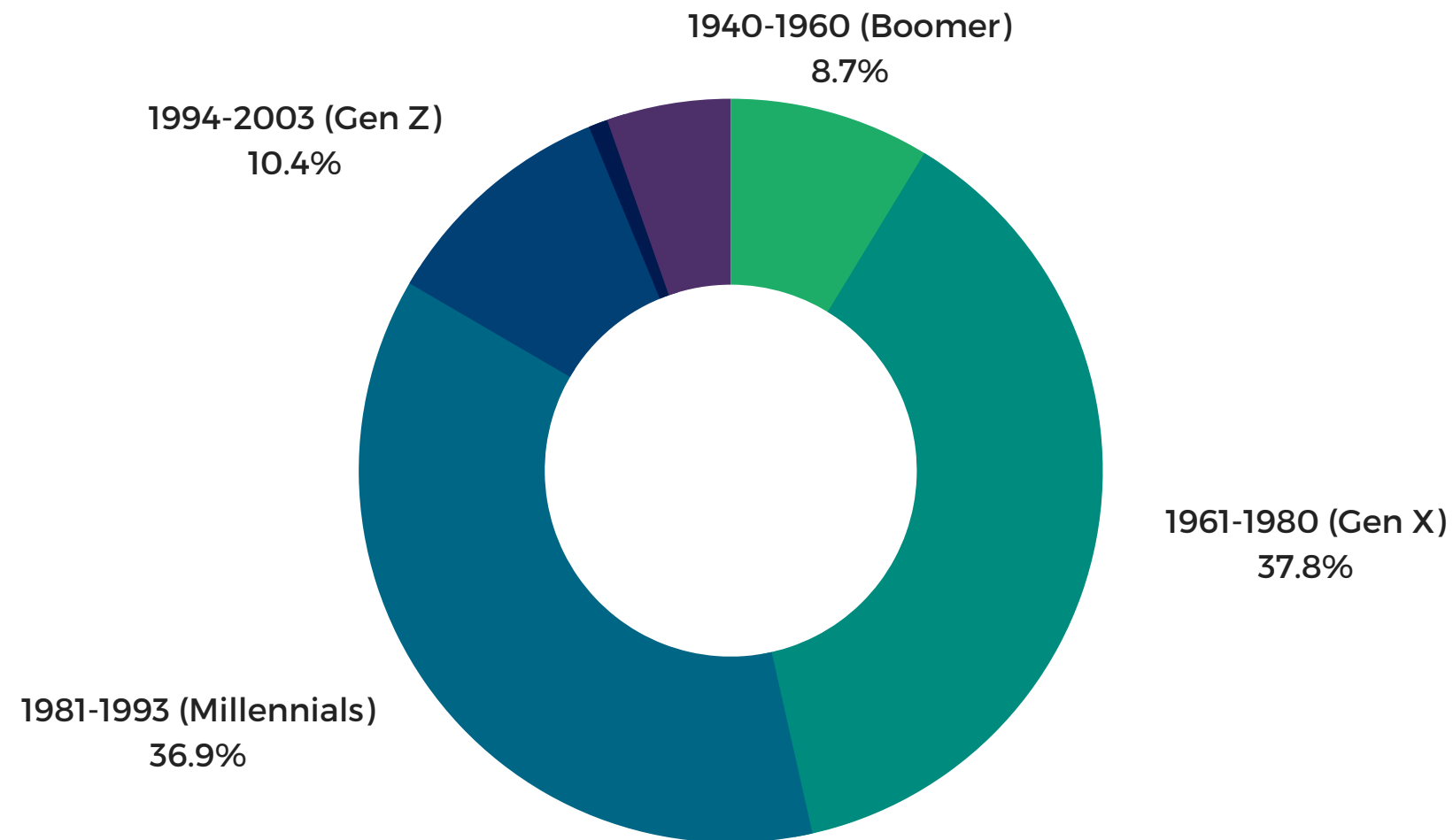
Gender

Proportion of Participants

Prefer not to say
5.4%

Women
43.6%

Men
50.2%

Total Pillar Satisfaction Scores

Men	693
Women	688
Non-binary/Gender nonconforming	790
Prefer not to say	654

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Age

Proportion of Participants

1940-1960 (Boomer) 8.7%

1994-2003 (Gen Z) 10.4%

1961-1980 (Gen X) 37.8%

1981-1993 (Millennials) 36.9%

Total Pillar Satisfaction Scores

Gen Alpha	623
Gen Z	716
Gen X	667
Millennials	707
Boomer	670
Prefer not to say	701

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Sexual Orientation

Proportion of Participants

Other
1.3%

Prefer not to say
13.8%

Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Queer
7.5%
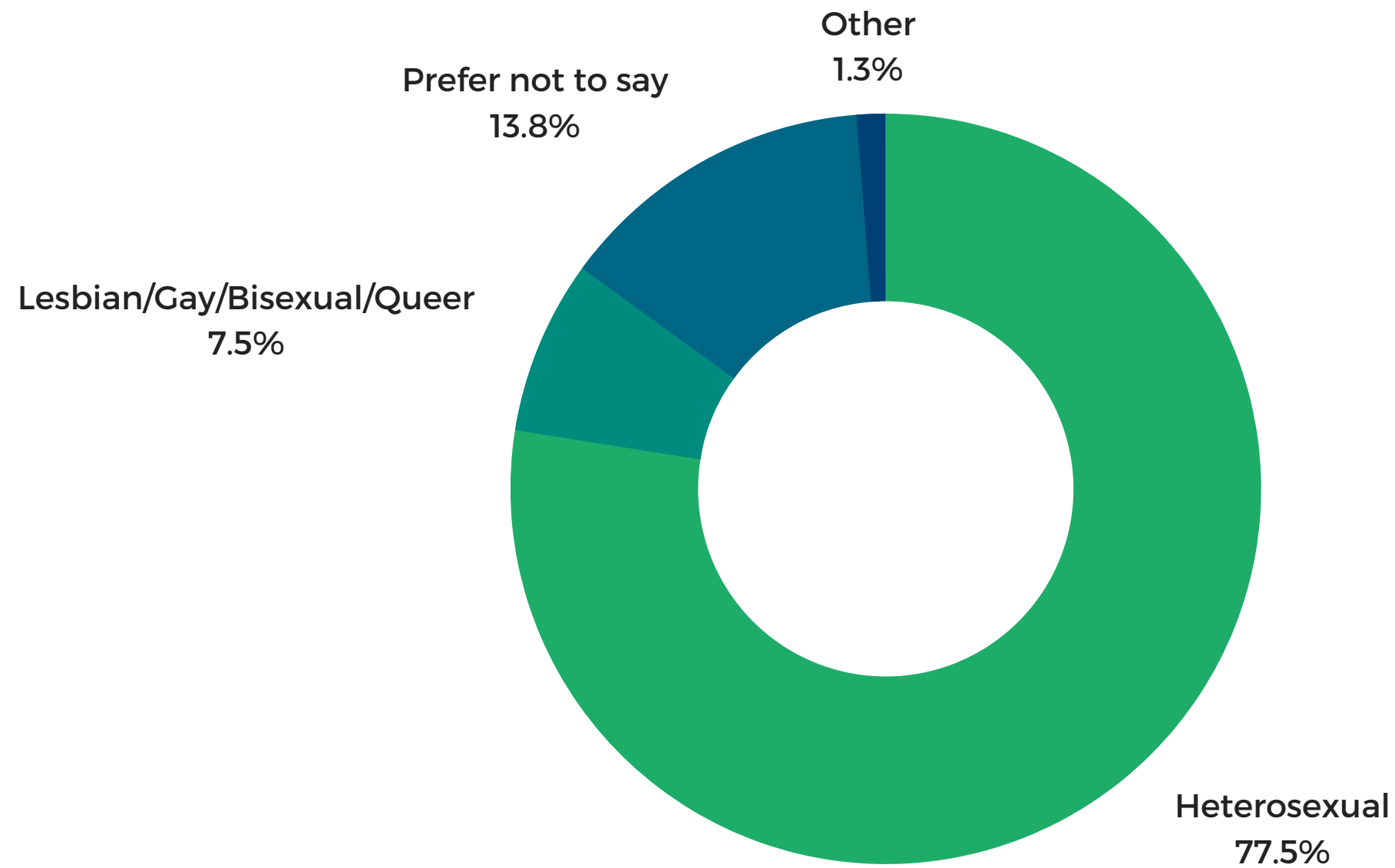
Heterosexual
77.5%

Total Pillar Satisfaction Scores

Heterosexual	692
Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Queer	694
Prefer not to say	691
Other	602

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Caregiver Status

Proportion of Participants

Total Pillar Satisfaction Scores

- Other 0.8%
- Prefer not to say 8.3%
- One or more children as dependents 40.7%
- No dependents 45.2%
- One or more parents as dependents 2.1%
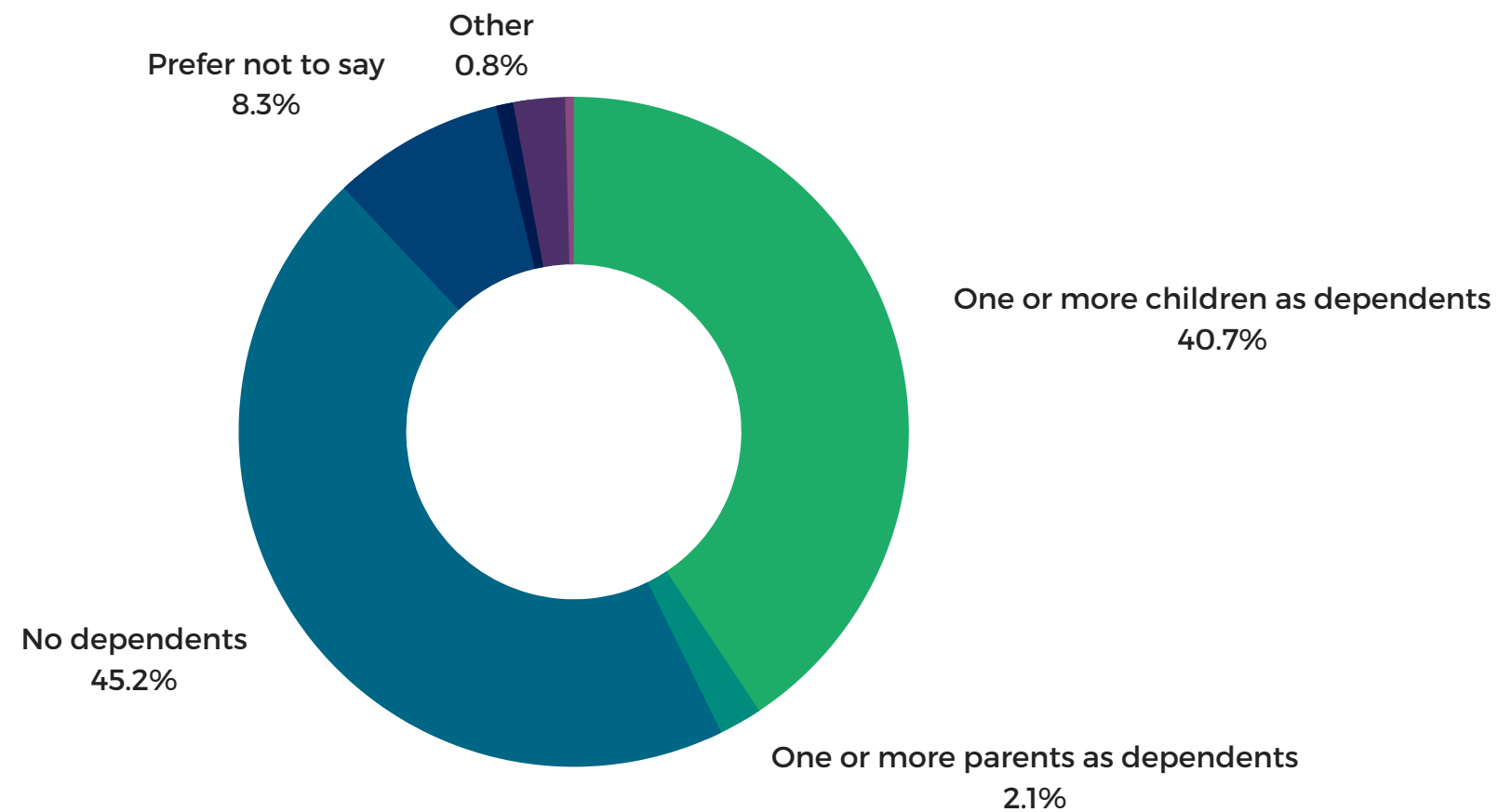
Other	760
One or more children as dependents	717
No dependents	707
One or more parents as dependents	717
One or more children and parents as dependents	597
Prefer not to say	697

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Length of time in ecosystem

Proportion of Participants

Less than 6 months
8.7%

More than 10 years
19.9%

6-18 months
18.7%

More than 5 years
12.9%

Over 18 months
22%

More than 3 years
14.9%
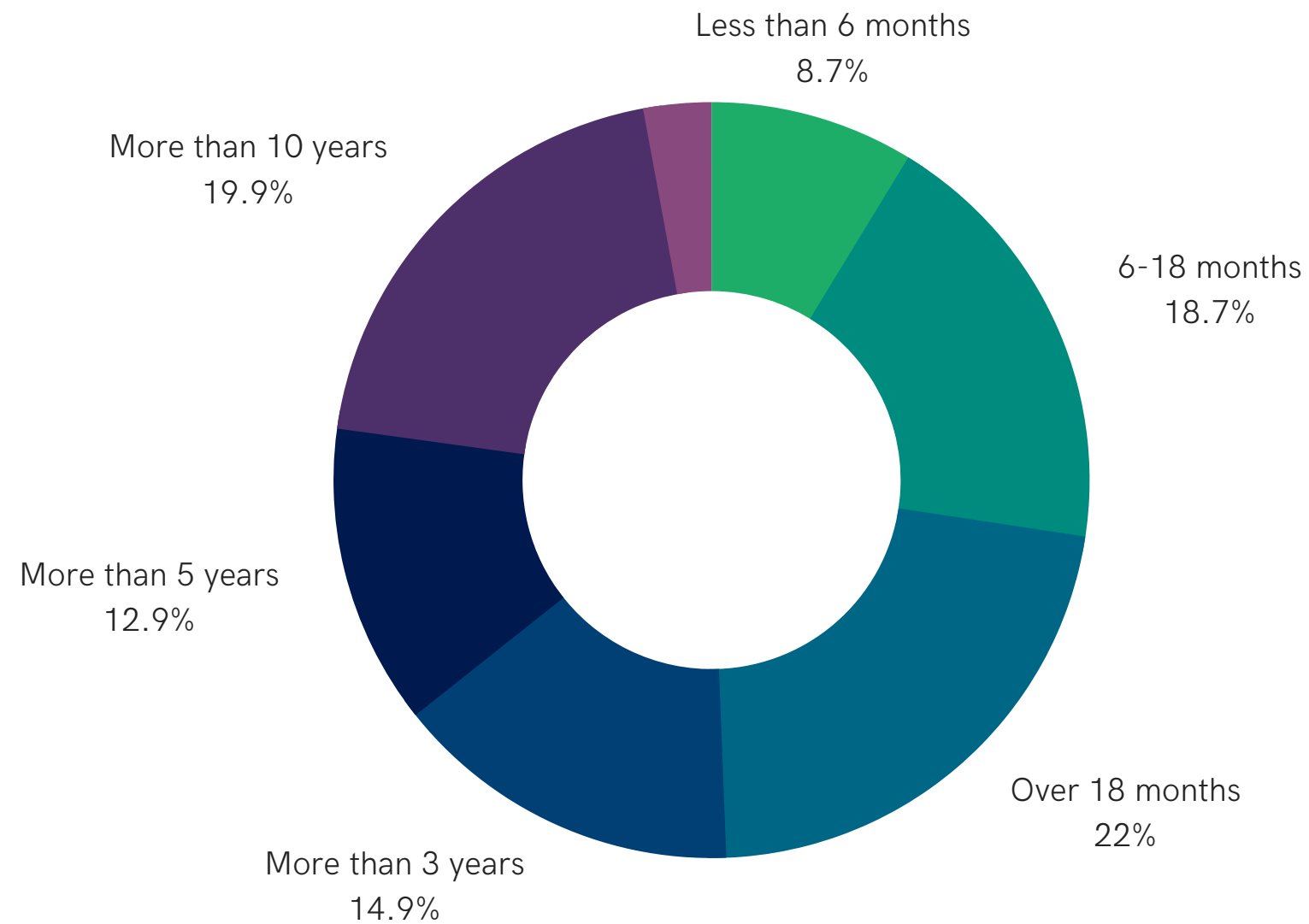
Total Pillar Satisfaction Scores

Less than 6 months	763
6-18 months	738
Over 18 months	694
More than 3 years	662
More than 5 years	646
More than 10 years	647
Prefer not to say	708

WHO MAKES UP THE ECOSYSTEM?

Occupation/Position

Proportion of Participants
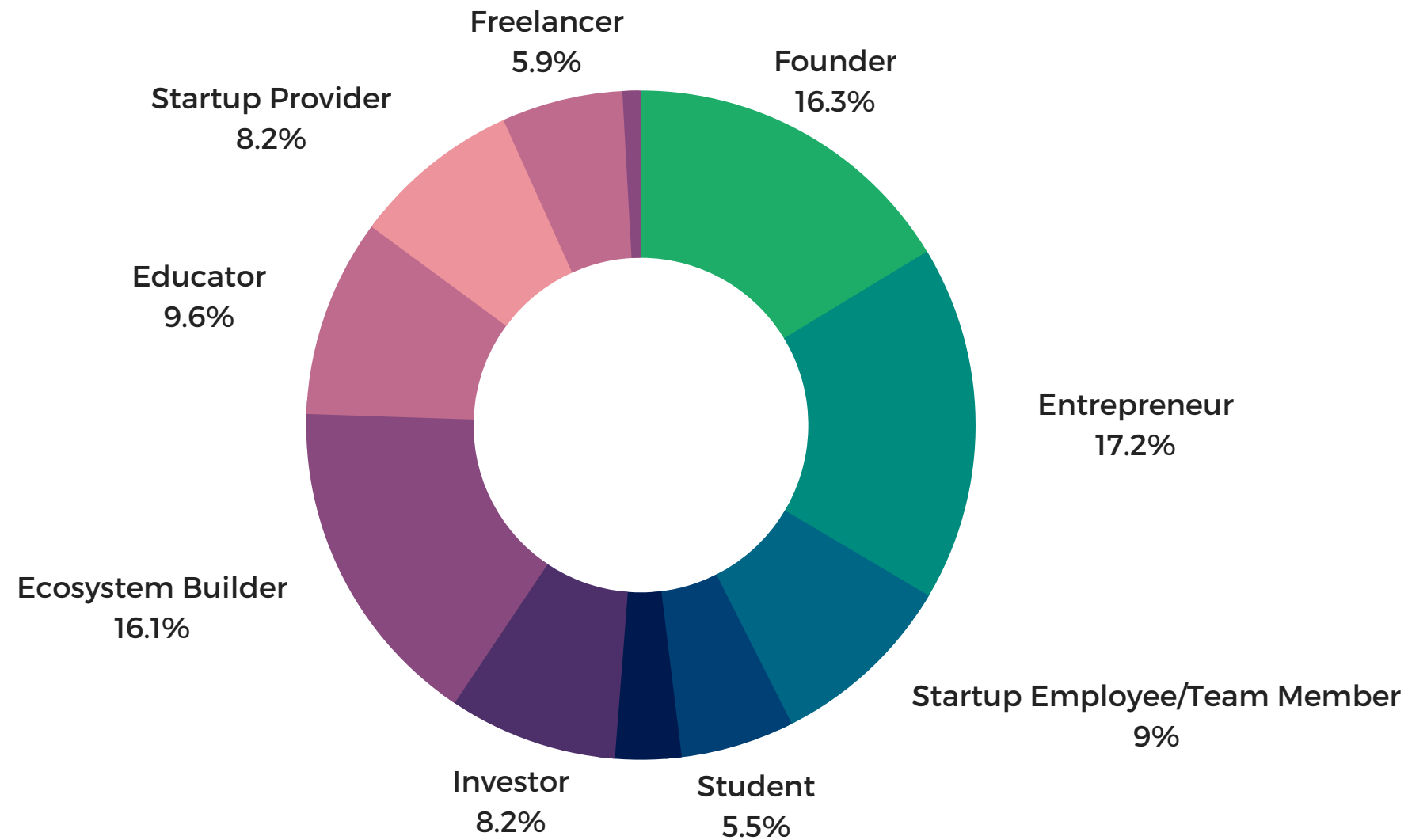
Total Pillar Satisfaction Scores

Prefer not to say	693
Student	747
Freelancer	688
Startup Provider	673
Startup Employee/Team Member	714
Policymaker/Government Representative	664
Ecosystem Builder	687
Founder	652
Investor	623
Entrepreneur	652
Educator	659

Race/Ethnicity

Proportion of Participants

Prefer not to say	5.2%
East Asian	4.7%
Southeast Asian	3.9%
South Asian	6.4%
European	22.3%
Black	2.6%
White	41.6%
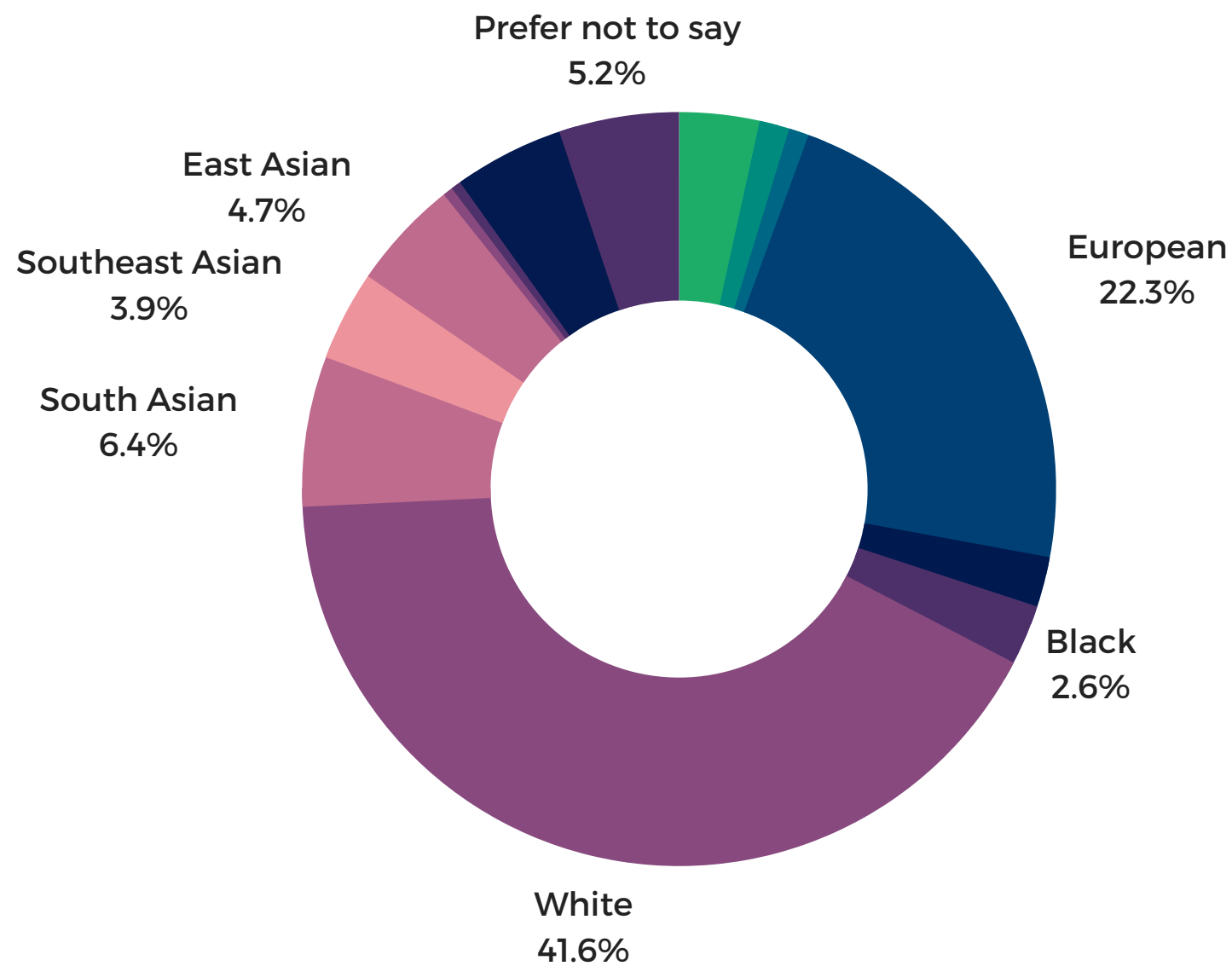
Total Pillar Satisfaction Scores

Southeast Asian	695
African Canadian	756
East Asian	699
Caribbean	612
European	698
White	690
Black	727
Hispanic or Latinx	684
Indigenous	618
Prefer not to say	629
Other	710

Disability Status

Total Pillar Satisfaction Scores
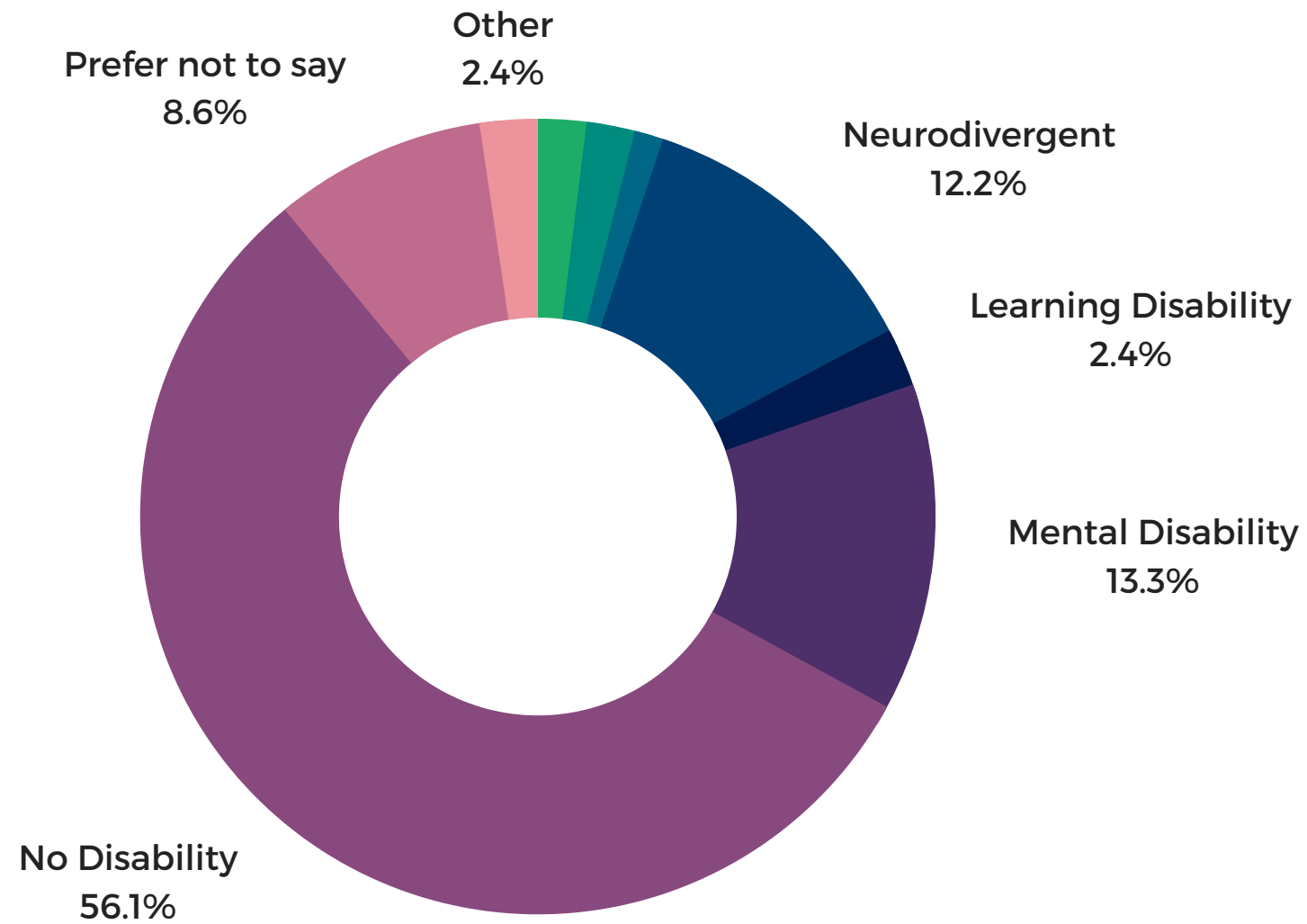
Proportion of Participants

Hearing Impairment	713
Visual Impairment	782
Learning Disability	697
No Disability	692
Mental Disability	702
Neurodivergent	679
Prefer not to say	640
Mobility Impairment	693

WHO MAKES UP THE ECOSYSTEM?

Industry

Proportion of Participants
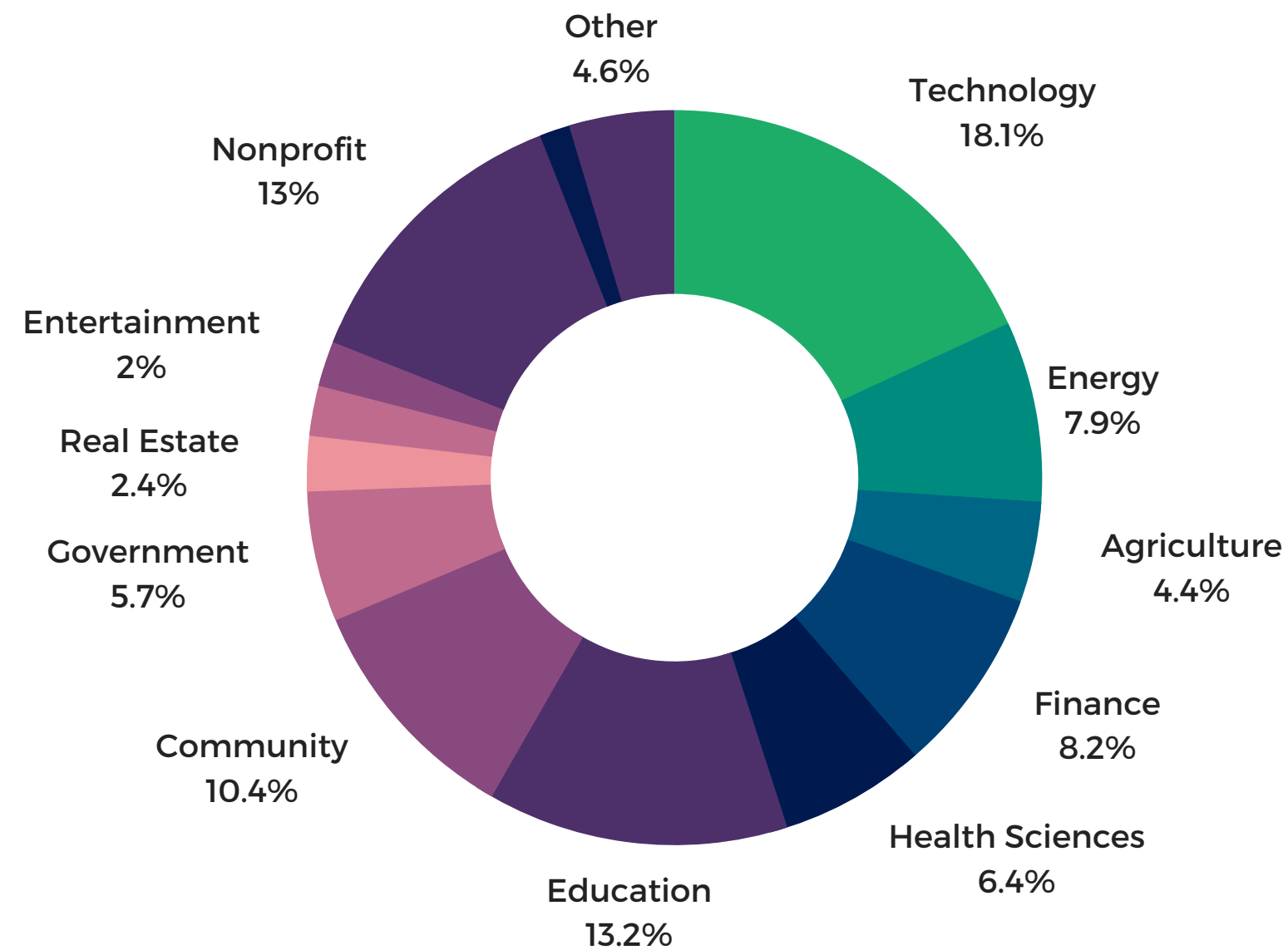
Total Pillar Satisfaction Scores

Real Estate	643
Technology	689
Nonprofit	687
Health Sciences	692
Energy	649
Education	666
Food and Beverage	680
Community	660
Agriculture	646
Government	689
Finance	626
Entertainment	636