

**Context:** From January- March 2016, a group of female aid workers carried-out a survey of their peers to better understand the experiences of women working in the humanitarian field. The survey sought to capture information about the demography of respondents in addition to four broad categories pertinent to issues facing female humanitarians, namely: (1) Discrimination and Harassment, (2) Sexual Aggression and Assault, (3) Reporting, and (4) Impact on Professional and Personal Well-Being. The 35-question survey captured both quantitative and qualitative information. Options were offered to respondents to share their experiences and some results were coded into qualitative data. The survey was conducted on SurveyMonkey in French and English, and participants were informed through word of mouth, social media, and professional networks. Survey methodology and analysis was guided by PhDs in qualitative and quantitative research.

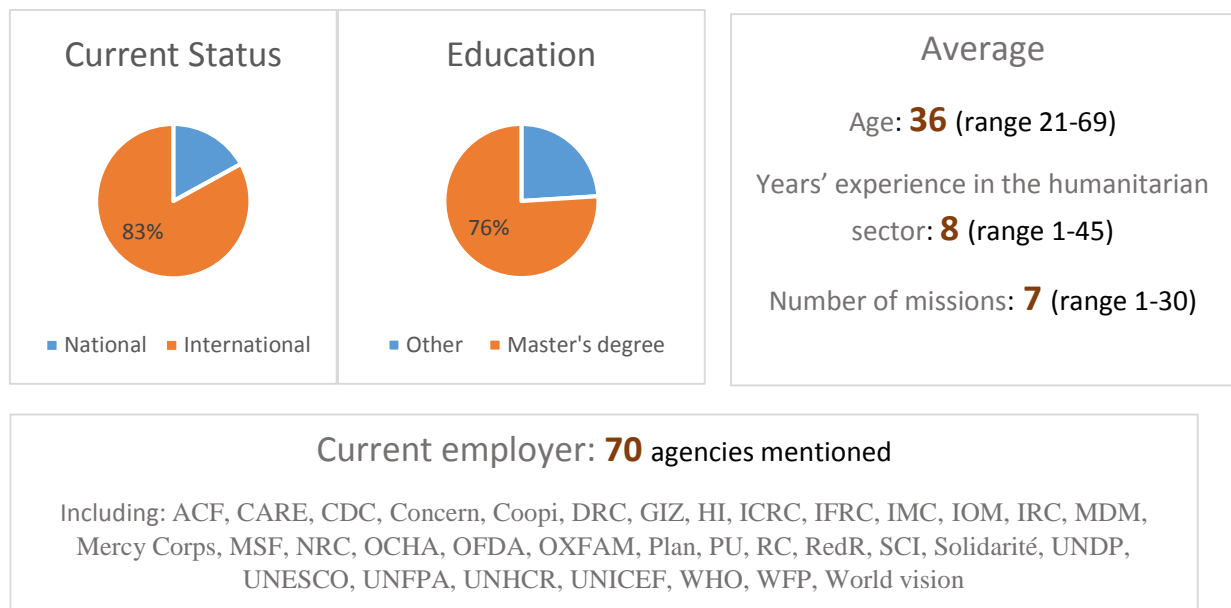
**Limitations:** This survey is not meant to be an exhaustive evaluation of all gender issues internal to the profession, but rather an exploration to get an idea of how prevalent certain issues may be. Given constraints in time and context-- we were organizing this in the middle of the Ebola response in West Africa— more traditional approaches to an academic survey (i.e. literature review, focus group testing, etc.) were not pursued. Moreover, the survey is heteronormative and focuses exclusively on the experiences of female staff in relation to their male colleagues. We recognize that men can be victims of harassment and assault and women can also be perpetrators, but exploring these dynamics would have been too ambitious for this initial survey. We strongly encourage others to conduct further research to explore any key aspects or dynamics we have not included.

**Outcome:** A total of 1,005 women from more than 70 organizations responded over a period of 50 days, which indicates that despite not having used a random sampling framework, the survey draws on a relatively representative group of women. Some of the results confirmed what the group had believed to be true from anecdotal evidence, other results were surprisingly positive, and still others worse than we had anticipated.

The following is a brief overview of the initial results of the quantitative and qualitative analysis.

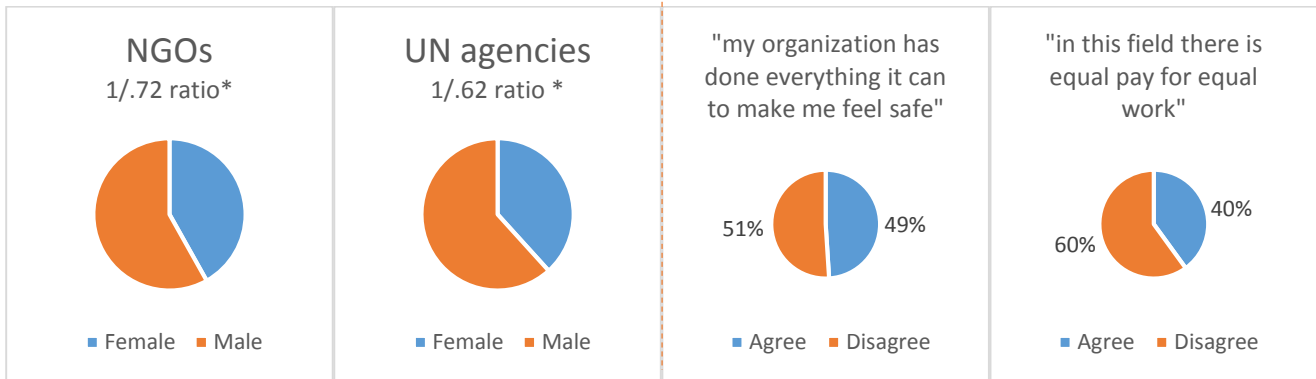
## Demographics: Who responded to the Survey?

The sample can be characterized by the following demographic details:



## Discrimination & Harassment

### Gender breakdown in Senior Management Team

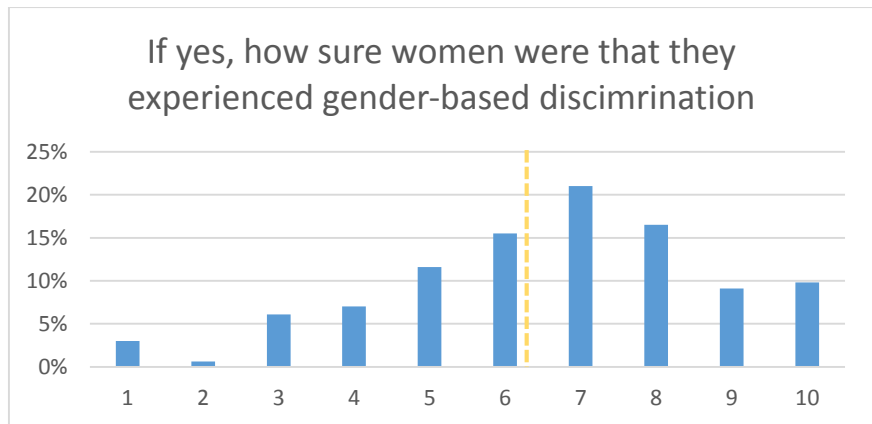
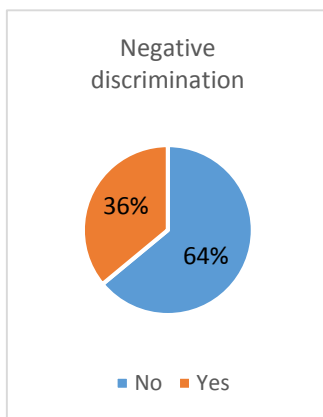


\*Statistically significant difference

### % of respondents who agreed with these statements:

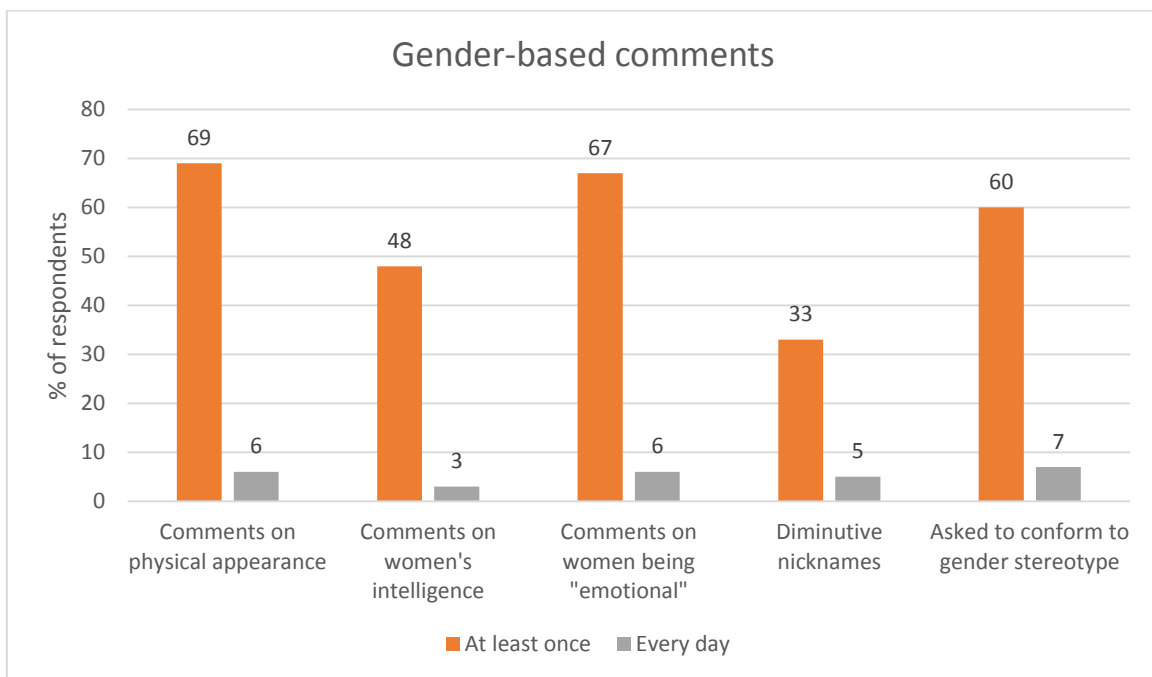
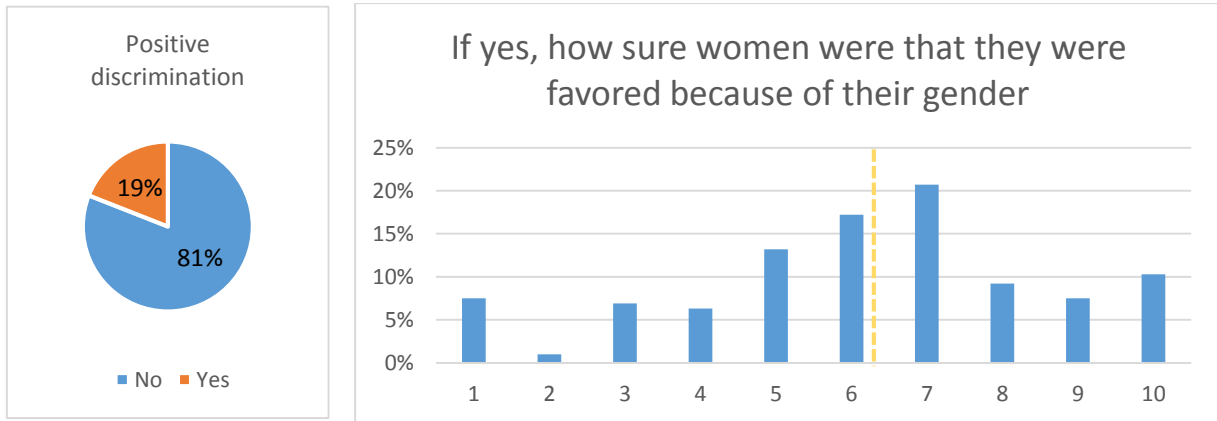
\*rated on a scale of 1-10. Responses between 1-5 classified as "disagree", between 5-10 was "agree"

### % of respondents who felt they were discriminated against for getting a job opportunity because of gender



\*Scale of 1-10: 1 is "not sure", 10 is "I have evidence", 6 = mean

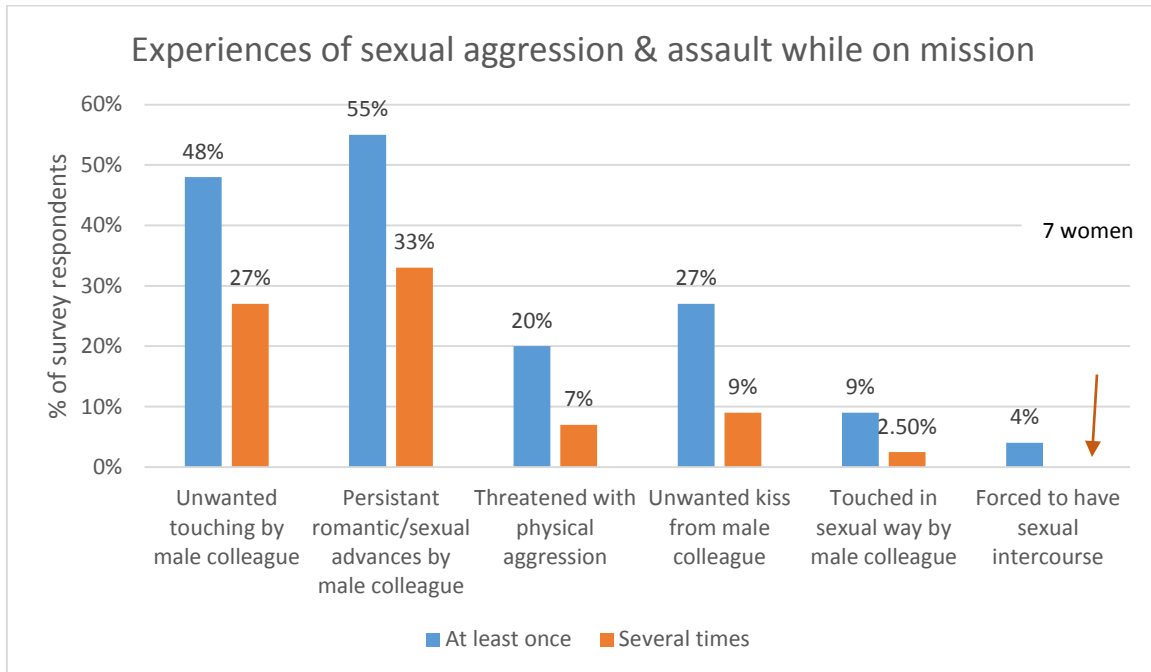
% of respondents who felt they were favored for getting a job opportunity because of gender



51% of women who reported having these experiences at least once report that it came from a male supervisor

International aid workers report comments on physical appearance and demands to conform to stereotypes more than national counterparts (statistically significant,  $p < .05$ )

## Sexual Aggression & Assault

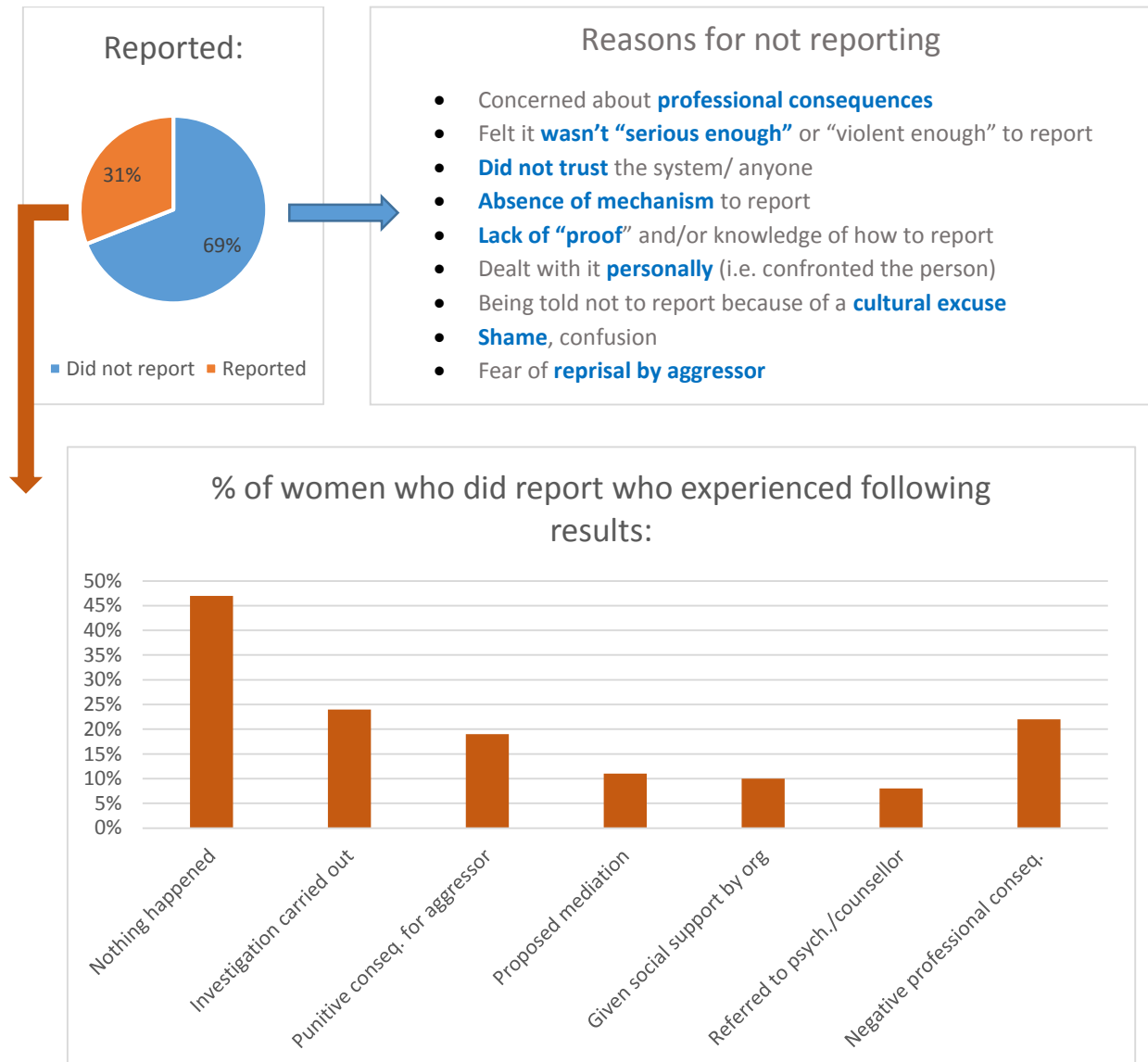


The number of times these events happened to a woman is *not* correlated with age, number of years of experience in the field, or number of missions. However, the acts are correlated to each other ( $p < .05$ ), meaning there is a strong probability that a woman who reports one of these acts will also have experienced another one.

Of the women who responded affirming they had experienced these acts, 33% reported that it came from a male supervisor.

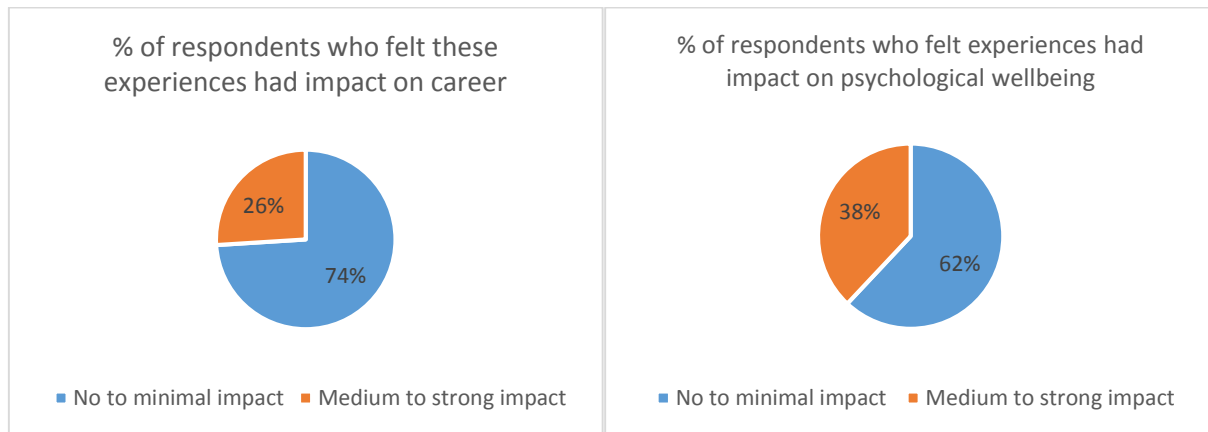
## Reporting & Repercussions

Of the women who experienced gender-based harassment, aggression, and assault, only 31% officially reported the act.



Qualitative results confirm that, after reporting, most women felt minimized, judged, or ignored. Two respondents shared instances of being fired after reporting. There were several examples of constructive results, including two instances of the woman being moved to a safer location.

## Impact on Professional & Personal Well-Being



In order of prevalence in qualitative analysis, here are the consequences women believe that these experiences had on their professional wellbeing:

1. Many women felt they were being denied opportunities because of their gender, mostly through generalized sexism, although a few were targets of retribution for denying romantic/sexual advances
2. Most women just “took themselves out of the game”, by either:
  - a. Choosing to leave a mission/country/organization
  - b. Hesitating or refusing to take a job opportunity because of fear of repeated exposure to a previous experience of discrimination/harassment/assault
  - c. Leaving the field altogether (or considering leaving the field altogether)
3. Developing coping mechanisms/changing behaviors that had negative impacts on their job performance
  - a. Becoming more withdrawn, quiet, passive, shy
  - b. Become more aggressive, direct, rude
  - c. Withdrawing from certain situations (both professional and social) that could be helpful to career
  - d. Loss of motivation for work
4. Some women used these experiences to empower themselves to develop strategies to deal with these issues themselves, or to alter career to work as gender advisor or in protection to address the issue from a systemic level
5. Five women who shared instances of being forced to leave because of their experience

*For More information about the Humanitarian Women's Network or our Survey, contact us at [womeninaid@gmail.com](mailto:womeninaid@gmail.com)*