

What You Told Us

The 2009 Keystone Constituency Survey Report



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As part of the process of creating a short history of Keystone, we conducted a survey of those people with whom we have interacted since our inception in 2004.

The survey sought the views of a wide range of development practitioners about the current state of constituency voice in the development sector, as well as views of Keystone's work products and general contribution to advancing constituency voice.

In order to live up to our values of transparent and validated public reporting, we are presenting herewith the full results of the survey. Some of its main findings are included in the short Keystone history, *Keystone Accountability: Our journey to constituency voice 2004 - 2009*, which can be viewed on our website.



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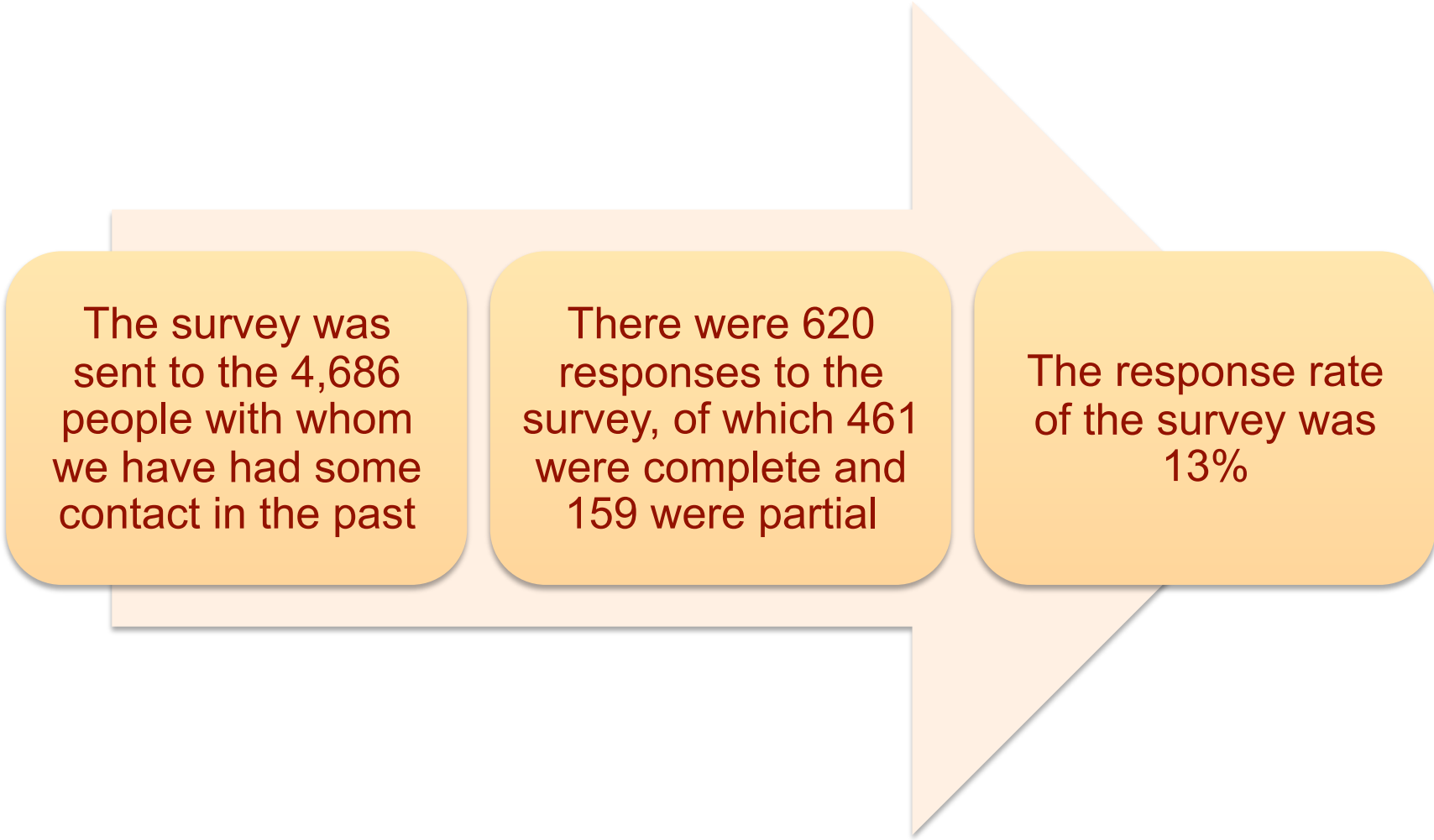
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Sample and response rate

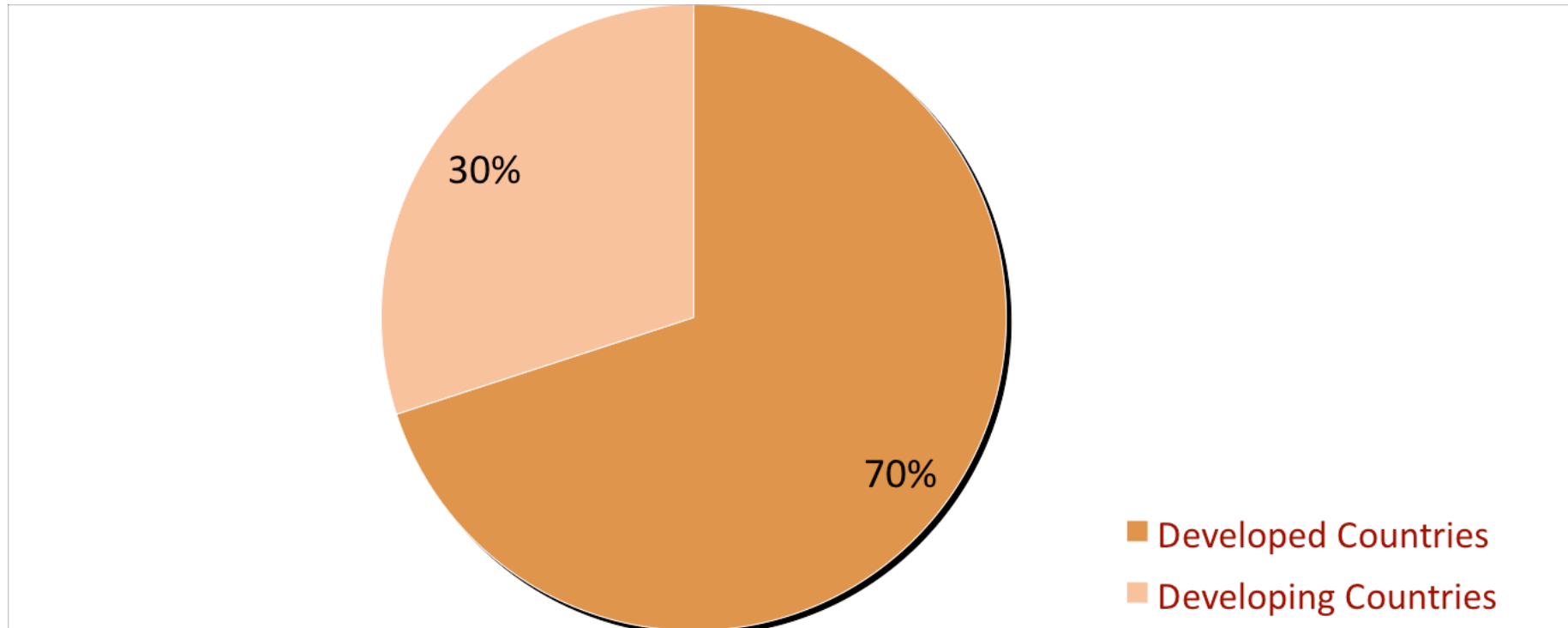


The survey was sent to the 4,686 people with whom we have had some contact in the past

There were 620 responses to the survey, of which 461 were complete and 159 were partial

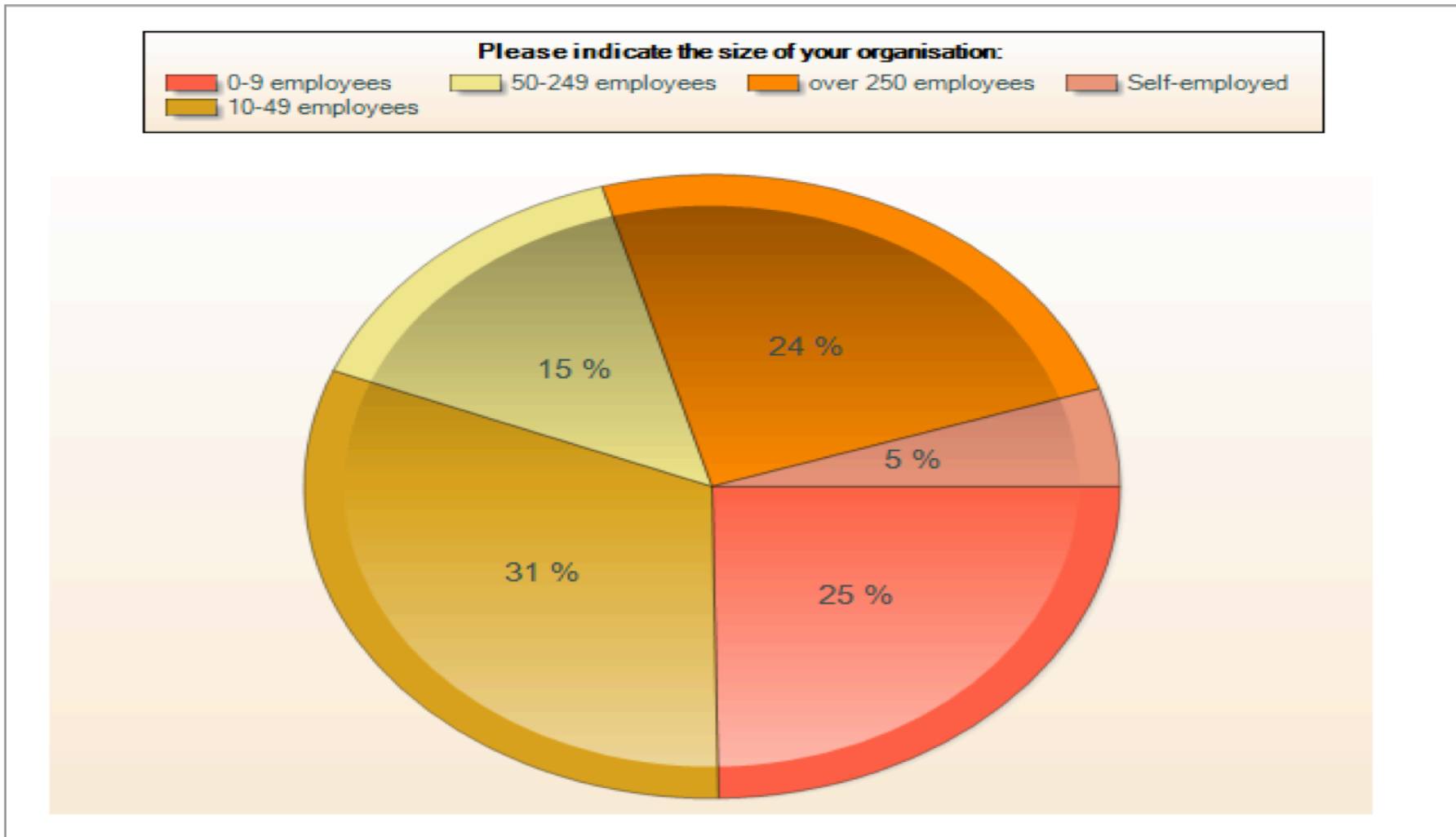
The response rate of the survey was 13%

In which country are you based?



The results have shown that a large concentration of survey respondents are based in the developed countries of the global North, with particular concentration in the United States and the United Kingdom. We have committed ourselves to achieving a 50/50 distribution of respondents in our next general survey on Keystone's results and performance.

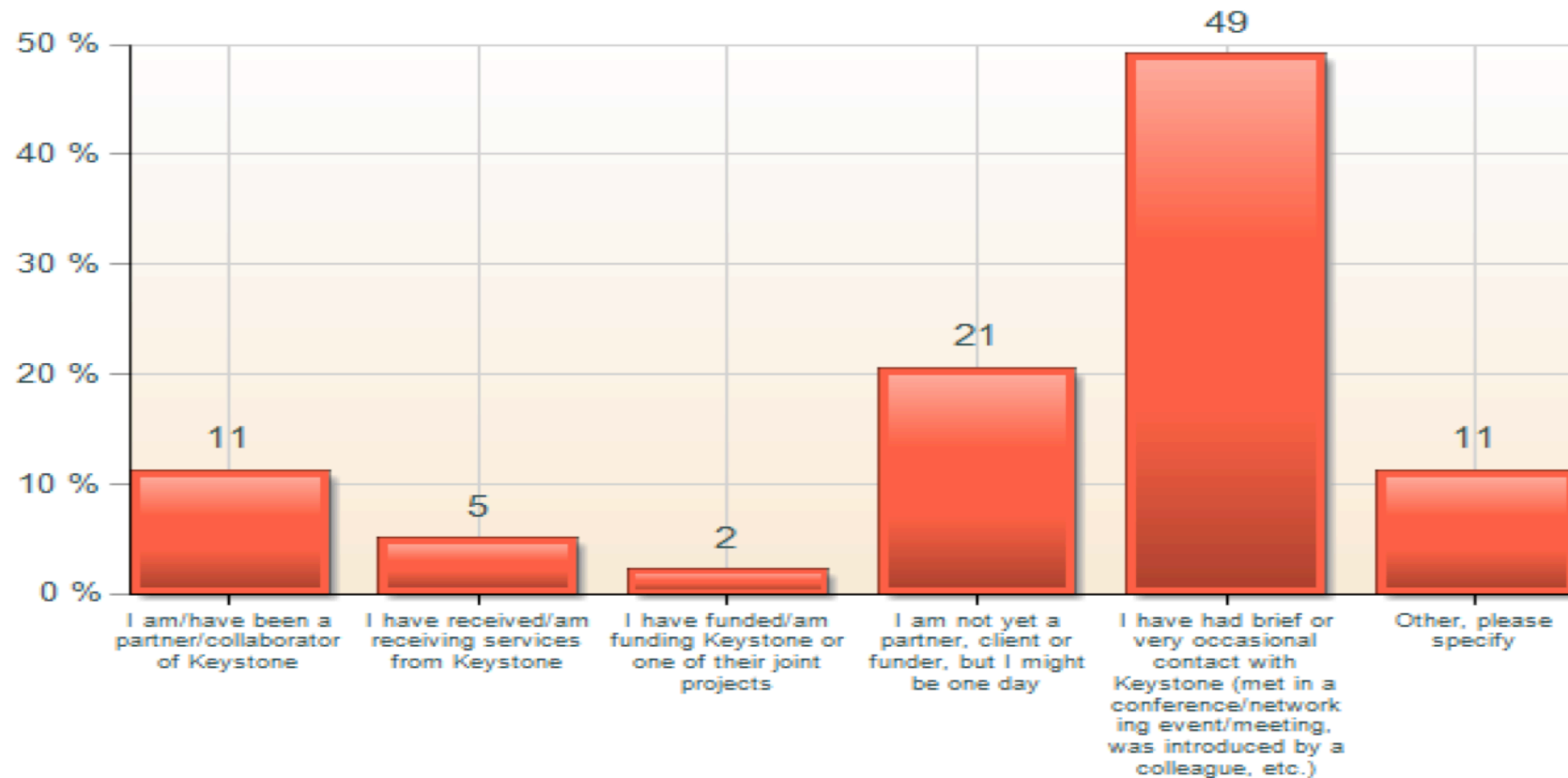
Size of Organisation



Survey respondents represented the spectrum of organisational sizes.

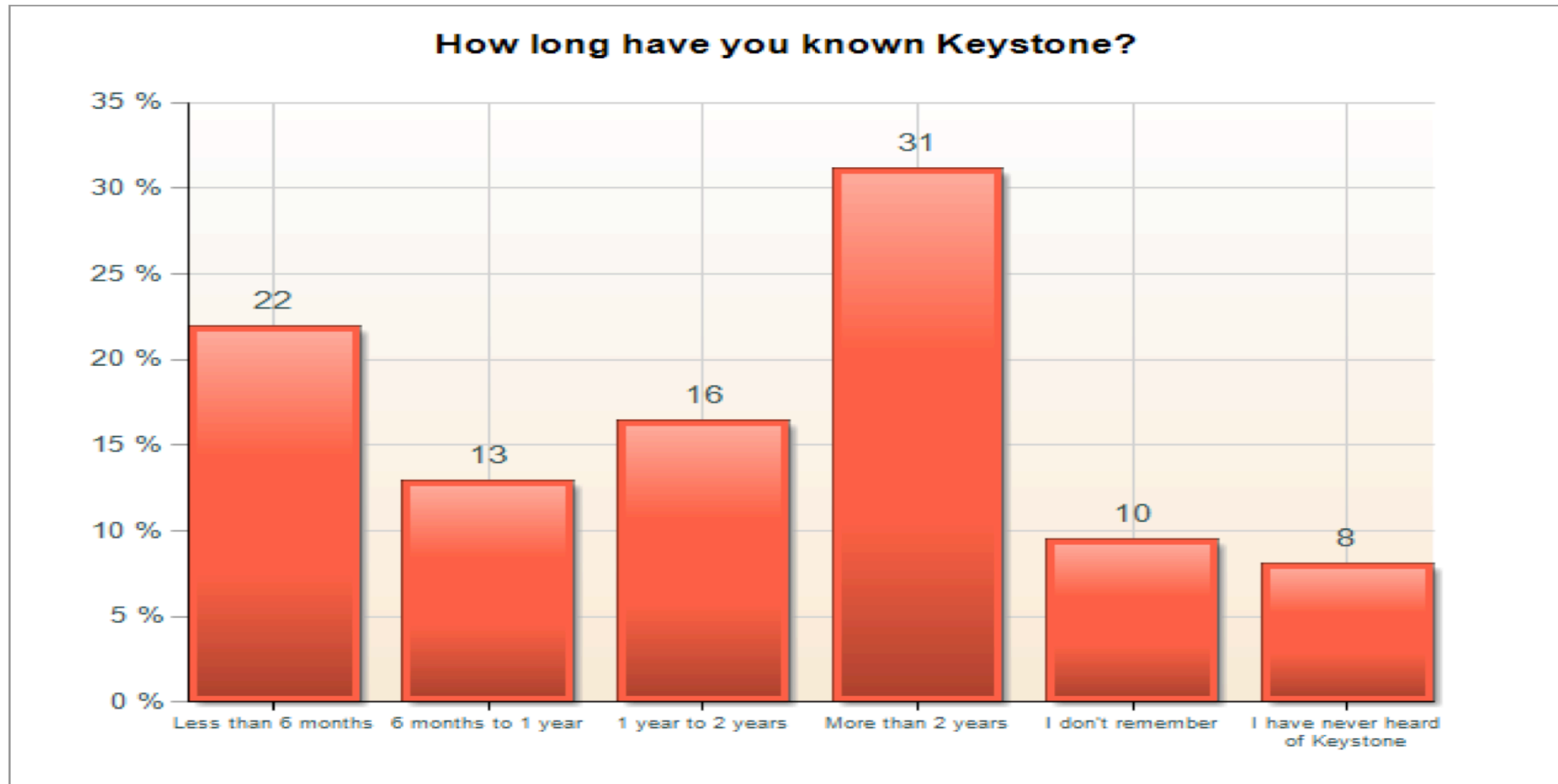
Relationship with Keystone

What kind of relationship do you have with Keystone? Choose the option that closest reflects your case.



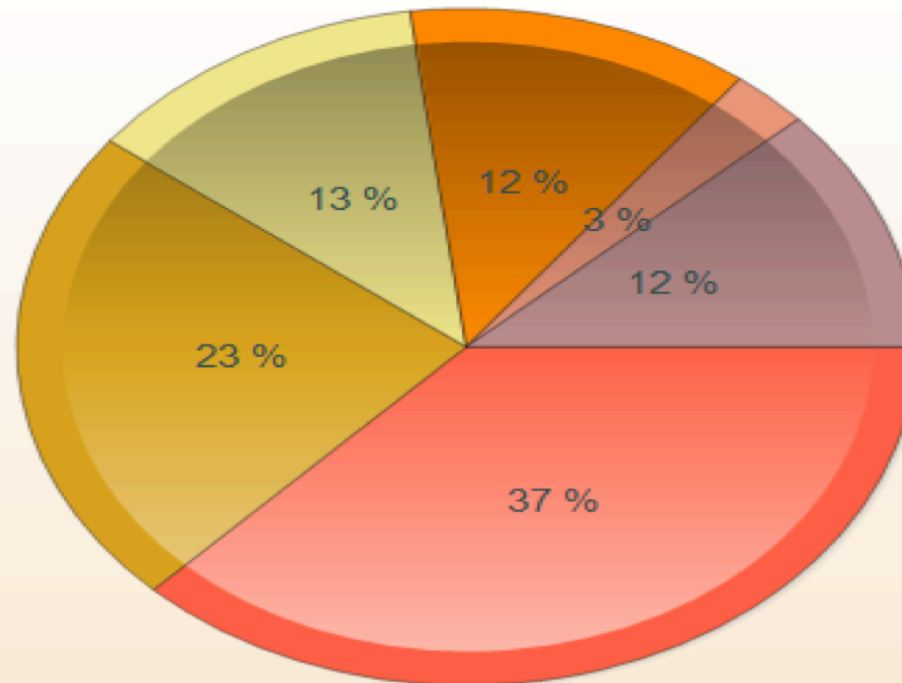
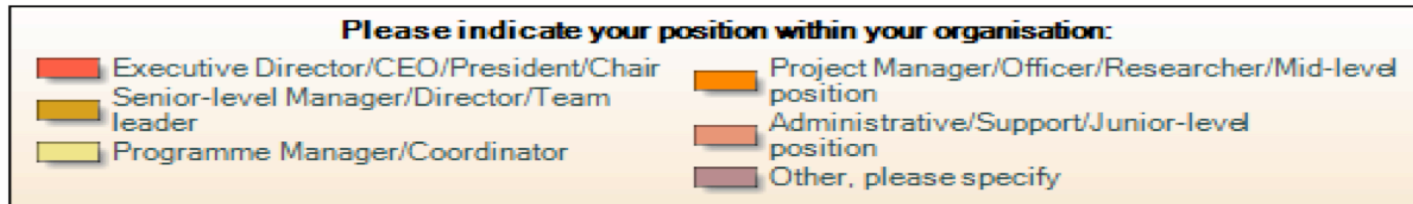
About half of the respondents have only a cursory relationship with Keystone today, with the other half, over 300 in number, self-identified as clients, partners, funders or in other ongoing relationships. Using this as a base, and considering the survey response rate of 13 percent and our own analyses of our correspondence and work patterns, we estimate that there are over 1,000 organizations that would consider themselves to be in an ongoing relationship with Keystone.

Knowledge of Keystone



Keystone promotes the idea that building strong and stable relationships with constituents is essential to successful performance. So we were pleased that nearly a third of survey respondents indicated that they know us for longer than two years and nearly half for longer than one year.

Position within Organisation



62% of survey respondents are senior-level managers, and over 85% them program roles.



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How We Define Constituency Voice

Keystone uses the term “constituency voice” to describe what is achieved when we work in ways that respect the views of the primary constituents of an intervention in its planning, monitoring, assessing, reporting and learning.



Constituents are all the actors who are affected by or have a significant influence on the problems being addressed by an organization. They are ‘constituent of’ the change process desired by a social purpose organisation.

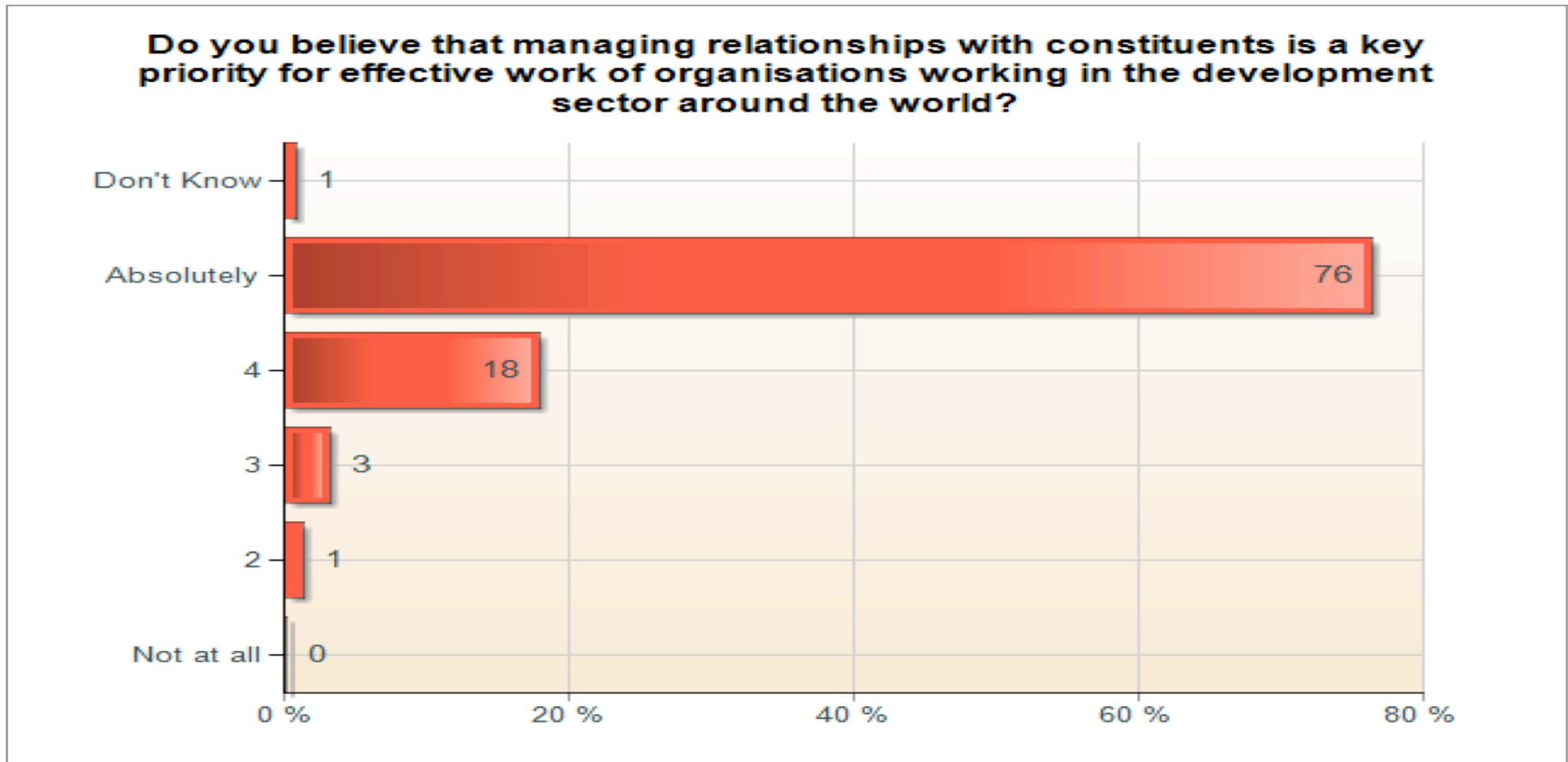


We refer to *primary constituents* as those vulnerable groups intended to benefit from social change.



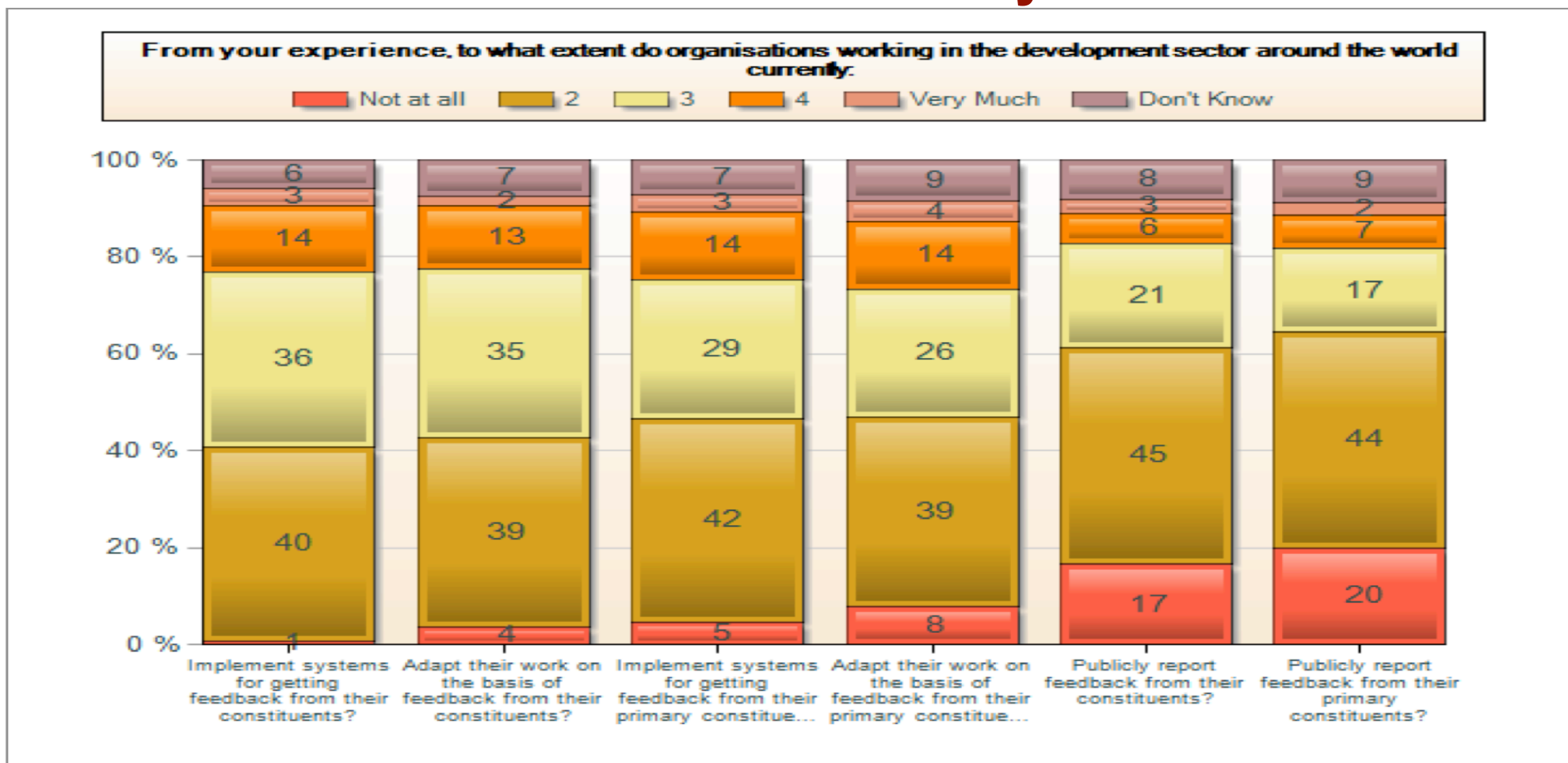
We asked respondents five questions about the current state of constituency voice in the development sector around the world.

Managing Relationships



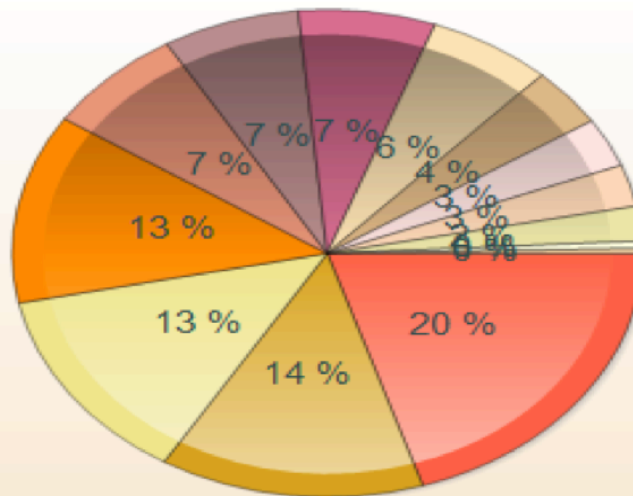
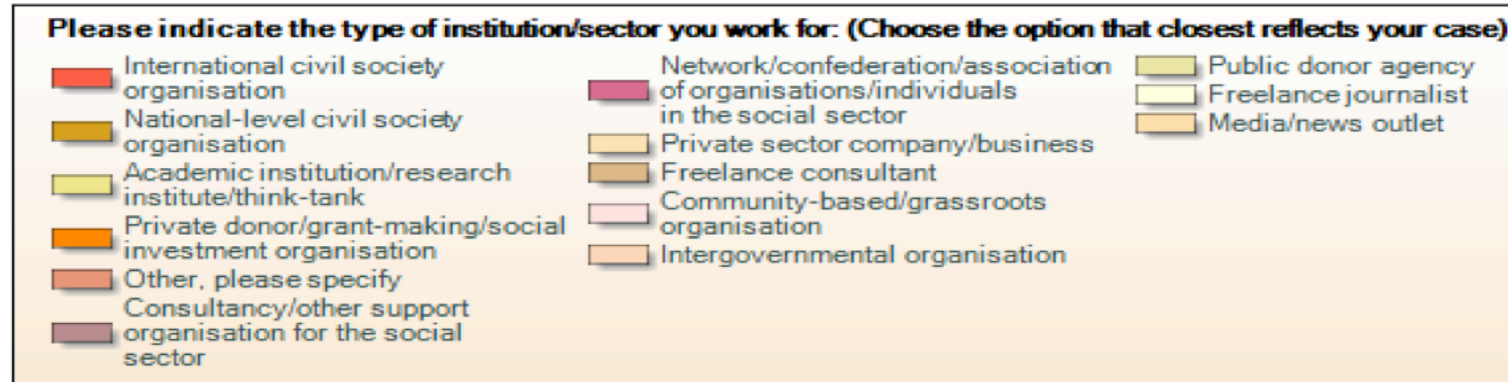
Despite the fact that an overwhelming 94% of respondents believe managing relationships is a key priority, they do not believe that current relationship management practices are satisfactory.

The State of Constituency Voice



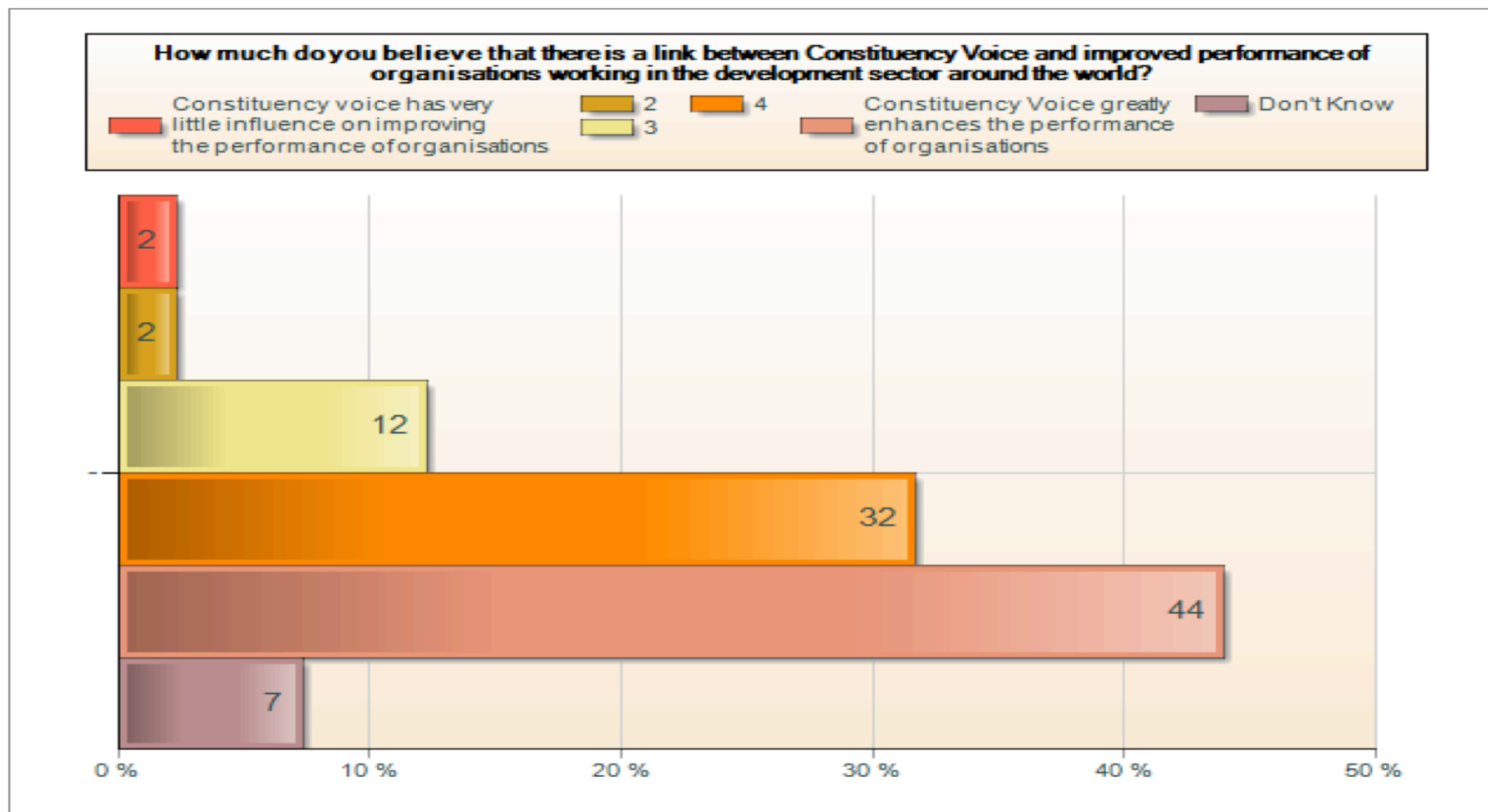
When asked to rate six statements regarding the extent to which they think constituency voice is currently enabled by organisations working in the development sector, most respondents found current practices lacking.

With funders being most critical of current practice



There is a significant difference of opinion between representatives of implementing organisations and funders (both public and private). While both groups place an equivalent value on constituency voice (more than 75% of both groups see a strong link between constituency voice and improved performance), implementers tend to give themselves more credit for realizing constituency voice than do their funders.

The Link between Constituency Voice and Performance



A large majority (76%) of respondents see a link, while only 4% do not. This is a very positive result, as respondents clearly believe that constituency voice improves performance.

Small is Voice

The survey findings suggest that smaller organisations (1-50 employees) tend to be more optimistic about the current state of constituency voice than larger ones (50+ employees)

A significantly higher proportion of smaller organisations also strongly believe that there is a link between constituency voice and improved organisational performance

This could be due to the fact that those who took the survey from smaller organisations are closer to their primary constituents, and see the benefits in their day-to-day work



Our funders, clients and partners

Those who work closely with Keystone are more likely to hold that there is a direct link between constituency voice and improved performance

Our partners and clients consistently placed higher value on our tools and publications

They also rated our contributions to the advancement of constituency voice to be more significant than those less familiar with our work

Examples of Good Practice

We asked respondents to provide examples of individuals or organisations that are leading the practice of embedding Constituency Voice (or equivalent) in their planning, learning and reporting. More than 160 organisations and individuals were named, with 20 occurring more than once. The latter are listed below, with the number in brackets showing the amount of times they were named.

- Action Aid (16)
- Oxfam (11)
- CARE (5)
- Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) International (4)
- World Vision (4)
- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (3)
- Concern Worldwide (3)
- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) (3)
- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) (3)
- Plan International (3)
- Save the Children (3)
- Transparency Int'l (3)
- USAID (3)
- World Bank (3)
- Christian Aid (2)
- CIVICUS (2)
- European Union (EU) (2)
- Hivos (2)
- Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) (2)
- Southern Africa Trust (2)

Comments on the State of Constituency Voice

- Over 180 persons took advantage of the opportunity to comment on the current state of constituency voice, providing a broad palette of suggestions and observations.
- Comments mirrored the survey finding that constituency voice is important but not sufficiently embedded in practice.
 - Many noted that donor accountability activities tend to compete with constituency voice. Some suggest that donors need to be made more aware of these issues.
- Some respondents thought that constituency voice is being practiced more and more; others were skeptical about its uses for the purposes of development.
- The comments were very similar to those expressed in the focus groups undertaken in the Keystone-Alliance for Children and Families report on the state of constituency voice among United States human services organisations (see <http://www.keystoneaccountability.org/node/341>)

"It's generally a missing voice, though much needed. The pressure to implement projects also makes this a marginalized part of our work."

"I hope that enhanced attention to constituency voice will not result in lack of attention to development missions, particularly when diverse constituencies make conflicting claims on organizations."

"Most organisations do not include in their work plans any time for a structured discussion with their constituents that can improve their performance. There is a need to do this as otherwise the development sector will continue to suffer from the widely held opinion that resources meant for those whom they intend to support are mostly spent on administrative costs. This is an unfair criticism, but it can only be negated if there is a proper dialogue with the constituents."



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How You Rated Our Contributions and Performance

Since Keystone came into existence in 2004 we have worked to provide organisations with analysis, tools and services to help them improve their work by learning from and with their constituents.



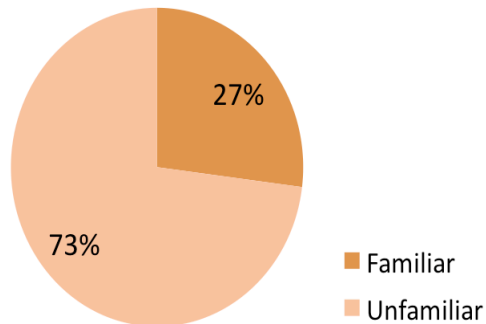
We have kept a record of what we believe our achievements and contributions to the field have been in the last five years. The survey provided an opportunity for us to test our version against the opinions of our constituents.



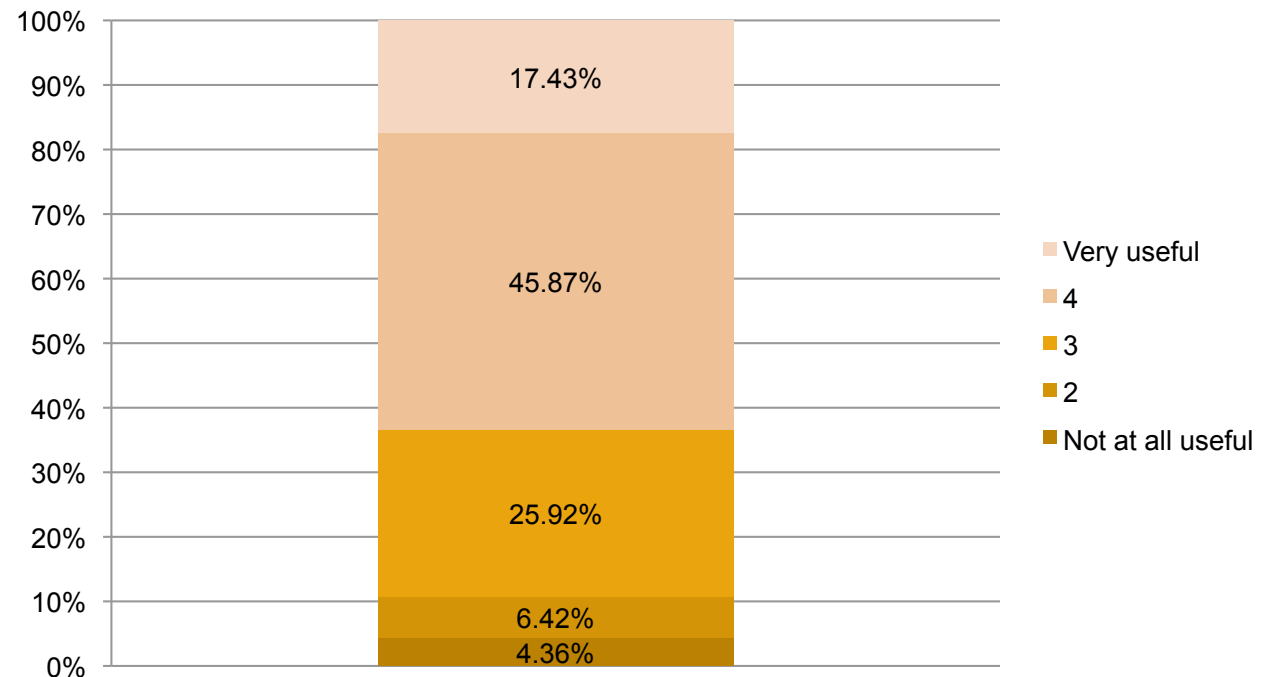
The survey results give us both encouragement and clear suggestions improvement.

Keystone's Tools and Guides

Familiarity with Keystone's tools



Average ratings of Keystone's tools by those who know them



- The majority of respondents were not sufficiently familiar with Keystone's tools to be able to rate them.
- Among those that could rate the tools, 63.3% found the tools useful or very useful.
- The most popular tool is the Developing a Theory of Change guide, followed by the IPAL guide. They were also the most commonly downloaded tools from our website, with downloads more than doubling between 2007 and 2008.
- By the time of the survey we had recalled the Capabilities Profiler, which proved to be the least popular of our tools.

Comments on Keystone's Tools and Guides

Developing a Theory of Change guide:

"I think Keystone's analysis is a major step in the right direction."

"We have just completed the revision of our theory of change with the help of Keystone and have found it very useful and more realistic to our situation"

"The Keystone approach was useful for institutional strengthening".

Learning with Constituents guide:

"A fair balance between our learning and constituents' learning should be reached."

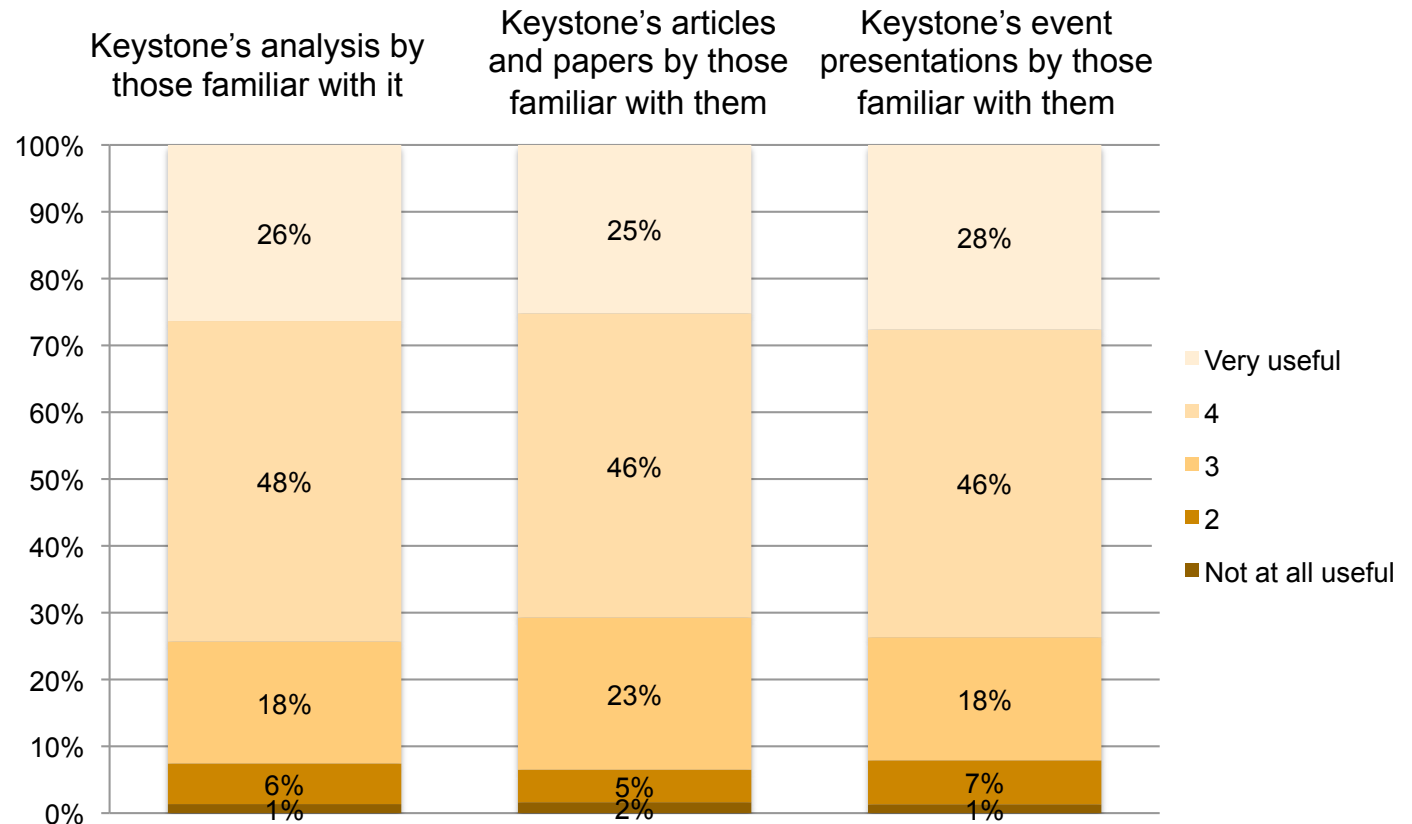
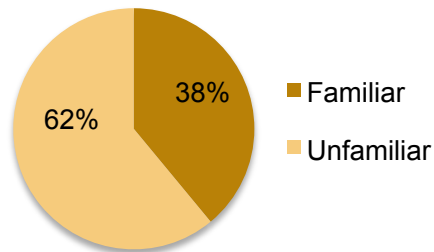
"A very useful approach to impact assessment. Clearly set out."

Impact Planning, Assessment and Learning (IPAL) - Overview and implementation guide:

"We have just finalized our impact planning, assessment and learning process with Keystone and have found it quite useful and a departure from linear measures".

Keystone's Analysis and Presentations

Familiarity with Keystone's Research and analysis



- The majority of respondents said they were not able to comment on our knowledge products.
- The different kinds of Keystone knowledge products were rated similarly, with about three quarters finding them useful or very useful and 7 or 8 percent finding them not useful or not at all useful.



Keystone's analysis in general:

"The specific activity suggestions templates and example at the end are very useful for making the concepts more understandable, real and do-able".

"Not sure that it adequately takes on board the complexity aspects of working in highly uncertain and dynamic contexts."

"Putting Beneficiaries First" is the most widely shared in the NGO sector and was welcomed warmly on its publication, although criticised by some for claiming an innovative solution (i.e. listen to stakeholders) that many organisations believed they were already successfully doing."

"Sometimes the articles/papers are a bit difficult to follow; simplification of concepts would be useful."

"The BOND paper was a useful articulation of some of the thinking that we were grappling with (and still are)."

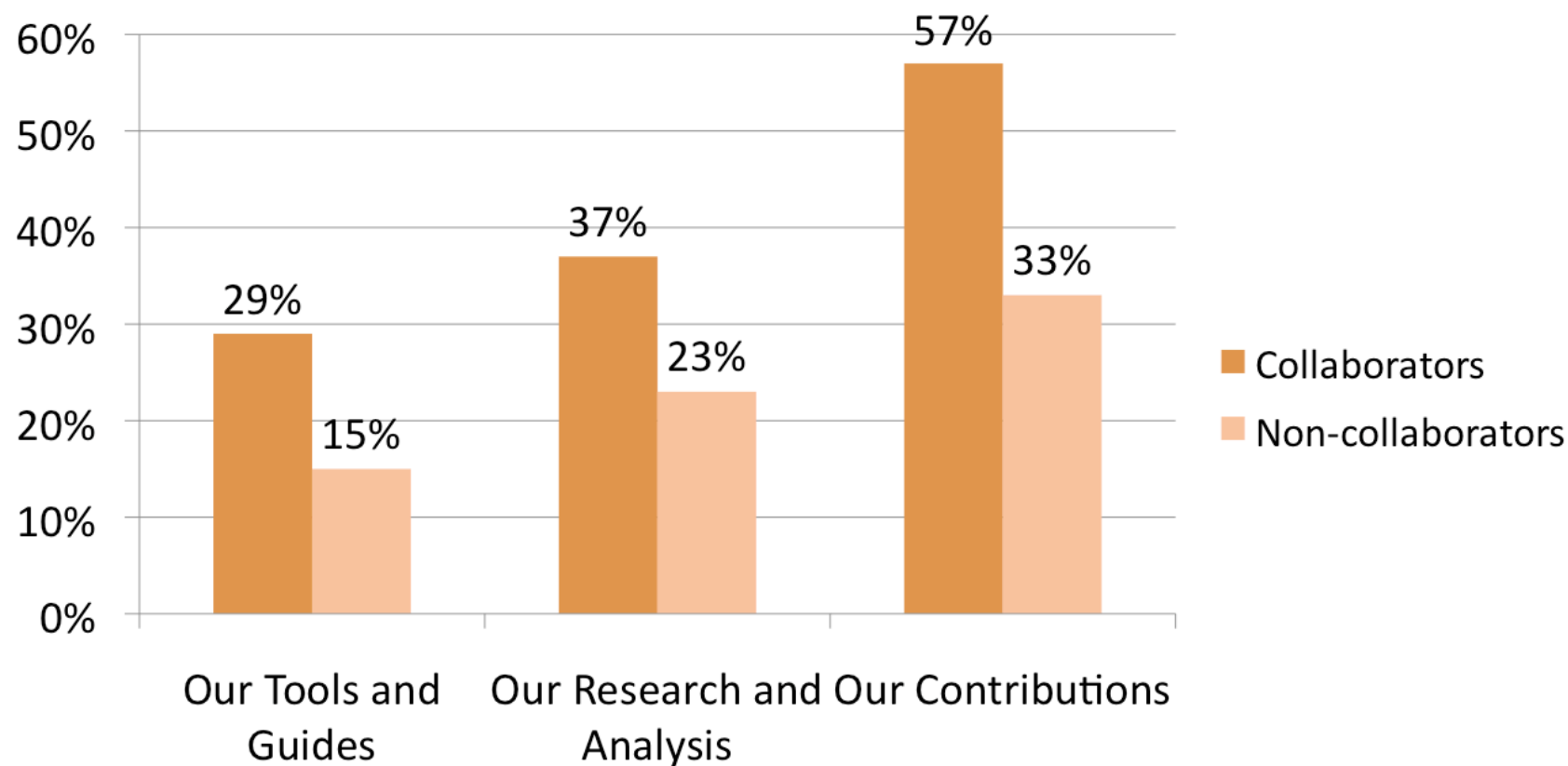
Keystone's article and papers:

"I attended the CIVICUS World Assembly and found the presentation very interesting!"

Presentations at conferences and other events:

"David Bonbright's last presentation to a group of USAID employees was excellent".

... those who work most closely with us

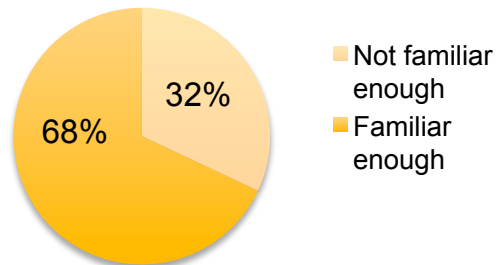


- Our collaborators – our funders, clients and partners – consistently placed higher value on our tools and publications than those who have not worked directly with us.
- They also rated our contributions to the advancement of constituency voice to be more significant than those less familiar with our work.

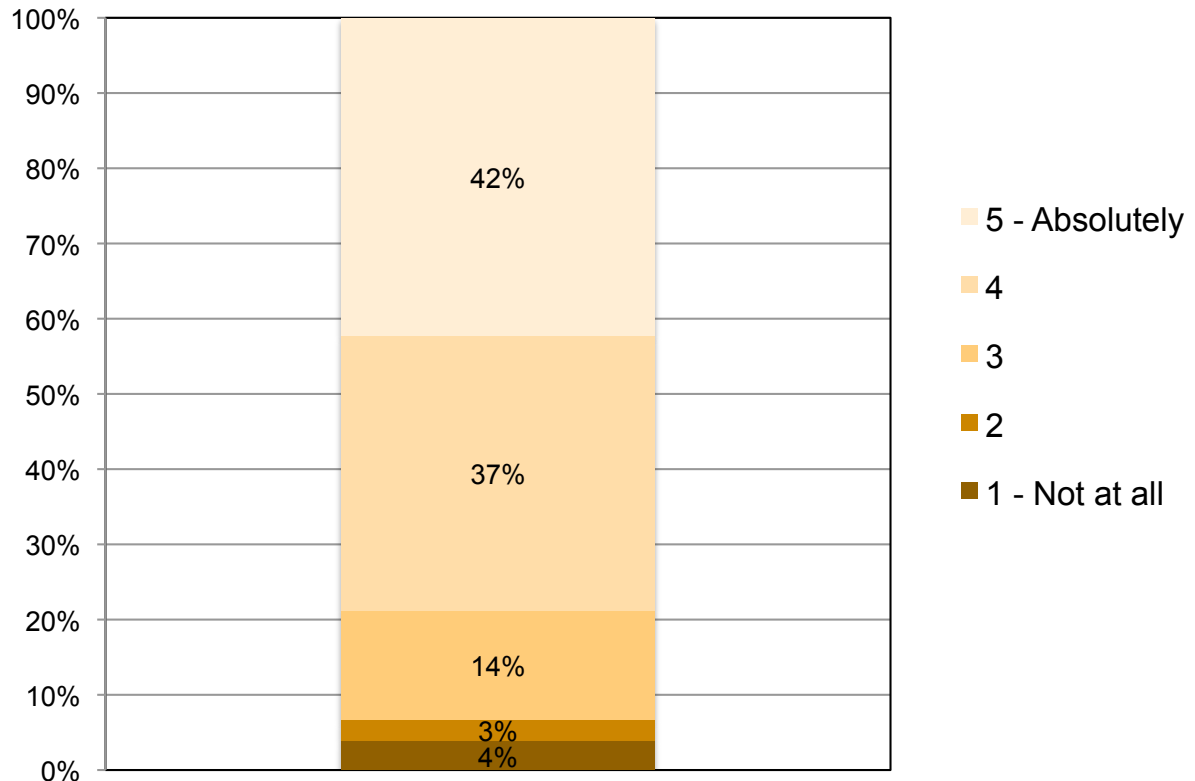
The comparisons in the graph show the proportion of respondents who rated our tools and publications as useful or very useful, and rated our contributions highly.

Recommending Keystone

Sufficient familiarity to be able to recommend Keystone



Willingness to recommend Keystone by those familiar with us



- Although a third of respondents were not familiar enough with Keystone to be able to recommend us to others, the longer people know us the more comfortable they are with recommending us.
- From those respondents who gave a rating, 79% are happy to recommend while 7% are not.

We Received a Wealth of Suggestions for Improvement

- Comments and suggestions all conveyed a constructive spirit of guiding improvements!
- The comments excerpted here reflect the most common themes
- Except that the far and away most common comments offered appreciation and general encouragement for our work

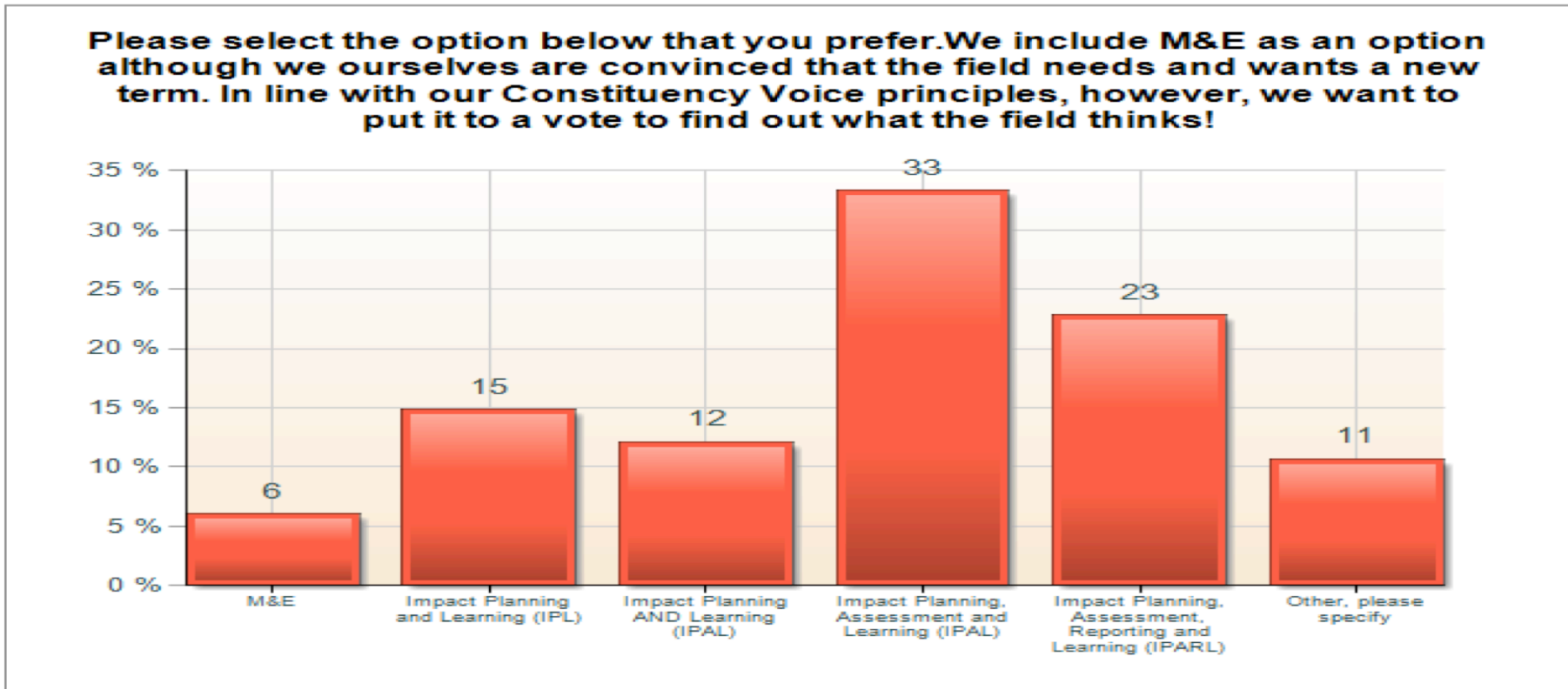
"More face to face training and empowerment."

"Seek to present at global venues of the international development industry, and publish in international development journals as well as social entrepreneurship venues/journals."

"Keystone's key opportunity is to make these ideas and concepts concrete and accessible to a diverse audience."

"Share results on any impact this work has had to encourage development workers to use these tools."

And now for something different: You help us settle on a name



During the R&D years of Constituency Voice, we co-created (with our main partners the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex and iScale in the USA) a methodology that explicitly departs from conventional monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practice. After a prolonged debate, we decided to put the question of naming this approach to a vote. The results showed a clear preference for **Impact Planning, Assessment and Learning (IPAL)**. We propose use this name henceforth!