



ENGAGE Project Newsletter

The key message of the project is clearly reflected in the project title. The aim is to engage TCN women, local citizens and other stakeholders in fostering active participation of TCN women in societies, inclusion while promoting the development of integration practices in the labour market, such as application of Job Shadowing schemes, gender equality policies and enhancing intercultural competences within the workplace

“Inclusive Workplace Culture - Benefits and Challenges”

“Even our workplaces are culturally diverse.”



We are surrounded by cultural diversity in our daily lives, from global product trends and cuisines to our populations. Even our workplaces are culturally diverse. In fact, cultural diversity in the workplace drives innovation, creative thinking, and offers new perspectives to challenges.

Not only does workplace diversity offer great benefits for innovation and our taste palettes, it is also an important social issue. Employees, customers and partners hold businesses accountable to play their part in overcoming these issues. A company must prioritize a culture of inclusivity and diversity or risk their reputation.



What is Cultural Diversity in the Workplace?

Diversity in organizations means recognizing differences, both sociodemographic (age, gender, ethnicity, nationality, background, seniority, role, education, etc.) and humanistic (knowledge, cognitive schemes, experiences, values, etc.), which generate unique people and heterogeneous groups.

Inclusion is involvement and empowerment, where the inherent worth and dignity of all people are recognized. An inclusive workplace promotes and sustains a sense of belonging; it values and practices respect for the talents, beliefs, backgrounds, and ways of living of its members.

***“Inclusion is
involvement
and
empowerment”***



❖ **Benefits of Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace**

Increased Productivity

Having a diverse culture at your workplace means different people are striving towards one common goal, which can be a great tool to increase productivity. A multicultural environment means you foster different skillset and different perspectives at your workplace, which can be highly beneficial for the result.

Different people bring different skills and value-sets to the organization, and the organization can benefit from this knowledge. Fresh ideas and content could be created in an environment with different people and help foster a learning environment.



“An inclusive workplace promotes and sustains a sense of belonging; it values and practices respect for the talents, beliefs, backgrounds, and ways of living of its members”

Increased Creativity

Another advantage of having a diverse culture is that you can increase creativity at your workplace. When people are coming from different communities and races, they bring in several values and a fresh set of ideas that could be of great help for a company to grow.

With diverse minds in the workplace, you can expect several solutions to a single problem because every person would bring a unique solution to the problem. Companies are now more open towards a diverse workforce to enhance and increase work productivity.

Promotes Harmony

Employees working in the same workplace interact with each other daily, and this is how they can learn about various cultures, norms, traditions, and values. This regular interaction decreases intolerances and promotes harmony. Cultural diversity educates employees about various cultures. Employees and coworkers share incidents and memories from their schools or festivals during casual conversations, which can help people discover various cultures. This is a good way to learn and enhance exposure.

Positive Reputation

If your company encourages inclusion and diversity, and you are able to retain those employees, then you will be known as a progressive workplace. Companies that encourage and hire employees belong to different cultures, religions, sex, and ethnicities, etc., become known for their equal-opportunity orientation. Your clients and other business partners would value your organization because of your values and principals. The employees working at your organization would feel welcomed and encouraged in an environment where there is no bias or discrimination.



Challenges of Diversity Management

Cultural challenges are related to different wording. Understanding the importance of using the right language when communicating with and about diversity groups – the way to overcome the cultural challenge.

When companies and organizations hire people from different cultures, races, and ethnicities with different backgrounds, it means they are including cultural diversity in their work environment. Once a company learns how to retain employees from different cultures, they make a huge difference as compared to conventional teams.

The world is rapidly advancing and growing with newer studies and inventions around the globe. People now appreciate having a diverse team of people to learn new perspectives and continue to grow together as one, regardless of boundaries defined through geographical borders.

The main challenge employers face with respect to cultural diversity is overcoming the deep-rooted prejudices and stereotypes that all individuals have and encouraging individuals from different backgrounds, religions, races, genders, etc. to work together.

Creating an inclusive workplace environment necessitates the use of inclusive, unambiguous, and unbiased language. Inclusive language reflects diversity in the workplace positively and is necessary for successful diversity initiatives to be implemented. Any Diversity and Inclusion policy or action will fail if it is based on language that excludes people and continues to perpetuate stereotypes or prejudices.

Stereotypes and prejudices can contribute to a variety of problems in the workplace:

- Communication problems resulting from different groups' failure to understand one another;
- Discrimination and stereotyping with regard to ability to do the job;
- Increased tension and conflicts between different groups;
- Individuals with similar backgrounds tend to remain together, recruit similar people, and choose similar people to work on projects with;
- Discrimination and harassment, as well as the creation of a hostile work environment.



Sustainable Diverse and Inclusive Culture in the Organization

Despite the importance, diversity strategies are difficult to implement. Once in place they often do not deliver the benefits they promise.

Why is this the case?

One reason is definitely the attitude of the company. Diversity programmes are likely to fail if they are set up because it is perceived to be the right thing to do without reflecting a true commitment to creating a work environment that fosters the best workforce.

The other thing is that many companies underestimate the time and effort required to implement such a strategy. Rather than working towards integrating diversity into the organisation's strategy and all HR activities, companies often see it as just another "stand-alone project".

Finally, large companies especially often fail to address the more hard-wired aspects such as management style, hierarchy and culture. Because of that, the implementation often fails.

How to work around this?

Best practice experience suggests at least five crucial steps when implementing a successful and lasting diversity strategy. These are listed below:

5 strategies to create a culture of inclusion:

- Commit with Purpose
 - Meeting Change
 - Leadership Matters
 - Acknowledge the Biases
 - Embrace the Differences
-



The ENGAGE Project deals with several ethical issues concerning universal values of human dignity, freedom, gender equality and solidarity of minorities and is well expected to encounter discriminatory perceptions and stereotypical behaviours of the host communities towards the TCNs and specifically women. Therefore, the project includes the development of capacity building workshops, job shadowing activities, cross-cultural events directed to TCN women, locals and the business community.

Promoting intercultural activities among people with different national backgrounds and developing a welcoming attitude towards newcomers, by tackling discrimination, favouring the relationship between newcomers and the host society is one of the objectives. This is in line with the current policies of the participating countries: Inclusion is intended as equal participation of all citizens, both nationals and foreign nationals, without considering women with different nationality from the host country's as separate group, in all sectors and in all aspects of social life.





	Belgium, Diepenbeek UCLL Research & Expertise		Germany, Berlin MetropolisNet EEIG
	Slovenia, Ljubljana Science and Research Center SAZU		Italy, Magliano Ce.F.A.S
	Austria, Trofaiach Verein Interaktion		Germany, Oberhausen kitev – Kultur im Turm e.V.
	Greece, Larissa DIMITRA Education & Consulting		Cyprus, Nicosia Emphasys Centre
	Spain, Albacete Dramblys		Netherlands, Amsterdam A'Dam Mob
	Cyprus, Nicosia Cy.R.C Cyprus Refugee Council		

Contact us:

Project coordinator: Sebastiaan Jans sebastiaan.jans@ucll.be

UC LIMBURG – CAMPUS DIEPENBEEK AGORALAAN GEBOUW B BUS, 3590 DIEPENBEEK, Belgium

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.