

# embracing DIVERSITY

A guide to diversity management for  
organisations active in intercultural youth  
work



Erasmus+



EUROPEAN  
SOLIDARITY  
CORPS

**SALTO**

INCLUSION &  
DIVERSITY

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# SALTO YOUTH STANDS FOR...

...'Support and **A**dvanced **L**earning and **T**raining **O**pportunities within the Erasmus+: Youth in Action and European Solidarity Corps programmes'. The European Commission has created a network of seven SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres to enhance the implementation of the EU Erasmus+: Youth in Action and European Solidarity Corps programmes, which provide young people with valuable non-formal learning experiences.

SALTO's **aim is to support the implementation of the [European Erasmus+: Youth in Action and European Solidarity Corps Programmes](#)** with regard to priorities such as Social Inclusion, Diversity, Participation and Solidarity. SALTO also supports co-operation with regions such as EuroMed, South-East Europe or Eastern Europe and The Caucasus and co-ordinates all training and co-operation activities, as well as information tools for National Agencies.

In these European priority areas, SALTO-YOUTH provides **resources, information and training** for National Agencies and European youth workers. Most of these resources are offered and disseminated at [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net). Find online the [European Training Calendar](#), the [Toolbox for Training and Youth Work](#), the database of youth field trainers active at European level ([Trainers Online for Youth or TOY](#)), links to online resources and much more.

SALTO-YOUTH actively **co-operates** with other actors in the European youth field, among them the National Agencies of the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes, the Council of Europe, the European Youth Forum, European youth workers and trainers and training organisers.

## **THE SALTO-YOUTH INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY RESOURCE CENTRE** [WWW.SALTO-YOUTH.NET/INCLUSION/](http://WWW.SALTO-YOUTH.NET/INCLUSION/)

The SALTO-YOUTH Inclusion and Diversity Resource Centre (based in Belgium Flanders) works together with the European Commission to support the inclusion of **young people with fewer opportunities** in the Erasmus+: Youth in Action and European Solidarity Corps programmes. Through that, it works to contribute to social cohesion in society at large. SALTO Inclusion and Diversity also supports the National Agencies and youth workers in their inclusion work by providing training, developing youth work methods, disseminating information via the newsletter, etc. By offering opportunities for training, exchange and reflection on inclusion practice and diversity management, SALTO Inclusion & Diversity works towards the visibility, accessibility and transparency of its inclusion & diversity work and resources, and towards making 'inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities' and 'positive diversity management' a widely supported priority.

For more information and resources, have a look at the Inclusion & Diversity pages at [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/) ●

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## SUMMARY

The following video has been produced to introduce the publication and share some of its key concepts.





# INTRODUCTION

How can differences become a source of learning rather than conflict or prejudice? This is a key question individuals and organisations have been reflecting upon and trying to answer. International youth work offers organisations and individuals a unique opportunity to learn with and from positive encounters with differences.

This publication aims at **equipping organisations** involved in Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Programmes and in other youth work activities **with the necessary competences to embrace human differences and make their programmes and organisations more inclusive**. This will, in turn, contribute to foster more understanding around diversity and promote dialogue and understanding in Europe and beyond.

Aligned with the core European values, equality and inclusiveness are important elements of Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps, shaping the strategic focus of including “people with fewer opportunities”. In that sense, it is key to understand and address barriers to access such as health problems, disabilities, cultural differences, barriers linked to education and training systems, social barriers and economic barriers, barriers linked to discrimination and geographic barriers, among others.

Our intention is that this publication can help organisations in-

involved with training and youth work to integrate diversity management at all levels and use an inclusive lens in their internal practices as well as their programmes. The publication brings in perspectives from current diversity, inclusion and social justice work, where critical perspectives on the systemic origins of exclusion and discrimination are important elements to consider when working to dismantle barriers. In the words of Dafina-Lazarus Stewart:

*Diversity asks, “Who’s in the room?” Equity responds: “Who is trying to get in the room but can’t? Whose presence in the room is under constant threat of erasure?”<sup>1</sup>*

The following pages provide a starting point for anyone who wants to get familiar with or dive deeper into the topic of diversity management for youth organisations, including a theoretical background, opportunities for reflection and tips for implementation. We encourage you as a reader to, as much as possible, use this handbook together with your team: reflect about your individual competences, your work with participants and your organisational structures and practices. What is important is that we start doing the work. ●

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<sup>1</sup>Dafina-Lazarus Stewart: [Language of Appeasement](#)





# THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Before we dive in, let's start with a story:



*Nasima first heard about Youth Connection from her high school teacher. "There's a youth exchange program for young people with migrant background living in different European countries, you should apply!", the teacher had urged her. Despite not really thinking that she'd be accepted, Nasima was really excited about the encounter happening in Sardegna and decided to apply. She had never left Sweden since she arrived from Afghanistan with her family at age 8. Nasima got selected by the sending organisation and soon embarked on her trip to Italy.*

*The youth encounter was "AMAZING!" as she explained to her friends back home upon her return. Nasima had connected instantly with other youth that had their roots in Turkey, Gambia, Tunisia and many other places.*

*Nasima stayed in touch with her new found friends from across Europe. Yet she was missing the intimate and fun environment that she had experienced in Sardegna. That's why she decided to join Youth Connection as a volunteer. During her first meeting with other volunteers and the coordinator, Nasima didn't quite feel comfortable. She was the only one*

wearing a headscarf and she didn't understand many of the terms the group was using. The meeting ended, as seemed to be tradition, in a shared dinner. Everyone entered the kitchen and started cutting and preparing the food. Nasima wasn't sure what was expected of her and eventually asked how she could help. The coordinator seemed in a rush and simply handed her a cutting board and a package of pork, telling her to chop it in small pieces - before rushing off to do something else.

Nasima decided to stick around and took on the position of contact person for international volunteers stationed in Sweden. She felt that she could support these newcomers with her experience in bridging two different worlds. After 5 years, Nasima was still in the same position - while other volunteers had moved up and were now part of the steering committee of Youth Connection. Their meetings were open for anyone to join and Nasima once decided to go and share her idea for a new youth program. However, during the meeting only the male volunteers talked and she was never asked her opinion or given space to talk. Soon after, Nasima quit the organisation.

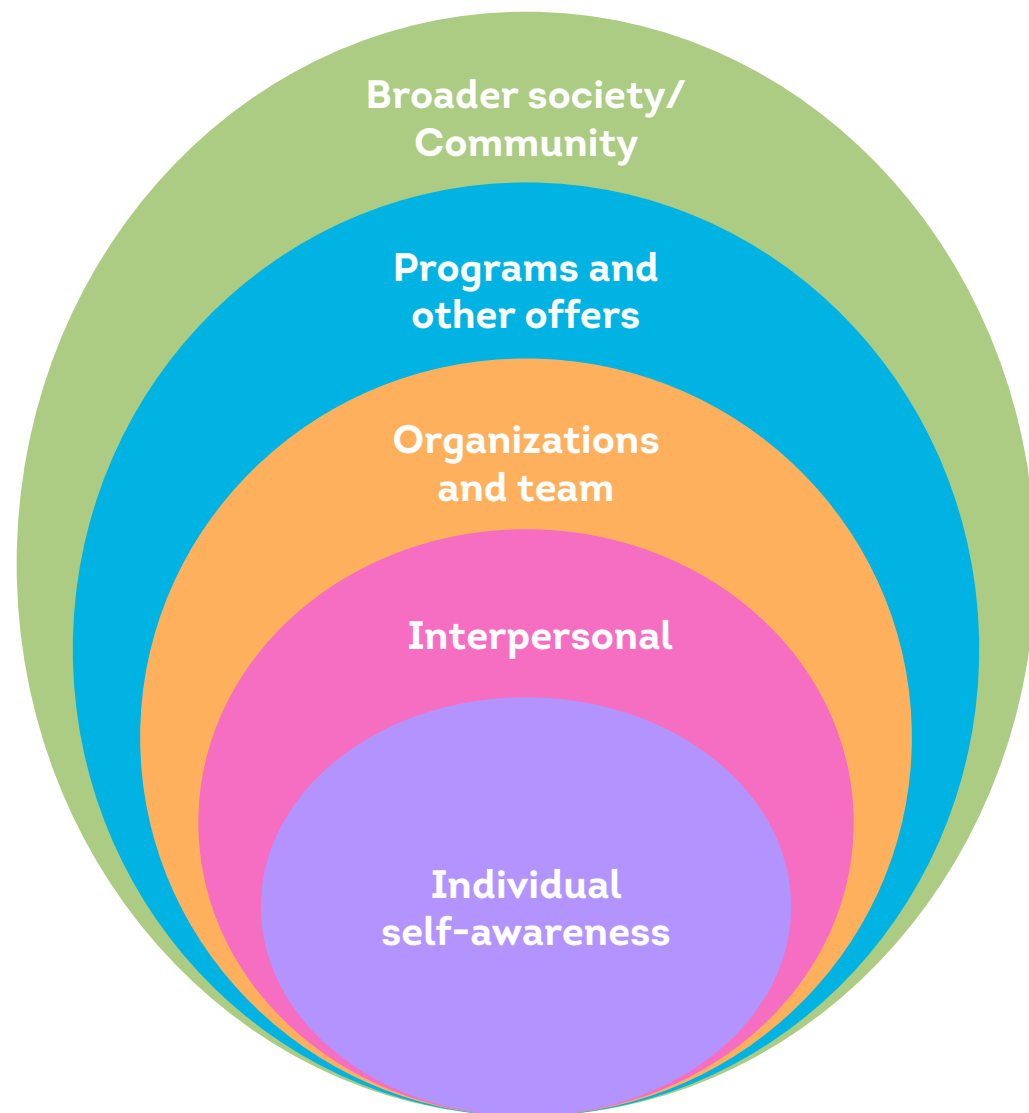
Nasima's story is fictional, yet it reflects what happens to many people in many different places. It highlights the need for organisations to really embrace [diversity](#) and embark on the journey to develop the competences and policies necessary for **diversity management**.

## So what is diversity management?

**Diversity management** can be understood as the active and intentional approaches organisations take to promote [inclusion](#). But diversity management is not just about welcoming and hiring people with different backgrounds or changing people's opinions about diversity. It's about **changing the organisational culture and practices for everyone to feel safe, valued and able to be themselves**. More and more companies have been renaming their diversity management approaches to "**Diversity and Belonging**" to highlight the importance of people feeling part of the organisation and how much they can actually be themselves.

Diversity management also requires us to reduce inequities and ensure that everyone can be successful within our organisations. That is why other organisations have chosen to use the term "[Equity, Diversity and Inclusion](#)" to describe their efforts in diversity management, highlighting their lens towards reducing inequities.

Organisations that excel in diversity management are those that are able to put their respect for human differences in action at all different levels - from the individual to the broader community that the organisation is embedded in.



Nasima's story highlights how organisations may lack the awareness, competencies and policies necessary to enable the full **participation** of people from backgrounds outside the **norm**. In the case of the imaginary Youth Connection, Nasima might've been the first muslim volunteer. Lack of awareness around **privilege** and **inclusion** likely led the organisation to not even perceive that Nasima was not feeling comfortable or feeling like she could contribute. Having

diversity management within the organisation could have avoided Nasima eventually leaving the organisation and could have helped the organisation grow and reduce **barriers** for other young people to contribute.



Learn more


- Harold Andrew Patrick and Vincent Raj Kumar: [Managing Workplace Diversity: Issues and Challenges](#)
- JUMP: [Solutions for equality at work](#)
- Arwa Mahdawi (TED talk): [The Surprising Solution to Workplace Diversity](#)

## Where does diversity management come from?

Diversity management as a concept originated in the USA in the mid-1980s and soon started spreading to other countries.

To understand diversity management, it's important to **understand** the historically created systems of **oppression** that have





shaped the inequities that still exist today. These historical systems include, but are not limited to, colonialization, slavery and patriarchy. Such systems created hierarchies in the social groups we belong to, having led to inequities being deeply embedded in our institutions and mindsets.

The Civil Rights Movement and the Women's Movement have pushed for policies such as Equal-Employment-Opportunity and [Affirmative Action](#) to counterbalance the historical and organized patterns of inequity that still heavily influence how people are treated today. Based in the [oppression](#) and [marginalization](#) of women and black people respectively, these movements have fought for **redistribution of power and representation** - a fight that continues very much alive and needed until today. You can think of the #metoo and Black Lives Matters movements as recent examples. With quotas and other tools, some governments have made employers and universities accountable for reducing these systemic inequities. In this context, diversity management offers itself as a tool to ensure that companies and other organisations offer equal opportunities and reduce [barriers](#) for the full participation of people in spite of their differences.

The employment and educational sector in the USA has developed a strong focus on diversity management with innumerous professionals and organisations offering services, training and consulting in the area - aiming especially at big companies, public service and universities.

Besides the historically-originated inequities that exist in all societies, **migration and globalization have increased human encounters with differentes** - be them ethnic, linguistic, religious or other. Technologies have simplified working across distances and the ever-changing demographics have led companies to taking diversity more seriously. Companies in many EU countries have developed a shared Diversity Charter that highlights their commitment to [antidiscrimination](#) and inclusion. The Swedish Diversity Charter, for example, reads:

*Diversity Charter Sweden strives for a world where different ideas, knowledge, experiences and skills count for something. A world where difference is a valuable resource.<sup>2</sup>*

It is important to highlight that policies around diversity and inclusion in many companies are not rooted in striving for equity - but rather in understanding the importance of diversity for the competitiveness of the company. **Numerous researches show that companies that manage diversity effectively have better returns and are more innovative.** More and more companies are also using diversity as a tool to position themselves and attract more talent and clients. The danger of such performative inclusion can be seen in the example of [pinkwashing](#) - when [LGBTQI+\\*](#) topics are used for companies to better position themselves in the market without actually contributing to more rights for these communities.

Rooted strongly in historical North-South relationships and de-

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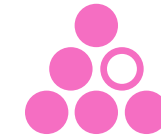
<sup>2</sup><http://www.diversitycharter.se/en/>

velopment cooperation, around the turn of the century European NGOs started developing a critical look towards globalization and their role as perpetrators of colonialism and neocolonialism. Fueled by sociological work around subalternity and post-colonialism, and critical educational work by pedagogues such as Grundtvig, Horton, Dewey and Freire, **more and more organisations started including perspectives around power, inequity and privilege into their work.** It's a process that has intersected with diversity management and the questioning of hiring practices and the distribution of power and resources in local and global organisations.

For decades, inclusion and diversity have been high on the agenda of the European Union for all educational projects. The European Commission promotes youth work and international projects as a tool for promoting solidarity and social inclusion. Promoting inclusion and reducing barriers in access to Erasmus+: Youth in Action and the European Solidarity Corps are important priorities. Besides, the Youth department of the Council of Europe has also been promoting understanding across differences, being a strong actor against hate speech and the integration of Roma youth.

Now let's look in more details at some of the key concepts in diversity management to better understand what it entails:

## IMPORTANT TERMS DIVERSITY



Diversity - in organisations or in society - describes all the ways in which people differ. It encompasses all the variations of attributes that make individuals or groups of people different from each other.

A diversity lens in our organisations and in our youth work requires us to understand and value these human differences. Diversity does not just refer to gender, [race](#), [ethnicity](#), ability status or [sexual orientation](#). It also includes religion, socioeconomic status, education, language, physical appearance, marital and family status, as well as differences in perspectives, political affiliation and values, among other things.

Activists for social [justice](#) point out that **fostering diversity without addressing equity and without an analysis of power structures is not enough.** Read more about these concepts a bit further in this document.



### Reflection

What does diversity mean for you in the field of youth work?



Learn more

- SALTO Inclusion & Diversity: [Guide to European Diversity](#)
- EU-CoE Youth Partnership: [The politics of diversity in Europe](#)
- SALTO Inclusion & Diversity: [Europe in Transition – Diversity, Identity and Youth Work](#)
- European Commission: [Diversity Management in Central and Eastern Europe](#)

## IMPORTANT TERMS IDENTITY



When we look at diversity, we also need to understand the concept of “[identity](#)”. **Each person has multiple, dynamic identities that are combined in unique ways and make up who we are.**

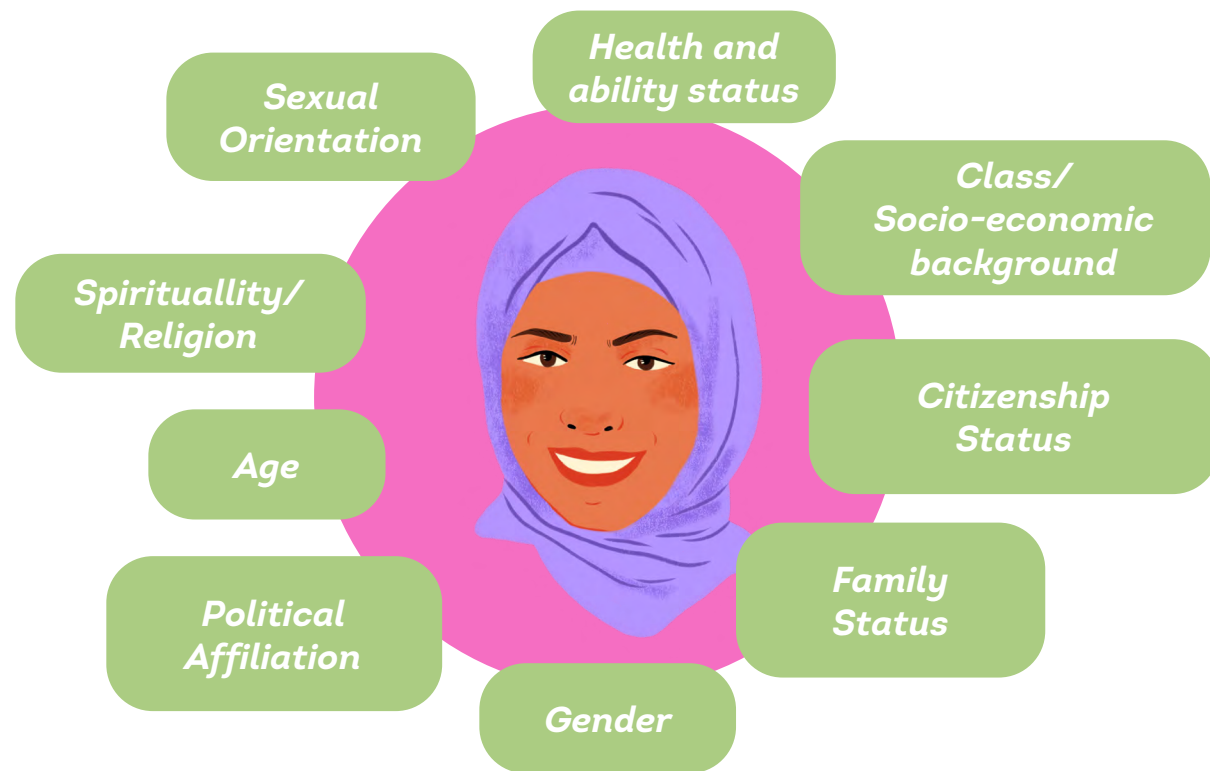
We can differentiate between personal and social identity. Personal identity describes the individual characteristics that make up who we are. These include qualifications, lifestyles, preferences, personality, beliefs, talents, etc. Social identity, on the other hand, describes collective differences: our ethnicity, gender

identity, [citizenship status](#), etc. **Some of these differences are visible, others are invisible.** These categories are shaped by society as we try to categorize ourselves and others into groups along social identity lines. Social identity is usually in the focus when we talk about diversity management.

Not all of the identities that make up a certain person are given to them at birth and some of these identities change over a person’s lifetime, such as age or family status. Some people change their religious affiliation, social class or ability status, among others.

As such, each person that we work with in our organisation and that joins one of our programs is made up of these different facets, which define how they experience the world and how they are treated by others. People hold prejudices against certain identities, have biases linked to certain groups of people and a lot of bigotry is based on these negative feelings against certain groups.





*In Nasima's case, some of her social identities are being a woman, young, muslim, with migrant background, having finished high school, being able-bodied and part of working class family.*



### Learn more

- It's pronounced Metrosexual: [You Soup - understanding diversity and the intersections of identity](#)
- Sam Killerman: [The Genderbread Person](#)
- Aliya Saperstein (video): [The Social Construction of Race](#)
- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (TED Talk): [The danger of a single story](#)
- Erasmus+: [Inclusion and Diversity Strategy](#)
- Northwestern: [Social Identities](#)

### IMPORTANT TERMS INCLUSION

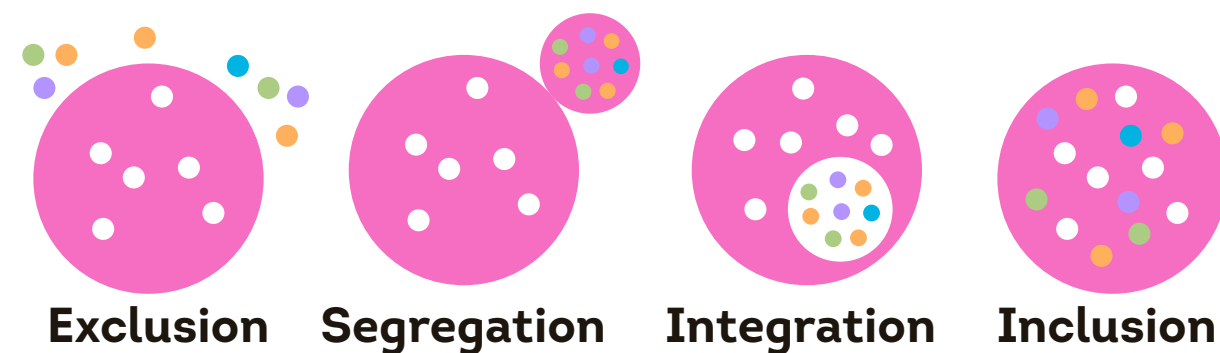


Inclusion means respecting and valuing diverse identities and experiences and enabling full participation of everyone. Note that the term itself implies that the people we are trying to include were previously excluded.

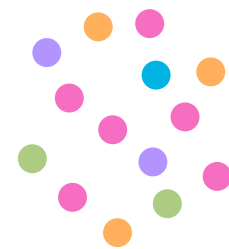
Within the framework of Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme, the focus of inclusion lies on young people with fewer opportunities who are disadvantaged compared to their peers because they face one or more of the exclusion factors and obstacles.

To fully understand inclusion, we can compare it with other ways of dealing with differences. **Exclusion** describes the state

in which those who are different from the norm are not allowed to participate. **Segregation** means creating separate spaces for those who differ from the norm, and **Integration** means creating a sub-space within the group for those who are different. These differences are shown in the following illustration:



However, an important work for us when managing diversity and making our organisations more inclusive lies in removing the barriers of participation to avoid that only a part of the previously excluded groups are being included. The ideal version of the visualization thus looks like this:



That means that diversity management requires us to reduce barriers for participation and for growth within the organisation. **For inclusion to be successful, it requires a paradigm shift towards openness and accountability for historic and systemic oppressions.** Diversity management is not a short-term effort or approach. It requires people and organisations to embrace lifelong learning and commit to constantly revisiting their values and practices.



#### Learn more

- *Inclusion Imperative:* [What is inclusion?](#)
- *EU-CoE Youth Partnership:* [Social inclusion for young people: breaking down the barriers](#)
- *Dawn Bennett-Alexander (TED talk):* [Practical diversity: taking inclusion from theory to practice](#)



#### Tips and tools

- *EU-CoE Youth Partnership:* [T-Kit 8: Social Inclusion](#)
- *SALTO Inclusion & Diversity:* [Inclusion and Diversity resources](#)

## IMPORTANT TERMS POWER AND PRIVILEGE



The historic and systemic oppressions that marginalize people have two strong mechanisms, which we can call “**power**” and “**privilege**”. Privilege can be defined as the unearned advantages, benefits and rights given to people who belong to certain social groups. In each of the identity groups discussed earlier, there is a hierarchy of who has more or less privilege and power.

Privilege often takes the shape of inequitable treatment by institutions and unequal access to opportunities. Often these inequities are rooted in biases and systemic inequities.



*Take the example of white privilege: in most societies, people perceived as white receive better treatment than people perceived as non-white. That includes, but is not limited to, more often being selected for a job - despite having the same qualifications as a person of color, having more positive experiences with police forces (see [racial profiling](#)), receiving more support and recognition in educational institutions, feeling represented by the majority of people in power, receiving priority and/or better treatment by health providers, etc. **Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack** (see [Learn More](#)) collects further examples of white privilege.*

Privilege is something easy to notice when we don't have it, but

when we belong to a social group that has a lot of privilege, we can easily be oblivious to it.

People who have more privilege also have more power. Power can be understood as **one's ability to influence or control people, events, processes or resources**. We each have different levels of power in different situations.



*For example, in most societies, men are more privileged and have more access to power than women. Just have a look at people in leadership positions in politics or companies, you will likely find more men in those positions. [The Male Privilege Checklist](#) points out specifically, what male privilege can look like in reality. The text is written from a US perspective but most points also apply in Europe.*

Taken to the individual level, each one of a person's identities attributes them with different levels of privilege or lack thereof.



*In Sweden, Nasima's religious background and history of migration both mean that she is less privileged and has lesser opportunities and power than young people who grew up in Sweden and are not muslims.*

It is important to understand that **these inequities are socially constructed** - meaning that there is, for example, no natural reason why women should be paid less for, let's say, flying an airplane or performing a heart surgery or why people of color should not



be considered for a position as lawyer or TV presenter.

Furthermore, we need to keep in mind that differences in historical, legal, economic, political and social contexts influence the privilege or lack thereof that a certain identity holds. That means that being a lesbian or gay person in the Netherlands is different than being a gay or lesbian person in Iran.



## Reflection

Think about the reality in the society your organisation serves, what groups lack privilege and access to power?



### Learn more

- EU-CoE Youth Partnership: [Some still more equal than others? Or equal opportunities for all?](#)
- National Youth Council of Ireland: [Let's act on inclusion](#)
- Peggy McIntosh: [Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack](#)
- Julian Real: [Male Privilege Checklist](#)
- Yes Magazine: [10 Examples That Prove White Privilege Exists in Every Aspect Imaginable](#)
- Eric Liu: [How to understand power](#)
- Peggy McIntosh (TED talk): [How to recognize your white privilege](#)
- University of Florida: [The intersection of Power and Privilege](#)

## IMPORTANT TERMS EQUITY

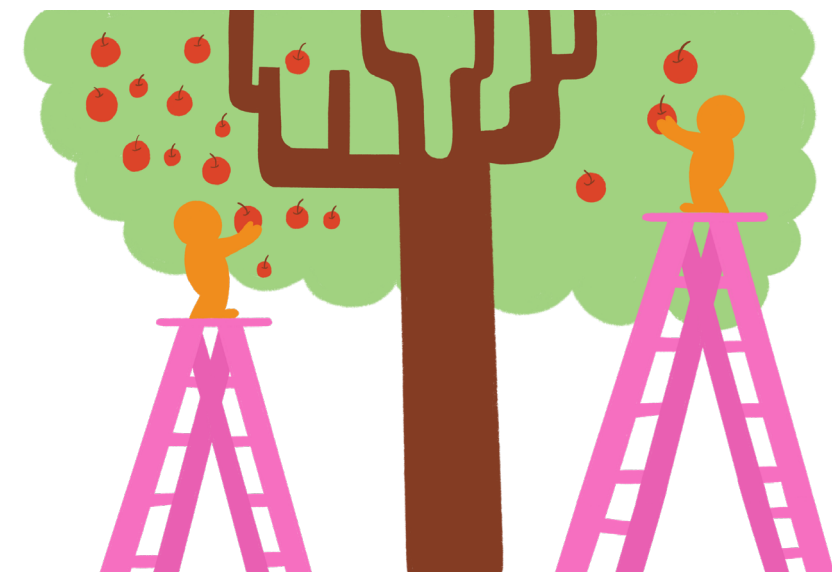


Equity means giving all people the access and resources they need to succeed. It stands in comparison to [equality](#), which means **giving everyone the same access and resources**. As such, equity takes into account the structural factors that favour certain groups and marginalize others. As a result, **justice might often require an unequal treatment for different groups or individuals to make sure that each of them has access to the same opportunities**. Without equity, we cannot truly include people into our organisations and programs because we are not accounting for their differences in privilege.



## Reflection

Have a look at the image below, what do you see?



In the image, the two children are not getting equal treatment. But if each child would get the same ladder, one child would end up with much more fruit than the other. In that sense, the tree (with plenty of fruit on one side and few on the other) represents the unequal distribution of privilege - and the unequal height of stairs represents the equity needed for both children to be successful.



#### Learn more

- *Diffen*: [Equality vs. Equity](#)
- *Everyday Feminism*: [Equality is not enough](#)
- *Paloma Medina (TED Talk)*: [Let's stop talking about diversity and start working towards equity](#)



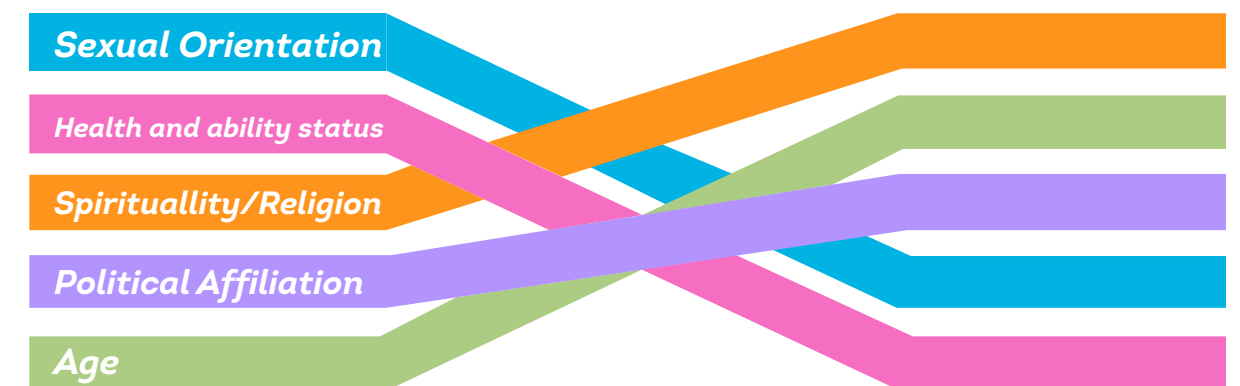
#### Tips and tools

- *Teaching Tolerance*: [Guideposts for Equity](#)

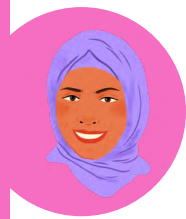
## IMPORTANT TERMS INTERSECTIONALITY



When we try to understand differences between human beings, a useful lens is the one of "[intersectionality](#)". The term stems from feminist theory and was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw to explain how black women face struggles both for being women and for being black, and the combination of these two identities makes it much harder for them to thrive in a society that marginalizes both. **Intersectionality allows us to understand that each person belongs to different and intersecting social groups and, as a result, may face different and often overlapping discriminations.**



It's crucial for us to understand intersectionality in youth work to be able to grasp the multiple identities of our participants, the heterogeneity within any social group and the discriminations that can occur due to intersecting identities. We must especially focus on **creating organisations that are inclusive to persons and groups that are marginalised and discriminated against at multiple levels.**



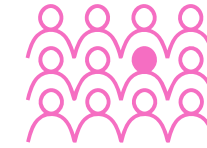
*In Nasima's case, even if in Sweden she might face lesser [discrimination](#) for being a woman than in other parts of the world, her intersecting identities of being a person with migrant background and being a muslim mean that she has way less privilege than the majority of volunteers of Youth Connection.*



#### Learn more

- NewStatesman: [Kimberly Crenshaw on Intersectionality](#)
- Peter Hopkins (video): [What is intersectionality](#)
- Lafayette College (video): [Kimberlé Crenshaw Discusses Intersectionality](#)
- Teaching Tolerance (video): [Intersectionality 101](#)
- Council of Europe: [Barbaripen - young Roma speak about multiple discrimination](#)

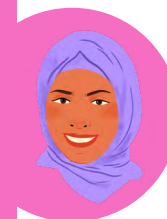
## IMPORTANT TERMS SALIENCY



Our personal experience of the world is shaped by the intersection of our different identities. Some of these identities are more salient than others depending on the situation we are in, that is, **specific identities might stand out more in certain situations than others.** Visual identities such as gender or race tend to be more salient than invisible identities.

To exemplify the concept of [saliency](#), let's look at a kindergarten. A child's young age is not very noteworthy in this setting, given that everyone has more or less the same age. However, having a different skin color than the majority of children, not speaking the local language or having a disability will likely have an influence on the way a child experiences that educational space.

Similarly, in youth encounters, identity traits such as religion, sexual orientation or ethnic and racial background may or may not be salient depending on the make-up of the group and the ability of the organisation to be inclusive for everyone.



*During her youth exchange, Nasima's religious and cultural background was not as salient as when she was back in Sweden.*



Learn more

- Etlyn Kenny & Rob Briner: [Increases in salience of ethnic identity at work](#) ●





# STARTING AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

Equity, diversity and inclusion work really starts with us individually, because every organisation is made up of individuals. Diversity management requires us to create space and a culture for everyone to reflect on their identities and their relationship with the organisation and the world around us. This **self-awareness is crucial for us to create truly inclusive organisations.**

Our process of self-reflection starts with who we are. As we have seen in the theoretical chapter, each of us holds many different identities. **Most of us also belong to at least one dominant identity group.** That is a first important reflection point: in the identities in which we belong to the dominant group, we can easily forget that our experience is not representative of everyone else's experience. So how can we increase our awareness and make sure we don't forget that?



## Activity

Fill out the power flower exercise to learn more about your identities and your access to power. Access the worksheet and instructions in the [C2Toolbox](#).



*Let's think back to the story at the beginning of this publication: The volunteers in Youth Connection who are part of the **dominant** Swedish **identity** group might not realize that, for someone like Nasima, there are several **barriers** in participating or making her voice heard. As such, it is important that we reflect critically about our own **privilege** and the **conscious and unconscious biases** we have.*

**Biases** are mental shortcuts that occur consciously or unconsciously. For example, when we are at the supermarket and choose vegetables, our brain automatically directs us towards the red tomatoes, inferring that these would be the ripe ones. However, these kinds of shortcuts are dangerous when it comes to judging other people rather than tomatoes. **Our biases are created over our lifetimes through socialization and media.** Oftentimes, these biases function without us even being aware of having them - that's what we call unconscious or implicit [bias](#). It's important to note that everyone has unconscious biases. The first step for us is to gain awareness of the biases we hold.



## Activity

The Implicit Bias Test developed at Harvard University is a great tool for us to explore our unconscious biases. Access the different tests at [Project Implicit](#).



### Learn more

- Jennifer Eberhardt: [Unconscious Bias](#)
- Kristen Pressner: [Is your brain lying to you?](#)
- Beyond Blue (video): [The invisible discriminator](#)
- 



### Tips and tools

- Harvard University - Project Implicit: [Implicit Bias Test](#)

## The competences needed to contribute to inclusive organisations

Here comes another story to help us navigate the upcoming section:



*Luca had always been very outgoing and enjoyed meeting new people. His wheelchair had never been a problem for him. Luckily, his family had the resources to provide him with lots of opportunities. His favourite thing was travelling. Luca's dream was to spend several months in another coun-*

*try and work on a social project. He applied for a position as a volunteer in an organisation in Germany that works with elderly people.*

*Luca's intake interview went very well and at the end, Ivaan, the volunteer manager, asked: "Do you have any further questions?" Luca hesitated and finally said: "I just want to make sure that people will accept me in the organisation, you know, because I..." Ivaan, who had seen in Luca's application that he was a wheelchair user, interrupted him: "Of course, Luca. Everything is accessible here and several of the people we serve are also in a wheelchair. You have nothing to worry about." Then, Ivaan informs Luca that he'll soon reach out with an offer and hangs up the phone.*

*Luca is not happy with how the conversation ended. "Did you tell them you are trans?" his best friend asks after the interview. "I didn't get a chance.", Luca answers and decides it was better to decline the volunteer position.*

To help foster an atmosphere of trust and a culture of inclusion, each person involved in international and local youth programs is required to contribute to make these spaces inclusive.

There are no recipes or instructions that we can follow to deal with differences in a positive way, but we can work on developing the necessary competences. Competences can be understood as the **combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes** people

display through their actions. The set of competences outlined below<sup>3</sup> can help us create bridges across differences and have positive and respectful encounters with people, taking into account our differences and commonalities.



### Active Listening

Being able to listen and fully focus on understanding what others are saying without jumping to conclusions or judgement.



### Bias Recognition

Understanding how our judgements of situations are shaped by the way we were socialized and seeking to overcome our biases by unlearning and questioning our positions.



### Critical Thinking

Being able to question our assumptions and information presented to us and looking at things from different perspectives.



### Empathy

Being able to relate to the feelings, needs, and experiences of other people.

<sup>3</sup>Based on the competence model of the NOW App: <https://www.nowcompetence.app>



### Interpersonal Communication

Being able to have positive and empathetic interactions with other people.



### Open Mindedness

Being open to consider ideas, experiences and opinions that are new or different to our own.



### Self-awareness

Being conscious of and understanding our feelings, behaviors, needs, and aspirations, as well as strengths and weaknesses.



### Solidarity

Acknowledging our own privileges, seeking understanding of the struggles of marginalised groups and actively promoting equity.



### Tolerating Ambiguity

Understanding that there are different, sometimes contradictory perspectives and being able to stay in situations of uncertainty.



## Understanding and Valuing Differences

Understanding how people's experiences are shaped by their different identities and recognizing the benefits of bringing different perspectives, opinions, and experiences together.



### Activity

You can reflect about where you stand in developing these competences using the self-assessment questionnaire in annex 2.

When we talk about these competences linked to **equity, diversity and inclusion**, we are talking about lifelong learning. This is not something that we learn once and then master, but rather that we keep developing at all times.

A crucial attitude for individuals who work with diversity is to be humble and understand that it is okay not to know everything about every kind of identity. What is important is that we are able to **recognize our mistakes, listen and learn**.



*Let's take the example of Ivaan, the volunteer manager. He certainly was well-intended when reassuring Luca that his disability would not be an issue during his stay. Still, despite the good intentions, he made assumptions and was not fully able to listen to Luca's concerns, which made Luca feel uncomfortable and unsafe. However, what Stefan could do - if getting a chance to learn about Luca's discomfort with the conversation - is to apologize, learn from the situation and act differently in the future.*

It's crucial that our organisations provide space for the intentional development of these competences. This can take the form of [trainings offered for youth workers](#) (the trainings offered for youth workers and volunteers within the framework of Erasmus+: Youth in Action are a great resource for organisations to tap into) and access to learning resources or by periodically proposing activities people can do and then reflect about or discuss. This can also be done as in the format of a book- or reading club.

*In Ivaan's case, having a clearer understanding of the intersectionality of people's identities, might have helped him to see that Luca is more than a person in a wheelchair. Besides, training his active listening skills could've really made a difference in the conversation shared above.*

It's really important that the spaces we create for learning and reflection are somehow facilitated. That starts with establishing rules of engagement (or a group agreement) that include how we



are going to deal with potentially uncomfortable or offensive situations. Read more about this topic in the “facilitation” section.



Learn more

- Sam Killerman: [Why Your Intentions Don't Really Matter, but Outcomes Do](#)
- SALTO-YOUTH: [The European Training Calendar](#)

## Becoming allies and keeping ourselves accountable

Once we gain awareness about privileges we may have, it is important that we get active. **Being an ally describes the attitude of stepping up for the struggles of marginalized groups that we are not necessarily part of.** The first step is speaking up whenever we witness any kind of discrimination. One important concept for us to be aware of is that of microaggressions. Microaggressions are verbal or nonverbal messages that invalidate or insult people of certain marginalized groups. **Microaggressions often happen unintentionally and go unnoticed** by those who are not

affected - but that doesn't make them less harmful.



### Activity

Watch the videos of the [Look Different campaign of MTV](#) and reflect if there are any such microaggressions that you have experienced yourself, then think about how to address microaggressions when you witness them.

Allyship for privileged people means **stepping aside and creating opportunities and space for people with fewer opportunities to have voice and power.** For those of us who realize, while seeking awareness that we hold quite a lot of privilege, we need to keep in mind that this is not about feeling guilty. The idea is that we can feel responsible for using our privilege to help dismantle unequal structures. It is key that privileged people understand the injustices in access to opportunities and power and their responsibility in passing on the power (the space, the voice, the resources, the decision power, etc.) to those with lesser privilege.

Besides that, it is important to keep ourselves accountable to diversity and inclusion. Because sometimes, **intentionally or unintentionally, it might be ourselves who discriminate against others, silence people from marginalized backgrounds or who are the microaggressors.** That means that we need to learn how to recognize and correct our mistakes. Recognizing mistakes also means taking initiative to learn more when we realize that we are

in touch with social identities that we do not know enough about. We need to keep in mind that it is not the responsibility of people of a certain identity to educate us about their struggles.



### Activity

Read the “Boots and Sandals: How to handle mistakes” section in the [Guide to Allyship](#). Reflect about your own reactions to being called out.



#### Learn more

- *The Grainger College of Engineering: [A guide to responding to microaggressions](#)*
- *Nita Mosby: [Be an unlikely ally](#)*
- *Melinda Epler (TED Talk): [3 ways to be a better ally in the workplace](#)*
- *Sam Killerman: [How to respond when someone uses non-inclusive \(or bigoted\) language](#)*
- *Council of Europe: [We CAN! Taking action against hate speech through counter and alternative narratives](#)*



#### Tips and tools

- *Amélie Lamont: [The Guide to Allyship](#)* ●



# PROMOTING DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND BELONGING IN OUR ORGANISATIONS

## DIVERSITY

Linked to what we have seen earlier about diversity management, inclusive organisations can be defined as those that work to **reduce all possible barriers for the full participation of anyone in the organisation**. In other words, it means focusing our organisational lens on who we **welcome, integrate and empower** in our spaces. Having inclusive practices requires us to value diversity and actively seek to bring different perspectives to our organisations.

## EQUITY

As mentioned earlier on, coming from a corporate tradition, diversity and inclusion have often been overly portrayed as a tool for increasing profits and innovation. However, being inclusive is not about being more profitable or about publicly positioning our

organisations as progressive. Inclusion is about **treating each human being with dignity and accounting for differences in privileges and opportunities**. It's about creating an organisational culture that embraces and promotes each person's unique contribution, which requires us to deconstruct systems of inequity that permeate our organisations (and our societies). It is important to highlight the word "culture" here, which points out the importance of fostering collective values and practices shared by everyone within the organisation.



## Activity

Together with your team, choose one of the resources in the "Learn More" boxes in the theoretical section and propose that everyone reads/watches it in their own time. Set a date when everyone comes together to discuss what you have learned. Repeat this practice with other resources.

## BELONGING

Being inclusive also means that everyone involved has a **sense of belonging and feels safe, appreciated and respected**. In other words, everyone in the organisation - staff, volunteers or participants - should feel comfortable to share their perspectives and be themselves.

If successful in creating such a culture, organisations can really thrive. Indeed, Gallup concluded in years of research at the workplace that

*“Environments that are both diverse and inclusive show numerous advantages, including increased job satisfaction, retention, organizational commitment, trust, well-being, creativity and innovation, as well as lower levels of conflict, intention to quit, stress, job withdrawal and organizational turnover.”<sup>4</sup>*



#### Learn more

- SALTO Inclusion & Diversity: [Inclusion by design](#)
- SALTO Inclusion & Diversity (video): [ID Talks Organisational](#)
- SALTO Inclusion & Diversity: [ID Talks Organisational: Ok, your projects are inclusive, but is your organisation too?](#)
- European Commission: [Managing Diversity at Work](#)
- Sharon Florentine: [Diversity and inclusion: 8 best practices for changing your culture](#)
- WEF: [3 ways to improve diversity and inclusion in your organization](#)
- Inclusion Nudges: [The Power of Inclusion Nudges](#)



#### Tips and tools

- University of Southern California: [Diversity Toolkit](#)

<sup>4</sup><https://www.gallup.com/education/228572/culture-inclusion-assessment-overview.aspx>

## Inclusive to whom?

Understanding the intersectionality of people’s identities requires us to understand that **building inclusive organisations is not a simple recipe to follow, nor are there “one size fits all” solutions.** We need to understand that each reality is different and each person has their needs and experiences influenced by their unique combination of identities. We need to use an intersectional lens to acknowledge the complex and dynamic nature of identity and privilege.



*Let’s think back on the example of Luca, the young trans person in a wheelchair. For Luca to fully feel comfortable in an organisation, he needs to be seen for his different identities.*

We might be asking ourselves: so who exactly should I include in my organisation? As we’ve seen before, the Erasmus+ Youth in Action programme focuses their inclusion efforts on “**young people with fewer opportunities**”, defining them as: “*those young people who are at a disadvantage compared to their peers because they face one or more of the seven exclusion factors: disability, health problems, educational difficulties, cultural differences, economic obstacles, social obstacles or geographic*



obstacles”<sup>5</sup>. These categories are a great starting point for us to look at groups of people who often are not represented within our organisations.

It’s important to understand that **inclusion looks different in different realities**, being dependent on the makeup of the community that the organisation serves. In other words, when we are working to make our organisations more inclusive, we must look at the makeup of the society we are embedded in and at the group the organisation is hoping to serve.

While there are social groups that exist everywhere (for example, younger and older people, cis and trans people, people with different sexual orientations, people with and without disabilities, etc.), there are also groups that are more prevalent in some regions than in others. Think about different religions, people with migrant backgrounds, specific cultural and ethnic minorities, to name a few.

We need to **gain awareness of our blind spots and identity groups that we might not be aware of**. Sometimes, we may think certain social groups are not present in our society just because we don’t interact with them or because we are unaware of their identities.



### Reflection

What groups are present in the society your organisation is serving but not within our organisation?

<sup>5</sup>European Commission: [Erasmus+ Inclusion and Diversity Strategy in the field of youth](#)



## Case Study

### *Solomon, Greece*

Solomon is a non-profit organization founded in Athens that uses media as a tool for social inclusion and change. To be inclusive as an organisation is “a logical thing to do”, according to the founder, Fanis Kollias. “Our core philosophy is linked to diversity.” In practical terms, that has meant that since it’s very beginning, people with migrant backgrounds have been in core decision-making positions as part of the board. Besides having helped Solomon grow as an inclusive organisation, this practice has also made a difference for the people involved: “It empowered them to get involved in much more activities in their lives, not just in Solomon. If you’re a board member of an organisation, other organisations will treat you differently.” One of the first members of the Solomon board is now also president of the Greek Council for Refugees.

Besides these key decision making positions, Solomon also includes people with migrant backgrounds in all of its journalistic production. “Just doing independent journalism is not enough to tell the stories of the people who arrive in Greece.” When Solomon reports

on refugee issues, they always include refugees in all production steps. Solomon journalists partner with refugees for investigation, not just as translators.

What has really made a difference for Solomon is the way they approach inclusion: "In our seminars on video production and photography, we never ask people where they come from. It doesn't matter. What matters is that they are interested in media production." Applicants have often mentioned to the Solomon team how they had been positively surprised for not having to respond to personal questions when applying to Solomon. It makes people feel like they are chosen because their talent is seen - not because they fulfil some preset quotas on gender or origin.

## Leading for diversity

As leaders, we have an important responsibility in enabling our organisations to become more inclusive. **Leaders should promote dialogue and enable the space for everyone in the organisation to develop the competences required to collectively make the organisation an inclusive space.** To be able to do that, it's crucial that we understand the concepts of equity, social identity and

intersectionality, and how it links to privilege and power.

Research shows that it is important for an organisation's leadership to be outspoken, intentional and committed to equity, diversity and inclusion.

*"Leaders who are willing to reflect on their own assumptions, and simultaneously acknowledge the different perspectives of others within their organisation, will be more effective than those who cannot."*<sup>6</sup>

Keep in mind that leadership positions in the majority of organisations across sectors are still occupied by people with privilege: able-bodied people, white people and men. It is thus very important for leaders to be aware of their privilege and to **apply an equity lens** in their leadership. This can help leaders understand that not everyone has the same starting point for succeeding in an organisation. Having an equity lens reminds us that the lives of people with lesser opportunities tend to have been marked by unevenness of advantages, representation and power, and that we need to actively work to dismantle these systemic inequities.



### Reflection

As a leader, reflect about the role white privilege and male privilege play in your organisation. What could you do to empower marginalized groups and diversify leadership in your organisation?

<sup>6</sup>D5 Coalition: [Vision and Voice](#)

In practice, being inclusive leaders requires us to switch between different approaches or roles according to the situation: varying between **mentoring** others, **coordinating** work, **supporting** others in their tasks, **facilitating** conversations, and **enabling** policy processes.

What cannot be underestimated is the **importance for inclusive leaders to be able to step aside and give voice and space to others** (and, ultimately, their leadership position) - especially those with lesser privilege.

Finally, as leaders, it is our task to address topics linked to discrimination and enable difficult and critical conversations to happen within the organisation in a respectful and productive way. A helpful definition of critical conversations is from Teaching Tolerance:

*“Any discussion about the ways that injustice affects our lives and our society. It’s a conversation that explores the relationships between identity and power, that traces the structures that privilege some at the expense of others, that helps students think through the actions they can take to create a more just, more equitable, world.”<sup>7</sup>*

However, having this responsibility to make sure difficult conversations happen, doesn’t always mean that as a leader, we need to be the ones addressing it or speaking about it. Sometimes, it might be a better idea to bring an external person with expertise

on the topic or someone who is a skilled facilitator to guide a conversation.

At other times, the best way to address a topic is by creating a space where people can listen to one another - and here, a practice that can be helpful is the Council method (see “Learn More”) but really, there are many ways of doing it.



#### Learn more

- Juliet Bourke and Andrea Titus: [Why Inclusive Leaders Are Good for Organizations, and How to Become One](#)
- Gallup: [Create a diverse and inclusive workplace](#)
- D5 Coalition: [Vision and Voice](#)
- Tamekia Mizladi Smith (TED Talk): [How to train employees to have difficult conversations](#)



#### Tips and tools

- Teaching Tolerance: [Critical Conversation](#)
- Ways of Council: [What is Council Practice](#)

<sup>7</sup>Teaching Tolerance: [Critical Conversation](#)

## Bringing more diversity to our teams

The work of bringing more diversity to our teams starts with the people who are already in the organisation. We need to prepare ourselves and become inclusive before bringing new people to the team. **Differences in identities and backgrounds will often lead to differences in opinions, needs and approaches to the team - and everyone has to be ready to embrace that.** It's thus a good idea to make the effort of diversifying our teams, something that everyone is involved in.



### Activity

Discuss your organisation's stand on diversity, equity and inclusion within your team. The following questions can guide you: *What are our values around diversity and inclusion? What is your understanding of "diversity", "equity", and "inclusion"?"? How do we deal with diverging opinions? Who makes the decisions? What cultural groups are present within our organisation? Which are not?* The assessment shared in the annex can also be a great starting point for this conversation.

**Don't make conversations about diversity, equity and inclusion a one-time thing.** Have monthly or bi-monthly meetings to discuss how your organisation is advancing in becoming more inclusive. Set clear goals for the organisation.

To bring new perspectives to our teams, we can start by thinking about groups that should really be present in our organisations - reflecting the groups and identities that we serve with our programs and other activities. Once we have identified groups that should be represented in our team but are currently not, it is time to learn more about these social groups. There are tons of resources available on how to be inclusive to certain groups - from making internal communication accessible to people with visible impairments, to how to accommodate people of different faiths in the organisation, etc.

To find the right people to join our teams, we can start by looking at our alumni and other people that already have a connection to our organisation. Would they be interested in joining our organisation? In what way could they get involved? Do we have a path of opportunities for development within the organisation? Could we include a mentoring program that helps people to grow within the organisation? We need to **make sure that we find paths for diverse people to join at all levels of the organisation, not just in junior or volunteer positions.**

Before including people with fewer opportunities in our teams, we should discuss processes and protocols. We need to ask our-



selves: How do we dismantle barriers? How can we foster a saf-  
er space for people with fewer opportunities? How do we deal  
with a situation of discrimination?

The logo for STATUS M, featuring the word "STATUS" in a bold, sans-serif font, followed by a red square containing a white letter "M". The logo is positioned inside a white circle that is partially obscured by a blue shape above it.

## Case Study

### Status M, Croatia

Status M is an NGO founded in 2010 that focuses on opening spaces for boys and men to join the fight for gender justice and gender equality.

The Status M team works mostly with young people in educational settings by bringing non-formal education and youth work to schools. "We do a lot of long-term cycles of workshops with boys." The organisation also works with offenders in correctional facilities and prisons on the prevention of gender-based violence. "In our work, we also promote active fatherhood and the involvement of boys and men in care work."

The organisation works purposefully towards including people from different backgrounds. "We are a small team and we don't

have some elaborate diversity strategy in place. But it is always in the back of our minds and we use any opportunity we get to include as much diversity as we can. There is a lot of intentionality to our efforts to work with diverse groups of young people, like Roma or persons with migrant backgrounds."

To really bring the perspective of their participants to their work, Status M tries to recruit employees and volunteers from the pool of former participants. A few years ago, they employed a young man who was a former ward of a correctional facility. "He did amazing work with juvenile offenders." However, integrating people with diverse backgrounds into the team often requires extra efforts and adaptations: in this case, the team had to take on some of the tasks which were difficult for the person due to their limited level of schooling - such as writing long reports. "The extra support the team provided was worth it. The perspective he brought to our organisation and the difference it made to our youth work approach was invaluable."

## Manage the diversity in your team

Often, diversity management is seen in a very limited sense as the act of recruiting and managing a diverse workforce - thinking in a narrow way about people of different cultural backgrounds, sexual orientations and genders. However, we need to remind ourselves that **every team is diverse as no two people are the same**. Each of us comes to the organisation with a different professional and personal trajectory, and a unique combination of personal and social identities.

That means that **managing diversity in your team can start with whoever is in there right now**. Your goal is to make sure everyone feels safe and comfortable to stay in your organisation. That requires work and intentionality. Keep in mind that **accounting for the differences among team members also requires you to account for the privilege that team members might or might not have**, and the visible or invisible barriers they may face in order to be able to participate fully.

Here are a few practices that can be implemented:

### 1. RECOGNIZING PEOPLE'S MULTIPLE IDENTITIES

This step is about encouraging people to be their full selves and create a space and culture in which people do not feel like they need to hide a part of who they are. For that, an intersectional lens is crucial and **we need to avoid assuming that we know all of people's background and identities**. For example, be careful to assume (and imply) people's sexual orientation and [gender identity](#). In that regard, think back on the example of Stefan earlier in this publication. Gender neutral language can be helpful here: If a male colleague mentions they are married, avoid asking "What is your wife's name?". Instead, we can ask what their partner is called. If a female colleague shares that they have a girlfriend, don't jump to conclusion and think they are a lesbian. They might identify as bisexual, pansexual, or simply queer. **When talking about someone, we should only use words to describe their identities that they have used themselves** - and we should definitely not push them to provide us with a list of their identities. The same goes for people's gender identity and the [pronouns](#) that they use.

### 2. VALUING AND REASSURING

**People from marginalized backgrounds often face mental barriers**, such as feeling that they are not good enough to be in a certain position. Many more women, and especially women of colour, for example, suffer from imposter syndrome. Researchers see the reason for this feeling of inferiority in the lack of representation of women and people of color in

positions of power. To counterbalance mental barriers, we need to make sure that we acknowledge everyone's work and contributions and make people feel valued and seen.

### 3. HAVING INCLUSIVE CONVERSATIONS

This step starts with looking at our organisation and at who is most dominant in conversations? **It's still very common, for example, that men take up more speaking time than women**<sup>8</sup>. We need to stay on the lookout for [mansplaining](#) and other forms of microaggressions that might make people feel that their perspectives are not welcome or heard. There are many approaches that can help us create a healthy communication culture in our organisations. One such example is [non-violent communication](#), which is a great tool to learn about with our teams.



#### Activity

One practical tool you can use to increase the gender balance in your team meetings is the [Gender Avenger](#) app. Use it to track if men are talking more in meetings, and if your results indicate that men take up more space, think about strategies to rebalance that distribution of speaking time.

### 4. VALUING AND REASSURING

Check-ins are all about creating space for people to be themselves and share about how they are doing. **Especially**

<sup>8</sup>Yahoo Management: [The stark reality of how men dominate talking in meetings](#)

**when collaboration only happens online, it's crucial to offer a moment for human connection.** However, people should feel invited - not pressured to share about their private lives. No one should feel obliged to share when they might not feel safe or comfortable sharing.

### 5. SAFER SPACE

Creating a safer space is not only important in our programs. Read more about creating safer spaces in the [inclusive programs section](#). We need to keep in mind that creating a safer space is not done by proclaiming it a space safe. Rather, **we need to establish ways in which people can safely share if they are actually feeling safe** - and then listen carefully. When most meetings happen online, there is a special need for safeguarding people's wellbeing because non-verbal cues are hard to be deciphered. That's when check-ins and check-outs become even more important.

We need to make sure that everyone has opportunities to grow within the organisation. One way of doing so is by enabling people to know their strengths and ensuring that they are supported in their professional development. Other ways include offering training or mentoring opportunities that are available for everyone, and making sure people's efforts to grow are seen and rewarded.



## Activity

The [VIA Character](#) survey can be a great starting point to foster a reflection in your team about each person's unique set of strengths. Have everyone fill out the questionnaire and discuss the results.

## 7. ACCESS TO SUPPORT

Besides clear policies around inclusion, **we should make support structures and resources readily available.** Everyone in the organisation should know the answer to the following questions and be able to access the necessary resources or contacts: *How can I get support in delivering my tasks? How can I further develop within the organisation? What do I do when I feel uncomfortable with something in the organisation?*



### Learn more

- Deloitte: [Belonging - From comfort to connection to contribution](#)
- Wharton: [Beyond Diversity: How Firms Are Cultivating a Sense of Belonging](#)
- Rebekah Bastian: [Why Imposter Syndrome Hits Underrepresented Identities Harder, And How Employers Can Help](#)

- Virtual not Distant: [Psychological Safety in online Meetings](#)
- BBC Worklife: [Mansplaining, explained in one simple chart](#)



### Tips and Tools

- Learning Hub: [An Employer's Guide to Using Gender-Inclusive Language in the Workplace](#)
- Gender Auender: [Gender Auenger Tally App](#)
- Yoram Mosenzon (video): [Introduction to Nonviolent Communication](#)
- Hyper Island Toolbox: [Check-in and Check-out Questions](#)



## Case Study

### *BJV, Austria*

The Federal Youth Council of Austria aims at representing the needs and perspectives of youth and children in political debates in all areas. The association was founded in 2001 and represents all major youth organisations (political, religious and others) from across Austria.

While taking different types of diversity very seriously, the work of the BJV stands out in the area of gender equality. The organisation has gained national and international awareness for following a clear policy (as stated in the organisation's statutes) of gender parity. In the bi-yearly elections for the organisation's board and steering committee, their policy and process ensure that women and men are represented equally in those positions. For example, for the steering committee, the two highest voted women and two highest voted men are elected. Besides, the representatives who attend the general assembly where the votation happens are also required to represent their organisations in gender parity - meaning no organisation can just send women or just send men to represent them. "This has challenged some organisations and really

made them reflect about gender equality within their structure. Some had to increase female and some male participation."

Another practice that contributes to gender equality at BJV is the organisation's "declaration of commitment to gender mainstreaming" that each active board member signs before starting their term. It's available [here](#) (in German).

Finally, all steering and board meetings of the organisation are guided by a gender watch protocol that helps in observing if the organisation's agreed-up practices regarding gender equality are being followed. That includes observing if men or women are talking more than the other group, if either of the groups is interrupting the other, or if gender-neutral language is being used. It's a tool to foster reflection on daily practices around gender equality. "Of course, the tool is still very binary, so we need to also keep in mind that not everyone falls into those categories."

Get the BJV's toolbox on gender [here](#) (in German). ●



4

## MAKING OUR PROGRAMS INCLUSIVE

As the SALTO Inclusion & Diversity article “International youth projects benefit most those with fewer opportunities” points out, having access to international youth projects is especially beneficial for marginalized young people. **For these young people to truly apply to, engage with and learn from our programs, we need to make sure that the content and form of what we offer reflects participant’s needs and experiences.** No one should feel that our programs are disconnected from what they have experienced in life and what they are expecting from life to come.

Accessibility is a core element of the guideline of non-formal education that the Council of Europe has established<sup>9</sup>. Innumerable publications on inclusive programs can help us in bringing diversity management to the program level. The following sections address some of the key areas:

<sup>9</sup>Council of Europe: [Definitions](#)



### Learn more

- European Commission: [EU Youth Strategy](#)
- SALTO Inclusion & Diversity: [International youth projects benefit most those with fewer opportunities](#)
- SALTO Inclusion & Diversity: [How to make the European Youth Programmes more inclusive](#)
- Unesco: [Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education](#)
- SALTO Inclusion & Diversity (video): [ID Talk Impact](#)



### Tips and Tools

- DARE: [Practical Guide for Inclusion](#)
- NOW: [NOW Journey Blueprint](#)
- SALTO Inclusion & Diversity: [Clever ways to measure the impact of your EU Youth project on inclusion and diversity](#)



## Case Study

### *Masorti, Germany*

Masorti provides learning opportunities for Jews in Germany and beyond. The organisation runs a Jewish kindergarten and school and offers educational activities for adults.

Masorti serves a very diverse audience of Jewish families, often with different national backgrounds. "Children in our kindergarten speak more than 10 different languages at home." Masorti offers bilingual schooling - either German and Hebrew or German and English - having always at least one educational staff speaking either language. They have learned that compared to many other schools, their approach really values the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of their students - while creating a common ground in their shared Jewish identity.

While they aim at strengthening their students' Jewish identity through the practice of Jewish traditions, Masorti wants to create space for a dialogue with other identities. "We live a modern Judaism of equal opportunities".

Their openness and modern perspective on Judaism has made them a very successful provider of volunteering opportunities in the European Solidarity Corps. Today, they do not only welcome volunteers in their school and kindergarten from different countries; they also help other Jewish organisations find international volunteers. The majority of the young people that join Masorti as volunteers are not Jewish - allowing for a dialogue and mutual enrichment.

## In Preparation

### REACHING A MORE DIVERSE AUDIENCE



A key question many organisations active in youth work and international projects keep asking themselves is: how can we reach young people with fewer opportunities in our programs? **It's not enough to say "everyone is welcome" without actually developing strategies to reach young people and take down the barriers that could keep them from applying and participating fully.** We also need to always question ourselves if what we offer is actually interesting for the people we are hoping to reach and if they feel that our organisation can be trusted.

Different organisations that are successful in this have developed strategies that include offering low threshold opportunities for young people to get to know the organisation and partnering with other organisations that are already working with the group they are hoping to reach. Another possibility is to look for institutions (like schools or social services) that serve a diverse audience and embed our offering there.

It is also important to reflect about our communication strategies. Some questions can include:

- What language do we use in our materials? Is it only in English or also in local languages? Are we making our materials available in minority languages?
- If we use English, are we using simple, easy-to-understand language and short texts?
- Are our materials and online presence accessible for people with disabilities?
- Who do we represent in our communication material? Do young people with fewer opportunities see themselves in those images? Does it help them feel confident to apply?
- In the application form, are we asking questions that might make people feel uncomfortable?
- Are the questions - and the answers we offer - inclusive? For example, if we need to ask people about their gender identity, are we providing options for trans and non-binary people to answer?



## Case Study

### *Asylkoordination Österreich, Austria*

The Erasmus+ K3 Project “Unaccompanied minor refugees united: Democratisation, participation and self-organisation of unaccompanied minor refugees” by Asylkoordination Österreich focused on connecting young people with migrant backgrounds from all over Austria and empowering them to participate actively in their own realities and the political scenario in the country. As a result, the participants created their own organisation “Bunt”, to have a say in Austrian and European politics.

Participation was a key concept for the project: “We actively talked about what participation means and reflected on how each young person can influence their reality.”

As a best practice in reaching the participants, the project coordinator highlights the importance of using the right communication channels. “Email doesn’t work with this group. What works best is Whatsapp, and ideally, you talk to each person individually. It’s more work, but it means they will have all the information and will show up.”

Other barriers that we can help reduce when we communicate our program offers are linked to economic differences. Are we charging participation fees? If yes, are scholarships available? For some people that might include more than just free access to the program. Are we covering visa fees? What about the travel costs to the embassy to apply for the visa? Rather than a reimbursement approach, some people might need to get the cash upfront.

Young people who have never traveled abroad might require individual support. For them, it could be important to be able to talk through the trip step by step to take away any worry they may have. Also, remember that **people might feel uncomfortable to have to ask for financial support**, so we need to be upfront about what kind of support we are able to make available for those who need it.

More reflections on the application process and administrative support can be found in the SALTO Inclusion and Diversity publication “Inclusion A to Z.” (see “Learn More)



### Learn more

- *Inclusion Europe: [Make Your Information Accessible: European Standards for Making Information Easy to Read and Understand.](#)*

- EU-CoE Youth Partnership: [Between insecurity and hope. Reflections on youth work with young refugees](#)
- SALTO Inclusion & Diversity: [Inclusion A to Z](#)



## Case Study

### [Giuvlipen Roma Feminist Theatre, Romania](#)

Giuvlipen is a theatre company that started its work in 2014, founded by Roma actresses Mihaela Dragan and Zita Moldovan. The name of the company is an attempt to translate “feminism” into Romani language: guivli = women, pen = abstract suffix for collective nouns.

“For us, intersectionality is a theatre practice”. For their programs, they easily reach participants with fewer opportunities. Most of their participants are Roma or other ethnic minorities, LGBTQI+, most are women and non-white. “When we realized how difficult it was to find Roma actresses for our company, we went to work in a Roma neighbourhood to train young people, and we found a lot of

talents. We give these young people more space so that they can take the lead and take responsibility for the company.”

Recently, in an Erasmus+: Youth in Action funded project, Giuvlipen Feminist Theatre Company trained 4 young people from different corners of Romania to become multipliers of their approach: three of them were women, two LGBTQI+, all were minorities. Today, the company is able to reach these young because, over the years, they have built a network and a name for themselves. It is not uncommon for people to reach out to the organisation hoping to become a participant.

Giuvlipen works on diversity on all different levels: being a highly diverse collective of people that keeps looking for new perspectives, having not just diverse participants but giving them an opportunity to join the company, and finally also influencing the mainstream perspectives in Romanian culture by creating [visibility](#) for non-male, non-white actresses through occupying mainstream public institutions. “We don’t want to stay in marginality”.

Giuvlipen: [Roma Heroes Project](#)

## PREPARING FOR AN INCLUSIVE EVENT



The process of making our spaces as safe as possible for participants starts before the program even begins. **Young people are only going to apply for a program if they are sure that they will**

**be safe there.** For some, that might include have certainty that the food offered will be inclusive, that they will have barrier-free access to all rooms and activities, that they will be able to communicate with others and that they will not face any discrimination of any kind. **It's our challenge to give this security to people who might have experienced life not to always provide this kind of safety.** Topics to consider before the event starts are:

### SPECIAL NEEDS

It's important to ask ahead of time if people need any specific support or have any specific needs (e.g. allergies, food restrictions, mobility needs etc). We need to keep in mind that if we ask, we must commit to providing what people need. If we are not able to do that, we have to let people know ahead of time.

### VALUES

Inclusion and valuing diversity should be something everyone contributes to. We need to be outspoken about with our participants even before the event starts. Besides, the values also need to be discussed in the team to make sure everyone is on the same page.

### BATHROOMS

Everyone during an in-person event needs to feel comfortable using the bathroom. Not everyone might feel safe in a bathroom that is shared among everyone. On the other hand, having a gender neutral toilet is crucial for trans or

non-binary people. Ideally, we provide female, male and gender neutral bathrooms. So we need to check beforehand if that is possible at the venue.

### VENUE

The choice of venue is one of the key elements in making the logistics of our programs inclusive. Being barrier-free, meaning that all spaces are accessible for people with specific mobility needs, is a crucial element. Having outdoor space for people to go for a walk is also important for people's wellbeing. The bedrooms should allow for a distribution that makes everyone feel comfortable.

### LANGUAGE SUPPORT

For some people, interpreters are crucial to be included in the program. Think about those who didn't have the opportunity to learn English, or people who use sign language. Ideally, we have a professional team of interpreters. If not possible, we should make sure it's several people who can rotate in the job since interpreting is a very tiring and demanding activity.

### FOOD

The food we offer during in-person events is crucial for people to feel well. Besides looking out for sustainability and health, food also has an important element of inclusion. People can have food restrictions for different reasons. Rather than singling people out for their food restrictions by offering things apart, we should aim at cooking meals that everyone can eat

together. It might not always be possible to offer food that is halal, kosher, vegan, gluten-free and that takes all allergies into account, but we can certainly aim at having at least some meals that are suitable for everyone. Some food items - like meat or milk products - don't need to be in all meals, for example, making the food a lot more inclusive. If needed, these food items can also be offered on the side, so that everything else can be enjoyed by everyone.

## INCLUSIVE PROGRAM DESIGN



A useful concept when designing our programs and sessions is “universal design”. Universal design means:

*“The design of products and environments to be usable to the greatest extent possible by people of all ages and abilities”<sup>11</sup>*

A common example for universal design are automatic doors or ramps, which are essential for people who are in a wheelchair, but benefit also other groups of people like parents with a stroller, elderly people, people who are carrying something, etc.

We can also apply the concept of universal design to the space of learning. There, **universal design summarizes approaches that give all learners an equal opportunity to succeed**. In youth work, besides applying universal design to the space and other logisti-

<sup>11</sup>Center for Universal Design: [Universal Design Principles](#)

cal aspects of the work, universal design requires us to be flexible and adapt tasks and offer different ways people can make contributions: writing, speaking, moving their body, drawing etc.

Some important steps for us to take to make our programs and sessions inclusive are:<sup>12</sup>

**UNDERSTANDING WHO OUR AUDIENCE IS:** It's not about making assumptions but really trying to find out who our participants are and what needs they have.

**CONSIDERING MULTIPLE LEARNING APPROACHES AND NEEDS:** People like to learn through a diverse set of methods. So we should diversify how we deliver content and allow participants to engage. For each activity or session, consider the questions: whose participation is this favouring? Whose participation is it limiting?

**BEING AWARE OF YOUR OWN BIASES AS WE DESIGN THE PROGRAM:** We should reflect on some of the assumptions that we have about certain activities and how they should be facilitated. Also, we need to pay special attention to how we will be sharing information or knowledge (regardless if it comes from ourselves or others) and who we are making it accessible to.

**KNOWING (AND OWNING) THE LIMITATIONS OF OUR SESSIONS:** It's important to accept the limitations that we face

<sup>12</sup>For more details, check out Acpa: [10 steps for designing and facilitating inclusive at Conventions and Conferences](#)



in terms of space and time and be aware of the limitations we may have in our team in terms of knowledge and experience.



### Learn more

- *EU-CoE Youth Partnership: [Learning mobility, social inclusion and non-formal education. Access, processes and outcomes](#)*
- *University of Washington - Doit: [Universal Design for Learning](#)*
- *Design for all foundation: [Design for All is design tailored to human diversity](#)*
- *Sinéad Burke (TED Talk): [Why Design should include everyone](#)*
- *Antionette Caroll (TED Talk): [Designing for Justice](#)*



### Tips and Tools

- *Acpa: [10 steps for designing and facilitating inclusive at Conventions and Conferences](#)*
- *EU-CoE Youth Partnership: [T-Kit 4: Intercultural Learning](#)*



## Case Study

### *[Pudcad, Turkey](#)*

Pudcad is an initiative that had its origin at Istanbul Technical University. It started with the experience of people with disabilities still facing a lot of physical barriers. "Being at the design department, we realized that design practices in Turkey were not inclusive at all. There is legislation, but so far, it hasn't improved a lot of things." So Pudcad was created to create awareness around inclusive design.

In 2017, Pudcad started as a KA2 Erasmus+: Youth in Action project that explores how gamification can increase understanding and awareness of inclusive design practices among design students. Having an understanding of inclusive design and about the physical barriers people with disabilities face, students will be able to design spaces that are inclusive. "The game focuses on universal design principles applied to creating an inclusive high school for the youths with disabilities."

The Pudcad team made sure that the project partners brought different perspectives to the project. The aim was to balance finding

the right approach to educate students and to represent the needs of people with disabilities. The project includes several European universities and Turkish organisations. ED, for example, is the Occupational Therapy Association of Turkey. "They were able to point out all our blindspots." Besides, Pudcad includes Sercev, the Turkish Association for the Well-being of Children with Cerebral Palsy - helping them to understand what specific needs children and youth have when it comes to school design.

The [beta version of the Pudcad game](#) is already available. In it, players experience what happens to a person in a wheelchair in a high school that does not apply universal design - and get an opportunity to change the makeup of the high school and allow the student to move freely.

Project partners also include Bahcesehir University Foundation; Università degli Studi di Firenze, POLIMI, Department of Design, Politecnico di Milano; OWL University of Applied Science and Arts, Department Detmold School of Architecture and Interior Architecture; LAB University of Applied Sciences Institute of Design and Fine Arts.

## During the event

### FACILITATION

Those of us who guide and facilitate group processes have a crucial role in making our programs inclusive - many of the reflections shared in the inclusive design practice are also important for facilitators to consider. Holding space for diversity requires us to put into practice the competences discussed earlier in this document, and support our participants in also developing them.

In simple terms, **our objective as facilitators is to ensure that everyone feels comfortable and safe, can learn and contribute.** For that to be possible, we need participants to be able to trust us. Creating a safer space (see below) is thus a key step towards inclusion in our learning spaces.

Besides, facilitating diverse groups requires us to be open to adapt our language and methods to the group. Like with any group, we need to constantly be aware if we need to change the way we are conducting the processes and communicating with the group. Using accessible language and creating space for the group to make suggestions or give feedback are two ground rules that work in most settings.

Humbleness, which was mentioned earlier in this document, is especially crucial for facilitators: **generally - but especially when linked to people's experiences and identities - we are as much learners as our participants.** We should thus not present ourselves as owners of wisdom, but as co-learners. Otherwise, as in Stefan's case, we risk shutting out participants and not helping to make them feel comfortable to share. Besides that, we must be always aware of our own biases and assumptions that we tend to make while facilitating and interacting with people. Remaining open and curious to get to know the actual people we are working with (and not a previously conceived idea of who they are and what they need) is essential.

Addressing discrimination and pointing out biases and differences in privilege requires facilitators to train their ability to facilitate difficult dialogues (see section about difficult conversations). Topics around diversity can be challenging to discuss. That is why it is important to assume positive intent.

If someone does say something that crosses a boundary, Teaching Tolerance<sup>13</sup> suggests a **“zero-indifference policy” as opposed to a “zero-tolerance policy”**. In other words, rather than silencing or punishing participants for any harmful behaviours and speeches, “zero-indifference” suggests to gently let them know why what they did or shared was problematic. As such, we need to make sure that no harmful behaviour or speech goes unaddressed. Remember that everyone is learning.

<sup>13</sup>Teaching Tolerance: [Let's Talk - Facilitating Critical Conversations with Students](#)



#### Learn more

- SALTO Inclusion & Diversity: [Ideas for Inclusion and Diversity](#)
- Schools of Future Youth: [The Skills of a Youth Facilitator](#)
- Nectarius: [How to facilitate learning during youth exchanges](#)



#### Tips and Tools

- SALTO-YOUTH: [Hundreds of useful tools for learning - for youth work and training activities](#)
- EU-CoE Youth Partnership: [T-kit 6 - Training Essentials](#)
- EU-CoE Youth Partnership: [STEP-by-STEP together - Support, Tips, Examples and Possibilities for youth work with young refugees](#)
- Kristina Ruiz-Mesa and Karla M. Hunter: [Best Practices for Facilitating Difficult Dialogues in the Basic Communication Course](#)

## SAFER SPACE



A safer space can be described as a **supportive, non-threatening environment that encourages everyone to be respectful and learn from one another and where all participants feel comfortable to express themselves and share their experiences**. A safer space requires critical awareness about the power structures that influence the people present in the space. There's also another concept worth exploring called "brave spaces".

When it comes to safer space, it's important that we learn from and with our participants about how to make them feel safe. It's key that we are able to listen without judgment and without wanting to influence how a person feels. Using the word "safer" space rather than "safe" space, we acknowledge that safety is relative and that not everyone feels safe under the same conditions. Some rules worth establishing are:

- For physical encounters: we should choose a space that is appropriate for people's needs, accessible for everyone and where everyone's physical safety can be guaranteed.
- At arrival and through our events, we should be warm and welcoming, showing that we care about people's wellbeing. Music, decoration, food, all of this can make a big difference.
- We need to learn and respect the pronouns and names of everyone. We cannot assume anyone's gender identity, sex-

ual preference, economic status, background, health, religion, etc.

- We should have clear rules of engagement, for example in the form of a group contract.
- We need to respect everyone's physical and emotional boundaries. We cannot force anyone to participate in any activity. It's important to ask first before touching or posing questions that may make people vulnerable. If someone tells us that they are uncomfortable, we need to apologize, listen and change our behavior.
- Different methods allow people to participate in different ways. Silent discussions or small group conversations may make it easier for someone to feel at ease to contribute.
- We need to respect people's opinions, beliefs, experiences and differing points of view.
- We cannot force anyone to share their story and should never share what we heard from participants with people who weren't there.
- We should be responsible for our actions and for what we are communicating through them. We need to observe if only men are doing the talking, women are cleaning up, etc. If so, we need to look for the best way to intervene.



- We should invite everyone - including ourselves - to be aware of our prejudices and privileges and work actively to overcome them.
- Checking with participants before using cameras or recording devices means respecting their privacy.
- Being around people with different backgrounds sometimes means that we will make mistakes - misgender someone, ask an insensitive question or engage with someone in a way that they do not feel comfortable with. It's important that there's space to openly talk about and reflect about these mistakes, while also, always, remaining accountable for our mistakes.
- We need to take care of our own safety and boundaries.



#### Learn more

- *Break Away*: [Do we need safe or brave spaces?](#)
- *Brian Arao and Kristi Clemens*: [From Safe spaces to brave spaces](#)



#### Tips and Tools

- *Mental Health Commission of Canada*: [Guide to safer space](#)



## Case Study

### [Anti-Racist Forum, Finland](#)

Anti-Racist Forum (ARF) is a non-governmental organization in Finland that works for social justice by promoting critical intersectional voices relating to anti-racist work and practices.

Having an intersectional framework and meaningful representation are core practices of the organisation. The leadership consists of a multiracial board of people of diverse backgrounds, experiences and expertise - with those racialised as non-white taking more of a lead on defining the anti-racist work. Employed persons of the organisation have all identified as racialised minorities.

In 2018, the organisation implemented a European Solidarity Corps project to tackle the issue of underrepresentation of youth of color in Finnish universities, especially within social sciences. In their work, the project tackled both visible barriers - for example, by offering free preparation courses for university entrance exams - and invisible barriers, for example, through offering mentoring sessions helping students of color to navigate the [dominance](#) of whiteness in academia. Later on, one of the project's alumni co-founded the student organization SOCO Students of Color at the University of Helsinki. No such group existed before.

For the Anti-Racist Forum, creating Safer Spaces is a key concept in promoting inclusion in their activities. Each of their events starts with establishing a Safer Space by sharing their Safer Space Rules.

## INCLUSIVE PROGRAMS ONLINE



In the online space, the barriers that young people face to participate take on a bit of a different shape and our inclusion practices need to be adjusted accordingly. Barriers in the virtual space include access to tools (having a functioning computer or cell-phone that allows participants to install any necessary software or app) and connectivity (having access to stable internet connection to participate fully in all sessions).

Access to virtual programs for people with disabilities depends on each person's specific needs. A good starting point to learn about accessibility online are the W3C guidelines. Keep in mind that online activities can be very tiring for everyone, even more people with certain disabilities. So keep your activities short and use different methods.

When working online, **we also need to keep in mind the social and psychological barriers that can affect people's participation in online programs.** That includes people not feeling confident enough to use technology or to appear on screen or speak into a microphone. Besides, people might not have a quiet space from where to call in or not feel comfortable sharing their environment (as background in the call). That means that we should never force anyone to turn on their camera or to speak. We can have alternative participation options like writing in the chat, for example or low threshold participation like quizzes or polls.



### Learn more

- *EU-CoE Youth Partnership: [Social Inclusion, Digitalisation and Young People - Research study](#)*
- *MOOC Digital Youth Work: [Webinar on Digital Exclusion vs Inclusion in Digital World](#)*
- *[SALTO Inclusion & Diversity: ID Talks Digital](#)*
- *Michele Di Paola + graphic recordings by Olalla Gonzalez: [How do you make online youth activities inclusive?](#)*



### Tips and Tools

- *Dan Moxon: [Online youth work and participation padlet - tools, tips and practices](#)*
- *World YMCA: [Virtual safer space](#)*
- *W3C: [Web Accessibility Guidelines](#)* ●



# CONTRIBUTING TO A MORE EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY

As an actor of civil society, we also have a responsibility to position ourselves openly and to promote a more diverse and inclusive society. We can do that through campaigns and partnerships, among other approaches. Below are some important points to keep in mind.

Inclusion on a societal level requires **collaboration**. A good starting point is to find allies and like-minded organisations to connect with and position yourself together for a stronger voice. And always remember the slogan: “**Nothing about us without us.**” We should never design or decide anything about any group without their full involvement. Participation and collaboration at eye level are key prerequisites for sustainable approaches to inclusion.

Certain groups will need support and resources to be able to contribute actively. In that sense, **diversity management at the societal level is also about removing barriers**. Working to remove barriers might also require us to take a **political stand** towards policies and laws that might exclude and discriminate against certain groups.



Learn more

- SALTO Participation & Information: [Resource Pool](#)
- Frank D. Golom: [Alternate Conversations for Creating Whole-System Change around Diversity and Inclusion](#)



imProve  
emPOW

## Case Study

*Emprove, Bulgaria*

Originated in a Erasmus+ project, Emprove is now a Bulgaria-based NGO that offers support for women suffering from domestic violence. The project started with the idea of a gamified app that offers online mentoring as a suitable, meaningful, long-term solution for women leaving crisis centres. The project was highly successful, which is why it continued beyond the 2 years project duration. The Emprove team today counts nearly 100 volunteers, made up of



psychologists, lawyers, domestic violence survivors, as well as filmmakers and journalists. Together, they do not only support women on their journey to self-discovery, confidence, empowerment and increased economic independence, they also work on campaigns to raise awareness in the broader society.

Among other things, the organisation has been able to show a short-film in tube stations and cinemas, and is working on different urban interventions. "To really make a difference in our society, we need to go beyond like-minded people." One way the organisation does that is by inviting high-profile speakers for their free public events in which also survivors and therapists talk. "We want to reduce the tolerance for violence, raise awareness for non-physical types of violence, and help people understand what they can do when they observe early signs of violence."

One of the challenges the organisation faces is how survivors of domestic violence are portrayed in the media. "We work actively so that these women are not victimized, because they are the most powerful role models and sources of inspiration for women who are still in violent relationships". Lately, journalists who want to write about Emprove, or interview one of the survivors, need to first be approved: "we interview them before they are allowed to interview us, just to make sure they will have an empowering tone and don't have any hidden agenda."

The group of volunteers contributing to Emprove is very diverse - especially in age. "It's important that everyone feels comfortable to share their perspective and doesn't feel intimidated". Conscious group facilitating helps in creating inclusive processes of communication and reducing the possibility that negative group dynam-

ics are activated. Conversations in the organisation, for example, usually happen in small groups before sharing back to the bigger group. Like that, everyone has space to speak and be heard.

Besides, the organisation has a clear set of values. "Everybody needs to seek and understand differences of viewpoints and we do not tolerate offensive language". The organisation's code of ethics describes these values and is used when new volunteers join. "We have had very few volunteers who were not a good fit. Besides making the organisation's values very clear, it's probably because everyone is here for the same reason: they want to protect human and women's rights. Being unified around a shared "WHY" is always a solid foundation for effective collaboration." ●



# CONCLUSION

**Working for equity, diversity and inclusion is a long-term project and requires us to get active on many different levels.** We should not be intimidated by the size of the challenge that bringing diversity management to our organisations might represent; rather, we should be inspired by the opportunities for individual and organisational growth. Most organisations that are active in local and international youth work already care deeply about fostering meaningful experiences for development of youth. The more we can bring a diversity of perspectives and backgrounds to our team, the more we can reach and support diverse youth in our services and offers as well.

The most important thing is not necessarily where we start - among the many different layers shared in this publication. What matters most is that we avoid getting stuck or paralysed waiting for answers, and focus on actively starting to do the work.





# GLOSSARY

**Access/Accessible:** The quality of being able to access opportunities and spaces (physically or not). Equal accessibility is reached through the removal of barriers.

**Allyship:** A person of one social identity group that stands up in support of members of another group - often members of dominant groups standing beside members of marginalized groups.

**Affirmative Action:** Policies and practices of institutions and governments that seek to counter-balance systemic and historical inequities - for example, by increasing the access of specific groups in areas such as employment or education.

**Antidiscrimination:** Attitudes or policies that oppose and aim at preventing discrimination.

**Anti-racism:** The active and conscious process of opposing racism and working to dismantle systemic and individual forms of discrimination linked to race.

**Barriers:** Barriers are structures, policies, practices, and beliefs that limit or prevent some people's access to opportunities that are available to others. There are several types of barriers: physical barriers (for example in the form of walls, stairs, etc.), socio-economic barriers (such as lack of access to financial resources), systemic (such as racism, sexism and other



forms of discrimination) or psychological barriers (for example in the form of feelings of inferiority or internalized oppression).

**Bias:** An inclination, prejudice or preference that influences our judgement of other people. Can be conscious or unconscious / implicit. Biases are constructed through socialisation, and often lead to internalizing systemic discriminations present in our societies.

**Cisgender:** Having one's gender identity consistent with the sex assigned to one at birth - as opposed to transgender.

**Citizenship status:** A legal status referring to one's right (or lack thereof) to live in a state and not face deportation.

**Discrimination:** The denial of just and fair treatment on the basis of the social groups to which persons or groups are perceived to belong. Discrimination is based on prejudiced thinking and can be exercised by individuals or institutions. It can have many different forms in areas such as housing, political rights, employment, etc.

**Diversity:** Acknowledging the different characteristics in which individuals and groups differ from one another (for example, age, socio-economic status, gender, religion, sexual orientation, race, etc.) and striving to have the different identities in our society represented in the spaces we are part of.

**Dominance/Dominant identity group:** A social identity that holds more privilege, visibility and control over resources than other social identities in a given society. The cultural values and practices of that social identity are often perceived as the "norm".

**Ethnicity:** The social identity of a person that is linked to belonging to a

social group that shares national or regional tradition that can include history, ancestry, religion, language, cultural artifacts and practices.

**Equity (as opposed to inequity):** Seeking fair and just treatment and opportunities for everyone. Unlike equality, which is about seeking equal treatment for everyone, equity takes into account the structural factors that favour certain groups and marginalize others. As a result, justice might, in some cases, require an unequal treatment for different groups or individuals to make sure that each of them has access to the same opportunities.

**Equality:** Being equal in status and having access to the same resources and treatment.

**Gender Identity:** A person's conception of their gender and understanding of oneself as male, female or non-binary (among other options).

**Identity (Personal/Social):** Personal identity describes the individual characteristics that make up who we are. These include qualifications, lifestyles, preferences, personality, beliefs, talents, etc. Social identity, on the other hand, describes a person's sense of who they are based on the social groups (gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, class, age-group, etc.) they belong to.

**Impostor Syndrome:** An individual feeling of self-doubt linked to a psychological pattern of doubting one's capability, talents and accomplishments. Often, imposter syndrome makes people unworthy of success and affects their self-esteem and ability to direct their career.

**Inclusion:** Actively and intentionally removing barriers for the participation of groups and individuals with lesser opportunities, and valuing the diversity of backgrounds, beliefs, identities, capabilities, and ways of life.

**Intersectionality:** An intersectional perspective suggests that classifications like gender, race or sexual orientation cannot be examined in isolation from each other because each person has many interconnected social identities. These intersectional identities mean that some people can experience several overlapping forms of disadvantage that may even aggravate the other.

**Justice:** Fair treatment aligned with a moral perspective of what is just.

**LGBTQIA+:** An acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, asexual and other groups that are marginalized due to their gender identity and/or sexual orientation.

**Mansplaining:** A man talking in a condescending and patronizing way to someone (usually a woman) about something that person is already familiar with, having the mistaken assumption that he knows more about it than the person he's talking to.

**Marginalisation:** The process of excluding certain groups or individuals from a society or community and putting them in a powerless position.

**Microaggression:** Verbal, nonverbal or environmental messages or actions that invalidate or insult people of certain marginalized groups. Microaggressions are indirect, subtle and sometimes unintentional forms of discrimination and "otherization".

**Nonviolent communication:** An approach to nonviolent interactions and relationships developed by Marshall Rosenberg beginning in the 1960s.

**Norm:** Informal rules or expected behaviours that are perceived to be default for a certain group.

**Oppression:** The systemic, unfair and pervasive – often unconscious – ways that dominant groups unjustly maintain privilege and power by marginalizing other groups.

**Pinkwashing:** A critical term used to describe marketing strategies that appropriate the LGBTQIA+ movement to promote a particular corporate or political agenda, while overshadowing negative behaviour.

**Participation:** Involving groups in decision-making processes on issues that affect them.

**Power:** The ability of an individual or group to achieve their own goals and influence events, resources, and the behaviour of others.

**Privilege:** The unearned advantages, benefits and rights given to people who belong to certain social groups. For example: male privilege, white privilege, etc.).

**Pronouns:** Words that can substitute a noun or a noun phrase. In English and in many languages, the pronouns we use to refer to people who are being talked about are gendered, and in most cases there are only two sets of gendered pronouns: one typically used to refer to men/males, and another one to refer to women/females. A gender neutral or gender inclusive pronoun is a pronoun which does not associate a gender with the individual who is being discussed. For a list of gender inclusive pronouns in English, check out: <https://askanonbinary.tumblr.com/>.

**Race:** An often misleading classification of human beings according to certain physical characteristics such as skin color.



**Racism:** Individual and institutional prejudices and practices that discriminate against people because of their (perceived) race.

**Racial Profiling:** The discriminatory practice of police officers and security professionals targeting and suspecting people based on their perceived race or ethnicity.

**Salience/salient:** The process of a certain identity of a person being invoked or standing out in a social interaction or a certain setting.

**Safer Space:** A supportive, non-threatening environment that encourages everyone to be respectful and learn from each other, and where all participants feel comfortable to express themselves and share their experiences.

**Sexual orientation:** A person's sexual and emotional attractions and preference in sexual partners.

**Social Justice:** Social justice describes the fair and equitable participation of all groups in society. This includes justice in terms of the distribution of wealth, social and political rights, and economic resources and opportunities.

**Socially-constructed:** A concept or perception of something that doesn't exist inherently or naturally, but has been created and shaped by human interaction in a certain community or society.

**Systems of Oppression:** Historically constructed and organized patterns, norms and institutions of discrimination and marginalization. All "-isms" are forms of oppression which are often reinforced by systems like education, culture, and the government.

**Transgender:** Having one's gender identity differ from the sex assigned at birth - as opposed to cisgender.

**Visibility:** The state of a certain group or individual being visible within a group or society. For example, in films and other cultural representations. Marginalised groups often suffer from a lack of visibility leading to a perception that this group is not part of a certain society or shouldn't have access to certain spaces. ●



# ANNEX 1 SELF-ASSESSMENT

In the section “Starting at the individual level”, we introduced several competences that help us navigate differences and manage diversity. Below you can find a short self-assessment sheet that can help you reflect on your own development in each of these competences. For each situation shared, reflect on what answer (from never to always) best represents you. Make sure to answer how you tend to behave in real life, rather than how you think you should behave and what you consider to be the correct answer.

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
<p>Active Listening:</p> <p><i>1. When I talk to someone who has a different opinion than I do, I am able to focus on understanding what they are saying, rather than thinking how I am going to respond.</i></p> <p><i>2. In conversations with others, I make sure to ask clarification questions and paraphrase what I've heard to check my understanding.</i></p>				

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
<p>Bias recognition:</p> <p>1. I'm aware when I automatically judge someone and I can consciously decide how my judgement will affect my behaviour.</p> <p>2. can see how my feelings about certain social groups are related to how I was socialized and the way they are generally portrayed in society.</p>				
<p>Critical Thinking:</p> <p>1. When I hear something negative about other people or certain social groups, I make sure to look for other perspectives before having my own opinion.</p> <p>2. When I need to make a decision, I am able to look at a situation from many different angles.</p>				
<p>Empathy:</p> <p>1. When I'm working in a team and someone does not deliver their part, I try to understand why they may have struggled to get their work done.</p> <p>2. When I disagree with something a colleague decided, I try to look at the situation from their perspective.</p>				

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
<p>Interpersonal communication:</p> <p>1. When I meet someone who doesn't speak the local language very fluently, I can easily adapt my communication style so that person can better understand me.</p> <p>2. When a participant in a program shares a problem with me in an indirect way, I'm able to understand what they are saying to find a solution together with them.</p>				
<p>Open-mindedness</p> <p>1. When working in a team, I'm open to feedback and suggestions, even if I already have a quite clear idea on how I want to do things.</p> <p>2. When someone corrects me for saying something insensitive, I apologize and correct myself immediately.</p>				
<p>Self-awareness:</p> <p>1. In my interactions with others, I am aware of how my different identities affect my perspectives.</p> <p>2. In situations of conflict, I'm able to perceive how I'm feeling and what my needs are.</p>				

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
<p>Solidarity:</p> <p>1. <i>If I hear about a marginalized group fighting for their rights, I seek to listen and understand how I can support them.</i></p> <p>2. <i>In a situation where I have more privilege than the other people in the room, I listen more than I talk and avoid taking up much space.</i></p>				
<p>Tolerance of Ambiguity:</p> <p>1. <i>When I'm in a conversation with different people, I can see how there are different perspectives that are valid, even if they are not mine.</i></p> <p>2. <i>I can work on a project without always having full clarity on each step of the process or the people who will be involved.</i></p>				
<p>Understanding and valuing differences:</p> <p>1. <i>When working in a team with people with several different identities and backgrounds, I see how our differences can influence our perspectives and interactions.</i></p> <p>2. <i>When doing group work, I deeply believe that having different perspectives and opinions enriches the processes and interactions.</i></p>				

Now, take a look at your answers. This self-assessment gives you a starting point for further developing these competences. Start with those in which you answered “never” or “sometimes” for one or both of the statements. Ask yourself: how could I further develop these competences? You can also discuss these statements and your reflections on them with colleagues or friends - they might bring in a different perspective about your competences and strengths. ●





## ANNEX 2 ORGANISATIONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT

The organisational self-assessment can help you understand how your organisation is doing in terms of diversity and accessibility. Ideally, fill it out together with your team to discuss answers, making sure everyone can share their perspective. You can also distribute the questionnaire for the team to fill it out individually and then compare answers.

<b>POLICIES</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Partially</b>	<b>No</b>
Your organisation has written documents that outline your commitment to diversity and inclusion.			
Anti-discrimination policies are in place and known to everyone in the organisation.			
Diversity and inclusion are part of all important policies and practices of your organisation.			
The commitment documents and policies are known and understood by everyone involved in the organisation (board members, management, staff, volunteers, members).			



<b>POLICIES</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Partially</b>	<b>No</b>
You share your commitment towards diversity and inclusion with participants and beneficiaries of your programs.			
You share your commitment with diversity and inclusion with any other organisation that you collaborate with.			
Information regarding your governance structure and anti-discrimination policies are readily available for anyone.			
Clear and effective mechanisms are in place for people to report incidents of discrimination and are available for anyone (community, participants, volunteers, staff).			

<b>ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Partially</b>	<b>No</b>
You have a body or (group of) persons that is in charge of monitoring and measuring progress the organisation is making to reduce barriers to participating in the organisation.			
Diversity and inclusion matters are discussed including all different levels in your organisation (board, management, staff, volunteers and participants)			
Your board and management show clear commitment towards diversity and inclusion, and keep itself accountable.			
Your board and management show clear commitment towards diversity and inclusion, and keep itself accountable.			
In your staff, volunteers and partnerships, your organisation reflects the diversity of the population that you are serving.			
Decision-making processes are transparent.			
Members of diverse communities are equally represented on the different levels of your organisation.			

<b>ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Partially</b>	<b>No</b>
Your organisation offers opportunities for everyone involved to develop competences needed to collaborate with others and bridge differences.			
Evaluation of management, staff and volunteers includes performance linked to diversity and inclusion.			
Conversations and meetings are not dominated by a specific group of people (leadership, men, or other) .			

<b>PROGRAMS AND SERVICES</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Partially</b>	<b>No</b>
You actively seek out to make your programs accessible by reducing physical, economic, social and psychological barriers.			
Your activities and services take into account the values, perspectives and needs of diverse communities.			
Your organisation enables the participation of your target groups in the definition of programs and methodologies.			
You provide sufficient linguistic and logistical support to enable the full participation of diverse communities.			
Your services and programs reflect a deep understanding of differences in privilege.			
To reach diverse participants, your organisation has effective communication and dissemination strategies in place.			
Your communication (use of image and language) represents the community you are trying to serve. I.e. you use inclusive language and representative images.			
Monitoring and evaluation is embedded in all services and programs and includes accessibility.			

## Results

To see your result, count 2 points for a “yes” and 1 point for a “partially”. Compare the sum of points with the overview below. Please note that the result is only a starting point for a deeper conversation in your team, so don’t take the description too literally. Take into account that when it comes to diversity management, the journey is the destination.

### 0-8 POINTS: UNAWARENESS

At this stage, the organisation is not aware of the importance of diversity and inclusion. Exclusion and discrimination happen, and are not addressed - and potentially not even noticed by many. Individuals who suffer from experiences of discrimination must deal with it alone. The organisation needs to gain awareness of how its way of operating is likely excluding (and hurting) many people.

### 9-16 POINTS: GAINING AWARENESS

The organisation has diversity and inclusion on their radar and there is a certain effort to look at the world through this lens. The organisation understands that discrimination needs to be addressed and that their programs need to be accessible. Yet, the organisation and its members still lack a deeper understanding of the challenges and underpinning systems of inequity that marginalized people face. Resources and time need to be allocated to identify and address the organisation’s and the individual’s biases.

### 17-24 POINTS: DOING THE WORK

The organisation actively seeks out to be inclusive both within its programs and in its internal practices. Team members have started to gain an understanding of the privileges and systems of inequity that affect the organisation. They try to reflect on their own biases and keep themselves and

the organisation accountable. The organisation starts working on systemic changes that dismantle barriers of access and speaks up against discrimination. The organisation needs to keep working on recognizing its biases, include more diverse perspectives and make resources available for fostering an inclusive environment.

### MORE THAN 25 POINTS: FOSTERING THE CULTURE

Fostering the culture: The organisation has been able to effectively decrease barriers to participation on all levels. Everyone involved shares the values of inclusion and equity, which are deeply embedded in the organisation’s practices. Systemic protocols for inclusive decision making and collaboration are woven into the organisation and its programs. Few incidents of discrimination or exclusion occur, and when that happens, they are addressed with processes that allow the organisation to reflect, react, learn and heal. The organisation needs to keep fostering and caring for its culture and pass it on to new team members. ●



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