Deep Dive into Diversity, Equality and Inclusion

UN WOMEN

7 PRINCIPLES

Principle 1
Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality.

Principle 2
Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and non-discrimination.

Principle 3
Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers.

Principle 4
Promote education, training and professional development for women.

Principle 5
Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women.

Principle 6
Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy.

Principle 7
Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality.

Deep Dive

into **D**iversity, Equality and Inclusion

WEPs - Women's Empowerment Principles | Deep Dive into Diversity, Equality and Inclusion

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DISCLAIMER

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Abbreviations
and acronyms

BIPOC	Black, Indigenous and People of Colour
DEI	Diversity, equality and inclusion*
ERG	Employee resource group
GDEIB	Global Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Benchmarks
HBCUs	Historically Black Colleges and Universities
HSIs	Hispanic Serving Institutions
ILO	International Labour Organization
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
LGBTQ2+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and two-spirit
SWOT	Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WEPs	Women's Empowerment Principles

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* Equality means that each individual or group of people is given the same resources or opportunities. Equity recognizes that each person has different circumstances and allocates the exact resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome. For the purposes of this manual, DEI stands for diversity, equality and inclusion, recognizing that the ultimate goal of such efforts is to achieve equality.

Terms and definitions

Accessibility: The extent to which workplace environments, systems and organizational products and services are accessible and can be used by the broadest range of people.[1]

Accommodation: Adapt to or adjust to. The aim of accommodating specific needs is to enable people with differing abilities to gain access to work and contribute to the organization. Adjustments can vary according to differing abilities, specific individual needs, and circumstances. For example, this can include having organizational policies that cover adjusting premises, working hours, job responsibilities and equipment, in addition to providing accessible information and assistive technologies, as well as time for treatment and rehabilitation, when applicable.[2]

Ageism: Refers to the stereotypes (how we think), prejudice (how we feel) and discrimination (how we act) towards others or oneself based on age.[3]

BIPOC: An acronym used to refer to Black, Indigenous and People of Colour. It is based on the recognition of collective experiences of systemic racism. As with any other identity term, it is up to individuals to use this term as an identifier.[4]

Discrimination: The intended or accomplished distinction, exclusion or restriction of certain individuals based on gender identity, gender expression, race, skin colour, lineage, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, social status, religion, age, disability or any other individual trait, with the purpose or effect of preventing or hindering the recognition and/or exercise, on an equal basis, of nullifying or impairing the recognition of human rights and fundamental freedom in all spheres, including public, private, political, economic, cultural or civil.[5]

Diversity: Socially, referring to the wide range of identities. It broadly includes race, ethnicity, gender, age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, veteran status, physical appearance, etc. It also involves different ideas, perspectives and values.[6]

Diversity in the workplace: An effort to employ a diverse team of people that is reflective of the society in which it exists and operates.[7]

Equality: The right of diverse groups of people to have a similar social position and receive the same treatment. Gender equality is where access to rights or opportunities is unaffected by gender.[8]

Equity: Differs from equality, which focuses on providing all individuals and groups with the same starting point and treating all people the same. Equity takes peoples' differing experiences, needs and abilities into account and works to ensure that all individuals and groups of people are afforded the same finish line.[9]
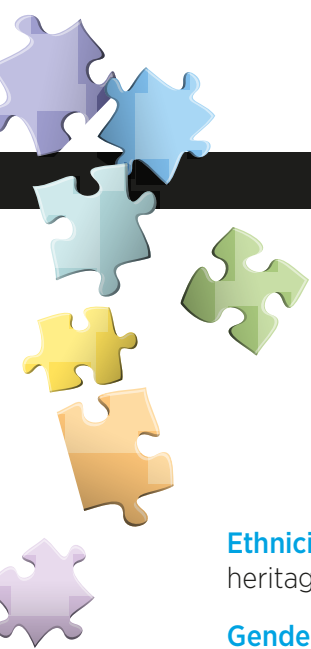
Ethnicity: A socially defined category or membership of people who may share a nationality, heritage, language, culture and/or religion.[10]

Gender: Differs from sex, which refers to biological and physiological characteristics. Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for individuals based on the sex they were assigned at birth.[11]

Gender-based violence: The violence committed against someone based on their gender, gender identity or expression. It can be economic, financial, physical, verbal, sexual or psychological. Sexual and gender-based harassment are forms of gender-based violence.

Gender equality: Refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centred development.[12]

Gender expression: How a person publicly expresses or presents their gender through actions, behaviour and appearance. A person's gender expression may or may not be aligned with their sex, gender identity or sexual orientation.[13]

Gender identity: Refers to a person's deeply felt sense and experience of gender. A person's gender identity may or may not be aligned with the sex they were assigned at birth. Employees may undergo transitions in the workplace to align their gender identity with their outward appearance.[14]

Harassment: The use of comments or actions that can be perceived as offensive, embarrassing, humiliating, demeaning and unwelcome.[15]

Homophobia, biphobia and transphobia: Fear or hatred of gay or lesbian people, of same-sex attraction, of bisexuality or of transgender individuals that may manifest in exclusion, discrimination or violence.[16]

Inclusion: An organizational effort in which diverse groups or individuals with diverse backgrounds are culturally and socially accepted, welcomed and equally treated.[17]

Intersectionality: The ways in which multiple forms of inequality exacerbate one another to create obstacles not often widely understood or visible within conventional ways of thinking. For example, we often consider racial inequality as separate from gender inequality, yet women of colour are subject to both forms of inequalities, and the experience is not simply a sum of its parts. As such, women with multiple identity intersections of race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, ability and other characteristics can experience different, mutually reinforcing barriers to equality; moreover, they may not be directly targeted in mainstream company policies, programmes and efforts for justice.[18]

Institutional racism: Racially discriminatory policies and practices within organizations and institutions.[19]

LGBTQ2+: An acronym standing for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and two-spirit. There are different acronyms used by various communities; the plus sign is used as a term of inclusion to acknowledge the diverse ways that people may identify. Internationally, the acronym LGBTI is often used.

Racism: An ideology that assumes that different races possess distinct and inherent characteristics, abilities or qualities, especially to distinguish them as inferior or superior to one another. Racism occurs in relation to, and between, people and groups; in the design and development of public policies; in government structures; and in the forms of organization of states. It covers a wide and complex scope, penetrating culture, politics and ethics. It moves processes in favour of maintaining and perpetuating privileges and hegemonies. Racism implies or clearly states that pure races exist, that these races are superior to the others and that such superiority authorizes political and historical hegemony, points of view against which considerable objections are raised.[20]

Racial discrimination: Any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, ancestry, ethnicity or national origin with the purpose or effect of preventing or hindering the recognition and/or exercise, on an equal basis, of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.[21]

Sex: Refers to the biological classifications of people as males, females or intersex, usually assigned at birth. A person's sex may or may not be aligned with their gender identity. An employee's sex is personal, confidential information.[22]

Sexual orientation: A person's attraction (emotional, affectional and sexual) to other people.[23]

Social justice: Constitutes a form of activism, based on principles of equity and inclusion that encompass a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable, and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. Social justice involves social actors who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility towards and with others.[24]

Stereotype: A generalized view or preconception about attributes or characteristics that are, or ought to be, possessed by members of a particular social group or the roles that are, or should be, performed by members of a particular social group. A gender stereotype is a generalized view or preconception about attributes or characteristics that ought to be possessed by women and men or the roles that are, or should be, performed by women and men.[25]

Xenophobia: Refers to the attitudes, prejudices and behaviour that reject, exclude and often vilify persons based on the perception that they are outsiders or foreigners to the community, society or national identity.[26]
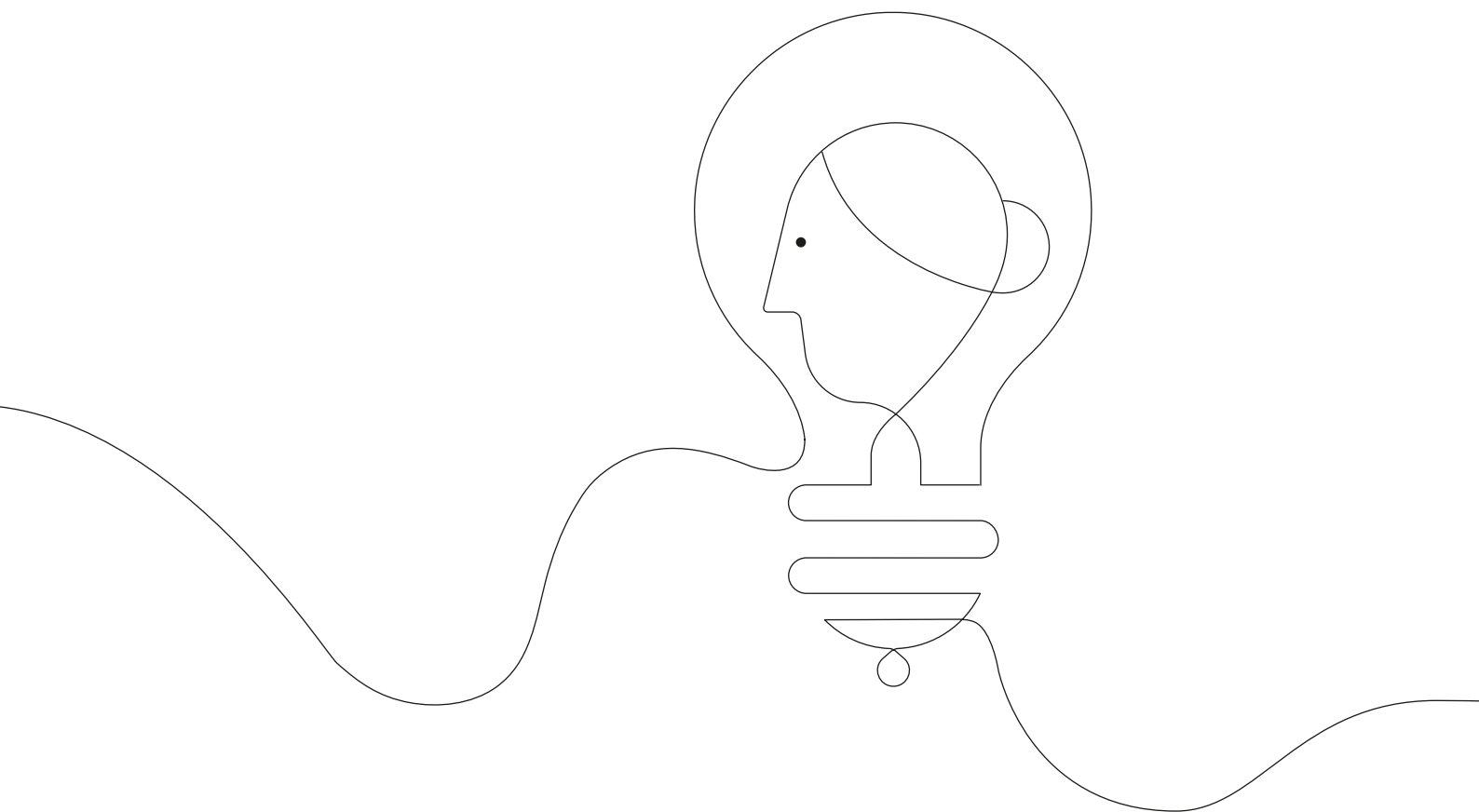
SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Over the past three decades, the gender gap in labour force participation rates has narrowed, and labour mobility globally, regionally and within countries has increased racial and ethnic diversity in the labour market. Some companies have taken action to include people with disabilities in the workplace, and there has been an increased awareness of the right to a respectful workplace regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or HIV status (real or perceived). At the same time, demographic changes in the workforce mean that organizations are now managing a more multigenerational workforce.[27] Organizations have been pushed to develop and refine their culture, test innovative solutions, recruit from more diverse pools, find new suppliers and engage in internal policy changes to ensure equity.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought about new challenges. The physical and mental health and well-being of employees quickly rose to the top of the agenda. Remote working has been implemented at scale, overnight, with many enterprises now moving towards 'hybrid' working. Living through COVID-19 has brought existing social and workplace inequalities to the fore and exacerbated them further still. Individuals, especially women, have experienced burnout, as they disproportionately carry the burden of care work and have been disproportionately impacted by increased rates of violence against them, particularly domestic violence.

For women, the need to feel valued and respected by their companies and employers has become a non-negotiable. The International Labour Organization (ILO) and UN Women have called for an inclusive, sustainable and human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, highlighting that public and private sectors must execute a transformative agenda for diversity, equality and inclusion aimed at eliminating violence and harassment in the world of work and all forms of discrimination.[28]

In this context, diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) have gradually become one of the most pressing issues in the new world of work. Many signatory companies of the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) around the globe have built their capacity to integrate gender equality into their organizational priorities and strategy but still lack sufficient knowledge on how to bring a DEI lens to their work. Much of this work has been driven from a human resources perspective while DEI is highly relevant for all three WEPs pillars: workplace, marketplace and community.

This manual primarily aims to provide human resources and DEI professionals in WEPs signatory companies—large and small—with guidance to design, implement and track progress against their workplace DEI policies and procedures and cultivate corporate DEI cultures. This manual is also highly relevant for other corporate leaders working to advance sustainable development, including through environment, social and governance principles. This manual provides a summary of emerging key DEI principles and good practices with a focus on gender equality. It also offers tools and recommendations on how to implement DEI strategies and initiatives.

This manual aims to provide hands-on guidance—to leaders, professionals and practitioners in WEPs signatory companies—on integrating a DEI lens into the core of their business strategies and plans.

SECTION **1**: Introduction

SECTION **2**: The seven WEPs through a DEI lens

SECTION **3**: Six areas to begin your WEPs journey

SECTION **4**: Sample DEI policy template

SECTION **5**: DEI resources

Based on the WEPs framework, Section 2 illustrates DEI principles and good practices:

Principle 1: Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality

Principle 2: Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and non-discrimination

Principle 3: Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers

Principle 4: Promote education, training and professional development for women

Principle 5: Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women

Principle 6: Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy

Principle 7: Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality

Each of the above seven WEPs subsections includes four components:

- An introduction
- Good practices
- Practical recommendations
- Global good practice case studies
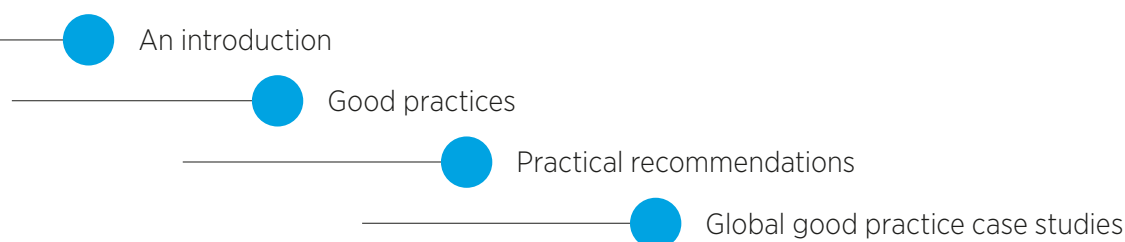
Ideally, this manual will be read sequentially and in its entirety. That said, each organization has its own starting point. Some organizations are more ahead in their WEPs journey; for example, they may have started developing a DEI strategy and need support on how to develop metrics, in which case they may target Principle 7 (on measurement and reporting) covered in Section 2. Others just starting out will benefit from reading Section 2 as well as Section 3, which contains a list of practical ideas and actions to start their WEPs journey. This manual can also help WEPs signatory companies develop content for DEI training as it includes citations to useful references throughout the manual, many of which are organized into seven focus areas in Section 5 (DEI resources). Wherever a company finds itself in its WEPs journey, this manual can help complement existing gender equality and women's empowerment initiatives while moving beyond gender to integrate a more intersectional approach.

When reading this manual, organizations should be mindful that DEI is an evolving, nuanced area that does not exist in a vacuum. DEI is influenced by and influences the wider social and economic context. Most organizational DEI literature and guides advocate a 'good practice' approach. However, we must recognize that the approach to diversity in organizations can be influenced by culture, traditions and religion, as well as political and institutional factors (including government, employers' organizations, workers' organizations, legislation, labour markets, education systems, professional bodies and financial markets, among others), all of which make up the context in which organizations operate. For example, while gender equality is a dimension that is often a focus of organizational efforts on DEI globally, decisions on the gender approach in DEI can be influenced by how gender roles are defined in the national context and culture.[29]

Organizations will also have unique starting points and emphases in their DEI work; for example, some organizations may start with race as an entry point into DEI work, while for others, disability inclusion and/or ethnic origin is a key focus. DEI is not a one-size-fits-all model; as such, it should make room for both context and the complexity of factors present in organizational, regional and national contexts. As organizations use this manual, they should consider context carefully and integrate an intersectional approach into all of their DEI work.

What is diversity?

Diversity is the diverse mix of people bringing a range of skills, experiences and perspectives that is seen as offering the potential for improved outcomes for members of the workforce, for business performance and for wider societies and economies. Diversity in organizations means ensuring that people from a range of groups experience equality of opportunity and treatment in their access to employment, development, promotion and pay and can fully contribute to the organization's goals.

Since its introduction, definitions of diversity have focused on personal characteristics of groups in organizations. Globally, the personal characteristics most applied in definitions of diversity are gender, ethnicity, race, age, sexual orientation and disability. More recently, definitions of diversity have expanded further to include other aspects of identity, such as skills, cognitive styles and values. An understanding of diversity has also developed to recognize that the experience of individuals at work is often influenced by more than one dimension of their personal characteristics (e.g. both race and gender), referred to as intersectionality.[30]

The following three principles form the basis of workplace diversity:

1. Promoting and developing all employees equitably

2. Ensuring the integration of all members as a key factor of individual and collective efficiency

3. Seeking out and acknowledging all skills that can play a part in developing an organization

What is inclusion?

Inclusion is a behavioural and relational concept. Any approach to creating an inclusive workplace needs to consider the whole environment, including the strategy, leadership, systems and organizational culture as well as the wider social and economic environment in which a company operates. Like diversity, different definitions and interpretations of inclusion exist. The theory underpinning inclusion states that individuals feel included at work when they have a combination of feeling that they belong to a group (forming and maintaining a sense of acceptance and connection) and being seen, valued and understood as an individual with a unique identity, skills and experiences.

Progress towards and benefits of diversity in the workplace can only be achieved with a focus on inclusion. While an organization may be successful in recruiting a more diverse mix of employees, it is inclusion that influences the extent to which diverse employees are retained and able to thrive. Unlike diversity, which often focuses on quantity (i.e. the representation of distinct groups), inclusion focuses on quality (i.e. the experience of individuals and groups in the workplace).[31]

What is belonging?

Belonging is a close cousin to such related experiences as mattering, identification and social connection. The unifying thread across these themes is that they revolve around a person's sense of being accepted and included by those around them. Employees need to feel that they belong to something they value—and that they have the power to bring about change. Leaders and organizations should invite employee feedback and take it seriously. It is a cornerstone of inclusive companies.[32]
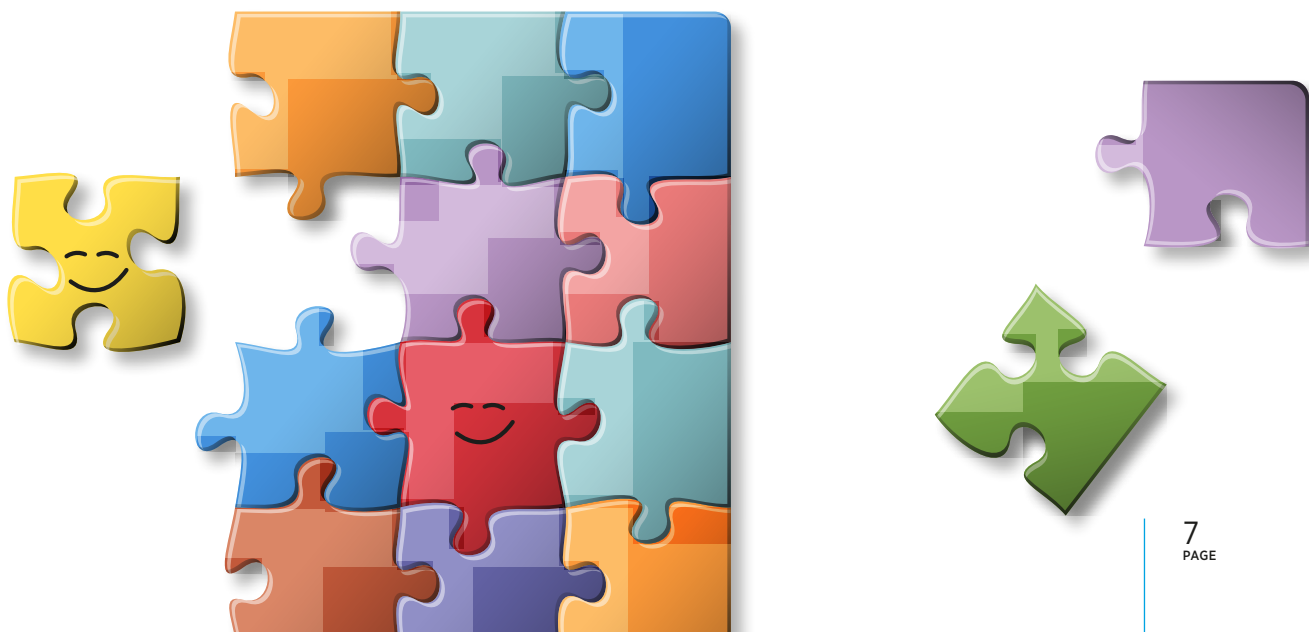
Diversity dimensions

The Four Dimensions of Diversity model, created by Gardenswartz and Rowe, has influenced the conversation around DEI; it helps one better understand and reflect each person's reality in the organization. The model includes dimensions that shape and impact both the individual and the organization.

The Four Dimensions of Diversity[33]

FIGURE
1

Source: Gardenswartz & Rowe 2022.
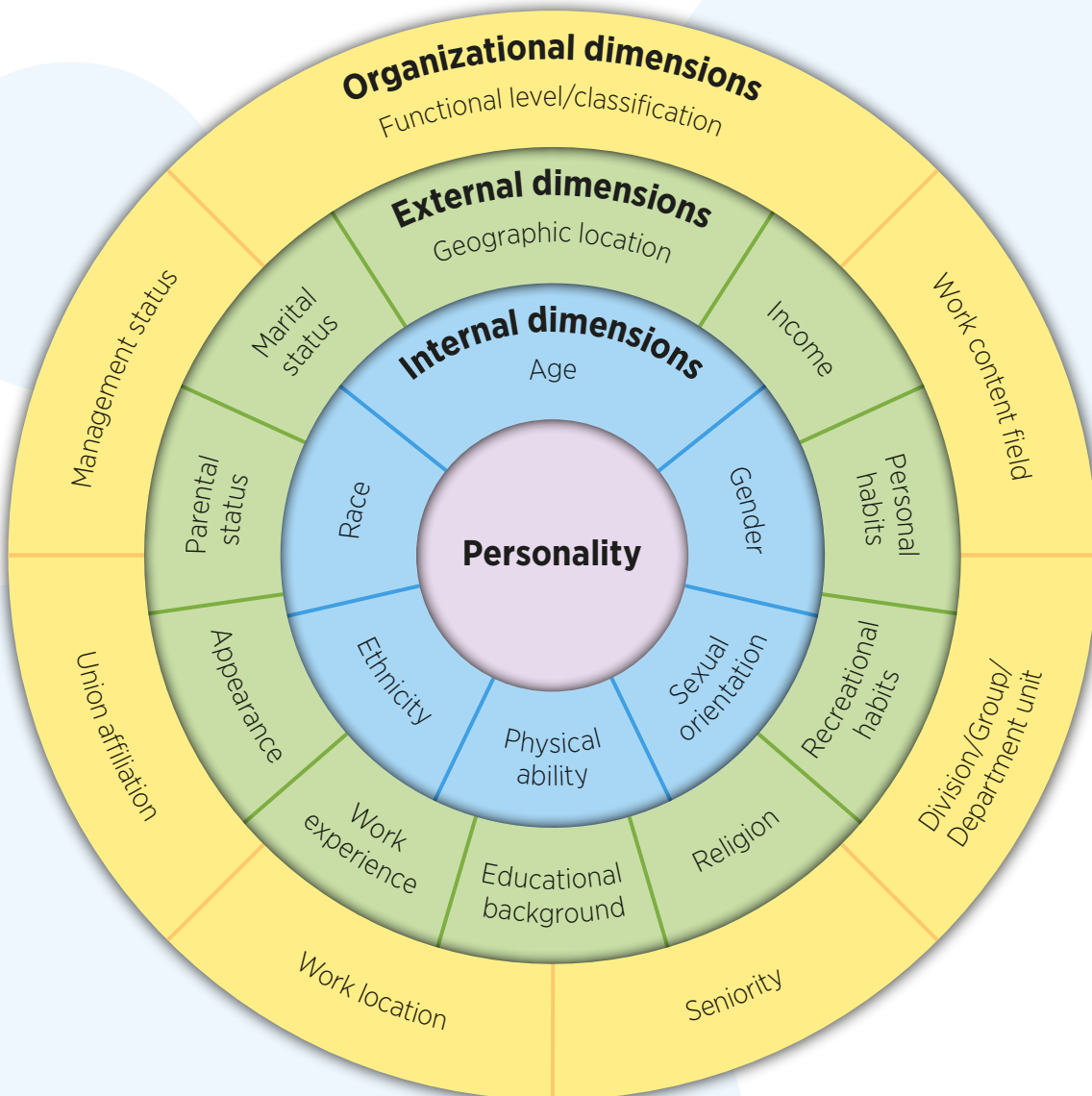
As seen in Figure 1, the four components of the dimensions of diversity include:

- Personality
- Internal dimensions
- External dimensions
- Organizational dimensions
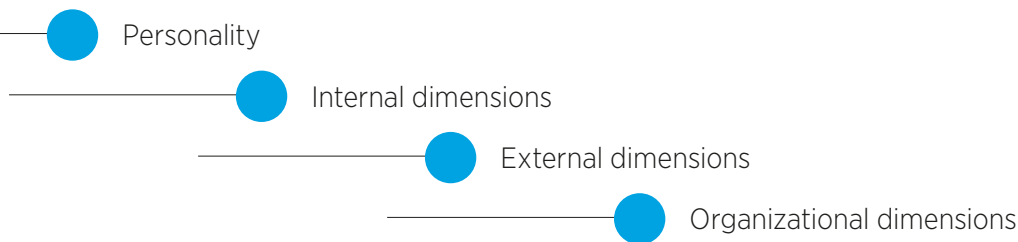
Personality includes an individual's likes, dislikes, values and beliefs. Personality is shaped early in life and is influenced by and influences the other layers throughout one's lifetime and career choices.

Internal dimensions include aspects of diversity over which we have no control. This dimension is the layer in which divisions between and among people often exist—and forms the core of many DEI efforts. These include the first things we see in other people, such as race or gender, and on which we hold biases and make assumptions and judgments.

External dimensions are aspects of diversity over which we may have some control and which may change over time—for example, marital status, educational background or geographic location. These usually form the basis for decisions on careers and work styles. This layer often determines, in part, our work, with whom we develop friendships, and who we like to be with.

Organizational dimensions concern the aspects of workplace culture found in a work setting. While the attention of DEI efforts has focused on internal dimensions, the opportunities for development or promotion are impacted by this layer.

While internal dimensions receive primary attention in DEI initiatives, the external and organizational dimensions often determine the way people are treated and who is considered a great 'fit' for the organization. This model increases employee awareness around the diversity of their colleagues, and it can be used for team building, for examining bias and as a tool to introduce DEI in training. It can also be used in developing DEI strategies and pinpointing DEI pain points.

This model is an important reminder that diversity goes beyond internal dimensions; elements of the external dimension (for example, income or educational background) and the organizational dimension (for example, seniority or work location) can play a large role in determining how someone is treated, whether they feel that they belong on a team, and their opportunities for development, promotions or recognition.[34] Each dimension of diversity in this model is, therefore, important to consider.

The positive impacts of DEI

Harnessing the power of DEI goes beyond the responsibility of the human resources department. It spans all business operations and is of strategic importance for the success of any organization. DEI directly contributes to achieving equality of opportunity at all stages of employment, including recruitment, retention, promotion, remuneration and upskilling.[35]

Embedding DEI in companies strengthens the corporate culture and helps leadership teams take comprehensive and proactive steps to foster diverse and innovative thinking.[36] DEI is also increasingly becoming a priority to investors in order to ensure sustainable operations and profitability.[37]

The benefits of bringing DEI into a company include the following:

- **Increased employee satisfaction and commitment:** Research in 2020 shows that personnel who feel included are nearly three times more likely to feel committed to their organizations and more likely to pursue career development and promotion.[38]

- **Increased collaboration and innovation:** When individuals feel included at work, they report experiencing greater trust, increased engagement and stronger collaboration with colleagues.[39]

- **Enhanced recruitment of new talent, increased retention of employees and decreased turnover:** Inclusive companies are better at retaining employees, with turnover rates 4 per cent lower than those not acting on DEI.[40]

- **Revenue growth:** When organizations act on DEI, they achieve three times the revenue growth compared to less inclusive organizations.[41]

- **Increased well-being:** Research demonstrates not only how inclusive workplaces support improved levels of employee well-being but also that employees with elevated levels of well-being are more inclusive of others. Inclusive organizations are 18 per cent more effective at creating a positive employee experience, according to McLean & Company research.[42]

- **Increased productivity:** Work environments that are more inclusive of people with disabilities have often been found to yield improved productivity levels across the whole workforce.[43]

Whether to promote economic development or a fair and equitable society, it is important to keep in mind that there is a difference between diversity and genuine inclusion. The impact of diversity initiatives is stronger in organizations where employees from diverse groups feel valued and when they participate in decision-making.[44]

SECTION 2

THE SEVEN WEPs THROUGH A DEI LENS

The seven WEPs
through a DEI lens

This section uses the seven WEPs as a framework within which to explore key elements of building a diverse and inclusive organization. This approach will help leaders in WEPs signatory companies complement their existing gender equality and women's empowerment initiatives while also moving beyond gender to integrate a more intersectional approach, accounting for women in all their diversity in addition to underrepresented groups in their organization.

Each subsection comprises:

An introduction (with some sections highlighting key areas)

Good practices

Practical recommendations

Global good practice case studies

1 PRINCIPLE

High-level corporate leadership

2 PRINCIPLE

Treat all women and men fairly at work without discrimination

3 PRINCIPLE

Employee health, well-being and safety

4 PRINCIPLE

Education and training for career advancement

5 PRINCIPLE

Enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices

6 PRINCIPLE

Community initiatives and advocacy

7 PRINCIPLE

Measurement and reporting

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES

Principle **1**

Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality

The first principle of the WEPs highlights that leadership commitment and action are crucial to an organization's ability to improve gender equality in the workplace—it publicly signals the executive team's goals and targets and how the WEPs will become part of the business model, corporate sustainability strategy, day-to-day operations and organizational culture.[45]

Corporate leadership is equally crucial for DEI and for all organizational transformation to be effective and sustainable. A McKinsey Global Institute survey found that organizational transformations were 5.3 times more successful when leaders modelled the behaviour changes they were asking their employees to make.[46]

Key areas for WEPs signatories to consider under Principle 1 are outlined below.

Inclusive leadership

Inclusive leadership has quickly become paramount when discussing DEI and gender equality in the workplace. Inclusive leadership refers to the capacities, knowledge, skills and behaviours of leaders that make their organizations inclusive.[47] According to ILO research,[48] when senior leaders are held accountable as role models for DEI, the workforce is:

- Eleven per cent more likely to report elevated levels of well-being.

- Ten per cent more likely to report ambitions for career development.

- Ten per cent more likely to feel encouraged to speak up about better ways of doing things.

There are various models outlining competencies of inclusive leadership, including the Diversity Council Australia,[49] Catalyst[50] and Deloitte.[51]

The six signature traits of an inclusive leader

FIGURE 2

Source: Modified from Deloitte University Press (Bourke 2016).

Cognizance

Curiosity

The six signature traits of an inclusive leader

Courage

Cultural intelligence

Commitment

Collaboration

Key traits of inclusive leadership, according to Deloitte, include the following:

1. **Courage:** Highly inclusive leaders speak up and challenge the status quo, and they are humble about their strengths and weaknesses.

2. **Cognizance of bias:** Highly inclusive leaders are mindful of personal and organizational blind spots and self-regulate to help ensure 'fair play'.

3. **Curiosity:** Highly inclusive leaders have an open mindset and a desire to understand how others view and experience the world, and they have a tolerance for ambiguity.

4. **Cultural intelligence:** Highly inclusive leaders are confident and effective in cross-cultural interactions.

5. **Collaboration:** Highly inclusive leaders empower individuals as well as create and leverage the thinking of diverse groups.

6. **Commitment:** Highly inclusive leaders are committed to diversity and inclusion because these objectives align with their personal values and because they believe in the business case.

Catalyst research highlights the importance of inclusive leaders. This involves leading both outwards—by taking ownership, being an ally and being accountable for DEI—and inwards—by modelling behaviours of curiosity, humility and courage.[52]

Catalyst[53] also emphasizes that empathy is an important trait for leaders to help employees manage their work-life balance. Research found that manager empathy was linked to increased experiences of inclusion, particularly for women, and that their life circumstances were valued and respected. Leader empathy has downstream consequences for attrition, significantly increasing women's intention to stay at their job. This research also provides action-based recommendations for leaders to help them show empathy (see also Section 5 on DEI resources).
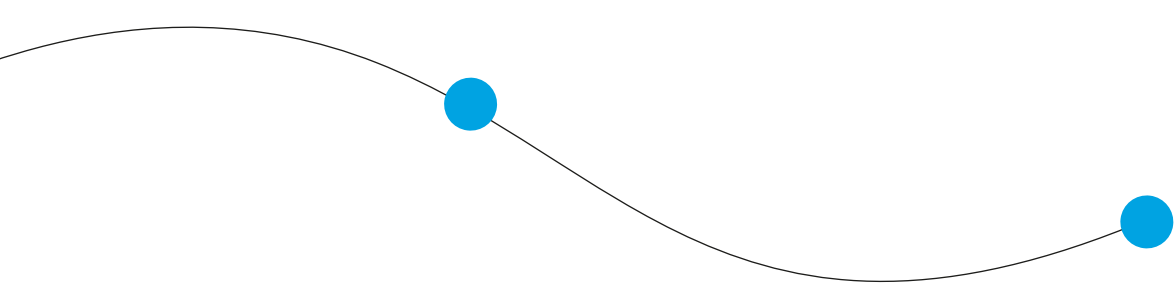
Shared leadership and a strategic, culture change approach

Research from the ILO[54] and the Centre for Global Inclusion[55] shows that organizations making progress on DEI tend to position it within their business model as a core strategic business issue, as opposed to only a human resources or corporate social responsibility issue. To be effective, leaders and board members should view the accomplishment of DEI goals and objectives as an important part of their management responsibilities that is linked to core business goals, values and strategy, in addition to it being an important part of an organization's sustainability agenda.[56]

According to "ISO 30415:2021 Human Resource Management – Diversity and Inclusion",[57] DEI should be approached as a shared responsibility where everyone in the organization has a role and responsibility in the realization of DEI principles, and in establishing and maintaining an inclusive culture, rather than identifying only one senior DEI 'champion'. It is also important to involve employees in the process of change to create sustainable DEI; for it to be effective, leadership needs the buy-in of members of the majority group as well as minority groups across business units and at various levels. That said, specific accountabilities and roles should be clearly outlined to different stakeholders.

Senior leadership should be accountable for developing DEI principles and objectives, delivered through a DEI framework and integrated into the organization's policies, processes and practices. They are also accountable for ensuring that resources, time, support and adequate funding are available for initiatives and activities. DEI responsibility should be delegated to people with expertise and understanding of DEI; these people are accountable for planning, implementing and monitoring policies, processes and practices, as well as reviewing their effectiveness in achieving DEI objectives.

Diversity in top management

According to ILO research, diversity in top management has a positive impact on inclusion and an even greater impact among respondents who are from the same diversity group that is represented in top management.[58] For example, when women are represented in critical mass (at least 40 per cent) in top management positions, women and men respondents were 9 per cent and 3 per cent more likely to feel included, respectively. In this research, diversity in top management was also shown to have a positive impact on inclusion across all employee groups. When employees saw themselves represented in top management, they were more likely to feel included at work.

Good practices

Effective leaders are proactive change agents and role models for DEI and inspire others to take responsibility and become role models. Leaders and board members should view DEI goals and objectives as a part of their management and oversight responsibilities and support internal and external diversity-related activities. Leaders should position DEI as a key component of their organization's sustainability and overall strategic agenda and provide DEI coaching to everyone they manage as part of their supervisory functions. This means that leadership development includes DEI competency-building.[59]

Effective leaders and board members regularly show public support for DEI initiatives. According to the Centre for Global Inclusion's Global Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Benchmarks (GDEIB), leaders and board members should show this support even if the initiatives are perceived as controversial or involve a potential personal risk.[60]

Effective leaders model equitable, inclusive behaviour. Leaders must model bold actions and inclusive behaviour that go beyond minimum requirements, as employees are more likely to take notice when leaders make DEI familiar and personal. Leaders should also consistently challenge and address inappropriate behaviour.

Recommendations

Hold managers at all levels accountable for results against DEI goals and targets. Integrate DEI accountability into regular leadership performance reviews.[61] This also sends the message that DEI is part of core leadership competencies and can help measure a leaders' success and opportunities for learning regarding DEI. Consider linking formal incentives to DEI indicators.[62]

Allocate resources to achieve DEI objectives. According to "ISO 30415:2021 Human Resource Management – Diversity and Inclusion", inclusive leaders ensure that there are adequate resources, time, support and funding for DEI initiatives and activities.[63] This can include sponsoring initiatives, forming employee resource groups (ERGs) and steering committees, and allocating time and support for participating in and contributing to the achievement of DEI objectives.

● **Establish DEI principles and objectives and a supporting framework,** including organization-wide goals and targets for DEI, and measure progress through clear performance indicators.[64]

● **Provide leaders with appropriate DEI resources and regular training.** Specifically, ensure that leaders are trained on your DEI strategy and their role in modelling inclusive behaviour and inclusive leadership, on how to address stereotyping, on conscious and unconscious biases, and on inequitable behaviour.

● **Embed the DEI objectives into the core business model and strategy.** Ensure that progress on these objectives is made a regular, standing item in key management meetings.

● **Review requirements for board membership, as well as other governance bodies and committees and leadership positions.** Ensure that discrimination and bias is mitigated in these processes to ensure diversity in top management.[65]

Case studies

In 2016, **Microsoft** made DEI a strategic performance goal that determines annual incentives. Senior executives are evaluated on performance categories related to culture in the context of inclusion. Microsoft has made DEI a core priority for everyone working there, factoring how well employees meet that standard into performance evaluation. In 2022, Microsoft had employed 22 per cent more women employees globally than it did in 2016, and in technical roles alone, Microsoft had appointed 49 per cent more women. This progress is partly attributed to these efforts to engage executives on Microsoft's cultural transformation, of which DEI is one aspect.[66]

Principle **2**

Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and non-discrimination

The WEPs highlight that treating people of all genders fairly at work and maintaining a workplace free of discrimination align with international human rights principles; and that removing discrimination from corporate policies, strategies, culture and practices is a solid step forward in a company's WEPs journey. Treating all people fairly translates to better talent acquisition, higher employee retention and satisfaction, increased productivity and better decision-making.[67]

When we apply a DEI lens to Principle 2, its focus moves beyond preventing discrimination to taking proactive steps to foster workplace cultures and environments of **inclusion and belonging**, where underrepresented groups and women in all their diversity are heard, respected and actively involved in decision-making. Key components covered under Principle 2 include the following:

1. Applying an intersectional lens and mitigating bias

2. Disability inclusion

3. Inclusive workplace culture

4. Non-discrimination and inclusion in the employee life cycle
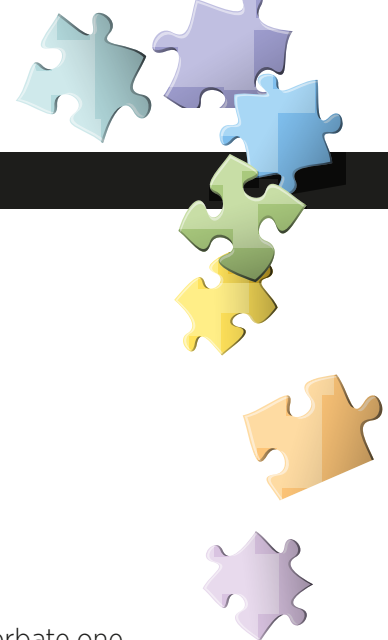
Applying an intersectional lens and mitigating bias

Intersectionality refers to the ways in which multiple forms of inequality exacerbate one another to create obstacles not often widely understood or visible within conventional ways of thinking. For example, we often consider racial inequality as separate from gender inequality, yet women of colour are subject to both forms of inequalities, and the experience is not simply a sum of its parts.

Women with multiple intersections of identity, including religion, race, ethnicity, age, disability, and sexual orientation and gender identity, can experience different, mutually reinforcing barriers to equity; moreover, they may not be directly targeted in mainstream company DEI policies, programmes and efforts.

For example, studies show that there is a significant emotional tax on women of colour in the workplace, as they are forced to be on guard against acts of discrimination and bias.[68] Women who identify as members of the LGBTQ2+ community, for example, may experience both sexism and homophobia simultaneously, and not separately, based on the combination of these two identities, and trans women may also face transphobia. Moreover, women of different faiths, ethnicities and/or cultural backgrounds—for example, Muslim women— may experience the compounded effects of Islamophobia, xenophobia and gender bias, in addition to stereotypes about Muslim women.[69] When companies are implementing DEI initiatives and targeting efforts, it is therefore crucial to consider the entire picture of people in all their diversity.[70]

In considering intersectionality, it is important to remember that not all aspects of identity are visible; women may be part of the LGBTQ2+ community but not be 'out' at work, while other women may live with invisible disabilities (for more on this topic, please see the subsection on disability inclusion below).

Learning about intersectionality facilitates a deeper understanding of the ways in which diversity, equality and inclusion are relevant to each person in the organization. The Wheel of Power/Privilege (Figure 3), for example, is a simplified way to reflect on the many intersecting identities and power structures and a good way for workplaces to help people understand how social identities play into power and privilege. The closer you are to the centre, the more power/privilege you have. The wheel is not exhaustive but may be used to inspire discussions about power and privilege.

The Wheel of Power/Privilege

FIGURE **3**

Source: Modified from University of British Columbia 2021.
Note: See also Canadian Council for Refugees 2022.

The Wheel of Power/Privilege
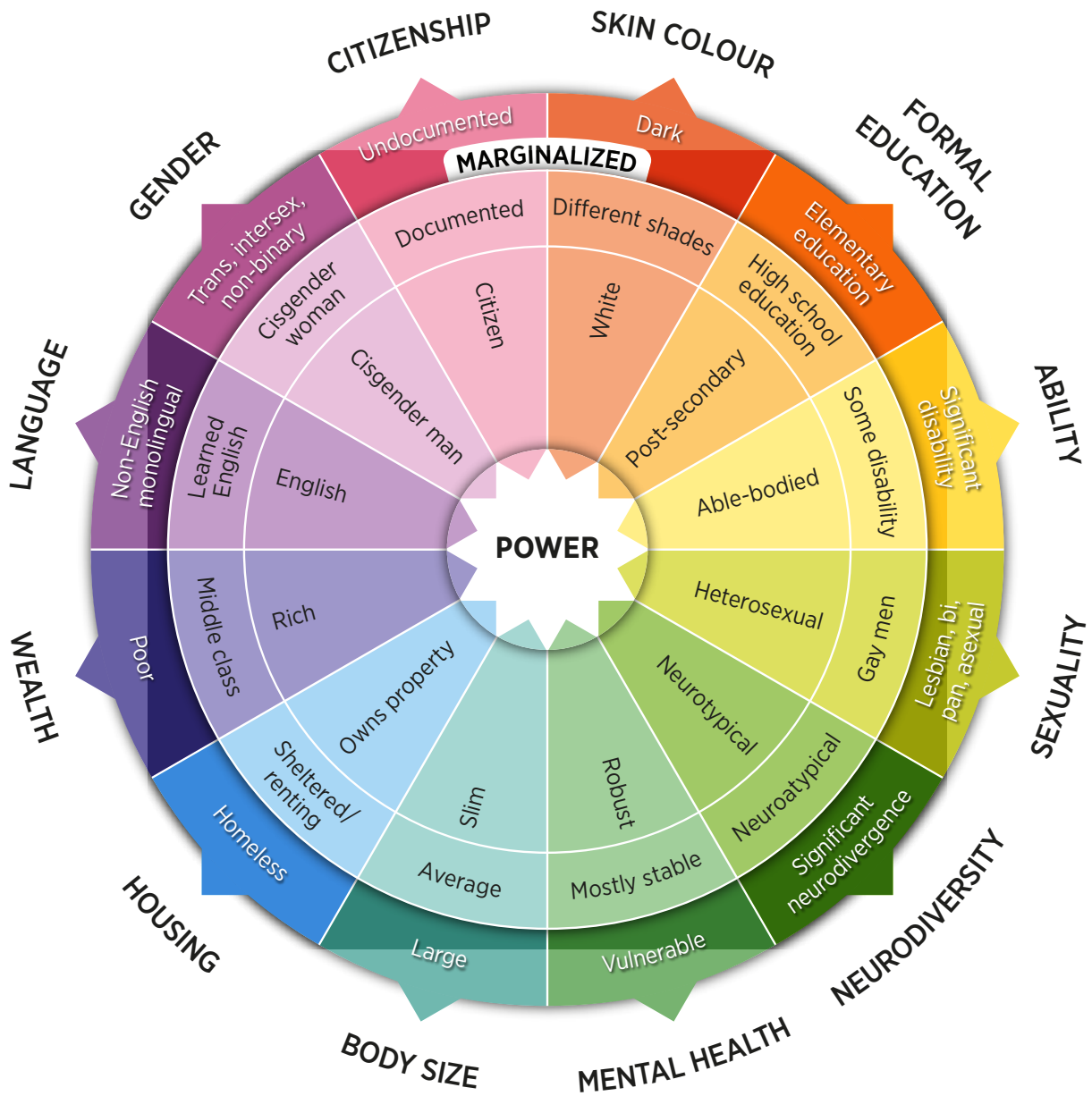
There are other useful analytical tools that help organizations assess programmes and initiatives through an intersectional lens. For example, in Canada, Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus)[71] is an analytical process that provides a rigorous method for the assessment of systemic inequalities, as well as a way to assess how diverse groups of women, men and gender-diverse people may experience policies, programmes and initiatives. The 'plus' in GBA Plus acknowledges that GBA Plus is not just about differences between the biological (sexes) and the sociocultural (genders). We all have multiple characteristics that intersect and contribute to who we are, and we may have different starting points when it comes to analysing identity. GBA Plus considers identity factors, such as race, ethnicity, religion, age and mental or physical disability and how the interaction between these factors influences the way we might experience policies and initiatives.

Unconscious biases manifest as automatic thinking from our unconscious mind, revealed as social stereotypes about certain groups of people.[72] Cognitive neuroscience research has shown that the basis of biases is formed from life experiences, culture and background. Most decisions, especially regarding people, are influenced by biases in which we see others as compared to, or as projections of, ourselves. These biases have an influence on decision-making, including recruitment, advancement and performance management.[73] There are also conscious biases, whereby business leaders make conscious decisions based on their bias; for example, only recruiting from certain universities, such as private schools with the most name recognition, can leave out low-income groups.

Types of unconscious bias include:[74]

- **Likeability:** One's likeability may be perceived differently depending upon another person's dimension(s) of diversity (e.g. race, gender, ethnicity).

- **Like me:** People may unintentionally give higher ratings to employees who are like them.

- **Personal:** Individual preferences may prevent objective analysis of an employee.

- **Horns and halos:** A supervisor may assume that a type of employee is good or bad at the job.

- **Stereotyping:** People may assign positive or negative attributes to an entire group and act upon these ideas.

The following are just a couple examples of unconscious bias:[75]

- Fictitious résumés with white-sounding names sent to help-wanted ads were 50 per cent more likely to receive call-backs for interviews than résumés with African American-sounding names.

- Science faculty rated male applicants for a laboratory manager position as more competent and hireable than female applicants. Faculty also selected a higher starting salary and offered more career mentoring to the male applicant.

Companies and individuals can identify risk areas where implicit biases may affect behaviours and judgments.[76] For useful tools and reading on unconscious bias for workplaces, see the Center for Creative Leadership's "7 Ways You Might be Overlooking Talent"[77] and Project Implicit's Implicit Association Test (IAT).[78]

Disability inclusion

According to "Getting to Equal: The Disability Inclusion Advantage", companies that embrace best practices for employing people with disabilities outperformed their competitors.[79]

Disability:IN's 2022 Disability Equality Index Report[80] suggests that the journey towards disability. inclusion in the workplace starts with foundational programmes and policies. A company needs to welcome and represent people with disabilities. Once foundational programmes and policies are established, companies can move beyond accommodation to actively seek talent and celebrate the unique contributions of people with disabilities.

Beyond hiring, employers should implement practices that encourage and progress persons with disabilities.
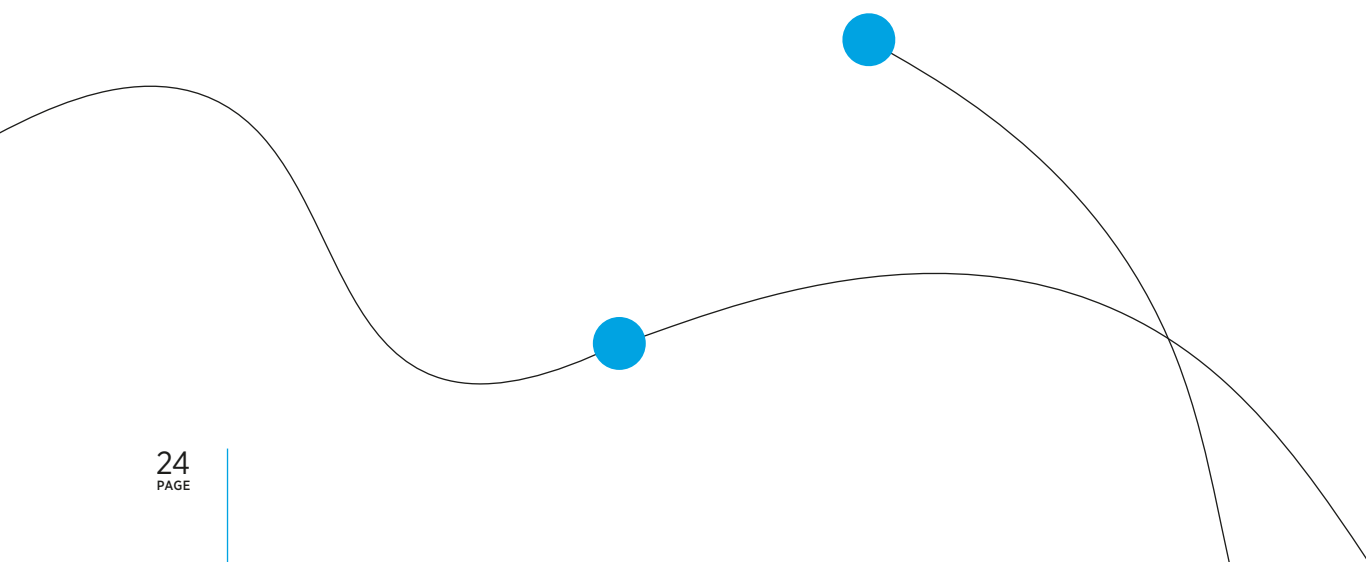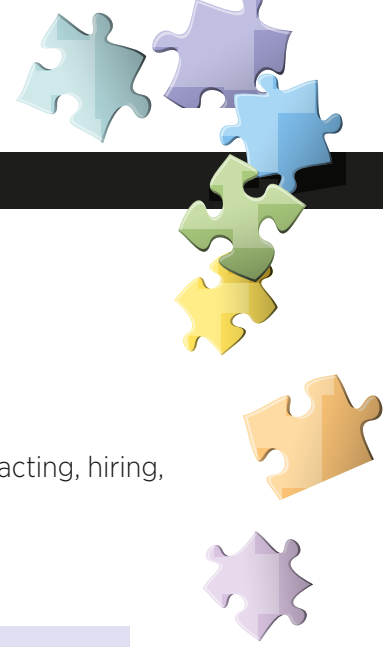
"Getting to Equal: The Disability Inclusion Advantage" lists four actions for attracting, hiring, retaining and advancing diverse talent:[81]

EMPLOY
Ensure that persons with disabilities are represented in the workplace, and implement practices that encourage and progress persons with disabilities.

ENABLE
Provide employees with disabilities with accessible tools and technology and/or a formal accommodation, and cultivate awareness through training programmes for those without disabilities to learn about tools and accommodations.

ENGAGE
Build awareness through recruitment efforts, disability education programmes and grass-roots-led efforts and events.

EMPOWER
Offer mentoring and coaching initiatives, as well as skilling/reskilling programmes to ensure that persons with disabilities continue to grow and succeed and occupy roles at all levels, including top leadership.

As noted in the subsection above on intersectionality, women and people across genders may live with both visible and invisible disabilities. Some invisible disabilities are increasingly referred to as neurodiversity. According to the Stanford University Neurodiversity Project, neurodiversity is a concept that regards individuals with differences in brain function and behavioural traits as part of a normal variation in the human population.[82] Neurodiversity includes, among other conditions and traits, ADHD, being on the autism spectrum, learning disabilities, high sensitivity/sensory processing sensitivity and some mental health challenges including depression and anxiety. This movement is focused on uncovering the strengths of neurodiverse individuals and harnessing their talents to increase innovation.

Women with disabilities, in particular invisible disabilities, or those who identify as neurodiverse may face barriers to inclusion in the workplace that intersect with gender bias—for example, labelling women making requests for accommodation as 'unreasonable' or 'too sensitive'. Jenara Nerenberg & The Neurodiversity Project are undertaking ground-breaking work on this topic that will benefit employers and employees alike.[83] In her book, *Divergent Mind*, Nerenberg offers a study of neurodivergent women and explores how processing differences are often overlooked, masked or mistaken for something else entirely in women due to a system

that focuses on diagnosing younger male populations and the fact that girls are conditioned to blend in and conform to gender expectations. Women may live with undiagnosed or misdiagnosed neurodivergence, which can lead to depression, anxiety, low self-esteem and shame. Companies have been integrating neurodivergence into their DEI work, with examples offered in the subsection on recommendations below.

An emerging area, related to invisible disability, is the concept of 'cognitive diversity'. As Deloitte mentions in its publication, "The Diversity and Inclusion Revolution: Eight Powerful Truths", diversity of thinking is a new frontier.[84] In this publication, Deloitte cites Apple's holistic view of diversity that goes beyond demographic parity towards the ultimate outcome: diversity of thinking. Diversity of thinking means companies include the varied perspectives of people who see things in diverse ways. It refers to educational and functional diversity, as well as diversity in the mental frameworks that people use to solve problems. This is not to say that demographic characteristics, such as gender and race, are not important, as organizations still need to ensure that workplaces are free from discrimination and enable people to reach their full potential. Deloitte argues, however, that the goal of DEI initiatives is to create workplaces that leverage diversity of thinking as research shows that diversity of thinking enhances creativity and innovation.

Deloitte's research reveals that high-performing teams are both cognitively and demographically diverse. Demographic diversity helps teams tap into knowledge and networks specific to a particular demographic group. More broadly, it can help elicit cognitive diversity through its indirect effect on personal behaviours and group dynamics. For example, racial diversity stimulates curiosity, and gender balance facilitates conversational turn-taking.

Inclusive workplace culture

According to Accenture, given the COVID-19 pandemic, heightened awareness and exacerbation of inequities including systemic racism and a labour market in flux, DEI has increasingly placed emphasis on building inclusive workplace cultures where everyone can belong.[85] This is supported by ILO research, which highlights the importance of organizational culture and behaviour, in addition to processes and policies, to build a diverse and inclusive organization.[86]

The GDEIB defines organizational culture as a system of shared beliefs, values, norms, habits and assumptions that impact the organization's environment and influence how people behave within it.[87] Organizational culture varies across contexts, and aspects of organizational or national culture may assist and/or hinder the implementation of DEI initiatives, which should be considered in DEI strategies. The GDEIB itself does not include a specific category on organizational culture, which would ensure its usefulness to organizations of a variety of sizes, sectors and contexts.

Notwithstanding context-specific considerations, there are good practices and principles that all organizations and their leaders can draw on to build a more inclusive organizational culture. For example, relational and people skills have become a new priority in DEI skill-building. People skills, including communicating with empathy to encourage bringing one's full self and life circumstances to work, in addition to transparent communication, have become critical competencies.[88]

Accenture offers a framework to better understand how to cultivate a culture of belonging, particularly through the four categories where belonging manifests:[89]

1. Having influence over decisions

2. Being respected by peers and managers

3. Feeling comfortable speaking up

4. Receiving sponsorship from a senior leader to help people advance and grow

Non-discrimination and inclusion in the employee life cycle

The WEPs "Call to Action: Leveraging the WEPs Framework to Target Racism and Discrimination in the World of Work" emphasizes that the recruitment, retention and promotion of women of different backgrounds and races is a core element of creating DEI in the workplace.[90] Increasing the representation and inclusion of women from different races along the corporate pipeline, including in positions of leadership, normalizes diverse and inclusive decision-making.

Moving beyond gender, ILO research emphasizes the importance of proactively supporting employees from diverse groups, particularly those who are minoritized, in developing, performing and progressing in the organization.[91] The research further reinforces that higher levels of inclusion and its benefits are only fully realized when actions are applied across the entire employee life cycle.

Recommended practices comprise a combination of policies and procedures aimed at ensuring that life-cycle processes are free from bias and are accessible and inclusive, with specific actions aimed at supporting minoritized groups. Policies, processes and programmes should be tailored to meet the needs of employees with different personal characteristics. For example, actions required to retain older women employees may differ from those to retain women from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Good practices

● **Organizations use diverse and accessible recruitment channels and outreach activities to broaden the pool of candidates.** When deciding which screening, assessment and selection systems to use, organizations should be aware of the potential for bias, including in their automated human resources systems, and should seek to address processes that limit opportunities for people from marginalized backgrounds.[92] In addition, WEPs signatories have access to a useful checklist to help guide them through a gender-responsive recruitment process.[93]

● **Pay anomalies and disparities are addressed, and remuneration and compensation policies, processes and practices are implemented fairly, equitably and transparently.** Organizations should ensure that they consider disaggregated disparities in pay and compensation between women of different identity groups, which may include, but not be limited to, race, ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation.[94]

● **Inclusion is integrated as a core principle of all training and development.** To foster inclusive behaviour, DEI-focused learning and development should raise awareness of the organization's DEI principles and objectives and the lived experiences of others. Opportunities for training and development should be provided equitably to increase participation, mitigate bias and prevent discrimination.[95]

● **Job design considers flexibility, accessibility or adjustments that accommodate individual needs.** Companies provide the necessary skills, capacity-building and resources to ensure accommodation.[96]

Recommendations

● **Examine all stages of the employee life cycle from a DEI lens.** Ask how your organization can ensure that you are attracting people of diverse backgrounds. Are you interviewing, hiring and promoting enough candidates from diverse backgrounds? Are you targeting recruitment to diverse communities? Are there specific groups of employees that are experiencing higher turnover?[97]

● **Incorporate DEI principles and objectives into performance management processes.** As noted under Principle 1 on leadership, people with management responsibilities should demonstrate inclusive leadership and ensure that both

team and individual objectives for DEI are identified and met. Performance management should recognize inclusive behaviour and address biased and discriminatory behaviour.[98]

Review and diversify your recruitment strategies using a DEI lens. Start by reviewing your recruitment practices and data to ensure that candidates from diverse groups and identities are given equitable opportunities.[99] Ensure diversity in interviewing and that staffing/hiring managers are educated on the impact of conscious and unconscious bias.[100] Use more diverse and accessible recruitment channels to reach out to and encourage interest from the broadest pool of people in the communities in which your organization operates and serves. Identify inclusion opportunities in recruitment strategies and activities, such as the progression of women and people from demographically underrepresented groups.[101]

Integrate into job postings ways for candidates to demonstrate their experience beyond degrees and certificates. The University of Washington DEI Department's sample position description and tips[102] note that statements regarding candidates' equivalent education/experience can provide an option to be more inclusive when assessing specific education and experience qualifications. The standard equivalency ratio is one year of experience for one year of education. However, to ensure that all equivalencies are applied consistently, it is recommended to document equivalency options/ratios as part of the screening criteria. Organizations can partner with their HR recruiter, department HR representative and all search committee members to ensure that everyone is clear on what equivalencies are acceptable to qualify an applicant for the position. In addition, job descriptions should state the work to be performed and not any non-job-related factors.[103]

Review current processes, including automated processes that limit opportunities for people from marginalized backgrounds, and introduce methods to interrupt bias. For example, some companies use the practice of anonymous recruitment. When assessing candidate applications, companies remove information that can provoke bias (e.g. photos, names, gender, age) in order to compare applicants purely on their experience and credentials to help choose the best candidate, which also teaches recruiters about their own biases. Other companies have trained their artificial intelligence selection and recruitment algorithms to ignore the 'personal information' section of the applications.[104]

Ensure that DEI is embedded in your recruitment processes, including diversity among the recruitment panel members, as well as the use of inclusive language in job postings, advertisements and job interview questions. Avoid sexist language and stereotypes and prejudices towards women, various ethnic and religious minorities to prevent gender bias and discrimination during recruitment and to attract a diverse range of candidates. Online tools include Textio[105] or Alex,[106] an open-source tool, to catch gendered language in team communications.

- **Formalize an inclusive workplace flexibility policy and strategy, and assess how you can design the work schedule, location and conditions to better accommodate employees' needs and preferences.** It is important to be reminded that one size does not fit all. Organizations should determine what flexibility means to all employees and its applicability by analysing job requirements and job descriptions, regularly assessing the use of these options, and updating policies based on employee feedback. To make flexible work policies real, leaders should ensure that flexibility is available for all employees regardless of where they work, the job they hold and their motivation, and leaders should provide employees with resources, tools, technology, training and support to ensure that employees are equipped to utilize flexible work options.

  Organizations should also encourage leaders to adopt workplace flexibility, implement training for managers and equip them with resources to effectively manage workplace flexibility, as well as remove the stigma from discussing workplace flexibility, so that all employees are comfortable and face no reproach for taking advantage of available options. Finally, it is important to align performance review processes to flexible work and ensure that performance is based on productivity and results, not face time or hours worked.[107] For an example of a flexible work policy, see the WEPs policy template on flexible work.[108]

- **Address parental leave expectations.** Such discussions should take place before, during and after these periods for both employees and employers to address questions and concerns. Companies have facilitated this by developing job aids to assist leaders in having parental leave discussions. Companies should implement practices to support parental and dependent care responsibilities for people of all genders. These include, for instance, financial top-ups for pregnancy, adoption, parental and dependent leave, and employer-supported childcare.[109]

- **Build the capacity of DEI champions, change agents and allies.** Ensure that they have tools and information to inspire others to support DEI efforts. Provide leaders, managers and supervisors with skills and resources, such as development workshops that discuss management, culture, communication and conflict management.[110] Build leader and employee knowledge and skills on cultural sensitivity, intersectionality, bias and inclusion.[111]

- **Provide mechanisms for people to express their opinion and make suggestions for change.** For example, this can be done through ERGs, focus groups, surveys and other feedback methods. Regularly seek feedback on workplace culture.[112]

- **Celebrate differences, and give employees a voice.** Discuss lived experiences, and create opportunities for employees to share cultural traditions such as different religious holidays or cultural celebrations. Set up teams that include people with a range of skills, experiences and backgrounds whenever possible, and encourage collaboration and mobility between core businesses or entities and different

countries where possible, which can help make individual members of staff more open to the diversity of environments and cultures. Read more on intercultural teams through the Intercultural Development Inventory[113] and Hofstede's six-dimensional model of national culture.[114]

- **Collect disaggregated data by various identity dimensions beyond gender.** This may include race, ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation and may contain information on absences, workforce turnover and retention to identify trends and impacts. Ensure that ethical and regulatory considerations are applied to collecting, interpreting and using data. Encourage people to disclose their demographic data by explaining that the data will be used to improve systems, policies, processes and practices by identifying and addressing disparities.[115]

- **Pay equal remuneration.** This encompasses equal pay for work of equal value, including compensation, benefits and bonuses, and ensures a living wage for all employees.[116] Evaluate and benchmark relative worth and market value of job roles to ensure an equal pay for equal value approach. Collect data on the outcomes of remuneration and compensation policies, processes and practices to identify gender and other diversity-related anomalies and differentials in and across job families, geographic locations and pay structures.[117]

- **Develop formal foundational programmes and policies to welcome, represent and recruit people with disabilities.** This can include supporting disability-focused employee groups and ensuring accommodations for recruits and employees with disabilities. Other examples include making disability inclusion an organizational priority and holding teams accountable for digital accessibility. Once foundational policies are set, companies can move beyond accommodation to actively seek to recruit more persons with disabilities, including in leadership positions. Companies are now making leadership roles and corporate boards of directors more inclusive of people with disabilities.[118]

- **Be intentional and mindful when organizing formal and informal events.** Be responsive to employees' preferences and social identities (e.g. networking that occurs during core work hours, team-building exercises that do not only involve travel or alcohol).[119]

- **Integrate awareness-raising, capacity-building and accommodations for neurodiversity into your DEI work.** For example, SAP[120] has an Autism at Work week, and Microsoft holds annual Autism at Work events. Other examples include starting neurodiversity ERGs to raise awareness and build connections around neurodiversity, educating leaders about neurodiversity, creating opportunities that rely on creative thinking and less on linear thinking, creating diverse physical spaces that accommodate a range of working styles, and designing surroundings to account for different needs, such as Snoezelen multisensory environments,[121] where people have access to cosy, soothing, darkened rooms.

Case studies

Amazon works to identify the best talent from all backgrounds. To find the best talent for technical and non-technical roles, the company actively partners with organizations and academic institutions that reach underrepresented communities.[122] Through their interview process, they work to understand the diverse perspectives that candidates from all backgrounds bring and work to recruit women and underrepresented racial/ethnic minority talent. For example, they recruit from diverse colleges and universities (including Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), women's colleges and tribal colleges) in the United States and host hiring fairs and career enrichment summits like "Represent the Future, Success is Inclusive" in order to partner with underrepresented communities around the world.[123] The company also brings college students to Amazon's campus to learn from finance and accounting leaders and to interview for finance internships. Amazon has also been creating opportunities for people with disabilities at Amazon, with examples like the silent delivery station in Mumbai and the partnership with the Northwest Centre, a Seattle-based non-profit that helps people with disabilities find jobs and keep them.

ANZ Bank Lao in the Lao People's Democratic Republic introduced a range of measures that seek to promote gender DEI and embed it into the employee life cycle. Initiatives include a requirement for managers to ensure that at least 40 per cent of candidates for interviews are women and that both women and men sit on selection panels.[124] Parental leave is available for mothers, fathers, same-sex couples and parents of adopted children. There is support for LGBTQ2+ staff through the sponsorship of a group pride network within the Bank. Pension and healthcare schemes are extended to life partners. Flexible working and unpaid 'lifestyle' leave for major life events are offered to help retain employees. These actions have resulted in the improved retention and promotion of diverse talent.

Starbucks aspires to make each one of its stores a welcoming and inclusive place.[125] From their decision to offer health care to part-time workers to the commitment to support diverse hiring and economic development through their community store initiative—they are dedicated to creating not just opportunity but equal opportunity. Examples include plans to design, test and scale more inclusive design standards and experiences across its store portfolio with the goal of ensuring that physical and digital Starbucks environments will meet an elevated standard of accessibility by 2030. In 2021, Starbucks achieved and maintained 100 per cent pay equity by race and gender for similar roles in the United States and 100 per cent gender pay equity in Canada, China and other company-operated global markets, including Austria, Italy, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Good practices they have used to address the gender pay gap include not asking for prior compensation history to determine base compensation for a new role, as well as using clear and consistent processes for annual merit increases and bonuses that are statistically analysed before finalization to ensure that there are no biased outcomes.[126]

TELUS created the TELUS Work Styles programme,[127] which offers employees the option to work remote or hybrid. This flexibility strengthens employee accountability, ownership, control and engagement. TELUS has seen results from supporting flexible work, such as savings in real estate and reductions in travel expenses. For example, in 2018, the company reduced 2.9 million hours of commuting time.[128]

X (Twitter) provides training on disability accommodation to all managers; has a centralized accommodation programme in the United States that is coordinated by a trained and experienced team; and recently created an accommodation budget to remove any financial concern that a manager may have from the consideration of individual accommodation.[129]

Principle **3**

Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers

We know from the WEPs that organizations have a responsibility to ensure occupational health and safety, prevent workplace violence and harassment, support employees' psychological safety and mental health, and create and maintain conditions so employees are comfortable.

Gender equality and DEI are linked to workplace well-being and safety in complex, nuanced ways. Research reveals that women experience gender-based violence in the workplace more commonly than men and that specific groups of women are at higher risk than others, including senior leaders, LGBTQ2+ women, indigenous women, women with disabilities and women in male-dominated fields.[130] Research also indicates that women are up to twice more likely to experience anxiety and depression than men due in part to gender expectations, including work and family responsibilities. Those who face work-related racial/ethnic discrimination experience negative mental health impacts, and women of colour may be subject to an additional 'emotional tax' from being compelled to protect themselves from racial and gender bias and discrimination.[131]

In the wake of COVID-19, the physical and mental health and well-being of employees have become a top priority. As Adriana Leigh notes in the Ontario Workplace Health Coalition's discussion paper on "Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace", employers have now been tasked with paying more attention to the interplay of the impacts of inequity, harassment and exclusion on mental health in the workplace, although these links existed long before the pandemic.[132]

The COVID-19 crisis revealed that a range of factors can lead to or increase the risk of violence and harassment, such as poor working conditions, stress, stigma and discrimination, and it has led to increases in domestic violence. Employers need to take steps to review and implement risk assessments and put in place preventive measures to protect the safety and health of employees.[133]

Internationally, the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), is a useful legislative framework to support COVID-19 response and recovery and ensure safe working conditions for all.[134] Nationally, governments have passed legislation to protect against workplace violence and harassment. Regardless of legislation, all companies should proactively implement safety plans and ensure that mechanisms are in place to guarantee employee well-being and reduce health and safety risks.

Good practices

An intersectional lens is used in well-being and safety decision-making. Organizations collaborate with women and underrepresented groups to identify gaps and how workplace policies, programmes, processes, controls, design and environment can reduce inequalities.

Managers and those in human resources have knowledge and skills on well-being and safety and their links to DEI. Occupational health and safety, human resources and DEI teams collaborate, and links are made between well-being, the prevention of harassment and violence and mental health.

Recommendations

Evaluate your company's culture for norms and practices that promote victim-blaming. Provide ways for employees to anonymously disclose their experiences, and use these results to inform follow-up action and training.[135]

Develop confidential, clear mechanisms to identify, examine and resolve workplace conflict. Ensure that they are implemented and followed up on appropriately to address reports of bullying and harassment, including sexual harassment and discrimination, microinequities and retaliation.[136] Organizations should develop a policy for the prevention of gender-based violence and harassment at work and on domestic violence; see the WEPs policy templates on these topics.[137]

Identify and assess working conditions from the perspective of women and marginalized groups. This can be done through quantitative and qualitative data-collection methods, including lived experience. Collect data on various issues, which can include but are not limited to workplace conflict, such as incidents, disputes, discipline and grievances, reports of bullying, harassment, microinequities and retaliation as well as resolution outcomes, to identify trends and impacts as well as workforce health, safety and well-being.[138] Use these data to develop intersectional and gender-responsive indicators to measure workplace well-being and safety.[139]

Ensure that leaders model and build psychological and emotional safety. Feeling emotionally and psychologically safe means that employees feel able to express their feelings, speak up and communicate openly.[140] Leaders can build psychological and emotional safety by encouraging employees to speak up at work and by demonstrating openness to having tough conversations without becoming defensive. Through these conversations, leaders model a culture where they respect, hear and value diverse voices.[141]

Become a trauma-informed workplace. According to Bill Howatt in his article "Leaders can Facilitate Trauma-Informed Workplaces", a trauma-informed workplace understands and recognizes the presence of trauma, acknowledging the role trauma can play in a person's life.[142] He notes that employees have varying experiences of trauma, from microinequities to sexual or domestic violence or to being a newcomer or a minority in an unwelcoming workplace. Trauma-informed employers approach employees who display out-of-character behaviour with curiosity and compassion, trying to root out the cause rather than assume that they are being 'difficult' (as employees in a state of trauma are at risk of being afraid, which can result in irritability). Howatt recommends that employers adopt a 'plan, do, check, act' approach to measuring and monitoring whether established programmes are working and support a psychologically safe workplace. According to Adriana Leigh in her article "Why DEIB and the Future of Work in Trauma-Informed", employers should educate themselves on trauma and understand the different types, which include:[143]

▶ 'Big T' trauma refers to a single event or experience.

▶ Cumulative trauma refers to the cumulative impact of a series of 'small t's' or events over time. The cumulative stress effect of cumulative trauma can be comparable to that of a 'big T' (major single event trauma experience).

▶ Vicarious trauma refers to the stress/trauma reactions triggered when we see or hear about people who are suffering. Our own history, identities and mental health baseline affect our vulnerability to vicarious trauma.
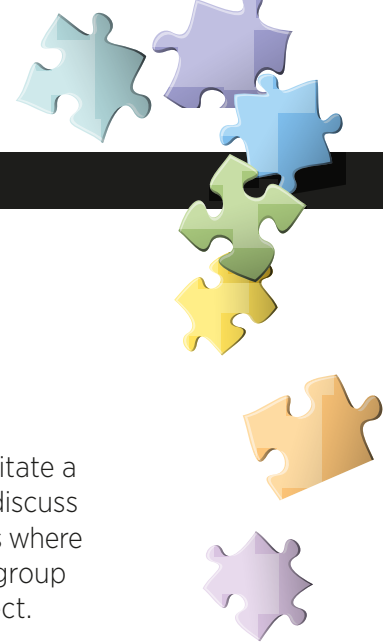
Leigh provides recommendations on the ways that employers can facilitate a trauma-informed workplace—for example, holding regular meetings to discuss challenging events and moments of inspiration at work, creating safe rooms where people can go to decompress, blocking time for check-ins and creating group guidelines for check-ins and meetings, so employees know what to expect.

Provide opportunities to take stock of individual and systemic challenges and viewpoints of women in all their diversity. Provide opportunities for underrepresented groups by creating ERGs and/or focus groups. Draw on feedback from these groups to gain insight and tailor well-being initiatives and programmes at work.[144]

Address safety and security issues, planning for employee benefits packages and well-being options, including sick/vacation days, benefits and other support, from an intersectional perspective. Ensure that all employees, including part-time workers, have equal access to health insurance and to support services for survivors of violence and harassment.[145] Provide mechanisms to protect all employees when working, whether on-site or off-site. Options include a remote check-in system, arranging security or transportation for after-hours work, designating gender-neutral washrooms and consulting with all genders and diverse groups in the renovation or design of workspaces.[146]

Provide regular training for employees, especially managers and those in human resources, on well-being and safety and their links to DEI. Ensure that they work proactively to destigmatize mental health and create awareness of equity-specific mental health factors. Prepare them with formal policies and resources to support those experiencing issues related to mental or physical health, personal crises, unexpected events, etc.[147]

Train all staff on how to prevent and respond to sexual harassment. Sexual harassment training should be held regularly rather than only part of the induction process. A one-size-fits-all approach is unlikely to be effective. A nuanced and layered approach is therefore recommended—tailored to the context, linked to work roles and responsibilities, and reflective of the diverse workforce cultures. Training on sexual harassment should focus on new ways of thinking and acting rather than providing the 'right' answers. It needs to be engaging, encourage active discussion and provide a safer space for questions and reflection. It should also be delivered by trainers with expertise on the issue.[148]

Raise the awareness of your employees about workplace violence, including domestic violence. Work towards eliminating the stigma associated with domestic violence by talking about it so that employees feel comfortable about coming forward.[149] In addition, train security staff and managers to recognize signs of domestic violence, human trafficking, forced labour and sexual exploitation and abuse.[150]

Case studies

CAE developed EthicsPoint, a third-party platform with a website and hotline that employees, customers, partners and suppliers can use to confidentially report issues related to illegal or unethical behaviour, including equal opportunity and a harassment-free workplace. Additionally, CAE created a pilot project to conduct a Total Health Index assessment of employees' physical and mental health, personal life and work environment. Employees received a personalized report with recommendations and relevant resources, and CAE used the aggregated results to improve organization-wide initiatives and policies related to well-being.[151]

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, **Crystal**, a financial inclusion organization and one of the first companies that joined the WEPs in Georgia, started planning well-being initiatives. The company surveyed employees to find out their needs during the pandemic. Based on the survey results, Crystal delivered webinars and training to increase employee awareness of the new epidemiological regulations—and to enhance employee happiness, engagement and satisfaction. From these activities, the company learned that employee well-being encompasses much more than just physical health. Although it may not be easy for any company to become employee centric and put people first, the unprecedented times showed Crystal that this approach is fundamental. The company observed that when people have a positive sense of well-being at work, they can develop their potential, be productive and creative, build positive relationships, better cope with stress, make meaningful contributions and take better care of their customers. This in turn has had a positive impact on the company's corporate responsibility, further contributing to its corporate sustainability.[152]

Google actively listened to how social and economic inequities and the relentless effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic impacted people at Google and beyond. In 2021, they reflected on what they learned—and they acted. One of their key actions was to take concrete steps to foster a culture of belonging. For example, in the Asia Pacific, they started the "You Can't Ask That" programme in 2020, which creates a safe and respectful place for any Googler to share stories and experiences that reflect experiences faced by them or their community. In their India offices, Google received a gold rating in the 2021 India Workplace Equality Index, India's first comprehensive benchmarking tool to measure LGBTQ2+ inclusion in the workplace—thanks to internal initiatives, like "Chai Chats", that foster open discussions between employees. Leaders from each office also held conversations with disability ERGs.[153]

Stantec has made a point of prioritizing psychological health and safety. Their corporate safety team is conducting a company-wide audit on mental health and will use the findings to determine key focus areas for mental health moving forward. At the same time, Stantec has implemented and supported mental health initiatives across its offices in Canada.[154]

Principle **4**

Promote education, training and professional development for women

The WEPs underscore that programmes to support the professional advancement of women and underrepresented groups should include education and training, complemented by networking, mentoring and sponsorship programmes.[155] Career development practices help employees acquire new skills, take on more responsibility and enhance their knowledge, which can help them succeed at their jobs, earn promotions and transition to new positions.

Senior management support—either in the form of mentorship or sponsorship—and assignment allocation are crucial for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. Women, and especially those with intersectional identities, tend to have less access to career development opportunities, fewer role models and more pressure if they are the 'only' representatives of their gender and/or other identities in a position, team or organization. To prevent backlash and provide equal opportunities for advancement, organizations need intentional and adaptive practices that respond to the needs of all employees.[156]

Good practices

Investments are made in workplace policies and programmes that open avenues for the advancement of women in all their diversity and for underrepresented groups at all levels and across all business areas,[157] particularly in non-traditional job fields and revenue-generating roles.[158] One of those business areas is the information technology (IT) field. To open opportunities for career advancement in IT fields for women, a US-based multinational technology company maintains strategic partnerships with women's organizations in several countries where it operates in order to promote education and training and recognize women's accomplishments in IT.[159]

● **High-potential employees from underrepresented groups are provided with coaching, mentoring and sponsorship opportunities to help them advance within the organization.**[160] Mentorship can help a high-potential employee feel less isolated at work as well as encourage them to interact more with others, particularly new hires. Mentors can provide tips on career growth and introduce the employee to other professionals. Coaching, mentoring and sponsorship opportunities enable employees to promote their personal and professional development in a strategic and supportive manner, which leads to an increased return on investment per individual. The presence or absence of a supportive mentorship programme may be what drives an employee's decision to remain within an organization or not.[161]

● **Equal access to all company-supported education and training programmes is ensured.** This includes computer literacy classes as well as vocational and IT training.[162]

Recommendations

● **Be strategic and purposeful when designing career development programmes.** Identify areas and levels of the business that would benefit most from the programmes; assess future workforce demographic needs; set formal goals and measurement methods; and develop a strong communications plan to promote programmes. Career development programmes should provide all parties with sufficient information, support and resources to help them understand their roles, cultivate self-advocacy skills and ensure that participants are effective and engaged. While designing the programmes, 'similar to me' relationships should be avoided in order to look beyond traditional mentoring structures that could limit opportunities for women, visible minorities, people with disabilities, etc. Employees' career development plan should aim to match their skills and development needs, which can include having multiple mentors or reverse-mentoring aspects (with mentors learning from mentees).[163]

● **Take proactive steps to support non-traditional career development.** This includes, for example, tailoring programmes to support women in male-dominated roles and men in women-dominated roles, sharing information about non-traditional career paths, and encouraging horizontal progression and non-linear advancement.

Formalize mentorship/sponsorship relationships by setting expectations that are mutually agreeable to hold both parties accountable. According to the WEPs guidance note on mentoring,[164] the objectives of mentoring should be concrete, feasible and achievable. It is recommended to use SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time-based) objectives to design the right goals. The more specific the objectives are, the easier it is to evaluate results and improve the programme for the next round of employees. The process should be monitored at regular intervals—for example, through periodic reports on the programme's progress and follow-up questionnaires for those participating in the programme.[165] A mentoring programme should be a minimum of three months in duration. However, a mentorship period of six months is more beneficial as it allows mentees to set realistic goals and achieve them, while mentors will be able to monitor progress.[166]

Make mentoring sustainable through engagement with programme alumni. Graduates of the mentoring programme can become ambassadors of the programme and play a critical role to the success of future programmes. Call on alumni to promote the programme and recruit new members to ensure sustainability. Alumni can also become trainers of future participants.[167]

Monitor participants in the mentoring programme to identify future leaders. Update performance frameworks to ensure that mentoring is a professional development opportunity and that those who participate are recognized. Use the mentoring programme in performance management and/or to discuss the acquisition of new skills or changes to a person's current situation.[168]

Case studies

As the workforce continues to diversify and widen across the globe, this challenge has become an imperative for **APM Terminals Poti**, one of the biggest operators and employers in Georgia (at the Black Sea port) and a WEPs signatory since 2018. With their goal of increasing diversity in the workplace, which is 90 per cent male-dominated, the company formed partnerships with six technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions to support women's economic empowerment and education. This joint venture allowed APM Terminals Poti to implement Principle 4 and identify the required female workforce through the TVET centres for jobs traditionally occupied by men: crane operation, information technologies, health and safety, welding, electrical engineering and mechanical engineering. The company then provided the identified women with paid internships and on-the-job training. Since spring 2019, four young women have received internships, one of whom is now employed as a crane operator after completing her internship with the company. By specifically recruiting women, this partnership enables them to enter traditionally male-dominated professions.[169]

As part of **Deloitte's** Emerging Leaders Development Programme, employees from underrepresented populations are paired with mentors from the partner, principal or director level. In 2018, Deloitte also launched a mentorship programme for women, the Deloitte Women's Leadership Launch, which is one of the company's initiatives to support women's career advancement in the company.[170]
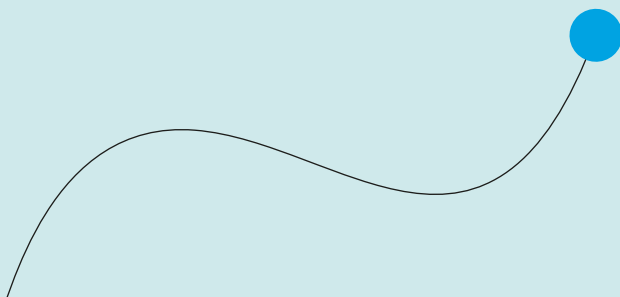
Principle 5

Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women

Companies are well positioned to advance gender equality, DEI and empower women through their purchasing policies and practices. The size and volume of global corporate purchasing means that corporations have the potential to dramatically influence the way suppliers and supply chains operate.[171]

Deloitte notes in its publication "The Diversity and Inclusion Revolution: Eight Powerful Truths" that, while many organizations have prioritized workforce diversity over customer diversity, both are important to business success.[172] Deloitte's 2017 research revealed that up to half of customers had been influenced to make a purchasing decision based on the organization's support for equality.

In terms of marketing and advertising, 2021 research from the Unstereotype Alliance, "Beyond Gender 2: The Impact of Intersectionality in Advertising", showed that consumers' expectations of brands are changing and that those companies that create content with diverse representations of people in terms of race, ethnicity, creed, body size, sexual orientation, gender, ability and other characteristics in roles that defy traditional stereotypes are best positioned to strengthen business performance and meet consumer expectations.[173] Some countries have taken action by passing regulations of gender portrayal in advertising, and UN Women launched the Unstereotype Alliance in 2017 to bring industry leaders together to take collective action in eliminating outdated stereotypes in advertising.

Good practices

● **Diverse and inclusive imagery, phrasing and examples are used in marketing materials.** Organizations use positive and progressive images of people from diverse backgrounds and inclusive language in product and service marketing and advertising communication.[174] Companies proactively challenge stereotypical roles of gender and other social factors and avoid cultural appropriation, showing positive role models and featuring diverse, realistic portrayals of different genders and social identities, including faces, bodies, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and cultural background.[175]

● **Organizational culture and practices align with external communications and public image.** Marketing and advertising accurately reflect the practices in the organization. Organizations that advertise inclusivity and the potential for upward mobility only do so when this is the reality in the organization, not when promotions only belong to one specific group. The products and services that are designed, developed, advertised and sold by organizations also respect women's dignity and eliminate gender stereotypes and bias.[176]

● **Supplier outreach activities are leveraged to identify a variety of potential suppliers.** Companies create opportunities for businesses owned by women. They engage with supply chain partners through supplier forums and feedback mechanisms to share and exchange DEI experience and expertise.[177]
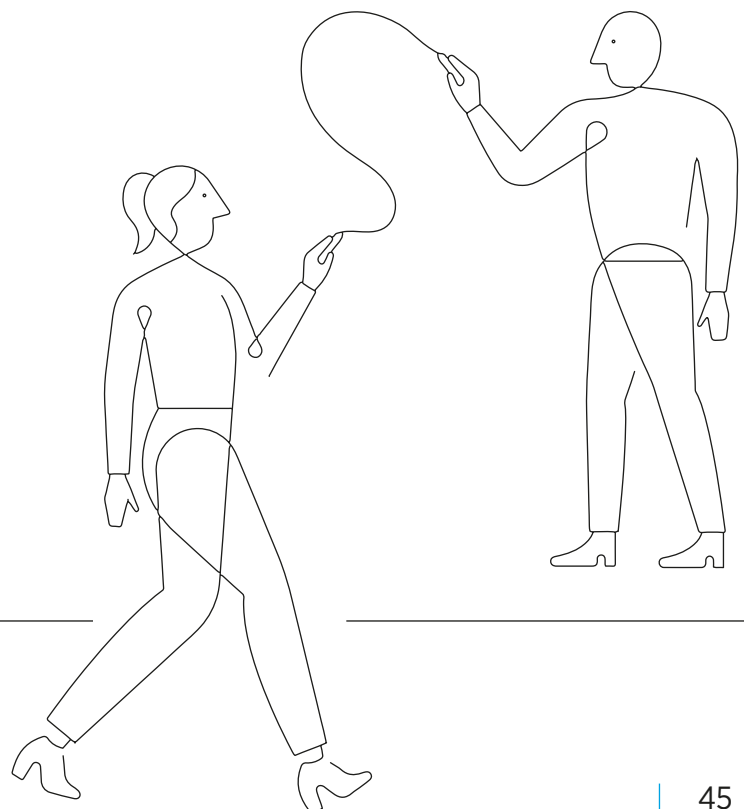
Recommendations

○ **Simplify procurement processes—for example, the accessibility of documentation and the use of supplier portals and systems to provide opportunities to the broadest range of suppliers.** Integrate DEI principles into each stage of the procurement and supply chain process. The business strategy of an organization should also include supplier diversity to broaden the range of suppliers, including businesses owned by women. Within the activities related to procurement and supply chain relationships, data should be collected—for example, the number of women suppliers and women-owned businesses and the volume of such procurement.[178]

○ **Assess how supply chain partners align with the organization's DEI principles and WEPs implementation.** Periodically review DEI provisions in procurement policies, processes and practices as well as the performance of supply chain partners, and incorporate gender equality and DEI contractual clauses that require supply chain partners to provide decent work, safe and secure working conditions, a living wage and fair and respectful treatment of people.[179] Supply chain partner performance within an organization should be monitored against DEI contractual clauses.[180]

○ **Train your marketing team on stereotypes, bias and intersectionality.** Ensure that the whole marketing team receives training on gender stereotypes, bias and intersectionality, and consider requesting such training to agency partners or vendors.
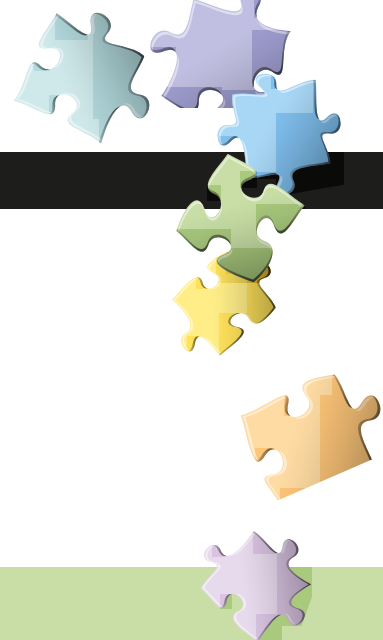
Case studies

Employment and Social Development Canada oversees a public procurement policy that promotes DEI in supplier enterprises. All suppliers to public contracts in Canada must sign an Agreement to Implement Employment Equity within 30 days of the contract award. Enterprises should take reasonable actions to ensure progress towards the full representation of women, people with disabilities and members of visible minority groups and indigenous people within their workforce. Progress is reviewed through regular compliance assessments by the Labour Programme. Failure to adhere can result in the loss of the contract and/or of the right to bid on future contracts.[181]

Unilever began its journey to unstereotype the portrayals of people in its advertising in 2016. Unstereotyping ads is part of Unilever's business strategy that impacts all brands and marketing teams as well as agency partners. Dove's #ShowUs campaign[182] in collaboration with Getty Images creates an open image database of diverse, natural, non-digitally distorted women. In addition to brands like Dove and LUX[183] supporting women's empowerment, brands like Axe/Lynx and Dove Men+Care have launched campaigns to tackle stereotypes that hold men back in the workplace. In 2019, Dove Men+Care launched the Pledge for Paternity Leave and Paternity Leave Fund[184] to make paid paternity leave the new standard.

WOMEN'S
EMPOWERMENT
PRINCIPLES

Principle **6**

Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy

Companies are starting to better acknowledge their impact on the communities in which they operate. Accordingly, they have started to advocate for DEI interests beyond their workplace into communities and society, placing an increased emphasis on being socially responsible, going beyond traditional philanthropic contributions.[185]

Each company's external stakeholders vary but may include a variety of individuals or groups that are affected by its operations and activities, such as investors and shareholders, communities and community organizations, educational institutions, regulatory bodies, advocacy groups and non-profit associations, in addition to customers, clients and supply chain partners. It is important for organizations to recognize the needs, expectations and interests of these stakeholders, as they can impact DEI outcomes positively or negatively. A proactive, inclusive and collaborative approach to external stakeholder engagement can demonstrate leadership and commitment to DEI, influence the adoption of inclusive behaviours and practices among stakeholders, and build the company's reputation for social responsibility.[186]

Good practices

● **Employees are encouraged to participate in and support various community engagement projects,** as well as share DEI learning from such activities.

● **The organization takes bold stands in words and action on societal issues related to achieving equity and justice,** including through social media engagement under #WEPs, #BlackLivesMatter, #MeToo, #GenderBasedViolence, #UnitedAgainstRacism and #StandUp4HumanRights.[187]

● **The organization addresses and atones for past behaviours regarding the mistreatment of people.**[188]

● **The organization consults women and girls before designing and launching new products and services for them.**

Recommendations

Encourage volunteerism. For example, this can be accomplished by providing information to employees on community initiatives that the organization supports and by providing time off and/or compensation and rewards.[189] See the case study below on Unilever's Take Action Hub, where employees and those visiting its website can find organizations, petitions and activities that offer them the chance to take part in simple, actionable initiatives that help make sustainable living commonplace.[190]

Develop an external stakeholder engagement strategy. Start by recognizing the needs, expectations and interests of external stakeholders, particularly women and girls, as they relate to your organization's DEI principles and objectives; and develop your strategy based on the relevance, needs, interests, power, importance and influence of various external stakeholders on your organization's DEI objectives.[191] As part of your DEI strategy, monitor the influence and impact of external stakeholders on the organization's DEI objectives and outcomes.[192]

Use philanthropy and grants programmes to support community initiatives.[193] For example, see the case study below on the Starbucks Community Resilience Fund, which aims to advance racial equity and environmental resilience by supporting small business growth and community development projects in Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) communities with historically limited access to capital.

Engage in external stakeholder outreach activities, particularly towards women and girls, to promote the organization's DEI objectives, and identify opportunities to support their DEI initiatives.[194] Communicate DEI principles and objectives consistently when engaging with external stakeholders.[195]

Collect, document and review DEI-related media reports and disaggregated data involving external stakeholders.[196] Document examples of sharing DEI experiences and expertise between the organization and its external stakeholders.[197]

Case studies

Impact Hub Tbilisi is an international co-working space aimed at promoting entrepreneurship through diverse programmes and projects. To implement Principle 6 at the community level and boost entrepreneurship interest among mature women, Impact Hub Tbilisi, in partnership with Liberty Bank, implemented the project "Restart 60+". The project targeted homemakers in their sixties and older women who are eager to work and participate in social life and/or wish to improve their income. Interest in the project was significant: among 220 applicants, 15 women were selected and trained in the basics of entrepreneurship and culinary business during a three-month period.[198]

Starbucks is providing an example of intentional community engagement. In January 2021, Starbucks announced new initiatives as part of a long-standing commitment using its scale and platform to positively impact the communities they serve. One part is the commitment to invest US$100 million to launch the Starbucks Community Resilience Fund. It aims to advance racial equity and environmental resilience by supporting small business growth and community development projects in BIPOC communities with historically limited access to capital. The investments will initially focus on 12 US metropolitan areas and their surrounding regions: Atlanta, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, Minneapolis, New Orleans, New York City, Philadelphia, the San Francisco Bay Area, Seattle and Washington, DC. In partnership with community leaders, Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) and other impact-focused financial institutions, the Fund will help provide access to capital intended to support small businesses and neighbourhood projects, including those addressing the inequitable impacts of climate change.[199]

Unilever created its Take Action Hub,[200] where employees and those visiting its website can find organizations, petitions and activities that offer them the chance to take part in simple, actionable initiatives that help make sustainable living commonplace. They are initiatives that Unilever and its brands own, deliver, support or sponsor or are ones that are run by their partners.

Principle **7**

Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality

Measuring and reporting—both internally and externally—are crucial to ensure that organizations are held accountable for their commitments and create opportunities for advancing meaningful action.

A growing number of stakeholders, including employees, consumers, investors and civil society, are calling on companies to disclose information on their efforts towards gender equality. By using the WEPs Transparency and Accountability Framework,[201] companies can more effectively work towards a gender-equal economy that works for all women and men. The framework aims to provide companies with a holistic set of indicators that are most likely to advance gender equality across corporate value chains aligned with existing corporate gender equality frameworks. The indicators aim to challenge the status quo while also enabling companies and organizations to understand their performance on gender equality and women's empowerment across their value chain. It helps companies:

- Learn to operationalize the WEPs through a gender action plan.

- Get an overview of how to develop a successful organization-wide action plan.

- Understand the importance of consulting external stakeholders.

To accurately measure and report on DEI impacts, a strategy and action plans are essential. An effective DEI strategy should be scaled as well as purposeful, strategic and customized. As DEI is nuanced, every strategy should be tailored to the context and unique organizational challenges, not based on current trends in DEI. DEI planning should be intentional, human-centred and iterative rather than reactive, and it should include specific objectives and goals.

McLean & Company underscores that the development of a DEI strategy should follow four strategic pillars:[202]

1. **Conduct a current state assessment:** Create a DEI strategy project team, gather data to uncover DEI gaps, conduct focus groups, review broader strategic goals and priorities, complete a DEI assessment, and gather external data to understand the DEI landscape.

2. **Determine the purpose of DEI:** Undertake a SWOT analysis, identify the organization's DEI strategic pillars, and determine the goals and metrics that will indicate progress.

3. **Develop a governance model, and select DEI initiatives:** Clarify roles and accountabilities, examine the employee life cycle from a DEI lens, and select customized DEI initiatives.

4. **Plan to launch the DEI strategy:** Identify DEI responsibilities across the organization, build a clear action plan for launching the DEI strategy, and determine a communications plan.

DEI maturity level

Companies should also strive to better understand their own DEI maturity level to help them set a baseline for their strategy and assess progress. Companies that show strong, transformational change on DEI have four things in common, according to the ILO:[203]

1. They focus on adopting a strategic and culture change approach to DEI.

2. They build diversity at top management levels.

3. They adopt a shared approach to leading change on DEI that involves leaders, managers and employees at all levels.

4. They embed DEI into every aspect of the employee life cycle and organizational activity through policies and practices.

Companies should take stock of their own DEI maturity levels in developing and implementing their DEI strategy to better understand their current baseline and assess progress. Deloitte[204] and other consulting organizations, as well as the ILO[205] and the GDEIB,[206] have developed useful frameworks that can be used in conjunction with the WEPs Transparency and Accountability Framework[207] to assess a company's DEI maturity level.

Three levels of DEI maturity

The ILO's "Transforming Enterprises through Diversity and Inclusion" cites three levels of DEI maturity:[208]

COMPLIANCE

Organizations take more of a compliance-focused approach at the beginning of their work on DEI and may have some basic policies in place but little else.

TRANSACTIONAL

Organizations have a range of actions in place, such as staff awareness training, but these have limited overall impact on the achievement of systemic change. The approach is often driven by a series of initiatives rather than being coordinated and strategic, and the onus for change is often on underrepresented groups to adapt to fit with the predominant culture.

TRANSFORMATIONAL

DEI is part of the organizational culture and strategy and is embedded into every aspect of the employee life cycle and organizational activity. Top level management is diverse, and all are held accountable for DEI actions.

Five maturity levels

For WEPs signatories and global organizations, the Global Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Benchmarks[209] offers a particularly flexible and easy-to-customize maturity model.

LEVEL 5

BEST PRACTICE
Demonstrating current global best practices in DEI; exemplary.

LEVEL 4

PROGRESSIVE
Implementing DEI systemically and showing improved results and outcomes beyond what is required or expected.

LEVEL 3

PROACTIVE
A clear awareness of the value of DEI, starting to implement DEI systemically. This is what is required and expected of all organizations.

LEVEL 2

REACTIVE
A compliance-only mindset; actions are taken primarily to comply with relevant laws and social pressures. Doing the bare minimum.

LEVEL 1

INACTIVE
No DEI work has begun; diversity, equity and inclusion are not part of organizational goals.

Developing DEI goals and metrics

According to the OECD policy brief on diversity at work,[210] the collection of accurate and systematic disaggregated data on the implementation and results of anti-discrimination and diversity initiatives, including on the effectiveness of mechanisms, can help strengthen the understanding of what works in promoting and embedding DEI.

It is crucial to measure diversity quantitatively, in addition to measuring the qualitative experience of inclusion and belonging. While an organization may be successful in attracting and recruiting a diverse workforce, it is inclusion that influences the extent to which diverse members are able to thrive and fully contribute. Overall experiences of inclusion within a workforce should be examined by breaking down the results by personal characteristics so that different experiences between groups are uncovered. The ILO report "Transforming Enterprises through Diversity and Inclusion" offers a framework for measuring workplace inclusion at three levels:[211]

1. Assess the degree to which employees say they feel included at work.

2. Consider factors contributing to belonging—that is, the extent to which employees feel:

    a. Respected for who they are and the skills and experience they bring and that they experience a sense of belonging at work

    b. Supported to perform well in their roles

    c. Rewarded and developed at work in an environment that supports equal opportunity and treatment

3. Examine the extent to which employees experience the positive benefits of inclusion. These benefits include an increased sense of well-being, greater ambition for career development, higher levels of productivity, performance, commitment and collaboration, and more opportunities to contribute to better ways of doing things in their workplace.

There are various tools that can support human resources in WEPs signatories in developing DEI metrics for their organizations. One of these tools is the "ISO 30415:2021 Human Resource Management – Diversity and Inclusion", which provides sample DEI metrics to use for each stage of the employee life cycle.[212] This tool is scalable to all types of organizations across sectors, regardless of size, type, activity, industry or sector, growth phase, external influences and country-specific requirements. The document presents fundamental prerequisites for DEI, associated accountabilities and responsibilities, recommended actions, suggested metrics and potential outcomes.

Sample metrics for inclusive organizational culture

The effectiveness of outreach activities with all stakeholders to ascertain the organization's awareness of its DEI principles and objectives

The percentage of the workforce that discloses their personal demographic data

Changes in the composition of the organization's governance body and workforce

The percentage of the workforce that states that they feel valued by the organization

Data on workforce health, safety and well-being, including absences, workforce turnover and retention, in order to identify trends and adverse impacts

Data relating to workplace conflict, such as incidents, disputes, discipline, grievances, complaints of bullying, harassment, microaggression, and forms of retaliation, as well as resolution outcomes to identify trends and adverse impacts

Data related to disproportionate and adverse impacts arising from the implementation of organizational policies, processes and practices
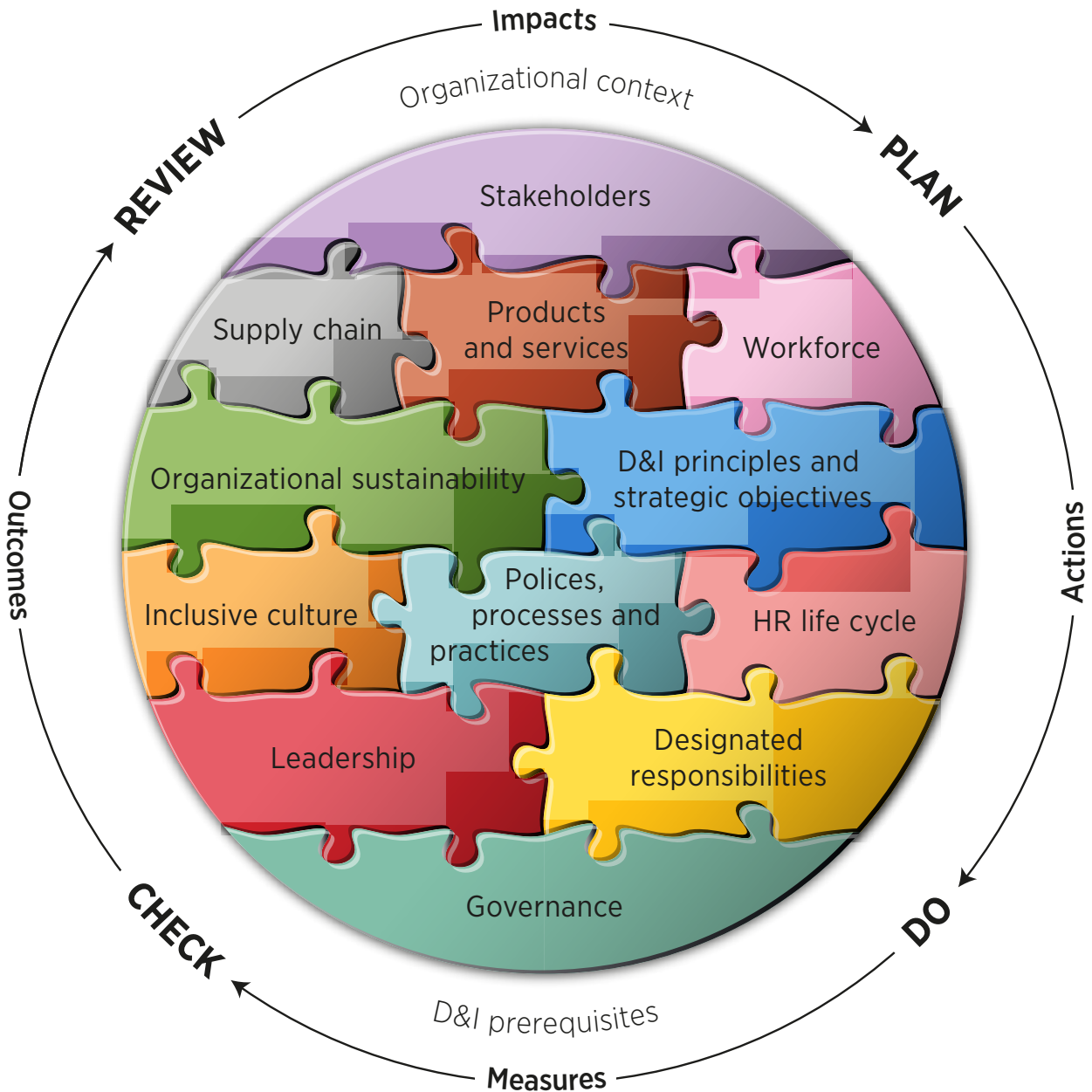
Trends in solicited and unsolicited feedback to ascertain the organization's standing as an inclusive organization and any DEI impacts

Changes in the number and levels of DEI risks identified

Organizational diversity and inclusion

FIGURE 4

The ISO metrics can complement indicators and information that WEPs signatories may already have, including those from the WEPs Transparency and Accountability Framework[213] and the WEPs Call to Action.[214]

Communicating and implementing your DEI strategy

According to McLean & Company, organizations should develop a specific plan to execute and implement their DEI strategy, which should include an action plan for launching the strategy and a communications plan.[215]

When communicating the DEI strategy across the organization, it is important to tailor and choose channels for specific audiences (e.g. human resources, employees, managers, etc.) and communicate clearly and consistently—and in a timely fashion to avoid misinformation. It is good practice to start communicating on the DEI strategy well before completion.

As a starting point, the WEPs Welcome Package[216] includes plenty of promotional materials and templates that companies can download for internal and external communications for use at their meetings, conferences, booths and events to showcase their commitment.

Good practices

An effective DEI strategy is scaled, purposeful, strategic and customized. It includes an action plan with concrete actions, the allocation of human and financial resources and an accountability framework.

The company assesses its DEI maturity level. It does so by using the WEPs Gender Gap Analysis Tool[217] to gain an understanding of the status of DEI and to gauge progress.

Companies regularly report progress on reaching the DEI vision to the public and internally.[218] DEI communication should be frequent and ongoing, both internally and externally.[219]
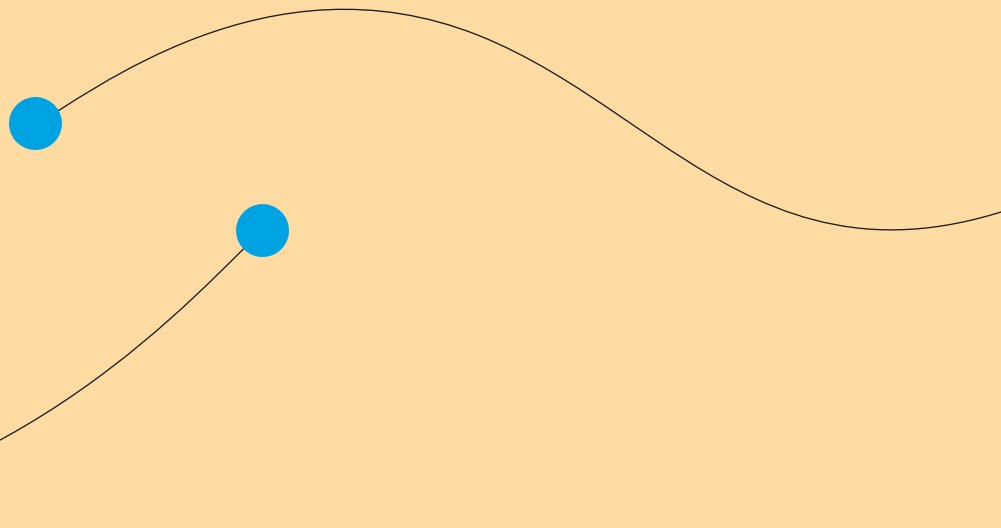
Recommendations

Develop benchmarks for DEI. Review current data collected by human resource systems, including on recruitment, hiring and selection, training and development, promotion, retention and termination—considering both quantitative and qualitative data to create an understanding of the status of DEI. Use participatory methods, including anonymous surveys, focus groups and in-depth interviews. Identify regular checkpoints for assessing DEI initiatives, goals and metrics.[220]

Develop specific, measurable, achievable, resource-based and time-bound (SMART) qualitative and quantitative goals at the organizational level supported by activity-level targets. A holistic set of indicators are listed in the WEPs Transparency and Accountability Framework.[221] When developing metrics, measure diversity quantitatively, in addition to measuring the qualitative experience of inclusion and belonging. A DEI strategy will involve various metrics, including results-based indicators—for example, the men-women ratio in management or the percentage of local or foreign nationals in all levels of managerial posts—and means-based indicators, such as the number of participants in specific training programmes or the number of managers taking part in awareness programmes. Culture Amp provides a useful list of potential metrics and data to monitor DEI, including data on the employee life cycle—for example, tracking the demographic similarities between employees who get promoted, data trends between employees who rate their job satisfaction and engagement poorly, and metrics focused on company make-up, such as diversity in the C-suite.[222]

Regularly measure targets, goals and actions, and make changes continuously and iteratively. Meet with key stakeholders to gather feedback on the DEI strategy and initiatives, and consult with employees across all levels to inform the changes you make.[223]

Communicate DEI progress and achievements publicly. For example, the organization can include a section in their annual report detailing the ways in which it has implemented its anti-discrimination and diversity commitments (e.g. actions undertaken, practices and results). DEI topics should be on websites and social media platforms, and they should be quick and easy to find.

Case studies

Sodexo set a goal of having women comprise 40 per cent of its senior leadership level by 2025. To get there, the company created the Gender Advisory Board "SoTogether" (previously known as SWIFt, Sodexo Women's International Forum for Talent). In the United States, Sodexo also developed a Balanced Scorecard for Diversity, with a Diversity Index linked to an annual incentive. The scorecard contains both quantitative and qualitative measures. Quantitative measures focus on the distribution of women and people of colour within hiring, promotions and terminations, while qualitative measures look at managers' inclusion behaviours over the year, such as whether they attended diversity training or mentored diverse employees. Today, globally, women make up 60 per cent of Sodexo's board, 35 per cent of its executive team and 37 per cent of its senior executive roles.[224]
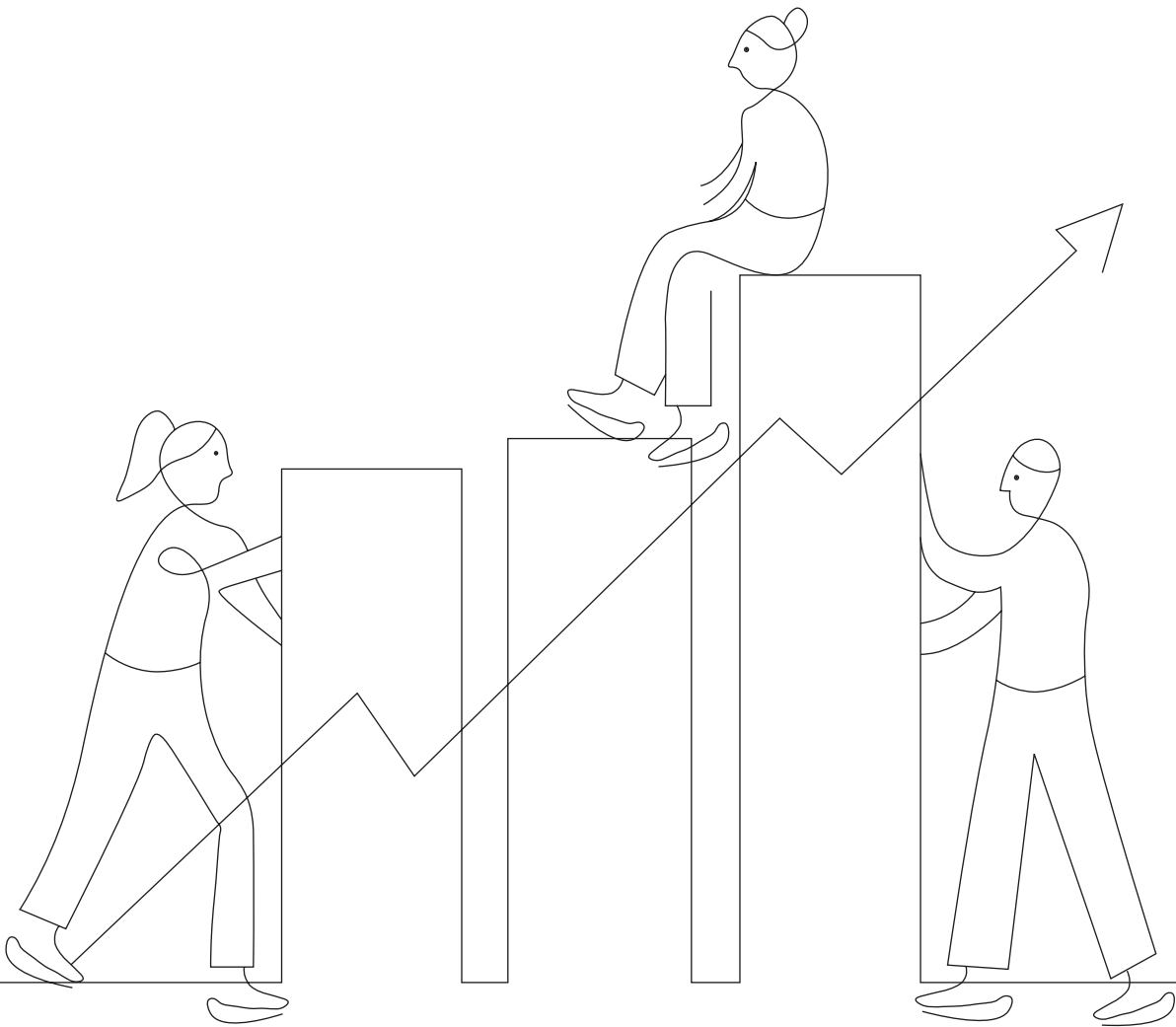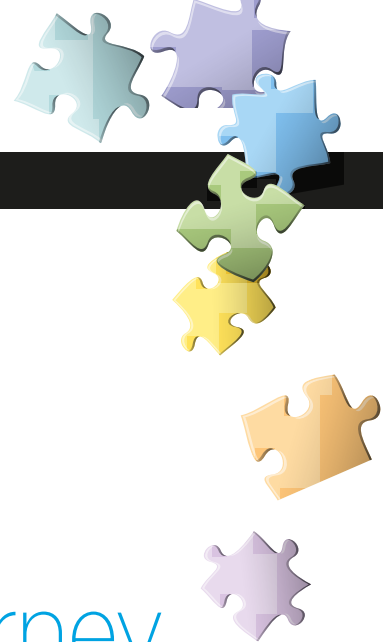
SECTION 3

SIX AREAS TO BEGIN YOUR WEPs JOURNEY

Six areas
to begin your WEPs journey

Below is an easy-to-use, consolidated list of practical steps that your company can take to begin its WEPs journey, inspired by the recommendations in this manual and adapted from Lever's "Diversity and Inclusion Handbook".[225] This list was developed through insight from Lever employees, innovative customers, industry leaders and several studies. When reviewing this list, it is important to remember that for DEI to be sustainable and effective, activities should not be ad hoc or approached as a checklist but, rather, integrated as part of a scaled, purposeful, strategic and customized DEI strategy.

Inclusive language and communication

1. **Use gender-neutral language in job descriptions.** Audit job descriptions for the use of 'he/his/him' as a default, and convert them to gender-neutral pronouns like 'they'. Textio[226] offers a platform where you can copy-paste your job descriptions and receive feedback.

2. **State a commitment to building a diverse and inclusive culture in your job descriptions and careers page.** Even one sentence sends a strong message to applicants.

3. **Write results-based job descriptions.** Studies have found that men apply for a job when they meet only 60 per cent of the qualifications, but women will only apply when they meet 100 per cent of them. Instead of focusing on a checklist of skills that could weed out great women and minority candidates, focus on what a candidate will be expected to achieve in, for example, a month, six months and a year into the job.

4. **Try using Alex,[227] an open-source tool, to catch gender stereotypical or biased language in team communications.** It can catch potentially hurtful language and subtly remind individuals of how to rephrase the content.

5. **Start a 'team's jar' for a friendly reminder against unnecessarily gender stereotypical or biased language in the office.** Whenever someone accidentally uses a gender stereotype or bias for something gender-neutral, they put a fixed amount of money in the jar. When they reach a certain total, they donate the money to a charity.

6. **Check the reading materials in your lobby.** If you are going to provide magazines, try to make them relevant to your industry as opposed to providing gender-specific options.

Inclusive work environment and employee practices

1. **Celebrate holidays and events.** For example, consider celebrating International Women's Day (8 March), the International Day of Rural Women (15 October), the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (25 November), and those for underrepresented minorities like Gay Pride Week (location-specific).

2. **Schedule team bonding activities during the day rather than after 5pm.** This will allow more working parents to participate, as well as others who may not be available otherwise.

3. **Give visible recognition when employees go above and beyond to pick up extra duties.**

4. **Share discussion points and an agenda prior to meetings so more voices are heard.** Some people like to talk through new information immediately, while others prefer having time to process.

5. **Try a Round Robin technique in meetings.** In this technique, you ask every person in the room for a contribution. People can either share an idea or pass.

6. **Point out interruptions.** Studies show that women are far more likely than men to be interrupted in meetings.

7. **Hang a poster.** It should outline how every employee can contribute to an inclusive workplace.

8. **Check the temperature of your office.** The default temperature in most buildings is often what is most comfortable for men.

9. **Check your office decorations.** Try to put up decorations, signage or even fun company memories that promote the values you want employees to hold.

10. **Post inclusive bathroom signs.** Lever's bathroom doors have a sticker that says "For those who identify as" above the men's and women's signs.

11. **Establish a room where nursing parents have a private space for pumping breast milk.** If you have limited space, try using an available room such as a conference room, which can still be used for conferences when not in use.

12. **Host a book club.** There is great literature out there that can stimulate conversation.

13. **Host a movie night.** A movie night is another way to stimulate meaningful conversation without the commitment of reading a full book.

14. **Listen to your employees.** Invest in the things they care about. Start small. Do not let the scope of things that need to be done keep you from doing anything at all. You can talk about DEI forever, but acting is the only way to change anything.

Inclusive representation and cultural diversity

1. **Order company clothing in women's sizes.** Order also from non-gender-binary clothing companies.

2. **Hold an international food potluck as a way of appreciating diverse cultures.** Your employee population should be reflected, which can also open discussion naturally.

3. **Review the visuals of your careers page.** Which demographics are represented in your photos and in your leadership biographies? Candidates may interpret a non-diverse careers page as a sign of a non-inclusive workplace. Remember, however, that your external visuals should reflect the reality of your organizational culture and practices. Do not advertise inclusivity and the potential for upward mobility when this is not the reality in your organization.

4. **Sponsor diversity-focused community organizations.** If there are organizations doing work that you admire or aspire to, offer to sponsor them.

Inclusive organizational policies and procedures

1. **Hold open door hours.** Your HR/DEI team can hold recurring 'open door' hours and welcome discussions on DEI.

2. **Sponsor an event.** Get employees, or representatives in other companies, together to talk about DEI, what is working and what is not working.

3. **Offer flexible paid time off.** Empower employees by giving them the option to take time away when they need it, which also signals that you trust their judgment.

4. **Allow flexible work hours.** Show employees that you trust them to get their work done with the freedom to create their own work hours. People have all sorts of situations that may affect their ability to work a strict schedule from 9am to 5pm (e.g. picking up or dropping off children at school).

5. **Have every employee take a working style test to help co-workers understand one another's work and communication approaches.** This can lead to more empathy towards others, as well as an appreciation of differences.

6. **Have a parental leave policy.**

7. **Have a performance review system.** Standardized reviews help reduce unfairness in promotion decisions. If you are not able to implement a formal review process, solicit reviews via a 360 assessment tool instead so that managers have multiple perspectives.

8. **Include DEI in performance conversations.** If you are not tying DEI directly to individual goals, you can still touch upon hiring managers' efforts, progress and expectations of those goals in performance conversations.

9. **Order a set of knowledge cards.** It can be hard to know how to talk about DEI and bring awareness to your co-workers. The Society of Women Engineers in the United States, for example, partnered with another organization to create a set of knowledge cards designed to facilitate a discussion and prompt reflection around DEI.[228]

10. **Have co-workers take an Implicit Association Test (IAT)[229] to help them realize their own biases.** Acknowledging that we all have biases is a key step to deeper DEI conversations.

11. **Provide skills-building workshops.** These workshops can offer sessions on such topics as communication and empathy to your company's employees.

12. **Approve a budget for ergonomic workspaces.** Promote a healthy working environment by catering to individual needs.

13. **Expand benefits coverage to domestic partners.** The legality of same-sex marriage varies, but if you have the power to be more inclusive with your benefits offerings, doing so is recommended, and employees will appreciate it.

Inclusive hiring practices

1. **Conduct anonymous screening to minimize unconscious bias in the résumé review process.** As noted above, studies have shown that people with ethnic names need to send out more résumés before they get a callback and that résumés with female names are rated lower than ones with male names, all else being equal.

2. **Remove 'culture fit' as a reason for rejecting a candidate.** When interviewers want to reject candidates for 'culture fit' or a 'gut feeling', it is an indication that unconscious bias is at play. Challenge interviewers to articulate a more specific explanation, which is also a way to uncover biases and have open conversations about them, without shame.

3. **Structure interviewing.** You do not have to follow a strict script in your interviews, as candidates often share important insights when conversations flow naturally. However, structured interviews can lead to higher-quality hires because they help reduce bias. By asking each candidate a similar set of questions, you have consistent data to facilitate objective decision-making.

4. **Ensure that underrepresented employees are included in your interviews (without overloading them).** Ensure that candidates meet their diverse potential co-workers, without overburdening members of your interview panel (e.g. your sole woman engineer should not be tasked with being in every single interview panel).

Gender-responsive supply chains

1. **Conduct gender-responsive procurement.** A good place to start is creating an action plan on how the company will increase its procurement spent with diverse suppliers, including women-owned businesses. Clear targets and indicators are key elements of the action plan.

2. **Collect data on all suppliers.** Collect gender-disaggregated data on your suppliers to measure progress on your action plan.

3. **Source from diverse suppliers.** Your upcoming corporate events can be catered by women-owned businesses.

4. **Remove gender bias from advertising and marketing materials.** Remove harmful gender-based stereotypes in all media and advertising. Ensure that both women and men are depicted as empowered actors with progressive, intelligent and multidimensional personalities.
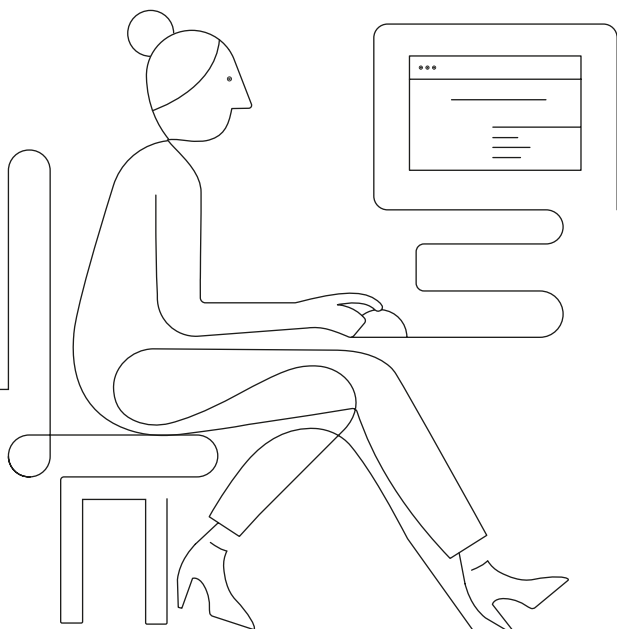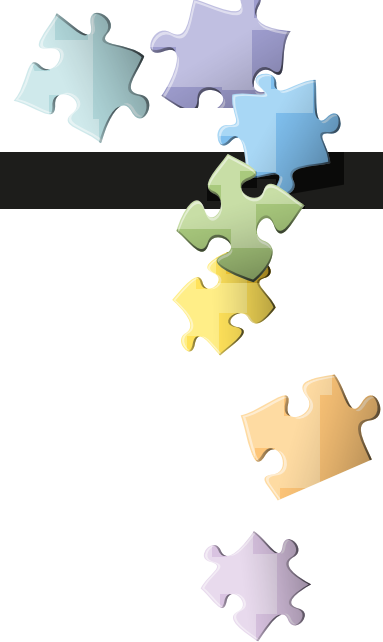
SECTION 4

SAMPLE DEI POLICY TEMPLATE

Sample DEI
policy template

According to the WEPs guidance note "Understanding Intersectionality",[230] internal policies to eliminate discrimination and harassment and promote diversity and inclusion show a company's commitment to equal and inclusive workplaces. This includes human rights and living wage policies in line with international standards and ensuring that internal conduct does not infringe upon anyone's human rights. Continuously evaluating existing policies and grievance mechanisms allows for adjustments, and clear reporting structures and targets promote swift and effective action.

Parental leave policies, for example, often exclude people in same-sex relationships, those who adopt or conceive via surrogacy, or gender non-binary, gender-nonconforming and transgender individuals. Companies can broaden policy coverage to include same-sex parents, single parents, those who adopt or use surrogacy, and other family types, as well as promote equal care responsibilities among parents.

Similarly, in some Western countries, it has been customary to provide employees with leave during Christmas, Easter and Thanksgiving. Workers who do not celebrate these holidays are not necessarily given the opportunity to take leave during their holidays; accordingly, companies can revisit holiday policies to ensure that employees from various religions are supported in celebrating their holidays.

Each context will be different; some companies may have a collection of policies, rather than just one, that together is formed around building an inclusive and respectful workplace. Such a collection may include a non-discrimination/harassment policy, an equity and diversity policy (often together, as seen in the template below), a policy on domestic violence in the workplace, a policy on gender-based violence and harassment at work, and a flexible work policy.

Below is an example of a sample template for a diversity, equality and inclusion policy. Each organization can use this template for inspiration to develop or improve upon their own DEI policy. DEI policies are not one-size-fits-all; companies should tailor the provided template to their unique legal and social context, sector and industry. Where possible, companies should work with human resources and/or in-house legal counsel in developing a company policy.

The template below includes the following sections for an effective DEI policy:

1. A preamble

2. An introduction to the purpose of the policy

3. An overview of the company's DEI commitments

4. A statement of agreement by senior management, trade unions and/or employee representatives to follow the policy

5. Disciplinary and grievance procedures

Before diving into policy development, it is important to think about the roles and responsibilities connected to your policy and reporting processes. Managers will define and implement the policy while human resources, business partners and staff take on an advisory and support role, overseeing the application and adjustments/updates of the policy.

All of the people designated to make decisions related to the policy and reporting process should have training about sexual harassment, discrimination and DEI. As part of your DEI plan, you will need to plan to train people in your organization who will be making reports, as well as informing all staff members about the policy.

The policy template below contains bracketed, blue text to help companies identify where information specific to their organization should be inserted. Companies should replace all text in blue with relevant information, add relevant information into the remaining placeholders and delete any particularities that are not relevant.

For more reading on recommendations of what to include in a DEI policy, see LexisNexis, "Six Components of a Diversity Policy for Your Corporate Legal Department".[231]
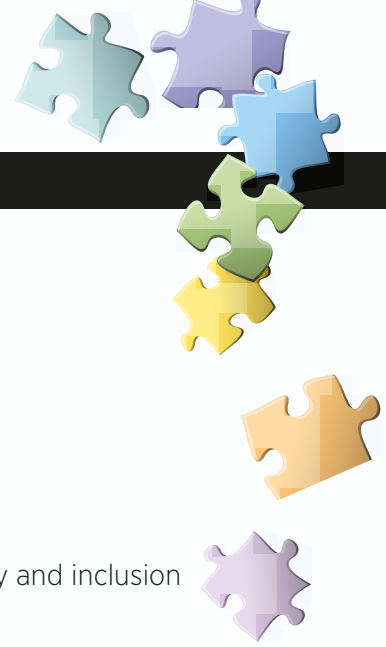
SAMPLE DEI POLICY TEMPLATE
(adapted from ACAS UK[232])

[Insert your organization's name] is committed to encouraging diversity, equality and inclusion among our workforce and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

The aim is for our workforce to be truly representative of our customers and of all sections of society—and for each employee to feel respected and able to give their best.

The organization, in providing goods and/or services and/or facilities, is also committed against the unlawful discrimination of customers or the public.

Our policy's purpose

This policy's purpose is to:

1. Provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time

2. Not unlawfully discriminate because of the *[insert name of the relevant equity legislation here]*, which protects such characteristics as *[include protected grounds of discrimination]*

3. Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination, including with respect to:

   - Pay and benefits
   - Terms and conditions of employment
   - Dealing with grievances and discipline
   - Dismissal
   - Redundancy
   - Leave for parents
   - Requests for flexible working
   - Selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities

Our commitments

The organization commits to:

1. Encouraging diversity, equality and inclusion in the workplace as they are good practice and make business sense.

2. Creating a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimization and unlawful discrimination—one that promotes dignity and respect for all and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognized and valued.

   This commitment includes training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under this diversity, equality and inclusion policy. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the organization provide equal opportunities in employment, as well as prevent bullying, harassment, victimization and unlawful discrimination.

All staff should understand that they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimization and unlawful discrimination in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, customers, suppliers and the public.

3. Taking seriously any complaints of bullying, harassment, victimization and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others during the organization's work activities.

   Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organization's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

   Further, sexual harassment may amount to *[both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations—this section should be adapted based on national legislation]*. Harassment under the *[insert relevant act against sexual and/or workplace harassment here]* is a *[civil and/or criminal offence—insert information on relevant national legislation here]*.

4. Making opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential so that their talents and resources can be fully utilized to maximize the efficiency of the organization.

5. Making decisions concerning staff based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the *[insert name of the relevant equity legislation here]*.

6. Reviewing employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.

7. Monitoring the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as *[insert examples of identities to consider, which may include age, gender, race/ethnic background, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion/belief and/or disability]* in encouraging diversity, equality and inclusion, as well as in meeting the aims and commitments set out in this diversity, equality and inclusion policy.

   Monitoring will also include assessing how the diversity, equality and inclusion policy and any supporting action plan are working in practice, reviewing them annually and considering and taking action to address any issues.

Agreement to follow this policy

This diversity, equality and inclusion policy is fully supported by senior management and has been agreed upon with trade unions and/or employee representatives.

Our disciplinary and grievance procedures

Details of the organization's grievance and disciplinary policies and procedures can be found at *[insert details as appropriate]*. This includes with whom an employee should raise a grievance.

Use of the organization's grievance or disciplinary procedures does not affect an employee's right to make a claim to *[insert relevant statutory body as appropriate]* within *[insert relevant limitation period, if applicable]* of the alleged discrimination.
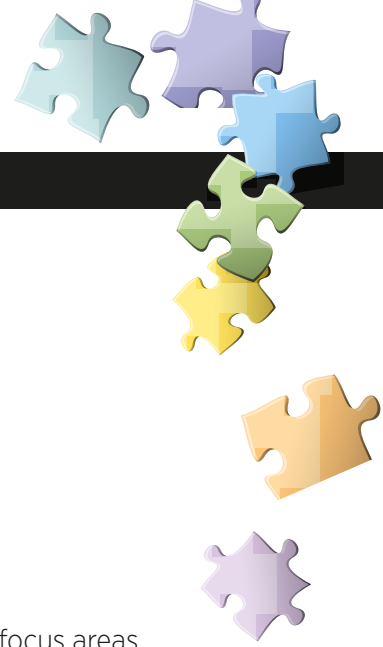
SECTION 5

DEI RESOURCES

DEI resources

This section presents a helpful collection of DEI resources, organized by seven focus areas listed below, for more examples and detailed guidance on building a successful DEI strategy for your company.

- **FOCUS AREA 1:** WEPs fundamentals
- **FOCUS AREA 2:** Inclusive leadership and workplace policies
- **FOCUS AREA 3:** DEI fundamentals
- **FOCUS AREA 4:** Creating an inclusive workplace with an intersectional lens
- **FOCUS AREA 5:** Treating all people fairly and equally at work
- **FOCUS AREA 6:** Employee health, well-being and safety
- **FOCUS AREA 7:** Measuring and reporting on DEI

FOCUS AREA 1:
WEPs fundamentals

Women's Empowerment Principles Toolkit | UN Women 2021j

The WEPs Toolkit is a compilation of WEPs resources. These resources help potential WEPs signatories as they consider signing the WEPs and for WEPs signatories to accelerate their implementation and tracking of progress.

Case studies of WEPs signatory companies | UN Women, n.d.

The WEPs website includes a collection of inspiring DEI case studies showcasing how companies are actively and successfully implementing DEI strategies in the workplace.

WEPs Transparency and Accountability Framework: A Reference Guide for Tracking Results on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment | UN Women 2021k

This reference guide assists WEPs signatories in identifying indicators to track their results on gender equality and women's empowerment. It provides indicators to measure progress against each of the seven Principles.

FOCUS AREA 2:
Inclusive leadership and workplace policies

Building Inclusion: An Evidence-Based Model of Inclusive Leadership | Diversity Council Australia 2015

This report outlines key skills, capabilities and behaviours to be an effective and inclusive leader.

Getting Real about Inclusive Leadership | Travis, Shaffer and Thorpe-Moscon 2019

This report provides guidance on building an inclusive team culture and management behaviours that predict inclusion.

The Six Signature Traits of Inclusive Leadership | Bourke 2016

This article provides a summary of Deloitte's research report on inclusive leadership, which identifies six traits that characterize an inclusive mindset and inclusive behaviour:

1. Curiosity
2. Cognizance
3. Courage
4. Cultural intelligence
5. Collaboration
6. Commitment

Better to Belong | Accenture 2021

The research report quantifies the impact that leaders can make when they leave their people Net Better Off (NBO). Leaders can boost NBO scores when they get the traditional moments that matter, such as onboarding, right. When leaders scale equitable experiences, they drive up NBO scores, which creates a thriving culture of diversity, inclusion and belonging. This research report identifies 10 levers that leaders need to continually apply, spanning across three key areas:

1. Essential people skills
2. Organizational factors such as skilling
3. Individual factors such as self-efficacy

The Power of Empathy in Times of Crisis and Beyond | Van Bommel 2021

The article summarizes Catalyst research from surveying 900 employees across industries in the United States to understand the effects of empathic leadership on their experiences at work. The key finding is that empathy is an important driver of employee outcomes such as innovation, engagement and inclusion, specifically:

1. Empathy is a force for productivity, work-life integration and positive work experiences

2. Empathy boosts productivity

3. Women of colour experience less burnout when they have more empathic senior leaders

4. Empathic leaders respect employee life circumstances

5. Empathic leaders support both life and work needs

6. Empathic leaders foster inclusion

7. Senior leader empathy is linked to employees' reduced intent to leave

Getting to Equal 2020: The Hidden Value of Culture Makers | Accenture 2020

This article summarizes the result of a global survey of senior company leaders and employees on the workplace culture perception gap. Findings and recommendations from this research can empower leaders to act, no matter where they are on their journey to a culture of equality.

The report includes an overview of 40 factors proven to influence advancement and that characterize a culture of equality, organized into three pillars:

1. Bold leadership

2. Comprehensive action

3. An empowering environment

Building a Workplace Flexibility Strategy | Government of Australia, Workplace Gender Equality Agency 2019

This guide provides a holistic framework to support a strategic approach to implementing organization-wide workplace flexibility programmes. Specifically, the aims are to:

1. Ensure alignment between an organization's workplace flexibility strategy, its gender equality strategy and its broader business strategy

2. Enable organizations to design a comprehensive workplace flexibility strategy

3. Enable organizations to develop and implement an organization-wide approach for improving flexibility capability

Bias in Performance Management Review Process: Creating an Inclusive Talent Pipeline by Understanding Our Filters | Traub 2013

This article explains the four domains of bias in performance management:

1. Rater bias
2. Self-rater bias
3. Structural bias
4. Calibration bias

Drawing upon a fictional case study based on years of real-life consulting experience, the article explores how each bias manifests daily in the workplace, how each bias affects performance management and how these biases can be mitigated.

## Unconscious Bias Training | University of California San Francisco 2022

This website provides information about unconscious bias and strategies to address it.

Blueprint for Gender Equality Leadership in the Canadian Private Sector | Global Compact Network Canada 2020

The Blueprint was built on three years of primary and secondary research and through active collaboration with participating companies from the private sector and advisory partner organizations. The Blueprint features proven methods and practices, both large and small, to improve gender equality in the workplace with a specific focus on three cornerstones: leadership, inclusion, and transparency and accountability.

These cornerstones are broken down further to include different attributes and more detailed information on how to advance intersectional gender equality and inclusion.
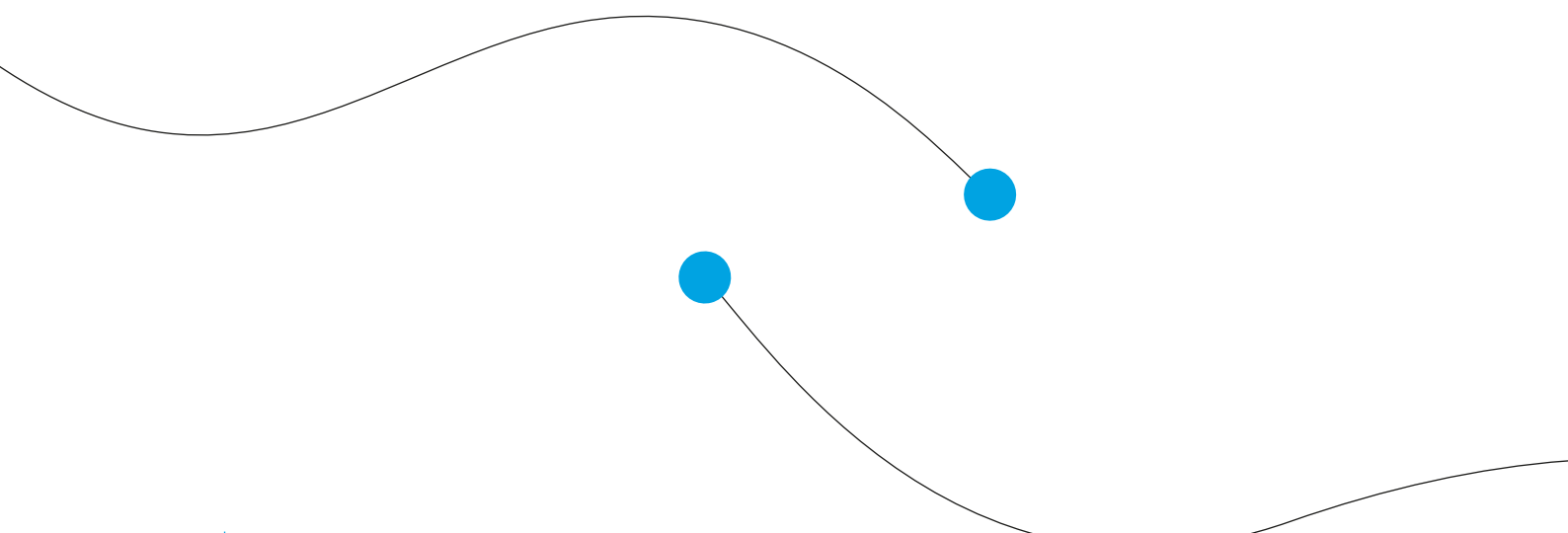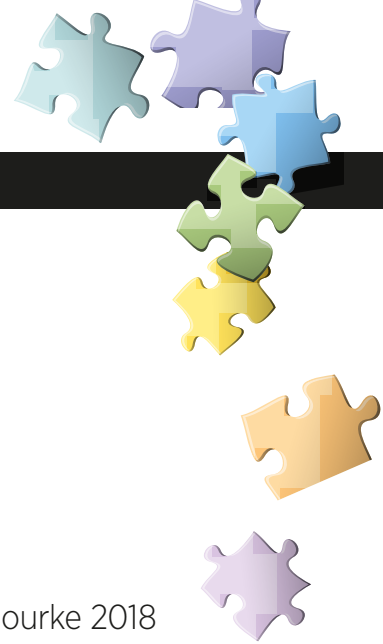
FOCUS AREA 3:
DEI fundamentals

The Diversity and Inclusion Revolution: Eight Powerful Truths | Bourke 2018

This article presents eight powerful truths about DEI, culminating from work with approximately 50 global organizations and drawing upon the findings of seven major research studies. It highlights the Deloitte DEI Maturity Model.

The eight powerful truths include:

1. Diversity of thinking is the new frontier
2. Diversity without inclusion is not enough
3. Inclusive leaders cast a long shadow
4. Middle managers matter
5. Rewire the system to rewire behaviours
6. Tangible goals make ambitions real
7. Match the inside and the outside
8. Perform a culture reset, not a tick-the-box programme

To address these eight powerful truths, seven powerful actions are recommended:

1. Recognize that progress will take a culture reset
2. Create shared purpose to include diversity of thinking and inclusion
3. Build inclusive leadership capabilities
4. Take middle managers on the journey
5. Nudge behaviour change by rewiring processes and practices
6. Strengthen accountability, recognition and rewards
7. Pay attention to diverse employees and customers

The Diversity and Inclusion Handbook | Lever 2018

This handbook is a compilation of a DEI blog series. It summarizes Lever's learnings from innovative customers, industry leaders and dozens of studies and compiling that knowledge into a vision for how to achieve a more diverse and inclusive workplace—step by step.

Inclusion and diversity – what can you do? | Play by the Rules and Sport Australia 2023

This article outlines the pillars that provide a common language and framework to help people understand what inclusion means. They can help organizations identify their strengths and weaknesses around inclusion and help them along the path to creating a strong, inclusive culture. Although designed for sports organizations, the principles can provide a useful framework for workplace inclusion. The seven pillars are:

1. Access
2. Attitude
3. Choice
4. Partnerships

5. Communication
6. Policy
7. Opportunities

The pillars can be used as the basis for knowledge and actions across all levels of the organization, for all disadvantaged and diverse groups, thereby reducing the need for different programmes and policies for each. They are focused on simple actions that lead to cultural change over time.

Transforming Enterprises through Diversity and Inclusion | ILO 2022

In this report, the ILO explores the complexity of diversity, equality and inclusion by tapping into the experience of staff, managers and senior executives worldwide. This report was prepared during the COVID-19 pandemic, which exposed and exacerbated existing inequalities in our economies and societies.

As called for in the ILO Global Call to Action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient, it is essential for the public and private sectors to execute a transformative agenda for diversity, equality and inclusion aimed at eliminating violence and harassment in the world of work and discrimination on all grounds. The report offers a framework for measuring inclusion at work at three action levels:

1. Assess the degree to which employees say they feel included at work

2. Consider factors contributing to belonging

3. Examine the extent to which employees experience the positive benefits of inclusion

FOCUS AREA 4:
Creating an inclusive workplace with an intersectional lens

An Intersectional Approach to Discrimination: Addressing Multiple Grounds in Human Rights Claims | OHRC 2001

This paper aims to build on the work that the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) has already done to recognize the complexity of how people experience discrimination. It describes a framework for a contextualized approach to analysing discrimination in complaints spanning multiple grounds.

This contextualized approach is termed 'an intersectional approach to discrimination'.

The paper outlines the importance of exploring how an intersectional approach might be consistently applied.

Intersectionality: When Identities Converge | Ramos and Brassel 2020

This report outlines the concept of intersectionality, including how our identities intersect through the lens of privilege, oppression, power and marginalization.

An intersectional framework recognizes and celebrates diverse experiences and talents and is the foundation to a more inclusive working environment. It can be a lens through which businesses view hiring procedures, written and unwritten policies and procedures.

Intersectionality Resource Guide and Toolkit | UN Women 2021f

This publication is part of a collaborative initiative led by UN Women and the United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, with support from UN and non-UN entities. It aims to help both organizations and individual practitioners and experts to address intersectionality in policies and programmes.

40+ Dimensions of Diversity and the Many Intersections | Feminuity 2022

This resource aims to illuminate the infinite intersections that compose our identities. The paper unpacks the challenges and biases people with different identities face at work. Keep in mind that the list of intersections shared is not comprehensive and will continue to grow as learning evolves.

FOCUS AREA 5:
Treating all people fairly and equally at work

Day-To-Day Experiences of Emotional Tax Among Women and Men of Color in the Workplace | Travis and Thorpe-Moscon 2018

This report examines the Emotional Tax levied on Asian, Black, Latinx and multiracial professionals in the United States as they aspire to advance and contribute to their organizations. In particular, the report focuses on an important aspect of Emotional Tax: the state of being on guard—consciously preparing to deal with potential bias or discrimination.

Racism in the Workplace: Expert Voices From Around the World | Ramos 2021

In this article, Catalyst summarizes its research based on interviews of 21 business professionals and academic scholars from around the world whose work focuses on race, ethnicity and culture. The purpose was to hear their unique insights on the question "What needs to be done to create workplaces where employees from marginalized racial and ethnic groups are fully included?" Catalyst asked them to share their stories of what the workplace looks like through their eyes and what they think should be done to create workplaces free from racism and bias.

Diversity at Work: Making the Most Out of Increasingly Diverse Societies | OECD 2020

This report and accompanying policy brief consider five key groups that are widely considered disadvantaged in the labour market and society at large and that often face discrimination based on their group membership in OECD countries: women; immigrants, their descendants and ethnic minorities; LGBTQ2+ people; older people; and people with disabilities. The report assesses:

1. How the inclusion of these groups in OECD labour markets has evolved over time

2. The evidence on how diversity affects economic outcomes

3. Which policies countries have implemented and what is known about their effectiveness

Among its recommendations are that policymakers focus on the most disadvantaged within the diverse groups to avoid further inequalities and, instead, to better exploit the full potential of a more diverse and equal economy and society in order to avoid massive unemployment and increases in poverty and exclusion.
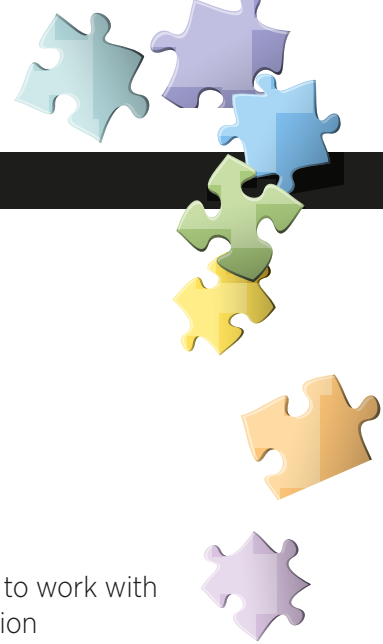
Stanford Neurodiversity Project | Stanford Medicine 2022

This website outlines the key objectives of the Neurodiversity Project:

1. Establish a culture that treasures the strengths of neurodiverse individuals

2. Empower neurodiverse individuals to build their identity and enhance their long-term skills of daily living throughout their lifespan

3. Attract talented neurodiverse individuals to study and work at Stanford

4. Train talented individuals to work with the neurodiverse population

5. Disseminate the Stanford Neurodiversity Model locally, nationally and internationally

6. Maximize the potential of neurodiversity

Disability:IN | Disability:IN, n.d.

This is the website of Disability:IN, the leading non-profit resource for business disability inclusion worldwide. Its network of more than 400 corporations expands opportunities for people with disabilities across enterprises. The organization's central office and 25 affiliates serve as the collective voice to effect change for people with disabilities in business.

Getting to Equal: The Disability Inclusion Advantage | Accenture, Disability:IN and AAPD 2018

This report takes a closer look at DEI results over a recent four-year period to unearth the 45 best-in-class companies specific to disability employment and inclusion. Two important measures of financial performance were: profitability (revenues and net income) and value creation (economic profit margin). Employers can take four actions to encourage greater inclusion of persons with disabilities in the workplace:

1. **Employ:** Organizations should ensure that persons with disabilities are represented in the workplace and should implement practices that encourage and progress persons with disabilities.

2. **Enable:** Leaders should provide employees with disabilities with accessible tools and technology and/or a formal accommodation, and they should cultivate awareness for those without disabilities.

3. **Engage:** Companies should generate awareness-building through recruitment efforts, disability education programmes and grass-roots-led efforts and events.

4. **Empower:** Companies should offer mentoring and coaching initiatives, as well as skilling/reskilling programmes, to ensure that persons with disabilities continue to grow and succeed. Persons with disabilities should occupy roles at all levels, including top leadership.

FOCUS AREA 6:
Employee health, well-being and safety

ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190): 12 ways it can support the COVID-19 response and recovery | ILO 2020

This brief highlights the relevance of ILO Convention No. 190 to the COVID-19 pandemic. It provides examples of work-related violence and harassment that have been reported across countries in the context of COVID-19 and mentions specific provisions of Convention No. 190 and its accompanying Recommendation No. 206 that can help prevent and address those situations.

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace: How Companies Can Prepare, Prevent, Respond, and Transform Their Culture | Daley, Travis and Shaffer 2018

This report discusses the action that organizations can take to create a safe and fair working environment for all employees beyond policies and training. According to Catalyst's report, there are four important actions:

1. Prepare
2. Prevent
3. Respond
4. Transform

What Will it Take? Promoting Cultural Change to End Sexual Harassment | UN Women 2019b

This discussion paper focuses on cultural change needed to end sexual harassment. It offers guidance to policymakers, employers and universities, making sure that the needs of the victim-survivors are at the heart of all efforts.

The publication focuses on five areas of work to achieve lasting cultural change:

1. Training to dislodge entrenched and discriminatory ideas on gender
2. Victim-focused work in which victims and survivors lead
3. Rational reporting to remove judgment and retaliation and to ensure victim safety as well as consequences for abusers
4. Zero tolerance for all forms of sexual harassment, both in principle and in practice
5. Collective ownership of the need to change culture and attitudes and to establish common values, including the need for bystanders to intervene

Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace | OWHC 2021

This discussion paper was submitted to the Government of Canada on psychological health and safety in the workplace and how much interplay there should be between the new Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention Regulations and any new specific requirement to protect the psychological health and safety of employees.

How to Better Support Women's Well-being in the Workplace | Leigh 2022a

These days, many are struggling to stay afloat at work. Women have faced disproportionate pressures during the COVID-19 pandemic, whether it be homeschooling children, caring for family members and/or taking on additional emotional labour. This article offers tips on how employers can better support the intersectional well-being of women at work.

We Need Trauma-Informed Workplaces | Manning 2022

This article makes the case for why it is so important for organizations to take steps now to build the cultures that can see them through crises in the future.

As the lines between work and home blur and a fundamental shift in workers' expectations takes place, especially as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, organizations have struggled to provide the support and leadership that their employees and customers need.

A trauma-informed organization is one that operates with an understanding of trauma and its negative effects on the organization's employees and the communities it serves and works to mitigate those effects.

FOCUS AREA 7:
Measuring and reporting on DEI

Create a People-First Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategy | McLean & Company 2022

This report outlines that diversity, equity and inclusion are a continuum—an ongoing journey of unlearning.

It outlines a four-step process to develop a scaled, human-first and purposeful DEI strategy and offers an example of a DEI maturity model. The four-step process includes the following:

1. Conduct a current state assessment
2. Determine the purpose of DEI
3. Develop a governance model, and select DEI initiatives
4. Plan to launch the DEI strategy

9 Metrics to Help you Understand (and Prioritize) DEI | Boogaard 2022

This article outlines the nine most impactful performance indicators to consider:

1. Hiring
2. Representation
3. Retention
4. Advancement
5. Job satisfaction and engagement
6. Employee resource group participation
7. Accessibility
8. Leadership
9. Suppliers

When it comes to measuring diversity, equity and inclusion, finding the right numbers is challenging. You do not want to set arbitrary quotas or send the message that you are making token hires. Yet quantifiable goals increase accountability—and even success.

Human Resource Management — Diversity and Inclusion | ISO 2021

This abstract of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) global standard on diversity and inclusion aims to support organizations in embedding diversity and inclusion in their workplaces by providing guidance on:

1. Prerequisites for demonstrating ongoing commitment to diversity and inclusion
2. Accountabilities and responsibilities for diversity and inclusion
3. Approaches to valuing diversity and fostering the development of an inclusive workplace
4. Identifying diversity and inclusion objectives, opportunities, risks, actions, measures, outcomes and impacts

This document also provides an assessment tool to determine the organization's status as compared to the ISO Standard.

Global Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Benchmarks, Standards for Organizations Around the World (GDEIB) | Centre for Global Inclusion 2021

This report offers organizations a range of case studies from diverse companies. It is organized into 15 categories identifying levels of achievement and individual benchmarks (there are a total of 198 in the desired levels 3, 4 and 5), which range from inactive to best practices, together with user tools to make this a living/working document for users.
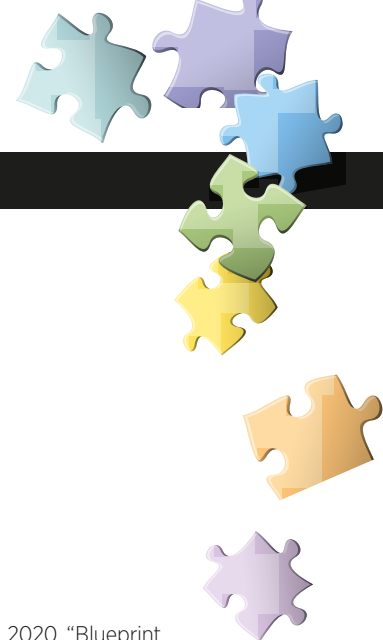
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