PANTOUR

PACT FOR NEXT TOURISM GENERATION SKILLS

TACKLING INEQUALITIES AND PROMOTING DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY

A BEST PRACTICES HANDBOOK

INTRODUCTION

The growth of the tourism and hospitality sectors in the last 10 years has shown how this industry has been positioning itself as one of the most thriving in Europe. The sector has been responsible for the employment of 12.5 million jobs in the European Union (Eurostat, 2024a) and also generates economic growth and social development at local, regional and national levels across Europe.

The recent pandemic and subsequent recovery of industry has demonstrated the sector's resilience. In particular, small and medium enterprises that were significantly hit, have been recovering since 2020, with some of the subsectors reaching their pre-pandemic levels of revenue and employment, demonstrating steady post-pandemic growth (Eurostat, 2024). The experience highlights the need to focus on skilling and training to enhance well-being and t build a resilient workforce. Training and skilling, especially the reskilling and upskilling of employees, have been a focus of attention for different organisations in the tourism and hospitality sector across Europe. One important initiative is the Pact for Skills (European Commission, 2020a), a European Commission policy that aims to boost educational efforts and encourage sectoral collaboration in the European Union. Together with the European Pillars of Social Rights (2017), and other policies targeting inequalities[1], this handbook seeks to highlight the important topics of developing social justice, inclusion and gender equality through inclusive practices and training within tourism and hospitality.

Within this framework, training for equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) should be a focus within the sectors. Retaining and attracting a resilient, qualified, and diverse workforce plays an important role in securing the future of the industry. Promoting well-being and best practices at work is also fundamental to developing an inclusive environment and tackling inequalities in the workplace. Advancing the inclusion of minorities is essential given the diverse nature of the tourism and hospitality sectors. Additionally, there is a need to address the challenges which hinder the progress of the industry in achieving inclusion by, for example, supporting workers with disability needs, removing barriers to women's advancement, promoting intercultural awareness, addressing unconscious bias, while addressing discrimination and lack of representation.

A fair and inclusive work environment involves creating a workplace where everyone feels respected and valued. Raising awareness and educating people about the importance of EDI in the workplace is a collective responsibility but leadership in this area is crucial to success. By recognising diversity, celebrating inclusion and upholding values of dignity and fairness in society are essential for the economic and social growth of the sector.

With this Handbook, the Pact for Next Tourism Generation Skills (PANTOUR) consortium seeks to provide useful, practical tools for developing EDI skills and practices that can be adopted by businesses in the sector. The aim is to enhance understanding of how to achieve equality and promote inclusion within a diverse workforce. These tools are based on freely

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[1] Important European strategic policies are available in the European Commission different websites, such as the LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025 (European Commission, 2020b); The Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 (European Commission, 2020c); The Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030 (European Commission, 2021); The EU Anti-racism Action Plan 2020-2025 (European Commission, 2020d); The EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion, and participation 2020-2030 (European Commission, 2020e).

available sources, and include creating a change management plan, creating inclusive training, and developing an EDI strategy plan for organisations.

This handbook provides information and tools for implementing EDI strategies in the workplace, with a particular focus on small and medium organisations in tourism and hospitality. It also provides information on different policies, training in EDI in the 10 countries of the PANTOUR consortium, and a compendium of 31 best practice case-studies from tourism and hospitality organisations across Europe. These best practices demonstrate how to tackle inequalities and promote diversity and social inclusion in the workplace. They provide real-world insights and effective strategies that can be replicated across various tourism and hospitality sectors.

1- POLICIES AND PRACTICES OF EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN THE WORKPLACE

1.1- TRAINING FOR EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Recently, human resources specialists in the private and public sectors have focused their attention on education and training initiatives, aligned with organisations' changing core values and the world's ever-evolving work practices. Thus, training for EDI has become essential in workplaces aiming to create a fairer and more equitable environment.

It is important to identify what EDI mean in this handbook:

> Equality: refers to treating people and groups fairly, regardless of background (gender, family status, disability, age, race, sexual orientation, religious belief, economic situation). Equal treatment means that everyone should receive the same fair treatment (gov.ie, 2023);

> Diversity: is 'what makes each of us unique and includes our background, personality, life experiences as well as specific characteristics' (gov.ie, 2023). Diversity policies recognise and value differences, and they also emphasise representativeness in the workplace;

> Inclusion: refers to 'building a culture based on fairness and respect, value and belonging, safety and openness, empowerment and growth' (gov.ie, 2023). In the workplace, it also refers to workforce experiences, and the 'degree to which organisation embrace all employees and enable them to make meaningful contributions' (McKinsey, 2022).

Promoting EDI has proven to be effective in improving workplace well-being, staff retention, productivity and innovation (Chaudhry et al, 2021; Akpa et al, 2021). EDI promotes a shift in cultural values, such as social fairness and dignity at work, g These are human-centred values, as They promote social development in society, create opportunities for once-marginalised groups, and foster a sense of belonging for all.

Over the last number of years, there has been increased attention on EDI skills in organisations, as many studies have shown a correlation between employee performance, employee satisfaction and diversity (McKinsey, 2022; Wang et al 2023; Kossek et al, 2022; Emidy et al, 2024).

In the report from McKinsey, *Diversity Wins: How Inclusion Matters* (2020), individuals from more than 1000 large companies across 15 countries were interviewed. Results show that

inclusive practices and training were important for employee satisfaction, even in relatively diverse industries (McKinsey, 2020). Data suggests that the more diverse, organisations are more likely to outperform non-diverse organisations in profitability. The study also shows that gender diversity on executive teams made the organisations 25% more likely to experience above-average profitability than peer companies. Additionally, the report suggested that organisations with higher diversity are more likely to outperform their counterparts.

It is also important to note that work satisfaction and well-being are intrinsically related. Well-being can be defined as 'a positive state experienced by individuals and societies. Well-being comprises quality of life and the ability of people and societies to contribute to the world with a sense of meaning and purpose' (World Health Organisation, n.d.). Work well-being also encompasses core values, because it relates to physical, psychological, and emotional health and safety (Guillemin & Nicholas, 2022). Aligning an individual's and an organisation's core values is essential for creating a satisfying work environment. Indeed, 'When work supports the whole person, it supports their entire well-being' (Guillemin & Nicholas, 2002, p. 6). EDI policies and practices enhance workplace well-being by focusing on understanding everyone's values, adopting a holistic approach to individual and group needs, recognising people's abilities and personal experiences, and embracing differences.

There have been systemic challenges related to EDI in society that are reflected in the workplace, such as building individual recognition in the workplace, allowing everyone to be considered part of the organisation, and providing support for employees to thrive in the workplace, regardless of their background, differences or needs (McKinsey, 2020).

Research studies in the tourism and hospitality sectors have underscored the importance of inclusiveness training for the workforce. Some of these studies focus on practices related to disability awareness and the employment of a diverse workforce (Mahoharan, 2024; Kalargyrou & Volis, 2014). Other studies highlight challenges for the hospitality and tourism female workforce in achieving top management roles, despite the highly gendered sector (Russen et al, 2021; Kogovsek & Kogovsek, 2015). Other authors draw attention to the challenges brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic for ethnic minority groups and workers with families (Baum & Hai, 2020; Zhou et al., 2022; Liu-Lastres et al., 2023). Recognising these challenges is key to building a more equitable workplace. Developing policies and inclusive practices are essential in this journey.

To achieve this, it is important to define how EDI-related policies can lead to transformation and changes in workplace culture; however, to successfully build a meaningful culture of change, there is a need to develop a systemic approach to EDI. This means that building a transformational mindset requires more than developing internal policies and training: 'raising awareness and educating people about EDI is crucial not only to build an inclusive workplace, but also to avoid efforts that are overwhelming and drain resources with little impact' (Mildon, 2024, p. 28). Accordingly, a systemic approach to promoting EDI policies and practices should include:

> Building knowledge around EDI, what it means and how employees and employers can understand, and actively support equality, diversity and inclusion;

> Training individuals and teams, developing best practices for important skills for the sector;

> Creating opportunities to implement actions that drive workplace culture change, as people need to 'think and talk about diversity, and leaders need new skills to enable equality and inclusion in the workplace' (Center for Creative Leadership, 2022, n.d.);

> Developing scalable methods to establish and sustain these initiatives (Center for Creative Leadership, 2022).

Therefore, establishing EDI practices should prioritise developing knowledge through training, and creating opportunities to put plans into action. Changes in organisational culture are difficult to achieve, and developing new practices demands effort, investment, and human resources. This process also involves complying with regulations and promoting different practices that are fundamental to driving a shift in the workplace culture.

1.2- PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES

Recognising how to approach and handle sensitive subjects, managing diversity, tackling discriminatory behaviours and biases, and effectively reporting and communicating issues, are essential elements in promoting well-being. Treating everyone fairly, with dignity and respect are also fundamental ethical and societal values.

Various research studies highlight the need to develop and implement effective policies and practices to promote more inclusive and equitable environments. Some research in tourism and hospitality showcases the implementation of diversity related policies from a human resource perspective (Madera et al., 2023; Lu et al., 2024; Fresnoza et al., 2024).

Implementing policies and practices are different but intertwined aspects of diversity and inclusion training. Policies are crucial for developing a work culture and reaffirming the organisation's principles. Practices, on the other hand, are the key to creating change.

Policy implementation is an important step in developing a changing culture in an organisation. Policies are usually the 'guiding principles of an organisation' (University of Galway, n.d.). They can be designed to align with different directives, such as governmental regulations or an organisation's structures and values. The main objectives of policy management are to maintain consistent practices in different departments and attain organisational objectives.

Implementing policy is also an essential step in transforming organisational culture, which we can describe as 'patterns/systems of shared meanings, beliefs, ideologies, values, symbols, language, rituals, assumptions and myths that evolve and are established within an

organisation or any unit over time and play a significant role in guiding and coordinating its members' behaviour and holding the organisation together' (Bhuiyan et al., 2020, p. 978).

Policy implementation needs to involve people and organisations. For this, it is vital to identify and coordinate resources, support, existing processes, and plan for sustainability (McKinsey, n.d., 2021).

Policy implementation usually follows the steps outlined in Figure 1:

Figure 1: Policy Implementation Steps
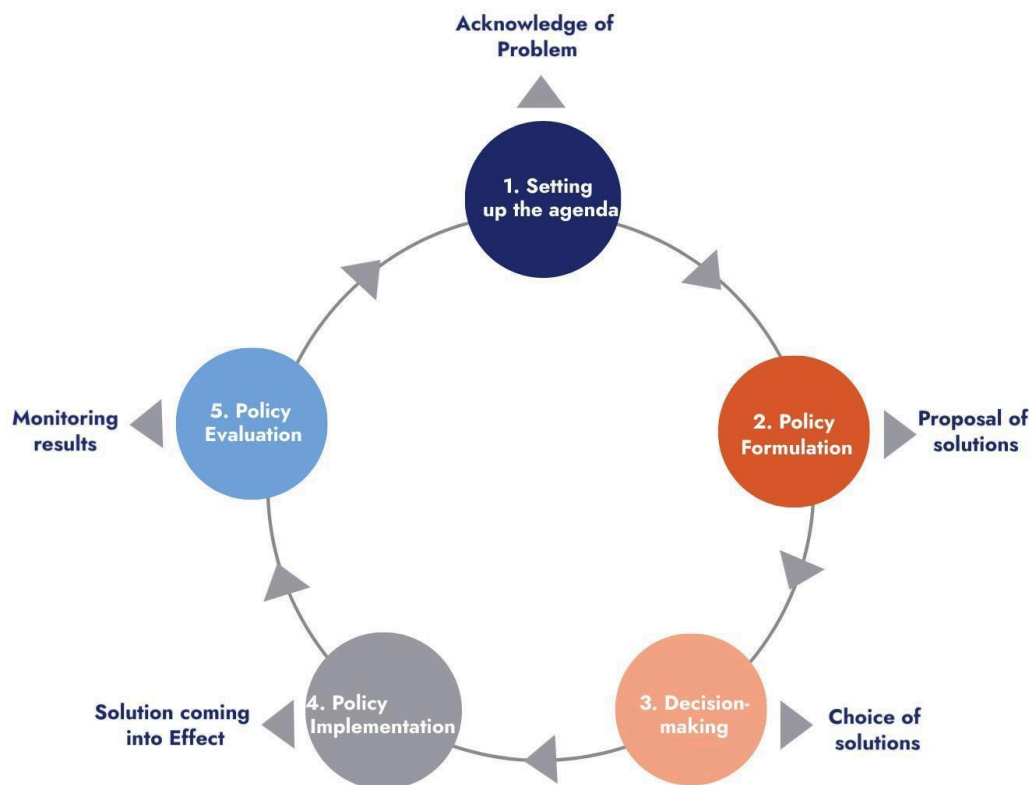
Adapted from: Banha, F., Flores, A., & Coelho, L. S., 2022

The steps are explained as following Jann, W., & Wegrich, K. (2007) and Banha (2022):

Step 1: Agenda-Setting

Involves identifying a problem and proposing a list of 'to-do items' that need analysis. This list represents problems to be addressed and where a solution will be implemented. If the issues have not yet been assessed, they could be assessed by delivering a survey to employees to identify EDI-related issues within the organisational culture.

Step 2: Policy formulation

This is the step where it is possible to identify the problem and take decisions on how to address it. This should include objectives and details of the policy, who will manage it, and how it will be operationalised. In this stage, objectives must be set based on the problem, and alternative actions to achieve objectives must also be considered.

Step 3: Decision-making

Decisions are strategic choices that have a role in defining the organisation's objectives and how to use resources. In this step, there is a need to determine the right strategy and the best solution for policy implementation.

Step 4: Implementation

The implementation process can begin once the policy proposal is approved by the organisation. This process can outline detailed solutions to issues, specify who should be involved in implementation, with clear allocation of resources, and clear delegation of decision-making authority.

Step 5: Evaluation and Monitoring

Measuring the success of the policy implementation is the last step. The measurement is crucial as it can identify if the policy implementation was successful and propose new steps for additional cycles of activity (Jann, W., & Wegrich, K., 2007; Banha et al, 2022).

These steps may help in developing clear policies, particularly when attempting to establish a new organisational culture.

The implementation of inclusive policies requires specific actions, as inclusivity and change are challenging goals. The European Website on Integration has a useful list of seven elements that are needed to create an inclusive organisational culture:

1. Review different roles of the Board of Directors, CEO or managers, before inclusive policies are designed and explore how the policies can be drafted so that they are widely accepted;

2. Acknowledge that inclusion is a long-term process, and resources need to be put in place to support it;

3. Combating discrimination and exclusion should be a first priority, with an assessment of groups that are potentially discriminated against;

4. Foster acceptance of differences and create environments that reward and reinforce positive behaviours, where meaningful personal connections can arise;

5. Procedurally fair processes must promote equal opportunities for minorities. They should be fair, based on measurable results, and should be communicated across the organisation;

6. Evaluate and re-evaluate, as they are critical for the inclusion process. This is a continuous process; evaluation and re-evaluation will be required to ensure policies remain appropriate in changing contexts;

7. Cooperating within different sectors strengthens the organisation and can change the environment, creating inclusive workplaces (European Website of Integration, 2019).

An organisation should, then, have a clear vision and strategy for how practices will be implemented to ensure successful implementation of EDI policies.

Ciuk et al. (2021) developed a conceptual framework for implementing diversity and inclusive practices in organisations. The authors highlighted that two main changes can help develop the EDI agenda in organisations: how we *think* about diversity and inclusion how we *act* about diversity and inclusion:

Think about diversity (and inclusion): there is a need to change our perception of negative terms (separation) to embrace positive terms (variety) when thinking about EDI. We must move away from binary categories (for example, distance and difference) to a conceptualisation of fluidity;

Act about diversity (and inclusion): An EDI agenda needs to have meaningful inclusion and relations of reciprocity, with collective efforts, recognising all people's roles in setting up the agenda. (adapted from Ciuk et al, 2021)

Best practices are examples of successfully implemented initiatives that can be applied or adapted with variations. They can also be defined as successful experiences that have been tested, validated and can be adopted by others. Best practices development is not a straight process and differs in every organisation, as unique challenges may arise due to different cultures, contexts, moments, societal values, and political situations. These practices should be continuously improved and assessed.

The following steps (Miles, 2022) can be used to integrate EDI practices in organisations:

> Gather data about EDI, which is crucial to develop new measures and strategies. Examples include conducting employee satisfaction surveys, focus groups or assessing;
> Evaluate the organisation's strengths and weaknesses: determine what is needed by the organisation to implement new practices. This can be done with SWOT analysis, reviewing best practices and looking for patterns in data;
> Establish EDI as an important core value in the organisation: creating a diversity management programme and fostering relationship building and dialogue with the organisation's workers are important practices for promoting EDI in the workplace;
> Develop a strategic plan: an EDI strategy is essential to support necessary changes;
> Promote an inclusive recruitment process: use inclusive job descriptions and diverse recruiting sources to advertise posts while ensuring the selection process does not have unconscious bias;
> Promote equitable promotions and succession planning: this is crucial for the employee to feel valued, and ensure that all employees are treated equally;
> Develop EDI workshops and training: different types of training can be developed, depending on the needs of individual organisations;
> Track progress of EDI initiatives: this can be done with metrics, keeping track of progress with different online tools, and developing a record of activities (Miles, 2022).

Adopting principles and practices can offer numerous benefits to organisations and create a better work environment for everyone. However, to ensure real change, it is necessary to educate people about the importance of EDI. Creating awareness about the topic and seeking behavioural change facilitates the development of successful inclusive policies and practices.

2- TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY EDI TRAINING LANDSCAPE IN EUROPE

2.1- PANTOUR SURVEY AND INTERVIEWS: EDI EDUCATION AND SKILLS TRAINING NEEDS IN THE TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY SECTORS

This chapter reports on research conducted in the European Union, to understand gaps and needs in training for EDI in the sector. This section also highlights progress made in different countries in the development of EDI policies and practices. This research, conducted between July 2023 and June 2024, was composed of three parts. Firstly, a survey was sent to employees in the tourism and hospitality sectors, in 22 EU countries containing questions about training undertaken, EDI training needs and workplace culture. Secondly, interviews were conducted with educators from higher education, vocational education and specialised training organisations on EDI curricula and the training landscape in the sector. Lastly, desk research was performed in 10 countries on the EDI landscape, including policies, programmes and best practices in education in European countries.

Within this section, the training landscape in tourism and hospitality in Europe is explored. Additionally, information is provided that could support the adoption of practices aimed at transforming workplace cultures and promoting inclusion in organisations.

2.1.1- SURVEY ON EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION TRAINING AND SKILLS NEEDS

An online survey was disseminated from February to May 2024 to employees and employers from the tourism and hospitality sectors. The survey was shared through the PANTOUR website, emails and social media, using a combination of convenience and snowball sampling techniques. To ensure a representative sample, the data was cleaned to obtain a balanced countries' description, resulting in a final sample size of 602[2] . The first part of this

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[2] A total of 1,049 answers were obtained. However, it was noted that Portugal was overrepresented, with 51% of the responses (528 participant) coming from this country. To avoid bias and ensure the data was representative of Europe, a balanced distribution of responses by country was necessary. During data cleaning, a random sampling method was applied to reduce the number of responses from Portugal to 95 to align it with Bulgaria, the country with the second-highest response count. This adjustment was advised by two lecturers from Technological University Dublin's School of Mathematics, who recommended maintaining an equal sample size between these two countries. This approach improved the reliability of the analysis and ensured a balanced reflection of EU countries in the dataset. Additionally, 14 responses lacking specified country information were removed from the original dataset as including responses without a corresponding EU country could have compromised the representativeness of the sample. A total of 602 responses were analysed.

section describes the sample while the second part presents an in-depth analysis of the overall EU responses and the seven countries with the highest participation numbers.

Sample Description

As seen in Table 1, the sample was composed of 23 countries with Portugal, Bulgaria, Spain, Greece, Ireland, Italy and Finland having provided most of the answers.

Table 1: Responses per Country

Country	Responses	Percent
Portugal	95	15.8%
Bulgaria	95	15.8%
Spain	93	15.4%
Greece	77	12.8%
Ireland	56	9.3%
Italy	55	9.1%
Finland	33	5.5%
Other EU Countries	30	5.0%
The Netherlands	13	2.2%
Hungary	12	2.0%
Germany	11	1.8%
Belgium	8	1.3%
Romania	7	1.2%
France	3	0.5%
Poland	3	0.5%
Croatia	2	0.3%
Estonia	2	0.3%
Slovenia	2	0.3%
Latvia	1	0.2%
Luxembourg	1	0.2%
Malta	1	0.2%
Slovakia	1	0.2%
Sweden	1	0.2%
Total	602	100.0%

The gender distribution of the sample (Figure 2) consisted of 67% female, 32% male, 0.7% who preferred not to say, 0.3% who identified as non-binary and 0.2% who skipped the question.

Figure 2: Gender Distribution

Male (31.89%) Female (66.94%)
Non-binary (0.33%) Did not answer (0.17%)
Prefer not to say (0.66%)
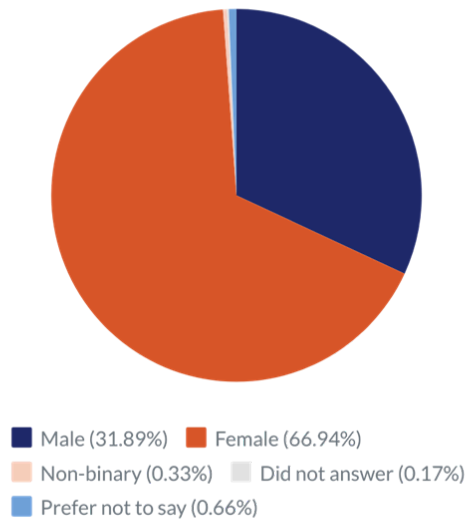
Regarding age distribution, 7% of the sample were aged 18-24, 16% were 25-34, 27% were 35-44, 29% were 45-54, 18% were 55-64, and 4% were over 65 years. Less than 1% (only 2 respondents) opted not to answer. In terms of sector (Figure 3), most respondents (31%) were from the accommodation sector. This was followed by 'Others' (19%), which included participants from various fields such as tourism consultancy, mountain tourism, civil service in tourism departments, events, transportation, associations, and education and training. The food and beverage sector accounted for 18% of the responses, while tour operators made up 14%. Additionally, 7% were involved in destination management, and 4% represented visitor attractions. Furthermore, 4% of respondents preferred not to answer, while 2% did not answer the question.

Figure 3: Distribution of Sample by Sector
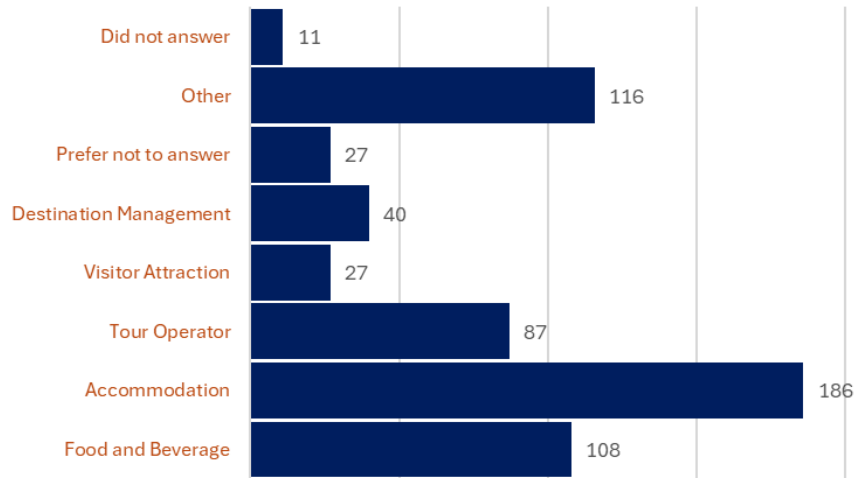
The majority of respondents (78%) were from micro to medium-sized enterprises, distributed as follows: 8% were self-employed, 21% worked for organisations with 2–9 employees, 25% for those with 10–49 employees, and 24% for organisations with 50–249 employees. Additionally, 18% worked in tourism large enterprises with over 250 employees, and 4% were uncertain or preferred not to answer as portrayed in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4: Size of Organisation
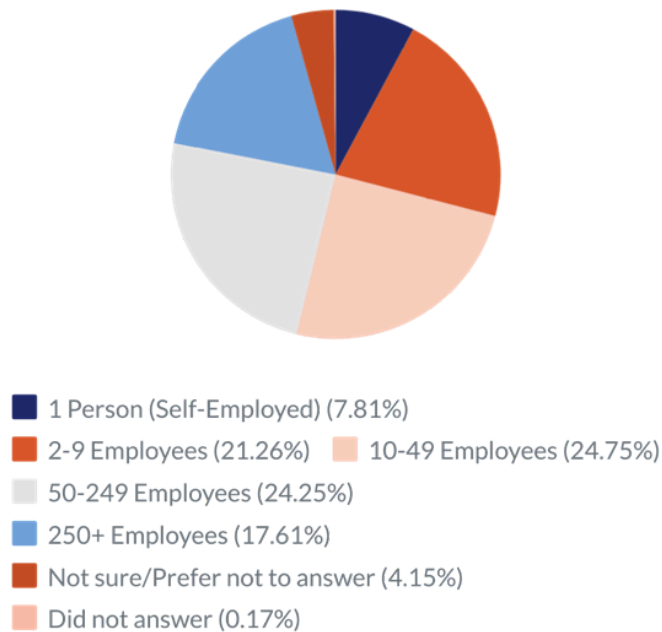
The job level distribution (Figure 5) among respondents was as follows: 27% held positions in Top Management/Ownership, another 27% were in Middle Management, while 15% were in Lower Management. Additionally, 22% had no supervisory or managerial responsibilities, 8% preferred not to answer, and 1% did not answer the question.

Figure 5: Distribution of Sample by Job Level
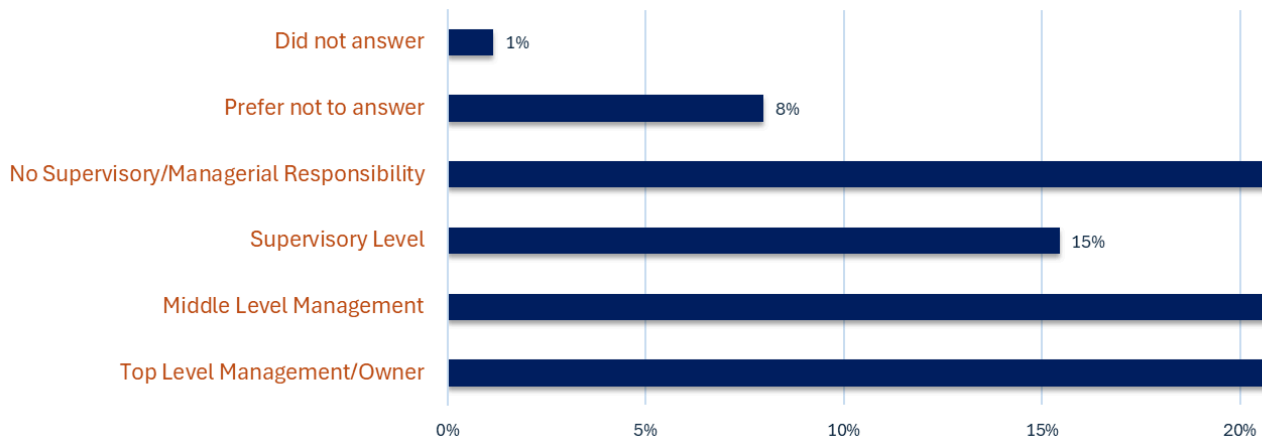
Lastly, the distribution of the sample by work length (Figure 6) revealed that 16% had worked for less than one year in their tourism organisation, 28% for 1 to 5 years, 18% for 6 to 10 years, and 35% for over 10 years. Additionally, 3% preferred not to say and less than 1% (only 2 responses) did not answer the question.

Figure 6: Distribution of Sample by Work Length
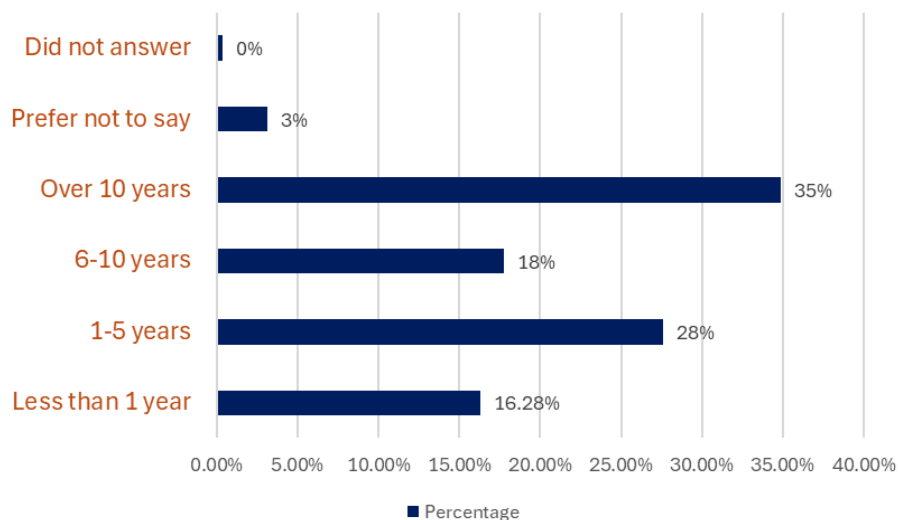
Types of EDI Training Completed by Participants

EU Responses

Participants were asked to select all the EDI training programs that they had participated in the last five years. Figure 7 shows that Conflict Management was the most offered training across the EU, with 27.7% of participants having completed it. This was followed by Cultural and Intercultural Awareness at 18.9% and Accessibility and Disability Awareness at 18.6%. On the other hand, participants reported that the training programmes they attended the least were Neurodiversity Awareness and Inclusion at 4.70%, LGTQ+ Awareness at 8.30%, and EDI in Recruitment at 11.10%.

Figure 7: Percentage of training courses EU respondents had participated in the past 5 years[3]
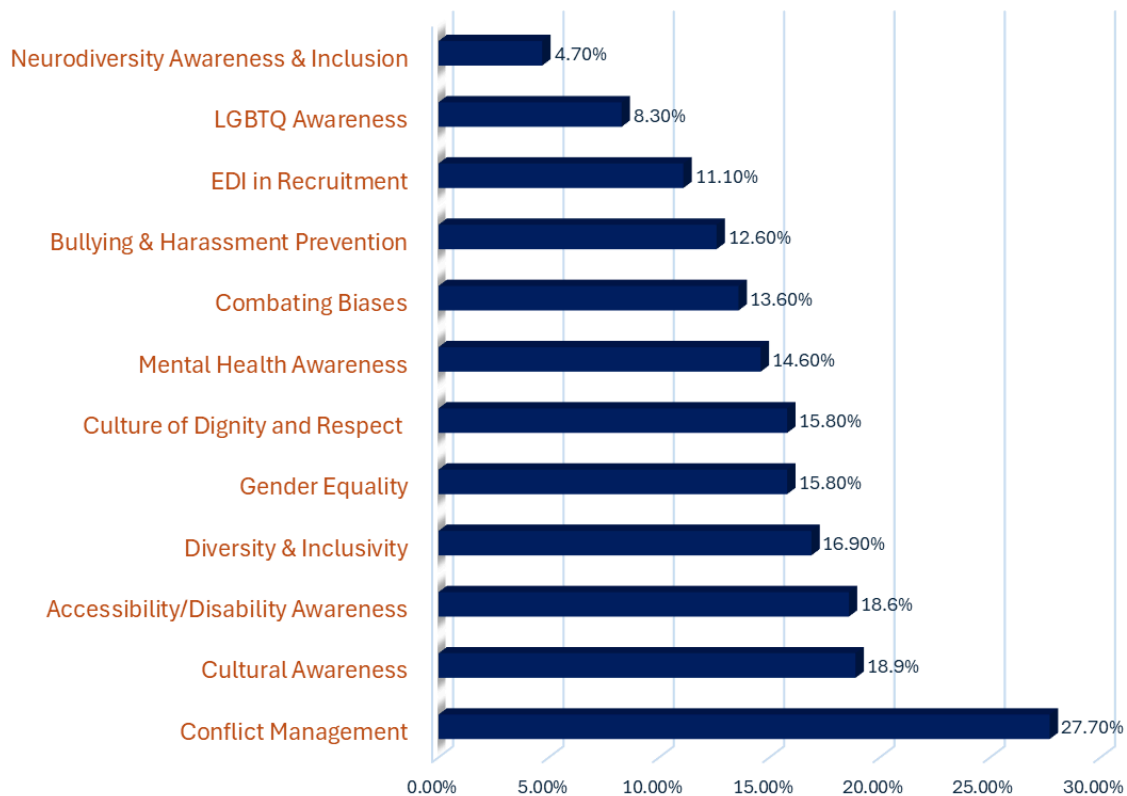
Countries' Responses

Although data from all participating countries contributed to the overall European survey results, individual analysis were only possible for the seven countries which had a sufficiently high response rate to ensure representation. These were Bulgaria, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal and Spain.

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[3] Descriptive statistics were initially analysed at the European level to determine how many respondents (N=602) had participated in EDI training. The table above was created in Microsoft Excel using the frequency tables generated by SPSS.

As observed Table 2, employees in Italy and Ireland undertook the highest levels of EDI training, followed by employees in Finland, Spain, Portugal, Greece, and Bulgaria, in that order. At an individual level, the most conducted training was done by Italy with Conflict Management and Accessibility and Disability Awareness both with a rate of 49.1%. These results are mostly consistent with the overall EU results. This was followed by respondents from Ireland, who undertook Bullying and Harassment Prevention (44.6%) and Diversity and Inclusivity training (42.9%). While the latter aligns with the overall EU results, the high participation in the former was surprising, as this training scored low in the overall EU responses. However, this is likely due to lower training participation rates in other countries.

The lowest undertaken course was Neurodiversity and Inclusion training, with most countries reporting rates below 5%. Finland had no participants (0%), while Bulgaria and Portugal reported participation rates of only 2.1% followed by Greece at 3.9%, and Spain at 4.3%. Additionally, there were low participation rates in Bulgaria for LGBTIQ+ Awareness and EDI in Recruitment, both at 4.2%. These trends are also consistent with the overall EU data.

Table 2: Undertaken EDI training programmes over the last five years, per country

Imparted Training	Bulgaria	Finland	Greece	Ireland	Italy	Portugal	Spain
Combating Biases	7.4%	12.1%	7.8%	35.7%	25.5%	10.5%	8.6%
Cultural Awareness	17.9%	30.3%	14.3%	28.6%	21.8%	8.4%	18.3%
Gender Equality	5.3%	12.1%	9.1%	30.4%	29.1%	10.5%	25.8%
Diversity & Inclusivity	10.5%	21.2%	6.5%	42.9%	27.3%	9.5%	18.3%
LGBTIQ+ Awareness	4.2%	15.2%	6.5%	14.3%	12.7%	5.3%	9.7%
Neurodiversity Awareness & Inclusion	2.1%	0.0%	3.9%	12.5%	7.3%	2.1%	4.3%
Accessibility & Disability Awareness	4.2%	12.1%	14.3%	25.0%	49.1%	15.8%	18.3%
Mental Health Awareness	8.4%	6.1%	7.8%	39.3%	18.2%	10.5%	9.7%
Culture of Dignity & Respect	10.5%	12.1%	16.9%	41.1%	25.5%	9.5%	6.5%
Conflict Management	18.9%	21.2%	22.1%	37.5%	49.1%	32.6%	22.6%
EDI in Recruitment	4.2%	15.2%	13.0%	25.0%	16.4%	7.4%	8.6%
Bullying & Harassment Prevention	5.3%	15.2%	6.5%	44.6%	9.1%	7.4%	16.1%

Future Training Needs

EU Responses

Respondents were asked to select all the EDI training programs they would like to attend over the next five years. As illustrated in Figure 8, Conflict Management emerged as the most preferred training programme among EU hospitality workers, with 42.7% expressing interest. This was closely followed by Mental Health Awareness at 41% and Creating a Culture of Dignity and Respect at Work at 36%. Conversely, EU participants showed less interest in participating in LGBTIQ+ Awareness, Gender Equality, and Neurodiversity Awareness and Inclusion courses, with only 18.8%, 24.4%, and 25.8%, respectively, expressing interest in these topics.

Figure 8: Training courses EU respondents would like to undertake in the next 5 years [4]
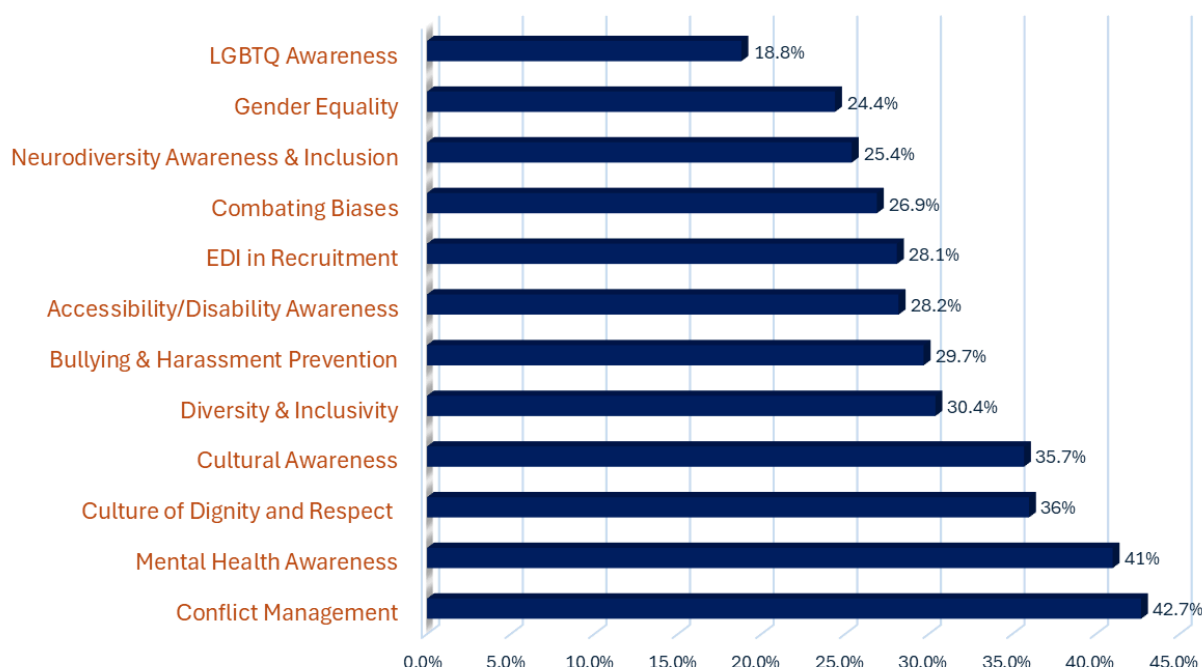
Countries' Responses

Similar to the previous section, only responses from the seven countries with the most contributions were analysed (Greece, Ireland, Italy, Finland, Portugal, Bulgaria, and Spain- Table 3). At an individual level, Italy showed the highest interest in Cultural Awareness (61.8%) and Conflict Management (50.9%). Greece followed this with Mental Health Awareness (50.6%) and Culture of Dignity and Respect (49.4%). These results align with the overall EU findings, as they represent the same top four courses just in a different order.

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[4] The table above was generated in Microsoft Excel using the SPSS frequency data from the sample's (N=602) descriptive statistics. It shows the percentage of EU employees who expressed interest in participating in EDI training courses.

On the other hand, the courses in which participants were less interested were LGBTIQ+ Awareness, which received low interest from Bulgaria (7.4%) and Portugal (14.7%), and Accessibility and Disability Awareness training, with only 9.5% participants from Bulgaria showing interest. While the former is consistent with the EU results, the latter was striking as this training scored higher in the overall EU findings.

Table 3: Desired EDI training programmes for the next five years, per country

Desired Training	Bulgaria	Finland	Greece	Ireland	Italy	Portugal	Spain
Combating Biases	18.9%	18.2%	33.8%	39.3%	36.4%	24.2%	21.5%
Cultural Awareness	29.5%	39.4%	42.9%	42.9%	61.8%	26.3%	23.7%
Gender Equality	16.8%	21.2%	35.1%	32.1%	29.1%	15.8%	23.7%
Diversity & Inclusivity	21.1%	48.5%	35.1%	33.9%	38.2%	24.2%	19.4%
LGBTIQ+ Awareness	7.4%	18.2%	22.1%	33.9%	27.3%	14.7%	17.2%
Neurodiversity Awareness & Inclusion	15.8%	24.2%	29.9%	46.4%	21.8%	21.1%	23.7%
Accessibility & Disability Awareness	9.5%	30.3%	41.6%	30.4%	27.3%	30.5%	21.5%
Mental Health Awareness	42.1%	48.5%	50.6%	41.1%	34.5%	44.2%	26.9%
Culture of Dignity & Respect	36.8%	45.5%	49.4%	37.5%	47.3%	33.7%	19.4%
Conflict Management	47.4%	48.5%	40.3%	44.6%	50.9%	35.8%	38.7%
EDI in Recruitment	24.2%	27.3%	33.8%	28.6%	41.8%	23.2%	15.1%
Bullying & Harassment Prevention	18.9%	30.3%	37.7%	37.5%	29.1%	33.7%	21.5%

Organisational Culture

EU respondents were asked to evaluate their workplace culture by rating thirteen EDI-related statements using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Table 4 displays the average scores of the statements that participants agreed with, ranked from highest to lowest. The top three include: I feel included in most of the decisions of my team (mean score: 4.01), I feel my manager is inclusive and fair (mean score: 3.91), and I feel my organisation has a culture of valuing diversity (mean score: 3.84). In contrast, the statements with the highest levels of disagreement were: I have seen or experienced religious discrimination from staff or managers in my workplace (mean score: 1.78), I have seen or experienced LGBTIQ+ discrimination from staff or managers in my workplace (mean score: 1.80), and I have seen or experienced gender discrimination from staff or managers in my workplace (mean score: 2.07).

Table 4: Mean Scores for Q10 Statements Relevant to EU Organisations [5]

Item	Mean (Scale from 1 to 5)
I feel included in most of the decisions of my team	4.01
I feel my manager is inclusive and fair	3.91
I feel my organisation has a culture of valuing diversity	3.84
My organisation promotes well-being at work	3.75
My organisation promotes people from diverse backgrounds equally	3.69
I feel the organisation treats employees equally	3.68
My organisation promotes accessibility awareness	3.56
I see best practices in my workplace related to equality, diversity and inclusion	3.56
My organisation caters for mental health issues and promotes mental health awareness	3.27
I have seen or experienced discrimination from staff or managers based on race/ethnicity in my workplace	2.08
I have seen or experienced gender discrimination from staff or managers in my workplace	2.07
I have seen or experienced LGBTIQ+ discrimination from staff or managers in my workplace	1.80
I have seen or experienced religious discrimination from staff or managers in my workplace	1.78

Participants were invited to share additional comments on how they see EDI initiatives and training in tourism and hospitality organisations. A total of 30 answers were obtained. Firstly, six participants expressed concerns regarding discrimination against foreigners and religious prejudices within EU tourism establishments. From this number, one respondent associated this with denied employment opportunities. Two more reported instances where clients have expressed dissatisfaction with these groups. Secondly, six respondents recognised a lack of diversity within tourism businesses. One individual suggested that the reason is the prioritisation of profitability over EDI training and practices. Additionally, three participants expressed dissatisfaction with the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions and the absence of arrangements for hiring individuals with disabilities. Lastly, four respondents shared their desire to improve EDI practices in the EU tourism landscape. Two individuals highlighted additional training on EDI legislation within the sector as well as offering more local language classes for foreigners to help overcome language barriers and improve cultural integration. Five participants also expressed enthusiasm and interest in incorporating all of these courses into their training programmes.

To conclude the survey results, EU responses identified that the least attended EDI training sessions included Neurodiversity Awareness and Inclusion, EDI in Recruitment, LGBTIQ+ Awareness, Bullying and Harassment Prevention and Combating Biases. Similarly, participants expressed a strong interest in attending training sessions on Conflict

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[5] Table 4 represents the combined output for the categorical field analysis and the Non-Parametric Friedman's Test which together informed the descriptive statistics generated in SPSS. These tests proved that there were statistically significant differences in the distributions of the Q10 items (χ^2[12] = 1791.56, p < .001). Table 4 displays the sample's (N=404) average level of agreement and was created using Microsoft Excel.

Management, Mental Health Awareness, Culture of Dignity and Respect, Cultural and Intercultural Awareness, and Diversity and Inclusivity in the coming years. The survey also revealed that EU respondents generally view their organisations positively regarding EDI. They reported feeling included in team decisions, recognising their managers as inclusive and fair, and experiencing a workplace culture that values diversity, promotes well-being, and supports career progression for employees from diverse backgrounds.

2.1.2- INTERVIEWS WITH EDUCATORS ON EDI EDUCATION AND TRAINING

This section highlights the research findings related to education and training for EDI in tourism and hospitality discussed with 28 participants from 8 European countries (Bulgaria, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Hungary, Portugal, Spain and the Netherlands). The participants were educators from higher education institutions, vocational training institutions, and training organisations specialised in accessibility awareness. They shared their perspectives on the EDI training landscape in their country, and on topics being discussed to promote inclusiveness and sustainability in tourism and hospitality.

They shared their perspectives on advancements in the sector, existing barriers in the EDI training landscape, and how their organisations are tackling challenges and integrating EDI topics into their curricula. These interviews also focus on two aspects of training: equipping students to meet the needs of clients/guests and promote inclusivity in the sector, and from a human resource perspective, developing a more resilient and inclusive workforce.

82% of interviewees worked in Higher Education, 11% worked in vocational education institutions, and 7% were specialist consultants in tourism and hospitality. The interviewees had extensive experience, as 63% worked/taught more than 10 years in the sector, 22% worked/taught between 3-9 years and 15% did not disclose how many years they worked or taught in tourism and hospitality.

Figure 9: Participants Sector

- Higher Education (82%)
- Vocational Education and Training (11%)
- Private training (7%)
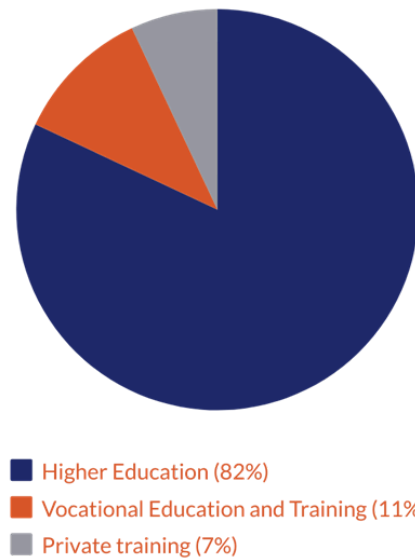
N= 28; Interviews undertaken between January and June 2024

Figure 10: Years of Experience Teaching and Working in Tourism and Hospitality

- Not disclosed (15%)
- Between 3-9 years (22%)
- Between 10-47 years (63%)
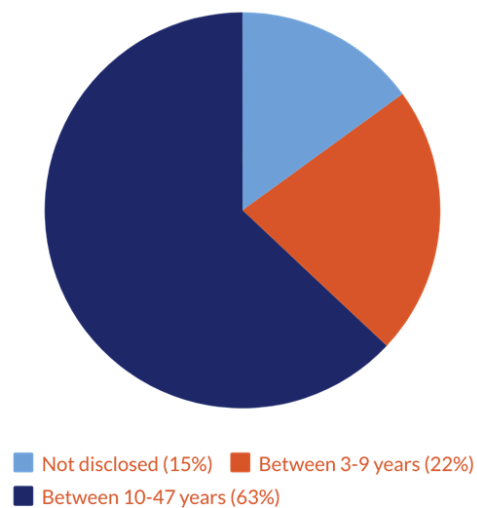
Among the diverse topics taught by lecturers and trainers in tourism and hospitality were: human resources management, cultural tourism, accommodation and the MICE industry, intercultural negotiation skills, hotel operations, revenue management, workplace skills,

culinary nutrition and skills, practices and theory in culinary arts, talent management, intercultural awareness, cultural intelligence, management and business studies, marketing and research, aviation, internationalisation, tourism marketing analysis, tourism and gender, e-commerce and technology applied in tourism, accessibility and hospitality training, sustainability, corporate social sustainability, educational policy and tourism education, communication skills in tourism and cultural influences in tourism.

The interviews were divided thematically (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017), focusing on five key points: 1) Importance of EDI skills and training in tourism and hospitality education; 2) Curriculum changes and incorporation of EDI topics; 3) Barriers to delivering EDI training in the sector; 4) Changes in mindset about the importance of EDI skilling and training and 5) EDI creating sustainability for the sector.

Importance of EDI Skills and Training in Tourism and Hospitality Education

Educators interviewed emphasised the importance of training for EDI for the industry. Participants from Portugal and Bulgaria noted the importance of developing skills in the workforce with a dual approach, focusing on both tourists and tourism workers.

Training for EDI was highlighted as crucial for several reasons: complying with legislation, ensuring that a respectful work environment is in place, and managing a multicultural workforce. One of the participants identified challenges with accepting cultural diversity within the workforce and highlighted that training for EDI can help address the issue. The participant noted that understanding, accepting, and effectively catering for the needs of a diverse workforce is a growing reality in the world of work.

The educators interviewed also highlighted the importance of developing those skills in students so that they are equipped to change existing attitudes in some workplaces. Teaching self-care, well-being and practices involving respect and dignity in the work environment is not only an imperative for the industry but also has been a focus for students. Some lecturers pointed out how younger generations are developing an increasing awareness about the importance of work-life balance in the workplace.

There is a growing sense of inclusiveness and openness among students.

Educator from Hungary

One important point discussed by lecturers was accessibility. One interviewee noted that accessibility benefits society as a whole and improves the tourism experience. Educators also highlighted that the development of skills to deal with the needs of people with different disabilities leads to the development of other essential skills, such as critical thinking and social justice. This, in turn, contributes to normalising the lives of people with additional needs, contributing to higher inclusion levels and inclusive environments. Another participant stated that there is still 'a lot of space' to improve education focused on ensuring

equal access to services and attractions. It was also highlighted that curriculums should focus on this issue using a transversal approach.

It is through inclusion that we also help to educate our students and the school community itself - for a better society.

Educator from Portugal

Key points

- There is a need to consider the development of EDI skills from both a client perspective and a human resources/workplace perspective.
- Intercultural and diversity awareness are key skills required in the tourism and hospitality sector, both from a client's perspective and a human resources perspective, because of the diverse workforce and diverse customer base.
- The younger generation of students has an increased awareness of the importance of work-life balance and well-being in the workplace and prioritises these when looking for jobs.
- Skills development in Accessibility is an area that still requires attention.

Curriculum Changes and Incorporation of EDI Topics

Curriculum developments and changes to embed EDI topics and skills development were cited by almost all countries' participants, with different focuses and approaches. In Higher Education, many participants cited the presence of topics embedded in the curricula in different courses and levels (undergraduate and graduate studies). One interviewee cited the increasing number of student assignments that focus on EDI, and other participants directly embedded EDI into the curricula.

Other participants highlighted that while topics are considered, they are not systematically across all curricula in the tourism and hospitality courses. One participant identified the lack of mandatory inclusion of EDI in curricula as a barrier. However, another lecturer noted that because it takes a long time to develop new curricula in universities, EDI topics usually become the focus of skills and competency development rather than being integrated into curriculum content.

Tourism Studies is a human-centred discipline as it traditionally includes issues related to human equality, gender, culture, and ethics. EDI training and education in tourism are very important because tourism is based on human communication, acceptance of people with different values, customs, and cultures, and mutual respect.

Educator from Greece

Participants also discussed different methodologies that can support the inclusion of topics for training for EDI skills in the sector, such as creating specific modules with 'glasses of inclusion' and holistic views of the challenges encountered by minorities and people with disability; encouraging the use of case studies from the industry; bringing people to share their experiences especially when talking about disability; designing marketing campaigns; providing internships with a more inclusive approach, for example in care homes, where they can talk and understand experiences of people with disabilities. Perspective-taking exercises as well as pop-up training for the workforce were also cited.

A participant from a vocational institution also highlighted initiatives in curriculum development that included, for example, the adoption of a new vocational system with the free provision of content which could be adapted to meet the needs of individual schools. There were no set subjects and curriculum, and it could give schools opportunities to provide vocational education aligned with their vision and in tune with students.

Today we have to look at school not only from a professional point of view, but also to create the conditions for students to become citizens of the world.

Educator from Portugal

Barriers to Delivering Training in EDI in the Sector

Participants from all countries illuminated barriers that can hinder or slow the advancement of EDI training in the tourism and hospitality sectors. These include: 1) resistance to change, which was identified both in the adoption of new curricula and also at the industry level; 2) difficulties in finding specialised trainers or lecturers, indicating a need for a 'train the trainer' approach to educate more professionals in the EDI field of learning; 3) the time it takes to embed change; and 4) societal barriers that could hinder the advancement of the EDI agenda, which are catered for by legislation but need to be addressed holistically, not only in the tourism and hospitality sector.

Lecturers viewed these barriers as diverse and present in training from different perspectives: societal, organisational, trainer/lecturer, and student. Other barriers mentioned were the lack of skills in EDI leadership; power relations; precarity and insecurities about work, which makes the workforce less prone to either participate or be motivated to discuss these topics; and management perspectives about provisioning the needs of minorities which was also highlighted by one educator as 'not attractive from a financial point of view'.

In terms of education institutions, some of the barriers cited were: students' lack of interest in the topic; traditional ways of learning still present in higher education institutions that need to be adapted to meet contemporary needs; the complexity of dealing with multiples tasks and difficulties with time management for lecturers to upskill and develop new curricula; lack of awareness on the development and delivery of EDI training in tourism and hospitality sectors, especially on the human resources side of the businesses.

One participant noted that willingness to adopt EDI skills topics in curricula is not sufficient to provide change. They highlighted that outside factors such as social movements are creating this need, and although there are policies in place, barriers are still present because they need to be addressed first as social issues to be readily accepted in the industry.

There is a change that is primarily due to the awareness created by social media. Younger generations think differently about these issues, and their awareness is high. Businesses also, to some extent, are attuned to these trends and are seeking training on EDI issues.

Educator from Greece

Besides the barriers mentioned, the interviewed participants considered ways to overcome these issues. One participant noted that more awareness campaigns showcasing opportunities for creating human-centred practices would create viability for EDI skills and training. Other participants highlighted that overcoming these barriers requires strong management commitment and the implementation of effective communication, training and evaluation strategies. They also cited it as essential to promote an organisational culture that values EDI at all levels of education. Another participant noted that including environmental, social, and governance (ESG) frameworks in organisations has produced new needs in today's business realities and that organisations seeking to comply with them will need to seek more training and inclusive practices. Additionally, participants recognised that legislation stimulates changes, promotes opportunities, and accelerates changes from a societal point of view. Adopting practices that seek to promote changes in personal attitudes and beliefs also has an essential role in addressing EDI skills training in tourism and hospitality.

If you as a student see that EDI initiatives are being carried out at the university, you are going to look for them to be carried out in your workplace.

Educator from Spain

> ## Key Points
>
> - There are many barriers found in all countries to develop EDI training, associated primarily with resistance to change, difficulties in finding EDI trainers and training lecturers on the topic, the amount of time and investment it takes to make changes and societal barriers that make it challenging to advance EDI training.
> - The barriers are present at societal, organisational and individual levels.
> - The participants pointed out different approaches to overcome barriers, which include approaches within legislative, organisational, and cultural changes.

Changes in Mindset about the Importance of EDI Skills and Training

Participants highlighted positive and negative aspects of changing perspectives on EDI in the sector. They were divided regarding how EDI training and skills are considered and seen as essential aspects of training for the industry. Participants from three different countries highlighted the difficulties found in their national training landscape, such as acceptance of the need for inclusion in the industry, with a negative perception specifically regarding disabilities needs; the industry lagging in terms of embracing these topics compared to other economic sectors, citing the 'tokenism' of EDI in the sector; outdated mindset in different businesses; cultural differences and perceptions of the acceptance of these differences; and the need to develop more mindfulness and empathy towards minorities and women working in the tourism and hospitality sectors.

Conversely, participants also cited noticeable changes in aligning EDI to businesses, albeit slowly, with positive changes in disability awareness and intercultural awareness; a gradual shift to a greater focus on EDI in curricula in universities and educational institutions, with more students engaging in research projects or internships on the topics; optimism related to the involvement of students and people working in businesses to change the current mindset, especially regarding diversity awareness and inclusion of foreigners in the workplace; and positive changes with the participation of women and minorities groups in development programmes, promoting more integration and inclusion in the industry.

How is the tourism sector doing in terms of EDI? In customer service, yes [well], in recruitment, we are just starting now to give attention to this subject, but we are starting.

Educator from Portugal

Participants also cited positive changes in perspectives on how EDI is being addressed in industry and education. Participants highlighted a significant shift in promoting EDI training in the sector, due to greater recognition of this topic in society and awareness-raising events in various organisations in their country. One participant also mentioned that at industry level in their country, it is possible to see noticeable changes, and another cited seeing significant changes in EDI in the sector in recent years, especially in gender equality and women participation in the labour market, with substantial progress on equality. Furthermore, two participants cited how universities have been addressing, developing and implementing EDI topics and training in the education in the sector, giving attention and focus on them in curricula, looking for accreditation, and promoting and empowering women working in the sector.

These changes in perceptions of EDI skilling were seen by a participant as a continuous effort and higher education lecturers and trainers are developing strategies at local and global levels related to inclusive tourism. Additionally, partnerships between educational institutions and industry level organisations facilitated staff training, certification and a feedback loop between best practices in industry and informed education provision, and vice versa.

We look in classes at the number of females in Ireland as CEOs, managing positions, members of boards, and it's so little. Students say that it's smaller than they thought. The number of people with disability participating in employment, they also say, why is that so different compared to people who don't have a disability? I think it's important for people to get the training and be aware of why the training is necessary.

Educator from Ireland

Key Points

- Participants cited different perspectives on progress in embedding EDI in training and in the industry, with some citing: Slow progress in embedding EDI training and education in curricula, others highlighted significant progress on EDI skilling and training.

- Gaps in practices were cited, with a need to change perspectives of work in businesses.

- Changes in mindset and culture are referred to as slow processes. Implementation of policies and practices are considered enablers of change.

EDI Creating Sustainability in the Sector

Most participants noted that EDI skilling and training bring more sustainability to the sector. Educators from Bulgaria noted the importance of training in creating sustainability for businesses and the embeddedness of EDI skills in sustainable practice. An educator from Finland also highlighted different approaches to teaching social sustainability, such as developing topics on employee-employer relationships, talking about equal pay and treating people equally. They also mention a concern about addressing those issues within the industry, with projects between their university and industry stakeholders looking to address basic issues in social sustainability. An educator from Greece also discussed sustainable

employment practices are important in tourism businesses for developing sustainability, including support for working women, accessible infrastructure and support, and cultural and diversity awareness.

EDI practices and training would surely influence the sector and the better functioning of the workforce. Company culture cultivated by EDI-centred education can also be a sustainable part of tourism.

Educator from Bulgaria

Participants have shared the importance of EDI skills in the workplace, specifically the restaurant environment. One interviewee indicated how this environment is highly multicultural, and the need for inclusion and respect of chefs and international workers is fundamental to retaining and having a qualified workforce, generating more sustainability to the industry. Another participant highlighted that as many graduates work in supervision roles, their increasing understanding of different cultural approaches to work enhances employee well-being and therefore, sustainability.

There were also concerns raised regarding the training of EDI to ensure greater sustainability for the sector. Two interviewees noted that there is a need to develop individualised actions for local sustainability, as there is a need to assess needs in place in different regions, connecting first with local communities. Another interviewee noted that they do not see effective implementation of EDI training because of a primary focus across the sector on addressing staff shortages.

Another participant from Hungary also addressed that developing EDI skills and training moves people forward in the 'right direction', especially among the younger generations that are more conscious of these topics. They see this as more important to the younger generations, and a growing number of guests are choosing more responsible service providers whose work also has a sustainable approach. Younger workers also prefer to stay with employers who promote good workplace practices.

If you want to get the best person to do the job and that person to bring that best self to work, you need to create an environment focused on equality, diversity and inclusion.

Educator from Ireland

> **Key Points**
>
> - Most participants stated that they see EDI training as important for promoting sustainability in the workplace.
> - Addressing social issues in the workplace, such as social justice, equality of opportunities, intercultural awareness and respect at work are present in training in higher education and vocational organisations, resulting in enhanced workplace sustainability.
> - Addressing local issues together with an 'EDI' lens is seen as important, especially in building dialogue with local communities.
> - EDI skills are also noted as important in providing solutions to address issues present in the workplace.

2.2- COUNTRIES' LANDSCAPE IN PROMOTING EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The European Union has legislation and policies to tackle societal inequalities and combat discrimination to promote integration gender equality, inclusion of people with disabilities, and inclusion of minorities. In this section, there are examples of how EDI policies are being implemented in different European countries, with a focus on how training is happening in the tourism and hospitality sectors. This section also highlights examples of programmes, with best practices developed in each country.

Bulgaria
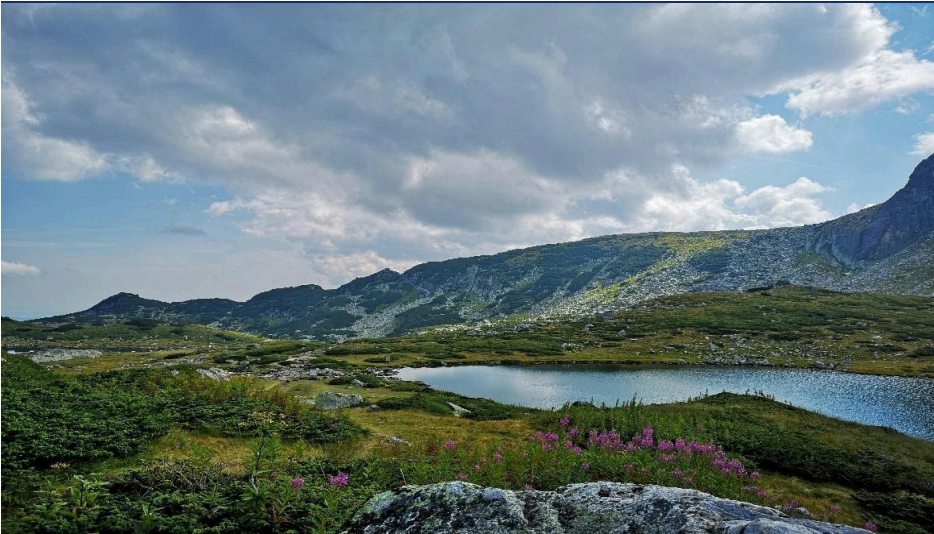
Source: free copyright from Pexels.com (Kyustendil, Bulgaria, by Hristo Ivanov)

In Bulgaria, the Constitution (Republic of Bulgaria, n.d.) upholds fundamental principles of non-discrimination based on race, national origin, gender orientation, religion, education, among others. The commitment of the Bulgarian government to comply with rigorous legislation regarding discrimination in employment and labour is present in different laws, such as the Labour Code (Republic of Bulgaria, n.d.), the Social Security Code (Republic of Bulgaria, 2003) and Family Code (Republic of Bulgaria, n.d.)

Employment legislation criminalises any prejudice or discriminatory behaviour, for example in penalising hate speech and discriminatory language. Other important policies that focus on tackling inequalities in the workplace are introduced by the Bulgarian Labour Code, with regulations such as accommodation of employees with visible and invisible disabilities, and unbiased hiring regulations. However, experts also identify that although there is a legislation in place, there is a significant gap in terms of behaviours and attitudes, showing that there is still much to be done to close the gap between policies and practices in the workplace (Stoyanova, 2023).

One important policy that aims to promote equality in the country is the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021-2030 (Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Republic of Bulgaria, 2021). It is a comprehensive policy with an integrative approach and targeted measures across various priority areas, such as economic independence, work-life balance, participation in decision-making, violence prevention, stereotype elimination and adopting European best practices.

The Bulgarian government also promotes social inclusion and diversity awareness with two main policies: National Development Programme Bulgaria- 2030 (Council of Ministers of Bulgaria, 2020) and Bulgarian Diversity Charter (Center for the Study of Democracy and Diversity Charter Bulgaria, n/d/). The National Development Programme has three main pillars, looking to promote employment, the inclusion of vulnerable groups (including people with disabilities, children, and the Roma population), and poverty reduction. This

policy is followed by actions plans on a bi-annual basis, that include activities, indicators, measures, allocation of resources and execution timelines, to ensure its effectiveness. The Bulgarian Diversity Charter encourages organisations to recognise diversity within the workforce. Membership in the charter is open to commercial companies, public institutions and civil society organisations, and it facilitates collaboration in the promotion of more diversity and diversity awareness in the workplace.

The Bulgarian education system follows the Strategic Framework for the Development of Education (Ministry of Education and Science, Republic of Bulgaria, 2021) This is a policy which aims to develop activities focused on inclusion, anti-discrimination, and gender equality in the country. The Strategic Framework emphasises supporting individual students, to cater for everyone's needs in all aspects of the educational process. In addition, the framework supports the development of intercultural competences, such as intercultural dialogue, respect regarding cultural differences, linguistics and religious identities. It also promotes tolerance and combats discrimination in educational institutions, enhancing social skills, and training specialists in tackling inequalities and discrimination.

The tourism and hospitality sectors in Bulgaria do not have any specific guidelines on promoting EDI in the workplace, to operationalise the legislation in place. National curricula in the vocational and third level sectors do not cover EDI topics or embed specific disciplines on the topic. However, there are subtopics such as multicultural communication, customer relationship management, social psychology and customer behaviour, and many universities have been including different topics on EDI at undergraduate and graduate level.

Research Findings	
Bulgaria Training in EDI	
Most undertaken training (last 5 years)	**Most desired training (next 5 years)**
18.9% Conflict Management	47.4% Conflict Management
17.9% Cultural Awareness	42.1% Mental Health Awareness
10.5% Diversity & Inclusivity and Culture of Dignity & Respect	36.8% Culture of Dignity & Respect

The survey showed that Conflict Management, Mental Health Awareness and Culture of Dignity and Respect were the most desired by the surveyed workforce. Training courses most taken within the workforce included Conflict Management, Cultural Awareness, Diversity and Inclusivity and Culture of Dignity and Respect. The data showed a lower rate for the remaining EDI training with 8 skills having been taken by less than 10% of the participants. It is also important to note that the survey had a higher number of accommodation workers (36.96%), and travel /tour operator workers (31.52%) respondents, representing more the views of these two specific subsectors.

Lecturers in Bulgaria also talked about how the universities and the sector need to provide more courses and embed topics in EDI. Barriers addressed are lack of awareness of its importance, traditional forms of learning and also cultural resistance to some topics. However, significant progress was also identified by some of the lecturers, in topics such as Human Resources Management, Social Entrepreneurship, Intercultural Communication, Cultural Awareness and Gender Equality. A number of subjects have also been identified as increasingly important in universities with a growing number of theses topics. This shows a changing landscape on gaps and needs related to EDI in the Bulgarian tourism and hospitality sectors.

Best Practice: Academy for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

In January 2023, the Council of Women in Business in Bulgaria launched the country's first certification *Academy for Diversity, Equality and Inclusion*. The concept of this programme came from a partnership between the Council and the Faculty of Economics of Sofia University 'St Kliment Ohridski', with financial support provided by Lidl Bulgaria.

The Academy developed an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Programme consisted of 4 months' duration consisting of 7 thematic modules. The modules covered different aspects of embedding inclusion and equality practices in work, such as overcoming unconscious bias, inclusive leadership and inclusive communications. The programme also involved strategic leaders from large organisations, such as Lidl, Coca-cola company, Siemens, as well as lecturers from Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski. Because of its success, a second edition was launched in 2024.

For more information: https://womeninbusiness.bg/en/forum-brussels/

Germany

In Germany, EDI in society represent essential social values and principles. Because of that, many legal texts and regulatory legislation present these as values, including in the world of work.

The Social Code (Federal Republic of Germany, 2023) is the central body of social legislation in Germany, and it provides an important framework on the social benefits for people with disabilities. The Disability Act (Bundesgleichstellungsgesetz, n.d.a), regulates the rights of people with disabilities. The General Equal Treatment Act (Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz, n.d.b) prevents and eliminates discrimination on the grounds of race or ethnic origin, gender, religion belief, age or sexual identity. The Equal Treatment Act is also important legislation enacted for the labour market, guaranteeing access to employment, job advertisements, job interviews, and career advancements and promotions.

Gender gaps are present in Germany especially in management positions and boards This has been a topic of discussion in the country, and also a study commissioned by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, that aims to create equal opportunities for women. One of the points highlighted in a study published by the German Commission for UNESCO is in the area of inclusion (German Commission for UNESCO, 2015). The document supports the rights of people with disabilities to access employment opportunities, with vocational training available for different needs.

EDI training varies in different regions in Germany, as each federal state has its own regulations and resolutions. However, there are identified for example in the OECD Education Policy Outlook for Germany (OECD, 2020). Some identified actions in education are a need to improve upskilling initiatives and develop opportunities in lifelong learning; address socially disadvantages groups of learners to provide better education outcomes, address gaps in literacy for migrant background learners and introduce policies and strategies to include socially disadvantage groups in vocational and higher education

(OECD, 2020). In the tourism and hospitality sectors there were no identified policy in EDI, but it follows the national legislation and educational initiatives in the country. The promotion of EDI-related skills is becoming increasingly important in the tourism education landscape in the country, as possible to see in initiatives on migrant integration, equal pay act and disability rights.

Although data from Germany contributed to the European survey results, an in-depth analysis was not possible, resulting in an unrepresentative sample. Further research on the topic, however, may point out directions where training will play a fundamental role in providing change on how to tackle inequalities in the sector.

Best Practice: Vocational Orientation for People with Refugee and Migration Experience (BOFplus)

The Vocational Orientation for People with Refugee and Migration Experience (BOFplus) is a national programme in Germany that supports refugees and migrants preparing them for the labour market with training and qualification.

This Programme has been launched in 2016, and ran between 2016 and 2023, with courses aiming at different professions in vocational training centres in the country. Students from a migrant and refugee background wanting to learn a profession can participate in courses, with preliminary orientation, and also access language lessons. The programme provides work sponsors, in which the students can learn and work on site, with a practical approach. It also provides career orientation as part of a broader vision of fulfilling needs of the country, facing shortage of skilled workers, and integrates these workers in the labour market, developing well-being within migrant communities.

For more information:
https://www.bmbf.de/bmbf/shareddocs/pressemitteilungen/de/2024/03/070324-BOFplus.html

Finland

Source: free copyright from Unsplash.com (Helsinki Cathedral, by Tapio Haaja)

In Finland, legislation protects all workers against inequalities and discrimination in the workplace. As part of the Nordic Welfare State, Finland integrates equality legislation and an inclusive political ideology as well (Smale et al., 2017). One example of this is in the gender equality legislation, in which Finland has been active in policy implementation in the European Union for decades, especially in promoting and embedding practices and policies in the workplace (Ylostalo, 2016).

The Nordic Welfare Model has been lauded for the success in the advancement of women's rights, and Finland's welfare system also enables women to participate in the economy in higher numbers than other European countries. The labour market is equally represented by men and women, which can be attributed to affordable, good quality, public childcare, and policies which benefit families by creating more equal conditions. However, despite the high rates of women's participation in the economy, the gender gap still exists, and it is an area which still deserves attention and needs considerable improvement (Finland Promotion Board, 2023). Additionally, the labour market is characterised by unequal representation, which means that women participate more in the healthcare sector, educational sector, and tourism sector (in particular in the accommodation and restaurant subsectors), reflecting a global economic trend.

Diversity is a topic that has been discussed and has featured more strongly in different Finnish policies in recent years. For some authors, diversity has also been a topic important in economic discussions as it has begun to provide an important competitive advantage in the labour market (Vanhanen et al., 2023). A few reasons are behind this trend including the ageing of the population and an increase of immigration to the country. According to Smale et al (2017) and Yostalo (2016), immigration still represents a 'blind spot' in the Nordic Welfare Strategy as inclusion of ethnic and cultural minorities has been challenging. Discrimination, for example, in recruitment practices, and structural discrimination in the labour market have been the focus of attention of government policies and plans.

Education and training for EDI in Finland are guaranteed by the Finnish National Agency for Education. With different development policies at all levels of education, the Finnish educational system has different key targeted areas to be noted in accessibility, integration of migrants, and gender equality. One important example in training is the Programme to Develop Quality and Equality in Vocational Education and Training (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2023). This Programme aims to ensure low dropout rates of students in secondary and vocational education, with a strong welfare system that provides and improves students' quality of life. This Programme also encourages the development of occupational competencies for skilling younger generations for work. It focuses on lifelong learning, strengthening well-being, providing support for students and improving learning conditions.

The tourism and hospitality sectors in Finland reflect the main challenges and barriers present in the workplace in Europe. Gender disparities and gender wage gaps are present in the sector. The number of women enrolling in vocational education and training in the tourism, accommodations and restaurants sector is high in the country. However, there was a significant decrease in the participation of women in the training and education in the accommodation and restaurant subsectors between 1987 and 2017 (Keski-Petäjä & Witting, 2018). These sectors also provide part-time and fixed-term work, irregular working hours and shifts, with 98% of the vacancies in professions with an earning level of less than 16 euros an hour, lower than the minimum wage in Finland (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, 2023d; 2023e). This reflects unequal opportunities for women in the labour market, and in the tourism sector.

Immigration also plays an important role in the tourism and hospitality sector in Finland. In a country with a need to recruit and employ a skilled international workforce, with the share of foreign labour at 16% of the workforce (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment in Finland, 2023), different discussions on how to attract and retain workers, especially in the restaurants subsector, have been occurring in the hospitality sector. Recruitment and employment of a skilled international workforce is promoted and encouraged by the government. This has also created a need to discuss diversity inclusion and awareness, working conditions and well-being within the sector workforce.

Research Findings	
Finland Training in EDI	
Most undertaken training (last 5 years)	**Most desired training (next 5 years)**
30.3% Cultural Awareness	48.5% Mental Health Awareness 48.5%
21.2% Diversity & Inclusivity	48.5% Diversity & Inclusivity
21.2% Conflict Management	48.5% Conflict Management

Our survey with tourism and hospitality workers in Finland showed that EDI training courses in the country were higher in the topics of Cultural Awareness (30.3%), Diversity and Inclusivity (21.2%) and Conflict Management (21.2%). Employees also indicated that the most desired training were Mental Health Awareness (48.5%), Diversity and Inclusivity (48.5%), and Conflict Management (48.5%). The data showed that none of the participants had received training in Neurodiversity Awareness and Inclusion. Furthermore, only 6.1% had participated in Mental Health Awareness.

Lecturers interviewed highlighted the need after the COVID-19 pandemic to employ an immigrant workforce, with different programmes createdto address worker shortages while leading to a more diverse workforce. There were difficulties in the past because of low levels of Finnish proficiency in immigrant communities. Participants emphasised a need for a flexible approach in hiring a diverse workforce.

Best Practice: Working Life Diversity Programme (2021-2023)

The Working Life Diversity Programme was developed by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, with the aim of promoting diversity and inclusivity measures to improve immigrants' working conditions and well-being. The Programme looks to reduce structural discrimination in the labour market by increasing awareness of the benefits of having a diverse population in local communities. It also aims to: promote diversity management and inclusive recruitment practices; develop skills among employers and jobseekers' services; combat discrimination in recruitment; and increase diversity in the public sector (The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment in Finland, 2023).

For more information:
https://aca-secretariat.be/newsletter/finland-working-life-diversity-programme/

Greece

Greek legislation framework includes different laws on promoting EDI in society and in the workplace. The body responsible for developing policies on gender equality is the General Secretariat for Equality and Equal Opportunities, a division of the Greek State Ministry of Equality and Human Rights. This department is responsible for the design, implementation and monitoring of policies to promote more gender equality in society. It also develops actions to combat the gender pay gap, prevent and combat violence against women, and tackle gender stereotypes. (GSGE, n.d.).

Examples of other important legislation on the topic include the National Action Plan, underpinned by Law 4622/2019 which safeguards the rights for people with disabilities, and Law 3769–/2009, which establishes principles of equal treatment of men and women. Also, Laws 4491/2017 (Legal Recognition of Gender Identity) and 3304/2005, protect people against unequal treatment on the basis of sexual orientation. Law 4356/2015, article 1, also protects LGBTIQ+ population and guarantees rights of identity expression and legal marriage in Greece.

EDI have garnered significant attention within Greece's higher education system. However, the approach is inconsistent and does not follow a uniform path, evident in different policy enactment and implementation across universities. Regarding equality, several universities provide training to employees on equal rights in the workplace, and others have formulated strategies to decrease the gender pay gap while increasing the participation of women across all boards. Tourism educational institutions have also integrated the topic of gender equality in different curricula, such as by developing courses and seminars on Diversity, Interculturality and Gender Economic Inequality, and Sociology of Gender.

In the Greek tourism landscape one can find different initiatives on EDI specialised training. These initiatives focus on different aspects of training for inclusion, such as collaboration

with associations to develop inclusive practices, research with universities to understand the needs of different stakeholders, support for employment of minorities and people with disabilities, and programmes to increase the participation of women in the tourism sector. In the accommodation sector, it is more common to find training programmes for employees on different types of skills in EDI, such as training for use of inclusive language, awareness of neurodiversity needs, disability awareness and gender equality in the workplace.

All tourism subsectors have been implementing training programmes focused on EDI. These programmes are thorough, including the development of initiatives on inclusivity for people with disabilities, minorities, LGBTIQ+ persons and women. Training also focuses on enhancing local development, sustainability of the local population, training younger cohorts, inclusive recruitment and also diversity awareness. However, these training programmes are primarily found in large organisations, rather than in micro, small, and medium-sized organisations in Greece.

Research Findings	
Greece Training in EDI	
Most undertaken training (last 5 years)	Most desired training (next 5 years)
22.1% Conflict management	50.6% Mental Health Awareness
16.9% Culture of Dignity & Respect	42.9% Cultural Awareness
14.3% Cultural Awareness and Accessibility & Disability Awareness	49.4% Culture of Dignity & Respect

The survey with tourism and hospitality workers in Greece revealed that training courses in EDI have been higher in the topics of Conflict Management, Culture of Dignity and Respect, Cultural Awareness and Accessibility and Disability Awareness. Employees also indicated that the most desired training courses were Mental Health Awareness, Cultural Awareness and Culture of Dignity and Respect. The survey showed a lower level of training in 7 EDI skills (lower than 10%). However, most respondents of the survey were from the accommodation sector (58.67%), which might highlight the reality of this specific subsector.

Lecturers interviewed in Greece highlighted the need of having more skills training on topics related to EDI in both the vocational and training sector and in higher education, although universities have begun embedding topics especially in Human Resources Management and Hospitality Management courses. Modules such as Social Responsibility and Ethics were also cited, as well as Intercultural Awareness and Communication. However, they also identified barriers related to these topics, such as societal perceptions, attitudes and behaviours regarding minorities and changes in the demographics of diversity in the sector.

Best Practice: The Observatory to Combat Discrimination

The Observatory for Combating Discrimination is a structure of the National Centre for Social Research (NCSR) in Greece, that carries out research and studies at national and local levels. It also promotes networking between staff from support services with vulnerable groups subject to discrimination. The Observatory emphasises employment needs, fighting against discrimination and organises events to disseminate research and data and create more awareness on different forms of discrimination in the country.

The Observatory combines economic and technical, scientific, research, information and administrative activities with organised cooperation and partnerships in programmes at national and international levels. Some examples of programmes are:

- Combating Discrimination in Entrepreneurship: Women, Young Roma and Muslim Migrants (2013-2014)
  https://www.ekke.gr/ocd/?page_id=29

- Combating Discrimination in the Labour Market (2011-2012)

  https://www.ekke.gr/ocd/?page_id=27

- Establishment of an Observatory for Combating Discrimination (2010-2011)

  https://www.ekke.gr/ocd/?page_id=31

- Combating Multiple Discrimination in Greece: Promoting equality through active participation and policy-making (2016-2018)

  https://www.ekke.gr/ocd/?page_id=278

For more information: https://www.ekke.gr/ocd/?lang=en

Best Practice: The Boarding Pass to Autism

The Athens International Airport "Eleftherios Venizelos", created the "Boarding Pass to Autism", an educational programme created by an initiative of the Onassis Foundation and the airport management. This Programme aims to desensitise children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) to all aspects of flight travel, to train the children, parents and staff at the airport, and to familiarise them with boarding and flight procedures. Using the methodologies of social stories, the programme includes training designed with families and therapists, as well as a practical guide on how to interact with autistic people and address the difficulties they face.

For more information:
https://www.onassis.org/initiatives/onassis-special-education/boarding-pass-for-autism
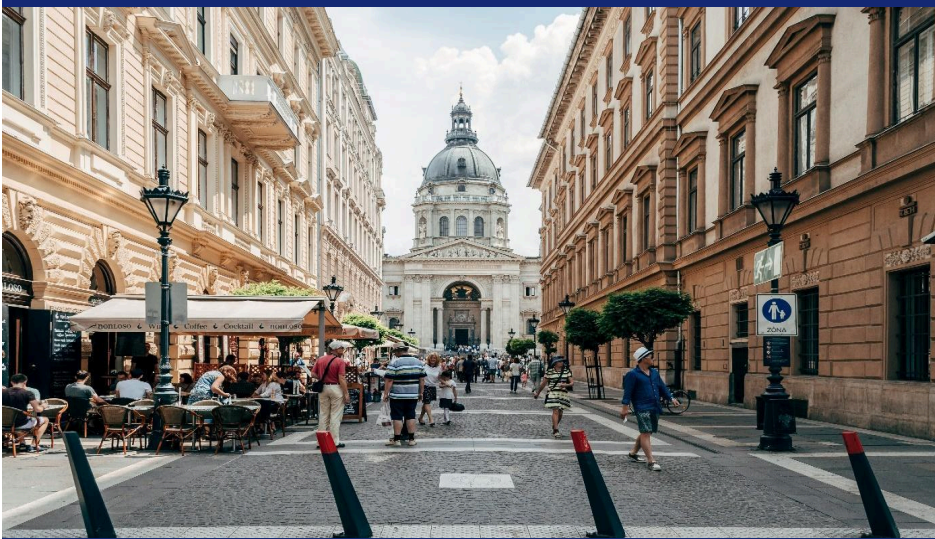
Hungary

Source: free copyright photo Unsplash.com (Budapest, Hungary, by Ljubomir Žarković)

Hungary follows a number of the European Union's EDI directives and initiatives. However, there is still a need to improve in the implementation of different policies and practices in the workplace. One example is the gender pay gap, a topic which has been widely debated. In 2021, women's gross hourly earnings in Hungary were 17.5% below those of men in Hungary, 5.2% lower than the EU average of 12.7% (Eurostat, n.d.). The gender pay gap was also identified in the latest European research results (EIGE, 2023), which shows that there is a lot of progress to be made to reduce the gap in gender equality. Another important aspect to highlight is the low number of studies on violence and sexual harassment in the workplace (Komiljovics, 2008; Juhász, 2021). According to the authors, these topics are difficult to discuss. Additionally, these issues have not been accurately measured in the country.

Furthermore, Hungary has implemented multiple initiatives to enhance social inclusion of minorities in the country. One of these is the Hungarian Roma Integration Strategy (2021-2030) (2021), which aims to improve inclusion of the Roma minority based on four pillars: education, employment, health and housing (Szociális Ágazati Portál, n.d.). The vulnerable situation of the Roma population in the country, such as difficulties in accessing education, social services, the labour market and health services, have also been part of discussions and initiatives both at national and local levels (Józsefvárosi Önkormányzat, 2023).

In education and training, Hungary has reduced the upper age limit of compulsory education from 18 to 16 years-old in 2011. This challenging response to tackling inequality has created further issues for the Roma population which had already been experiencing a decrease in study and work participation. In 2018, 68.4% of Roma young population aged 15-24 were classified as early school leavers, compared to 9.3% of non-Roma. Also, 40.1% of Roma youth aged 15-24 were considered not in education, employment or training, as compared to 9.1% of non-Roma in the same age group (Kollo & Sebok, 2019). This highlights

that inequalities exist in Hungary which that hinder social mobility, as vulnerable groups are less likely to attend formal education after this age (Polonyi, 2023). Initiatives have been developed across the country to tackle inequalities. Examples include education initiatives for Ukranian refugees and support for the participation of students with additional needs in education (Fatalin, 2004).

In Hungary the tourism and hospitality sector has also focused on modernising skills within the workforce, making careers more attractive. However, there is still a lack of emphasis on inclusivity and equality (Hungarian Tourism Agency, 2021). These topics are occasionally covered in tourism vocational and higher education, but not in-depth. Yet, more training and research on diversity and gender would improve workers retention and well-being.

Although data from Hungary contributed to the European survey results, an in-depth analysis was not possible, due to an unrepresentative sample. Further research on the topic, however, may indicate where training will play a fundamental role in tackling inequalities in the sector.

Research Findings

The educators in Hungary highlighted the importance of including diversity and inclusion in the vocational and higher education curricula in tourism and hospitality. The topics considered extremely important included accessibility awareness and training, intercultural awareness, well-being and inclusion of vulnerable groups in the economy. Interviewees noted that younger generations are exhibiting more inclusive and open attitudes and behaviour, and as a result, are more interested in debating these topics. They expect a focus on well-being in the workplace, and this can only be achieved through a conscious approach to providing better working conditions.

Furthering opportunities for younger vulnerable groups were also discussed by one of the lecturers working in a vocational school in an underprivileged area in Budapest. They highlighted the importance of having different supports in place, to support students' pathways in education. These supports include psychologist services, special needs teachers, and educators with experience in working with vulnerable groups. Furthering opportunities for early school leavers through training and certification would also provide workers with fundamental tools to advance in a career in the sector, contributing to a better future for this younger group.

Best Practice: The Social Justice Programme for the Roma Population of Józsefváros

The Józsefváros District in Budapest is the second large Roma community in Hungary. In 2023, the Social Justice Programme for the Roma Population of Józsefváros (2023-2028) was developed around 7 main goals:

- The establishment of a professional support office of equal opportunities and social justice
- Creating opportunities for women with special support for young women and mothers
- Culture and popular education
- Economic progress and employment
- Housing
- Education
- Healthcare

In 'Education', the programme focuses on increasing participation of the Roma population in skills development, providing qualifications and more opportunities for this group of society.

For more information:
https://jozsefvaros.hu/english/news-in-the-district/2023/11/the-jozsefvaros-municipality-launches-a-comprehensive-roma-programme/
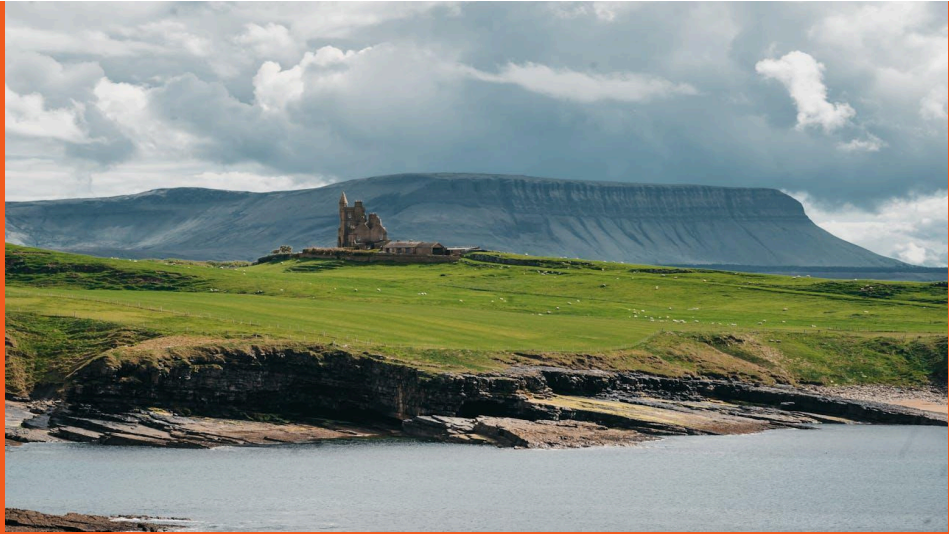
Ireland

Ireland's legislation protects workers from discrimination, ensuring they have equal rights in the workplace. Two pieces of legislation provide guidelines for equal treatment of employees: the Employment Equality Act (Ireland, 1998) and the Equal Status Act (Ireland, 2000). The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission is Ireland's national human rights and equality institution and protects citizens' rights. Ireland also has various EDI policies, programmes and strategies in place, including the National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017-2020 (Department of Justice and Equality, 2017); the National Travellers and Roma Inclusion Strategies I and II (2017 and 2024); The National LGBTIQ+ Inclusion Strategy 2019-2021 (Government of Ireland, 2019), and The Roadmap for Social Inclusion (2020).

One example of a vulnerable group addressed in different policies in Ireland are the Irish travellers, a minority group officially recognised by the Irish State in 2017 (HSE, n.d.). The 2022 Census identified 32,949 Irish Travellers living in Ireland. Historical inequalities and discrimination have led to the exclusion of this group in accessing education, healthcare and their participation in society. The National Strategy aims to improve the Irish traveller participation in education, guarantee employment opportunities and 'break the cycle of intergenerational poverty' (Gov.ie, n.d.).

The National Further Education and Training Strategy, Future FET: Transforming Learning 2020 - 2024 (Government of Ireland & SOLAS, 2020) emphasises the role of the FET sector in training socially disadvantaged learners for employment. The strategy seeks to generate jobs, provide learning pathways, foster active inclusion, promote lifelong learning, meet key skills gaps and encourage new delivery models. Another important policy is Ireland's National Skills Strategy (2016), which provides a blueprint for skills development designed to 'benefit all people living in Ireland, companies operating here or planning to establish here, and those hoping to work here' (Department of Education, 2023). One of its objectives focuses on active inclusion and support for engagement in both education/training and the workforce. The strategy also promotes lifelong learning, with a vision of having a quality

workforce, improving the well-being of the country and using skills to support economic and social development.

The primary Irish policy relating to tourism and hospitality People, Place and Policy: Growing Tourism to 2025 (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, 2015), lacks specific actions and key targets regarding equality and inclusion. In higher and further education, institutions in Ireland include diversity awareness, intercultural inclusion, gender equality and well-being, within their curricula. (Pantour, 2023)

Several NGOs and private organisations offer EDI training, and many make this training available to employees in the tourism and hospitality industry. The Cultural Diversity Strategy and Implementation Plan (Failte Ireland, 2004) recognises that the growth of international staff and overseas tourists in Ireland recognises the pressing need for cultural diversity training in the tourism workplace (Failte Ireland, 2005). However, although the document is important in recognising the diversity within the industry, it has not been reviewed since its completion 20 years ago. The landscape of migration, inclusion and equality in Ireland's tourism sector has significantly changed since then, indicating the need for EDI skills development to be addressed in future policy formulation.

Research Findings	
Ireland Training in EDI	
Most undertaken training (last 5 years)	**Most desired training (next 5 years)**
44.6% Bullying & Harassment Prevention	46.4% Neurodiversity Awareness & Inclusion
42.9% Diversity & Inclusivity	44.6% Conflict Management
41.1% Culture of Dignity & Respect	42.9% Cultural Awareness

The survey with tourism and hospitality workers in Ireland exhibited a higher uptake of training on Bullying and Harassment Prevention, Diversity and Inclusivity and Culture of Dignity and Respect. Employees indicated that the most desired training courses were Neurodiversity Awareness and Inclusion, Conflict Management and Cultural Awareness. The survey showed a higher-than-average level of EDI training compared to other surveyed countries (over 30% in 11 skills). However, there was a significantly higher number of respondents in the food and beverage (28.57%) and accommodation subsectors (28.57%), which might shed light on the needs of these specific subsectors.

The lecturers interviewed conveyed the need for more training on different topics in EDI, with a special focus on identifying and tackling gender inequalities and stopping bullying and harassment in the workplace, especially in the food and restaurant subsector. A lecturer noted that international workers in the sector are seen as catalysts for change, as ensuring their retention in the industry requires support and incentives.

Best Practice: The Adult Literacy for Life (ALL)

The Adult Literacy for Life (ALL, 2021) is a government national strategy that aims to equip adults with the literacy, numeracy and digital skills they need to thrive in society, leading to a fully inclusive and equitable economy and society. It also addresses social exclusion, as the 'link between literacy and equality and disadvantage is clear' (ALL, 2021, p. 8). Over 300,00 of adults in Ireland, representing 5.2% of the population, did not complete second level education. In addition, 900,000 adults, accounting for 17.%% of the population, do not have formal education beyond school level. Some of the actions outlined in the policy aim to launch a national campaign around literacy awareness; provide online training modules at local level for people with literacy needs; implement new Universal Design of Learning; develop and create continuous development frameworks for literacy practitioners, and establish core skills framework which allow learners to understand the necessary skills and the available learning paths to literacy.

For more information: https://www.adultliteracyforlife.ie/

Italy

Italy has legislations in place to tackle inequalities, and different policies focused on EDI to address existing gender inequality and other EDI related gaps society. According to Self-Perceived Discrimination at Work by EUROSTAT (2023), 7% of human health and social workers across the EU reported experiencing workplace discrimination in 2021. This included 5.23 million women who felt discriminated against, compared to a far fewer number of men, 3.63 million, who reported the same.

Gender discrimination is highlighted in different reports on Italian's progress in gender equality, including the Global Gender Gap Report (2023), and the World Economic Forum Annual Report (2022). Out of 146 countries ranked, Italy is placed as the 79th country for gender disparity. According to the Eurostat Gender Statistics highlights, the gender employment gap varies significantly across EU Member States. In 2023, Italy had the most significant gap (19.5%) while Finland had the lowest (0.2%). Within Italy itself, the gap between north and south represented the largest regional disparity in Europe. On one hand, the Northern province of Bolzano employed 79.5% of its residents aged 20 to 64. On the other, the Southern regions of Campania, Calabria, and Sicily, had the lowest employment rates in the EU with less than half of the working-age demographic being employed.

To address these issues, there are a series of policies in place that contain concrete actions to reduce the gender gap and increase female employment rates in the country. The Italian government also introduced the National Strategy on Gender Equality (2021). An important note from this document is that it also relates to the Covid-19 pandemic, addressing the deep economic and social crisis Italy has experienced during the pandemic, which also widened the gap between men and women in the workplace.

Italy's educational legislation also addresses various aspects of inclusion of students from different nationalities, social backgrounds, and with additional needs. It is important to note that Italy has a system that includes learners with disabilities in mainstream education. Indeed, according to the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, Italy is

the only country that has reached 99.6% of inclusion of learners in the European Union's European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education: Country information for Italy - Legislation and policy, n.d.). Additionally, the Italian government has established processes of inclusion of foreign learners, with social interventions that include different key actions for migrant's inclusion.

One support the Italian government has also made available is a strategy for rural and remote areas (European Network of Human Development, n.d.). By facilitating transport access, investment in infrastructure services and use of digital technologies the government aims to increase participation in rural areas.

From a tourism and hospitality perspective, the country has established the National Strategic Tourism Plan 2023-2027 (Senato de la Republica, 2023), to ensure inclusive and accessible travel experiences for all tourists. However, there is also a need to invest in training for staff on disability and inclusion. It is necessary to provide more investment to support migrants' inclusion (Fasone et al, 2023) and develop EDI skills (Rienda et al, 2024) in the sector.

Research Findings	
Italy Training in EDI	
Most undertaken training (last 5 years)	Most desired training (next 5 years)
49.1% Accessibility & Disability Awareness	61.8% Cultural Awareness
49.1% Conflict Management	50.9% Conflict Management
29.1% Gender Equality	47.3% Culture of Dignity & Respect

The survey with tourism and hospitality workers in Italy revealed a higher uptake of EDI training in the topics of Accessibility and Disability Awareness, Conflict Management and Gender Equality. The survey also indicated that the most desired training courses were Cultural Awareness, Conflict Management and Culture of Dignity and Respect. There was an average level of training in all EDI skills compared to other surveyed countries, with the lowest levels of training in Neurodiversity Awareness and Inclusion and Bullying and Harassment prevention. It also interestingly showed a high demand for training in almost all 12 skills surveyed, highlighting the significant level of interest in EDI topics.

Best Practice: The Gender Equality and Diversity Award of the Emilia-Romagna Region

The Gender Equality and Diversity Award of the Emilia-Romagna region was first introduced in 2015, as part of a framework law from 2014 in which the region strives to fight against gender discrimination and support more equality in organisations. It recognises private entities, associations and different bodies that implement effective practices to tackle gender inequality and create equal opportunities. Since 2017, the initiative supports innovation through targeted awards for organisations that combat gender discrimination. Since 2022, the prize was also extended to professional associations, schools, and universities.

Up to 2022, the GED has awarded 26 organisations, with the participation of 700 public and private entities. The project aims to promote replication and transferability of best practices to tackle gender inequalities in the workplace. It also creates a network of public and private organisations with good practices, encouraging sensitisation, and exchange of practices in multiple sectors of the economy.

For more information:
https://www.interregeurope.eu/good-practices/ged-gender-equality-and-diversity-award

Portugal

Source: free copyright image from Pexels.com (Porto's Boats by the Douro, by Armando Oliveira)

Portugal has been adopting different policies to strengthen EDI initiatives. The country's main policy to promote equality is the National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination (Portugal, 2018) that aims to promote equality and combat discrimination in different areas. It is also supported by three action plans with specific objectives: the promotion of activities for reducing gender inequalities between men and women; the prevention and combat of domestic violence and violence against women; and an action plan for combating discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, expression and sexual characteristics.

Combating discrimination and racism in Portugal has been a longstanding challenge, as it occurs on a generalised basis (Portugal, 2021a). The National Plan to Combat Racism and Discrimination 2021-2025 aims to reaffirm principles of fairness, combat discrimination and enact social justice to the Portuguese social structures. This plan involves a multisectoral effort, with different government departments, working groups and representatives from antiracist associations, Roma communities, and migrants' communities.

The National Strategy for the Inclusion of People with Disabilities 2021-2025 (Portugal, 2021b) provides additional key targets to promote the participation and the autonomy of people with disability. It also seeks to promote social inclusion through increasing participation of the population in all aspects of society. Another important initiative to promote inclusion and diversity is Portugal Digital (Portugal, 2023), that aims to deconstruct stereotypes within digital literacy, reducing the gap between men and women in the area, and ensuring employability for a diverse workforce.

In Education and Training, Portugal has made important progress in establishing a framework for inclusive education, seeking to provide accessible education for all students. The Review of Inclusive Education in Portugal (OECD, 2022) provides a perspective on major

issues faced in schools and contains actions for monitoring and evaluation, capacity building and school interventions in primary and secondary education.

In tourism and hospitality training and education, the national tourism agency, Turismo de Portugal, has been developing different programmes within the private and public sector, focusing on promoting EDI. Some of the related activities include: transforming the tourism education and training for inclusivity, ensuring access and equality among all students; including migrants and refugees in education and training, guaranteeing entrance and participation in training for skills development for the labour market; strengthening social responsibility of organisations, working in the tourism sector to develop a more diverse workforce, targeting specific vulnerable groups to increase their participation in training. Therefore, it aims to integrate different groups in the economy and society.

The Portuguese government is also preparing a new programme to support the tourism sector, aimed at training and integrating 1,000 immigrants and refugees, with an initial investment of 2.5 million euros. The initiative aims to respond to the labour shortage in the sector and to improve the conditions of integration of migrants in Portugal (República Portuguesa, 2024).

The plan aims to 'welcome professionals, or non-professionals, for a training and integration project, helping to improve the integration conditions of refugees and migrants in Portugal' (Público, 2024). The initiative will have the collaboration of Turismo de Portugal's network of hotel and tourism schools for training. Additionally, participants will have the opportunity to undertake internships in tourism companies.

Research Findings	
Portugal Training in EDI	
Most undertaken training (last 5 years)	**Most desired training (next 5 years)**
55.56% Conflict Management	54.71% Mental Health Awareness
26.54% Diversity & Inclusivity Training	48.65% Conflict Management
25.93% Accessibility & Disability Awareness	44.17% Culture of Dignity & Respect

A total of 528 Portuguese respondents participated in our survey, which informs this Research Findings section. Among tourism and hospitality workers in Portugal, the findings revealed that the most undertaken training in the past five years were Conflict Management, Diversity and Inclusivity Training and Accessibility and Disability Awareness. The data showed that less than 10% of participants had undergone training for EDI in Recruitment, Bullying and Harassment Prevention, and Neurodiversity Awareness and Inclusivity. When asked about EDI trainings they would like to participate in, Portuguese employees identified their most desired trainings as Mental Health Awareness, Conflict Management, and Culture of Dignity and Respect at Work.

The hospitality and tourism education specialists interviewed from Portugal highlighted how essential it is to embed EDI topics in education and training. Among training courses present in the vocational sector, Intercultural Communication, Diversity and Cultural Awareness, and Accessibility were cited. One of the lecturers noted the importance of teaching those topics as part of professional development in addition to being a social imperative, linked to citizenship. Interviewees also noted that significant efforts are needed to improve the integration of EDI in tourism and hospitality education. Having the right resources, teacher training and infrastructure is needed to accomplish this. Acknowledging and creating awareness of the value of a diverse workforce was also cited. Promoting an inclusive learning environment is essential for the social inclusion of people with disabilities. It involves understanding how to integrate individuals through the provision of supports.

Another educator highlighted the importance of considering a dual perspective when training for EDI skills in the industry to include training for both tourists and tourism businesses.

Best Practice: Refutur Programme

The Refutur Programme is a training programme that trains migrant workers and refugees to work in the tourism sector. The Programme was created in partnership between the High Commission for Migration, Turismo de Portugal and the Council of Ministers. The programme seeks to develop skills within a diverse workforce and contribute to a fairer and more inclusive society. It also aims to strengthen social responsibility of organisations, with a training programme that develops professional skills such as communication, interpersonal relations and Portuguese language. The programme provides internships in hotels and restaurants, emphasising practical learning in a work context. It targets unemployed people and migrants in vulnerable situations, with the objective of facilitating their (re)entry into active professional life.

For more information:
https://migrant-integration.ec.europa.eu/news/refutur-programme-trains-refugees-and-migrants-work-portugals-tourism-sector_en

Spain

Spain has multiple policies addressing equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace. The legislation tackles discrimination by promoting inclusive opportunities for men and women, the inclusion of people with disabilities and minority groups in society, and advocating for the rights of the LGBTIQ+ community, migrants and minorities.

Although the government of Spain has diverse legislation, in general, regions have similar policies, and they have the power to integrate EDI into local policies. The regions also have the autonomy to develop their policies and measures, to take account of regional differences. In education and training, a national framework guarantees equality, diversity and inclusion in the Organic Law of Education (Spain, 2020). This law establishes people's fundamental rights regardless of genre, race, origin, sexual orientation, religion, age or social conditions. Education providers must ensure and promote diversity and inclusion in their educational communities.

Four examples of regions that have different approaches to gender equality, inclusion, cultural diversity and inclusive education are Andalusia, the Basque Country, Catalonia and the Community of Madrid. These regions have made strides in implementing gender equality policies, for example, and have also developed strategic plans and legislation to promote equality, the inclusion of minorities and people with disabilities, tackling discrimination and creating educational opportunities for everyone.

The Andalusia region has developed key EDI policies, with a particular focus on gender equality and the inclusion of people with disabilities. Andalusia promotes effective equality in the educational system with the l:aw: Promotion of Gender Equality in Andalusia (Junta de Andalucia, 2007). This law promotes co-education and the integration of diversity and tolerance into curriculum content and teacher training. The region also has achieved higher levels of inclusive education programmes in schools. The Andalusia region has a comprehensive action plan for people with disabilities that promotes inclusion in all aspects of life, especially at work (Junta de Andalucia, 2011). Another important aspect of Andalusia's framework for equality, diversity and inclusion is the Esfuerza Plan (Regional Government of

Andalusia, n.d.), which champions values such as respect, responsibility, autonomy and peaceful coexistence, offering equal opportunities and a framework of non-discrimination in the Andalusian education system. The Andalusia community, as well as the Basque country (Basque Women's Institute, n.d., Regional Government of Andalusia, n.d.), have developed an ambitious agenda to enhance gender equality, by setting targets to reduce the gender pay gap and increase the number of women across all board levels.

The Basque Country is a benchmark for gender equality and disability policies, with a specialised and advanced approach to inclusion in education and the labour market While the Basque Country does not have an Education Act, it has a Vocational Training Act (Government of the Basque Country, 2015), that aims to integrate diverse groups and promote equal opportunities. For this, it developed strategies aiming to: make training accessible to all, promote measures and developing training offerings to support the integration of disadvantaged groups; ensure that citizens have autonomy in managing their training and professional careers; identify and facilitate training and career paths; and overcome obstacles that prevent groups and people in disadvantaged social groups to access training. They also increased the quota of adults participating in training actions. The Basque Country also has a Framework Plan for the Development of an Inclusive School (Basque Regional Government, n.d.), which proposes a shift from special education needs to addressing barriers to learning and participation. This will be achieved through four actions: coexistence, structural actions, autonomy of schools and the academic community, and promoting inclusivity in the education system.

In Catalonia, the Equality and Non-Discrimination Law (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2020) is essential for promoting gender equality, minority inclusion, and cultural diversity. Catalonia is also recognised for its multicultural approach, thanks to its linguistic diversity and high immigration levels, which further highlight the importance of its inclusion policies. The Catalan Education Act (Parlament de Catalunya, 2009) delves into creating an inclusive and equitable education system with the following principles: equality and equal opportunities; multilingualism; attention to diversity and lifelong learning; and other holistic approaches to promote formal and non-formal learning (Parlament de Catalunya, 2009). Another critical approach of the Catalan government is to develop co-education with a gender perspective, aligned with creating a curriculum with co-education, the organisation of educational centres with co-education, a plan to reduce violence in school and a plan for sexual and reproductive rights in education.

The Community of Madrid, as Spain's economic and political centre, has a significant influence on national and local policies. It's approach to education offers parents flexibility in choosing schools and projects for their children, supported by the Master Law on Freedom of Educational Choice (Government of Spain, 2020). The Community of Madrid also emphasises attention to individual differences, focusing on flexible learning environments where they can be adjusted to accommodate students' diverse needs (Government of Community of Madrid, 2023). The Gender Identity and Expression Act (Comunidad de Madrid, 2023) and its equality policies make the Community of Madrid particularly relevant in the field of gender equality and transgender rights. The region is pioneering the inclusion of transgender people in the labour market and promotion of access to inclusive public services.

Another important example of inclusiveness in education is present in the Autonomous Community of Castilla la Mancha. The Community has in place a Plan for equality and coexistence, and a Strategic Plan for Emotional Intelligence and Socio-emotional well-being (Regional Government of Castilla-La Mancha, n.d.). These specific plans are tailored to improve mental health and well-being in the educational community, focusing on four main areas: providing teachers with tools for the prevention of suicidal behaviours, addictions; raising awareness in the educational community about the risk of suicide to offer resources to prevent it; raising awareness of the risks of addictions and offering tools to prevent them; and promoting comprehensive affective- sexual education. The material prepared for this plan envisages actions such as preparing and disseminating material teaching resources, creating a resource bank for the topics and developing training actions.

In tourism and hospitality, Spain has also been promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion through different types of training. The main strategy for tourism in Spain is Spain's Sustainable Tourism Strategy 2030 (2020). The main document has various initiatives to promote EDI and sustainability; for example, EDI is an essential strategy pillar. The policy also aims to implement training and skills development initiatives, which include specific competencies on managing cultural diversity, catering for different needs of tourists and influencing the training of professionals to address challenges in inclusion.

In the public sector, different measures and public policies were created, locally and nationally, to develop more training activities for EDI in the sector. Some of the ongoing actions are international cooperation, promotion of interdisciplinary competency development, support of specific target groups and professional development for teachers. Initiatives also exist in the private sector to enhance the development of EDI skills in the workplace, across different organisations and tourism subsectors.

In the private sector, large tourism organisations have also recognised the importance of creating work environments to promote equal opportunities, non-discrimination, and diversity and inclusion of tourism professionals. This private sector commitment reflects an understanding of the need to build equitable and diverse work environments, which is also impacting the education system in the Spanish tourism sector.

Research Findings	
Spain Training in EDI	
Most undertaken training (last 5 years)	**Most desired training (next 5 years)**
25.8% Gender Equality	38.7% Conflict Management
22.6% Conflict Management	26.9% Mental Health Awareness
18.3% Cultural Awareness, Accessibility & Disability Awareness, and Diversity & Inclusivity	23.7% Gender Equality, Cultural Awareness, and Neurodiversity Awareness & Inclusion

Our survey with tourism and hospitality workers in Spain showed that the most frequently undertaken training in the past five years was in the areas of Gender Equality, Cultural Awareness, Accessibility and Disability Awareness and Diversity and Inclusivity. It also illustrated that the most desired training courses were Conflict Management, Mental Health Awareness, Gender Equality, Cultural Awareness and Neurodiversity Awareness and Inclusion. The survey also revealed that Spain needs to advance in more EDI training, as 6 out of the 12 researched skills had a lower rate of uptake compared to other countries (less than 10%). This could also reflect the reality of two subsectors, as response from the food and beverage (38.04%) and Accommodation (28.26%) were notably higher than the other subsectors surveyed.

The lecturers interviewed in Spain recognised the need for and importance of developing more training in EDI skills, through different modules and curriculum in an array of disciplines. They highlighted differences in how universities have been working on these topics, providing visibility to different types of inclusive needs in tourism. One of the lecturers highlighted a significant shift in reflecting EDI in recent years, attributing this to the recognition of diversity and inclusion in society, as well as the recent awareness-raising campaigns in the country. Among different practices in the sector, experts highlighted the adoption of inclusive recruitment policies, promotion of diversity in teams, cultural awareness, diversity training for employees and accessibility awareness. The inclusion of local communities and ethnic minorities was also emphasised.

Best Practice: The FRIDA Project

The FRIDA project was launched between 2014 and 2017 and aimed to raise awareness and improve the training of teachers and the educational community as key social agents in the education of children and young people. Following the European Commission's 2013 Progress Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity, and receiving additional funding from the Autonomous Provinces, the Project was implemented in schools and focused on creating safe spaces for younger students to develop their identities.

The main focus of the project was to provide training for the prevention and detections of racism and xenophobia to 14000 education professionals. material was also disseminated to a broader audience along with the provision of workshops, and the publication of a manual to support the prevention of racism, xenophobia and intolerance in schools.

For more information:https://migrant-integration.ec.europa.eu/integration-practice/spain-frida-project_en

Best Practice: Guide to Help Universities to Include Design for All in their Educational Programmes

The ONCE Foundation, in collaboration with the Conference of Rectors of Spanish Universities (Crue Universidades Españolas) and the Royal Board on Disability, has launched a series of university guides, including one specifically for tourism, designed to integrate the concept of "design for all" and accessibility in the academic programmes of some twenty bachelor's and master's degrees.

These guides aim to instil an understanding of diversity and inclusive skills from the very beginning of training, are a bridge between academia and the critical need to prepare students to address the diverse needs of people when conceiving, designing and delivering environments, goods or services. This joint commitment, provides a means for professionals to acquire not only knowledge, but also the sensitivity and skills to create a more accessible and understanding world.

For more information:
https://www.fundaciononce.es/es/noticia/fundacion-once-publica-una-serie-de-guias-para-ayudar-las-universidades-incluir-el-diseno

The Netherlands

Source: free copyright image from Pexels.com (Breda, the Netherlands, by Yailan Tran)

The Netherlands is recognised as a progressive country regarding social practices in inclusivity and diversity in the workplace. The country has been constantly ranked high in global surveys measuring different aspects of well-being of individuals, which is also extended to the workplace (OESO, 2020). The Netherlands has also ranked as one of the most diverse, equitable and inclusive workplaces in the world (Kantar's Inclusion Index, 2022). The Dutch government looks to improve diversity in government parties and ministries. This is highlighted in the *National Action Plan for Greater Diversity in Higher Education and Research* (Government of the Netherlands, 2020).

The Netherlands has different legislation regarding gender equality and LGBTIQ+ policy plans. There is no national action plan in the country focused on gender equality, but progress is monitored by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science to ensure and assess progress in women's participation and emancipation in society (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, 2021). The approach to gender mainstreaming in the Netherlands focuses on compliance instead of inclusion goals, and an ex-ante gender impact assessment is required by law when developing policies. Training for awareness-raising activities, however, is limited. There is a need to focus and coordinate gender mainstreaming actions to progress especially in interested identities in the country (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, 2021).

Regarding training and education, the Netherlands has a national action plan to improve diversity and inclusion in higher education (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, 2020). The plan promotes inclusivity and diversity in research, work environment and provide opportunities for everyone to fulfil their potential. -To achieve this, there are different actions in separate levels, such as data collection, allocation of resources, building support structures, and promote collective and cooperative actions to tackle inequalities.

The Dutch vocational and education training system (VET) is developing an integrative approach to education, preparation for the labour market and active citizenship. There are

also different actions in place to design learning-by-doing approaches in schools' practices. An example includes designing education activities and taking into consideration different social and religious backgrounds (CEDEFOP, 2022).

EDI in the Netherlands' tourism and hospitality sectors have become increasingly important in the past years. However, it still needs an integrative strategy and approach. There is an increased number of initiatives present in different policies, reports, EU initiatives and working groups on the topic (Bencivenga et al, 2021). A few aspects indicated as barriers to advancement on the topic in tourism education in the Netherlands are the response on addressing challenges encountered by under-represented groups, the need to integrate inclusivity in the curriculum in programmes, as well as including minorities perspectives in research. Diversity and inclusion, although seen as important topics in the training sector, also require alternative initiatives, as the curriculum currently focuses in two specific areas: the human resources perspectives and customer behaviour (Madera et al, 2021).

Although data from the Netherlands contributed to the European survey results, an in-depth analysis was not possible, resulting in an unrepresentative sample. Further research on the topic, however, may point out directions where training will play a fundamental role in providing change in how to tackle inequalities in the sector.

Research Findings
Interviewed lecturers from the Netherlands shared barriers and facilitators to integrating EDI in curricula in higher education and training in tourism and hospitality. They highlighted the importance of fostering true inclusion through various initiatives. They also communicated the importance of addressing the potential challenges students may face when attending training, and how EDI needs to be seen as a priority. Examples on how to embed EDI topics in the curriculum were given, such as incorporating case-studies and discussions. They also emphasised the need for more robust EDI training for lecturers through approaches such as peer learning groups, providing curated EDI teaching resources and linking EDI training to performance evaluations and incentives._x000D_
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Benefits resulting from EDI training for professionals in the sector were also identified, such as creating greater empathy and cross-cultural skills, a higher employee satisfaction and talent attraction, and alignment with growing societal expectations. However, lecturers also noted that the sector is lagging behind other economic sectors in embracing EDI, and that there is a need to ensure that EDI related initiatives are authentic rather than token gestures.

Best Practice: Shaping Diversity and Inclusion in VET through Action

The Shaping Diversity and Inclusion in VET through Action Programmes is an evidence-based initiative supported by the Dutch government, that aims to support local pilot projects in designing learning-by-doing approaches and evaluating outcomes to promote educational interventions in the Netherlands. Its goal is to tackle inequalities and promote diversity and inclusion by integrating democratic principles into formal classroom lessons, linking learning experiences, personal life, and practical experiences. The project aims to understand how VET schools could benefit from having a diverse community of students in a co-learning process with diverse classrooms.

Since its inception in 2022, initiative has seen strong participation from schools which have, proposed solutions to shape diversity in school and build a community grounded in inclusive principles.

For more information:
https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news/netherlands-shaping-diversity-and-inclusion-vet-through-action

3- A GUIDE ON HOW TO IMPLEMENT EDI PRACTICES IN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY

Promoting an inclusive work environment is an important step from an organisational point of view, as it can bring multiple benefits, such as innovation, the development of trust, and retention of employees. Implementation of EDI strategies and practices also improves decision-making and relationships while increasing productivity and engagement. The lack of inclusive practices can lead to mistrust, shortage of staff and talents, and have a negative effect on employees' well-being (Chaudhry et al, 2021; Akpa et al, 2021). Implementing EDI practices can benefit employees and employers, emphasise human-centred values, reduce inequalities, improve lives and promote societal advancements.

In tourism and hospitality, an increasing number of studies are focusing on the implementation of EDI practices in organisations. The studies investigate, for example, the implementation of practices in different subsectors, from a managerial and leadership perspective (Russen et al, 2023; Tracey et al, 2023). Other studies analyse EDI through a lens of gender equality and explore women's progress in addressing the pay gap, occupying leadership roles and developing entrepreneurship in tourism (Mooney, 2020; Ali et al, 2022; Guillet et al, 2019), while other studies investigate discriminatory behaviours and establishing decent working conditions for the workforce (Kim et al, 2022; Wang & Cheung, 2024; Baum, 2018; Zhou et al, 2022). These topics are not exclusive to the tourism sector, but they are evolving topics in organisational and human resource management research worldwide. The increasing number of studies in the sector highlights the importance EDI has been given in recent years. This shift can be attributed to the development of new approaches and mindsets, changes in corporate social responsibility policies and practices, increased focus on workers' well-being during and after the Covid-19 pandemic, and the high levels of turnover in the industry.

Important aspects of promoting inclusive work environments include advancing practices in gender equality, work-life balance, tackling discriminatory behaviour, bullying and harassment in the workplace, promoting effective inclusion of minorities and developing intercultural awareness. The interviews with educators conducted for this project demonstrate the integration of EDI in education and training curricula, as well as the importance of continuing to develop EDI practices in the workplace. Tourism and hospitality businesses are also increasingly focused on developing sustainable practices such as incorporating corporate social sustainability goals, enhancing well-being in the communities, and involving employees in the organisation's activities and values (Dangy & Petrick, 2021; Saarinen, 2021; Camilleri, 2013).

Nevertheless, developing new practices requires cultivating a mindset of change. This means that building an inclusive culture, sustainable social practices, and responsible and inclusive leadership and management practices are essential to achieve success in

developing EDI strategies. This chapter seeks to provide a roadmap for developing EDI practices in the workplace with a change management approach that can be implemented in organisations in the tourism and hospitality sector. This chapter also includes a range of resources including tools, websites and learning material to assist in developing inclusions, tackling inequality and promoting decent work and well-being.

3.1- DEVELOPING CHANGE STRATEGIES IN THE WORKPLACE

The first step in developing new strategies to embed EDI practices in the workplace is an analysis of required changes. It is essential to identify what the organisations goals, the guiding principles and the organisational culture. These steps are needed to understand how embedding new EDI practices will promote a better workplace environment.

Organisational change can be interpreted as 'the methodological process of guiding the organisation to fruition' (Harvard Business School, n.d.). There are two types of changes common in organisation development: adaptive changes, where there are small incremental changes developed by human resources and managers to develop new practices in the workplace, and transformational changes, which are more extensive and can bring transformations across a whole organisation, impacting all processes and people.

Transformational changes are the most difficult to achieve, as they requires more time, effort, and resources. According to Chapman, 'transformational change in an organisation requires a basic shift of attitudes, beliefs and cultural values' (Chapman, 2002, p. 16). The readiness for change is also an important topic when discussing the need for transformation in organisational development. Studies have shown correlations between the employees' readiness for change and the sense of self-efficacy.t Employees with skills and knowledge to lead changes are more prone to involve themselves and other employees in change, and lead the organisational development processes (Chapman, 2002; Kuntz & Jones, 2012).

Therefore, transformational change may be better achieved if organisations can identify factors that guide and motivate changes, with goals, strategies and behavioural actions (Kuntz & Jones, 2012).

Important steps to develop change in organisations encompass the following:

- Identify what type of change is needed: does the organisation already have a culture of valuing inclusion? If so, does it need to improve in some areas? Does the organisation need a new transformational mindset, or is the organisation a new venture that wants to align with inclusive and equality policies? These questions need to be asked to identify if adaptive or transformational change is needed.
- Identify what aspects need to change: this can be done through discussions and employee evaluations. It can be identified through employee morale, productivity increases or decreases, the organisation's competitiveness, the level of turnovers, and customers/clients' evaluation.

- Measure what needs to be changed: several authors identify how measurement is an essential step in providing the needed information about change (Harvard Business Review, 2021; Errida and Loft, 2021). When it comes to EDI, confidential surveys are also an important step to provide this information. Benchmarking is another approach that can produce significant metrics for change.

- Choose the right methodology: there are different types of change management models that can be useful tools to identify needs and develop practical steps for including EDI practices in the workplace. The chosen methodology must be the one that best works for the organisation size or needs (for example, for incremental or adaptive changes, there are different methodologies that can be used including good practices development and assessing specific needs).

- Develop a change management strategic plan: the plan should include all steps to develop the required change, from the first assessment steps to the cyclical re-evaluation of the changes needed. The strategic plan will guide organisations through the process, in developing steps, accountability, timeframe for changes, dissemination of results, and assessing the need for other changes.

- Develop training: training is not the only approach that can be used, but it is an essential step to develop EDI awareness in the workplace.

- Develop transformational leadership training: although leaders are not the only people that are needed in the development of inclusive practices, they are essential for the success of any change management or EDI strategic plan. They are responsible for leading and developing actions guided by values. Furthermore, they are considered models for the organisation. Studies also show significant impact of leaders on employees' performance (Groenewalfd, 2024; Martins, 2020).

- Re-evaluate needs: re-evaluation of strategies is a cyclical process and is necessary for effective change management. When re-evaluation does not occur, past and additional changes will need to be addressed in the future, requiring more resources.

Although this section highlights the necessary steps for undertaking change, organisations must also consider additional factors such as financial, human, material or technological, and the strategic alignment of leaders with the goals. Without the right resources, change strategies might fail, or lack the necessary evaluation and training for successful implementation. This chapter provides a range of resources and tools that can be used to implement EDI-related changes within organisations.

3.2- METHODOLOGY: EFFECTIVE CHANGE MANAGEMENT MODELS

An effective way to promote and implement EDI practices is to develop strategies based on change management methodologies. They provide a structured approach to undertaking complex transformations.

Change management can be defined as 'the process of continually renewing an organisation's direction, structure and capabilities, to serve the ever-changing needs of external and internal costumers' (Moran and Brightman, 2001, p.111) . Transforming an

organisational culture requires embedding new models that may not be readily accepted by or familiar to employees. Different techniques can be used to guide organisational change. Those change management methodologies or tools can stimulate increased productivity, create a positive work environment, and improve communication, preparing employees for change and providing tools for its implementation.

According to Errida & Loft (2021), change management models can serve as a facilitator to lead change efforts by:

'Determining the specific processes and steps to follow; Illustrating the various factors influencing change; Determining the levers used to succeed in the change management process' (Errida & Loft, 2021, p. 2)

They provide steps to embed of EDI in the workplace and to take account of necessary cultural change such as diversity management, inclusion of workers and, gender equality management. Here are a few examples of methodologies/change management models that can be used in the process of embedding EDI practices in the workplace.

The Lewin's Linear model

Lewin's linear model is considered one of the foundations for change management. It comprises a 3-step change model: unfreezing, making the change, and refreezing with the new behaviour. It is also a model that indicates that to change people, individuals need to have experienced change or dissatisfaction with their status quo. With new changes, people can see the gap between what exists and what will exist (Pryor et al, 2008).

First step, Unfreeze: this is the phase where the organisation must prepare to initiate change. The organisation can communicate change in different ways to ensure that employees understand why changes are necessary, and how they are happening.

Second step, Change: this is the phase where the organisation starts to develop the changes, with a set plan and strategies. In this phase, communication is also an important step, and it is also important to address barriers (such as resistances to change).

Third step, Refreeze: when change is embraced, and it is internalised in the organisation, the 'refreeze' phase starts. In this phase, is important to cyclically evaluate new needs for change, and monitor progress of changes.

Step 1
Unfreeze

Step 3
Refreeze

Step 2
Change

Adapted from: Sheikh, 2021

Prosci's ADKAR Model

This model was developed by Prosci's founder, Jeff Hiatt, after studying the change patterns of more than 700 organisations. This change management model focuses on shifting individuals' mindsets, with five individual outcomes or stages for change. Among the actions that could be taken to achieve change according to Adkar model of change are:

Figure 12: ADKAR Model
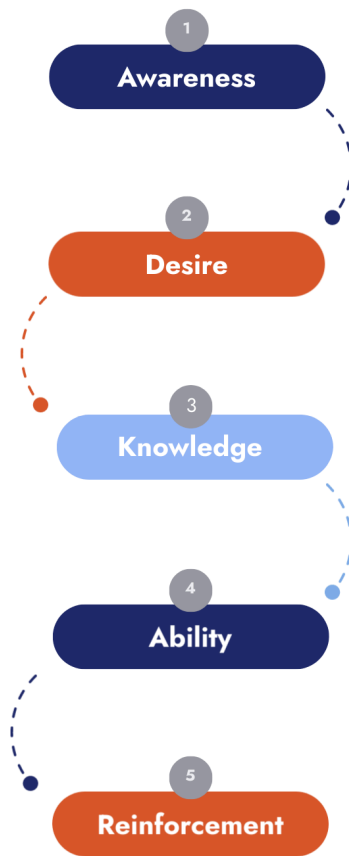
Adapted from: Human Capital Hub, n.d.

- **Step 1 - Create awareness**
    - o Address why a change is needed, and explain to the team/individuals the risks of not changing;
    - o Identify business drives and opportunities by taking this chance;
    - o Focus attention to most the important reasons for change;
    - o Communicate when there is a problem.

- **Step 2 - Create Desire**
    - o Communicate benefits for adopting change, with a strong employee involvement in discussing and creating solutions for it;
    - o Create incentive programmes aligned with the change;
    - o Promote personal engagement by coaches;
    - o Choose champions that can advocate and help with the goals.

- **Step 3 - Create knowledge**
    - Learn and promote new skills and provide employees with adequate training;
    - Think as a team about how to acquire skills to change and perform after change;
    - Fill skills gaps and make them useful and aligned to work outcomes;
    - Share information with sessions, informative reading, and videos, providing additional resources when needed

- **Step 4 - Create the ability (action)**
    - Put knowledge into action via training, coaching and support;
    - Create a new governance framework;
    - Adjust processes and policies;
    - Put in practical small actions that can make a change (diversity awareness, emailing, communicating with others);
    - Set achievable and realistic goals and stagger them through the change;
    - Adjust processes accordingly to fit them with the change;

- **Step 5 - Create the reinforcement**
    - Change must be sustained and reinforced with revaluation and new steps again, if needed;
    - Define a rewards or recognition system, to generate internal satisfaction;
    - Review performances to confirm desired results, for example documenting lessons learned, and outcomes from the adopted best practices;
    - Keep channels of communication open, sharing successes.

(adapted from https://www.proscieurope.co.uk/thought-leadership/the-three-phases-of-change-prepare-manage-and-sustain)

The PDCA/Deming Cycle

The PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) or Deming cycle is a widely used method in change management. It was created in the 1950s by W. Edward Deming, who proposed a business process that should be analysed and measured to identify variations. This cycle is widely known and used in change management for continuous and effective improvement based on four main elements:

Plan: assess the need for change by developing a change management plan, outlining strategies, timelines and support available for the proposed changes.

Do: assess/implement the change management by planning and executing activities, communicating with stakeholders and supporting employees with training. Communication is crucial to the success of this phase.

Check: organisations must evaluate progress and impact of the change initiative by monitoring performance indicators and understand planned outcomes to understand causes. It is also in this phase that new strategies and identification of new areas for improvement must be made.

Act: take corrective actions based on findings, adjust the change management plan, and integrate successful changes to procedures. This phase involves continuous improvement and updating strategies based on lessons learned.

Figure 13: PDCA Cycle
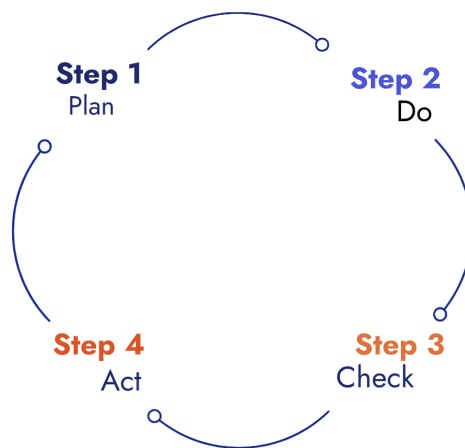
Adapted from: Aggarwal, 2020

The McKinsey 7S Model

The McKinsey 7S framework model dates back in the 1970s, created by business consultants Robert Waterman and Tom Peters. This framework aims to map seven factors that can lead to change and improvement in organisations. If there is an element that needs to have more balance, all the other elements are impacted. This model values the importance of a change culture to impact the organisation and guide it towards change.

This framework consists of 7 elements and is divided into 'Hard S' and 'Soft S' elements:

- Hard elements: they are influenced by leadership and management, and include Strategy, Structure and Systems.
- Soft elements: they are culture-driven, and include shared-values, style, staff and skills.

Elements:

- Strategy: the plan the organisations create for successful change implementation;

- Structure: the structure the company, or the chain of command to create a sense of employee accountability;

- Systems: the infrastructure of the organisation that establishes flows to the decision-making;

- Skills: the capabilities and competencies to enable employees to achieve objectives, learned through training;

- Style: the management style that exists in the organisation, affecting employee satisfaction and ability to promote change;

- Staff: the human resources of the organisation, the size of the organisation, and motivations. Rewards also refer to an established system for recognising workers talent and ability to promote change and/or innovate;

- Shared values: considered the core values of an organisation, this refers to the mission, objectives, and values that form the foundation of organisations, aligned with elements for effectiveness within the workplace.

Figure 14: McKinsey 7S Model
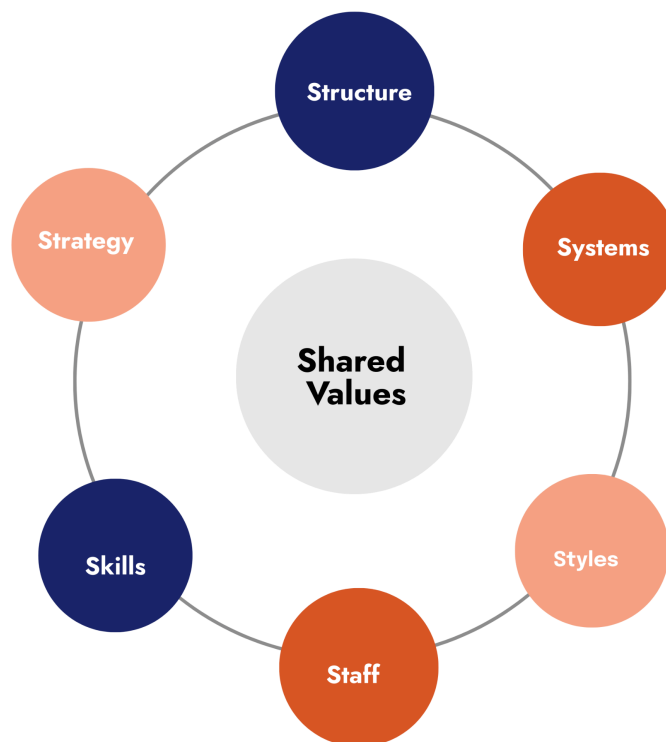
Adapted from: Sheikh, 2021

Kotter's Change Management Theory

This theory was developed by John Kotter, a professor at Harvard Business School, in 1995. This model has 8 steps to lead change, analysing individuals' capacity for improving their chances of success:

- Step 1 - Create urgency: the organisation needs to want the change and develop a sense of urgency around this need. This can create motivation to start to move things. In this phase, it is possible to identify threats and examine opportunities;

- Step 2 - Form a Powerful Coalition: people need to understand and be convinced that change is necessary. Leadership needs to get support from the key people leading this process in the organisation;

- Step 3 - Create a vision for change: linking the concepts to an overall and clear vision can help understand what it is needed to do. Giving directives and creating a strategy are important elements to achieve this;

- Step 4 - Communicate the vision: Communication needs to be embedded in every step by recurringly discussing the change vision. Stakeholders' concerns must be addressed openly in the organisation;

- Step 5 - Remove obstacles: There must be continuous feedback on obstacles that present constraints in organisations;

- Step 6-Creating short-term wins: creating quick wins during the process is important for demonstrating progress. In this step, organisations can develop a reward system to be put in place for employees championing change;

- Step 7- Consolidating gains: in this step, it is important to achieve continuous improvement by highlighting successful stories and individual experiences;

- Step 8-Anchoring Change in the Corporate Culture: Sharing successful stories related to change initiatives plays a key role in embedding change within the organisation and highlighting support for change from the organisation's leaders. (PortalCT.gov, n.d.).

Figure 15: Kotter Model
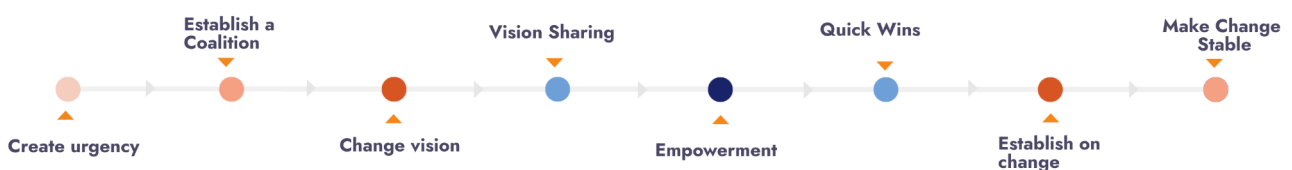
Adapted from Sheikh, 2021

Change Management frameworks/models and theories are helpful in providing the necessary knowledge for procedures that should be put in place for change in the organisation. Embedding EDI in the workplace requires steps and plans that involve all members. These models provide different ideas on how to start the change, and the steps

necessary to achieve it, leading to better results in transforming enterprises for future and current changes.

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Practical tip

Choosing a change management model might be a difficult task. There is a need to ask questions about your goals and what you want to achieve before choosing the best model for your organisation. A few of these questions are:

- What do you want to do with change? What are the objectives? Is it for improving well-being and reputation, increasing profit, or expanding the talents in the organisation? The model you choose should monitor the goals and progress you want to achieve.

- How comprehensive are the changes and impact you want to make? The model you choose should reflect the scope of changes you wish to accomplish.

- Does your employee already recognise the need for change? Are they on the same page as management? Accepting change is a process, so you need to consider this in the process of choosing the right model.

- What strategies do you think are needed? What would be most beneficial? Think about how you see your organisation and how your experience can help in choosing the right model.

 (adapted from: Walkme (n.d.). How do you know what change model is right for your organisation? https://change.walkme.com/how-do-you-know-what-change-model-is-right-for-your-organization/)

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3.3- DEVELOPING A CHANGE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Creating a change management plan is essential for change implementation in organisations. With a plan, potential obstacles can be identified, a clear communication plan that benefits the organisation created, and misunderstandings about why, how, and who is responsible for these changes can be addressed. Potential risks can also be recognised and effective mitigation strategies provided, improving performance.

In tourism and hospitality organisations, specific factors, such as technological advancement for guest and clients' services, can help service providers to innovate and offer a better customer experience. With an effective change management plan, it is possible to adapt to challenges successfully and increase the ability of enterprises to compete. According to Hristova et al. (2019), a change management plan is crucial for tourism businesses.

The key elements to develop a plan must include the following steps:

- Step 1-Identifying need for change: There must be a need for change. Organisations can assess their current needs, through surveys, internal meetings, and interviews with employees. Once this need is identified, then it is necessary to define the goals.

- Step 2-Defining clear goals/strategy: In this phase, it is important to understand the challenges and define what the goals and objectives of the management plan are. The SMART graphic helps in this process, as it can be used in a tangible way to move forward to implement a plan. The plan should outline clear methods for communicating the change to the organisation and provide support to help those affected by the change adapt to it. Goals should also have Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which will make it easier to ensure the change results in the desired outcomes.

- Step 3 - Communicate about the plan: The plan should be shared with teams and the organisation. Communication is key as the involvement of employees during the whole process is crucial for the success of the outcomes.

- Step 4 - Create the plan: With the assessment in place, and goals set, the change plan can be created. This should include key elements such as:

    o A checklist of actionable tasks, with included actions, a timeline to complete these tasks, and the people involved;

    o Create a list of training related to the change topics for staff, with a list of tools used to support changes. Training could be courses, but also seminars, workshops, group activities, or any other learning activity.

- Step 5-Executing the plan: While executing the plan, it is important to keep clear communication and transparency of the process with employees. A feedback process could be established as well as a system for rewarding or championing the implemented changes and achieved goals.

- Step 6 - Reinforcing the plan: Acknowledging milestones and also reinforcing the plan through the process are important steps in achieving change. Coordinating the different initiatives in different departments, and allocating resources are also important steps, as well as continuously articulating connections and changing the corporate structure as necessary (Histrova, 2019).

Change management plans also need appropriate measurement tools, which are extremely helpful in tracking and monitoring success. When defining key performance indicators, there is a need to:

- Align KPI with goals;
- Establish a monitoring framework, with a schedule for review and progress updates;
- Conduct regular feedback with employees involved in the changes;
- Identify threats and indicate adjustments while addressing challenges and opportunities (SWOT analysis).

The adoption of a change management plan is an essential step to develop EDI in organisation, as the inclusion of EDI in skills training or in organisational practices require changes across different sectors and aspects.

> **Practical tip**
>
> Pryce and Chakal (2006) analyse change management model and applications in organisations, providing strategic frameworks. They develop 4 basic principles to be included in the strategic planning:
>
> 1. Evaluate the current situation: Assessing organisation's needs with three questions: How did things get to be this way? How long they have been this way? What keeps things the way they are?
>
> 2. Develop a participative and consultative process: Assessing the process with three questions: Who owns the change? Who should implement the change? Who does the change impact?
>
> 3. Address human response to loss and change: Where resistance to change and overcoming resistance are recognised as central in change planning strategies;
>
> 4. **Recognise agents of resistance to change:** Where it is possible to recognise the importance of people who resist change in the strategic planning, as they play an important role to challenge and improve the changes in place.

3.4- DEVELOPING AN EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY PLAN

As much as developing a change management plan, developing a diversity and inclusion strategy is critical to promoting change, tackling inequalities in place, promoting fairness, empowering and including minorities, and producing well-being and a sense of belonging in the workplace.

In tourism and hospitality, diversity is a reality, as the industry is recognised as employing members of ethnic groups and minorities. However, there are many gaps between diversity management in tourism and hospitality, when compared to other sectors (Kalargyrou, 2016; Iyer, 2009), which can lead to a number of outcomes:

● The underlying social inequality that is left unaddressed;

● The time and resources that have been wasted on ineffective work;

● The failure to address tensions and conflicts between groups (Iyer, 2009).

Many organisations implement plans and invest in EDI training to create a corporate culture that includes everyone. Others need to attract more employees or face challenges in retaining the workforce. Building a sense of belonging and tackling these issues is critical to developing and creating a strong workforce based on talent and inclusion. Expanding recruitment and developing engagement at work are considered today as a combination of employment success in private and public organisations. As we become more aware of the existing challenges, creating a strategy is a helpful tool to embed EDI in the workplace.

Key questions to ask in the development of this plan are:

- Why does the organisation have to invest in EDI initiatives?
- What are the opportunities and benefits of incorporating these strategies?
- How can the organisation integrate strategies in their day-to-day operations?
- How can the organisations monitor progress?

With the chosen methodology and a change management plan in place, some useful tools and strategies can be used to assess the needs of EDI in the workplace, such as:

- Conducting a SWOT Analysis;
- Identifying strategic themes;
- Setting long-term and short-term objectives with specific, realistic and achievable goals;
- Developing an action plan that can include measurement of activities, with key performance indicators;
- Writing a diversity and inclusion roadmap;
- Developing training according to the new needs of the organisation, with cyclical feedback, and more training available according to the needs of the organisation;
- Finding 'champions' in the organisation that can deliver the message and communicate the importance of changes being made and everyone's participation in the process.
- Emphasising the goals of creating a fair system where all individuals in the group can get the outcomes they earned; Identifying and sharing successful cases and their concrete benefits for individuals, such as learning opportunities associated with diversity and productivity (Iyer, 2009);
- Encouraging positive focus on disadvantaged groups, encouraging perspective-taking when talking about different cultures and characteristics, such as immigrant minorities. Also, it is important to encourage positive aspects of the advantage group identity, showing beneficial aspects of multinational collaboration (Iyer, 2009).

Key points also to have in mind when developing an EDI strategy are:

- Building EDI as part of the organisational culture is important for successfully implementing policies and practices. Values and behaviours need to be aligned from top management to all staff across the organisation.
- Resources are essential for the strategy to work as defining financial and human resources is crucial for the success of the strategy.
- Fostering diversity thinking, as it can improve performance, and productivity while expanding ideas within the organisation
- Encouraging people to discuss their challenges is also important, as everybody needs to be catered to. Developing effective channels of communication with HR organisations or with the management/leadership team can also be accompanied by team-building groups or the setting up of champions who can help develop communication among staff.

- Developing mutual respect in the workplace is also essential when developing a strategy. Although resistance to change when applying new strategies and practices might happen, respect is essential to making the work environment thrive.
- Work-life supports and balance are fundamental in the post-pandemic world. Providing the appropriate support for staff on needs is also an essential part of embedding inclusion.

A strategic action may have different formats, but usually include:

- An introduction: where you can briefly overview the mission and vision for developing the plan;
- A self-assessment: reflection based on organisations SWOT analysis, data collection and/or lessons learned with previous experiences of developing and planning EDI practices in the workplace;
- Goals, strategies and metrics: these metrics are essential to understand the success of the strategies and organisation's goals;
- An implementation plan: this will work as a document for developing the strategies and achieve goals (University of California, Berkeley, n.d.).

A useful sample plan of implementation plan can contain the following elements:

Table 5: EDI Sample Plan

Actions	Level of Priority	Timescale	Resources Needed	Team members

(Adapted from: Arts Council Ireland (n.d.). Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit.https://www.artscouncil.ie/uploadedFiles/wwwartscouncilie/Content/About/Equality,_Human_Rights_and_Diversity/EDI%20Toolkit%20Final_Eng.pdf)

Formulating and implementing an EDI strategy is a process that is crucial for the embedding inclusive practices in organisations. Although many steps or actions might be required to achieve this goal, every organisation has its specificities, and the EDI plan should have targets based on these; 'the key is to create your own strategic buckets, or themes, to make sense of your unique organisation, your unique culture, the industry you are working in, where you are currently at, where you are trying to get and what feels achievable and realistic for you and your organisation to implement' (Mildon, 2024, P. 127). Having an individualised approach and developing a strategy that provides the changes necessary to organisations' needs is core to successfully embedding and developing practices in EDI.

3.5 - USEFUL TOOLS AND RESOURCES FOR EMBEDDING EDI PRACTICES IN ORGANISATIONS

This section provides links for tools and resources that SMEs can use as guidelines and training to enhance EDI. Tools and reading materials will be provided first followed by additional practical resources from European and other countries in their own language. All these resources are free of charge and can be accessed online.

3.5.1 - TRAINING AND TOOLS

Free copyright image from Unsplash.com

The NTG/PANTOUR Toolkit (English)

Encompasses a number of resources to guide individuals, government departments, educational organisations, and training providers in the tourism and hospitality sectors on acquiring and developing green, social and digital skills through lifelong learning. Features include identifying gaps and needs via analyses for training needs, job profiles, qualifications, as well as training programmes to address them. Other tools include mapping, developing curriculum, Human Resources frameworks, and toolkits directed both at businesses and individuals. An additional resource was developed from two projects: the NTG/ PANTOUR Toolkit, the Sectoral Skills Intelligence Monitoring System, that particularly helps SMEs identify current and future skills needed in the sector, to create strategies to enhance the skills of their workforce and maximise productivity.

https://nexttourismgeneration.eu/tourism-sector-and-skills-toolkit/

IN-TOUR Project (English)

The European Union's IN-TOUR Project is designed to provide accessibility and inclusion training to tourism professionals through VET suppliers and European Universities. Tourism managers and frontline personnel acquire skills, competences and knowledge to enhance the service delivery for customers with special requirements. Training modules are divided into curriculum and profiles for frontline staff and manager professionals.

https://in-tour.eu/

Inclusive Tourism Project (English)

The Erasmus+ project Inclusive Tourism Project raises awareness about the capabilities and potential of people with disabilities both as customers and employees. The project develops training courses, guidelines and business models to enhance cooperation and inclusion among tourism businesses.

https://www.inclusivetourismproject.com/project/

The Academy for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (Bulgarian)

The Academy for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Bulgaria offers 35 trainings organised by the Council of Women in Business in Bulgaria and Sofia University. The aim is to professionally encourage the development of Bulgarian women in SMEs through an inclusive environment.

https://womeninbusiness.bg/new-site/akademia-mnogoobrazie/

The Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (Portuguese)

The Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality in Portugal offers training resources to guarantee the implementation of public policies to promote and defend gender equality and the fight against domestic and gender-based violence and trafficking of human beings.

https://www.cig.gov.pt/bases-de-dados/documentacao/#Viol%C3%AAncia%20Contra%20as%20Mulheres

The Equality Tools of the Instituto de las Mujeres (Spanish)

The Equality Tools (Herramientas para la Igualdad) of the Women's Institute (Ministry of Equality) in Spain provides an array of resources to promote gender equality. These include guides for developing equality plans and remuneration audits, training modules, job evaluation tools, and kits for implementing equality measures.

https://www.igualdadenlaempresa.es/asesoramiento/herramientas-igualdad/home.htm

The Adecco Foundation Training on Diversity and Disability (Spanish)

The Adecco Foundation in Spain offers online training on diversity and disability to create inclusive environments in organisations. The purpose of the training is to challenge prejudices and stereotypes that prevent people with disabilities from entering the workforce. Material includes standards for appropriate treatment and attitudes in the workplace, dynamic content, practical inclusion tools and real testimonies.

https://fundacionadecco.org/formacion-online-en-diversidad-discapacidad-y-trato-adecuado/

Intrama Consultoria training resources (Spanish)

Intrama Consultoria in Spain offers training resources and tools to promote EDI in organisations through inclusive talent management. This programme provides courses, interactive videos, case studies, continuous exercises, and tests. SMEs can also obtain a university certification in diversity management from Universidad Nebrija.

https://www.intrama.es/EDM

Failte Ireland's Accessible Toolkit (English)

Fáilte Ireland's Accessible Tourism Toolkit provides resources to foster an accessible and inclusive sector. The aim is to help Irish tourism businesses understand how to create welcoming visitor experiences for all. The site offers training material on inclusive recruitment and employment, best practices in accessible communications, and business insights as well as a toolkit designed to help businesses target and support employees of all abilities.

https://supports.failteireland.ie/accessible-and-inclusive-tourism/

The National Youth Council of Ireland Tools and Training Courses (English)

The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) represents over 50 organisations committed to the well-being of young people in Ireland. NYCI offers various tailored resources including practical training, certified courses and expert tools to support the professional development of youths. SMEs can also become members to participate in events, committees and campaigns.

https://www.youth.ie/

The Open Doors Initiative's Inclusive Employment Toolkit and Inclusive Recruitment Toolkit (English)

The Open Doors Initiative's Inclusive Employment Toolkit and the AIB Inclusive Recruitment Toolkit both support employers to design inclusive placement or training programmes. These toolkits aim to increase recruitment and retention of people with disabilities who are actively looking to find a job where their skills and knowledge can be used. These guidelines can be used by HR managers, diversity officers, and employers from all levels in Ireland and across Europe.

https://pathwaystoprogress.ie/userfiles/files/EFCInclusiveRecruitmentToolkit2022_V2.pdf

 *https://www.opendoorsinitiative.ie/userfiles/files/InclusivityEmploymentt*oolkit.pdf

SKEP – The Social Responsibility Association for Children and Youth (Greek)

SKEP (Social Responsibility Association for Children and Youth) offers disability awareness training programs to promote the inclusion of socially vulnerable and marginalised individuals in companies. SKEP provides personalised training to embed inclusivity based on the individual needs of each organisation.

https://www.skep.gr/el/%CE%B3%CE%BD%CF%89%CF%81%CE%AF%CF%83%CF%84%CE%B5-%CF%84%CE%BF%CE%BD-%CF%83%CE%BA%CE%B5%CF%80

This is Athens (Greek)

This is Athens website provides information about activities and events available for visitors from all backgrounds. The website has dedicated a section for the LBGTQ+ community. This tool is aimed at SMEs who wish to provide diverse and inclusive offerings for employees and visitors in Athens. When entering the site, businesses can click on "See & Do" to see all activities offered.

https://www.thisisathens.org/

Asperger JobLinks Platform (Greek)

The JobLinks platform connects autistic individuals or those with other social and cognitive impairments with job opportunities in Greece. People with these conditions are encouraged to subscribe to be provided with a mentor who supports their integration into the workforce. The goal is to promote inclusivity within companies and provide meaningful opportunities for autistic individuals.

https://jobslink.asperger.gr/login

The Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (Finnish and English)

The Finnish Institute of Occupational Health designed the Diversity and Inclusion Self-Assessment Tool to aid public and private organisations and SMEs to recognise potential areas to enhance diversity and inclusion across different levels and themes. Using a Matrix and User Manual, the Tool proposes goals and diversity strategies based on references and case studies, mirroring the size of each business.

https://monimuotoisuusarviointi.fi/en/

Hyvä työ – Parempi elämä, Good Work – Better Life (Finnish and English)

The Mental Health Toolkit provides SMEs, work communities and occupational health providers with tools to support mental well-being while building a humane work culture. Materials include guides to ensure the cooperation of employees in the workplace, development of supervisory tasks, maps to identify stress factors, assessments for recovery practices, checklists for establishing tailored well-being policies among other tools.

https://hyvatyo.ttl.fi/en/mental-health-toolkit?_gl=1*19vlie6*_gcl_au*NzQwMjI0OTY5LjE3Mz MwNjU5NzM.&pk_vid=173306622414e6ae

Village4All (Italian)

Village4All provides guidelines for Accessible Tourism with an online toolkit. Training materials include videos as well two manuals to embed accessibility in hospitality and tourism establishments. Upon completion, SMEs obtain training credits and accessibility certifications. The website also has a blog where organisations can deepen their knowledge of inclusive practices.

https://projectforall.net/formazione-e-linee-guida-per-il-turismo-accessibile/

The Cornerstone OnDemand Foundation (English)

The Cornerstone OnDemand Foundation offers more than 500 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Training Courses through their NonprofitReady portal. The three most popular ones include Introduction to Unconscious Bias, Invisible Disabilities, and Equality and Inclusion Lens. The aim is to help nonprofit professionals and individuals create inclusive environments.

https://www.nonprofitready.org/free-diversity-equity-inclusion-courses

3.5.2 - READING RESOURCES
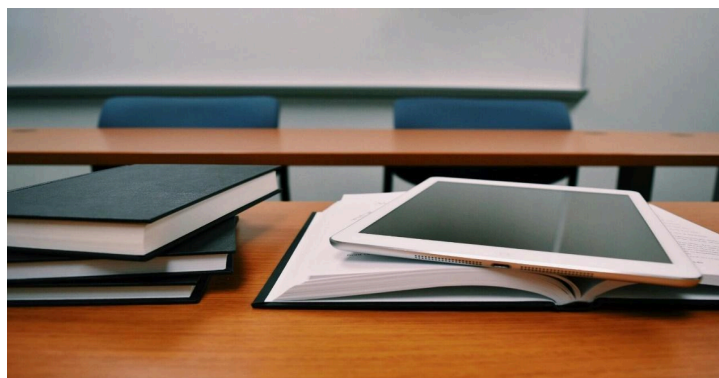
Free copyright image from Pexels.com

Diversity within Small and Medium-Sized Businesses – Best Practices and Approaches for Moving Ahead (English)

Diversity within Small and Medium-Sized Businesses – Best Practices and Approaches for Moving Ahead is a report generated by the European Commission that provides guidance, exercises, and resources for SMEs to implement diversity and inclusion practices within their operations. The report covers the advantages of having a diverse workforce and proposes strategies to minimise the challenges. This document is divided into three sections: Practical

Guidance, Best Practices of SMEs Successfully Implementing Diversity Measures, and Best Practices of Large Corporate Groups Successfully Supporting SMEs Define and Implement their Diversity Policies.

https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELLAR:91af0878-b379-11e5-8d3c-01aa75ed71a1&from=EN

Managing Diversity – A Manual for the Tourism Sector (Malta Tourism Authority) (English)

Managing Diversity - A Manual for the Tourism Sector is a practical guide from the European Union that seeks to help SMEs, training providers and employees from the tourism sector implement diversity and inclusion initiatives. The Manual includes tools such as strategies to build inclusive environments and recommendations on overcoming barriers commonly faced in the industry. It also shares best practices from tourism businesses as well as the impact of having a diverse customer base and workforce. The Manual is divided into seven units: Understanding Diversity Management, The Need for Strategic Diversity Initiatives, Developing Diversity Policies and Strategies, Conducting a Diversity Audit, Designing and Delivering Diversity Training, Cultural Awareness, and Additional Resources.

https://culturalsolutions.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Diversity-Management.-A-Manual-for-the-Tourism-Sector.pdf

Diversiteit in Bedrijf, The Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands (SER) (Dutch)

The Diversiteit in Bedrijf is a knowledge platform that seeks to enhance the inclusion of people from diverse age groups, genders, cultures, ethnicities, religions and people with disabilities. The evidence-based reports cover topics like diversity in recruitment and selection, developing diversity and inclusion policies, cultural awareness, and diversity guides, among others.

https://www.ser.nl/nl/thema/diversiteitinbedrijf/english/knowledge-platform

The Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (Finnish and English)

The Diversity and Inclusion in an Expert Organisation is a guide created for Human Resources departments, managers and individuals responsible for workplace development to support diversity in their organisations. This resource helps readers navigate the process of developing diversity and inclusion. Organisations will learn how to develop policies that meet legal obligations while maintaining productivity. The guide also provides guidance on promoting inclusion, ensuring career development, as well as practices to embed language awareness.

https://www.ttl.fi/en/learning-materials/diversity-and-inclusion-expert-organization

How to Use Training Techniques to Reduce Unconscious Bias in the Workplace (English)

Research done by McKinsey (2015), Techniques on how to use training techniques to reduce unconscious bias in the workplace, examined the relationship between diversity levels and companies' financial performance. The report analysed financial documents and leadership characteristics from hundreds of companies from the US, Canada, the UK, and Latin America. It concludes that the relationship between performance and organisational diversity is positive, resulting in increased profitability and offers suggestions. McKinsey - techniques on how to use training techniques to reduce unconscious bias in the workplace.

https://www.insurance.ca.gov/diversity/41-ISDGBD/GBDExternal/upload/McKinseyDivmatters-201501.pdf

The Change Management Toolkit (English)

Berkeley's Change Management Toolkit offers tips, tools and techniques for leading a change initiative successfully. The authors detail the most effective change strategies for identifying, planning, communicating, carrying out and overcoming challenges associated with changes in organisations. Readers will find exercises and tools to guide change. This toolkit may be particularly useful for SMEs seeking to incorporate EDI initiatives. There are seven components divided into four main sections: Introduction & Pre-work, Managing Transitions and Resistance to Change, Developing a Plan, and Enacting & Monitoring Change.

https://hr.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/change_management_toolkit.pdf

Inclusion and Diversity Guidelines, World Travel & Tourism Council (English)

The WTTC (World Travel & Tourism Council) offers industry recommendations through its Diversity and Inclusion Guidelines formulates from experts' insights and frameworks. These suggestions guide organisations and individuals within the travel and tourism sector on embedding EDI initiatives and policies in their operational processes. The guidelines offer steps on providing equal opportunities, overcoming challenges, setting goals, and measuring change. Key pillars include creating a supportive system, promoting safe spaces, developing agile systems, and demonstrating inclusion and diversity.

https://wttc.org/Portals/0/Documents/Reports/2020/Inclusion-and-Diversity-Guidelines.pdf

4-BEST PRACTICES CASE-STUDIES IN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY

This section provides 31 case-studies collected in 9 different countries with hospitality and tourism organisations, including industry providers, educational institutions and government departments. These case studies cover eight main themes: 1) fostering social inclusion, 2) the inclusion of employees with disabilities; 3) the inclusion of tourists with disabilities, 4) welcoming migrants, 5) embracing a culture of diversity, 6) promoting gender equality, 7) supporting education and training, and 8) implementing EDI policies. These examples can be applied across various subsectors and organisations of different sizes.

4.1 - FOSTERING SOCIAL INCLUSION

4.1.1 - Viajando al Futuro, Spain

Location	**Basque Country, Spain**
Website	https://www.tipigara.co/en/
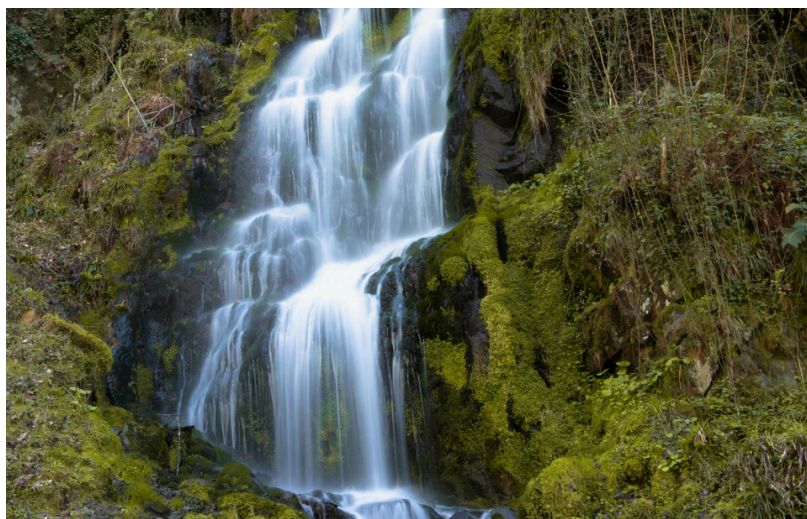
Source: free copyright from Pexels.com
(https://www.pexels.com/photo/waterfall-surrounded-by-greenery-in-spain-21967099/
by Renato Rocca

Viajando al Futuro is a project overseen by Tipi. Founded in 2012, Tipi specialises in designing processes, programs, and services for public administration across various sectors, including urban planning, tourism, gender equality, and health. The organisation focuses on creating user-centred services through collective creativity and co-creation. Tipi works with education centres, town councils, municipalities, provincial councils, the Basque Government, universities, development agencies and European foundations.

Context

Viajando al Futuro (Traveling to the Future) is an initiative that seeks to promote sustainable tourism in underdeveloped Spanish regions. The project is currently being piloted in the Valle de Laciana in León, a former mining region. Participants will gain the skills to influence local policies and regulatory frameworks, ensuring that tourism practices are improved. The project prioritises diverse participation by incorporating input from men, women, and individuals of various age groups. Viajando al Futuro also collaborates with residents, local administrations, and socio-economic agents to empower marginalised stakeholders and ensure their voices are integrated into the tourism development process. The project currently employs four full-time and two part-time staff members.

Implementation

The work for Viajando al Futuro began in 2021 and was divided into two phases. The first phase focused on researching and engaging local stakeholders to gather insights and generate ideas for the future of tourism in Spain. Through this process, key concerns were identified, and potential six scenarios were developed to enhance the attractiveness of rural regions into a touristic destination. The second phase is currently taking place in Laciana. The goal is to transform the initial ideas and knowledge developed for rural areas into tangible results by designing and implementing sustainable tourism strategies through collaboration with local institutions, social agents, residents, and the private sector. This piloting phase is broken down into three steps: first, project partners identify barriers within Laciana's tourism sector and turn them into opportunities. Next, they define the challenges and scope of collaboration, allocate resources, and commit fully to the project. Finally, a co-creation workshop is held with a team of potential users, service providers, local authorities, and stakeholders to design solutions for the identified opportunities. The aim is to develop a replicable and transferable model for implementing sustainable tourism strategies in other underrepresented rural areas of Spain.

Enabling Factors

Laciana offers several key enabling factors that make it an ideal location for a pilot project, serving as a model for other underrepresented rural areas. It is characterised by a rich local culture and strong sense of community, supported by ongoing social and cultural initiatives. The region also has established social, economic, and tourism infrastructures that provide a solid base for new strategies. Additionally, Laciana's natural and cultural landscapes are also highly appealing to visitors. Another enabling factor is Tipi's expertise in designing and

managing similar projects, which strengthens its role as a guide and administrator, increasing the project's chances of success.

Barriers

Laciana faces some barriers typical of rural areas in Spain. These include population decline, ageing demographics, unemployment, and the threat posed by large-scale infrastructure projects. Another significant challenge is the limited involvement of young people, who often leave the area, leading to generational gaps and a labour shortage.

Impact on the Organisation

Viajando al Futuro encourages the participation of individuals and groups previously excluded from decision-making and policy-making processes, incorporating diverse perspectives trough effective collaboration and communication. Additionally, customer and client satisfaction appear to have improved as a result of these practices. Feedback from tourism and cultural service providers suggests that the initiatives may positively influence customer experiences. Although the full impact of the implementation remains to be confirmed. Viajando al Futuro aims to create sustainable tourism strategies in Spain, which are anticipated to enhance customer satisfaction by providing more responsible and sustainable experiences.

Quotes

'The practice received positive feedback from tourism and cultural service providers, suggesting an improvement in customer and user satisfaction. While the implementation of the practice cannot yet be confirmed, it is expected to have a positive effect in this area.'

'Viajando al Futuro initiative seeks to create strategies for sustainable tourism in Spain, which could positively impact customer satisfaction by offering more responsible and sustainable experiences.'

Lessons Learned

While the full picture is not yet clear, initial indications are that feedback from tourism and cultural service providers is positive.

Future Plans

The pilot is scheduled to conclude in 2024. To measure the effectiveness of the project, 15 participants from the public and private tourism sectors will be asked to answer a questionnaire. The findings will be presented to national and regional Institutions, including the Spanish Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism, the Ministry for Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenge. If successful, this tool could also support policy implementation. In addition, short videos featuring testimonies from the project's stakeholders will be shared through social media, as well as the local and national press. Viajando al Futuro will then be replicated in other socio-economically disadvantaged communities.

Links with UN Sustainable Development Goals

Viajando al Futuro promotes economic growth through the creation of local jobs in rural areas. It achieves this by developing sustainable tourism initiatives where employment opportunities are limited.

This initiative empowers marginalised populations by giving them an opportunity to contribute to community development and policy recommendations.

4.1.2- Palladium Hotel Group, Spain

Location	Spain and Latin America
Website	Palladium Hotel Group

Source: Photos with copyrights provided by Palladium Hotel Group

The Palladium Hotel Group is a Spanish hospitality company with nine brands of hotels and resorts. The Group employs around 14,000 workers and has an international presence across six countries: Spain, Italy, Mexico, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, and Brazil.

Context

Palladium initiated a project in 2023 called "4 Causes to Take Action," involving all its hotels in Europe and the Dominican Republic. This initiative focuses on four key areas: attention to children in disadvantaged situations, social inclusion, environmental care, and assistance for the elderly facing loneliness. Palladium engages with social aid projects that aim to address the inequalities faced by these groups. In addition, the Group provides training to equip individuals with necessary tools to secure a job and gain autonomy for a better future.

Implementation

The initiative started with Palladium reaching out local NGOs across the different Group's locations for projects in which they can collaborate. The first NGOs partners included Fundación Integra, Raíces and Prodis. For each of the project's 4 causes, each hotel is offered 4-5 projects so that the employees themselves can vote for the one they want to support. Since local workers are the most familiar with the region's situation and NGOs, it is crucial they have the final word. The current projects focus on fostering a diverse environment by promoting a culture of recognition and encouraging compassionate feedback. To enhance the impact of these initiatives, Palladium provides EDI training for their leaders to better understand and adapt to these sensitivities. Additionally, the Group runs awareness campaigns on cross-cutting EDI issues. For example, one of the Palladium's properties in Ibiza organised a day for the Multiple Sclerosis Association.

Enabling Factors

The biggest facilitating factor has been the willingness of the team to work together on these initiatives. This commitment is shared between Palladium's staff and partner NGOs.

Barriers

The main obstacle is effectively organising each project's activities. Managing multiple NGOs and collaborators is challenging because each location faces different realities.

Impact on the Organisation

Hotel employees have expressed feeling valued, as their opinions are considered when deciding which projects to implement. Additionally, engaging with marginalised members of society has cultivated a diverse environment at Palladium. This diversity has increased the sense of belonging and integrity among both workers and customers, enhancing the Palladium experience.

Quotes

'Not only do we have to identify inequality, but we have to give them the means and tools to get out of that situation of inequality.'

'Within our Palladium culture transformation programme, we always put a lot of focus on leaders who understand this type of sensitivities and who adapt to them, always implementing equality, diversity and inclusion.'

Lessons Learned

Palladium recognises that a diverse workforce not only attracts new employees but also helps retain those already part of the Group. Furthermore, Palladium believes that the best way to 'care is by doing.' In other words, overcoming social inclusion requires the development of projects that directly address this issue. For these initiatives to be successful, it is crucial to first provide the necessary tools internally to then engage with the external community.

Future Plans

Palladium is committed to continue with these efforts. The Group aims to expand the 4 Causes to Take Action to 80 different projects that encompass 50 NGOs, with about 1,000 beneficiaries in Europe and the Dominican Republic. After each project finishes, a new initiative will be developed, with subsequent projects focused on more specific areas, tailored to the needs of each location. It is important to make sustainable decisions to ensure that these actions remain effective over time. Additionally, new vocational training centres will be established across Palladium hotels in the Americas to provide the necessary tools for the local workforce to overcome social inequalities. For years they have had the Imbassai Institute near their hotel in Brazil, where they have been training apprentices both inside and outside the hotel for several years. They have just opened a centre in Jamaica where they train people to fill these positions within the hotel, whether it is in Palladium or another company. The important thing is to cover this insertion and inequality through the tool of training to cover a trade. They are waiting to sign an agreement to create a training centre in Mexico, in the most vulnerable area of Cancun. Lastly, Palladium is collaborating with an external consultancy to deliver targeted equality training for its employees. The goal is to create diverse and integrated teams where everyone feels included both internally, and externally.

Links with UN Sustainable Development Goals

Palladium engages in projects to overcome obstacles faced by children in disadvantaged situations, people facing social exclusion, and elderly experiencing loneliness.

The collaboration between NGOs and Palladium to address social inequalities faced by marginalised groups contributes to a peaceful and inclusive workplace while promoting social justice.

4.1.3- Marsenses, Spain

Location	Mallorca, Spain and Menorca, Baleares islands
Website	https://www.marsenses.com/en/care

Source: free copyright from Pexels.com
(https://www.pexels.com/photo/hospitable-woman-standing-behind-front-desk-3771087/ by Andrea Piacquadio)

Organisation Information	MarSenses is a hospitality brand that operates in the Balearic Island with 4 hotels in Mallorca and 2 in Menorca, with a total of 450 employees. The company aims to create memorable Mediterranean experiences.

Context

In 2020, the owner of MarSenses, a member of a hotelier family with 40 years of industry experience, rebranded the hotel group by inspiring a change in corporate values through the implementation of an equality plan. This transformation places MarSenses' people at its heart, introducing a new organisational structure and directors. The company's

new business model prioritises inclusiveness by considering employees' opinions for decision-making. Additionally, MarSenses collaborates with associations in the Balearic Islands to create employment opportunities for individuals at risk of social exclusion. The rebranding aimed to redefine the company in a more considerate and inclusive way.

Implementation

An equality plan was established with specific measures for implementation. The company began by prioritising equal representation of men and women in leadership roles. Promotions were made on a case-by-case basis, selecting employees who had already demonstrated compassionate leadership within the organisation. Following this, MarSenses refurbished its hotels, incorporating feedback from employees into the design process. Additionally, the company reduced the working day from 40 to 38.5 hours per week, as part of its commitment to enhance employee well-being. To further embed inclusiveness, MarSenses launched a project aimed at integrating individuals at risk of social exclusion, starting with the prison community. The company collaborated with the Employment Service of the Balearic Islands' (SOIB) Vocational Guidance Service for Ex-prisoners and Alternative Measures and Special Difficulties in Finding Work, which provided a list of candidates. Chosen individuals began internships with the company, receiving cooking courses as part of the programme. After earning their second diploma, they were offered employment contracts within MarSenses. From SOIB, they were put in contact with GREC (Grupo De Educadores De Calle Y Trabajo Con Menores), with whom they also began to collaborate. GREC works together with Fundació la Caixa. They offer cooking courses in the MarSenses production kitchens where they have created a school. They give this space to the foundation and the GREC and currently have 15 children in school. With these diverse actions, the Group seeks to attract and retain talent, addressing the labour shortages in the islands.

Enabling Factors

Empathy was a key facilitator in the rebranding process. Managers were eager to lead by example with compassion, prioritising an inclusive culture. For instance, managers and directors implemented a practice where all employees, across all departments and levels, ate together in the canteen to emphasise team unity. This approach also enabled those in leadership positions to better understand and connect with their teams, making them more receptive to feedback when implementing changes. This closeness helped minimise resistance to change.

Barriers

The main obstacle was raising awareness and acceptance when welcoming the new staff members at risk of exclusion into the company. MarSenses also faced public criticism, with many accusing the company of using the initiative to enhance its brand image. However, this inclusive action was implemented not for publicity, but to adapt to the reality of their environment.

Impact on the Organisation

The greatest benefit has been seeing how employees identify with these initiatives, resulting in increased cooperation, smoother operations and improved productivity. With an employee satisfaction rate of 91.9%, MarSenses' customers report that this is reflected in an enhanced quality of service.

Quotes

'The most important thing for us has been to re-humanise the corporate side of the hotels.'

'The biggest lesson learned is that people should not be numbers, but people.'

Lessons Learned

MarSenses has shared that re-humanising corporate culture has been fulfilling, strengthening teamwork and creating strong bonds within the team. Lastly, the Group recognises that by welcoming marginalised groups at risk of exclusion, the community is enriched while helping address challenges regarding inclusion in the tourism sector.

Future Plans

MarSenses is working toward acquiring the Great Place to Work certification. Emphasising the importance of employees' well-being, the company plans to further lower the working day to 36 hours per week. Additionally, the company is piloting an AI tool called Emotional to coach department heads and managers in developing their soft skills. This initiative will be available for all employees in 2025.

Links with UN Sustainable Development Goals

MarSenses adopted a new business model prioritising employee well-being and input, cultivating a positive work environment. Additionally, it offers decent job opportunities for marginalised individuals.

The company developed an equality plan to reduce inequalities by promoting gender balance in leadership positions. MarSenses also trains and welcomes ex-convicts at risk of exclusion.

4.1.4 Portugália Restauração Group, Portugal

Location	Lisbon, Portugal
Website	https://www.portugaliarestauracao.pt/?lang=en

Source: Photo with copyrights provided by the Portugália Restauração Group

Organisation Information	Founded in 1925, Portugália Restauração Group is one of Portugal's largest and oldest restaurant groups, featuring seven distinct brands, including Portugália Cervejaria, Cervejaria Trindade, La Brasserie de L'Entrecôte and, Segundo Muelle. Alongside its diverse dining options, the Group also specialises in catering for events, from corporate functions and team-building activities to personal celebrations like weddings and birthday parties.

Context

Founded as a family-run business, Portugália Restauração Group has embedded social inclusion and community development from the start, often calling itself the "Portugália family." Initially, inclusion practices were informal due to close team relationships, but as the company grew, it formalised its commitment by establishing a diversity department and policy in 2016. The Group supports the needs of its 800+ employees and their families while

also engaging in local initiatives to foster socio-territorial cohesion and address poverty and inequalities.

Implementation

The Group recognised the need for a dedicated department to manage the complex challenges of maintaining inclusive and socially responsible practices across a large workforce. Consequently, in 2016, Portugália established the Social Responsibility Department, Portugália Viva. That same year, it solidified its diversity policy and became a signatory of the Portuguese Charter for Diversity. Portugália Viva first started to offer social services and mental health assistance free of charge to help employees address personal and family issues, including health, housing, legal, and educational needs. The department connects them with local resources to find sustainable, long-term solutions. Following these initiatives, the Group became aware of its growing number of migrant and refugee employees and the challenges they faced in accessing public services in Portugal. In response, Portugália established a support office in partnership with CEPAC – Centro Padre Alves Correia, where a social assistant provides guidance on migration and social integration. To further support newcomers, Portugália Viva launched a certified 150-hour "Portuguese as a Host Language" course in collaboration with INOVINTER – Centre for Training and Technological Innovation. This course is available to both the Group's employees and unemployed migrants pursuing careers in hospitality. These classes aim to support team integration, career progression for foreign employees, and employability for migrants from partner NGOs interested in Portugal's hospitality sector. Recently, Portugália Restauração Group established a Training Academy to provide tailored training, addressing skill gaps and the limited availability of restaurant-focused courses, showcasing its commitment to employee development.

Enabling Factors

The main enabling factor is the longstanding reputation of Portugália, which has established the Group as a national leader in the restaurant sector. With a strong sense of responsibility towards its employees, the Group has pioneered initiatives to ensure integration and inclusion, backed by the necessary resources. Additionally, the Group's success is further enabled by its multiple partnerships to develop and enhance its diversity practices.

Barriers

Internally, the primary challenge is delivering uniform training across all locations and levels, from senior management to junior staff, including both long-serving employees and newcomers.

Externally, Portugália manages challenges when collaborating with institutions that have their own rules, methodologies, and organisational cultures. This requires balancing and overcoming various institutional barriers, demanding flexibility and a willingness to adapt.

Impact on the Organisation

The organisation is facilitating the integration of employees in the labour market, and enhancing career progression and opportunities, also creating visible impacts to their daily operations. This created benefits for team working, and produced well-being in the organisation, promoting employee development and leading to a higher retention of the workforce. In recognition of these efforts, the Portugália Restauração Group was awarded the "Diversity Seal" in both 2019 and 2021 for its work in inclusive employability, particularly in recruitment, selection, and people management practices.

Quotes

'I feel very welcomed by the company, I feel like I've found a family. There's a great human touch here.'

'You are very good to me... I was lucky to get [the] job because I don't speak Portuguese, but Portugália gave me [an] opportunity, and my boss is a very good person!'

'The best investment we can make is to take the time to get to know what is already being done locally and add value to these fantastic grassroots organisations.'

Lessons Learned

The Portugália Restauração Group believes that the purpose of these diversity and inclusion practices is to inspire other businesses to become social partners. The Group has observed that these practices can positively impact both the workforce and business operations.

Future Plans

The Group seeks to invite external stakeholders, including customers, suppliers, and other companies, to collaborate and engage with its social mission. Furthermore, Portugália will continue to lead the restaurant sector by being an example through the implementation and dissemination of its practices to promote a more equitable society.

Links with UN Sustainable Development Goals

Portugália Restauração Group provides social services and health support to aid employees in managing personal and professional challenges, including physical and mental health, housing, and education.

The Group promotes the economic inclusion of foreign workers in Portugal, helping reduce inequalities. Through language and personal development classes, migrants and refugees improve their skills, enhancing career prospects in the restaurant sector.

Portugália Restauraçăo's partnerships with local organisations such as CEPAC, INOVINTER, and the Portuguese Charter for Diversity support the Group's social mission and contribute to collectively advance sustainable development goals.

4.2- INCLUSION OF EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES

4.2.1- I Don't Give Up Café and Restaurant (Nem Adom Café), Hungary

Location	Budapest, Hungary
Website	https://nemadomfelkavezo.hu/
Photo	

Source: Photo with copyrights provided by Nem Adom Cafe

Organisation Information	The I don't give up Café and Restaurant (Nem Adom Fel in Hungarian) is the result of a partnership between the Nem Adom Fel Foundation and Nem Adjuk Fel Social Cooperative. The I don't give up Café and Restaurant is located in the historic Józsefváros district in the south-eastern part of Budapest city centre which contributes to its popularity.

Context

The I don't give up Café and Restaurant opened its doors in 2016 with the purpose of providing equal employment opportunities to people with disabilities to help them integrate into society. The café also provides accessible services to different types of disabilities. Out of its 40 employees, the I don't give up Café and Restaurant employs 36 workers with

disabilities, which include visual and hearing impairment, people with reduced mobility, as well as neurodiverse and autistic individuals.

Implementation

The Nem Adom Fel Foundation and Nem Adjuk Fel Social Cooperative was worked in collaboration to open this establishment. The Social Cooperative agreed to offer catering services, and the Foundation to provide the property, professional support and community programs. The recruitment process began shortly after and has been ongoing since then. The applicants' qualifications and disabilities are assessed by the team to allocate them to a suitable area of employment. For example, bartenders need formal qualifications while catering and kitchen roles are available for unskilled labour. Once hired, workers then secure accredited employment through the Foundation for insurance and security purposes. Employees are then trained on a group and personal level. Group trainings take place every month while personalised development sessions are designed for everyone based on needs and disabilities.

Enabling Factors

The design of the I don't give up Café and Restaurant optimises physical accessibility for disabled employees and guests alike. For example, there is a separate entrance for disabled individuals. Additionally, the mobility of the furniture, the spacious interior and adapted toilet facilities renders the entire space suitable for diverse guests' needs. Another enabling factor includes visual support tools such as color-coded system and a work handbook where pictured and diagrams help employees perform tasks effectively. The website offers ICT features for visually impaired guests to make online information accessible to users.

Lastly, the Foundation's established reputation plays a critical role in securing opportunities such as providing catering services to private clients. Additionally, the Foundation has obtained funding through the European Union's Erasmus+ program to develop workshops aimed at supporting individuals with disabilities under the Young People with Disabilities in the Hospitality Industry project based on the Café's performance. Furthermore, the Foundation has delivered presentations at international events, including the UN World Tourism Day, to raise awareness about the needs of people with disabilities in the tourism sector.

Barriers

Workers with disabilities react differently in certain situations which need to be taken into consideration during their employment. For example, the limitations that certain disabilities imply cause extra stress on these workers. Extra training must be provided to prepare employees with the right tools for these circumstances.

Impact on the Organisation

The Foundation has developed training material based on the experiences, lessons and challenges that the I don't give up Café and Restaurant has brought. For instance, the Conflict Management Exercises seeks to reduce turnover by equipping employees with the necessary skills to manage stress and other workplace challenges. The Communications training is aimed into improving performance by ensuring the information is accessible and easy to understand for all staff thereby, ensuring smooth operations.

Quotes

'In work organisation, attention must be paid to the different abilities and limitations of employees with disabilities.'

Lessons Learned

The I don't give up Café and Restaurant showcases that employees with disabilities can provide the same high-quality service as any other employee, promoting fairness in the workplace. By promoting understanding and acceptance, this best practice showcases how inclusive and diverse employment can be integrated into business operations. In addition, this best practice highlights the effectiveness of personalised development programs that address specific needs of disabled employees to equip them to overcome workplace challenges.

Future Plans

The organisation has established professional partnerships with Starbucks and Budapest Party Service for the integration and support of people with disabilities in the open labour market.

Links with UN Sustainable Development Goals

By providing meaningful employment opportunities to people with disabilities, the I don't give up Café and Restaurant promotes inclusive and decent work for all.

The establishment creates an inclusive workplace that caters to the needs of disabled employees. This fosters equal opportunities for disabled and non-disabled workers, cultivating social and economic inclusion.

The café provides access to a safe, inclusive and accessible public spaces where everyone, regardless of ability or age, can participate.

4.2.2- Academica-VUM, Bulgaria

Location	Varna, Bulgaria
Website	https://academica-vum.com/

Source: Photo with copyrights provided by Academica-VUM

Organisation Information	Academica-VUM is a joint initiative between Varna University of Management and International College Ltd. and financially supported by the Agency for People with Disabilities. Established as a Bistro, it offers restaurant and catering services while promoting inclusive employment, particularly for individuals from diverse backgrounds. Its central location and proximity to public institutions have also contributed to its success and popularity.

Context

Conceived in 2020, Academica-VUM began operating in 2021 as a Protected Employment Centre with the primary goal of providing long-term employment for individuals with multiple disabilities, particularly intellectual ones. Academica-VUM originated from Varna University of Management's desire to create an informal space for students and faculty to relax. Simultaneously, the Agency for People with Disabilities issued guidelines supporting the creation of Protected Employment Centres. This alignment of Academica-VUM's plans with the agency's guidelines led to the integration of a social mission into the university's project, combining the needs of people with disabilities seeking employment with the university's objectives. Of the current 29 employees, 15 have disabilities, no prior work experience, and a reduced work capacity of over 50%.

Implementation

Roles such as sales assistants, assistant cooks, bakers, and gardeners were created from the beginning of the project. Job assignments are carefully matched to individual capabilities, ensuring fair opportunities for everyone. Given that many employees have had limited access to education, the program provides professional training through individual and group sessions with the objective of facilitating a seamless integration into the working environment. In the initial stages, practical culinary arts training and professional catering skills are imparted. Continuous personal development training is provided through several sessions of English as a foreign language as well as soft skills. Mentorship and professional growth opportunities are tailored to each person's specific needs and abilities, helping guide their career paths. In addition, employees receive support from a dedicated team that includes a social worker, a psychologist, and four mentors with expertise in different fields. This support system ensures that employees remain actively engaged in the workforce, improves their adaptability and social standing. Mentors also assist them in securing employment beyond the project, should they choose to do so.

Enabling Factors

An enabling factor for its initial success was the institutional funding provided to Academica-VUM. This financial support from the Agency for People with Disabilities under the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy has allowed Academica-VUM to operate as one of the few Protected Employment Centres in Bulgaria. A second enabling factor is Academica-VUM's strong social mission to foster community involvement. Engagement in this social cause cultivates satisfaction among faculty, students, and external customers. Academica-VUM's commitment to creating opportunities for individuals with disabilities enhances community participation, motivating stakeholders to utilise Academica-VUM's services. Due to its strong social responsibility, Academica-VUM attracts corporate clients who support the centre's development by ordering catering services.

Barriers

Academica-VUM faces two main challenges: training the workforce and maintaining operations. Many newly appointed employees lack prior work experience. Consequently, extensive training sessions are necessary to facilitate their integration into the workforce, ensuring they understand their duties, adhere to safety protocols, and acquire essential professional skills and knowledge in the culinary field. Additionally, an imminent challenge is the termination of support from the Agency for People with Disabilities in 2025. This loss of funding poses a significant threat to the centre's operations. Continued financial support is crucial for maintaining motivation among staff and ensuring future sustainability.

Impact on the Organisation

Academica-VUM is committed to actively involving employees in the work process to enhance job satisfaction. Academica-VUM promotes a feedback culture regarding both staff and administrative performance, aiming toward continuous improvement.

Quotes

'This comprehensive support aims to help participants become actively engaged in the labour market, enhance their professional adaptability and social standing, and provide them with the opportunity to continue working beyond the project.'

'The social aspect of this initiative is highly valued by the entire staff involved, not only in the bistro but also by the VUM team and students who visit the bistro or use its services.'

'The satisfaction of those engaged in managing the bistro is greatly influenced by the social cause behind its establishment.'

'Our centre has proven that with the necessary support, help, and training, people with disabilities can perform just as well as anyone else.'

Lessons Learned

Integrating employment opportunities with a support network has proven to be highly effective for individuals with disabilities. Their adaptation to the workplace can be attributed to several factors: effective mentorship, comprehensive training, and their eagerness to work. Secondly, Academica-VUM underscores the significance of addressing social stigmas. Academica-VUM promotes an inclusive environment for people with disabilities by offering them an opportunity to engage in the workforce, collaborate within teams, and enhance their professional skills, contributing meaningfully to society. This initiative showcases the potential for expanding protected employment models across Europe.

Future Plans

Academica-VUM will continue to enhance staff training through rotations across various work positions, enabling employees to acquire diverse skills. To address the challenge of the lack of funding, Academica-VUM is exploring strategies to become permanently established in the market while seeking public support and government co-financing to ensure the continued success of its initiatives.

Links with UN Sustainable Development Goals
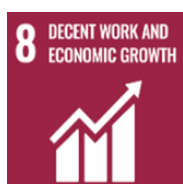
Academica-VUM promotes financial independence for individuals with disabilities by creating meaningful job opportunities, providing workers with qualifications that improve their employability beyond the project.

Academica-VUM offers inclusive employment opportunities for individuals who are often marginalised in the labour market, empowering them to participate in the workforce through tailored job positions, training and personal development to fit individual capabilities.

Through collaboration with the Agency for People with Disabilities and other stakeholders, Academica-VUM offers a model of inclusive employment for other institutions, facilitating the broader adoption of these initiatives across Europe.

4.2.3- InOut Hostel, Spain

Location	Barcelona, Spain
Website	https://www.inouthostel.com/es
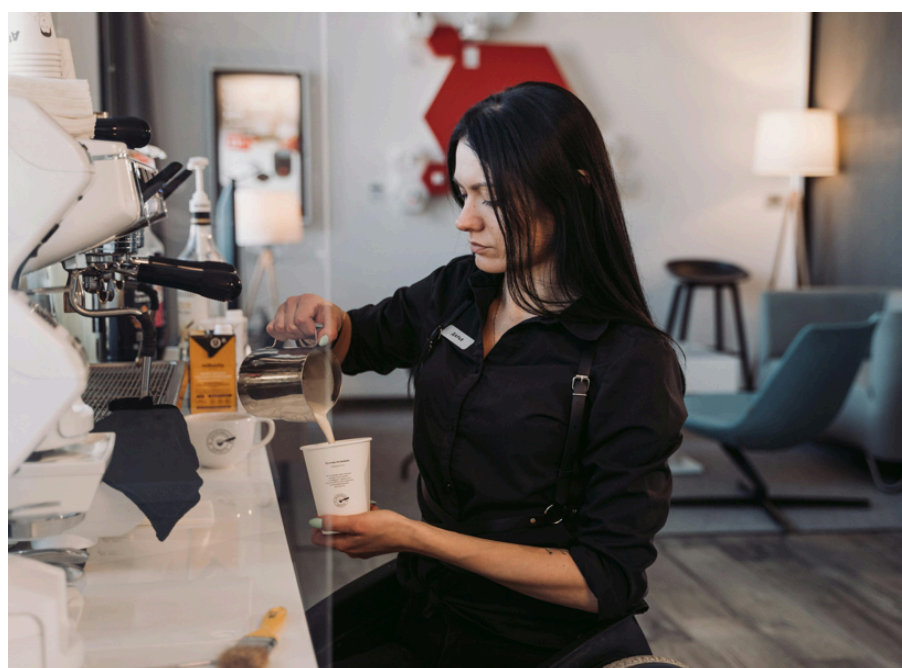
Source: free copyright from Pexels.com
(https://www.pexels.com/photo/a-woman-in-black-long-sleeves-pouring-milk-on-a-paper-cup-7162357/ by Mart Production)

Organisation Information	Founded in 2004, InOut Hostel was founded as a special employment centre by the non-profit organisation Icària Iniciatives Socials. The establishment provides 250 private and shared dormitories for tourists.

Context

The InOut Hostel is the first hotel in Europe to offer services with a team of 56 people, 90% of whom have physical and mental disabilities. The founding NGO had previously provided jobs

for people with mental disabilities in other sectors and sought to expand these initiatives to a tourism facility.

Implementation

Icària Iniciatives Socials conducted market research to develop a tourism project centred around a hostel in Barcelona. The NGO then created a marketing plan, including the design of a logo, catalogue, and organisational structure to promote InOut. Employees with disabilities were provided with professional training tailored to their respective departments, including reception, housekeeping, restaurant, and maintenance. The hostel has been welcoming guests for 20 years and serves as an example of how people with disabilities can successfully compete on equal terms within the tourism industry.

Enabling Factors

The main facilitator is the defining values of InOut: teamwork and responsibility. By making the entire staff shareholders of the company, the sense of belonging is strengthened. Additionally, the initiative has been successful due to the sense of responsibility that comes from having people with disabilities on the team, as everyone looks out for one another.

Barriers

A limiting factor is the workplace adaptations needed for different disabilities. For example, employees with visual impairments require tools like magnifying glasses to perform their tasks. Additionally, InOut has reached its recruitment capacity and is exploring solutions to continue hiring.

Impact on the Organisation

The success of this best practice is reflected in the ratings and feedback from InOut customers. They highlight that the hostel's social mission ensures customer service of the same quality as in any other establishment. Employees have also shared their fulfilment and satisfaction with their roles across various departments.

Quotes

'Equality, diversity and inclusion practices ensure that all people are welcomed and cared for appropriately.'

'The limiting factors in implementing EDI policies are the factors that companies place on themselves.'

'It is important that people with disabilities are made visible, that they have the opportunity to work in public, because they exist.'

Lessons Learned

Welcoming and training employees with disabilities can help address issues such as staff shortages in the sector. Companies in other sectors already provide employment for people

with disabilities, and potential partnerships could be formed to assist tourism institutions in tackling this challenge.

Future Plans

InOut has secured a license for an additional 100 beds in an annex, with plans to invest in it once capital becomes available. This expansion will increase opportunities for more people with disabilities and continue their best practices.

Links with UN Sustainable Development Goals

InOut Hostel provides employment for individuals with disabilities, enabling them to actively contribute to the economic growth of the hospitality sector.

This initiative promotes social inclusion and reduces inequalities by integrating people with mental and physical disabilities, often a marginalised group, into the workforce.

4.2.4- Electra Hotels & Margarita Guarantee, Greece

Location	Athens, Greece
Website	https://www.electrahotels.gr/ https://www.eeamargarita.gr/en/home

Sources: Free copyright from Pexels
(https://www.pexels.com/photo/a-manager-talking-to-a-customer-at-the-cafe-628 1462/ by Antoni Shkraba)

Organisation Information	Electra Hotels and Resorts has been in the hospitality industry for over 60 years with six properties throughout Greece. The organisation is committed to delivering exceptional guest experiences while positively contributing to local communities. 30 years ago, Margarita Guarantee introduced Greece's first job-matching platform specifically designed for individuals with intellectual disabilities, helping them secure employment by connecting them with potential employers.

Context

Electra Hotels and Resorts, in partnership with Margarita Guarantee, offers supported employment opportunities for neurodiverse and autistic individuals. This initiative, currently piloted at the Electra Metropolis Hotel in Athens, aims to expand across all the group's hotels in Greece. The project promotes equal societal integration by helping their target demographic enter the workforce, generate income, and engage in meaningful social interactions. This initiative was inspired by Electra's human-centric approach, which emphasises on giving back to society through ethical commitments. It also aligns with Margarita's long-standing dedication to social responsibility and intellectual diversity inclusion.

Implementation

Margarita approached the Electra Group to propose a collaboration on an EDI initiative aimed at providing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities within their properties. Electra accepted this invitation. Prior to the launch of the initiative, hotel executives organised a focus group session with guests to introduce key functions and job roles available at the hotel. During the session, the invited participants had the opportunity to explore the three main operational units where the initiative would be implemented: Housekeeping, Food & Beverages, and Reception. They also engaged directly with these areas and learned about their standard operating procedures. This experience enabled guests to share valuable insights regarding their interests, concerns, and feedback about the EDI initiative.

Following this step, the hotel hosted an open day where the first group of employees, which included neurodivergent and autistic people, participated in the hotel's daily operations. These employees demonstrated a strong interest in the tasks they were introduced to and responded positively to their roles. Permanent staff were exceptionally supportive, showing empathy for the challenges faced by their new colleagues while recognising their potential.

Acknowledging the mutual benefits from this initial positive engagement, the Electra Metropolis Hotel in Athens, with guidance from the Margarita organisation, established a formal professional employment initiative for individuals with intellectual disabilities as a pilot project. This phase focused on positions within the Food and Beverage sector and Reception, where employees interacted with guests and supported overall operations in the hotel restaurant and lobby. The integration of new employees occurred gradually, with continuous support from Margarita's experts over two weeks. As the new employees adapted to their roles, their working hours were slowly increased from an initial four hours

per day. Margarita's professionals closely monitored the new employees' responses to their tasks and provided necessary training and adjustments as required.

Enabling Factors

One enabling factor was the alignment of both organisations' vision and mission. Electra Hotels and Resorts is guided by integrity, compassion, and innovation, with every decision reflecting their commitment to these values. Meanwhile, Margarita's mission is to secure meaningful employment for individuals with disabilities. Another critical factor was Margarita's experienced interdisciplinary team and their specialised Employment Integration Department, which oversaw the implementation of the initiative. This team closely monitored each individual to ensure that both the employee and the hotel adapted to each other effectively. Moreover, the positive attitudes of the hotel manager and the respective business unit leaders played a crucial role. They promptly addressed any initial issues regarding the new employees' consistency and workplace integration to maintain an environment of understanding and acceptance. This leadership encouraged all staff to accommodate the unique working conditions of the new employees and support them. Finally, the hotel sector offers several roles characterised by repetitive routines, which are well-suited to neurodivergent and autistic individuals, allowing them to perform these tasks with a high level of consistency.

Barriers

While the initiative is still in its pilot phase, both organisations recognise the challenges people with disabilities face in providing services and interacting with guests. However, Electra's managers, permanent staff, and Margarita's Employment Integration Department work together to foster a supportive environment.

Impact on the Organisation

The supported employment provided by Electra Hotels and Resorts has brought multiple benefits for all stakeholders, promoting a deeper understanding and people with disabilities. This initiative also has positively influenced internal relationships among employees while enhancing their interactions with hotel guests. Staff at the hotel have broadened their perspectives, becoming more open to differences, and exceeded management's expectations in supporting their new colleagues.

Quotes

'Company tradition dictates that we forge our employees' culture of empathy and acceptance.'

'Although the industry has high employee attrition rates, at Electra Hotels and Resorts we adopt people-centric approaches - practically not just theoretically - and so it is a company that has permanent staff.'

Lessons Learned

Permanent employees have improved their communication skills. Another lesson has been the increased acceptance of diversity and a strengthened sense of patience from all stakeholders.

Future Plans

The next step involves engaging Athens-based executives to facilitate the adaptation and training of new employees with disabilities. This will equip managers with the necessary knowledge to prepare other hotels in the group for adopting this initiative. Once successfully implemented across all Athens properties, the practice will be expanded to the rest of Electra Hotels and Resorts.

Links with UN Sustainable Development Goals

Electra and Margarita significantly improve the mental health of individuals with disabilities through employment, stimulating a sense of purpose and belonging. By encouraging social interaction with staff and guests, the initiative reduces isolation and enhances quality of life.

This initiative tackles inequality by providing job opportunities to individuals with disabilities, who often face barriers in the job market. By offering employment, Electra and Margarita help enhance their financial independence and social standing, reducing economic disparities.

Margarita's expertise in employment integration complements Electra Hotels' commitment to social responsibility. By offering supported employment, this collaboration not only enhances the employability of individuals with disabilities but also sets an example for other tourism businesses to follow.

4.2.5- Albergo Etico Roma, Italy

Location	Rome, Italy
Website	https://www.albergoeticoroma.it/

Sources: Free copyright from Freepik
(https://www.freepik.com/free-photo/full-shot-disabled-woman-with-friends_25959
862.htm#fromView=image_search_similar&page=1&position=22&uuid=650f0973-b4
e2-4006-8d78-d31591781e9f)

Organisation Information	Albergo Etico Roma is a socially responsible, non-profit hotel located in Rome. The hotel is part of the Albergo Etico network and the second of its kind in Italy, focusing on promoting social inclusion and accessibility. The hotel employs 20 individuals of which 12 have a disability.

Context

Albergo Etico seeks to create an authentically inclusive space by employing individuals with physical, intellectual, or sensory disabilities to manage the property. Its long-term objective is to guarantee their full reintegration into the workforce by providing professional training. This is achieved through the Academy of Independence, Albergo Etico's training and employment programme. The project was created after the founder, a member of one of Rome's historic hotelier families, suffered a serious motorbike accident in 2007. After

rehabilitation, this initiative was inspired by the founder's personal experience. All earnings are used to cover salaries, rent, fixed costs and start-up debts. Any remaining funds are donated to other non-profit organisations that support people with disabilities.

Implementation

Participants study and learn for a period of three years at the Academy of Independence to achieve full autonomy. Through a gradual learning path, students train to perform all hotel and restaurant tasks in an environment known as the "artificial nest." For 12 to 18 months, students work alongside industry experts in a hands-on coaching and training period to aid them integrate into the workforce. Each student is then assigned a role based on their individual possibilities and residual capabilities to become full-time workers in Alerbo Etico. For example, participants with mobility challenges are assigned to reception. During this time, students and workers live in the project's internal staff accommodation to strengthen teamwork and cooperation. After the programme's completion, they are encouraged to apply these skills in their own environments, or "own nests," to reinforce independence in everyday life.

Enabling Factors

The project was founded by a prominent Roman hotelier family, whose industry expertise played a key role in its success. Additionally, the intensive work environment builds strong solidarity within the team, regardless of mistakes or misunderstandings that may occur throughout the day. For example, shared rituals such as meals help ease any tensions and reinforce connection. Sharing a uniform also enhances a sense of belonging and unity.

Barriers

Albergo Etico faces similar barriers as other hospitality establishments. Its management addresses these issues with a dual focus: overcoming both personal and organisational limitations while highlighting the talents of all employees.

Impact on the Organisation

The name of this initiative, the Academy of Independence, was chosen to highlight its structured hierarchy where each person has distinct roles and responsibilities. By respecting and learning from experts, people with disabilities gradually develop self-autonomy, integrate into society, and prevent potential mistakes. Customers' feedback has been gratifying. For example, they share the service provided has met their expectations. In addition, they feel good about helping a social cause.

Lessons Learned

The Academy of Independence has broadened perspectives on integrating young people with special needs into the hospitality industry. This initiative has also encouraged more entrepreneurs to hire young people with disabilities. Additionally, the immersive work

environment accelerates students and workers' independence. This experience empowers participants, helping them improve their self-management, confidence and motivation.

Future Plans

The Academy of Independence will continue to welcome students with physical, intellectual, or sensory disabilities, offering them employment opportunities within Albergo Etico.

Links with UN Sustainable Development Goals

The Academy of Independence offers a holistic education program designed to enhance participants' employment skills for the hospitality industry, along with personal management skills to achieve full autonomy.
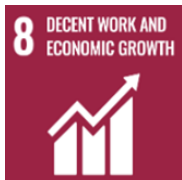
This initiative enhances employability for individuals with disabilities through job placements tailored to their abilities. By offering hands-on work experience, the Academy supports their integration into the workforce beyond the duration of the program.

The Academy of Independence provides individuals with disabilities, who often face barriers to entering the workforce, with practical training and employment opportunities, helping to reduce inequalities.

4.2.6- Barceló Hotel Group, Spain

Location	Palma de Mallorca
Website	https://www.barcelo.com/es-es/ https://fundacionintegra.org/

Source: free copyright from Pexels.com
(https://www.pexels.com/photo/a-woman-sitting-on-the-wheelchair-in-the-office-4
064076/ by Marcus Aurelius)

Organisation Information	The Barceló Hotel Group is one of Spain's leading hotel chains. Established in 1931, the Group has over 100 years of history. Barceló has an international presence with more than 270 hotel properties in over 25 countries.

Context

The Barceló Hotel Group collaborates with the Integra Foundation to promote the employability of socially excluded individuals and people with disabilities, integrating them into its workforce of 34,000 international members. In 2021, Barceló's co-president proposed this partnership to the Integra Foundation to attract employees from all backgrounds and select them through an open, transparent, and unbiased recruitment process.

Implementation

When vacancies arise, Barceló notifies various recruitment organisations, including schools and universities, employment portals such as Infojobs, and the Integra and ITER Foundations. The Integra Foundation then selects potential candidates based on their skills and affinity for the role. Once hired, Barceló provides training to help them adapt to their positions. The Foundation monitors their integration to ensure that both the Group and the candidates are successfully working together.

Enabling Factors

The key enabling factor has been the support from top management. The initiative to provide these opportunities came from the president himself, which made the implementation process easier. Knowing that the request came directly from the company made managers at each hotel more receptive to this new recruitment source. They also take pride in reporting the number of socially excluded individuals and people with disabilities successfully hired through the Integra Foundation.

Barriers

The primary barrier to this initiative was resistance to change. This was alleviated by explaining the processes and benefits of this new tool to stakeholders involved.

Impact on the Organisation

The Barceló Hotel Group has observed a greater cooperation and participation from the workforce. Understanding colleague's disadvantaged situation and challenges with certain tasks encourages team members to offer more support. This is reflected in positive customer perceptions, as a diverse team enhances their overall experience.

Quotes

'By giving a lot of information, we break down the barriers that may exist in the implementation of these practices, and the employee can understand the reason for this change in processes and the benefits that it will bring.'

'By having a diverse team, the customer feels included.'

Lessons Learned

The Hotel Group states that for society to embrace EDI, companies must lead by example. Once these values have been adopted by different organisations, EDI will be reflected in society. Barceló also acknowledges that effectively managing these good practices requires support from top management, as well as training and raising awareness among employees. Lastly, the Group highlights the growing importance of implementing EDI policies, as candidates increasingly consider such values when choosing an employer. People are more likely to choose a company whose values align with their own.

Future Plans

Barceló will continue its partnership with the Integra Foundation to keep integrating marginalised individuals into its workforce. Additionally, the Group plans to collaborate with other foundations in the same field at regional levels to facilitate the recruitment process.

Links with UN Sustainable Development Goals

The Hotel Group ensures equal access to employment opportunities for socially excluded individuals, promoting their professional development.

Barceló collaborates with the Integra Foundation, contributing shared resources and expertise to enhance social inclusion and equality for marginalised individuals.

4.2.7- De Pleats, The Netherlands

Location	Burgum, The Netherlands
Website	https://www.depleats.nl/

Source: free copyright from Pexels
(https://www.pexels.com/photo/smiling-waitress-serving-food-t-customer-4350081/ by Ketut Subiyanto)

Context

De Pleats actively recruits and supports autistic employees and other people with neurodivergent conditions. This practice has been in place since the organisation started, with a formal approach to social responsibility since 1999. The initiative was inspired by the owner's commitment to inclusivity and a family tradition of supporting individuals with additional needs. The owner has an autistic child and a background in entrepreneurship and advocacy for autism.

Implementation

De Pleats engages in customising jobs to create roles suited to the abilities of employees. They have made special accommodations in the workplace, such as sound and noise cancelling floors and ceilings as well as providing tailored tasks for people with mental conditions. The organisation also uses tools like colour codes and pictures for employees who cannot read or have other specific needs. De Pleats avoids segregation by integrating neurodivergent employees into the regular workforce and providing discreet support. Clear communication, internal rules (e.g. no cursing, zero tolerance on bullying), an online and offline onboarding programme, on-the-job coaching, learning-by-doing, tasks tailored to the individual's interest and abilities, and individualised support without singling people out are essential pillars of the hands-on EDI approach at De Pleats.

They make use of some principles learned through experience and training courses on giving support to employees or colleagues with special needs. An example of this is the HARRIE training course. This acronym in Dutch stands for Helpful, Alert, Calm, Realistic, Instructive, Honest. Managers and staff learn, amongst other things, how to give clear, unambiguous instructions and compliments to people with specific needs.

The 3 sustainability P's of People, Planet, and Profit have been embedded in the DNA of De Pleats. In 2000, De Pleats won awards for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the Netherlands and at the World Young Business Achievers Awards in the USA, when CSR was still a relatively new concept. In 2014, De Pleats became the first restaurant in Northern Netherlands to achieve the Green Key Gold certification. Companies with Green Key certification strive to reduce their environmental impact without compromising guest comfort. In addition, De Pleats is also a Fairtrade restaurant and a partner of MVO Nederland, the largest sustainable business network in the Netherlands.

Enabling Factors

Several factors have enabled the successful implementation of this best practice. Support from governmental organisations, unions, job coaches and confidentiality counsellors has been crucial, as well as a culture of inclusivity and flexibility within the organisation. Practical advice and assistance from local community resources have also played a significant role.

Barriers

There have been constraints, such as balancing the needs of autistic employees' pace with the overall workflow.

Impact on the Organisation

De Pleats has created a supportive and understanding work environment, enhancing inclusivity for neurodivergent employees. These improvements have been gradual, with positive changes in both employee and customer satisfaction. For example, the organisation has a low turnover rate, indicating high employee satisfaction. The organisation has welcomed back former employees who want to return after trying other jobs. This sense of pride and loyalty among staff members reflects the positive impact of the inclusive practices implemented by De Pleats.

Customers have also responded positively to the inclusive environment at De Pleats. The restaurant's flexibility and ability to accommodate diverse needs have been appreciated by patrons. For example, they have quiet corners for autistic customers and allow families to phone in their orders in advance to minimise waiting times. This welcoming atmosphere has contributed to a positive customer experience, further validating the effectiveness of the best practices in place. The restaurant is known for its inclusivity, employing people with different, intellectual and physical abilities, cultural backgrounds, citizenship status and sexual orientation. This attracts a diverse clientele despite the rather homogenous small-town setting in which De Pleats is located.

Quotes

'True hospitality is also being open to people who don't look like you or who are very different.'

'The most important thing is [that] they [people with disabilities] don't want to be separated or treated differently. They want just to be the part of the group.'

Lessons Learned

Several lessons have been learned from the implementation of this initiative. True inclusive hospitality should be ingrained in the culture of the organisation. Clear communication and support structures are essential to ensure the success of inclusive practices. Creating a welcoming and supportive environment for all and not making a distinction between employees with and without disabilities is vital, as this helps create a more inclusive environment. Everybody has a task and everybody is equally important.

Future Plans

De Pleats plans to continue its current practices with a focus on making inclusivity and sustainability priorities. The goal is to create an environment where inclusivity is a natural part of the organisational culture.

Links with UN Sustainable Development Goals

De Pleats provides employment opportunities to individuals with disabilities and those from diverse backgrounds, ensuring decent work conditions and promoting economic inclusion.

The organisation actively recruits and supports employees with disabilities, including autism, and promotes an inclusive work environment where everyone is treated equally.

De Pleats acts as a community hub, offering a space for various community activities and supporting local residents, including those with disabilities.

4.3- INCLUSION OF TOURISTS WITH DISABILITIES

4.3.1- Trylt, Hungary

Location	Budapest, Hungary
Website	https://try-budapest.com/

Source: Photo with copyrights provided by Trylt

Organisation Information	Trylt is a Tour Operator that offers city tours in Budapest for both Hungarian and foreign groups. The company has provided both fixed-route and personalised tours. The goal of the company is to provide a unique experience for guests.

Context

When Trylt was established in 2020, one of its objectives was to provide specialised city tours for individuals with limited mobility. The inspiration for this initiative came from the founders' personal connections with people with disabilities, which made them aware of the lack of accessible tourism options. Specific needs of this demographic were not addressed by existing tours. This realisation motivated them to create inclusive tours that ensure equal access to cultural experiences. The company currently has four permanent employees

including its two founders, one permanent tour guide, one project-based employee and a few occasional tour guides.

Implementation

Before launching Trylt, the founders initiated a planning phase, which involved renting a wheelchair and mapping out potential routes. The purpose of this phase was twofold: first, to gain a first-hand understanding of the user experience, and second, to identify specific challenges along the routes, such as pedestrian points, staircases, and sharp turns. Through multiple rounds of trial and error, they developed a final checklist to ensure the accessibility of each route. This checklist also served as a basis for contingency plans, recognising that a single misstep could negatively impact the overall experience for wheelchair users. After completing the initial phase, the founders developed training programs for tour guides to ensure a seamless experience for participants. The checklists created during the planning phase serve as a foundation, directing tour guides on the specific accessibility issues they need to be aware of. In addition, the training emphasises the development of soft skills, teaching guides to approach guests with respect, care, and sensitivity to create an inclusive and supportive environment.

Enabling Factors

Trylt adapted the principles of the European Disability Card into its tourism offerings, promoting social inclusion and equal opportunities for individuals with reduced mobility in Europe. This program served as a guide for developing their services. Another enabling factor is the company's careful planning, which ensures their tours are uniquely designed to meet the needs of this demographic. Additionally, Trylt has received national project funding aimed at creating cultural experiences for people with disabilities. This has allowed the company to offer tours to this group with expenses covered in the past.

Barriers

Trylt identified several recurring barriers to its operations. First, the extensive planning phase is reflected in its elevated price, which deters potential customers. Hungarian tourists, particularly those with disabilities, exhibit high price sensitivity, which negatively affects demand for the company's services. As for foreign tourists, there is a lack of interest for accessible tours. Many international visitors with disabilities prefer conventional city tours, relying on family members for assistance during these experiences. Lastly, various external and technical factors can negatively impact the tours, such as malfunctioning lifts in buildings that are part of the planned itinerary.

Impact on the Organisation

Trylt constantly receives positive feedback regarding its tours. Customers highlight the carefulness with which the tour was evidently planned, and the kindness of the tour guides.

'Customers really appreciate the extra carefulness when planning a personalised city tour.'

'It is an excellent sensitivity training for the tour guides.'

Lessons Learned

Trylt acknowledges that the sensitivity training imparted unto its guides is highly effective for understanding the specific needs of individuals with disabilities. By having tour guides experience the tours as if they were part of this cohort of people, they can lead with greater care, respect, and patience. Additionally, Trylt encourages other tour operators in Europe to replicate the same methodology. Trylt advise them to do the accessible routes advertised online and assess their feasibility. By identifying necessary adjustments, tour operators can turn this into an offering to better serve individuals with disabilities.

Future Plans

Trylt will continue to improve their training by considering the feedback provided by users. They are open to receiving external funding to contribute toward the cultural enrichment of disabled people.

Links with UN Sustainable Development Goals

By providing specialised tours and sensitivity training for guides, Trylt promotes social integration for people with disabilities, enhancing the tourist experience.

Trylt encourages the development of accessible cities by carefully planning routes that prioritise inclusivity and sustainable practices, considering the needs of all tourists.

4.3.2- Casa Rural Rosalia, Spain

Location	Cardeña, Spain
Website	https://www.andalucia.org/es/cardena-alojamientos-casa-rural-rosalia

Source: Photo with copyrights provided by Casa Rural Rosalia

Organisation Information

Casa Rural Rosalia is an accessible, automated rural accommodation designed to host individuals with severe mobility challenges. This initiative is led by a micro-enterprise dedicated to sustainability and inclusion, emphasising environmental stewardship and ensuring accessibility without physical or social barriers. The accommodation currently holds 2 environmental management labels, including the Andalusian Natural Park Brand since March 2009 and the Certificate of Accession to the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in May 2010.

Context

Casa Rosalia, launched in 2001, was the first fully accessible accommodation in Andalusia and one of the first in Spain. This "intelligent" property was the product of a restored century-old farmers' house, designed to host tourists with physical and sensory disabilities. The innovative project was inspired by the founder's personal physical disability which requires the use of a wheelchair. Casa Rosalia promotes inclusive tourism, offering marginalised individuals the opportunity to comfortably enjoy Southern Spain's attractions.

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Additionally, Casa Rosalia aims to support tourism development in Cardeña, Cordoba. The founder operates as a self-employed individual, occasionally hiring staff for cleaning and maintenance.

Implementation

The services of an architect were engaged to oversee the building's restoration. The renovation incorporated various assistive technologies such as motion sensors, automated light switches and door openings, doors, blinds, and windows of specialised widths, low-height beds as well as the installation of a crane and shower chair. Additionally, the design included ramps for outdoor access. Attention was also given to preserving the building's Andalusian rustic architecture. The restoration plans were approved, and the renovation was executed. The acceptance of the product into the market was a gradual process as the promotion of rural properties was limited at the time. Over the years, Casa Rosalia's reputation was solidified within its target market. The project's success facilitated the development of other inclusive public initiatives in the region, such as a network of accessible trails and an astronomical observatory. Today, Cardeña is a leading destination for individuals with disabilities.

Enabling Factors

One key enabling factor for this inclusive tourism initiative was the founder's personal experience with severe mobility challenges. Their specialised training and firsthand understanding were essential for designing the necessary improvements to ensure Casa Rosalia was fully accessible such as ensuring a barrier-free access to all rooms and the integration of home automation. Additionally, the founder's expertise in tourism management, built over 30 years as a tourism councillor in Cardeña, provided valuable insights into tourism planning and development, contributing to the success of this initiative. Its long term-success and influence paved the way for greater EDI initiatives in Andalusia, setting a precedent for future accessible accommodations.

Barriers

When Casa Rosalia was being repurposed in the early 2000s, it faced several limitations. First, there was a lack of specific regulations, technology, and architectural and construction expertise as accessibility and home automation were still underdeveloped. An additional constraining factor was overcoming lack of trust and visibility of the property at the beginning. Promotion through online platforms was not widely utilised at the time, and awareness relied heavily on word-of-mouth. Despite overcoming these barriers, Casa Rosalia still faces psychological and social obstacles that individuals with disabilities often experience. This demographic often faces travel challenges, leading to negative experiences and reduced tourism engagement.

Impact on the Organisation

The implementation of Casa Rosalia as a fully accessible rural accommodation has led to a notable improvement in customer and user satisfaction. This has been achieved by enabling individuals with varying levels of physical and sensory disabilities to enjoy a new destination

with a high level of comfort. Furthermore, the excellent ratings for both the accommodation and destination have positioned this tourism offer as one of the best for people with disabilities in the country.

Quotes

'Casa Rosalía's pioneering approach to accessible accommodation in Andalucía has paved the way for greater equality, diversity and inclusion. The establishment of inclusive holidays for individuals with varying physical and sensory disabilities has been a significant step forward.'

Lessons Learned

Casa Rosalia demonstrates that inclusive tourism is achievable through thoughtful consideration of the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities. Improvements in architecture and home automation have helped overcome accessibility barriers. This offers the hospitality industry the potential for progress to enhance the tourism experience for everyone.

Future Plans

Casa Rosalia will continue with its operations. In addition, other private and public projects are being implemented in the region to continue to expand EDI practices through future tourism development strategies.

Links with UN Sustainable Development Goals

Through its inclusive infrastructure, Casa Rosalia serves as a testament to innovative practices in the hospitality industry. The property integrates smart technology and accessibility features that enhance the overall guest experience while addressing the unique challenges faced by individuals with disabilities.

This initiative directly addresses inequalities by providing fully accessible accommodations for individuals with physical and sensory disabilities.

The restoration of Casa Rosalia conserves traditional architecture of the region's houses while integrating modern technologies. The project reflects a commitment to preserving cultural heritage, which is crucial for community identity and pride.

4.3.3- Village for All (V4A), Italy

Location	Italy
Website	https://www.villageforall.net/en/

Sources:Free copyright from Pexels
(https://www.pexels.com/photo/an-elderly-couple-walking-on-the-street-13538791/
by Artur Borecki)

Organisation Information	Village for All (V4A) is a tourism innovation company established in 2008, specialising in accessible hospitality. The company provides a platform with a wide range of accessible destinations throughout Italy, including hotels, campsites, and tourist villages each meeting accessibility criteria.

Context

The social mission of V4A is to ensure inclusive travel across Italy by building a network of public and private partners that accommodate travellers with diverse accessibility needs, while also offering an online platform to provide activities. The organisation was created to respond to the needs of people with visual and hearing impairments, motor disabilities and cognitive or behavioural challenges. Similarly, V4A recognised that accessibility extends beyond disabilities. For this reason, V4A's platform also provides inclusive leisure opportunities for elderly individuals, families with young children, and people with allergies or food intolerances. V4A's philosophy is "*To each his own holiday!*", reflecting its commitment to accessible travel for all individuals.

Implementation

The first step to certifying tourism businesses and adding them to the V4A network involves in-person visits to each facility to verify accessibility standards are met. V4A then collects detailed information about the level of autonomy and independence required by travellers to accurately describe the facility on its platform. This enables travellers to choose holidays that best meet their individual needs and capabilities.

To further promote inclusivity in tourism companies, the organisation has developed specialised e-training courses in accessible hospitality in collaboration with TecnoAcademy, a professional online training platform that issues training credits. These customised courses are designed for entrepreneurs and technicians who want to deepen their knowledge in accessibility, focusing on professional profiles in reception, maintenance, housekeeping, and food and beverage. These courses aim to make the hospitality sector reliable, complete, and consistent with people's needs by ensuring employees can meet the needs of guests with special requirements. By embedding accessible hospitality as part of touristic establishment's social responsibility, the training aims to unite the strategic vision of companies, guiding them to become more inclusive and sustainable.

Enabling Factors

A key enabler of V4A is its ability to support the network's associations, public and private organisations in accessing the market through a consolidated working method. This approach is the result of numerous national and international relationships as well as decades of practical experience gained directly in the field. Furthermore, the training modules are informed by the latest trends, making certain the company remains relevant and responsive to evolving tourist needs. For example, the course "Accessible Design of Hospitality and Commercial Activities" moves beyond the concept of only removing architectural barriers for people with disabilities. This training aims to change the perspectives on accessibility needs in everyday settings within hospitality, seaside, commercial, and restaurant environments.

Barriers

V4A recognises that entering the specialised accessible tourism market requires significant knowledge, skills, investment, and experience. One of the biggest challenges has been the limited research and lack of awareness about the importance of accessibility in the tourism sector as many operators consider complying with the government regulations to be sufficient. Companies that wish to enhance their knowledge in this field often face substantial time and financial costs to build the necessary resources, training and understanding. To address this, the company provides training courses to ensure that hospitality services are consistent and achievable with the diverse needs of all guests. Additionally, despite applying a uniform implementation to build a competitive advantage, efforts to improve facilities for all guests to address the specific accessibility needs of some individuals are still ongoing. For example, accessibility requires an integrated approach between various sectors (transport, hospitality, culture and public administrations), and the lack of coordination makes it difficult to offer a complete and accessible tourist experience. Lastly, many tourism operators show resistance to adopting new practices or changing their business models to be more inclusive. Addressing these difficulties still requires perseverance, continuous dialogue with stakeholders and a constant commitment to

education and raising awareness on the value of accessibility not only as a moral obligation, but also as a business opportunity.

Impact on the Organisation

V4A's online platform has helped thousands of tourists by providing correct, detailed and reliable information to helps tourists choose destinations based on their interests, whether they are travelling with family, friends, or following their passions. In addition, companies in the network have described V4A as an ideal partner for tourism establishments, helping them refine their accessible hospitality offerings through expert guidance, certifications, and training.

Quotes

'What are the advantages that Accessible Hospitality can offer to your customer? Putting people's needs first: Objective, reliable, and complete information: Self-contained and independent holiday.'

'Accessible Hospitality… remind[s] us that people go on holiday, not disabilities.'

Lessons Learned

When catering to the needs of people with disabilities, it is essential to include a broader definition of accessibility extending beyond visible impairments. The industry must consider the specific needs of different life stages, including children, seniors, or those with food allergies or temporary difficulties. Offering accessible hospitality is a sign of efficiency, professionalism, and attentiveness to the quality of service. By honouring the specific requests from diverse guests, tourism companies can differentiate themselves and enhance their competitiveness. Lastly, to build a truly inclusive environment, it is crucial to ensure that every guest feels like an active participant in their travel experience. Fulfilling this will enhance their well-being and satisfaction, making tourists feel valued and supported throughout their journey.

Future Plans

V4A will continue to offer training courses and guidance to companies seeking to join the accessible tourism sector through its uniform design and consolidated working methods. It will also emphasise the importance of appropriate language and vocabulary when discussing accessibility, focusing on concepts like transparent accessibility.

Links with UN Sustainable Development Goals

V4A offers specialised training programs to tourism professionals, enhancing their skills and knowledge of accessible hospitality to better anticipate and meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.

V4A addresses the needs of individuals with mobility, cognitive, and temporary disabilities as well as those in different life stages by ensuring they have equal access to tourism.

V4A promotes inclusive communities by encouraging the tourism sector to meet diverse travellers' needs. This project ensures sustainable, accessible locations, by certifying partner organisations' ability to accommodate individuals with various accessibility requirements.

4.4- WELCOMING MIGRANTS

4.4.1- BioGastro Ltd., Hungary

Location	Budapest, Hungary
Website	https://www.biogastro.hu/

Source: Free copyright from Pexels
(https://www.pexels.com/photo/two-men-preparing-food-3217156/ by Rene Terp)

BioGastro Ltd. offers catering services and event management services to children in school and adults. The company offers 30 different menus featuring fresh, unprocessed ingredients to 70 locations outside of Budapest with kitchens located in Törökbálint and Lauder Javne Primary School. They also organise business and press conferences as well as corporate and personal events. The organisation is committed to fostering a healthier population.

Context

BioGastro, established in 2007, aims to provide food while considering the dietary needs of different groups of people ranging from children to corporate clients. With the domestic labour shortage in Hungary's commercial kitchens, BioGastro faced challenges in meeting clients demands. The company began to hire Thai workers in 2018 to ensure sustainable operations and started to develop intercultural awareness and inclusions strategies in the workplace. Currently, the company employs 64 people, including 10 Thai nationals.

Implementation

Thai workers are recruited in their home country for unskilled positions following the Office of Immigration and Nationality rules, including roles such as kitchen assistants and other professions. Additionally, accommodation and transportation to the workplace are provided for these workers. Upon employment, workers undergo a traineeship where a chef imparts the necessary skills for their role. Those interested in further development can pursue additional education and training, sponsored by BioGastro. Furthermore, Thai workers are put in contact with the Royal Thai Embassy, which offers advocacy and legal protection services. To support the integration of Thai workers into both the labour market and Hungarian society, team-building events and on-demand online training for higher-level employees are organised. These initiatives aim to strengthen effective collaboration between Hungarian and Thai workers.

Enabling Factors

One of the enabling factors for the best practices is the company's commitment to adequately equipping and training migrant workers for their roles in the kitchens. BioGastro provides a handbook containing detailed instructions on the use of ingredients, tools, and machines, available in English, Thai, and Hungarian. Additionally, a color-coding system is employed to ensure effective communication, with colours used to distinguish tools and specific areas of work. Finally, the company emphasises the importance of Thai workers in the workplace as an asset, as shown by their outstanding performance, reliability, strong work ethic, adaptability, and ability to learn quickly.

Barriers

The main constraints faced by this practice stems from the cultural differences between Thai and Hungarian workers. Communication difficulties present challenges for effective training, work planning, control, and cultural adaptation. To address language barriers, daily professional briefings are held to efficiently allocate tasks. Additionally, an interpreter is

provided to assist migrant workers in legal manners, thus facilitating integration into Hungarian society. An additional constraint is the time required for team integration, as experience shows that it typically takes six to twelve months for Thai and Hungarian workers to collaborate effectively. Team-building exercises are imparted to help accelerate this process. Lastly, although the cost of recruiting and retaining staff is lower compared to other alternatives, the expenses associated with hiring Thai workers remain significant.

Impact on the Organisation

Welcoming migrant workers into BioGastro has strengthened the team's work ethic and improved overall employee satisfaction. By integrating diverse mentalities, this approach has had a positive impact on the team's performance.

Quotes

'You can always support workers by giving them a little more, with the right tools.'

'If there is no best practice, the system will build bad practice into the way it functions.'

Lessons Learned

This practice shows that integrating different nationalities into the workforce can help improve performance and reduce the labour shortage faced by the tourism industry in Europe. Additionally, it is critical to ensure equal treatment and fair pay within a multicultural team.

Future Plans

BioGastro aims to enhance both performance and customer and employee satisfaction, guided by its core value of quality. The company is also considering technical solutions to reduce the physical workload on employees through digitalisation and semi-automation in its commercial kitchens. However, a balance must be maintained, as excessive automation could jeopardise the company's economic profitability and the role of its hardworking Thai employees.

Links with UN Sustainable Development Goals

By providing fair wages, BioGastro enables migrant workers to improve their livelihoods, gain financial security, and achieve economic independence.

The company provides training to develop skills and safeguards labour rights, ensuring workers are informed about their legal protections and receive fair treatment.

4.4.2- The Guinness Learning for Life Programme, Ireland

Location	Dublin, Ireland
Website	[TU Dublin Guinness Learning for Life Programme](#)
Photo	

Source: Photos with copyright provided by TU Dublin

Organisation Information	The Guinness Learning for Life Culinary Arts Programme is a skills programme provided by TU Dublin's School of Culinary Arts and Food Technology (SCAFT). It is funded by Diageo Ireland. Established in 1941, the School of Culinary Arts and Food Technology is Ireland's oldest and largest provider of culinary education. Diageo, who own Guinness, is a global leader in premium drinks.

Context

The Guinness Learning for Life Programme is a collaborative initiative designed to equip individuals facing educational and employment barriers with the necessary tools to secure jobs in the hospitality and tourism sectors. The programme attracts a mix of students from various nationalities and backgrounds including migrants, mature students, and early school leavers, reflecting diversity and global trends. This initiative began as a commitment by Diageo and TU Dublin to secure equitable access to opportunities for marginalised members of the community while attracting new talent into the industry.

Implementation

The Guinness Learning for Life Programme has been delivered in partnership with TU Dublin since 2020, integrating theoretical knowledge with industry practice. The Programme lasts for 12 weeks, 8 weeks of practical training in TU Dublin's kitchens and 4 weeks of real-world industry experience. Once enrolled, students received culinary equipment for hands-on training. During the first part of the Programme, students attend classes, kitchen and larder training as well as industry site visits and demonstrations. Additionally, they complete their HACCP & Emergency First Aid Training to provide them with the necessary skills and training to enter the workforce. Following their training, students secure work placements in restaurants, catering kitchens, or hotels to gain experience in full-time employment. Both Diageo and the TU Dublin's School of Culinary Arts and Food Technology lecturers provided assistance during this process. Success is measured by tracking alumni employment and gathering feedback through follow-up emails with both employers and participants. Each year, the Programme is adjusted to incorporate current trends and industry insights. A similar development, the Hospitality Access Programme (HAP), was recently developed through collaboration between Diageo and TU Dublin's School of Tourism and Hospitality. This programme includes modules such as Food & Beverage, Hospitality Studies, and Rooms Division. HAP has received funding for four intakes starting in January 2024 and finishing in December 2025.

Enabling Factors

A key enabler of the programmes is the combination of Diageo's industry resources and TU Dublin's educational expertise. Diageo's funding supports initiatives aligned with its strategic goal of community engagement. Meanwhile, TU Dublin leverages its extensive teaching experience to create pathways to overcome educational barriers. Additionally, students bring motivation and commitment to learning and personal growth, reinforcing the success of the Guinness Learning for Life and Hospitality Access Programmes.

Barriers

The primary constraint of the Programme is the prevailing perception of the hospitality industry. This perspective leads to significant challenges in staff retention, resulting in labour shortages and a decline in student enrolment in hospitality and culinary courses. Additionally, asylum seekers and refugees face barriers to securing employment, including issues related to work permits and discrimination.

Impact on the Organisation

Students who have participated in the Guinness Learning for Life Programme express their gratitude to both organisations for equipping them with the skills necessary to enter the workforce. Participants reflect diligence and integrity acquired during this programme in their professional lives. Additionally, students create shared human experiences through a supportive environment where they mentor, coach, and inspire each other for personal development. Additionally, this initiative creates a talent pool of trained individuals who possess the skills and commitment to thrive in the industry.

Quotes

'The program equipped me with invaluable knowledge, from basic cooking fundamentals to advanced culinary techniques. Each session was an opportunity to learn, grow and experiment in the kitchen.' [6]

Lessons Learned

The Learning for Life Programme encourages diversity among its students, celebrating their varied traditions and cultures. Through culinary preparation, cooking and presentation, students express themselves through this art that transcends words. Participants show true authenticity, determination and passion.

Future Plans

Equality, fairness and respect will continue to guide the initiative's continuous improvement and growth. At the same time, both TU Dublin and Diageo look forward to continuing their partnership and welcome new participants.

Links with UN Sustainable Development Goals

The Guinness Learning Life Programme offers practical training and courses through the Ireland's oldest and largest culinary arts and hospitality educational institution. These opportunities equip participants with the essential skills needed for successful careers.

This initiative assists participants to find work to improve their socio-economic circumstances. The Guinness Learning for Life Programme aims to help Ireland to achieve full employment for individuals facing social exclusion.

Educational and employment access are offered to people with disadvantaged backgrounds. By promoting diversity, inclusion is encouraged regardless of age, social status, or gender in the hospitality and culinary sectors.

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[6] Testimonial from a previous participant on the Learning for Life Culinary Arts programme obtained form https://www.tudublin.ie/explore/faculties-and-schools/arts-humanities/culinary-arts--food-technology/partnership/bespoke-programmes-with-partners/

4.4.3- Lapland Education Centre (REDU), Finland

Location	Rovaniemi, Lapland, Finland
Website	https://redu.fi/fi

Sources: Vastavalo, Visit Finland (2015)

Organisation Information

The Lapland Education Center (REDU) is the largest vocational education provider in Lapland and is part of the Rovaniemi Municipal Federation of Education. REDU offers a wide selection of training programs to 5,000 students across six locations.

Context

REDU is implementing a project to permanently attract foreign seasonal workers while supporting their social integration by providing degrees and training courses in English to equip employees with the necessary skills to succeed in the local tourism and restaurant industries. The initiative was created in response to labour shortages in Lapland, which were further aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic. As illustrated by last year's figures, approximately 12,000 international workers were estimated to be employed in Lapland during the winter season of 2023-24, highlighting the demand for skilled labour in the region. REDU's personnel consist of approximately 560 experts working in different positions.

Implementation

In collaboration with Lapland's tourism employers, REDU developed a training model tailored to meet the specific needs of the regional workforce. In addition to vocational training, this model prioritised EDI content by offering courses in Finnish language, cultural

knowledge, and workplace skills to support the effective integration of foreign workers into Lapland.

To pilot this initiative, international participants were recruited through personnel service companies. Initially, an assessment was conducted to map the training and skill needs of foreign employees, focusing on Finnish language and cultural qualifications. The training packages were then piloted within tourism and restaurant establishments. Based on feedback from students and employers, a final model was created from this pilot study to support participants' academic progress and inclusion into Finland's workforce.

Enabling Factors

The main factor enabling of this inclusive training program was the collaboration between REDU and tourism establishments. This partnership ensured the integration of foreign workers into the labour market by providing an understanding of Finnish culture and workplace norms. An additional key factor was that vocational education in Finland is offered free of charge to participants.

Barriers

The project faced some challenges, particularly at the beginning, especially with the difficulties of the organisation in developing the pilot training model when it was difficult to secure employees. Employers reported that international recruitment is expensive. For this reason, the establishments avoided allocating training days during the peak season. Instead, employers preferred to provide training for employees themselves. Another identified barrier was the high cost of accommodation and transportation to the education centre. These expenses made it difficult to provide face-to-face training for employees before the season.

Impact on the Organisation

The initial data from the pilot indicated positive outcomes. By integrating assistance support and vocational training, participants are equipped to remain employed in the tourism sector in Lapland. The goal is to reduce the need for employers to hire new staff each year.

Quotes

'In the training, we discussed how to treat employees at work. For example, treatment should not vary according to nationality or gender.'

'The Living in Lapland training was participated by Filipino students living in Rovaniemi, where they studied the Finnish language and got to know the local culture and services. They also received library cards and got to know the immigrant services.'

Lessons Learned

To ensure a smooth integration of foreign employees, it is essential to share knowledge about their rights, resources and responsibilities in Finland.

Future Plans

The updated training model will be implemented. To increase the number of participants, REDU is exploring the option of offering the training via remote connection to overcome the past accommodation and transportation barriers.

Links with UN Sustainable Development Goals

The training model addresses the specific needs of the region's tourism and hospitality sectors and provides vocational training and learning opportunities through quality education.

The project provides vocational training and integration assistance to foreign workers to secure long-term employment in Lapland.

4.5- EMBRACING A CULTURE OF DIVERSITY

4.5.1- Grecotel Hotels and Resorts, Greece

Location	Greece
Website	https://www.grecotel.com/el/index.html

Source: Free copyright from Pexels
(https://www.pexels.com/photo/group-of-tourists-in-front-of-parthenon-14385272/
by Matheus Bertelli)

Organisation Information	Grecotel is a Greek hospitality group located in historical areas in the country. The Group employs 6,100 individuals to operate its 27 properties including luxury accommodations, resorts, and family hotels. Grecotel has received national and international awards for its contributions to tourism, hospitality, and societal enrichment.

Context

Grecotel is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive work environment across its hotels. The Group seeks to provide equal opportunities, improve employee satisfaction, and ensure that all stakeholders feel valued and motivated. Grecotel has made EDI practices central to its corporate philosophy due to the high turnover rates. For example, high importance is placed in accepting individuals from diverse backgrounds, with a particular focus on gender equality. The Group has employees from various group ages and 52 countries. Recently, Grecotel has also begun providing opportunities for refugees and migrants to join the workforce while integrating into Greek society. Furthermore, Grecotel prioritises education as a key aspect of its EDI practices, offering comprehensive training programs and policies designed to nurture an equitable workplace culture.

Implementation

Grecotel introduced its EDI practices in 2009 by partnering with organisations capable of certifying its commitment to these initiatives. In 2012, Grecotel received certifications from the Travel Life Organisation, an internationally recognised sustainability certification system for hotels, based on both social and environmental sustainability standards. The Group pioneered holistic EDI programs, focusing on education through ongoing training to ensure inclusivity for all employees. In addition, Grecotel conducts regular policy evaluations and monitors EDI compliance through anonymous employee surveys.

Enabling Factors

A key factor is the Group's commitment to certifications and transparent business practices that ensure compliance with equal treatment laws, prohibiting discrimination and harassment. Additionally, Grecotel actively engages with local communities, adopting an individualised approach that strengthens its EDI practices and encourages diverse applicants to join the company.

Barriers

Grecotel has not faced any obstacles or negative reactions from employees or other stakeholders regarding its EDI practices. However, employees may face potential violations of these initiatives. To address this, Grecotel trains its employees on how to report any violations of EDI policies anonymously, ensuring they understand the process and feel empowered to do so if necessary. The HR department promptly handles concerns, ensuring a discrimination-free and inclusive work environment.

Impact on the Organisation

The Group has identified notable benefits from a diverse workforce in terms of productivity, satisfaction and engagement. Employees have reported in their EDI evaluations that Grecotel's practices positively impact their daily work. By supporting a culture of inclusivity, teamwork is enhanced, resulting in positive outcomes for all stakeholders.

Quotes

'Being a leading hospitality organisation is not enough; we strive to have a positive impact on society.'

Lessons Learned

The Group recognises that each employee uniquely contributes to the enhancement of its services. Grecotel is committed to maintaining a respectful work environment that values the personality of all employees, as a diverse team embodies the company's philosophy.

Future Plans

Grecotel has plans to expand and upgrade its resorts while continuing to embrace a diverse and inclusive culture. The Group will create additional equal employment opportunities and continue to welcome participants from all backgrounds and genders. Additionally, Grecotel will provide ongoing training to employees on the importance of inclusivity.

Links with UN Sustainable Development Goals

As Greece's largest hospitality provider, Grecotel is dedicated to promoting decent work. This commitment is achieved through training programs and a strong emphasis on valuing diversity, which helps reduce turnover and enhance employee satisfaction.

Grecotel is committed to providing equal opportunities and welcoming employees regardless of age, gender, race, or ethnicity.

4.5.2- The Samuel Hotel, Ireland

Location	Dublin Ireland
Website	The Samuel Hotel

Source: Photo with copyrights provided by The Samuel

Organisation Information	The Samuel Hotel was established in 2022 as a property of the Dalata Hotel Group, the largest hotel company in Ireland. The hotel provides accommodation services to both business and leisure travellers.

Context

The Samuel is committed to creating an inclusive and respectful environment where all employees and guests feel valued. Its diversity strategies include equal opportunities for recruitment and promotions, unconscious bias training, and promoting gender balance in leadership roles. The focus on inclusive strategies stems from the Dalata Hotel Group's core values of 'people' and 'fairness.' With a diverse workforce of over 38 nationalities among its 100 employees, the Samuel recognises that adopting inclusivity is essential for team efficiency as well as employee engagement and motivation.

Implementation

The Samuel's diversity strategies begin with an inclusive and fair recruitment process, ensuring that opportunities are open to all. The hotel embeds inclusivity into its daily operations through a range of activities and ongoing training programs. These include regular sessions on EDI, safety, and mental well-being, all aimed at reinforcing a supportive and inclusive workplace culture. The Samuel consistently endorses cultural awareness and engagement through initiatives such as "Nationality Days," where employees can share insights about their countries. Additionally, the hotel conducts biannual internal surveys to

gather staff feedback on potential areas for operational and administrative improvements. Employees are also encouraged to express their interest in career advancement opportunities. Lastly, Samuel is committed to empowering women in their career advancement within the company, acknowledging the significant representation of females in the hospitality industry.

Enabling Factors

One of the key enabling factors for the success of the Samuel is its top-down decision-making approach, which ensures the consistent application of its diversity strategies values across all departments. By uniformly reinforcing its core values across the organisation, the Samuel ensures that managers are guided to make decisions that prioritise fairness and a people-centred approach. Another enabling factor is the hotel's ongoing EDI training courses such as overcoming unconscious bias and improving cultural awareness in customer service. Lastly, the Samuel tracks and reports data on nationality and gender distribution, helping to ensure a fair representation of diversity.

Barriers

A significant constraint is the resistance from individuals who may not fully embrace the organisation's diversity culture. Additionally, the nature of the hospitality industry presents challenges in implementing effective EDI training.

Impact on the Organisation

The diverse strengths and perspectives of individuals create a more balanced and effective team dynamic. Additionally, fostering an inclusive environment where cultural differences are valued contributes to employee well-being, which in turn positively impacts guest experiences. When team members feel welcomed and supported, they are more likely to project this with their behaviour.

Quotes

'Diversity is extremely important to positively impact employee satisfaction and delivery of service.'

'We aim to ensure that all employees feel valued and welcomed through our commitment to a diverse culture.'

Lessons Learned

A key lesson learned is that the implementation of effective diversity strategies and training requires time and clear communication, particularly as some employees may not be proficient in the local language. Time is necessary to evaluate effective approaches and create a plan to adjust where necessary. Finally, clear communication is essential to ensure a mutual understanding between management and staff about the importance of creating an inclusive environment.

Future Plans

The Samuel will continue to impart training that focuses on diversity and well-being of all stakeholders.

Links with UN Sustainable Development Goals

The Samuel's fair recruitment strategies ensure equal career development opportunities for all employees. Additionally, diversity practices promote a gender balance in leadership roles.
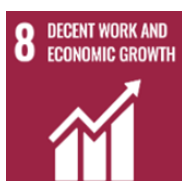
By providing personalised and operational training for professional growth, the Samuel contributes to the sustainable economic development of both the company and its workforce.

4.5.3- Intercontinental Lisbon, Portugal

Location	Lisbon, Portugal
Website	https://www.iclisbonhotel.com/en/

Source: Photo with copyrights provided by the InterContinental Lisbon

Organisation Information	The InterContinental Lisbon, a luxury hotel with 40 years of experience, joined the IHG Group in October 2014. The hotel provides service for both leisure and business travellers and employs 200 team members.

Context

The InterContinental Lisbon has named its initiative to embrace cultural diversity and inclusion True Hospitality for Good. The hotel has created non-discrimination policies regarding age, disability, and sexual orientation. In addition, the company actively supports women's career progression by providing equal opportunities. The aim of this commitment is to inspire the team to provide their services with the same energy as they do in their personal interests.

Implementation

The InterContinental Lisbon starts with a recruitment policy designed to enhance diversity as well as attracting and retaining its workforce. The hotel ensures fair treatment and equal opportunities for all employees by following the Global Protocol on Diversity & Inclusion. For example, the InterContinental Lisbon has begun to hire people with disabilities. Furthermore, the hotel also adopted the IHG Group's Journey to Tomorrow initiative which aims to positively contribute to the environment, communities, and individuals over a 10-year period. More recently, the InterContinental Lisbon created a diversity and inclusion handbook and an internal Diversity Calendar to highlight EDI events throughout the year.

Enabling Factors

A key enabler of the InterContinental Lisbon's diversity and inclusion policies is its affiliation with the IHG hotel chain, which provides the necessary guidance and resources to support and implement these initiatives. Furthermore, the InterContinental Lisbon has been a signatory of the Portuguese Charter for Diversity since 2018, strengthening its dedication to recognising, respecting, and valuing the unique differences among their stakeholders.

Barriers

Being so committed to EDI values demands a lot of training, additional activities, continuous awareness initiatives, and creative approaches to cultivate a more inclusive organisational environment.

Impact on the Organisation

Prioritising diversity and inclusion has boosted employee productivity and enhanced service delivery at the InterContinental Lisbon. The hotel has also earned awards for its inclusive practices. The 'Diversity Seal' was awarded based on its organisational culture focused on diversity, inclusion, and equal opportunities for career development and progression. Additionally, it has been named a 'Best Place to Work' in Portugal for prioritising its workforce's health and well-being.

Quotes

'Diversity is not about how we become equal, but how we respect and value our differences. Accept it, celebrate it and let it inspire you.'

'Our purpose is True Hospitality for Good. It's the positive difference we make in the world. We are focused on growing our business and everyone in it, fostering a unique culture with our Brilliant Talents, supporting local communities and contributing to sustainability.'

'Our promise to those who bring InterContinental Lisbon to life is to always have "Space to Belong", "Space to Grow" and "Space to Make a Difference". So Together We Go Further!'

Lessons Learned

By embracing diversity, the hotel recognised the importance of addressing workplace challenges with empathy and respect. This approach encouraged a culture of mutual understanding and collaboration. The hotel also shared that employees should be allowed freedom to reflect their personality to provide a unique service.

Future Plans

The InterContinental Lisbon is committed to prioritising diversity and inclusion in its managerial decisions to continue to create a positive and inclusive workforce. Additionally, the hotel invites applicants from all backgrounds to join its team, cultivating a dynamic work environment.

Links with UN Sustainable Development Goals

By prioritising the well-being of a diverse team, the hotel nurtures a positive workforce environment which ensures the sustainability of the hospitality sector.

The InterContinental Lisbon welcomes applicants from all backgrounds and disabilities. The further embraces inclusivity by recognising the uniqueness of all genders, races, and religions.

4.5.4- The Convention Centre Dublin, Ireland

Location	Dublin, Ireland
Website	https://www.theccd.ie/

Source: Free copyright from
Pexels(https://www.pexels.com/photo/dublin-28377925/ by Selim Karadayi)

Organisation Information	The Convention Centre Dublin (The CCD) offers 22 multi-functional rooms designed to hold meetings, conferences, banquets, and exhibitions for both international and Irish organisations.

Context

To create a more inclusive workplace, The CCD partnered with the Irish Centre for Diversity (ICFD) to gain Accreditation as an Investor in Diversity. This initiative began in 2022 when management identified a lack of diversity in leadership positions. They recognised the need to include minority voices in internal discussions, given the diverse backgrounds of a significant portion of their workforce. The program focuses on developing EDI policies and providing training for managers and staff on employee well-being, raising awareness of the challenges related to inclusion. The CCD currently employs 73 permanent and 25 temporary employees.

Implementation

In 2022, the organisation contacted the ICFD to guide it to develop more EDI practices. By 2023 and 2024, The CCD achieved the ICFD Bronze and Silver accreditation in Investors in Diversity, which benchmarks performances of Irish organisations in developing diversity practices in the workplace. The CCD has been invested in developing more practices to

achieve Gold Accreditation as an Investor in Diversity. As part of this phase, the CCD engaged with its workforce to identify EDI needs and gaps. This included distributing a survey and creating an employee resource group to gather deeper insights. The findings were compiled into a report submitted to the ICFD, which provided a tailored action plan for enhancing EDI practices. The initial phase of this plan involved training managers in inclusive leadership, which has already been completed. This training is currently being extended to staff. Policies are also being revised to reflect a more inclusive language and integrate mental health awareness.

Enabling Factors

An enabling factor is that employees from all levels are positively embracing this initiative, recognising the need for a cultural shift toward inclusivity to facilitate a more supportive work environment. For example, the employee resource group, composed of staff from various nationalities and ranks, offers valuable insights into EDI policies and action plans, ensuring diverse perspectives are considered. The CCD has also introduced mental health aides to provide emotional support for employees in need.

Barriers

The primary constraint faced by The CCD according to its first findings, is resistance to change. Some staff members hesitate to share their EDI concerns, fearing that voicing personal challenges may lead to differential treatment instead of inclusion. Additionally, unconscious biases were also identified, which present a challenge for the changes the organisation is making. Employees are currently receiving training to identify and address these biases effectively.

Impact on the Organisation

Since acquiring the Diversity accreditation, The CCD has observed a more inclusive and respectful approach to decision-making. The training has enabled managers at all levels to recognise the significance of EDI policies for employee well-being and productivity. As the accreditation process has progressed, employees have gradually begun to openly share their experiences regarding physical and mental disabilities in the workplace.

Quotes

'We have been successful in making employees voice concerns about their struggles with mental health. We've managed to remove the stigma around that.'

'We are working on being more inclusive with our language and policies to make the diverse workforce feel valued and heard.'

Future Plans

The CCD is currently developing its Strategic Planning Process for 2025, with a strong emphasis on EDI practices. This includes the implementation of new policies focused on raising awareness of neurodiversity challenges as well as promoting intercultural and

LGBTIQ+ inclusion. Periodic meetings with the employee resource group will be conducted to gather feedback on action plans and further identify EDI needs. In response, new training programs will be developed.

Links with UN Sustainable Development Goals
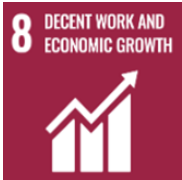
EDI accreditations enable The CCD to meet the diverse needs of employees effectively, contributing to a decent work environment.

The new EDI policies and training are creating a cultural shift that recognises employees beyond their ethnicity, gender orientation, or disabilities.

4.5.5. Rijksmuseum, The Netherlands

Location	Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Website	https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en

Source: photo with copyrights, Rachel Ecclestone, 2024

The Rijksmuseum is the national museum of the Netherlands. With a collection of over 1 million objects, the museum tells the story of 800 years of Dutch history by displaying 8,000 objects at any given time including paintings, sculptures, and historical artifacts. The Rijksmuseum reopened in 2013 after a ten-year renovation. It currently employs approximately over 750 people.

Context

Rijksmuseum attracts a significant number of national and international visitors which is why diversity and inclusion is considered crucial. For example, staff need cultural competences such as being able to communicate in multiple languages and understand different national backgrounds, to provide a welcoming experience. Rijksmuseum has established several EDI initiatives with the aim of learning through different perspectives in the organisation. This encompasses practices related to physical and mental abilities, cultural diversity, accessibility, neurodiversity, inclusive leadership and equitable recruitment practices. The museum has gathered all separate EDI related initiatives into one structured policy which is firmly embedded into the organisation's overall strategy. This has been operationalised in the museum's governance structure which includes a steering group consisting of department heads, a director and the diversity and inclusion manager, and an employees' ambassador group represented by various departments and perspectives that provide feedback on inclusion and social safety. The presence from this wide range of internal stakeholders ensures that EDI is a joint effort to keep the topic on the collective agenda.

Implementation

In 2017-2018, the Vrije Universiteit VU Amsterdam conducted a baseline measurement to provide a foundation for EDI related practices with the aim of adopting an integrated learning approach to remain innovative and flexible, not only internally but also in the face of societal developments. Additionally, it aimed to integrate different perspectives into the museum's offerings and structure. To further advance EDI efforts, the Rijksmuseum crafted the Diversity & Inclusion Manager role in 2019. Rijksmuseum started by developing practices in relation to cultural diversity. A structured and standardised hiring process was implemented to ensure inclusive recruitment practices. The museum has shifted away from meeting quantitative targets in recruitment and retention of minority groups to a qualitative approach that focuses on embedding an inclusive mindset and behaviours. In addition, importance was given to training department heads and managers on inclusive leadership. Public-facing staff were also trained in 'hostmanship' to improve skills related to public interaction. In 2022, a mentorship programme was formulated to foster cross-departmental education while supporting a learning culture aligned with the organisation's goals, a safe environment and a sense of belonging. The museum also hired an Accessibility Manager to support the integration of people with different physical abilities through various programmes. Additionally, improvements were made to the building to include accessible offices and exhibition spaces. Since 2024, neurodiversity has been added to the EDI agenda to develop policies around this diversity component.

Recently, the Rijksmuseum has collaborated with guest curators and experts, including community representatives, to identify ways to be more inclusive in its collections. For

example, the museum has organised expositions highlighting female painters, colonial and slavery history of the Netherlands and provenance research on objects obtained during the colonial era or World War II. To further incorporate diversity, the museum has partnered with different communities. For example, the Rijksmuseum offers activities to celebrate Keti Koti (Broken Chain in Sranantongo), a commemoration of the abolition of slavery in Suriname and former Dutch Caribbean colonies. Additionally, the museum hosts activities related to Amsterdam Pride, an annual celebration of the LGBTIQ+ community to strive for emancipation, social, societal and legal equality and acceptance, are also offered. Lastly, the museum has partnered with the Jewish community to commemorate the victims of World War II.

Enabling Factors

Enabling factors include strong support from top management to embed EDI into the overall strategy. An example is the adoption of the mentoring programme to cultivate life-long learning strategies. Additionally, Rijksmuseum follows a structured governance approach by integrating the Dutch Cultural and Creative sector's four Ps of the Code Diversity & Inclusion: Programme, Public, Personnel and Partners. This systematic approach has enabled the museum to effectively develop EDI policies.

Barriers

The main constraint includes resistance to change. Altering the internal mindset and behaviours within the organisation requires time and the development of new dynamics between different departments.

Impact on the Organisation

Rijksmuseum has observed improvement in employee satisfaction and retention. An example is the positive feedback from both mentees and mentors participating in the mentorship programme. Learning opportunities for both mentees and mentors were actively created and career expectations for mentees became clearer. In addition, an internal dialogue on topics that impact the museum has been established. This has provided a better understanding of the different perspectives in the organisation. Visitors have also shown appreciation for these inclusive efforts. These initiatives do not only tie in with the museum's role as a learning organisation but also opens the museums to different target groups and voices.

Quotes

'You constantly have to get your topic on the agenda. You have to talk to people. You have to see if everything is happening. You have to be aware. It [diversity & inclusion] is not something that's going to disappear.'

'The more difficult part is to look at yourself as a leader or as a director and your own behaviour, or if you are role model and also if you are an inclusive leader. Do you ask your team for input or feedback or not? So, these are very difficult things and if you dive into that, then the organisation needs to be changed in all kinds of ways.'

Lessons Learned

Key lessons include the importance of a structured governance approach to embed EDI into the overall strategy and integrate it into all departments. A shift must be embraced to incorporate EDI into other organisations' overall strategy and develop policies that align with their purpose. In addition, having joint responsibility and considering the perspectives from various departments and stakeholders is key. Finally, measuring progress is important for the sustainability of EDI.

Future Plans

Rijksmuseum will measure and monitor the effectiveness of their EDI initiatives. In addition, all job vacancies will be phrased in an inclusive way. Managers will also receive unconscious bias training. Regarding the public, the museum is developing activities to attract more diverse visitors such as youths, families with children, and less affluent people.

Links with UN Sustainable Development Goals

Rijksmuseum provides a mentorship programme to promote life-long learning between staff members. It also offers exhibitions and activities to visitors about the history of the Netherlands.

The museum works with curators and communities to highlight female artists and their representation in history.

Rijksmuseum's recruitment and retention procedures have been modified to be more inclusive and fair. The museum focuses on cultivating the right mindset and behaviour instead of meeting quotas to ensure sustainable operations.

Rijksmuseum plays a vital role in preserving Dutch and global heritage, promoting accessibility and inclusivity of diverse communities in close dialogue with these communities and addressing sustainability as a key player in urban setting with heavy tourism influx. Additionally, Rijksmuseum monitors its social impact closely.

Rijksmuseum actively participates in partnerships inside and outside the Netherlands to increase awareness, knowledge, understanding and visibility of different communities and different perspectives on people, events, culture, history and current societal developments.

4.6- PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY

4.6.1- Trigon Hotels, Ireland

Location	Cork, Ireland
Website	https://www.trigonhotels.com/our-people/diversity-and-inclusion/
Photo	

Source: Photos with copyrights provided by Trigon Hotels

Organisation Information	Trigon Hotels employs 300 employees to run three properties in Cork, Ireland, and has been in business since 2009. Their services include accommodation, dining and conference facilities for both leisure and corporate guests.

Context

In 2019, Tigon formalised its commitment to diversity and inclusion by developing various policies to support EDI practices to better reflect the diverse backgrounds of its employees and guests. The organisation recognised that the need for change was the initial step in building a team that feels valued, which in turn enhances the quality of service provided to guests.

The first EDI initiative was the 'Females in the Workplace' program, addressing menopause and fertility support. Aiming to normalise these topics, Trigon provided training for managers across all levels to promote an understanding of the unique challenges women face. This program includes paid leave for employees experiencing menopause or fertility difficulties. Another EDI policy is the 'Gender Identity and Expression' which creates a

welcoming environment for employees of all genders. By actively supporting employees from the LGBTIQ+ community, Trigon seeks to create an environment where everyone feels safe to express their true selves. Trigon collaborates with Ability@Work, a foundation dedicated to helping individuals with disabilities secure employment. This partnership has successfully enabled Trigon to integrate six employees with disabilities into the accommodation and restaurant departments. Lastly, Trigon has implemented 'JAM cards,' which stands for 'Just a Minute,' making it the first hotel group in Ireland to adopt this initiative. Cards are available at reception for employees or guests with visible and invisible disabilities such as dyslexia, depression, or various intellectual disabilities. Trigon has trained its staff to offer immediate assistance to anyone who shows them.

Implementation

Trigon compiled a report on workforce diversity, examining the distribution of gender and nationalities across all hotels and levels within the organisation. This report also assessed the company's EDI policies to identify gaps that needed to be addressed. A holistic approach was then adopted to incorporate EDI policies throughout the entire career path of Trigon's employees. This began with integrating EDI practices in recruitment and pre-boarding, followed by developing onboarding training and ongoing education. Trigon continues to collect data to assess the impact of diversity on employee engagement and productivity, using reports and employee feedback. For additional guidance in maintaining an inclusive culture, Trigon has partnered with the Irish Centre for Diversity, successfully obtaining Silver Investors in Diversity accreditation this year.

Enabling Factors

 The key enablers of Trigon's initiatives are the comprehensive trainings and policies that empower employees to embrace an EDI culture. By establishing these policies and reinforcing them through training, Trigon cultivates company-wide commitment. An example is the company's pioneering fertility and menopause training sessions which have been rolled out by Trigon's directors to other hotels. Another enabling factor is the company's 'Change Makers.' This employee group, composed of individuals from diverse nationalities, roles, and age groups, meets monthly to explore how the hotel can further integrate inclusivity. The goal is to involve employees in the culture and the decision-making process.

Barriers

The main barrier has been resistance to change. Trigon's journey toward embedding inclusivity has required significant training and effort, progressing gradually to help employees fully embrace and value these principles.

Impact on the Organisation

The impact of Trigon's EDI practices has been measured since their implementation. A gender balance across all company levels has been achieved. Reports also indicate incremental increases in employee engagement, motivation, and retention rates. Additionally, guests have expressed appreciation for these policies, recognising the

company's commitment to the well-being of all stakeholders. Trigon has also won the award for Best Place to Work in the Irish hospitality sector for its EDI initiatives.

Quotes

'We wanted to enact and inspire change by welcoming all genders, nationalities and people with disabilities.'

'We wanted to get the message across that we accept employees for who they are and want them to feel safe to be their true selves.'

'We wanted to normalise subjects such as menopause or fertility issues by making managers aware of what women go through.'

Lessons Learned

Trigon recognises that a one-size-fits-all approach is ineffective, as each individual is unique, which is essential for providing personalised service. While rules and regulations are necessary, it is equally important to adapt management styles to suit each employee's circumstances.

Future Plans

The company plans to continue to evaluate the impact of its EDI practices to inform the development of additional training and policies that enhance inclusivity. The company also aims to create a manual that instructs employees on engaging with diverse stakeholders, stimulating a respectful culture where everyone feels included. This manual will be shared externally and serve as the foundation for new training programs. A key component of this manual involves selecting a department with high turnover to implement various management styles and monitor employee satisfaction and retention. Should these metrics improve, the successful strategies will be applied across other departments.

Links with UN Sustainable Development Goals

Trigon prioritises a health-focused workplace by supporting work-life balance and well-being. The hotels offer paid leave policies to support employees during critical times, helping to relieve stress.

The company supports female employees by raising awareness of challenges women face such as fertility and menopause. Additionally, Trigon aims to achieve gender equality by ensuring fair representation of women in leadership roles.

Trigon enhances employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, who are often marginalised in the workforce. Their JAM cards allow employees and guests with visible and invisible disabilities to communicate their needs discreetly. Trigon also supports the LGBTIQ+ community, ensuring a safe and inclusive environment for all employees to express their identities.

4.6.2- CEOE, Spain

Location	Madrid, Spain
Website	https://www.ceoe.es/es

Source: Photos with copyrights provided by CEOE

Organisation Information	CEOE stands for the Spanish Confederation of Business Organisations, representing the interests of all Spanish employers. Its mission is to guarantee a favourable, legal, competitive and supportive environment for the development of business activity. This is achieved through dialogue with public institutions and workers' representative organisations.

Context

CEOE created The Women's Leadership, Diversity, and Business Development Unit to promote gender equality by supporting and developing women at all stages of their careers, creating more competitive and diverse organisations. This Unit has established a women's leadership itinerary that includes the following projects: Future Female Directors,

Promociona, Progresa, and Proactiva. This global leadership ecosystem began with the Promociona Project in 2013 as an effort to promote female talent while increasing their representation in leadership roles.

Implementation

CEOE, as an organisation representing the interests of all Spanish companies, recognised the importance of ensuring equal opportunities for all genders. To address this, analyses were conducted to identify training needs. In addition, to ensure focused and results-oriented development, CEOE's governing bodies designed tailored programmes for each level using the input from experts. Based on these findings, three levels were identified: Proactiva, Progresa and Promociona. The various women's leadership programmes developed by CEOE are based on the participants' years of experience and current positions. The first level is aimed at women in their early careers seeking to take on a leadership role. Progressa is designed for women in middle management who wish to advance to senior positions. Promociona targets women in executive roles to enhance their leadership and strategic skills. There are specific requirements to enter each programme. For example, Promociona must have at least 15 years of management experience, a B2 level in English, and a letter of support from their current enterprise to join the initiative.

Enabling Factors

The main enabling factor is the deep involvement and commitment of Spanish companies to supporting female talent and encouraging participation in these initiatives. For example, numerous top managers from these organisations act as mentors in the programmes.

Barriers

CEOE identified resistance to change and potential internal cultural conflicts within organisations as the primary constraints for the initiative.

Impact on the Organisation

After the implementation of the different projects, the results were immediate. It was confirmed that the objective of increasing the presence of women in positions of responsibility within companies had been achieved. 52% of the women who participated in the Promociona programme and 45% of Progresa participants have been promoted within their organisations. While changes vary by programme and organisation, significant improvements have been observed over a 12-month period, with the number of women progressing up the hierarchical pyramid in their companies increasing each year. Additionally, both the 2,000 women and 700 companies who have participated in the programmes have reported improvements in terms of productivity and competitiveness. Lastly, CEOE has internationalised one of its projects with nine editions in Chile and four in Portugal.

 'The objective of this itinerary is the accompaniment and development of women in all their professional stages.'

Lessons Learned

Today's society demands that companies address their sustainability practices across environmental, economic, and social dimensions, recognising this as essential for economic activity to endure over time and drive development.. Within this sustainability framework, promoting practices of equality and diversity provides companies with the tools to fulfil their role of creating wealth for all, without exclusion. Fulfilling this commitment will also promote careers in tourism among young people, as it aligns with their expectations.

Future Plans

The four leadership projects will remain ongoing to further support women in their professional development.

Links with UN Sustainable Development Goals

CEOE'S projects aim to enhance career opportunities for women by addressing their underrepresentation in leadership roles, supporting gender equality.

The women's leadership itinerary actively promotes the professional development of participants, ensuring economic growth and inclusive work opportunities.

4.6.3- Grand Hotel Adriatico, Italy

Location	Florence, Italy
Website	https://www.hoteladriatico.it/

Sources:Free copyright from Freepik
(https://www.freepik.com/free-photo/laughing-gay-couple-enjoying-juice-bed_15856
31.htm#fromView=search&page=1&position=1&uuid=6fedf0e4-3fea-456f-b9ee-b03cd
2e9c273)

Organisation Information	The Grand Hotel Adriatico, located in Florence, has been a pioneer in accessible and barrier-free hospitality since the 1960s. This commitment to inclusivity is provided by 14 employees who ensure that guests from all backgrounds enjoy comfortable stays.

Context

In 2021, the Grand Hotel Adriatico became Italy's first certified gay-friendly hotel after obtaining the "QueerVadis Diversity & Inclusion Protocol." The Grand Hotel pursued this certification to address challenges faced by LGBTIQ+ travellers while enhancing their service experience.

Implementation

To strengthen its commitment to integrating diversity and inclusion into its accessible operations, the Grand Hotel Adriatico acquired the QueerVadis certification through RINA, a multinational body specialising in sustainable business practices. This process aimed to create a welcoming environment for LGBTIQ+ guests by providing training and guidance. Consequently, the Grand Hotel developed a specific management manual for LGBTIQ+

hospitality, focusing on areas such as legislation, communication, marketing, and diversity management. The Grand Hotel then adapted the manual into its operational practices.

Enabling Factors

An enabling factor is that 50% of European LGBTIQ+ travellers choose hotels that are certified as inclusive of sexual and gender minorities, demonstrating real commitment to EDI policies. Additionally, the location of the Grand Hotel attracts tourists from various backgrounds, as Florence's reputation as an inclusive destination dates to 1853 when Leopold II abolished penalties against homosexuality.

Impact on the Organisation

The QueerVadis certification has proven to be a valuable opportunity for gaining market share and standing out from the competition. It has become a strategic tool for commercial positioning, particularly in Western markets that are rightly focused on EDI issues, highlighting that embracing diversity has led to positive economic outcomes.

Quotes

'In our company we have always welcomed guests without ever making distinctions of ethnicity, religious belief or sexual orientation. We have always done so, but without focusing on the value of a totally inclusive welcome, which is why we decided to invest in doing something more.'

'We are proud to have received this certification which goes far beyond calling ourselves 'gay friendly'. The certification represents a further commitment for us to perfect our hospitality towards travellers.'

Lessons Learned

The hotel has recognised that tourism, at its core, is about inclusivity and diversity. Furthermore, the Grand Hotel has discovered that most sexual and gender minorities prefer hotels that openly welcome the LGBTIQ+ community. As a result, they choose hotels with policies that offer diversity training for staff, have policies against discrimination based on sexual orientation, and advertise in LGBTIQ+ media.

Future Plans

The Grand Hotel plans to continue welcoming international and local LGBTIQ+ guests to aligning with the company's social sustainability objectives.

Links with UN Sustainable Development Goals

The Grand Hotels reduces inequalities by creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for LGBTIQ+ guests, implementing non-discrimination policies, and offering diversity training.

Through the QueerVadis certification, the hotel ensures a welcoming environment for guests from diverse backgrounds, particularly those from the LGBTIQ+ community. It ensures the principles of fairness and dignity, embracing a culture of respect within its operations.

4.7- SUPPORTING EDUCATION AND TRAINING

4.7.1- Walking Toward Employability, Greece

Location	Greece, Italy, Belgium and Greece
Website	https://www.aitr.org/progetti/walking-towards-employability https://www.walkingtours.dantillesetdailleurs.org/

Source: free copyright from Pexels.com
(https://www.pexels.com/photo/a-group-of-friends-walking-on-the-street-while-having-conversation-10621014/ by Ceyda Çiftci)

Walking Towards Employability was developed by L'Associazione Italiana de Turismo Responsabile (AITR). Founded in 1998, AITR is one of the oldest active associations for Responsible Tourism in Europe. AITR has about 80 diverse members, including NGOs, large and small operators, from hotels, training centers, tour operators to bed and breakfasts, and publishing houses. The association advocates for sustainable tourism that respects local communities, preserves cultural heritage, and minimises environmental impact.

Context

In 2019, AITR launched the Walking Towards Employability as an EDI initiative to promote sustainable tourism through youth employability and community development in France, Italy, Belgium and Greece. The project aimed to identify replicable models of youth entrepreneurship that encourages socio-professional inclusion, particularly for vulnerable groups. An innovative skills course based on the walking tour model was created. Informed by partners' insights and virtual or on-site tours, the course used a learning-by-doing approach to help young people acquire entrepreneurial, technical, and transversal skills, integrating vocational training with responsible tourism. The project also highlighted the culture and history of underprivileged communities. Currently, two employees manage the initiative.

Implementation

The Walking Tour Course integrated five modules to address skill gaps among young adults. Participants were paired with mentors who used a toolkit to guide them, and training sessions were held to evaluate the course's effectiveness. The first module, How to Start a Sustainable Walking Tour Collaborative Business? introduced the Business Model Canvas, guiding young participants in the design of their walking tour proposals. The second module, Asset Community Mapping through Street Audit and Digital Tools! helped youths to identify local opportunities for tourism development. Through visual and audio tools, participants observed community characteristics, recognised cultural heritage assets, and advertised the local environment through video production. The third module, How to Do Tourism Where There Seems to Be Nothing? taught the young people how to highlight overlooked places, histories, and cultural traits. It encouraged participants to rediscover their environment, turning local heritage into social value while developing skills in storytelling and itinerary design. The fourth module, A FAM Trip: What Is It and How to Organise One, equipped young entrepreneurs with the knowledge to plan and execute successful familiarisation trips for travel agencies, tour operators, journalists, and bloggers, aimed at promoting destinations or tourism products. The final module, Marketing: Convivial and Collaborative Communication, introduced a fresh approach to marketing for responsible tourism, focusing on fostering genuine and collaborative communication. It also included a hands-on exercise in identifying a region's unique characteristics using a landscape assessment map. A handbook and website were developed following the project's pilot phase.

Enabling Factors

A key enabling factor of the Walking Towards Employability project was AITR's extensive expertise in responsible tourism. AITR pioneered this concept when it was still largely unknown, and today responsible tourism is recognised by organisations such as the WTO, the European Union, and state masterplans. This strong foundation, along with AITR's established presence in multiple countries, facilitated the project's development. For example, AITR promotes locally managed hospitality to strengthen community ties built on interpersonal relationships between tourists and the region. The association also advocates for transparent pricing, solidarity contributions, and visits to local NGO projects. An additional enabling factor was that the project was financed by the European Union through the Erasmus+ KA2 program.

Barriers

The main challenge faced by the project was a delay in its initial launch, originally scheduled for 2019, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The delay was further complicated by the varying national regulations on organising walking tours after restrictions were lifted. Additionally, the pandemic significantly reduced the number of tourists willing to travel abroad or participate in group tours due to health and safety concerns.

Impact on the Organisation

This initiative shifted the mindset of young people who previously lacked opportunities to become entrepreneurs. By developing their business skills within the responsible tourism sector, this EDI initiative empowered them to start their own businesses. Although community involvement began only near the end of the project, local stakeholders were pleased to participate, recognising both the economic benefits and increased visibility from being part of a responsible tourism initiative.

Quotes

'*The best practice improved a change of mindset, mainly promoting an entrepreneurial attitude and enabling the integration in a different form of tourism supported by the community, representing their little-known cultural assets and history.*'

'*Regarding the mindset of the young people, the most visible changes have occurred since the beginning of the course, as they have acquired entrepreneurial skills to integrate into the responsible tourism sector.*'

Lessons Learned

The project encouraged an entrepreneurial attitude among socio-professionally vulnerable young people. The Walking Towards Employability project also stimulated the integration of underdeveloped and disadvantaged rural areas into a community-supported tourism model. The initiative highlighted lesser-known cultural assets and history through responsible, community-based walking tours. By combining youth employability initiatives with the promotion of local culture, this project contributed to policy recommendations for the European Union.

Future Plans

As highlighted above, a handbook and a website were created outlining the methodology for developing the walking tour model for responsible tourism. Countries can utilise these resources to implement the model effectively. Currently, there are no specific future plans beyond promoting access to these resources.

Links with UN Sustainable Development Goals

The Walking Towards Employability project provides specialised training to acquire entrepreneurial skills to help young people gain the knowledge necessary to succeed in the tourism sector.

This project equips socio-vulnerable youth with the tools to start their own businesses while integrating underprivileged communities and promoting local representation.

The Walking Towards Employability project promotes community tourism models that use local resources for sustainable services. It also encourages responsible consumption in tourism, respects local cultures, and enhances the economic viability of underprivileged communities.

4.7.2- The Mindful Kitchen at TU Dublin, Ireland

Location	Dublin, Ireland
Websites	https://www.tudublin.ie/explore/faculties-and-schools/arts-humanities/culinary-arts--food-technology/ https://www.tudublin.ie/media/website/explore/schools/culinary-arts-and-food-technology/documents/NTUTTOR-Showcase--POSTER--The-Mindful-Kitchen-Creative-Food-Sustainability.pdf

Source: Photo with copyrights provided by TU Dublin

Organisation Information	Technological University Dublin (TU Dublin) was established in January 2019 through the merger of three higher education institutions: Dublin Institute of Technology, Institute of Technology Blanchardstown, and Institute of Technology Tallaght. Enrolling approximately 28,000 students annually, TU Dublin offers a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate programs across disciplines including engineering, business, tourism, culinary arts, and the sciences.

Context

The Mindful Kitchen project is a module that empowers culinary students to integrate well-being techniques into their training. Launched in 2019, this module uses mindfulness-focused pedagogy to prepare students for healthy chef careers, emphasising inclusivity and teamwork as essential to a thriving kitchen. The project originated from head

chefs' feedback on the mental health impact of the sector's fast-paced environments. The Mindful Kitchen is currently taught in various programmes in the School of Culinary Arts and Food Technology.

Implementation

Lecturers and students collaborated to incorporate personal sustainability and positive work habits to drive social change. The pilot module taught first-year university students' skills like self-awareness, creativity, and teamwork. For example, students practiced inclusive leadership by managing a kitchen with a zero-tolerance policy for poor practices. Due to its success, a second module was developed for second-year culinary students, focusing on social and environmental sustainability, prioritising local sourcing. In the following year, a third version was co-created, emphasising social gastronomy to highlight chefs' potential to support inclusive communities. The Mindful Kitchen Project was also integrated into various postgraduate degrees, allowing its principles to be applied across all hospitality settings. The project has received external funding from Food on the Edge, the Chef's Network, and various other partnerships to promote and disseminate new practices related to the topic.

Enabling Factors

A key enabling factor is the cultural transformation driven by culinary students, with the younger generation actively embracing a positive and inclusive kitchen culture. Additionally, the project integrates new methodologies like active, problem-based, and collaborative learning which highlights the importance of equality and respect among all stakeholders, from producers to kitchen staff. These approaches further enhance teamwork, which is crucial for promoting a more equitable kitchen environment while supporting mental health.

Barriers

Constraints on this best practice include the traditional culture of the culinary world, characterised by a high-pressure and hierarchical environment. Additionally, there is often resistance to change within the professional setting.

Impact on the Organisation

Students report that these skills have helped them integrate into the industry, stimulating teamwork and supporting mental health to create a more inclusive environment. Additionally, students feel comfortable discussing various initiatives with lecturers to further integrate wellness and equitable practices.

Quotes

'The feedback I was getting from young chefs was that they could see not only the impact the Mindful Kitchen was having on their own lives but also the impact it was having on their team.'

'We're trying to change the culture in our kitchen to make it more equitable and inclusive. Currently, many kitchens are run using an autocratic and hierarchical approach. We're trying to challenge this.'

Lessons Learned

By actively involving students in their own education, this module emphasises the importance of inclusivity from the ground up. Additionally, advancing equality and teamwork cultivates a generation of future chefs who prioritise mindfulness for everyone in the kitchen.

Future Plans

The current modules of the Mindful Kitchen will continue to be integrated into TU Dublin's programmes. Additionally, evidence on the impact of the 'Health and Well-being for Chefs' module, which served as a pilot program, is currently being evaluated as part of a PhD dissertation.

Links with UN Sustainable Development Goals

The Mindful Kitchen equips students with skills to prioritise their health through mindfulness practices. It also emphasises teamwork to create an equitable kitchen environment where all members contribute equally to task delegation while supporting one another's well-being.

The Mindful Kitchen co-develops modules with students and lecturers to integrate current trends and support lifelong learning. This initiative enhances students' skills and knowledge while emphasising critical thinking and adaptability to meet the evolving demands of the hospitality industry.

4.7.3- Associação Pão a Pão, Portugal

Location	Lisbon, Portugal
Website	https://www.paoapao.pt/en

Source: Photo with copyrights provided by Associação Pão a Pão

Organisation Information	Associação Pão a Pão (Bread by Bread) is an NGO that uses food to provide cultural connections and support the integration of refugees and migrants in Portugal. The organisation operates a restaurant and offers catering services for events and workshops.

Context

Pão a Pão supports the integration of refugees and migrants into local communities by increasing their employability through its *Mezze Escola* training course. Pão a Pão's mission is threefold: to offer training and employment opportunities, eliminate cultural barriers, and foster connections between newcomers and host communities. Pão a Pão was founded in 2017 after a Syrian student living in Lisbon was asked what she missed most about home. Her response, "Bread! Syrian bread!" highlighted the importance of food in reflecting one's origins and shaping identity. Similarly, this initiative recognises that food also serves as a powerful bridge, connecting people from diverse backgrounds to share meaningful moments and experiences. The organisation currently employs 20 people, with 5 working at the association and 15 at the restaurant.

Implementation

This project began in the Arabic restaurant, Mezze, located in Lisbon, where newcomers from the Middle East were offered training and jobs. Pão a Pão developed a training programme for refugees and migrants that equips them with the skills needed to enter the

restaurant industry. The course also educates them on their rights to education, housing, fairly paid work, social and fiscal responsibilities, as well as the importance of mental well-being. This ongoing course was developed in collaboration with the Lisbon School of Hospitality and Tourism and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's Cidadãos Activ@s Programme. The training at *Mezze Escola* lasts six months, combining theoretical and practical components. The theoretical portion is delivered at the school, while the practical training takes place both at the Mezze restaurant and in partner restaurants. Upon completion, Pão a Pão connects migrants and employers to facilitate professional internships and job placements.

Enabling Factors

An enabling factor is that Pão a Pão has obtained certification for its training course, enhancing its credibility and increasing its impact within the industry. Another enabler is the continuous financial support offered by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, which has helped ensure the organisation's development and success.

Barriers

Pão a Pão faces barriers commonly associated with assisting migrants and refugees when integrating into the programme, including managing numerous institutions and the constraints these bodies impose. In other words, ensuring the success of the training program requires additional efforts, such as addressing legal issues, assisting immigrants with housing, challenging societal perceptions, and supporting physical and mental health.

Impact on the Organisation

The training course has enhanced employability and facilitated the integration of the migrant community into the Portuguese workforce. Pão a Pão has helped empower this marginalised group by ensuring fair access to the labour market as well as greater social inclusion. In addition, the organisation has also received recognition for its initiatives supporting refugees, including the Social Entrepreneurship Award from the PSA – Peugeot Citroen Foundation and the Julia Taft Grant.

Quotes

'We believe that there is no "them" or "us," only "all of us".'

'The table provides integration and inclusion. The table unites, the bread unites.'

'We know the power of food to create bridges, break down prejudices, bring people together and include them.'

'What we bring to the table are not only tasty dishes prepared by hands full of stories. We also bring inclusion, solidarity, and tolerance.'

Lessons Learned

Pão a Pão Association adopts a holistic approach to migration, recognising that successful integration requires more than just employment and education. By addressing key factors such as housing and mental health, the organisation provides refugees and migrants with the essential support to start a new life in Portugal.

Future Plans

Following three successful editions in Lisbon, the course has expanded to Porto, where it is now being taught at the Porto School of Hospitality and Tourism. Pão a Pão will also continue to raise awareness of the issues migrants and refugees face. The training programme will proceed in Lisbon, while the restaurant will remain a key provider of training and employment opportunities for refugees and migrants.

Links with UN Sustainable Development Goals

By offering training opportunities in practical settings of Portugal's hospitality sector, this initiative supports lifelong learning and personal development for individuals from diverse backgrounds.

Pão a Pão helps refugees and migrants acquire skills to enhance their employability and assimilate into the workforce.

This initiative reduces inequalities by improving access to education, training, and employment opportunities for refugees and migrants.

4.8- IMPLEMENTING EDI POLICIES

4.8.1- CWT, Spain

Location	Madrid, Spain
Website	https://www.mycwt.com/es/es/

Source: free copyright from Pexels.com
(https://www.pexels.com/photo/man-in-white-dress-shirt-sitting-on-black-wheelchair-8127813/ by Ivan Samkov)

Organisation Information	CWT is a digital business travel platform that provides personalised services for corporate travel. With a no central management, the company is supervised by a committee, following a vertical structure. CWT operates in Spain and Latin America with 1500 employees.

Context

CWT carries out various EDI initiatives to promote cultural diversity across gender and age groups while developing policies on equality and disability within its operations. Although the company had previously established EDI policies, it recognised the need to move beyond mere regulatory compliance. With a culturally diverse team made up of 17 nationalities, CWT used this as a basis to create EDI policies to embed inclusion and cultural diversity, creating a better working environment where all employees feel included. In 2019, CWT joined the Diversity Charter, a voluntary code of conduct that reinforced its commitment to promoting equality and non-discrimination policies.

Implementation

Faced with a lack of budget to design EDI initiatives, CWT sought partnerships and actions that could be implemented at no cost. The company secured collaboration with the Diversity Charter and ACCEM, an NGO, to participate in the European DIVEM project free of charge. This enabled CWT to analyse its internal operations and policies to later develop proposals that considered different groups at risk of social exclusion within the organisations. With the guidance of both ACCEM and the Diversity Charter guidelines, CWT introduced new policies focusing on equality, disability, and the promotion of interculturalism and cultural diversity.

The company then launched a disability awareness campaign across Spain in which training was provided for employees. Through a collaboration with the Roncalli Foundation (Fundación Juan XXII), a special employment centre, CWT helped individuals with disabilities to obtain their disability certificates anonymously. To conclude the campaign, the organisation developed inclusive employment policies for people with disabilities across all its operational countries including Europe and Latin America. Among this group, CWT included HIV-positive individuals, following an anonymous testimony from an employee who emphasised the importance of inclusion within the workplace.

Together with the ACCEM Foundation, CWT has also offered webinars and workshops addressing the issues faced by the LGBTIQ+ community, women and culturally diverse individuals. The company particularly advocates for women's leadership, recognising their important role in inspiring employees across different positions and stages of their careers. Lastly, CWT addressed age-related discrimination through the "5 Generations of CWT" event where older employees shared the changes they had witnessed in the company, while younger employees voiced their concerns about integration. The aim was to understand diverse perspectives to create a more inclusive environment where all employees feel valued.

Enabling Factors

The main enabling factor for the success of the EDI policies and actions has been the team's proactivity. All members of staff share a common interest in implementing them, recognising the importance of inclusion. Additionally, the guidance from the Diversity Charter and ACCEM has allowed CWT to receive cost-free support, enabling them to offer workshops, training sessions, and events to raise awareness of these issues. These collaborations have also helped in the ongoing development of relevant policies to address them.

Barriers

As CWT operates with a vertical structure, the primary constraint was the absence of an overall management department. This required extensive training, where the committee had to expand its understanding of EDI policies and initiatives to go beyond compliance with the required regulations.

Impact on the Organisation

These initiatives led to the company receiving the ACCEM Women Diversity Award for promoting women's leadership and cultural diversity. As a result, CWT reports that both suppliers and clients are more interested in working with them. Just as some clients look for trips with a minimal carbon footprint, others choose companies with shared social values. CWT has also seen an increase in team motivation and participation. Employees recognise the impact of EDI initiatives, creating a personal connection to the inclusive actions. This sense of belonging makes them feel involved in something greater than work.

Quotes

'Often the difficulty is not having a budget line for these EDI practices, and that is why it is important to publicise free tools that can be implemented by more companies in the sector.'

'Participating in this type of initiative makes the employee get involved in the company and to feel an alignment with their personal values.'

Lessons Learned

CWT shares that true social sustainability means going beyond the minimum legal compliance to provide added value for all stakeholders. The company has also recognised that implementing EDI initiatives is a process of trial and error, highlighting the importance of companies contributing meaningfully to society without fear of making mistakes.

Future Plans

CWT plans to continue implementing EDI policies and actions in the future.

Links with UN Sustainable Development Goals

CWT recognises the importance of women's leadership to inspire employees at different stages of their careers, supporting gender equality in the workplace.

The company reduces inequalities within its operations by developing policies and actions to address the needs and challenges of women, people with disabilities, and culturally diverse groups.

By collaborating with the ACCEM Foundation and the Diversity Charter, CWT aims to contribute toward advancing social sustainability, inclusion, and diversity.

4.8.2- The City of Helsinki, Finland

Location	Helsinki, Finland
Website	https://www.myhelsinki.fi/ https://www.myhelsinki.fi/en/see-and-do/helsinki-hlbtq

Sources: Free copyright from Pexels
(https://www.pexels.com/photo/group-of-tourists-enjoying-ferry-ride-on-sunny-day-29367437/ by Chris F)

Organisation Information	The City of Helsinki was founded in 1550 and became the capital of Finland in 1812. Today, it is the country's most popular tourist destination. In 2023, the city registered more than 4 million overnight stays with approximately 57% of visitors being domestic and 43% coming from abroad.

Context

Helsinki invests in EDI actions, ensuring that tourism experiences are equally accessible to everyone. The city aims to be an international pioneer in sustainability within the tourism and event sectors, with the goal of becoming the world's most sustainable travel destination. This approach prioritises economic, environmental, and social sustainability, with a strong emphasis on EDI practices. These initiatives are integrated into Helsinki's strategic tourism planning and are central to the city's tourism and events action programme, which considers diversity in age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, language, culture, physical characteristics, special needs, and socio-economic status. The proposed actions to enhance EDI in tourism focus on three key areas: diversifying marketing strategies, developing personnel diversity, and encouraging tourism and encouraging the commitment of tourism and service providers to these values. The City of Helsinki's Tourism and Destination Services unit employs 14 professionals.

Implementation

The EDI action programme prepares stakeholders through various training initiatives, beginning with personnel development. To increase knowledge of the target groups, the course introduces essential concepts and terminology, covering themes such as understanding and engaging with diverse visitors, improving customer interactions, and addressing issues like working with individuals with disabilities, ensuring safe travel experiences, and addressing underlying prejudices. Additional personnel development training includes identifying business potential and advancing inclusive, diverse business practices. To further integrate EDI into Helsinki's strategic tourism and event planning, the programme includes additional relevant actions and their practical implementation. These actions focus on ensuring the recruitment of a diverse workforce, aligning with the city's current EDI educational offerings, and engaging experts from target group associations, DEIB (Diversity, Equality, Inclusion and Belonging) specialists, and the tourism industry. Additionally, Helsinki has developed accessible resources to help tourists navigate the city, including a service map with service-specific accessibility details. The MyHelsinki website also promotes inclusivity, with the image bank showcasing diversity pictures and material to reinforce the organisation's commitment to EDI.

Enabling Factors

Helsinki's primary enabling factor as a sustainable tourist destination stems from its commitment to social and environmental values. This is reflected in its inclusive culture, unique events, diverse food offerings, and closeness to nature and the sea. Additionally, the city prioritises investment in EDI to ensure that tourism experiences are inclusive for visitors from all backgrounds.

Quotes

'Tourism that doesn't discriminate against anyone and applies to everyone is an important part of promoting diversity and inclusion as well as an integral part of an equal society. At the same time, it promotes the goals of sustainable development.'

Lessons Learned

The city acknowledges that EDI principles being essential to building an equitable society. Commitment to these practices requires training that promotes diversity both internally and externally.

Future Plans

Future training sessions will be developed by incorporating various operating models and best practice examples. These supplementary materials will be produced in languages other than Finnish or Swedish to enhance accessibility and understanding. In addition, it is deemed important to promote EDI in all stakeholder meetings and to highlight the guidelines of inclusive tourism for companies.

Links with UN Sustainable Development Goals

The City of Helsinki is ctively working to reduce inequalities by prioritising EDI in its strategic tourism and events plan. These actions ensure equal access to tourism experiences for visitors of all backgrounds.

Helsinki is integrating inclusive training to meet the needs of all tourists. The city is also developing accessible resources to guide visitors and promote social and environmental stewardship, positioning itself as a sustainable city.

4.8.3- Diversity Charter, Greece

Location	Athens, Greece
Website	https://diversity-charter.gr

Source: Photo with copyrights provided by Diversity Charter Greece

Organisation Information

The Diversity Charters, initiated by the European Commission in 2010, aim to promote workplace equality across the EU. The Diversity Charter Greece (DCG) is implemented by two organisations: the Cell of Alternative Youth Activities (KEAN) and the Institute for Diversity and Inclusion. KEAN, established in 2004, focuses on advancing universal human values, peace, prosperity, and environmental protection. The Institute, founded in 2019, was created to support the DCG by coordinating all diversity-related initiatives.

Context

Greece became the 23rd country to adopt a Diversity Charter, in 2019, as part of the EU's Charters gradual expansion. Through partnerships and collaboration between members, this commitment promotes equal and inclusive opportunities in the workplace through six key pillars: gender, age, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, and religion. The DCG plays a crucial role in the tourism sector by promoting EDI practices aimed at reducing workplace discrimination and enhancing employee satisfaction while also improving the tourist experience. These practices are designed to address biases, reinforce core EDI principles, and extend their impact across the tourism industry in Greece. The DCG is supported by

approximately eighty employees from KEAN and five staff members from the Institute for Diversity and Inclusion.

Implementation

The DCG was launched with the support of various governmental organisations, including the EU Commission's Diversity Charter, the General Secretariat for Gender Equality of the Ministry of Interior and the Economic and Social Council of Greece. Subsequently, the DCG sought to establish partnerships with organisations active in various diversity pillars.

To engage members actively and enhance EDI skills across Greece, the DCG implements a multi-range of initiatives. Firstly, the DCG hosts open diversity days where executives exchange insights on diversity pillars, improving the understanding and implementation of EDI initiatives. The DCG proceeds to formulate diversity actions along with the European Commission and invite tourism businesses to implement these practices. The organisations share their success factors and challenges faced, and the insights are published in a newsletter. The DCG offers webinars to member organisations to disseminate EDI best practices. These examples are also presented on an annual conference to motivate other Greek companies to adopt similar strategies. Additionally, the conference showcases new EDI international trends as a preview for the following year. Lastly, the DCG holds diversity and inclusion awards to celebrate organisations that successfully integrate EDI into their operations.

Furthermore, the DCG offers diversity and inclusion training to address stereotypes within the Greek culture, highlighting the importance of addressing unconscious bias in the tourism sector, characterised by a high level of interaction with diverse individuals. The DCG participates in European projects to expand these practices across Europe. One notable initiative is a diversity certification scheme, developed in collaboration with Eurocert S.A. under the "Inclusive Workplace" logo. This pioneering scheme is grounded in ISO 3415 and key principles of the Charter, aiming to provide certification for a three-year period, along with annual monitoring of EDI integration within organisations. This initiative enhances the measurement of EDI outcomes and moves away from reliance on informal communication, offering a more structured empirical approach.

Enabling Factors

The successful implementation of the DCG was largely enabled by the support of the European Commission, which provided guidance, and approval for key actions. Additionally, the Greek State's parallel support helped drive these efforts. Another key factor is the growing prioritisation of EDI issues by Greek businesses, especially within the tourism sector, as part of their corporate social responsibility. This shift is influenced by globalisation, which drives the need for more relevant actions and adoption of EDI practices.

Barriers

The main challenge the DCG faces in implementing its initiatives is achieving widespread acceptance of diversity. While some businesses fully embrace EDI principles, others resist these changes, creating social divides. Another significant obstacle is the persistence of stereotypes, which are often unrecognised by stakeholders themselves, along with a partial

lack of unconscious bias training. The goal is for diversity to be acknowledged without becoming a barrier, ensuring individuals are valued solely for their contributions in the workplace. DCG addresses these challenges through intensive EDI training.

Impact on the Organisation

The DCG implements significant EDI initiatives that enhance employee satisfaction. Member companies that embrace these actions not only become more productive but also more appealing to prospective employees. These organisations support a culture that recognises the importance of EDI, enhancing a greater acceptance and respect for diversity among management and staff. Additionally, these initiatives strengthen the company's image and enhance customer satisfaction, reflecting the growing demand for EDI in Greek culture.

Quotes

'The role of education is catalytic to prevent parents from 'passing on' their stereotypes to their children and consequently to future employees, executives, etc.'

'The key future challenge is that diversity should neither unite nor divide us, that it should be invisible and not concern us.'

'Diversity constitutes uniqueness, every person is unique, and this must be respected.'

'Acceptance of diversity has only benefits for the employee, the employer, the company and society.'

Lessons Learned

The DCG has observed that companies prioritising EDI are better equipped to address and challenge stereotypes, leading to a stronger and more inclusive workplace culture. These companies also report that employees feel more empowered to assert their rights. Finally, all stakeholders experience greater freedom to express diverse opinions.

Future Plans

Future DCG initiatives will focus on expanding EDI training tailored to the unique diversity needs of each company, promoting more inclusive environments. These efforts will be supported by partnerships with specialised training companies. Additionally, the DCG plans to address emerging EDI issues such as ageism linked to the generation gap and employees aged 40-45 leaving the workforce. The rapid pace of these trends complicates long-term planning. However, DCG's strategic plan aims to create incentives and actions to inform, raise awareness, and educate businesses and stakeholders on EDI issues.

Links with UN Sustainable Development Goals

The DCG implements EDI initiatives to foster a respectful and thriving work environment. The initiative demonstrates that tourism companies that adopt EDI practices have a more engaged workforce which boosts employee satisfaction, productivity, and economic growth.

This initiative addresses systemic inequalities through training and practices that focus on diverse aspects such as age, ethnicity, disability, gender and sexual orientation. The DCG motivates businesses to embrace diversity and inclusion practices through its award ceremony, ensuring a more equitable sector.

By promoting collaboration and partnerships, the DCG creates a workplace culture of respect, equality, and justice throughout Greece. These efforts support EDI practices and create a peaceful environment where all stakeholders feel valued.

CONCLUSION

Equality, diversity and inclusion are crucial elements for fostering social cohesion. They are essential for responsible businesses aiming to promote sustainable and decent work while fostering a better work environment. This handbook provided practical examples and actionable steps to implement change and embed an EDI culture in the workplace. It also showcased a number of best practices aligned with the UN Sustainable Goals, featuring tourism and hospitality organisations in Europe that promote inclusion through tangible actions.

Developing EDI policies and practices can be facilitated by different tools and resources, but it must begin with developing a culture underpinned by ethics and integrity, social fairness, equality, inclusive practices, and opportunities for everyone in society. The case studies in the handbook demonstrated a broad range of inclusive practices that already exist in the sector to tackle inequalities, promote awareness, develop gender equality, and promote European values. However, there are still many more actions can be undertaken to support social justice across Europe. This handbook serves as a helpful guide to organisations aiming to promote practices and principles that foster a culture of fairness and inclusion in the workplace.

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