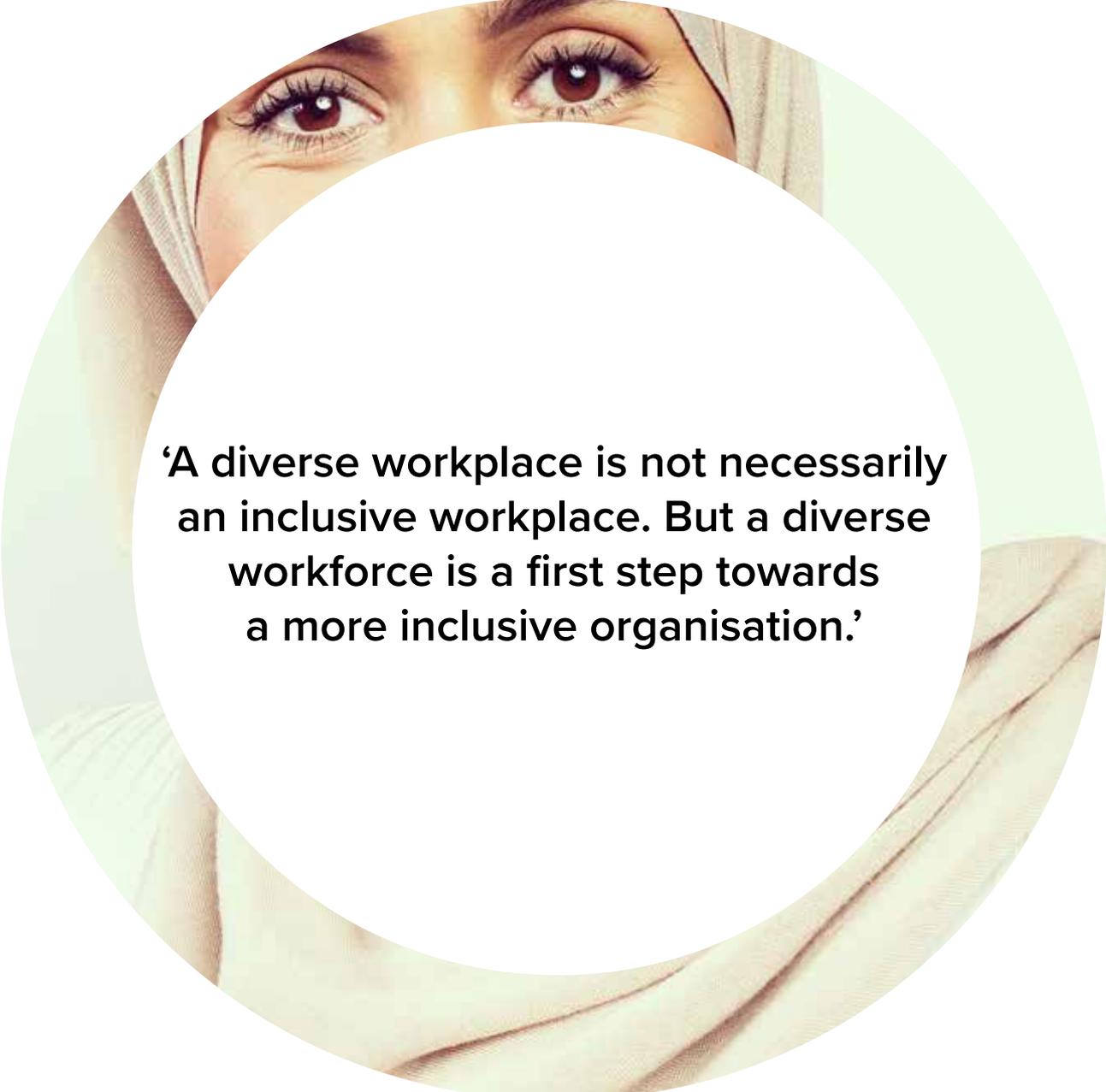




INCLUSIVE ORGANISATIONS

MANAGEMENT OF DIFFERENT PHILOSOPHIES OF LIFE
IN SMEs SUMMARISED IN TEN PRINCIPLES

corporate social responsibility in SMEs



‘A diverse workplace is not necessarily an inclusive workplace. But a diverse workforce is a first step towards a more inclusive organisation.’

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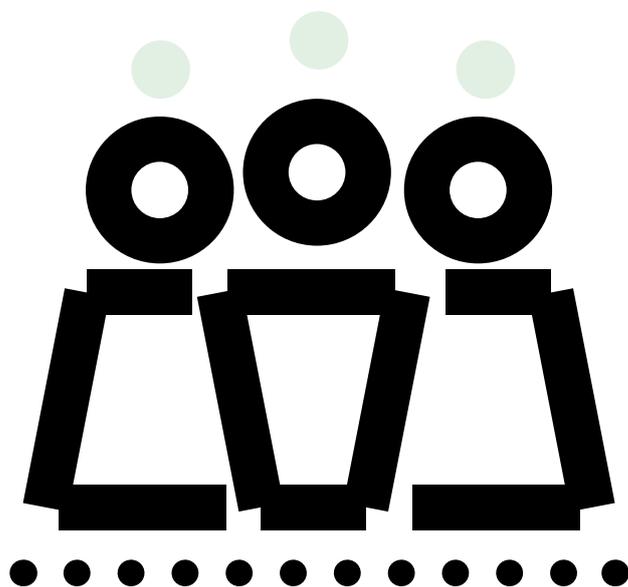
Introduction

An increasing number of organisations are striving for more diversity in the workplace and for a more inclusive work environment. Why? Because **efficient management of a diverse group of employees is critical** to any successful organisation. It is an inherent part of corporate social responsibility, also for SMEs. However, creating an inclusive work environment in which there is room for diverse philosophies of life, is not a self-evident process. It demands **specific efforts and targeted action**.

On the basis of **ten management principles** and corresponding, specific tips, an answer will be provided to the question of how to deal impactfully with philosophical diversity in the workplace. Various **examples of good practice** and **input from experts** are included.

These principles and tips result from **scientific research, focused on practice** and conducted by the centre of expertise Public Impact at the KdG University of Applied Sciences and Arts. This research placed strong emphasis on a qualitative research. Several interviews were conducted with employers, managers, HR managers and employees of Flemish SMEs. There were also group discussions with SME employees who hold different philosophies of life.

The result is a set of **specific and workable tools** for successfully managing the diversity of perspectives on life present among employees. These tools contain insights that will be of interest to employers, managers and HR managers in SMEs.





**Diversity
and
inclusion**

1. DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN THE WORKPLACE

Before discussing the ten management principles and the specific tips coming out of the qualitative research, we'll first take a closer look at the concepts of diversity and inclusion. The two terms are often used interchangeably, but they are not synonymous.

The positive impact of an inclusive workplace will also be discussed: What are the benefits of an inclusive work environment? Which criteria are crucial to the development of such a working environment? Finally, we zoom in on the focus of the research: ideological diversity in Flemish SMEs.

1.1 DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ARE NOT SYNONYMOUS

Although diversity and inclusion are often mentioned in the same breath, their meanings are quite different:

- > **DIVERSITY** refers to all aspects in which people can differ. For example, employees may differ in gender, age, ethnic.
- > **INCLUSION**, on the other hand, is about how these differences are dealt with. An inclusive work environment means that everyone, regardless of gender, age, ethnic background, culture and philosophy of life, etc., feels respected and valued. So, a diverse workplace is not necessarily an inclusive workplace.

Inclusion is of course diametrically opposed to **exclusion and discrimination**, to treating someone unequally or unfairly on the basis of their personal characteristics. Belgian anti-discrimination legislation includes 19 'protected criteria', of which faith or philosophy of life is one. Discrimination based on any of these criteria is prohibited and punishable.¹ An organisation that does not tolerate discrimination is thus already taking the first important step in a policy of actively supporting diversity and inclusion.

1.2 PROMOTING INCLUSION IN THE WORKPLACE

Promoting inclusion in the workplace is crucial. This is not only because of society's clear demand for universal equal rights, sufficient opportunities and appropriate treatment, regardless of individual background or other characteristics. It is also because a diverse workforce and an inclusive business culture can potentially add **economic and social value** to an SME.

BENEFITS FOR SMES AND EMPLOYEES

What does this added value entail? A diverse workplace with an inclusive organisational culture invariably succeeds in attracting and retaining **more and better talent**². By investing in diversity and inclusion, an organisation can access a larger pool of talent and increase its chance of attracting and retaining talent.

Further, more diversity within an organisation leads to **better financial performance**³ and can even drive **more innovation**⁴. This is because employees with different backgrounds often approach a problem differently – which in turn can lead to alternative and more creative solutions.

In addition to this clear, economic added value, an inclusive work environment is also associated with **proud employees**⁵ and **better employee performance**⁶.

Precisely for this reason, many organisations - including several Flemish SMEs - are taking specific action to create a workforce that is a realistic reflection of society.

1 Unia (n.d.). Discrimination - some clarifications. <https://www.unia.be/nl/discriminatiegronden/discriminatie-enkele-verduidelijkingen>.

2 Frost, S., & Kalman, D. (2016). Inclusive talent management: How Business can Thrive in an Age of Diversity. Kogan Page.

3 Dixon-Fyle, S., Dolan, K., Hunt, V., & Prince, S. (2020, May). Diversity wins: How inclusion matters. McKinsey. <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-wins-how-inclusion-matters>.

4 Lorenzo, R., Voigt, N., Tsusaka M., Krentz, M., & Abouzahr K. (2018, 23 January). How Diverse Leadership Teams Boost Innovation. Boston Consulting Group. <https://www.bcg.com/publications/2018/how-diverse-leadership-teams-boost-innovation>.

5 Salesforce Research (2017). The impact of Equality and Values Driven Business. Salesforce. <https://www.salesforce.com/content/impact-of-equality/>

6 Sherbin, L. & Rashid, R. (2017, 1 February). Diversity Doesn't Stick without Inclusion. Harvard Business Review. <https://hbr.org/2017/02/diversity-doesnt-stick-without-inclusion>

However, a comment is in order here. Many organisations are currently focusing solely on diversity. But **diversity without inclusiveness does not lead to the aforementioned benefits.** Achieving an inclusive corporate culture is, in fact, a long-term process, that requires constant effort and actions.

THREE ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

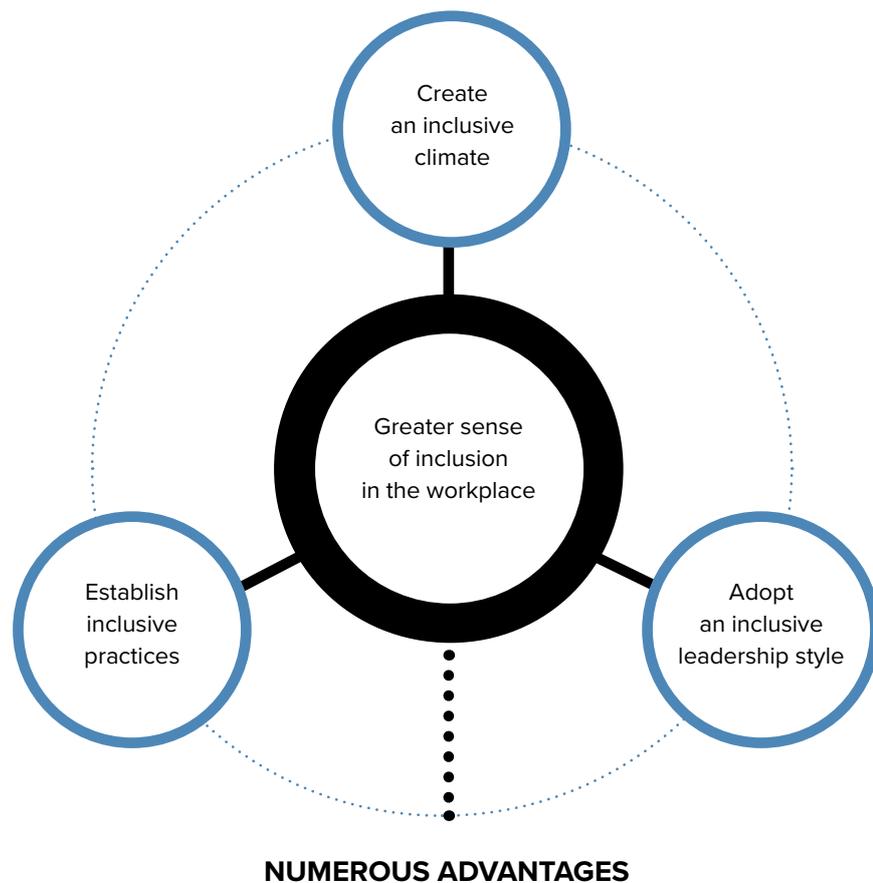
How do you ensure true inclusion? How do you contribute to a safe climate where all employees feel respected and valued? How do you create a workplace in which people can be themselves?

Scientific research by Shore et al. (2011)⁷ shows that **three criteria are crucial** when promoting inclusion in the workplace:

- > Creating an inclusive **CLIMATE**
- > Adopting an inclusive **LEADERSHIP STYLE**
- > Setting up inclusive **PRACTICES**

Figure 1: Predictors and outcomes of Inclusion⁷

This figure shows that employees who work in an organisation that meets these three criteria experience a greater sense of inclusion in the workplace, and this often generates the benefits mentioned above.



7 Shore, L. M., Randel, A. E., Chung, B. G., Dean, M. A., Ehrhart, K. H., & Singh, G. (2011). Inclusion and diversity in work groups: A review and model for future research. *Journal of Management*, 37(4), 1262-1289. doi: 10.1177/0149206310385943.

1.3 IDEOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

It is clear that this is a topic of social relevance, and that many SMEs need a structured approach with which to address it. What follows, therefore, not only provides management principles, but also concrete tips on how SMEs can better deal with ideological diversity in the workplace.

What is meant by ideological diversity? It relates to the **variations in perspectives on life**. These include not only traditional religions, but also non-religious beliefs and minority religions.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE AND RELIGION

Although the terms ‘philosophy of life’ and ‘religion’ are often used interchangeably in practice, philosophy of life is broader than religion. It is any view of life that has **‘a certain strength, seriousness, coherence and relevance’**.⁸ In addition to being a view, the concept also has to do with practices, more specifically the variety of actions and outward appearances with which people make their convictions visible, for example with garments such as a headscarf, kippa or turban, or symbols like a cross or Star of David, as well as through rituals like prayer, cleansing, specific rules for handling food, and so on. For the sake of clarity, this guide focuses on diversity in terms of philosophy and not only in terms of religion.

DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLE

Ideological diversity in Belgian society also has a **legal context**. Freedom of thought, conscience and religion is one of the pillars of democratic society. This freedom is enshrined in Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), in Article 19 of the Constitution, and in other international and European legal texts.⁸

GROWING NUMBER OF PRACTISING ADHERENTS

Ideological diversity is a fact of life in today’s society, and therefore also in the labour market. Although recent, official figures on the number of Belgians who adhere to a particular philosophy of life are not available, comparison of existing research shows a clear trend: **the number of practising adherents in Belgium is increasing**.⁹ For a growing number of people philosophy of life is therefore an important part of how they identify and of their daily practices.

IDENTITY, MOTIVATION AND INVOLVEMENT

Meanwhile, international research on well-being in the workplace has shown that employees who feel recognised and valued, in their entirety, also feel more motivated and engaged.^{10, 11} Recent figures show that organisations that give employees the opportunity to reveal their **entire identity** in the workplace, **have more satisfied employees**.¹⁰ However, when employees have to keep aspects of their identity hidden in the workplace - which is called ‘identity covering’ - the result is lower self-esteem and reduced engagement.¹¹

8 Unia (z.d.) *Religieuze diversiteit: wettelijk kader*. <https://www.unia.be/nl/discriminatiegronden/geloof-of-levensbeschouwing/wettelijk-kader>

9 Lipka, M. (2017, 4 December). Europe’s Muslim population will continue to grow – but how much depends on migration. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/12/04/europes-muslim-population-will-continue-to-grow-but-how-much-depends-on-migration/>

10 Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding (2013). *What American Workers Really Think About Religion: Tanenbaum’s 2013 Survey of American Workers and Religion*. Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding. <https://tanenbaum.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Tanenbaums-2013-Survey-of-American-Workers-and-Religion.pdf>

11 Deloitte (2019). *Uncovering talent. A new model of inclusion*. Deloitte. <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/us/Documents/about-deloitte/us-about-deloitte-uncovering-talent-a-new-model-of-inclusion.pdf>



**Ten
management-
principles**

2. TEN PRINCIPLES FOR IMPACTFUL MANAGEMENT OF IDEOLOGICAL DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE

As mentioned, **three pillars are crucial for promoting inclusion** in the workplace: creating an inclusive climate, adopting an inclusive leadership style, and establishing inclusive practices.

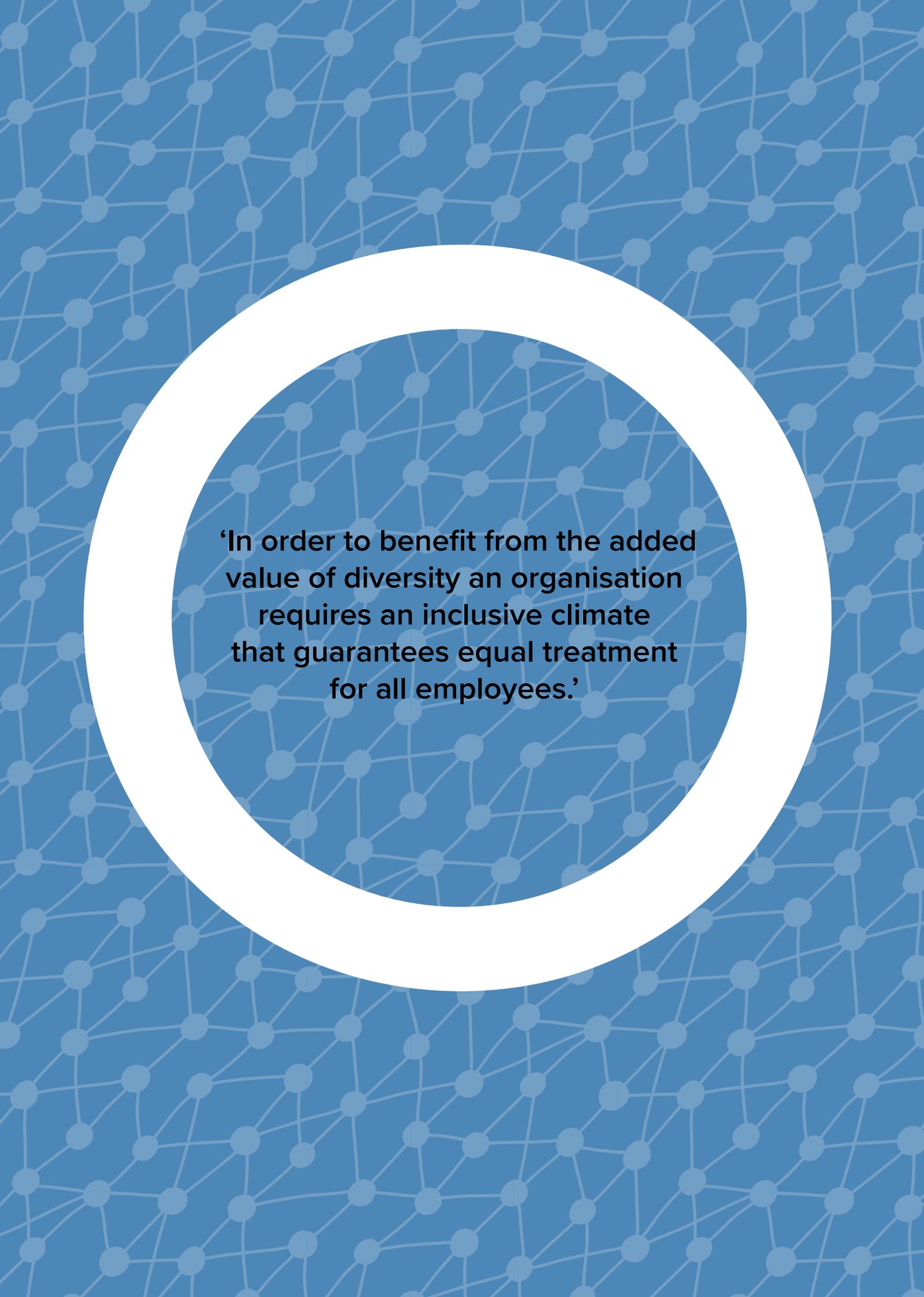
Each pillar will now be explained in more detail, using **management principles** that an SME can easily apply. These principles are based on the results of the practice-oriented scientific research conducted by the centre of expertise Public Impact.

The principles are then supported by a number of **specific tips** plus practical **cases in point** or expert **inputs**. Finally, each pillar includes an overview of freely-available **relevant tools and websites** available during the research period.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

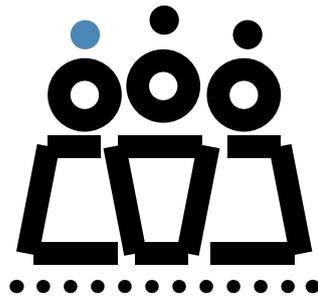
It is important for managers to keep the following points in mind when applying these principles:

- > Consider the **type of work** and **workplace conditions** when implementing the management principles provided below.
- > Remember that creating an inclusive work environment in which ideological diversity is successfully managed is a **long-term process**.
- > Developing an inclusive organisation that is sensitive to ideological diversity **requires the continuous involvement and commitment** of the entire organisation. It is a path with a lot of twists and turns and along the way resistance and difficulties may be encountered regarding the changing circumstances of some people. By engaging in dialogue, however, these issues can be mutually acknowledged and overcome.



‘In order to benefit from the added value of diversity an organisation requires an inclusive climate that guarantees equal treatment for all employees.’

Inclusive climate



2.1 CREATE AN INCLUSIVE CLIMATE (PILLAR I)

In order to benefit from the added value of diversity an organisation requires an inclusive climate that guarantees **equal treatment for all employees**. In this climate, every employee will feel recognised and appreciated. In addition, a good balance must be sought between personal and organisational standards and values. And, importantly, in this climate no one must feel the need to hide aspects of their personal identity.

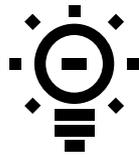
In order to achieve this, managers should apply the following **four management principles (MPs)**:

- > Make inclusive work measurable, and monitor it
- > Recruit, select and onboard inclusively
- > Engage in authentic, inclusive communication
- > Strengthen inclusive competencies and broaden knowledge

MAKE INCLUSIVE WORK MEASURABLE, AND MONITOR IT

Does the organisation really take differences between employees into account? Measure to what extent the organisation is perceived as inclusive. This will provide an insight into **where the SME stands and which steps must still be taken**. It is important to first determine exactly what must be measured, and then to determine how to measure it.

Once an organisation has assessed where it stands in terms of inclusion, it should **monitor inclusion** on an ongoing basis. This is necessary because the workplace is always changing, and therefore requires regular adjustment. Ongoing monitoring of the extent to which employees feel respected and appreciated not only provides a better understanding of what works, but also of what could be improved. This information enables adjustments, where necessary, such as refining existing initiatives, setting up targeted actions that contribute to a more inclusive work environment, and so on.



WHAT SHOULD AN SME DO? SOME TIPS!

- > Determine how the SME scores in the area of inclusion and, in particular, how it creates room for ideological diversity. Perform for example an **inclusion scan**.
- > Monitor inclusion in general and **the space available for ideological diversity** in particular. For example, send out satisfaction surveys on a regular basis (e.g. annually) and/or discuss the topic in more depth during performance and exit interviews.
- > Monitor initially **at the level of practices**. The registration of diversity characteristics is sometimes relevant and appropriate (e.g. gender distribution at certain job levels), but raises some questions with regard to privacy and further use of these data.



SANA SELLAMI

Strategy and inclusion expert at Untitled Workers Club

Dr. Sana Sellami is an expert in the field of diversity and inclusion, in which inclusive organisational culture and communication are **key** topics. As a diversity and inclusion expert she is part of the Untitled Workers Club, an agency specialising in cultural branding.

According to her, it is important to determine how the organisation scores in terms of inclusion and in terms of the way it deals with ideological diversity in the workplace. This informs managers where their SME stands today and which steps it needs to take in the future.

ASK HOW PEOPLE FEEL

'Inclusion is not monitored by counting the number of employees from different backgrounds, but rather by **putting the issue to your employees, at regular intervals**. This can be done face-to-face or via a questionnaire, depending on the composition and wishes of the team concerned. Be sure to include the following in this survey: "How do you feel in the workplace? Can you be yourself during working hours? Do you feel that you belong? Do you feel recognised?" This provides a clear picture of the perception of inclusion in the workplace and can be used to set up targeted action.'



ALSO MONITOR QUANTIFIED DATA

'It is certainly also useful to measure and analyse **quantified data**. For example, staff turnover numbers. Although one cannot make a direct connection between these figures and inclusion, they can indirectly give an indication of how good a person feels in the workplace. The **exit phase** is also of essential importance. One gains much information from systematically tracking why people leave.'

TREAT PHILOSOPHICAL QUESTIONS IN THE SAME WAY AS ALL OTHER QUESTIONS

'Finally, it is important to **get rid of the often-negative connotations or negatively charged feelings** relative to philosophical issues. Questions like, "May I go and pray?" or "Can I have a smoke break?" are simply requests for a short break from work, for personal needs. So, treat them in the same way. Investigate what is possible in the organisation and engage in dialogue during your search for a possible solution.'

— www.untitledworkersclub.be

Inclusive recruitment, selection and onboarding are crucial components of an inclusive work environment. Unfortunately, **existing recruitment and selection procedures are frequently not inclusive**. Due to conscious or unconscious bias on the part of recruiters and employers, these procedures often lead to the recruitment of new staff with background and characteristics that correspond to the profile of current staff.

Inclusive recruitment and selection therefore does not simply involve adapting the recruitment and selection procedure to attract a more diverse workforce. It is also about becoming aware of personal prejudices, developing a broader frame of reference and communicating openly about the procedure and the choice of a certain profile.

The way new employees are onboarded also plays a role. Do they feel welcome? Do they quickly find their way in the organisation? The onboarding of new employees is crucial for a good integration into the team and the organisation. An **inclusive induction process** is open, warm and provides an opportunity to get to know each other. Such an onboarding process focuses explicit attention on the actions that fit within the organisation's diversity and inclusion policy. It also aims to make people quickly feel at home and at ease in the organisation.

a talk
with

CHARLOTTE POLLET

Managing Director Almasy

Charlotte Pollet is MD of Almasy, an SME based in Hoogstraten that develops customised solutions that optimise business space utilisation.

Almasy is fully convinced of the **added value provided by a diverse workforce**. And therefore, clearly states, from the outset, what it stands for as an organisation. 'People with a different background are often quickly discouraged in their search for a new job, thinking, "It's not for people like me". Almasy therefore states, in all of its recruitment ads, that it is a diverse organisation. This lowers the threshold to application for many candidates and increases the size of the application pool.'

DIVERSITY AS A COMPETENCE

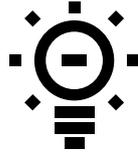
'By immediately adopting an open attitude and including diversity in competency profiles, we make it very clear to everyone, from the start, that we are striving **for an inclusive workplace**. From day one, our door has been open to everyone. Because **we are personally open to everyone**. We also make it clear that diversity is a competence. This means that there is no discrimination at Almasy and that action is taken immediately if anything goes wrong in that area.'

INCLUSION IS ABOUT THE BENEFITS, NOT THE DIFFERENCES

'We find that many people have more difficulty dealing with differences if we highlight those differences. So don't focus on the differences, rather convince your people by **emphasising the many advantages that accompany the differences**. Because that makes it easier for everyone to accept the differences.'

— www.almasy.eu





WHAT SHOULD AN SME DO? SOME TIPS!

RECRUITMENT & SELECTION

- > Formulate, in advance, **standardised selection criteria** that are task and function oriented.
- > In vacancy advertising copy, focus only on the **essential requirements of the job** and address people directly based on their talents, competencies and experience.
- > When advertising vacancies, consider adding a **diversity clause** - a sentence indicating that in this organisation, talent and competence are central - not origin, gender, age, etc.
- > Screen any **images** you use in a job advertising. If ideological diversity is already a reality in the organisation, make that visible.
- > Look beyond the classic recruitment channels and expand your **networks**. Search strategies can vary greatly among job seekers, and vacancies are often filled via networking.
- > Select a **diverse recruitment committee**. Discuss with the committee members, in advance, how questions on worldview will be answered and make sure all committee members are on the same page.
- > Provide **clear, fast feedback** - also to the candidates who were not selected. Applicants with a visible diversity characteristic (e.g. a headscarf) usually wonder whether they have not been disadvantaged by that particular characteristic.
- > During the interview **do not ask questions about religion or religious symbols**. Do check whether the candidate is suitable for a particular job, to ensure fair comparison of all candidates.

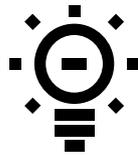
ONBOARDING

- > When onboarding new employees, mention the **measures** being taken to create a more inclusive work environment and to meet diverse philosophical needs. Provide a clear **onboarding guide**, so that new employees can absorb this information at their leisure.
- > Make sure that new employees have someone within the organisation to turn to with questions about inclusion and philosophical needs. For example, appoint a **mentor** to answer new employees' questions in the first days, weeks, or months.
- > Ensure that relevant staff are prepared to immediately **answer questions on philosophical issues** at work, such as: Is it permissible to take prayer breaks? What about religious holidays?
- > When introducing new employees to colleagues, focus on their competencies and experience, but also mention their hobbies and interests. This puts **similarities centre stage** and avoids preconceptions. Discussing the individual's philosophy of life is not relevant at such a time.

ENGAGE IN AUTHENTIC, INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION

Inclusive communication is **both accessible and recognisable** for as many people as possible. In other words, an inclusive organisation tailors its internal and external communication (to reflect the similarities that connect people. Examples of communication channels are: internal emails, staff invitations, presentations, speeches, newsletters, leaflets, flyers, brochures, social media and other promotional and marketing materials),

And it is important that the communication is **always authentic**. Don't present the SME as being more diverse or inclusive than it really is, as this can only undermine its credibility, including that of its other activities.



WHAT SHOULD AN SME DO? SOME TIPS!

- > Use 'inclusive language'. **This is language that emphasises what is shared**, avoids stereotypes based on philosophies of life and does not exclude people on the basis of their philosophy of life. For example, refer to 'our customers' and not 'our Jewish customers'.
- > Base communication as much as possible **on the goals people share** as employees, colleagues and teammates. What is the SME currently working on? What successes were achieved together?
- > Use **clear, plain language**. Avoid metaphors etc. as much as possible. Metaphors are often strongly culturally coloured and/or related to time and place.
- > Display the **(ideological) diversity of teams** on the company website and in newsletters, brochures, presentations, and so on. For example, put a team photo on the website that shows both men and women, young and old, and people both with and without headscarves and crosses, etc. Stay authentic and in line with how things really are in the organisation.
- > Pay **attention to differences** in a sensitive way, for example by sending greeting cards with appropriate designs to mark important events in the lives of employees, thereby giving all a feeling of recognition. This means cards with Christmas trees and holly, but also cards with lanterns and crescent moons for Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr (the Sugar Festival).



MARIO VANHELLEMONT

Managing Director Fruit Vanhellemont

Mario Vanhellemont is the MD of the fruit company Vanhellemont, a family business in Meensel-Kiezezem that grows and sorts fruit and sells regional products. Vanhellemont communicates in an **authentic, inclusive way**.

'We recruit and select new people for their talents and for their worth as individuals, regardless of nationality, race, colour, etc. We've been doing this for more than 15 years and as a result have a diverse workforce. This **diversity is clearly visible** on our website. The images clearly communicate who we are as Vanhellemont. We want to honestly communicate who we are and what we stand for.

Internally we also try to gear our communication to the needs of our diverse group of employees. So, our onboarding brochure is very simple and accessible. It contains mostly pictures, each with a short, clear explanation, in plain language, so that all of our new employees can easily understand the content.'

— www.fruitvanhellemont.be



STRENGTHEN INCLUSIVE COMPETENCIES AND BROADEN KNOWLEDGE

In order to operate inclusively as an employer, manager, HR manager or employee, it is not only important to have sufficient knowledge about certain cultures, religions and so on, but also to have a number of basic, inclusivity competencies.

It is therefore imperative that everyone within the organisation is encouraged to **acquire the necessary knowledge and develop the skills** that are required in diverse teams. To achieve this, the organisation can offer trainings that focus on broadening employees' knowledge of cultures and philosophies of life, as well as providing trainings that focus on strengthening inclusivity competencies.



RIK VANDERMARLIERE

HR Manager Deknudt Mirrors

Rik Vandermarliere is the HR manager of Deknudt Mirrors, a family business in Deerlijk, specialised in the production of mirrors.

'At Deknudt Mirrors we believe it is important to strengthen **inclusive competencies and broaden the knowledge of inclusion**. We attended an initial training course that aimed at gaining a better understanding of specific religions and cultures, as well as getting to know particular customs and behaviours better.

A few years later, we organised a second, more general, training session on how to deal with **differences in the workplace**. If you have knowledge of a particular faith and know how to deal with employees of that faith, it is easier to discuss it. This is because when others feel that you are making an effort, that you are interested, and that you want to listen, you get a lot in return.'

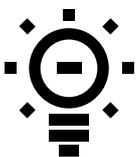
TRY TO PASS ON KNOWLEDGE INFORMALLY

'We like to spread the knowledge gained through training in an **informal way** to a broad group of managers and team leaders. So, in our daily conversations and in the course of supporting our managers, we provide tips and tricks on how to deal with diversity. Passing on a little knowledge and experience of dealing with diverse staff, but only when it's relevant, really helps.'

MAINTAIN YOUR BOUNDARIES

'I have learned from these courses, among other things, the importance of showing respect for all employees, regardless of their philosophy of life, but to do this within specific boundaries - which must be constantly monitored. **Maintaining certain boundaries** is important to ensure that the organisation's values are not compromised.'

— www.deknudtmirrors.com



WHAT SHOULD AN SME DO? SOME TIPS!

- > **Provide education and training for staff** that supports inclusive behaviour. For example, organise workshops that give employees a better understanding of how prejudice works.
- > **Enable managers to attend educational or training courses** that optimise inclusive leadership skills. Discuss, in this context, the idea of 'connecting communication', how to deal with conflicts and the recognition of ideological diversity in today's workplace.

TOOLS & WEBSITES

Below is an overview of some useful tools and interesting websites that focus on creating an inclusive workplace climate. Relevant diversity and inclusion scans are also listed, which are freely available, as well as training institutes and centres that offer training and workshops on diversity and inclusion:

TOOLS & WEBSITES

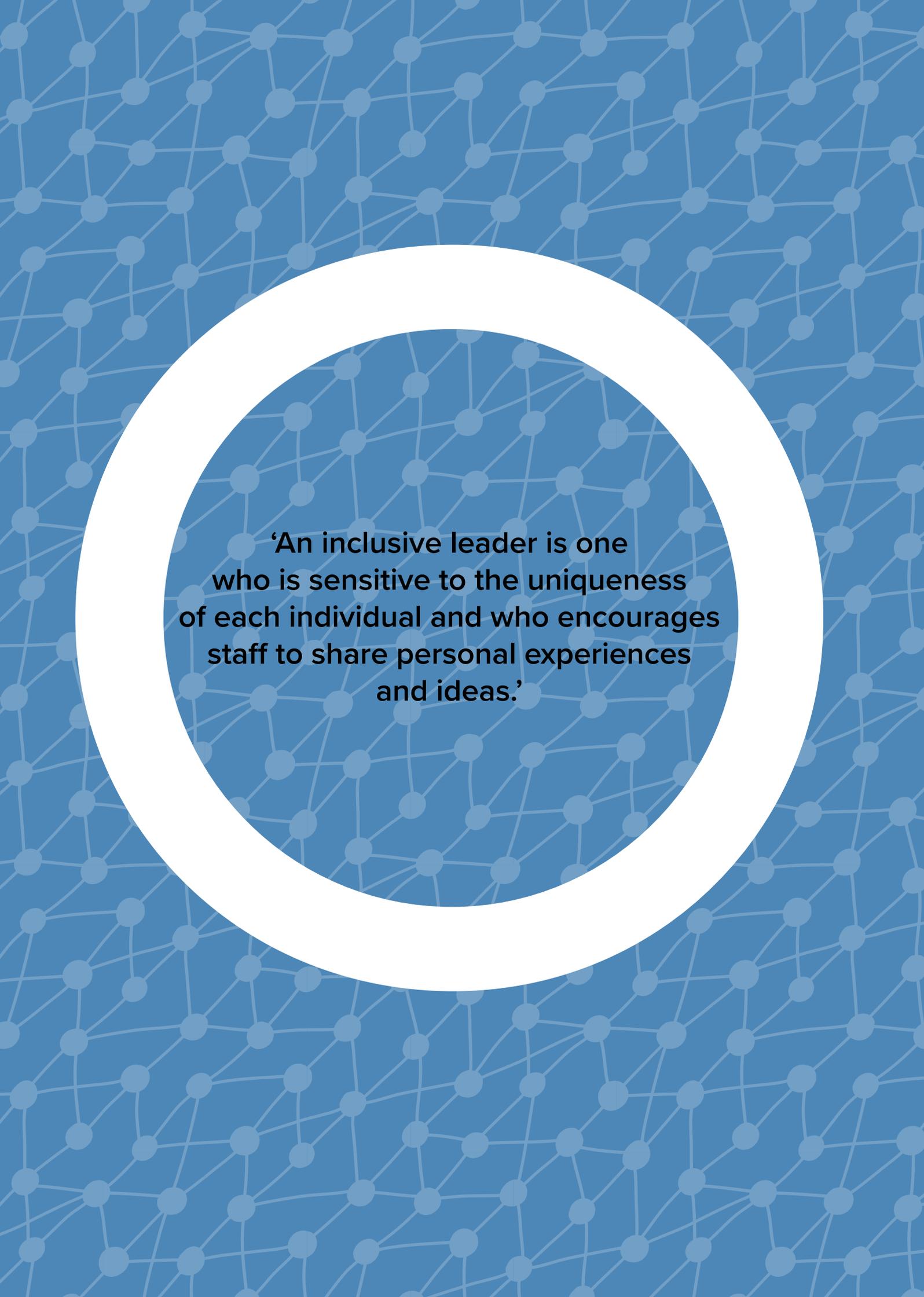
- > **Verso/HRwijs** has developed a checklist for to-read recruitment ads, in cooperation with the **VDAB** and **HR expert Lisa Coppin**. It can be viewed at verso-net.be/themas/hrwijs/hrwijs-detail/2019/08/19/Checklist-voor-een-Leesbare-Vacature.
- > **The West Flemish Project Developers EAD** have bundled practical information sheets on making personnel policy more diverse and in particular to steer the induction of new employees in the right direction – see diversityremix.be.
- > **The Flemish Community Commission (VGC)** has developed a checklist together with **Thomas More University of applied sciences**, which evaluates the degree of inclusivity in a business's digital and printed communication. The methodology is available at www.vgc.be/subsidies-en-dienstverlening/samenleven/toegankelijke-communicatie.
- > **Diversity associations** and **VRT language consultant, Ruud Hendrickx** have drawn up a 'diversity' glossary. This can be consulted at diversewoordenlijst.vrt.wordpress.com.
- > **Wablief** aims to make the world understandable to everyone with news that is simple and clear and by helping organisations to simplify their communications. Go to www.wablief.be.

SCANS

- > **Online Diversity Checklist by HRwijs**, a project of the Association for social profit enterprises (Verso) that provides advice on employee policies to employers in the social profit sector: diversity.hrwijs.be/
- > **Digital HR scan Inclusive Entrepreneurship by I-Diverso**, a collaboration between WEB vzw and Groep INTRO vzw that focuses on inclusive entrepreneurship: i-diverso.be/hr-scan/
- > **Welt Lightscan by Voka**, a Flemish network that represents the interests of Flemish businesses: www.voka.be/welt-lightscan

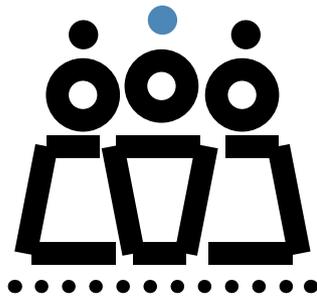
EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND TRAINING CENTRES

- > **SYNTRA** offers a training course, 'diversity in the workplace': www.syntra-ab.be/opleidingen/diversiteit-op-de-werkvloer
- > **VIVO**, the Flemish Institute for Training and Education, provides ongoing training courses on diversity: www.vivosocialprofit.org/diversiteit/
- > **Unia** offers free online learning modules via the eDiv online course. The training course supports better management of diversity in the workplace: www.ediv.be/index.php?lang=nl/
- > **Orbit** develops customised training courses and already has a range of courses on ideologies and religions: www.orbitvzw.be/vormingen-op-maat/
- > **I-diverso** offers a wide range of training courses and workshops based on their expertise in the field of diversity and inclusive entrepreneurship: i-diverso.be/workshopenopleidingen/
- > **Motief** is a training institute specialised in the topic of worldview in society: www.motief.org/
- > **Hands-on Inclusion** is a project by Verso and Minderhedenforum that offers organisations the right support to enable sustainable inclusion in their operations, and tries to close the gap between jobseekers and employers. They organize inspiration sessions and boot camps: www.handsoninclusion.be
- > **Studio Sesam** aims to make the diversity of Flanders visible. Flanders is rich in many cultures, origins, social positions, customs, religions, languages and talents. It also aims at connecting people and organisations via inclusive communication: www.studiosesam.be



‘An inclusive leader is one who is sensitive to the uniqueness of each individual and who encourages staff to share personal experiences and ideas.’

Inclusive leadership style



2.2 ADOPT AN INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP STYLE (PILLAR II)

In addition to an inclusive climate, inclusive leadership is also an important condition for activating the added value of diversity in SMEs. Because there is usually a more informal climate within SMEs, **management is often more informal**. This leads to more control over employees, as well as a quicker feedback cycle.¹² In other words, SME managers are often closer to their staff. They thus occupy a key position and can contribute directly - sometimes more so than managers in larger organisations - to an inclusive working environment.

An inclusive leader is one who is sensitive to **the uniqueness of each individual** and who encourages staff to **share personal experiences and ideas**. Inclusive leaders, by their own example, also know how to create an environment in which employees trust each other and feel connected to each other, while recognising their individually unique talents. An inclusive leader is thus also responsible for exposing and counteracting exclusion. He or she recognises exclusive behaviour (intentional or unintentional) and knows how to react appropriately.

To lead more inclusively, managers should apply the following **three management principles**:

- > Create a safe working environment
- > Create broad acceptance and support
- > Promote inclusive thinking and inclusive action

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12 Delmotte J. (2002). How do SMEs treat their staff? The characteristics of an effective SME personnel policy. In N. Schruers and K. Pierré. (Eds.), *Personeel & Organisatie. Ideeën voor een geïnspireerd HR-beleid, Jaarboek 2002* (pp. 135-145). Mechelen: Ced.samson.

CREATE A SAFE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

A safe working environment is one in which all employees feel they can be themselves. Where everyone feels **recognised and valued** regardless of age, gender, cultural background, faith, physical condition, etc. It is also a place where efforts are made to reduce deliberate and unintentional exclusion and barriers.

The manager plays a crucial role in this.



WHAT SHOULD AN SME DO? SOME TIPS!

- > Ask staff about their **personal experiences and insights** and their individual needs and requirements - also in the context of their philosophy regarding certain holidays, rituals or ethical considerations. This can be done in daily conversations, individual meetings and team meetings.
- > Focus on **matters that stand out and which (may) relate to philosophies of life**. Are certain tasks avoided? Are some people always absent at the same times? Discuss these things in formal or informal contexts. Make sure this is done in an appropriate way and at the right time and place. And keep the focus on a functional goal such as task allocation or scheduling.
- > Avoid stereotyping. Don't repeatedly **ask the same questions** to the same people. It is, of course, okay to ask questions about philosophies, but don't overdo it. Also pay attention to the effect of your question. Observe whether the person concerned seems happy with your interest. Or does he or she feel uncomfortable? Not everyone likes to talk about this topic and certainly not at all times. Respect this.
- > Be on the alert for **covering** – this takes place when people conceal certain aspects of themselves in order not to appear (too) different. For example, a Jewish employee may ask for a day's leave to supposedly care for his sick child, when it is actually for Yom Kippur. Find out when covering takes place and especially why the person concerned did not want or dare to express what they were covering. Openness helps.
- > Create **space for the voices of minorities**. When preparing a new measure or intervention, such as the establishment of a quiet place for prayer or meditation, seek out different points of view on the topic. Also listen to people who seem unconvinced or show resistance. It is not feasible to expect everyone to agree on everything. Nevertheless, it is useful to consider what people require in order to at least accept a certain decision. It may help, for example, not to place permanent symbols of only one religion in such a space.



FANNY MATHEUSEN

Deep Democracy Expert and founder of Hummus

Fanny Matheusen is an expert in *deep democracy* - a specific method for inclusive decision making and conflict management - and founder of Hummus. Hummus offers training and coaching and guides processes and projects tailored to the needs of organisations or groups.

According to this expert, **managers definitely function as role models** when it comes to creating a safe working environment. According to her, in such an environment all employees feel that they can mention tensions and address differences of opinion within the known structures of the organisation. Tensions and disagreements are a part of everyday reality, but with the right approach they are also an opportunity to learn, grow and innovate as an organisation.



GETTING RID OF YOUR OWN SHAME SHIELD

'Many managers and executives don't dare to enter into a particular conversation, because they are afraid of failing. However, getting rid of one's own shame shield is important. **Showing your differences** allows other people to dare to show themselves. This, in turn, contributes to a greater sense of safety in the workplace.'

SPREADING THE ROLE

'If a difference emerges in a conversation, don't park that difference with one person, but see the **single different voice as representing what needs to be discussed collectively**. For example, if one person in a meeting says "no", very clearly, don't consider them as a troublesome staff member. Just see it as a dissenting vote. And ask whether there are others who identify with that vote.'

DON'T JUDGE

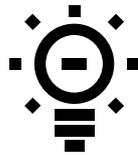
'Finally, it's also important as a manager **to avoid premature judgements** during conversations. A leader who wants to promote inclusion will notice things without immediately categorising them as right or wrong, desirable or undesirable - and will explore with the team how to deal with them further.'

— www.deep-democracy.be

CREATE BROAD ACCEPTANCE AND SUPPORT

Inclusion isn't just driven from the top down in an organisation. It's **created together**. However, it is the task of the manager to ensure that this drive is shared and that there is support and broad acceptance in the workplace.

Support or acceptance for a particular plan or decision must be obtained from everyone in the organisation. In doing so, a manager obtains intrinsic motivation and commitment from all employees.



WHAT SHOULD AN SME DO? SOME TIPS!

- > Involve staff in issues that are or may be related to inclusion and managing ideological diversity, for example by setting up **working groups**.
- > Inform employees through a variety of channels, such as newsletters and annual information sessions. Tell them about the **specific goals and measures** related to inclusion and the management of ideological diversity, and who they can contact if they have questions.
- > Develop a **communication plan** regarding the company's inclusion plans. First consider who you want to inform and keep informed - and include both internal and external stakeholders.



a talk
with

HAKIM BENICHOU

Inclusive Organisation Consultant
CEO, Teamspeler

Hakim Benichou is a consultant in the field of the inclusive organisation and CEO of Teamspeler, a full-service consultancy agency that guides clients to work smarter, more effectively and more inclusively.

According to him, creating support is important, for any issue. Why? A decision that is supported by everyone will lead to **better implementation** of that decision. On the other hand, the process of creating broad support **cannot function as an obstacle** to introducing the chosen change. After all, the behaviour and culture of organisations only change as a result of doing new things, and not by endlessly discussing them.

A PREREQUISITE

'I notice that many managers often don't think through their own decisions sufficiently, simply because they ask themselves too few questions about them. Moreover, SME managers should not only be clear about what they mean, but should also fully understand the choices they make. So, they should first check whether they can tell a coherent story that can also be conveyed to others, and which they are 100% behind.'



COMMUNICATE OPENLY ABOUT BOUNDARIES

'When building support, also **indicate where the boundaries lie**. For example, if an organisation decides not to allow ideological symbols in the workplace, it must justify this ban objectively and reasonably. You cannot base such a decision on the argument that customers and/or colleagues insist on it. And you have to **communicate that clearly and well**.

'Please note that there are always some grey areas, in which boundaries are less clear and therefore **require extra communication effort**. What do you do at Christmas, Sinterklaas or Ramadan? And how does that relate to a decision not to allow symbols of philosophies? Or what do you do regarding ideological symbols during team-building activities that take place outside the company walls?'

AVOID INCONSISTENCY

'Finally, make sure that all the efforts you make to deal with ideological diversity in your organisation don't contradict each other. Align your HR policy, as well as your mission, vision, value-adding activities and support processes, with all the worldview issues you want to create support for, so that there are **no inconsistencies**.'

— www.teamspeler.be

An inclusive leader **encourages both inclusive thinking and inclusive behaviour** among all team members. Inclusive thinking and acting starts by recognising what people have in common (= recognising their equality), as well as from the recognition of differences between groups of people and individuals (= recognising diversity).¹³ It is this balance that the manager must constantly monitor.

Employees can contribute to an inclusive workplace through the way in which they think and behave towards others. It is up to the leaders to recognize, name and encourage such inclusive thinking and acting.



KATHERINA SWINGS

HR strategist and founder of CO-WINGS

Katherina Swings is an HR Strategist and the founder of CO-WINGS. She has extensive expertise in recruitment, specifically in reaching and attracting the talent present in the labour market. In her opinion, this is only possible when policies are anchored in diversity and inclusion. In this context, she has gained extensive knowledge on inclusive leadership.

According to this HR strategist, **promoting inclusive thinking and acting is fundamental**, because good leadership is, by definition, inclusive. As are future-proof organisations, because they are aware of economic and social needs and realities.

AVOID 'US AND THEM' THINKING

'Inclusive measures are for everyone, not just for "us" or "them". This is achieved by always specifically communicating that **everyone will benefit from inclusive measures**. Inclusion is a win-win for everyone, not for one particular group. Explain, for example, that a quiet space is not only useful for employees who want to pray, but also for a colleague who needs a quiet moment, or a breastfeeding mother. Reach mutual agreement on the use of such a space - and make it available to all. This is essential.'

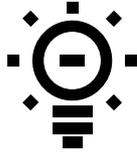


FOCUS ON THE SIMILARITIES

'Promote inclusive thinking and practices by **focusing on the similarities** within the team. Too often the focus is on differences, while every individual, regardless of his or her gender, age, skin colour or religious beliefs, shares with others many common values - such as solidarity, respect, cooperation, etc. Let these similarities come to the surface by ensuring that colleagues get to know each other better at an interpersonal level.'

— www.talenttreasurehunt.com

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13 Hoffman, E. (2009). *Interculturele gespreksvoering. Theorie en praktijk van het TOPOI-model*. Bohn Stafleu van Loghum.



WHAT SHOULD AN SME DO? SOME TIPS!

- > Be aware of **differences that are complementary** (e.g. language skills) and **similarities that reinforce each other** (e.g. having the same technical skills). Make others aware of these qualities and of their added value (e.g. being able to source additional technical information from other language areas).
- > Managers should present their **own behaviour as a good example** of interest in and commitment to others by being accessible and available, but also by being self-critical regarding their own behaviour. An example would be to admit that, as a non-believer, one does not fully understand why it is so important for a believer to carefully follow certain religious rules.
- > React immediately to any exclusive behaviour by employees. **Don't wait** for things to blow over. **Identify, by name, what went wrong** and set a relevant boundary. Indicate, for example, that an offensive remark or the use of certain language will not be tolerated.

TOOLS & WEBSITES

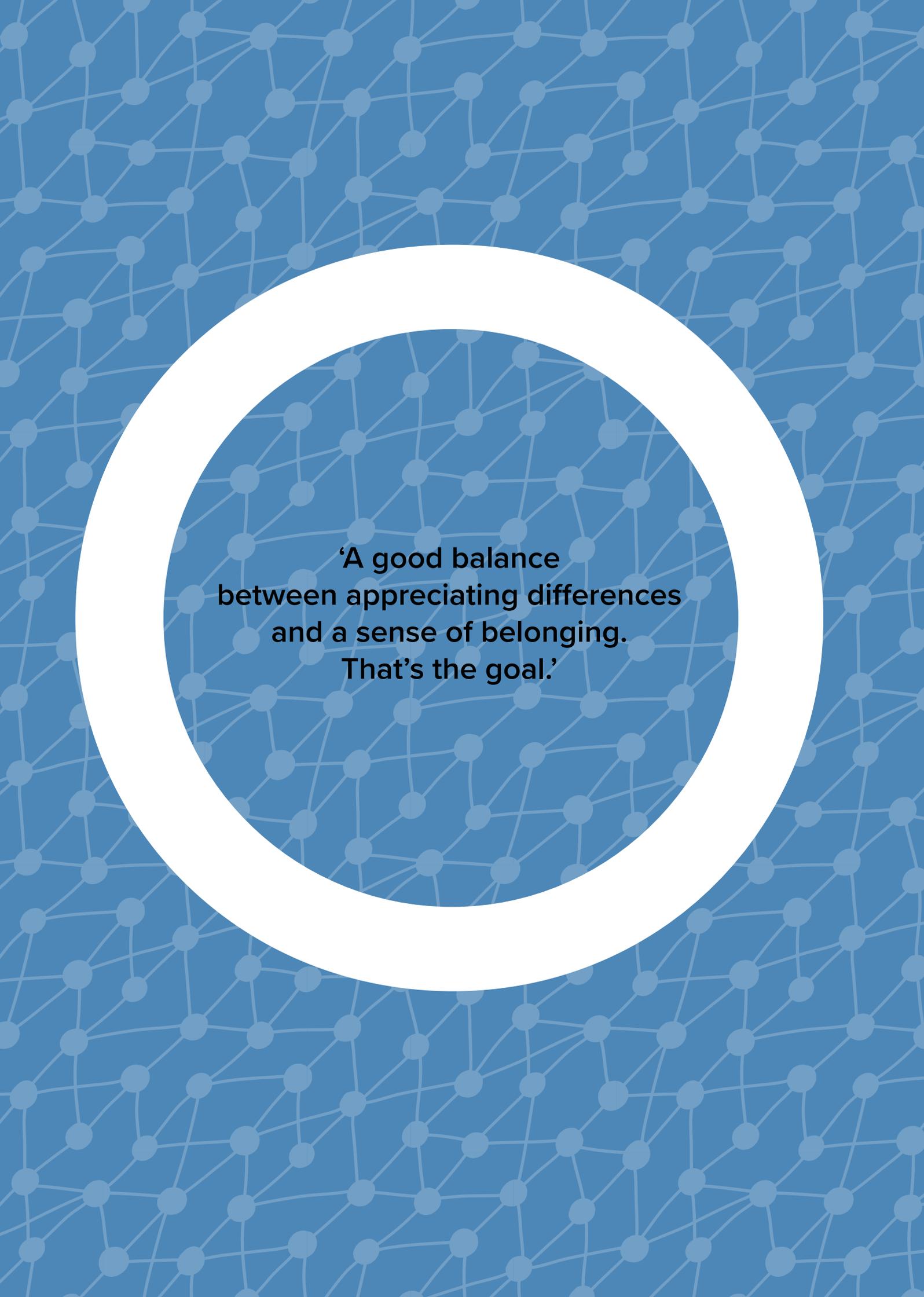
Below is an overview of some useful tools and interesting websites for promoting an inclusive leadership style.

TOOLS

- > **Kennisplatform Integratie & Samenleving** has developed an online instrument with which companies can measure the progress of their diversity policy. The instrument consists of a questionnaire with 23 items, subdivided into five areas in which SMEs can formulate their diversity policy. Leadership is one of these five areas: www.kis.nl/publicatie/effectief-diversiteitsbeleid-tel-uit-je-winst/
- > **De Aanstokerij** offers a number of tools for talking to others about how they experience various situations. These tools aid the understanding of self and others: www.aanstokerij.be/nl/nieuws/8-tools-om-te-praten-over-je-gevoelens

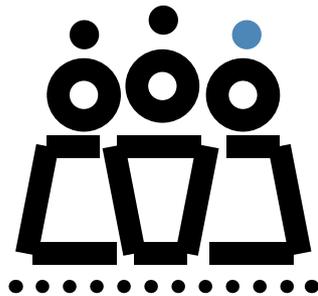
WEBSITES

- > **Unia** offers a useful 10-step plan on their website, on creating room for consultation. It can help one answer questions about religious practices: www.unia.be/nl/discriminatiegronden/geloof-of-levensbeschouwing/aanbod-unia/10-stappen
- > **VDAB** has developed a campaign with specific tools for the creation of an inclusive corporate culture in which diversity plays a role. The website contains inspiring stories about inclusive leaders who, in the midst of the corona crisis, are proving that inclusion is more than just measures aimed at specific target groups. Inclusion requires a different way of thinking and a leadership style that makes for strong companies in economically prosperous times, and is crucial in times of crisis: www.werkgevers.vdab.be/zeroexclusion
- > **Antwerp Management School** aims to put authentic, shared leadership and leadership development on the agenda of both organisations and society. Koen Marichal and Jesse Segers have posted a series of five podcast episodes called 'Leadership is everywhere' on the AMS website. Their metaphor using the leader of a jazz band is certainly relevant for organisations that want to work on inclusion. See www.offer.antwerpmanagementschool.be/leiderschap-is-overal-podcasts.



**‘A good balance
between appreciating differences
and a sense of belonging.
That’s the goal.’**

Inclusive practices



2.3 ESTABLISH INCLUSIVE PRACTICES (PILLAR III)

If an organisation aims at becoming more inclusive, it is important that it translates its ideals into specific, inclusive practices and measures. The goal? A good balance between **appreciating differences** and a **sense of belonging**. In other words, inclusive practices are specific activities that meet the need for belonging and at the same time address the needs for individuality and uniqueness.

The following **three management principles** are specific to setting up inclusive practices:

- > Tailor facilities to personal needs and wants wherever possible
- > Make tasks, schedules and holiday arrangements as personalised as possible
- > Encourage connectedness in and beyond the workplace

TAILOR FACILITIES TO PERSONAL NEEDS AND WANTS WHEREVER POSSIBLE

Some religious practices coincide with working hours. Employees can then request time for prayer, for example. This, of course, requires a specific space and, possibly, other adjustments. However, an ideological conviction does not rely solely on **practices or activities**. It can also be expressed by **external symbols** such as a cross, a yarmulke or a headscarf. There may well be questions, needs or wishes on the part of employers and employees in this regard.

Although employers are not obliged to make exceptions or adjustments because of individual personal needs and wishes related to a particular philosophy of life, **these are relevant to making an organisation more inclusive**. An employer who listens to these questions and discusses them, makes individuals feel recognised and valued, regardless of the final decision.

In such cases it is important to broaden the outcomes to such a question. In searching for a solution, **the needs of all employees** should be taken into account. A variety of employees should therefore be consulted in the search for a solution that benefits the entire organisation, rather than just a specific group.

Finally, be prepared for **very specific questions**, and possible resistance when the solution is presented to the whole group. Before proposing such a solution, think about how it will be implemented in practice. Also ensure that the dialogue takes place at the level of values, in the event of any resistance.



WHAT SHOULD AN SME DO? SOME TIPS!

- > Establish a **quiet space** in the workplace, a place in which people can experience a moment of silence and rest. It can be used for prayer, but also for meditation or relaxation. Preferably create a space that is exclusively available for such activities while also being accessible to all. If this is not possible, a meeting room could be reserved at fixed times for these purposes.
- > Provide facilities to **wash and/or shower** at the workplace. This comes in handy for ritual washing before prayer and for showering after physical exertion.
- > Provide an **ingredient list** and/or offer a range of different dishes and drinks when a reception, lunch or dinner are organised, or a gift is presented. It may be a good idea to involve those with specific dietary requirements in the preparation or purchase of the products. Or ask in advance which dishes, drinks and gifts employees prefer, using - for example - Google Forms.
- > **Company regulations** should clearly state whether **ideological symbols are allowed** in the workplace. Please note that only in specific cases may religious or ideological symbols be forbidden. Thus, a ban on such symbols may only be applied if it is necessary and appropriate in the achievement of a legitimate objective. More information on this can be found on Unia's website (www.unia.be). Please review these conditions thoroughly before implementing any ban on symbols.



CHARLOTTE MAES

HR Manager Roefs Group

Charlotte Maes is HR Manager at Roefs Group. With several branches in Belgium, the group specialises in septic materials removal, industrial cleaning services, waste management, utilities installation and soil remediation.

'At Roefs Group we consciously pioneer diversity, for reasons that include the labour shortage. Wherever possible, we tailor our **food and beverage provision** to the personal needs and wishes of our employees. When organising staff parties, we take into account the **preferences and wishes of all employees**. So, we provide a separate griddle for halal meat and a wide range of both alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks. In these small ways we try to give something back in return for the many things we expect from our people.'

IT'S A SMALL EFFORT, WITH A BIG IMPACT

'Taking into account dietary requirements is a very easy way to meet the personal needs and wishes of employees. This way everyone can participate and **feel welcome**. It makes it possible to bring everyone together at the same time, which for instance enables staff parties that include everyone. It is extremely important, regardless of gender, age, origin or philosophy of life, that everyone feels good at work and experiences a direct connection with the organisation. And these small things certainly contribute to this.'

MEETING THEIR PERSONAL NEEDS MAKES EMPLOYEES FEEL RESPECTED

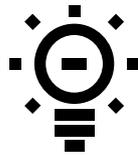
'In addition, we are convinced that this also has a positive impact on daily operations and the employee/management relationship. We really feel that mutual respect thrives in a workplace without discrimination. Employees also feel free to speak about a wide range of issues, ranging from their faith to their home situation. And this is a sign that they feel valued and respected.'

— www.roefsnv.be

MAKE TASKS, SCHEDULES AND HOLIDAY ARRANGEMENTS AS PERSONALISED AS POSSIBLE

Some religious practices initially seem difficult to fit into the work environment. Think, for example, of a fasting period or religious holidays with a variable date. They give rise to questions about **adjustments to work tasks, timetables and holiday arrangements**.

These kinds of questions also need to be investigated. And, here again, for successful implementation of the solution, it is best that as many employees of the SME as possible benefit from it.



WHAT SHOULD AN SME DO? SOME TIPS!

- > Consider whether a change in an employee's range of tasks is possible, **for a limited period** - for example, temporary exemption from heavy physical work. Start a dialogue about this and investigate specifically whether **other groups of employees**, not only those with a particular philosophy of life, are also interested in such an arrangement, e.g. people with a disability, top-level (hobby) athletes, parents of new-born babies, etc.
- > Examine **under what conditions** an adjustment of the work schedule for a certain period is feasible. This may involve temporary changes regarding work breaks, or flexible timetables. While one employee may like to start an hour later, in order to first drop children at school, another may want to leave in time to go to their place of worship.
- > Discuss **leave requests** as promptly as possible. Then give people a chance to double-check their choices, before recording them. Also make the applicable conditions very clear, and how subsequent changes can still be requested. It goes without saying that this is best done as a team. If someone requests a change to an approved arrangement, involve him or her in the search for a solution - for example using a replacement.



HOUSSEIN BOUKHRISS

Trainer & Consultant in diversity management and intercultural communication, leadership, conflict handling and verbal aggression.

Houssein Boukhriss is a trainer and consultant in the field of diversity management and intercultural communication (at Trace BV).

According to this expert, when it comes to changes in work schedules, tasks and holiday arrangements, sufficient attention must be paid to **both the consequences for others and the long-term**. 'Take particular care not to (unwittingly and unintentionally) discriminate against others, out of respect for a specific group. Diversity management is about **pushing boundaries**, but also about **clarifying boundaries**. These are relevant principles when it comes to religious practices and the question of adapting to philosophies of life.'

CONSIDER THE CONSEQUENCES

'When adjusting work schedules, tasks or other matters as a result of a request from a particular individual or group, it is extremely important to consider the consequences for others. Good intentions in favour of one group sometimes have the opposite effect on others in the workplace. So, think carefully about the **long-term impact of a decision**. What may be initially workable, may ultimately negatively impact good relationships and cooperation.'

PUSH BOUNDARIES, BUT ALSO DEFINE THEM CLEARLY

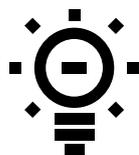
'Diversity management is about pushing boundaries - and also about making them clear. When an organisation becomes more diverse in its composition, its corporate culture must be adapted to this new fact. Employees who feel that their differences are respected often function better in the workplace. This often has a positive, long-term impact on cooperation and on the functioning of the organisation. This results in a **win-win situation for all parties**.

'It is also important to set clear boundaries. It is impossible to grant every wish at every moment, purely out of respect for difference. The common interest could be compromised by personal interests. If so, boundaries must be defined. Anyone who works for a business knows that there are **internal regulations** that everyone must abide by. Respect must be mutual.'

— trace@telenet.be

Connectedness ensures that employees feel **seen, heard and valued** for who they are. Inclusion is all about connection. A significant added value deriving from inclusion is that the accompanying sense of mutual belonging leads to greater job satisfaction and commitment. Always try to find a good balance between connectedness and individuality. After all, inclusion is not just about feeling connected to the organisation. It is also about recognition of the individual's own identity.

Connectedness in the workplace is not automatic. **Contact between employees** is crucial to creating a sense of belonging in the workplace. Encouraging informal social interactions in the workplace creates a greater sense of belonging among employees. Informal social interactions allow employees to get to know each other better and learn more about each other's background, habits, values and standards.



WHAT SHOULD AN SME DO? SOME TIPS!

- > Provide a time and a pleasant location for **people to eat together**. For example, provide a large table where colleagues can lunch together and talk. Such daily contact often enhances the working atmosphere.
- > Provide a **seating area in the workplace**, where colleagues can take a break or chat.
- > Organise **activities outside of work** that are fun for everyone - picnics, barbecues, walks, quizzes, bowling, parties, etc.
- > Provide a **game** in the workplace, such as a table football, ping-pong or a pool table.
- > Set up a shared **Strava group**, in which employees can share sports tips.



a talk
with

PETRA VELDMAN

Managing Director Stoffels Tomaten

Petra Veldman and her husband, Paul Stoffels, are both managing directors at Stoffels Tomaten, a tomato nursery in Rijkevorsel. At Stoffels Tomaten they believe it is important to stimulate solidarity, in and beyond the workplace.

'We organise **various staff parties during the year**, including a bowling outing. We then hire a bowling alley and provide eats and drinks. We also organise an annual party for employees' families, which includes the partners and children of all our staff. Soup is made from our own surplus tomatoes, and we also have a competition for the best soup.

ENCOURAGE CONNECTEDNESS, THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

According to Petra Veldman, connectedness is really stimulated if it's not just an occasional focus, but is the subject of attention throughout the year. 'We want people to know that our business is always open, to everyone. That we are accessible. That's why we try to include **many opportunities for conversations**.

We also remind employees to **respect each other**, and we react very sternly to occasions and situations when this is not observed. And we also remember the small things, like personal congratulations on birthdays. This leads to people seeing work not just as a job, but as a part of their lives.'

CONNECTEDNESS ALSO LEADS TO ECONOMIC BENEFITS

'More connectedness, both in and beyond the workplace, has many positive effects. If people feel more connected to each other, they are more involved with each other and they also stand up for each other more. This can only enhance the workplace atmosphere. We are also convinced that organisations obtain a **direct economic benefit** from connectedness. Commitment to Stoffels has become a common goal here. Which has a positive effect on our business results.'

— www.stoffels-tomaten.be

TOOLS & WEBSITES

Below is an overview of useful tools and interesting websites that are relevant in the context of inclusive practices.

TOOLS

- > **Unia** has developed www.ediv.be, a free online tool to support Belgian businesses, entrepreneurs and (local) authorities in the development and follow-up of an inclusive diversity policy.
- > **The Agency for integration and naturalisation** (Agentschap Integratie en Inburgering) offers the so-called 7B accessibility model on its website. The 7 Bs primarily give an insight into the factors that influence the accessibility of a service, project or event. But they are also perfect for screening the accessibility of the workplace and work-related activities. They enable testing for usability, reliability, understandability, awareness, contactability and accessibility. See www.integratie-inburgering.be/nl/7-bs-van-toegankelijkheid.

WEBSITES

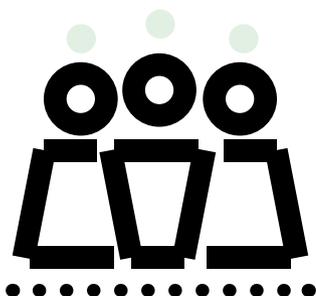
- > **The West Flemish socio-economic regions (RESOCs), the Integration and naturalisation agency, the Province of West Flanders and the Flemish department of recruitment and training (VDAB)** collaborate to provide specific tips, handy tools and practical examples, for HR and other managers wanting to start up their own diversity policy. These materials are available at vreemdevragen.be.
- > **Integration & naturalisation Antwerp (Atlas)** provides a wide range of information and practical tips on diversity policy and communication at diversiteitspraktijk.be
- > **Sector funds Alimento, Constructiv and Vorm DC** offer advice and support on diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Their training courses are aimed at supporting various sectors and management within these sectors, on a wide range of topics relating to diversity and inclusion.
 - > **Alimento** (a food industry sector fund) has developed a manual, together with several other sector organisations, to help and guide organisations in the development of non-discrimination codes: www.alimento.be/sites/default/files/files/alimento_publication/field_file/IntersectoraleHandleidingNon-Discriminatiedefinitieve%20schermversie_1.pdf
 - > **Vorm DC** (the service cheques sector fund) has developed a guide with information on the laws and directives concerning discrimination in the workplace, which includes specific tips on how to deal with situations involving discrimination: Vorm-DC.be/fileadmin/media/NL/3.PROJECTEN/DISCRIM_NL_web.pdf

The image features a light green background with a white network diagram consisting of numerous interconnected nodes and lines. A large, thick white circle is centered on the page, containing the text "Check your SME!".

Check your SME!

3. CHECK YOUR SME!

To what extent does your organisation already take ideological diversity into account in the workplace? Find out with the checklist below!



PILLAR I – CREATE AN INCLUSIVE CLIMATE

MP 1 – INCLUSION IS MEASURED AND MONITORED.

- The organisation’s score in the area of diversity and/or inclusion is monitored (e.g. by means of a scan). YES NO
- Inclusion is monitored via certain practices (such as via questionnaires or during performance appraisals or exit interviews). YES NO

MP 2 – RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND INDUCTION ARE INCLUSIVE.

- Recruitment is done via a variety of channels. YES NO
- Vacancy advertising contains only the essential requirements for the position. YES NO
- Selection criteria are task and function oriented. YES NO
- The recruitment committee is diverse. YES NO
- Induction of new employees is well prepared (e.g. an induction brochure has been drawn up and/or an induction mentor appointed) – with a focus on sufficient personal contact. YES NO

MP 3 – COMMUNICATION IS INCLUSIVE.

- Communication is based on shared goals and uses clear language. YES NO
- The organisation’s ideological diversity is visually communicated (e.g. on the website, in newsletters, brochures, presentations, etc.). YES NO

MP 4 – INCLUSIVE COMPETENCIES ARE STRENGTHENED AND KNOWLEDGE IS BROADENED.

- The organisation provides competence-enhancing and knowledge-broadening education and/or training courses, on inclusion-related topics. (For instance, workshops on understanding prejudice and training courses on strengthening inclusive leadership skills.) YES NO

PILLAR II – APPLY AN INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP STYLE

MP 5 – THERE IS A SAFE WORKING ENVIRONMENT.

- Managers regularly sound out the personal experiences and insights of employees. YES NO
- Managers pick up on things that stand out as (potentially) related to philosophies of life. YES NO
- Stereotyping is always avoided. YES NO
- Attention is paid to ‘covering’ behaviour, whereby employees may (attempt) to hide aspects of their identity in the workplace (because they think they must). YES NO
- Opportunities are created for minority voices to be heard. YES NO

MP 6 — BROAD ACCEPTANCE IS SUPPORTED.

- Managers involve employees in decisions that are or may be related to inclusion and ideological diversity (e.g. by creating workgroups). YES NO
- Managers inform employees via various channels about measures taken in the context of inclusion and ideological diversity. YES NO

MP 7 — INCLUSIVE THINKING AND ACTION IS PROMOTED.

- Managers are sensitive to differences and similarities between employees. YES NO
- Managers personally set good examples of inclusive behaviour. YES NO
- Managers respond immediately to non-inclusive behaviour. YES NO

PILLAR III - SET UP INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

MP 8 — FACILITIES ARE TAILORED TO PERSONAL NEEDS AND WANTS.

- The organisation provides a space for activities requiring silence. YES NO
- Facilities are provided for washing in the workplace. YES NO
- Ingredients lists and/or a wide range of dishes and drinks are provided at receptions, lunch and dinner. YES NO

MP 9 — TASKS, TIMETABLES AND LEAVE ARRANGEMENTS ARE AS PERSONALISED AS POSSIBLE.

- Adjustments to tasks and/or times are possible, for a certain period of time. YES NO
Leave requests are promptly discussed, so that everyone's wishes can be met as far as possible.

MP 10 — CONNECTIVITY IN AND BEYOND THE WORKPLACE IS ENCOURAGED.

- The organisation provides a pleasant place for employees to eat together. YES NO
- There are game facilities in the workplace and/or activities outside working hours. YES NO

Can your business answer YES to many of these questions? Then it's well on the way to successful management of ideological diversity in the workplace.

If that is not the case, there's room for improvement. You can call on the expertise and support of the Centre of expertise Public Impact in this regard, and on their extensive network of experts.

MORE INFORMATION

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