



DiGIN

Inspiring practice

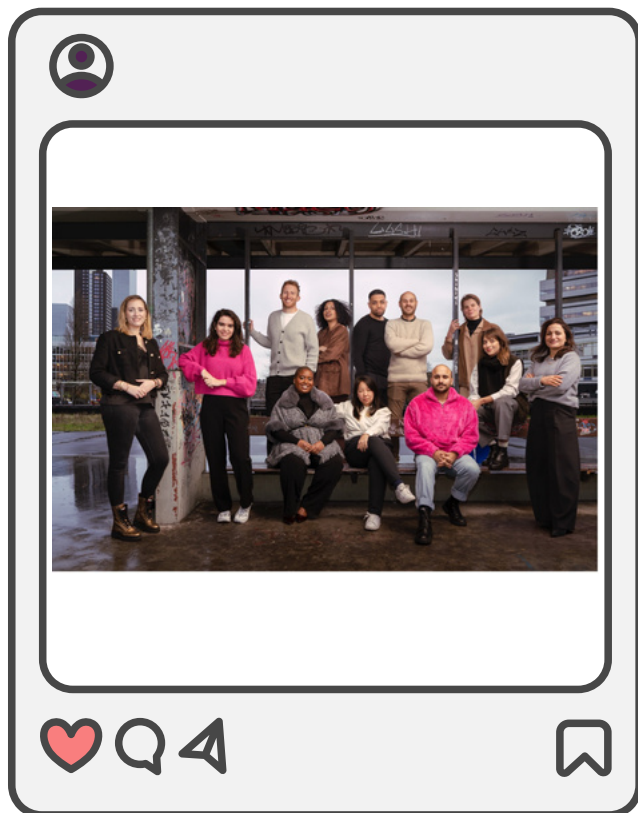
Inclusivity Panel for multiperspective decision- making in municipalities

By the Municipality of Rotterdam

February 2025



Inspiring practice: Inclusivity Panel for multiperspective decision-making in municipalities



Implemented by the municipality of Rotterdam, the Netherlands, with around 12,000 employees.

Rotterdam has been a pioneer in integrating Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) into municipal governance since the launch of the Inclusivity Panel in 2019. This initiative was created to deepen the city's commitment to these values and to foster a more inclusive environment.

The Inclusivity Panel, an affinity group within the municipality, was established to offer both solicited and unsolicited advice on DEI matters. This panel has played a crucial role in elevating the importance of DEI in municipal operations, helping to increase awareness and drive policy changes.

Objective



The goal of the Inclusivity Panel is for civil servants (of the municipality) to use fewer prejudices and stereotypes in municipal processes and policies. This is how the inclusion panel works against institutional racism/discrimination within local government.

Impact



Improved decision-making by adding extra voices to the table – less prejudices, more empathy and less stereotypical thinking

The Inclusivity Panel as a network for employees for improved bonding with employees and making them feel at home – also to serve as a mirror of the working place

Implementation steps

Phase 1: Group formation

The panel creates safe(r) spaces where employees can freely share experiences of discrimination and exclusion. These spaces foster open communication, allowing staff to discuss concerns and ideas in a secure environment. Monthly meetings are held to encourage dialogue about inclusion.

Phase 2: Advocacy and awareness

The panel works to raise awareness about the importance of inclusion across the organization, advocating for proactive measures to combat discrimination. Awareness campaigns and workshops are organized to inform employees about bias, diversity, and inclusion.

Phase 3: Process changes

In collaboration with HR and with policy makers, the panel develops inclusive recruitment practices and policy making, by adding their perspective to the process. Panelists can revise job descriptions, contribute to recruitment committees and engage in policy-making tables.

Phase 4: Evaluation and adjustment

The panel regularly evaluates its initiatives through surveys, staff data analysis, and feedback, using this information to refine processes and drive improvements.

Phase 5: Embedding and cultural change

Inclusion is integrated into all policy documents, making it a priority across the organization. Leadership training encourages managers to model inclusive behaviours and values.



Lessons learned & challenges



Create a group/movement

Building a group or movement is vital for creating momentum and fostering collaboration. A united effort allows for shared responsibility, collective problem-solving, and greater impact in achieving inclusion goals.

Find top-down support

Securing support from leadership is crucial. When leaders advocate for change, it signals to the entire organization that inclusion is a priority. Their influence helps ensure resources, policies, and attention are directed toward the initiative.

Safe space

Creating safe spaces where individuals can speak freely about their experiences is key to fostering trust and openness. These spaces encourage honest conversations and allow people to address sensitive topics without fear of retaliation or judgment.

DON'Ts



Avoid discomfort

Growth often comes from discomfort. Avoiding difficult conversations or situations may hinder progress. Embracing discomfort is necessary for challenging biases and promoting meaningful change.

Focus (only) on resisters

Focusing only on those resisting change can be counterproductive. Instead, it's important to engage a broad group, including potential allies, to build a stronger, more inclusive movement.

Be rigid – it is an iterative process

Inclusion is not a one-time fix but an ongoing journey. Being rigid in the approach can limit progress. It's important to remain flexible, adapt strategies, and learn from each phase to refine and improve the process.

How can this replicated by others?

During DiGiN the municipality of Rotterdam will guide the municipalities of Ghent and Genoa to replicate this intervention by providing them with an online course about how to create your own Inclusivity Panel within your organisation. If you want to know more, feel free to contact us.

“*We hope to foster a broader movement that can learn from our experiences, amplifying the impact of DEI initiatives regionally and beyond*” van Gennip notes

Contact us

Reach out to inclusiviteitspanel@rotterdam.nl

Read more information in Dutch

[Inclusiviteitspanel - Gemeente Rotterdam | KIS](#)

[Inclusiviteitspanel gemeente Rotterdam | Bestuursacademie](#)

DiGiN Consortium Partners:



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Designed by Yellow Window

This document is a result of the DiGiN Project, funded by the European Union under the CERV-2023-EQUAL call, aimed at integrating Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) across European municipalities to reflect the diverse demographics of local societies.

Find out more: <https://diginproject.eu/>

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