



# INSPIRING PRACTICE

## Handout: the concept of an Inclusivity Panel

*By the Municipality of Rotterdam*  
July 2025





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# Inspiring practice: Inclusivity Panel for multiperspective decisionmaking in municipalities

July 2025

Factsheet design by Yellow Window ([www.yellowwindow.com](http://www.yellowwindow.com))

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.

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# The structure and role of the Inclusivity Panel in advancing #DEI

The Inclusivity Panel consists of a **programme team**, a **core team** and the **network**.

- The **programme team** of the Inclusivity Panel focuses on the Panel itself, is the first point of contact and supports the core team in its needs.
- The **core team** consists of 8-10 members, all recruited from different parts of the organisation. The core team meets every couple of weeks to discuss the current affairs and advises on these affairs.
- The **network** is a broader network of members that all have an affinity with the Inclusivity Panel as an organ. These network members can be asked for advice as well, as well as joining recruitment and selection procedures.

**All members of the Inclusivity Panel**, including the programme and core team, add an **intersectional perspective** to policy processes, recruitment and selection procedures, projects and programmes within the organisation and anything else the Inclusivity Panel is asked to advise on.

Adding an extra perspective ensures that **decisions are made with a broader view**. From different perspectives that reflect the super-diverse city. The Inclusivity Panel can be used for internal and external dialogue tables in a safe setting, to think along on policy issues, team processes, etc. The inclusivity panel focuses on making the organisation more diverse and inclusive in order to serve the city in its broad diversity.

**The main goal is for civil servants (of the municipality) to be influenced less by prejudices and stereotypes in municipal processes and policy.** This is how involving the inclusivity panel works against institutional racism/discrimination within the local government.



## Four pillars of the Inclusivity Panel



### Advising (including facilitation)

One of the core tasks of the Inclusivity Panel is to advise the organisation on matters related to Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity (DEI). Over the past years, it has become clear that the organisation has DIG-related inquiries, challenges, and requests. Being available for such matters ensures that the panel can add value to the organisation, helping it become more diverse, inclusive, and equitable in an appropriate way. The Inclusivity Panel ensures that in the creation of new policies, projects, programs, and DEI-related issues, diverse perspectives are present at the table to actively participate, advise, and decide. This way, non-dominant perspectives are included.



### Networking

By maintaining a strong network, we aim to increase visibility, foster connections, inspire, support talent development, and disseminate our principles. The network will support employees involved in D&I initiatives and help onboard (new) employees. Part of this strategy is offering a safe(r) space for employees to meet, collaborate, and support each other. We also aim to connect with existing networks.



### Recruitment and Selection

Middle management plays a vital role in fostering diversity, inclusion, and equity within the organisation. Managers, including department heads, team leaders, and directors, influence the atmosphere within teams, how employees are valued, and how people interact. They are often hiring managers, responsible for recruiting new colleagues. For this reason, focusing on DEI at this level is highly effective. Moreover, DEI is integral to the Rotterdam leadership style. Over the past almost 5 years, the Inclusivity Panel has proven effective in influencing these processes, changing perspectives and discussions within selection committees. Therefore, continuing the panel's involvement in recruitment and selection processes for middle and upper management is beneficial for the organisation. The municipality is currently rolling out an inclusive recruitment and selection methodology, with the Inclusivity Panel playing an advisory role. Over time, the panel will also take on an evaluative role.





### Dialogue with the City

Citizen participation is becoming increasingly important. People want to contribute ideas and co-create plans for their neighborhoods and communities. The organisation also aims to amplify the voices of a diverse group of residents to improve policies and services. Given the city's immense diversity, such dialogues must be organised inclusively and equitably. Conducting meaningful conversations with the city requires skilled municipal facilitators with expertise in sensitive topics such as equity, discrimination, racism, anti-LGBTQ+ violence and more. The organisation seeks to strengthen its connection with the city by involving residents in policymaking. A major challenge is ensuring that inclusion policies are embraced across all departments. The panel will contribute to this by facilitating conversations with both the city and the municipal organisation, taking on both advisory and operational roles. One way we try to make a bridge between the organisation and the city is via the OneYoungWorld program.



## Theoretical framework: the KIS research

The Inclusivity Panel as an intervention is based on the theoretical framework developed by Kennisplatform Inclusief Samenleven, also known as KIS. This is a knowledge institute dedicated to making society more inclusive. This framework describes the Inclusivity Panel as an effective tool against discrimination in organisations.



For more information visit the website (in Dutch): [Inclusiviteitspanel - Gemeente Rotterdam | KIS](https://inclusiviteitspanel-gemeente-rotterdam.nl/kis)

### Goal of the intervention

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

### Target group

Civil servants of a municipal organisation. This at all levels of the organisation, with an emphasis on middle and senior management, because that is where important choices are made, staff are hired and the inclusiveness of teams and departments is managed.

### Sub-goals

- Civil servants are aware of their own prejudices in decision-making
- Civil servants see the need for different perspectives in decision-making. Because different types of civil servants meet each other who do not conform to the stereotype, anti-stereotypical thinking arises
- Civil servants know that the white norm is not the standard and can act accordingly

### Mechanisms at play

Mechanisms aimed at **groups of people or individuals**:

- Empathy: Anti-stereotyping and flexible thinking: meeting people who do not conform to the stereotypical image
- Reducing fear: reducing feelings of fear and feelings of threat towards the stigmatised group
- Reducing dividing lines: creating a sense of togetherness and intensive cooperation
- Social norm



### Mechanisms aimed at **institutions/organisations**:

- Change processes that are based on the norm and disadvantage marginalised groups
- Add processes to limit the influence of individual prejudices and stereotypes
- The people who are discriminated against in the situation are involved in changing the processes

## Change theory

The Inclusivity Panel ensures that civil servants are confronted with a broader range of perspectives, which on the one hand creates more empathy and empathy, less stereotypical thinking and reduces feelings of fear and threat between colleagues. On the other hand, it counteracts institutional racism by adding processes that no longer assume the socially dominant norm and limits stereotypical thinking in terms of process.

The Inclusivity Panel also ensures that when creating new policy, projects or programs and diversity and inclusion policy or issues, marginalised groups participate in discussions, advice and decisions, so that non-dominant perspectives are included.

Because colleagues from the Inclusivity Panel work together with colleagues outside the inclusivity panel, a sense of togetherness is created; together we work on achieving a systemic change that counteracts institutional racism.

Finally, because it is becoming more and more natural to use the inclusivity panel, it is seen as the new social norm, causing colleagues to 'infect' each other to involve the inclusivity panel. This changes processes within the municipality that work anti-stereotypically.

## Evaluation

The Inclusivity Panel of the municipality of Rotterdam has used the indicators below to evaluate the intervention in the beginning.

Organisation-wide, there was the 'Inclusiebarometer' and questions are asked about inclusivity in the employee satisfaction survey. In addition, there is some data about employee characteristics, but this is not official data.

Furthermore, it is recorded in which recruitment and selection procedures the inclusivity panel was used. The inclusivity panel has built in interim reflection moments as part of a collective learning process.

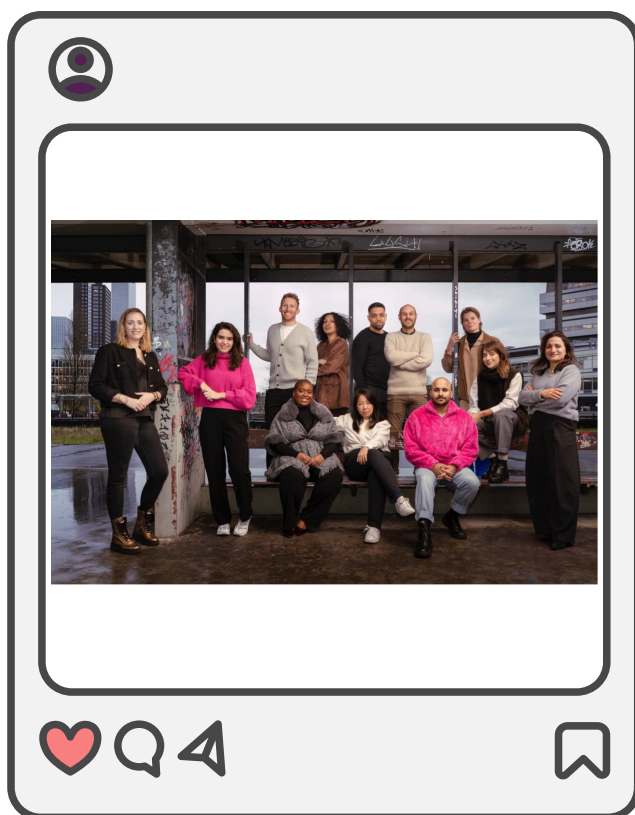




The inclusivity panel has also interviewed colleagues (who work within DEI) about their vision of the effectiveness of the inclusivity panel.

A survey was also conducted among the members of the Inclusivity Panel.

In the future, we will look at ways to make the effect of the Inclusivity Panel measurable. This could involve surveys among all those involved and requesting figures about colleagues and characteristics such as cultural background, gender, sexuality, disability, etc. This would then be data from the entire organisation, but the idea here is that the inclusion panel has contributed to this.



This document goes hand in hand with the document "[Inspiring practice: Inclusivity Panel for multiperspective decision-making in municipalities](#)" by the Municipality of Rotterdam (February 2025).



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**July 2025**

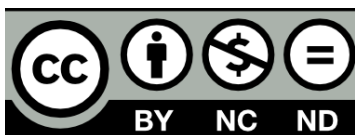
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