

Project acronym: DiGiN
Project title: Diverse, Equitable and Inclusive municipal organisations
Grant agreement number: 101144379
Start date of project: 01/05/2024
Duration: 24 months



DELIVERABLE NO. 2.2

Toolkit of DEI capacity-building materials

Due date of deliverable	31/03/2026
Submission date	23/03/2026
File Name	D2.2 - Toolkit of DEI capacity-building materials
Organisation Responsible of Deliverable	Yellow Window
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Revision number	1.0
Status	Final
Dissemination Level	Public



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SUMMARY

This deliverable presents the DiGiN Toolkit of DEI capacity-building materials, developed under Work Package 2 (Capacity-building for change agents). The toolkit provides a comprehensive set of practical, evidence-based resources designed to support municipal administrations in advancing Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI) within their organisations.

The toolkit brings together conceptual guidance, training materials, case studies and resources to strengthen the capacity of municipal staff and DEI change agents to embed inclusive practices into everyday governance. It is grounded in the findings of the DiGiN culture assessments conducted in the partner municipalities of Genoa, Ghent and Rotterdam.

The document is structured around five main components:

1. a conceptual framework outlining key principles for DEI capacity-building,
2. a glossary of core DEI concepts,
3. a set of case studies and inspiring practices from European municipalities,
4. a series of ready-to-use capacity-building modules developed by Yellow Window,
5. a curated collection of existing tools and resources to support further learning and implementation.

The toolkit is primarily addressed to municipal staff, including DEI officers, HR professionals, managers, and members of DEI working groups, as well as other stakeholders involved in organisational development and policy-making. It is designed to be flexible and adaptable, allowing municipalities to tailor its use to their specific context, needs and level of maturity in DEI work.

By supporting continuous, practice-oriented and participatory learning, the toolkit contributes to strengthening institutional capacities, addressing structural inequalities and fostering more inclusive, equitable and resilient municipal organisations.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the conversation on Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI) in the EU has gained momentum, driven by global social movements that have highlighted systemic inequalities, including racial, gender-based and other forms of discrimination. These movements have underscored the need for more inclusive policies and practices across various sectors. However, despite the growing emphasis on DEI, research indicates that there remains a significant gap between the development of DEI strategies and their effective implementation in organisations across Europe.

The DiGiN project seeks to bridge this gap. Funded by the European Union under the CERV 2023-EQUAL call, the project aims to foster diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplaces within municipal organisations. DiGiN promotes equality and combats all forms of discrimination - whether based on gender, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, age, health status or any other ground - by adopting an intersectional approach. Initially focusing on the participating municipalities of Genoa, Ghent, and Rotterdam, the project also aims to extend its impact to other European municipalities across Europe and beyond including the private sector, NGOs, and SMEs. Through its activities, DiGiN enhances decision-making and policy development processes within municipal workplaces contributing to the creation of more inclusive and resilient municipal structures.

This deliverable – D2.2 Toolkit of DEI capacity-building materials – forms a central output of Work Package 2 '*Capacity-building for change agents*', developed by Yellow Window. The Toolkit, available in English, Dutch and Italian, offers training resources and capacity-building materials specifically designed for the change agents of each partner municipality. These resources build on methodologies developed and successfully tested in previous EU-funded projects. The deliverable also integrates case studies from partner municipalities, highlighting concrete DEI practices that can inspire and support capacity-building efforts.

Purpose of the toolkit

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide municipal staff and DEI change agents with practical, evidence-based resources to support the mainstreaming of Diversity, Equality and Inclusion within their organisations. It provides actionable learning materials and new or existing resources, helping municipalities strengthen internal capacities, address institutional barriers and embed DEI principles into everyday organisational practices.

Target audience

The toolkit is designed for municipal officers, DEI coordinators, HR staff, members of DEI committees or working groups, project managers and other professionals involved in equality, inclusion, organisational development or strategic planning. It may also be relevant to leaders seeking to embed DEI into decision-making processes at different administrative levels.



FRAMEWORK FOR CAPACITY-BUILDING

Principles of Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion

Capacity-building for DEI in municipalities is a long-term, reflexive process that strengthens the ability of local institutions to recognise, question and transform the systems through which inequality is reproduced. This understanding aligns with Mahajan, Bleijenbergh and Benschop's (2024) argument that DEI work must address institutional structures and power relations, not only individual attitudes, to create meaningful and lasting change. Drawing on intersectional and postcolonial feminist scholarship (Crenshaw, 1991; Mohanty, 2003), the framework acknowledges that municipal policies and services are shaped by histories of privilege and exclusion and must therefore be examined within their broader social and political context.

The principles underpinning this framework begin with an intersectional understanding of inequality, acknowledging that people experience inclusion and exclusion in multiple, overlapping ways that cannot be reduced to simple gender or other binaries. DEI efforts must consider how gender interacts with aspects, such as race, class, migration background, disability, health status, sexual orientation age, and so forth, and avoid universal, one-size-fits-all assumptions about "women", "men" or any other group. At the same time, capacity-building requires reflexivity: an honest engagement with privileges (Collins, 2000), internal biases and the power dynamics embedded in municipal routines, rather than focusing solely on the disadvantages of particular communities. This work must also be participatory, bringing those most affected by inequality into the process as knowledge-holders and partners.

Role of change agents in institutional transformation

Within this framework, change agents play a central role in institutional transformation. They act as translators who help colleagues understand how DEI principles relate to everyday decisions, as conveners who create space for critical reflection, and as connectors linking leadership, staff, departments, and local communities. Their ability to challenge dominant narratives, navigate resistance and anchor DEI in core processes makes them essential drivers of sustained change.

Capacity-building as a driver of DEI mainstreaming

Finally, capacity-building becomes an engine of DEI mainstreaming when it is continuous, practice-oriented and embedded in governance structures. Rather than isolated workshops, it must form an ongoing process that strengthens skills, shifts organisational culture (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016) and influences policies, procedures and resource allocation. When approached in this integrated way, capacity-building helps municipalities close the gap between formal commitments and lived realities and ensures that DEI becomes a routine and accountable part of local governance.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit is designed as a practical companion for municipal staff, DEI officers, core teams and leaders who are working to advance Diversity, Equality and Inclusion within their



organisations. It can be used as a step-by-step guide, a reference document, or a collection of standalone resources depending on the needs and level of experience of each municipality. While the toolkit provides structure, it is intentionally flexible: every municipality is at a different stage of its DEI journey, and the materials can be adapted to local priorities, organisational cultures and available capacities.

The document is organised into several interconnected sections that work together to support institutional transformation:

- **The Framework for Capacity-Building** outlines the key principles, concepts and approaches that underpin sustainable DEI work in municipalities. It provides the conceptual grounding needed to understand why capacity-building is essential for mainstreaming DEI.
- **The Glossary** offers clear, accessible definitions of key DEI concepts used throughout the toolkit. Municipal teams may find it helpful to consult the glossary before starting a module or discussion, to ensure a shared understanding of terminology and avoid confusion, especially when working across departments or with mixed levels of prior DEI knowledge.
- **Case Studies and Inspiring Practices** offer real examples from DiGiN partner municipalities and other European cities. These cases can help you identify models that resonate with your context, spark ideas for local adaptation, or guide discussions within your team.
- **Capacity-Building Modules** present ready-to-use training materials, in English, developed by DiGiN. They include session descriptions, learning objectives, scripts, presentations and exercises. Municipalities can use these modules to train internal teams, build new competencies and initiate cross-departmental learning processes.
- **Existing Tools and Resources** provide access to practical instruments, such as standards, handbooks, assessment tools and reports, that can support more advanced or specialised work. These resources can be used to deepen understanding, guide policy development or complement the DiGiN modules.

When using this toolkit, we encourage organisations to:

1. **Start where you are.** There is no required entry point. You may begin with a training module, a case study or reading a resource, depending on your current priorities.
2. **Work in teams.** DEI transformation is most effective when groups engage together. Use the toolkit to spark dialogue, create shared understanding and build a common language across departments.
3. **Adapt the materials.** The resources are designed to be customised. Adjust examples, terminology and exercises to fit the realities of your municipal/organisational context.
4. **Integrate learning into practice.** Capacity-building has the most impact when it is connected to real organisational processes. After completing a module, identify concrete next steps or policy areas where the new insights can be applied.
5. **Use the toolkit iteratively.** Return to different sections as your DEI work evolves. The toolkit supports long-term transformation and will gain new relevance at different stages of implementation.

The toolkit aspires to empower municipal actors to make DEI a consistent, strategic and practical part of everyday governance—strengthening institutions from within and improving the experiences of the communities they serve.



GLOSSARY

Ableism: A form of discrimination arising from the belief that people with disabilities are inferior to those without disabilities. It is a systemic bias that classifies persons with disabilities as “lesser” and leads to prejudice, stigma, and unequal treatment in policies and practices. (United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2023).

- Inclusive Gender Transformative Approach Guidance Note (2023). United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Accessibility: Accessibility refers to the extent to which organisational environments, processes, information and services allow all individuals to participate fully and without barriers. In the DiGiN framework, accessibility involves identifying and removing structural, institutional and procedural obstacles that limit employees' ability to engage in workplace activities, access opportunities or benefit from organisational resources. This includes the design of physical spaces, digital systems and communication practices in ways that accommodate different abilities, needs and circumstances, as well as the provision of reasonable adjustments that enable equal participation. (United Nations, 2006; World Health Organization, 2001; Oliver, 1990; Shakespeare, 2014; Zbeidy & Çelik, 2025;).

- Zbeidy, D., & Çelik, S. (2025). *What is (successful) DEI and how to measure and evaluate it? Research report on DEI interventions*. Zenodo.
- United Nations. (2006). *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. United Nations.
- World Health Organization. (2001). *International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF)*. World Health Organization.
- Oliver, M. (1990). *The politics of disablement*. Macmillan.
- Shakespeare, T. (2014). *Disability rights and wrongs revisited* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Affirmative Actions: Affirmative action, also referred to in European policy as positive action, encompasses targeted measures designed to counter structural discrimination and improve the representation, participation and advancement of groups who have been historically excluded or underrepresented. In a municipal context, positive action includes deliberate steps such as tailored recruitment initiatives, capacity-building opportunities, mentoring schemes or outreach strategies that address persistent inequalities and enable fair access to employment and organisational processes. These measures help correct systemic imbalances by ensuring that individuals who face structural barriers are given equitable opportunities to participate and succeed. (European Union, 2000; Fredman, 2011).

- European Union. (2000). Council Directive 2000/43/EC implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin. Official Journal of the European Union.
- Fredman, S. (2011). *Discrimination law* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.

Ageism: Prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination directed against individuals based on their age. It encompasses negative assumptions and actions towards people (including oneself) simply because they are young or old. (World Health Organization, 2025).



- World Health Organization. (2025). Ageing: Ageism (Q&A). Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/ageing-ageism>

Ally: An ally is an individual who actively supports colleagues or communities who experience discrimination, exclusion or marginalisation, and uses their position or influence to help challenge inequities within the organisation. Being an ally goes beyond expressing solidarity; it involves taking responsibility for recognising privilege, addressing biased behaviours and contributing to organisational culture where all staff can participate safely and equally. In the context of municipal workplaces, allies can play a crucial role in identifying exclusionary practices, amplifying underrepresented voices, and intervening constructively when inappropriate behaviour occurs. A distinction is commonly made between performative allyship and active allyship. Performative allyship refers to symbolic gestures or statements that signal support without real commitment to change and may even reproduce the inequalities they claim to challenge. Active allyship involves consistent, informed and accountable actions that help remove structural and interpersonal barriers, including speaking up, supporting affected colleagues and advocating for inclusive processes and decision-making. Effective allyship requires ongoing learning and a willingness to share power to promote meaningful organisational change (Arao & Clemens, 2013; Edwards, 2006; Dover et al., 2020; Zbeidy & Çelik, 2025;).

- Zbeidy, D., & Çelik, S. (2025). *What is (successful) DEI and how to measure and evaluate it? Research report on DEI interventions*. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14725254>
- Arao, B., & Clemens, K. (2013). From safe spaces to brave spaces: A new way to frame dialogue around diversity and social justice. In L. Landreman (Ed.), *The art of effective facilitation: Reflections from social justice educators* (pp. 135–150). Stylus Publishing.
- Edwards, K. E. (2006). Aspiring social justice ally identity development: A conceptual model. *NASPA Journal*, 43(4), 39–51.
- Dover, T. L., Kaiser, C. R., & Major, B. (2020). Mixed signals: The unintended effects of diversity initiatives. *Psychological Science*, 31(11), 1463–1475.

Bias: Bias refers to systematic tendencies to favour or disadvantage individuals or groups in ways that are not based on objective criteria. It can appear in decisions, interactions or organisational processes, often without conscious intent. Bias can be explicit (conscious attitudes) or implicit (unconscious stereotypes) and both can shape recruitment, evaluations, team dynamics, access to opportunities, etc. Because bias is also embedded in organisational cultures and routines, reducing it requires both individual awareness and structural change (Banaji & Greenwald, 2013; Zbeidy & Çelik, 2025;).

- Banaji, M. R., & Greenwald, A. G. (2013). *Blindspot: Hidden biases of good people*. Delacorte Press.
- Zbeidy, D., & Çelik, S. (2025). *What is (successful) DEI and how to measure and evaluate it? Research report on DEI interventions*. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14725254>

Co-creation: Co-creation refers to a structured participatory process in which relevant stakeholders collaborate to design, refine or evaluate policies, services or organisational practices. It goes beyond consultation by positioning stakeholders as active contributors throughout the process, recognising their lived experiences and professional expertise as

essential. In municipal settings, co-creation helps ensure that DEI measures respond to real needs, strengthen trust and promote shared ownership. Effective co-creation requires inclusive facilitation, transparent decision-making and processes that value diverse perspectives equally (Zbeidy & Çelik, 2025; Denis, Madesi & Wuame, 2024; Voorberg, Bekkers & Tummers, 2015).

- Denis, A., Madesi, V., & Wuame, N. (2024). *Co-creation and participatory approaches towards addressing gender-based violence in research and academia*. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13986398>
- Voorberg, W. H., Bekkers, V. J., & Tummers, L. G. (2015). *A systematic review of co-creation and co-production: Embarking on the social innovation journey*. *Public Management Review*, 17(9), 1333–1357.
- Zbeidy, D., & Çelik, S. (2025). *What is (successful) DEI and how to measure and evaluate it? Research report on DEI interventions*. Zenodo. <https://zenodo.org/records/14725254>

Cultural competence: Cultural competence refers to the ability of individuals and organisations to work effectively with people from diverse cultural, ethnic, linguistic or religious backgrounds. It involves developing awareness of one's own assumptions, acquiring knowledge about different cultural experiences and adapting behaviours, communication and services to ensure respectful and equitable interactions. In municipal settings, cultural competence helps prevent misunderstandings, improve service delivery and strengthen trust between staff and residents. It requires continuous learning, reflection and organisational support rather than a fixed set of skills (Betancourt et al., 2003; Cross et al., 1989; Zbeidy & Çelik, 2025).

- Betancourt, J. R., Green, A. R., Carrillo, J. E., & Ananeh-Firempong, O. (2003). *Defining cultural competence: A practical framework for addressing racial/ethnic disparities in health and health care*. *Public Health Reports*, 118(4), 293–302.
- Cross, T. L., Bazron, B. J., Dennis, K. W., & Isaacs, M. R. (1989). *Towards a culturally competent system of care: A monograph on effective services for minority children who are severely emotionally disturbed*. Georgetown University Child Development Center.
- Zbeidy, D., & Çelik, S. (2025). *What is (successful) DEI and how to measure and evaluate it? Research report on DEI interventions*. Zenodo. <https://zenodo.org/records/14725254>

DEI mainstreaming: DEI mainstreaming refers to the systematic integration of diversity, equity and inclusion principles into all policies, procedures and everyday practices of an organisation. It requires that every decision, service, programme or organisational process is examined through a DEI lens, so that inequalities are prevented rather than addressed only after they occur. In municipal settings, DEI mainstreaming means embedding inclusive approaches in governance, HR processes, service design, community engagement and internal communication, rather than treating DEI as a standalone activity. It is an ongoing organisational commitment to ensure equitable outcomes, structural fairness and participation for all staff and residents (European Commission, 2021; O'Connor & Doyle, 2020; Zbeidy & Çelik, 2025).

- European Commission. (2021). *Union of Equality: The EU anti-racism action plan 2020–2025*. Publications Office of the European Union.

- O'Connor, P., & Doyle, C. (2020). Gender equality mainstreaming in higher education: A framework for organisational change. *European Journal of Education*, 55(1), 77–95.
- Zbeidy, D., & Çelik, S. (2025). What is (successful) DEI and how to measure and evaluate it? Research report on DEI interventions. Zenodo. <https://zenodo.org/records/14725254>

Disability: A concept defined by the interaction between an individual's impairment and various barriers that may hinder full participation in society. In the United Nations' terms, it includes long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which, in interaction with attitudinal or environmental barriers, may restrict one's equal participation in society (United Nations, 2006; European Institute for Gender Equality, 2016).

- United Nations. (2006). *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Article 1, Treaty No. 44910)*. New York: United Nations.
- European Institute for Gender Equality. (2016). Sexual orientation (Glossary definition). In *EIGE Glossary and Thesaurus*. Retrieved November 24, 2025, from <https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/thesaurus/terms/1051>

Diversity: The presence of differences within a given setting or group. It encompasses the variety of personal characteristics and experiences – such as gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, etc. – represented among individuals. In organizations, diversity entails examining the makeup of a group to ensure multiple perspectives are included (Tan, 2019).

- Tan, T. Q. (2019). Principles of inclusion, diversity, access, and equity. *The Journal of Infectious Diseases*, 220(Suppl_2), S30–S32. <https://doi.org/10.1093/infdis/jiz198>
- European Institute for Gender Equality. (2016). *Gender equality – Glossary & Thesaurus*. EIGE. <https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/>

Discrimination: Any unjustified distinction, exclusion, or preference made on the basis of personal characteristics (such as race, color, sex, religion, disability, etc.) that has the purpose or effect of impairing equality of opportunity or treatment. In essence, discrimination places certain individuals at a disadvantage because of attributes unrelated to their merit (International Labour Organization, 1958).

- International Labour Organization. (1958). *Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (No. 111)*. Geneva: ILO.

Equality: Equality refers to the principle that all individuals should have the same rights, opportunities and access to resources, without discrimination on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, migration background or any other characteristic. In organisational and municipal contexts, equality means creating conditions where everyone can participate and benefit on an equal footing, free from structural barriers and unfair treatment. It focuses on ensuring that policies, practices and institutional cultures do not privilege certain groups over others and that fairness is embedded in all aspects of decision-making and service delivery.

- European Commission. (2020). *Union of Equality: The Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025*. Publications Office of the European Union. https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en



- European Commission. (2020). *A Union of Equality: EU Anti-Racism Action Plan 2020–2025*. Publications Office of the European Union. https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/racism-and-xenophobia/eu-anti-racism-action-plan-2020-2025_en
- European Institute for Gender Equality. (2016). *Gender equality – Glossary & Thesaurus*. EIGE. <https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1168>
- United Nations. (1948). *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. United Nations. <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

Equity: An approach centered on fairness that acknowledges not everyone starts from the same place. Equity involves providing resources and opportunities according to individual circumstances and needs to achieve equal outcomes. It recognizes historical and structural disadvantages and works to correct imbalances, ensuring the fair and just treatment of all people (Tan, 2019).

- Tan, T. Q. (2019). Principles of inclusion, diversity, access, and equity. *The Journal of Infectious Diseases*, 220(Suppl_2), S30–S32. <https://doi.org/10.1093/infdis/jiz198>
- European Institute for Gender Equality. (2016). *Gender equality – Glossary & Thesaurus*. EIGE. <https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/>

Gender: The socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that society considers appropriate for women, men, girls, and boys. These expectations and norms are learned, can vary across cultures and time, and influence what is expected, allowed, and valued for individuals of different genders trainingcentre.unwomen.org (UN Women Training Centre, n.d.; European Institute for Gender Equality, 2016). (Note: Gender is distinct from biological sex and includes a spectrum of gender identities.)

- UN Women Training Centre. (n.d.). *UN Women Gender Equality Glossary*. Retrieved November 24, 2025, from <https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org>
- European Institute for Gender Equality. (2016). *Sexual orientation* (Glossary definition). In *EIGE Glossary and Thesaurus*. Retrieved November 24, 2025, from <https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/thesaurus/terms/1051>

Historically underrepresented: Refers to groups that have traditionally been marginalized or had disproportionately low representation in a given context compared to their share of the general population. Such groups have had persistently less presence or influence – for example, in education or leadership – due to systemic or historical exclusion (National Science Foundation, 2020).

- National Science Foundation. (2020). *Science and Engineering Indicators 2020: Elementary and Secondary Mathematics and Science Education* (NSB-2019-6, Chapter 1, Note 1). National Science Board, National Science Foundation. Retrieved from <https://nces.nsf.gov/pubs/nsb20196/>

Impact Pathways: The sequences of cause-and-effect through which activities or interventions lead to desired outcomes and long-term impacts. In project planning terms, an impact pathway explicitly maps how strategies and actions are expected to change stakeholders' knowledge, behaviors, or conditions (outcomes) and how those outcomes contribute to broader social, environmental, or economic changes (impacts)

- Schuetz, T., Douthwaite, B., & Alvarez, S. (2008). *Participatory Impact Pathways Analysis: A practical method for project planning and evaluation* [Toolkit



document]. International Water Management Institute (IWMI) & CGIAR Initiative on Water and Food.

Inclusion: The intentional, ongoing effort to ensure that people of diverse identities can fully participate in and be authentically valued by an organization or community. Inclusion involves creating an environment where all individuals feel respected, supported, and able to contribute equally – essentially being “asked to dance” once they are at the party (Tan, 2019).

- Tan, T. Q. (2019). Principles of inclusion, diversity, access, and equity. *The Journal of Infectious Diseases*, 220(Suppl_2), S30–S32. <https://doi.org/10.1093/infdis/jiz198>

Intersectionality: Intersectionality is an analytical tool used to study, understand, and respond to the ways in which different axes of inequalities, such as those based on gender, race, class, sexual orientation or other personal characteristics, intersect and contribute to unique experiences of disadvantage and discrimination. In the context of studying gender-based violence, the intersectional perspective helps us recognise the variability of forms of violence experienced by people with different characteristics and address gender-based violence in a more nuanced way.

- UniSAFE Toolkit Glossary <https://unisafe-toolkit.eu/glossary/>
- Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Policies. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989(1), 139-167.
- Walby, S., Armstrong, J., & Strid, S. (2012). Intersectionality: Multiple inequalities in social theory. *Sociology* 46(2), 224–240. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038511416164>.

Participatory methods: Participatory methods refer to inclusive approaches in planning, research, or evaluation that directly involve stakeholders or community members in decision-making. These methods emphasize collaboration with those affected by an issue, valuing local knowledge and sharing power to co-create solutions or knowledge for social change (Cargo & Mercer, 2008).

- Cargo, M., & Mercer, S. L. (2008). The value and challenges of participatory research: Strengthening its practice. *Annual Review of Public Health*, 29(1), 325–350. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.publhealth.29.091307.083824>

Privilege: Privilege in a social equity context describes the unearned and often invisible advantages that individuals in historically dominant groups enjoy over marginalized groups. Such advantages are systemic, rooted in social structures, and grant privileged groups easier access to resources, opportunities, and influence (Barajas, 2021)

- Barajas, S. (2021). Unearned advantages? Redefining privilege in light of childhood. *Children's Geographies*, 20(1), 24–36. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14733285.2021.1912295>

Sex: Sex is defined as the biological and physiological characteristics (such as reproductive organs, chromosomes, and hormones) that categorize humans as female, male, or intersex (World Health Organization, n.d; European Institute for Gender Equality, 2016). These characteristics are innate and separate from gender, which refers to socially constructed roles and identities.

- World Health Organization. (n.d.). *Gender and health*. Retrieved November 24, 2025, from <https://www.who.int/health-topics/gender>



- European Institute for Gender Equality. (2016). *Sexual orientation* (Glossary definition). In *EIGE Glossary and Thesaurus*. Retrieved November 24, 2025, from <https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/thesaurus/terms/1051>

Sexual orientation: Sexual orientation refers to a person's enduring emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction to other people. It encompasses each individual's capacity for profound affection and intimacy with others of a different gender, the same gender, or more than one gender (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2016). Examples include heterosexual, homosexual (gay/lesbian), and bisexual orientations, among others.

- European Institute for Gender Equality. (2016). *Sexual orientation* (Glossary definition). In *EIGE Glossary and Thesaurus*. Retrieved November 24, 2025, from <https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/thesaurus/terms/1051>

Underserved: Underserved refers to groups or communities who have limited access to resources, services, opportunities or support systems due to structural barriers, discrimination or historical exclusion. In municipal workplaces, underserved staff may lack equitable access to training, career development, information, decision-making channels or wellbeing support. Addressing the needs of underserved groups requires identifying the systemic obstacles that prevent them from participating fully and ensuring that organisational policies and practices actively close these gaps (European Commission, 2021; EIGE, 2016;).

- European Commission. (2021). Union of Equality: The EU anti-racism action plan 2020–2025. Publications Office of the European Union. https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/racism-and-xenophobia/eu-anti-racism-action-plan-2020-2025_en

Underrepresented: Underrepresented refers to groups whose presence in an organisation, sector or decision-making structure is significantly lower than their proportion in the wider population. Underrepresentation often results from structural exclusion, biased processes or unequal access to opportunities. In municipal contexts, this may relate to staff with a migration background, disabled employees, younger or older workers, ethnic minorities, or LGBTQIA+ staff. Recognising underrepresentation is essential for designing targeted, evidence-based measures that strengthen participation and ensure fair representation across roles and levels (European Commission, 2020;).

- European Commission. (2020). Union of Equality: EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025. Publications Office of the European Union. https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en

CASE STUDIES / INSPIRING PRACTICES

This section presents a collection of case studies and inspiring practices drawn from DiGiN partner municipalities and other leading European cities working to advance Diversity, Equality and Inclusion. These examples illustrate how municipal administrations translate DEI principles into concrete structures, policies and collaborative approaches that create more inclusive workplaces and communities. While each practice reflects a specific local context, together they offer valuable insights into different models of institutional transformation, from staff-led networks and advisory panels to city-wide coalitions and strategic DEI frameworks. The cases are included to support municipal partners in identifying approaches they can adapt or replicate, learn from, and integrate into their own DEI strategies.

Strategic Framework for a Diverse and Inclusive Human Resources policy by the Municipality of Ghent

The municipality of Ghent, Belgium, is advancing diversity and inclusion through targeted internal policies. With its commitment to inclusive employment practices, Ghent is working to reflect the diversity of its population within its administration. In 2020, the municipality adopted the "Strategic Framework for a Diverse and Inclusive HR-policy 2021–2025" setting out its vision and priorities on DEI in the workplace.

Objective

The objective of this practice is to support employees who share personal characteristics through dedicated peer networks. These groups aim to foster a stronger sense of belonging, reduce isolation and create informal spaces of solidarity within the organisation.

Impact

The framework outlines Ghent's current DEI priorities, focusing on people with disabilities, the LGBTQIA+ community, and individuals of foreign origin. It includes 85 actions to be considered or implemented across departments. It also offers support to teams and managers. A revised version is planned for 2025 to further consolidate and expand these efforts

Implementation steps

Phase 1: Strategic vision and framework

The municipality adopted the overarching framework in 2020, identifying key priority groups and proposing targeted actions. This created a common language and ambition across departments.

Phase 2: Departmental ownership and action plans

Each municipal department was asked to develop its own DEI Action Plan based on the framework. Some developed comprehensive strategies, while others made more limited progress. Actions were tailored to the department's function.

Phase 3: Inclusive policy innovation



Examples of departmental action include: The Department of Health & Care introduced an anti-discrimination statement co-signed by staff and residents in care facilities. The Department of Welfare revised the function description for social workers to promote diversity and inclusivity in recruitment.

Phase 4: Monitoring and review

Though representation targets were set (e.g. 30% of new hires from a foreign origin, 2% with disabilities), broader inclusion metrics remain under development. A follow-up strategic framework is planned for 2025, aiming to improve concrete goal setting and inclusiveness indicators.

Lessons learned and challenges

DOs

Provide practical support and recognition

Offer a dedicated budget, regular access to space and clear Human Resources recognition of the networks as part of the internal inclusion strategy. Even small forms of institutional support make a big difference in visibility and legitimacy.

Respect autonomy

Let networks be shaped by their members. These groups function best when they reflect the needs and rhythm of the people they serve. HR can be a facilitator not a driver.

Normalise their presence

Integrate visibility of the networks into internal communications and DEI materials. This helps increase understanding among all staff and makes the networks more approachable for new employees.

Foster trust and confidentiality

Ensure that participants feel safe joining without fear of judgement, retaliation, or tokenisation. Set clear expectations for confidentiality in meetings and communication.

Build bridges, not silos

Encourage soft collaboration between different employee networks and departments when relevant, without forcing alignment. This promotes intersectional awareness and shared learning.

DON'Ts

Don't instrumentalise the networks

Avoid using the networks as a PR tool or placing the burden of solving organisational DEI issues solely on their members. These groups are not a substitute for institutional responsibility.

Don't minimise time and effort required

Two hours per month of work exemption may not be enough. Explore options for additional support for coordination, especially when networks take on consultative roles.

Don't allow scepticism to undermine purpose

Be prepared for internal resistance or misunderstanding, as some staff may question the relevance of identity-based groups. Tackle this by proactively communicating the networks' value for wellbeing, connection and inclusive culture.

Don't assume one-size-fits-all

Each network will have different dynamics, needs and levels of engagement. Avoid imposing a uniform structure or performance expectations across all groups.

How can this practice be replicated by others?

Municipalities can adapt this approach by developing a central DEI vision and enabling each department to create tailored action plans. Success depends on balance: strong central coordination with localised ownership and flexibility.

Contact:

Reach out to the D&I office (HR Department)

diversiteitsbeleid@stad.gent

[Strategic Framework 2021–2025 \(PDF\)](#)

Access the PDF version of this practice [here](#).

Inclusivity Panel for multi-perspective decision-making in municipalities by the Municipality of Rotterdam

Implemented by the municipality of Rotterdam, the Netherlands, with around 12,000 employees. Rotterdam has been a pioneer in integrating Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion 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 inclusivity 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 and challenges

DOs

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 problemsolving, 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

Don't 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.

Don't focus (only) on resisting actors

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.

Don't 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 is important to remain flexible, adapt strategies, and learn from each phase to refine and improve the process.

How can this practice be 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.

Contact:

Reach out to inclusiviteitspanel@rotterdam.nl

Read more information in Dutch [Inclusiviteitspanel - Gemeente Rotterdam | KIS](#)
[Inclusiviteitspanel gemeente Rotterdam | Bestuursacademie](#)

Access the PDF version of this practice [here](#).

Equal Opportunities City Table by the Municipality of Genoa

The Municipality of Genoa, Italy, with approximately 5,000 employees and a population of around 500,000, is leading the Equal Opportunities City Table. The initiative brings together key public and private stakeholders to promote a coordinated and city-wide approach to Diversity, Equality and Inclusion.

Objective

The goal is to promote DEI in the City of Genoa as a whole, also through joint projects and activities. Some of the most important entities of the City are willing to work together, sharing good practices and coordinating among them.

Impact

Through coordination, mutual learning and joint action, the initiative seeks to build a "critical mass" that can influence local policy and public discourse. The collaborative model generates a multiplier effect, boosting awareness and sensitivity among both municipal staff and residents. By aligning efforts and sharing good practices, the initiative strengthens collective capacity to mainstream DEI across different sectors of urban life.

Implementation steps



Phase 1: Table formation

The Municipality began by contacting other stakeholders, initially public ones, to assess their availability and interest in the initiative. Once the full range of public actors in the city had been engaged, efforts continued to identify and involve additional stakeholders, until a first, motivated group of organisations was formed. This “core group” met to establish the administrative and legal framework for their collaboration.

Phase 2: Alignment & sharing

Following its formal establishment, the Table focused on internal coordination and identifying priority issues or themes to address, including through joint projects and initiatives. Previous DEI-related activities and relevant documents were collected and shared via common folders to support knowledge exchange.

Phase 3: Action & monitoring phase

Once specific issues had been identified, the Table developed projects and promoted joint activities. Simultaneously, efforts were made to expand and strengthen the network. Regular meetings, both in person and online, were held to monitor progress and share updates with all participants

Lessons learned and challenges

DOs

Identify and engage relevant stakeholders

The identification and contact with the relevant stakeholders is crucial to set up the scenario for the City and find out where it is in relation to Diversity, Equality and Inclusion. Mixing public, private, enterprises and cooperatives will offer a comprehensive view on the theme. Forming a core group or movement helps build momentum, foster collaboration, and ensure shared responsibility. This collective approach enhances problem-solving and amplifies impact in advancing inclusion goals.

Building connections among participants

While participants may already support the topic, actively nurturing relationships between them is key to long-term engagement. Strengthening these connections increases the likelihood of their continued support in future projects or activities. Their commitment helps mobilise resources, influence policies, and keep DEI initiatives a priority.

DON'Ts

Avoid empty periods and unnecessary communications/meetings

Managing a stakeholder network requires consistency. Long gaps in communication or holding meetings without clear purpose can weaken engagement and lead to drop-offs. Ensure regular, meaningful contact to maintain momentum and trust.

Avoid expansion before consolidation

Expanding the network prematurely can create confusion and dilute focus. This could be very counterproductive, generating confusion among participants and wasting energy.

A strong, well-aligned foundation is essential for ensuring clarity, direction, and sustainable progress.

How can this practice be replicated by others?

This practice can be easily replicated by creating a local network that brings together key public bodies (such as regional and municipal authorities) and influential private actors (including trade unions, business associations, and cooperatives). Establishing this collaborative structure helps map out the state of DEI in the city and creates opportunities for joint initiatives. Through regular exchange and shared commitment, the network can serve as a catalyst for new partnerships and projects, ultimately raising awareness and advancing inclusion across the local context.

Contact:

Contact Yuri Piccione or the secretary of City Deputy Francesca Corso – Equal opportunities at ypiccione@comune.genova.it or assistenza@comune.genova.it

Access the PDF version of this practice [here](#).

Safe Spaces at work: Ghent's staff-led inclusion networks by the Municipality of Ghent

The Municipality of Ghent, Belgium, is fostering an inclusive workplace culture by supporting identity-based employee networks. Recognising the importance of peer support and belonging, the city has established three voluntary staff groups for employees with a migration background, employees with a disability and LGBTQIA+ employees. These networks aim to strengthen internal cohesion, provide a sense of community and reflect the diversity of Ghent's municipal workforce

Objective

The Municipality of Ghent has launched three internal employee networks aimed at building a culture of belonging and visibility for underrepresented staff. These include:

- 'Link' – employees with a migration background
- 'AHA' – employees with a disability
- 'Roze Neuzekes' – LGBTQIA+ employees

The goal is to create informal support spaces, strengthen social cohesion and reflect the diversity of Ghent's municipal workforce.

Impact

These networks foster emotional wellbeing and peer connection among municipal employees. Though informal in nature, they contribute to a more inclusive internal culture and are occasionally consulted in matters related to DEI. Their presence has helped normalise conversations on identity and belonging at work, while offering a valuable perspective to management and HR.

Implementation steps

Phase 1: Initiation and internal mobilisation



The initiative was launched by the Diversity & Inclusion coordinator within the HR department, who organised an information session to present the concept and gauge interest. This low-threshold approach encouraged spontaneous engagement.

Phase 2: Formation and support structures

Once interest was confirmed, the three groups were established. Each received:

- A modest working budget
- Two hours/month work exemption for core members
- Access to municipal spaces for regular meetings
- Importantly, these networks are employee-led and retain autonomy in defining their identity, purpose and pace.

Phase 3: Activities and informal engagement

Network members meet periodically in a mix of informal social gatherings and semi-structured sessions. Activities focus on sharing experiences, fostering community, and promoting awareness. While not expected to drive policy, they are occasionally invited to share perspectives with HR or management.

Phase 4: Cultural embedding

Though still developing, the networks are increasingly recognised as part of the internal DEI ecosystem. They are featured in internal communications, mentioned in HR presentations, and considered a good practice in fostering staff wellbeing.

Lessons learned & challenges

DOs

Provide practical support and recognition

Offer small but meaningful support: a basic budget, access to meeting space, and formal acknowledgment from HR and leadership. Recognition signals that these spaces matter.

Respect autonomy

Let each group decide its own direction. Staff-led initiatives thrive when they're trusted to evolve in ways that reflect members' needs.

Promote visibility internally

Feature the networks in newsletters, onboarding materials, or staff events to normalise their existence and make it easier for newcomers to join.

Foster intersectionality and peer exchange

Encourage light collaboration between networks and with other departments when relevant without forcing integration or centralisation.

Safeguard safe spaces

Ensure that participation is voluntary and that members can meet and speak freely without fear of retaliation or tokenism.

DON'Ts

Don't over-formalise or control the networks

Avoid institutionalising these spaces too tightly. Overregulation can diminish authenticity and reduce participation.

Don't expect policy-level input from day one

These networks are not policy tools. Their value lies in creating connection and insight any consultative function should come gradually and respectfully.

Don't underestimate time needs

Two hours/month may not be enough for coordination. Consider allowing more time if members take on broader responsibilities.

Don't ignore internal scepticism

Be prepared to address concerns from other employees who question the purpose of identity-based groups. Communicate clearly about their role in creating inclusive workplaces.

Don't isolate these networks

Integrate their insights into the broader DEI strategy without burdening them with sole responsibility. Their input can inform, but should not replace, institutional action.

The networks offer meaningful emotional support and a stronger sense of community for participating staff. However, sustainability depends on time and capacity. Core members often feel constrained by limited time allowances. Internal questions about "separate groups" highlight the need for ongoing DEI communication and leadership endorsement.

How can this practice be replicated by others?

Municipalities can foster similar employee networks by creating enabling conditions such as dedicated time, budget and visible support. The key is to keep these spaces voluntary, autonomous and low-threshold, while embedding them as part of a broader culture of inclusion.

Contact:

Reach out to the D&I office (HR Department)

diversiteitsbeleid@stad.gent

[Watch the video about Ghent's employee networks](#)

Access the PDF version of this practice [here](#).

CAPACITY-BUILDING MODULES

The capacity-building modules presented in this section were developed by Yellow Window for the DiGiN project, specifically to support municipal partners in advancing Diversity, Equality and Inclusion within their institutions. Designed based on the needs, realities and challenges identified across participating municipalities, these modules provide practical, structured learning pathways to strengthen the skills of local change agents and core teams. Each module includes ready-to-use training materials —scripts, presentations, exercises and templates— tailored to help municipalities implement DEI mainstreaming in a hands-on, context-sensitive and sustainable way. Together, they form a comprehensive learning package that municipalities can use to train staff, build internal capacity and embed DEI into everyday governance and organisational practices. The following topics are elaborated below:

1. Institutional transformation towards mainstreaming Diversity, Equality and Inclusion: The role of participatory and co-creation techniques
2. Building inclusive workplaces: The role of allyship
3. Strategic framing for change: Designing pathways to impact
4. DEI Monitoring & Evaluation for sustainable change

1. Institutional transformation towards mainstreaming Diversity, Equality and Inclusion: The role of participatory and co-creation techniques

Description:

This interactive capacity-building session is designed to introduce participatory and co-creation techniques that empower core teams of change agents within municipalities seeking to drive inclusive and sustainable transformation within their institutions. Participants will explore the significance of fostering inclusive organisational change and learn practical methods to actively engage diverse stakeholders in institutional transformation. The session will provide hands-on experience with tools and techniques that promote collaboration and enhance stakeholder engagement, crucial for advancing Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion mainstreaming.

Learning objectives:

By the end of the session, participants will:

- Have gained practical skills to effectively apply methodologies such as journey mapping, persona exercises, and other participatory techniques to gather stakeholder input and foster engagement in DEI-related institutional change.
- Understand the importance of inclusive organisational change, emphasising the need for diverse perspectives in shaping sustainable transformation.
- Be equipped to take on proactive roles as change agents, utilising participatory approaches to lead and drive DEI initiatives within their municipalities.

Profile of participants:

- DEI officers and staff responsible for implementing and monitoring DEI activities/policies
- Leaders of municipal DEI committees or working groups
- Human resources staff
- Project Managers or Coordinators of DEI-related Initiatives
- Members of DEI core teams
- Stakeholder engagement specialists

Download the training materials (script and PowerPoint presentation) [here](#).

2. Building inclusive workplaces: The role of allyship

Description:

This interactive session introduces participants to the concept of allyship and its role in fostering an inclusive and equitable workplace culture. Allyship is a key driver of systemic change, helping to create environments where everyone, regardless of background or identity, feels valued, heard, and supported. Participants will explore the responsibilities of allies, understand the impact of privilege and positional power, and understand possible strategies to take meaningful action. Through guided discussions, real-world examples, this session will provide participants with the tools to practice allyship effectively and contribute to lasting change within their institutions.

Learning objectives:

By the end of the session, participants will:

- Have a comprehensive understanding of allyship and its critical role in promoting DEI within the organisation.
- Recognise personal privileges and learn how to leverage them to support and advocate for colleagues from marginalised groups.
- Be equipped to actively participate in fostering an inclusive organisational culture through continuous learning and allyship practices.

Profile of participants:

This training is designed for employees at all levels who wish to strengthen their capacity to contribute to an inclusive workplace culture. It is particularly relevant for:

- **Managers and team leaders** seeking to model inclusive behaviours and support diverse teams.
- **HR and DEI officers** responsible for embedding inclusive practices in organisational policies and culture.
- **Staff members and colleagues** who want to become effective allies and advocates for equality and inclusion in their daily work.

No prior DEI training is required — the session provides a foundation for understanding allyship and practical tools to apply it across different professional contexts.

Duration: 4 hours

Format: The following structure can work for both online and in-person formats

Download the training materials (script and PowerPoint presentation) [here](#).

3. Strategic framing for change: Designing pathways to impact

Description:

This capacity-building session is designed to equip participants with the knowledge and down-to-earth skills to strategically frame DEI initiatives, ensuring that they are impactful, well-positioned, and effectively communicated. Participants will explore the concept of strategic framing as a tool for identifying windows of opportunity, engaging allies, crafting compelling arguments, and anticipating/preventing resistance. Additionally, the session will introduce impact pathways as a method for structuring DEI actions with a clear trajectory toward measurable outcomes. Through a mix of practical exercises and peer discussions, participants will gain the ability to apply these techniques in their own institutional contexts.

Learning objectives:

By the end of the session, participants will:

- Have a clear understanding of what strategic framing entails, in terms of building allyship and delivering messages
- Learn how to draw pathways to impactful DEI work, connecting inputs with outputs, outcomes, and impact
- Recognise different types of resistance to DEI initiatives and learn about broad strategies to address and overcome them

Profile of participants:

- DEI officers and staff responsible for implementing and monitoring DEI activities/policies
- Leaders of municipal DEI committees or working groups
- Human resources staff
- Project Managers or Coordinators of DEI-related Initiatives
- Members of DEI core teams
- Stakeholder engagement specialists

This session is particularly valuable for those seeking to refine their strategic approach to DEI work, enhance their ability to advocate for change, and develop more structured and effective action plans.

Duration: 4 hours

Format: The following structure can work for both online and in-person formats

Download the training materials (script and PowerPoint presentation) [here](#).

4. DEI Monitoring & Evaluation for sustainable change

Description:

Monitoring and evaluating DEI actions is an integral part of the change process, as it provides a framework to assess the outcome and impact of delivered actions. This session introduces participants to the fundamentals of monitoring & evaluation (M&E) in DEI work. The session provides an introduction to DEI monitoring and evaluation, aimed at supporting the design of local Monitoring & Evaluation frameworks. Participants will explore different types of indicators, data collection methods, and strategies for evaluating the effectiveness of DEI interventions. Through hands-on exercises and guided discussions, participants learn how to design and implement M&E frameworks reflecting locally adopted DEI objectives.

Learning objectives:

By the end of the session, participants will:

- Have a clear understanding of indicator typologies and how to use them effectively to assess DEI performance and measure change
- Understand the logic models for setting-up and strengthening DEI M&E frameworks

Profile of participants:

- DEI officers and staff responsible for implementing and monitoring DEI activities/policies
- Leaders of municipal DEI committees or working groups
- Human resources staff
- Project Managers or Coordinators of DEI-related Initiatives
- Members of DEI core teams
- Stakeholder engagement specialists

This session is particularly valuable for those seeking to enhance their ability to track DEI progress, measure impact, and develop data-driven strategies for sustainable change.

Duration: 4 hours

Format: The following structure can work for both online and in-person formats

Download the training materials (script and PowerPoint presentation) [here](#).

EXISTING TOOLS AND RESOURCES

This section brings together a curated collection of tools, standards, guides, and evidence-based resources designed and collected to support DEI change agents in municipalities. The resources presented here provide deeper frameworks, methodological guidance, and ready-to-use instruments that can strengthen long-term DEI mainstreaming efforts. They cover a broad spectrum—from quality standards for gender equality training, to intersectionality toolkits, municipal DEI assessment tools, equality lenses, sector-specific handbooks, research reports, and leading international practice. Together, these resources allow municipalities to ground their DEI work in proven approaches, adapt existing models to local contexts, and continuously refine policies, programmes and organisational cultures.

Standards for capacity-building

Quality standards booklet

This set of quality standards was developed in the framework of the EU-funded Gender Equality (GE) Academy project and it provides a **set of quality standards and principles** to guide training design, implementation, and evaluation. The standards ensure **contextual relevance, participatory methods, intersectional approaches, and gender-sensitive content**. This booklet aims at providing practical support and examples for the implementation of training initiatives and programmes on gender equality and inclusiveness of different scopes, dealing with a variety of relevant topics and using different training formats. This booklet is an **essential resource for DEI change agents**, helping them structure and assess effective gender training programs aimed at fostering institutional change.

Access this resource [here](#).

Intersectionality Resource Guide and Toolkit - An Intersectional Approach to Leave No One Behind

The **Intersectionality Resource Guide and Toolkit** is a practical framework developed by UN agencies to help practitioners, policymakers, and advocates **integrate intersectionality into policies and programmes**. It explains the concept, highlights **eight key enablers** (e.g., reflexivity, accessibility, relational power), and provides a structured Analyse, Adapt, and Assess approach for designing inclusive interventions. With tools like the Power Flower and Creating Safe Spaces, it supports DEI change agents in **addressing multiple, intersecting inequalities** and **fostering systemic transformation**.

Access this resource [here](#).

Tools and Toolkits

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Capacity Assessment Tool (developed by DiGiN)



The Assessment Tool for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Mainstreaming Capacity in Municipalities is designed to help municipalities **evaluate their progress on institutional DEI mainstreaming**. By assessing the core "Impact Drivers" necessary for change, the tool allows your organisation to identify both **strengths** and **areas for improvement**. The users of the tool complete a structured assessment by answering targeted questions that evaluate their DEI capacities. Upon completion, they receive a **detailed report with tailored insights and feedback**. To ensure ongoing progress, municipalities are encouraged to repeat the assessment periodically, allowing them to track developments and continuously refine their DEI strategies.

Learn more and access the tool [here](#).

Equity & Inclusion Lens Handbook

The **Equity & Inclusion Lens Handbook**, developed by the **City of Ottawa and the City for All Women Initiative (CAWI)**, is a practical tool for integrating equity and inclusion into decision-making processes, policies, and services. It provides a **structured framework** to help organisations **identify and address systemic barriers**, ensuring diverse perspectives are considered. The handbook outlines key steps, including **checking assumptions, fostering inclusive workplaces, engaging communities, and applying equity to strategic planning, hiring, and policy development**. It also includes **practical tools, reflection exercises, and case studies** to support DEI change agents in creating more equitable and inclusive environments.

Access this resource [here](#).

Diversity and Inclusion Handbook for grass-root cultural centres

This Handbook aims at reducing inequalities, **empowering European cultural centres** to improve their work with **social inclusion** & contribute to relevant **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. While it is specifically designed for cultural centres, its principles, models, and tools are highly transferable and can be adapted to a variety of contexts, **including public services, community organisations, and educational institutions**. It provides a diversity model that focuses on people, processes and tools, in addition to monitoring and reporting mechanisms, and insights on change management, thus offering a framework that can be applied broadly to improve diversity and inclusion efforts in different sectors.

Access this resource [here](#).

EDI Leading Practices: A Guide for Companies

The **EDI Leading Practices: A Guide for Companies**, developed by the **Embedding Project**, provides a structured approach for organisations to integrate EDI into their strategies, policies, and workplace culture. It outlines a **six-phase framework: Understand** (identifying societal inequities and workplace patterns), **Commit** (aligning intent and setting strategy), **Embed Across the Employee Lifecycle** (inclusive hiring, compensation, and career development), **Embed in Structures & Processes** (policy and risk integration), **Embed in Culture** (fostering belonging and inclusion), and **Review & Improve** (monitoring progress and adapting strategies). The guide offers **case studies, practical tools, and real-world examples** to help DEI change agents drive systemic transformation within organisations.

Access this resource [here](#).

Diversity & Inclusion on demand content by D&I Leaders

This free online repository offers **over 100 recorded webinars and presentation sessions** focusing on a wide range of DEI topics—from leadership and neurodiversity to recruitment, employee networks and social mobility. This resource is organised by themes such as “D&I strategy”, “Women”, “Disability”, “LGBT+” and more, enabling users to filter content by area of interest. Access requires a free membership registration. Ideal for DEI change-agents in municipalities, the platform allows teams to draw on **high-quality knowledge from global practitioners and peer organisations**, supporting internal training, peer learning and strategic planning.

Access this resource [here](#).

Diversity and inclusion on demand free content by D&I Leaders

The Diversity & Inclusion Leaders platform is a free online community that offers complimentary access to **EDI content** such as independent **news articles, insight reports** and a catalogue of on **demand capacity-building content**, as well as **free monthly online one-to-one conversations with D&I experts**.

Access this resource [here](#).

Reports

The relative effects of diversity on collective learning in local collaborative networks in Belgium

The article explores how **diversity influences collective learning in collaborative networks**, using two case studies from city administrations in Schaerbeek, Belgium. It finds that **diversity enhances learning by bringing different perspectives, but this only works if social interactions are frequent and inclusive**. The study emphasises the importance of both **formal and informal interactions** in fostering trust and collective understanding. It also suggests that **subjective perceptions of diversity are more impactful for learning** than simply having a diverse group. This has implications for collaborative governance and policy innovation.

How to use this information as a DEI change agent:

- **Prioritise social interactions:** Organise frequent formal and informal meetings to foster trust and open dialogue, allowing for deeper collective learning.
- **Focus on subjective diversity:** Ensure that participants feel their diverse views are heard and valued, beyond just having a demographically diverse group.
- **Create safe spaces:** Facilitate environments where all members, especially underrepresented voices, can freely share ideas without power dynamics hindering participation.
- **Tailor diversity to task:** Ensure that diversity within the group is relevant to the topic or goal being addressed, focusing on including a variety of expertise and viewpoints.
- **Address power dynamics:** Be mindful of hierarchical structures in meetings and adjust formats to minimise the influence of power imbalances on discussions.



- **Track learning:** Use tools like mental models to assess how participants' beliefs evolve and align over time, ensuring collective learning is taking place.

Access this resource [here](#).

Cities of Welcome - Driving Integration and Equality in a Changing Europe

This report by Eurocities examines **strategies** and **best practices** employed by **European cities** to enhance **integration and equality**. It highlights the importance of inclusive policies, community engagement, and equitable access to services in creating welcoming urban environments. The document serves as a **guide for municipalities** aiming to adapt to demographic changes and promote social cohesion.

How to use this information as a DEI change agent:

1. **Policy Development:** Use the report's findings to inform the creation or revision of municipal policies that promote inclusivity and equal opportunities for all residents. This includes areas such as housing, education, employment, and public services.
2. **Community Engagement:** Implement strategies from the report to foster meaningful engagement with diverse community groups. This can help ensure that the voices of all residents are heard and considered in decision-making processes.
3. **Training and Education:** Develop training programmes for municipal employees based on the report's recommendations to enhance cultural competency and awareness of DEI principles.
4. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establish metrics to assess the effectiveness of integration and equality initiatives, as suggested in the report, to ensure continuous improvement.
5. **Collaboration:** Encourage partnerships with other cities and organisations that have successfully implemented DEI initiatives, as highlighted in the report, to share knowledge and resources.

Recommendation: We highly recommend reviewing pages 21-25, with practices related to "Cities as employers".

Access this resource [here](#).

Diversity and inclusion in European museums: A report in collaboration with NEMO members

This report delves into the **practices and policies** of **European museums** concerning **diversity and inclusion**. It provides an **analysis of current challenges** and showcases **successful initiatives** that promote inclusive representation and accessibility in museum spaces. The document serves as a resource for cultural institutions aiming to enhance their engagement with diverse audiences.

How to use this information as a DEI change agent:

1. **Cultural policy development:** Utilise the report's findings to inform the creation or revision of municipal cultural policies that encourage museums and cultural institutions to adopt inclusive practices.
2. **Partnerships with museums:** Collaborate with local museums to implement the report's recommended strategies, fostering environments that reflect the diversity of the community and promote equitable access to cultural resources.



3. **Community engagement programmes:** Develop initiatives that encourage underrepresented groups to participate in museum activities, using the report's case studies as models for successful engagement.

Access this resource [here](#).

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Resources for Local Governments

This resource compiles **strategies and best practices** for local governments aiming to **advance DEI within their communities and organisations**. It covers various aspects, including building inclusive communities, conducting DEI training, issuing official statements supporting inclusion, collecting and analysing DEI-related data, forming community-based advisory committees, engaging the public inclusively, adopting equitable hiring and contracting policies, and implementing equity tools. The resource serves as a **practical guide for municipalities** committed to fostering equitable and inclusive environments.

How to use this information as a DEI change agent:

1. **Policy development:** Utilise the resource's guidelines to inform the creation or revision of municipal policies that promote inclusivity and equal opportunities for all residents. This includes areas such as housing, education, employment, and public services.
2. **Community engagement:** Implement strategies from the resource to foster meaningful engagement with diverse community groups. This can help ensure that the voices of all residents are heard and considered in decision-making processes.
3. **Training and education:** Develop training programs for municipal employees based on the resource's recommendations to enhance cultural competency and awareness of DEI principles.
4. **Data collection and analysis:** Establish metrics to assess the effectiveness of integration and equality initiatives, as suggested in the resource, to ensure continuous improvement.
5. **Equitable hiring and contracting:** Review and revise hiring and contracting policies to promote diversity and prevent discrimination, ensuring that the municipal workforce reflects the community it serves.
6. **Implement equity tools:** Use equity tools, such as the City of Renton's Equity Lens, to evaluate policies and programs through a DEI perspective, identifying and addressing potential disparities

Access this resource [here](#).

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How to cite this document?

Polykarpou, Panagiota; Madesi, Vasia; Mergaert, Lut; Toolkit of DEI capacity-building materials (2025) Antwerp: Yellow Window, 2025