



**Generation 2.0**  
For Rights Equality & Diversity



**PROMOTING GENDER  
EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN THE WORKPLACE**

# **TOOLKIT FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF “BROWN-BAG” SESSIONS**

**MARCH 2024**



Co-funded by  
the European Union

# WELCOME

The project “Promoting Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace” (PROGEDI) is implemented by the [International Rescue Committee Hellas](#) (IRC Hellas), the [Cell of Alternative Youth Activities](#) (KEAN), and the [Generation 2.0 for Rights, Equality and Diversity](#) (Generation 2.0 RED), since January 2023. It is co-funded by the European Union.

The Toolkit for the implementation of “Brown-Bag” Sessions was produced by the IRC Hellas, with the support of Consortium Partners, KEAN and Generation 2.0 RED.

The Toolkit is available in English and Greek.

## DISCLAIMER:

Co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) Programme. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

# CONTENTS

<b>WELCOME</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1</b> INTRODUCTION TO PROGEDI	<b>4</b>
.....	
<b>2</b> INTRODUCTION TO “BROWN-BAG” DIALOGUE SESSIONS	<b>5</b>
.....	
<b>3</b> GREECE AND DEI	<b>7</b>
.....	
<b>4</b> PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF DIALOGUE SESSIONS	<b>10</b>
.....	
<b>5</b> IRC HELLAS' DIALOGUE SESSIONS – STRUCTURE AND LESSONS LEARNED	<b>13</b>
.....	
<b>6</b> EVALUATION	<b>20</b>
.....	
<b>7</b> CHALLENGES	<b>22</b>
.....	
<b>8</b> DEI AND ENGAGEMENT OF EMPLOYEES	<b>23</b>
.....	
<b>ANNEX</b>	<b>25</b>
.....	
<b>GLOSSARY   FOOTNOTES</b>	<b>29</b>

The IRC Hellas, KEAN and Generation 2.0 RED implemented the 16-month project PROGEDI, "Promoting Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the workplace."

### **The main objectives of the project were:**

- To foster a sustainable culture of inclusion in Greece by raising awareness and strengthening the capacity in multi-dimensional diversity in Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and selected public sector agencies and by creating dialogue platforms between civil society, academia, underrepresented communities and businesses.
- To strengthen national and transnational cooperation on diversity management and inclusion practices by sharing best practices, resources and tools in Greece and in Europe.

### **Under the PROGEDI project, the consortium partners delivered:**

- A baseline assessment that shows how DEI is perceived by Greek employees.
- Training on Unconscious Bias in Recruitment for Companies and CSOs.
- Training on DEI for the public sector.
- Six Dialogue Sessions that focused on intersectionality and the experiences of socially vulnerable groups in the workplace.
- Three Stakeholder Consultation Workshops that brought together representatives from companies, NGOs and the public sector in order to discuss about diversity, inclusion and policies.
- A Diversity Career Fair which provided companies and diverse job seekers the opportunity to connect and discuss vacancies.
- Two transnational webinars that aimed at bringing together representatives from companies, NGOs, the public sector and Diversity Charters in order to talk about DEI, joint actions and implemented best practices.
- A Diversity Conference which focused on DEI through the lens of the PROGEDI project.

The project was co-funded by the European Union and lasted from January 2023 until April 2024.

"Brown-Bag" sessions refer to training sessions that are held in informal settings. Their name is derived from the color of the paper lunch bag because they usually take place during the lunch break. These sessions may take different forms such as seminars, circle discussions, social meetings, etc. The main components of these sessions are:

#### **INFORMALITY**

Brown-bag Dialogue Sessions are less structured and leave plenty of space for participants to co-direct the structure and the topics of the discussion. A relaxed atmosphere and flexibility are essential to the facilitation of these discussions.

#### **PROMOTION OF THE DIALOGUE**

These sessions are solely based on dialogue and information sharing among participants, fostering an environment of communication and collaboration. This will signal the importance of open dialogue and sharing of thought within the company.

#### **ACTIVE PARTICIPATION**

Encouragement of active participation, interaction, and discussion-starting creates an opportunity for the exchange of ideas, viewpoints, and insights. This serves as a reminder that any achievement is a result of collective work.

#### **OPPORTUNITY FOR LEARNING AND UNDERSTANDING**

Brown-bag sessions provide a learning platform, where individuals can exchange knowledge, experiences, and best practices, hearing perspectives that they were not aware of until that point. This will also enhance the mutual understanding of the colleagues.

**This toolkit aims to support, mainly, HR professionals, People & Culture professionals, DEI professionals and practitioners, Senior Managers in the replication and implementation of dialogue sessions by providing resources and guidance.**

## **In this context, the toolkit will provide:**

- a. lessons learned from the IRC internal dialogue sessions as well as the piloted cross-company dialogue sessions in Greece,
- b. practical steps to engage employees in the company via listening sessions and interviews to collect feedback on opportunities, urgent needs and barriers to Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI) within companies/organisations and,
- c. methods to implement dialogue sessions and engage the academic and research community in a DEI strategy. The toolkit was adapted with lessons learned throughout the project and enhanced with specific case studies.

## **The toolkit is divided in 6 sections:**

1. The Greek context regarding DEI
2. The steps of planning and implementing a dialogue session
3. Insights from the dialogue sessions that IRC Hellas delivered, under the PROGEDI project.
4. Lessons learned from IRC Hellas' dialogue sessions.
5. Evaluation
6. Tips on employees' engagement



Although the business case for diversity is stronger than ever, data from various reports shows that progressing towards a more equal, inclusive and diverse labor force is a complex and slow process. Evidence shows that gender stereotypes in the workplace persist<sup>1</sup>, especially in the COVID-19 era<sup>2</sup>, employment rates of people with disabilities stand at around 50.6%<sup>3</sup>, ethnic minorities have fewer chances of securing work<sup>4</sup>, while LGBTQI workers continue to face discrimination at work<sup>5</sup>. Diversity and equality are core values of the European Union (EU) and policies to combat discrimination have increasingly advanced, with the EU integrating equality in policies and major initiatives. Recent efforts such as the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025<sup>6</sup>, the EU Anti-racism Action Plan 2020-2025<sup>7</sup> and the LGBTQI Equality Strategy 2020-2025<sup>8</sup> stress the importance of preventing and tackling all forms of discrimination. The EU also moved to create legal protection for minorities in the labour market with legislative instruments such as the Employment Equality Directive<sup>9</sup> and the Race Equality Directive<sup>10</sup>. In an effort to support organisations and businesses across the EU adopt a learning orientation towards diversity, the EU is also pushing for diversity management through initiatives such as the [EU platform for Diversity Charters](#) launched in 2010.

In Greece, the uniformity in the ethnic and religious profile of the population - of which 93% are Greek - has led the discussions on diversity management and inclusion into being mostly focused on the participation of women in the public sphere. Notably, Greece records the lowest female employment rate in the EU at 51.8%, while men overwhelmingly occupy management positions with women accounting for less than one third of managers in Greece<sup>11</sup>. At the same time, the demographic mix has rapidly changed in recent years first and second-generation migrants, along with the ongoing so-called refugee crisis contribute to a workforce landscape of increasingly diverse racial, ethnic, religious backgrounds and legal statuses. Indicatively, in 2020, 8,5% of the population (906,300) were non-Greeks, the vast majority of them (730,000) being citizens of a non-EU country<sup>12</sup>. Greece's commitment to comply with European legislation relating to the recognition of rights of people with diverse identities and characteristics has also changed the political climate. The government's commitment to promote gender equality is reflected in the new National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2021-2025<sup>13</sup>, whereas its commitment to protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms is reflected in the National Action Plan against Racism and Intolerance<sup>14</sup>. Other measures and actions to highlight include the increase of granted parental leave, as well as the expected piloted projects for childcare facilities in businesses, which are part of the "Program for the many". Also worth mentioning are the diversity trainings aiming to reach 1.6 million private and public sector employees via an asynchronous learning modality, as part of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP)<sup>15</sup>.



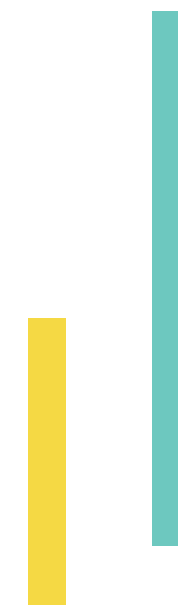
As data on DEI are scarce in Greece, the PROGEDI Consortium proceeded in building and facilitating a baseline assessment which examined the attitudes of employees in SMEs, CSOs, and the public sector toward DEI. The baseline assessment was led by Generation 2.0 for Rights, Equality and Diversity with the support of IRC Hellas and KEAN, and the final report can be found [here](#).

### Some of the main findings of the research include<sup>16</sup>:

- Familiarity with the concept of diversity is greater in comparison to that of inclusion according to respondents. However, **a significant number of respondents seem to confuse the two terms**, and this reveals a slight knowledge gap for diversity.
- Individuals working in the **Non-Profit sector claim to be more familiar with diversity (mainly) and inclusion**, in comparison to employees in the For-Profit sector. This could be attributed to the nature and scope of their work (contact with people from different social groups, who are very often in a vulnerable situation) as well as to the composition of these organizations, which, because of the service provision to people/groups of certain social profiles, have included in their personnel “cultural mediators” and professionals who belong in various social groups.
- Most respondents believe that diversity and inclusion can also have general benefits for a workplace to a large extent with the most predominant for the organizations (as perceived by participants), the **organization's reputation, innovation and creativity and access to a larger part of the market/ consumers**.
- Most respondents claim that they have not received any comment related to any of their social identities in their current workplace. As for the individuals who mentioned they have received such a comment, those concerned mostly the gender aspect (**sexist comments, sexual harassment against women**). This is of great interest, as, according to the responses, gender is one of the social identities that has the greatest acceptance at the respondents' organisations. Thus, we can notice a contradiction which could indicate that **in some cases the perception of the employees for their organisation may not correspond to their experiences or those of their colleagues**.
- In terms of witnessing discrimination incidents against a colleague, most of the respondents report not having witnessed such an incident. In cases where that has been witnessed, the incidents were based on social identities of **family status, physical appearance, health and sexual orientation** of individuals.

- Based on participants' answered, approximately **1/3 of organizations implement a DEI practice/policy**. For 1/3 of participants who report that they do not know if such a thing exists in their organization, this could either indicate an inefficient information dissemination, or an actual non-existence of such practices.
- Applied DEI practices mostly concern: Unbiased recruitment practices and Frequent Employee Training on DEI and as well as Written rules/Protocols that prohibit discrimination and promote equality.
- DEI practices and policies seem to be applied mostly in the For-Profit sector, to a slightly higher degree than in the Non-Profit one.

Many of these points were confirmed by the representatives of companies, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the public sector that participated in the Stakeholder Consultation Workshops (May 2023, September 2023 & January 2024). During these workshops, participants had the chance to discuss the DEI principles and their implementation, the research data as well as ways that could enhance the empowerment and inclusion of employees from marginalized populations. One of the main takeaways was that both theory and practice are needed to deliver initiatives regarding DEI, as without theory the action would not have a direction, and without practice, theory has no substantial meaning. Additionally, the need for collaboration between companies, NGOs (as representatives of communities), and the public sector was highlighted. This collaboration could be based on established communication channels, dissemination of new policies to the employers and the communities, needs assessment for the creation of new policies, referrals from NGOs to companies regarding qualified employees, etc. Finally, participants stated that the concept of “diversity” is approached and explained either with very limited terms or with very vague terms; this reinforces the reasons why each company should identify its needs, set its own “vocabulary” and DEI goals, and progressively work towards achieving those goals.





## Needs identification

A key element to successfully organize a dialogue session is that the company is aware of the topics that it wishes to address, and the discussions the employees are interested in. To collect data, a company could utilize many methods such as anonymous questionnaires, Focus Groups Discussions (FGDs), needs evaluations for each department by the respective manager, one-on-one sessions with different employees, analysis of project reports or recruitment of an external evaluator. For any type of research, it is important to set clear research questions and objectives. The questions will lead to the methods and the quality of data that the company wishes to collect. Some questions might focus on:

- The employees' perception of diversity and inclusion in the workplace ("Do you believe the company fosters a diverse and inclusive work environment? If yes/no, how?")
- Opportunities for Growth ("Do you believe there are equal opportunities for career growth and advancement for all employees, regardless of background?")
- Awareness of DEI Initiatives ("Are you aware of the DEI initiatives implemented by the company?", "What DEI-related actions would you suggest?" & How would you rate the company's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion on a scale of 1 to 10?")
- Reporting ("Have you ever reported a discrimination-related incident? If yes, how was it handled?", "Do you feel comfortable reporting incidents of discrimination to HR department and/or Senior Management?")
- Representation in Leadership ("Do you feel that diverse perspectives are represented in leadership roles within the company?")
- Training and Development ("Have you participated in diversity, equity, and inclusion training programs provided by the company?", "What were the strong and weak points of this training?" & "Could you provide some suggestions on future areas of focus?")

Following the data collection and analysis, the company should evaluate the needs, prioritize the emerging topics, and create a plan to address them. This plan should be disseminated to the employees for transparency and accountability and be a part of the company's general DEI strategy.

## Network Mapping

Dialogue Sessions may either be delivered by employees of the company or by guest speakers. In case the company decides to approach its own staff, it should consider their role, their lived experiences and identities, their willingness to facilitate a session, and the provision of incentives. This point is very important as each employee will allocate a significant level of time to organize, prepare and facilitate the session. In case the company chooses to invite an external guest speaker, it is recommended to take into account their expertise and professional experience, their lived experiences and identities, and the background of the organization that they might represent. In addition, it is strongly suggested that companies invite people who belong to the communities they talk about, and not just someone who supports them. An exception to this would be if an organization which is led by members of the community it serves selects that person as a speaker. After the completion of the network mapping, the company should have a list of organizations and people who could be potential speakers, with their area of focus and a note that refers to the topic the organization would like to cover.

## Preparation

Before contacting employees, organizations and/or freelance speakers, the company should know what it has to offer in exchange for this service. This is because speaking about certain issues (e.g. in regard to discrimination and violence), discussing vulnerability and covering the basics could be difficult or even exhausting for people coming from vulnerable communities. This is highly recommended when the company is planning an open dialogue, where people would be able to ask questions and express their thoughts. In case the company would like an employee to lead these sessions, it should have incentives that correlate to their needs (e.g. financial bonus, bonus paid day-off, additional remote-work days, etc.). In case the company would like to invite external speakers, it should have an available budget that could be used for their services. After the company finds a speaker, the focal point will have to discuss with them all the aspects of the session, in the following order of priority:

- Firstly, contextualize the action and share with them what your company would like to achieve by the end of the session, as well as the overall DEI goals of your company.
- Furthermore, provide the essential technical support which could either be the platform for the session (e.g. Zoom, Teams, Google Meet, etc.) or a physical space for an in-person session.
- Then, define the timeframe in order to set realistic expectations regarding the session. The ideal session should combine theory and practice! Keep in mind that, within an hour, two activities for practice are more than enough
- and that's why you should carefully choose with the speaker the ones that you will include.
- Set ground rules which could include the ways that someone may participate in the dialogue, or how to disagree respectfully. The rules could also be created collaboratively during the start of the session. Remember that the Brown-Bag Dialogue Sessions are supposed to have an informal vibe, so do not overwork the rules of the session!
- Invite colleagues to the session with an invitation that highlights the importance of these discussions and how they relate to their work.

## Feedback and Follow-Up

Following the facilitation of the Dialogue Session, ensure that a feedback form has been sent to all participants. The form should be anonymous, relatively short and encourage honest feedback. The questions could either be on a Likert scale ("From 1 to 5, how you would you rate....") or open for replying with a short paragraph. The questions should cover both the content of the dialogue as well as the overall facilitation. It may include questions regarding the relevance of the topic to their work and/or their interests, the session's contribution to their capacity to address the topic from now on, how safe and comfortable they felt to participate in the discussions, things they would like to change, worrying behaviors and comments that were made during the discussion, an assessment of the speaker's skills, and what they would like to see in the future. The company could also include a question regarding insensitive comments and behavior, but in this case, the steps that are followed to address this kind of situation.

Additionally, after the session, the company may send to the participants related material which was either discussed during the session or that could elaborate further on the topic. This material may include documents (toolkits, reports, guides, etc.), websites, videos, podcasts, a list of movies/books/tv-series, etc.

Based on the established DEI strategy, the company may have a line-up of upcoming activities and initiatives that aim to enhance inclusion in the workplace. These should be shared with the employees, and some information about the actions should be provided. The dissemination of this information to staff should be at least one week before the day of each activity.

Finally, regardless of the DEI strategy, make sure that there are open channels of communication within the company which employees could use to share an idea and suggest an action related to the topics discussed. Inclusion is not something that can be perfectly achieved by rigid strategies, but it is a reminder of what a workplace is striving for and an everyday practice. This is why people should always be able to share concerns, report incidents, express themselves and lead the change, especially when the topic of discussion is directly linked to their lives. The point is not just to be considered inclusive, but to create a space for everyone to feel included.

According to the [European Agency for Gender Equality \(EIGE\)](#), "diversity" refers to "differences in the values, attitudes, cultural perspective, beliefs, ethnic background, sexual orientation, gender identity, skills, knowledge and life experiences of each individual in any group of people".

Recognizing the range of this concept, this Toolkit will focus on specific communities and provide information about the experiences captured through the project's activities. Through the coordination of six (6) Dialogue Sessions, PROGEDI provided a platform for organizations and groups supporting vulnerable communities, to talk about their experiences in the workplace as well as on the barriers that marginalized people face. Good practices that employers could follow to support inclusion were also discussed. The dialogue sessions took place from September 2023 to January 2024 and were centered around DEI principles, LGBTQI+ identities, Migrants, Women, Disabled People, and Greek Romani People.

NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION	WEBSITE	DATE OF DIALOGUE SESSION
Independent DEI Specialist		20/09/23
Colour Youth Athens LGBTQ Youth Community	<a href="https://www.colouryouth.gr/">https://www.colouryouth.gr/</a>	24/10/23
Greek Forum of Migrants	<a href="https://www.migrant.gr/cgi-bin/pages/index.pl?arlang=Greek&amp;-type=index">https://www.migrant.gr/cgi-bin/pages/index.pl?arlang=Greek&amp;-type=index</a>	01/11/23
Irida Women's Center	<a href="https://www.iridacenter.org/">https://www.iridacenter.org/</a>	10/11/23
Me Alla Matia	<a href="https://meallamatia.gr/">https://meallamatia.gr/</a>	20/11/23
Union of Greek Roma Mediators and Partners	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/eldirom/">https://www.facebook.com/eldirom/</a>	19/01/24

The Dialogue Sessions were organized and facilitated online to reach more people from companies and organizations. The participants of these sessions were employees from companies and NGOs, while the participation of HR professionals and the senior managers was also encouraged by the invitation. Most of the companies and the NGOs that participated in these sessions are part of the network of IRC, KEAN and Generation 2.0 RED.

The following section presents the main points of each discussion and some of the takeaways. The focus of this series of dialogue sessions was the short examination of obstacles, and good practices. This decision was based on the need to set the foundation for any discussion that may follow within the activities of the project, as well as the urge to highlight intersectionality, which is a key term in the approach of PROGEDI.

## INTRODUCTION TO DEI

The first Dialogue Session was facilitated by an independent DEI Specialist who laid the foundation for the next sessions and set the theoretical framework. Using definitions of the European Network Against Racism<sup>17</sup> 'Diversity', 'Equity', and 'Inclusion' were described as:

- **Diversity** describes the people who embody marginalised identities and their representation in the workplace.
- **Equity** describes equality in outcomes through a recognition of structural differences that render some to have more disadvantages than others.
- **Inclusion** describes the processes and policies by which people who embody marginalised identities feel welcome and a sense of belonging.

Additionally, the term of **"intersectionality"** was presented through theory and the personal experience of the speaker, who is a black woman. Intersectionality refers to the intersected identities of a person which lead to multifaceted ways of experiencing everyday life. For the last part of the session, the facilitator asked the participants, firstly, to think of 5 barriers that an organization or a company may face regarding DEI. Then she asked the participants to choose the one they consider the most significant, and finally to discuss these in teams in order to present 2 barriers and 2 solutions.



### BARRIERS

- ✗ Language Barriers (even if the candidate is qualified)
- ✗ Non-specialized workers

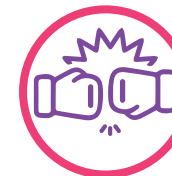


### GOOD PRACTICES

- ✓ Collaboration between companies and NGOs for language lessons
- ✓ Training period in order to develop the necessary skills
- ✓ Alternative ways of communicating with people who do not speak the language (e.g. usage of pictures accompanied by the matching Greek work)
- ✓ Raising awareness in the existing personnel and coordinating their collaboration between the existing personnel and the new employees that come from marginalized communities (how to communicate appropriately, challenges that may face, etc.)

## GENDER

Although the term "gender" in general is mentioned as a characteristic that can create barriers, the people who are discriminated against (overwhelmingly) are women. Barriers are also linked to stereotypes about women's abilities, and to societal expectations of women taking care of family members (young and old) disproportionately compared to men.



### BARRIERS

- ✗ Sexism
- ✗ Wage gap
- ✗ Motherhood & Family Building
- ✗ Inflexible working hours
- ✗ Difficulty in maintaining work-life balance
- ✗ Lack of recognition at work
- ✗ Employment in subordinate positions in relation to their professional qualifications



### GOOD PRACTICES

- ✓ Time flexibility and/or remote working
- ✓ Additional Parental Leave and in particular Paternity Leave
- ✓ Special Purpose Leave
- ✓ Support for Career Development and Further Education
- ✓ Equal pay
- ✓ Health and Mental Wellbeing Programmes

## LGBTQI+

The acronym "LGBTQI+" derives from the initials of the words *"Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex"*, while "+" refers to other identities that are not heterosexual and/or cisgender.

Cisgender (also called "cis", for short) are people who identify with the gender assigned to them at birth. Transgender (also called trans, for short) are people who do not identify with the sex assigned to them at birth. Example: if a person identifies as a trans woman this means that she was assigned the male gender at birth, but this does not match her internal sense of gender. So, she uses a female name and pronouns regardless of what is stated in her legal documents and perhaps her appearance. The trans community also includes those whose gender does not fall into the male-female binary and are called non-binary people.

Meanwhile, according to [Intersex Greece](#), the term intersex refers to "people born with intersex variations have physical characteristics that don't fit the usual definition of a female or male body. The term 'intersex' refers to a wide spectrum of variations to genitals, hormones, chromosomes and/or reproductive organs."

[ILGA World's database](#) on the legal framework of all countries is a valuable source for further and accurate information.



The flag of the LGBTQI+ community



The flag of the trans community



The flag of the intersex community





## BARRIERS

- ✗ Homophobia and transphobia
- ✗ Inappropriate questions
- ✗ Assumptions about their sexuality and/or gender identity
- ✗ Disclosure of their LGBTQ+ identity by third parties without the consent of the individuals themselves (outing)
- ✗ Uncritically rigid bureaucracy that does not respect the identity and self-identification of trans people
- ✗ Sexual harassment, which the individual may be afraid to report because of the possible disclosure of their own identity.



## GOOD PRACTICES

- ✓ Use inclusive language
  - Ask and respect all people's pronouns, showing that we respect their self-identification. E.g. "What's your name?", "What pronouns do you use?"
  - If a person doesn't remember someone's name or pronouns, they can ask politely or refer to them in a non-gendered way.
  - Introduce by name and pronouns to normalize this practice.
  - In business signatures, on business cards or on conference cards, a person may write next to the name the pronouns they use e.g. Mary (she/her), Dimitris (he/him), Lin (they/them).
  - Make sure the language in internal and

external communication is inclusive e.g. "We invite you all", "Graphic designer wanted" or "Graphic design qualified staff wanted".

- ✓ A person should address the individual they are talking to by their name and the pronouns they use, regardless of their appearance.
- ✓ If the person is trans and has not yet changed their legal documents, inform them how these will be used and ensure complete confidentiality of the information contained in them.
- ✓ Do not ask inappropriate questions.
- ✓ Do not make homophobic/transphobic comments, and if a person witnesses such a comment being made, they should point out its inappropriateness.
- ✓ Always remember that a person's gender or sexual orientation is not something we can perceive based on their gender expression.
- ✓ Do not "out" a person - if an LGBTQ person confides in us and shares their sexual orientation/gender identity with us, we respect that and do not disclose it without their explicit permission.
- ✓ Include gender-neutral bathrooms in the workplace or make sure the same facilities exist in both bathrooms (e.g. sanitary towels).
- ✓ Create an anti-discrimination policy that explicitly mentions LGBTQ+ identities and outlines a process for recording and addressing incidents of discrimination.
- ✓ Example to follow: When a company employee came out as a trans man, his name was immediately changed in the company email, on his employee tab and in electronic communications within the company.
- ✓ Use symbols in the office to indicate that it is an inclusive environment (e.g., flags, small posters, etc.)

## MIGRANTS

The definition also includes people with a refugee background, as they migrate because of a well-founded fear for their lives. According to the Geneva Convention (1951), well-founded fear may relate to race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. In terms of terminology, a refugee is legally defined as a person who has been granted asylum in a country and is considered an asylum seeker until the application is approved. To look for support services in different areas and to find out about the latest legal and procedural developments, consult [Refugee.Info](https://www.refugee.info/).



## BARRIERS

- ✗ Lack of information on bureaucratic procedures
- ✗ Residence permits
- ✗ Racism and xenophobia
- ✗ Waiting period before persons seeking international protection are entitled to access work (2 months, Law 5078/2023, Article 192)
- ✗ Language
- ✗ Lack of recognition of their educational qualifications
- ✗ Lack of awareness and knowledge of company and organization staff
- ✗ Informal work

## ROMA

The internationally accepted term is Roma. Roma in Greece are Greek citizens and are not recognised as a minority, unlike in all other European countries. Despite the long presence of Roma in Greece, it was not until 1979 that the Greek State granted Greek Roma Greek citizenship. In 2001 Representatives of Roma Associations signed a declaration of self-identification stating: "We Greek Roma declare categorically and in every direction that we are an inextricably linked part of Hellenism everywhere".

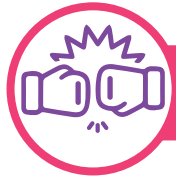
The language that most of them speak among themselves is Romani, except for some areas where only Greek is spoken. But in any case, all Roma people can speak and understand Greek, it is just that some of them have problems understanding it due to functional illiteracy. Roma are not a homogeneous community; they are often treated according to stereotypes that strongly contribute to social exclusion and poverty. Their housing and living conditions most often contribute to this.

Based on the aforementioned, when we refer to Roma we mainly mean those people who live in camps in austerity status and not those who live in houses like other Greek citizens.<sup>18</sup>



## GOOD PRACTICES

- ✓ Do not assume the language skills of other people
- ✓ Do not make assumptions about their origin
- ✓ Search for organisations that offer language courses and support the person in enrolling (if they wish to enroll in language courses)
- ✓ Provide mandatory trainings to employers
- ✓ Prevention, information and familiarisation with the respective populations (e.g. reaching out to groups that support migrant communities)
- ✓ Informing employers about the legal framework



## BARRIERS

- ✗ High levels of illiteracy and incomplete compulsory education, and few education and training opportunities
- ✗ The decline of traditional professions and the lack of formal qualifications (e.g. driving license etc.)
- ✗ The marginalisation of Roma women in particular, which is mainly due to internal community stereotypes about gender equality and their transition directly from childhood to motherhood
- ✗ Stereotypes from the wider Greek society
- ✗ The bureaucratic rules of public administration which the community is unable to understand
- ✗ The insurmountable obstacles to daily survival and the resulting shift to informal forms of work
- ✗ The limited access of Romani people to information on jobs and vocational guidance.



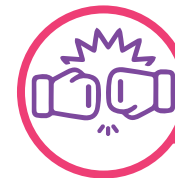
## GOOD PRACTICES

- ✓ Good cooperation between employers and the DYPA<sup>19</sup> (formerly OAED) for subsidized employment and training programmes
- ✓ Contact of employers with Social Services and Romani branches
- ✓ Contact of employers with the Panhellenic Confederation of Greek Roma (Ellan Passe) as well as with local Roma associations
- ✓ Employers' contact with the Association of Mediators
- ✓ Cooperation with Roma institutions and organisations for the recruitment of people in the context of social inclusion and corporate social responsibility
- ✓ It is necessary to educate the staff of the DYPA as well as the staff of the companies involved in recruitment in order to understand the specific characteristics of the Romani community so that there are no barriers to their promotion in the labour market, given that all people, even without formal qualifications or proven work experience, have skills and work abilities
- ✓ Removing stereotypical perceptions such as: "It smells bad, It looks dark, I don't have a problem but will my customers have a problem? Him? He's nice but what if I have a problem with his people? There's no way he's not stealing, it's in their blood.", etc.
- ✓ The introduction of the institution of subsidized probationary employment for two or three months in public or private institutions in order to create a register for future promotion to work after the evaluation of the employee.

## DISABILITY AND CHRONIC ILLNESS

For many years, the basic way of approaching disability was the so-called 'medical model', which treated it as a personal health problem, that needs treatment. However, such an approach concealed key elements of the deviations and discrimination faced by disabled people. Thus, the way we approach disability is now expressed through the 'social model' of disability, which sees disability primarily as the result of the barriers encountered due to some 'impairments'. We should not forget that disability can be physical (e.g. movement, vision, hearing) or mental (e.g. schizophrenia, personality disorder, dementia), apparent or not, and to a large or small degree.

An important concept in the disability debate is 'accessibility', which refers to addressing the elements of discrepancy and enhancing access for disabled people to services, tools, environments, etc. (e.g. adaptable text and screen-reading pages, ramps, lifts, interpretation, distance working, etc.).



## BARRIERS

- ✗ Ableism, prejudices and stereotypes
- ✗ Difficulty finding a job
- ✗ Jobs below their abilities
- ✗ Easier victims of sexual harassment, as disabled people are often seen by society as "asexual" and therefore not potential targets.
- ✗ Lack of training (and accessibility) programmes



## GOOD PRACTICES

- ✓ Remote working and the use of technology
- ✓ Subsidy for the construction of ergonomic spaces.
- ✓ Communication with organizations and agencies to make announcements in an accessible way
- ✓ Support for social enterprises that involve and run by disabled people
- ✓ Accessible website
- ✓ Staff training
- ✓ Provision of interpretation in Greek sign language for customer service
- ✓ Exploitation of features that may have been enhanced in the absence of others (e.g. better hearing for blind people)

In order to evaluate the quality and the impact of the dialogue sessions, IRC Hellas administered feedback forms after the session. The first section included demographic questions such as gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity/race, and disability. These questions were included to evaluate the quality of the outreach and the engagement of socially vulnerable populations in discussions regarding diversity and inclusion, which was deemed crucial. The forms were anonymous while, also, participants had the opportunity not to answer questions they were uncomfortable with. An example of the demographic questions is:

Gender	Do you identify with the gender assigned to you at birth	Sexual Orientation	Nationality	Do you have a disability or chronic illness?
Male	Yes	Heterosexual	[Open question]	Yes
Female	No	Homosexual		No
Non-binary	I prefer not to say	Bisexual/Pansexual		I prefer not to say
I prefer not to say		Asexual		
		I prefer not to say		

Next questions focused on the professional profile of the participant in order to provide an idea of the professionals who were interested in these discussions.

My employer is	My role is
The public sector	Employee in HR
A company	Employee in DEI
A Civil Society Organization	Employee in another department
I prefer not to say	Manager in HR
	Manager in DEI
	Manager in another department
	Employee in the public sector
	Manager in the public sector
	Senior Management Team
	I prefer not to say

The feedback form for this series of discussions concluded with questions regarding the content of the session(s).

I felt comfortable expressing my views and sharing my experiences during the discussion. (1: Not at all - 5: Very much)	Would you recommend this session to one of your colleagues?	Please mention the elements you enjoyed from today's session.	Please mention the things that could be improved in future sessions.
Likert scale (1 – 5)	Yes	[Open question]	[Open question]
	No		

The feedback form used for IRC Hellas' dialogue session was adjusted according to the scope of the PROGEDI project, matching indicators, and donor requirements. The aim was to be short due to the fact that participants were external (not employees of the consortium partners) and on limited availability. A company may choose a different set of questions (or even approach) according to its own needs and goals.

Naturally, challenges will arise with every action the company is planning to take. One of the main challenges is the engagement of the employees. For example, IRC Hellas faced this challenge while delivering the dialogue sessions, due to the fact that the participants were external and working in many different fields. A way to address this challenge is to create an invitation that connects their work and interests with their professional role and/or professional interests. This invitation should include the topic of the discussion, facilitator, day and time, place, way of registration, goal of the discussion, and why their presence is bringing value to the session.

Regarding the technical aspects of the sessions, online facilitation helps to reach out to more people, especially when the activity is short in terms of time. However, many people utilize ways of engagement that do not create a friendly environment, such as not turning their camera on and not actively participating in the discussion. For this reason, activities that subtly encourage all participants to engage should be chosen and implemented. Though, due to the short duration of the session, the activities should be carefully selected as it is usually good for a facilitator to have a maximum number of two activities in a one-hour session.

**Employees' engagement in DEI strategy is crucial because it is something that focuses on their experience in the workplace. This experience is not limited to internal processes but also includes external ones, such as recruiting.**

**Regarding external procedures, involve employees by asking them for feedback on the recruitment process. Some topics the feedback form may include are:**

- Questions about accessibility:** Was there something that made the recruiting process harder for them, where the company did not provide support? Was there something that made the process smoother? Was the process transparent and easy to understand? Was the building easy to navigate (on the day of the interview)? Was there flexibility regarding the technical aspects of the interview?
- Questions about DEI expectations:** Based on your experience, what would you like to see in the future regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion in the company? Was there any policy or action in a past employer which you believe worked well and you would like to see here as well? What do you think would help the recruiting process to go smoother?
- Questions about inclusion:** Was there any moment that you felt uncomfortable by something that was said or done? Was there something during the process that made you feel comfortable and included? Was there any moment that you felt that you could not fully express yourself?

The company can also utilize the general information that it gathered during the outreach. For example, it could focus on the channels where the majority of people reported that they heard about the position and create a plan to showcase the DEI initiatives of the company.

Furthermore, a company might reach out to employees to learn about organizations they might have heard of or know that support vulnerable groups. If the employee is part of a community, they might have a better understanding of the context, the services that the organizations provide and their quality. The company could utilize these connections through various ways, such as reaching out to them to disseminate their job advertisements, seek support regarding the support of people in the workplace, or invite the organizations to events, trainings or dialogue sessions.

## Regarding internal procedures:

- A company can start with **research** in order to collect data. Through this data collection and analysis, the company will be able to identify needs and prioritize what should be done according to the responses. Based on the data, the company may proceed in creating a Theory of Change which could be the foundation of the DEI Strategy.
- Encourage employees' initiatives such as the creation of an **Employees Resource Group (ERG)**. These groups are created by people working in the organization, who share common interests and/or social identities. Through the groups, individuals can feel a sense of belonging, express the needs of their communities within the work environment and play a crucial role in the development of DEI policies.
- Provide **training opportunities and educational resources** to employees of all levels regarding theoretical concepts, discrimination, inclusion, etc.
- Make **DEI part of the strategic goals** of the company and be transparent with the employees regarding the data, the needs, the challenges and the goals of the strategy. This way, the company will be accountable to the employees and show that it values their opinions. An annual DEI report could be a good start.
- Establish a culture of **mentoring** within the company, where senior employees could mentor junior employees and show them ways of achieving the goals they have set. It is important to match people based on shared goals because this would help the junior ones to get a better insight on what it takes to achieve their goals, and it would provide seniors a point of view regarding emerging elements from the field that are more apparent to juniors. Additionally, the mentor could use their prestige and "platforms" to provide juniors with opportunities that they otherwise might not have due to their social identities and/or characteristics.

In any case, the company should set goals and key indicators that would be based on data and could be used for the evaluation of its DEI initiatives.



# ANNEX



# ANNEX

## Dialogue Session Agendas

### SESSION 1: INTRODUCTION TO DEI

11:00 – 11:05	Start
11:05 – 11:12	Greeting and Introduction
11:12 – 11:30	Introduction to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)
11:30 – 11:45	The Greek Working Environment
11:45 – 12:10	Barriers of the Greek Working Environment
12:10 – 12:15	Good Practices
12:15 – 12:30	Recap and Closure

### SESSION 2: LGBTQI+ IDENTITIES AND THE WORKPLACE

11:00 – 11:10	Greeting and Introduction
11:10 – 11:15	Introduction to LGBTQI+ Identities
11:15 – 11:45	Research Data on LGBTQI+ and the Workplace in Europe and Greece
11:45 – 11:50	Intersectionality
11:50 – 12:05	Inclusive Language and other Good Practices
12:05 – 12:15	Group Exercise
12:15 – 12:30	Recap and Closure

### SESSION 3: MIGRANTS AND THE WORKPLACE

11:00 – 11:10	Greeting and Introduction
11:10 – 11:20	Terminology
11:20 – 11:40	Legal Framework
11:40 – 12:00	Barriers in the Greek Labor Market
12:00 – 12:15	Group Exercise and Discussion
12:15 – 12:30	Recap and Closure

# ANNEX

## Dialogue Session Agendas

### SESSION 4: GENDER AND THE WORKPLACE

11:00 – 11:05	Greeting and Introduction
11:05 – 11:10	Fun – or not so fun – facts
11:10 – 11:20	Introduction to the Legal Framework
11:20 – 11:35	Barriers in the Greek Labor Market
11:35 – 11:55	Good Practices
11:55 – 12:15	Group Exercise
12:15 – 12:30	Recap and Closure

### SESSION 5: DISABILITY AND THE WORKPLACE

14:00 – 14:05	Greeting and Introduction
14:05 – 14:10	Terminology
14:10 – 14:20	Disability in Greece
14:20 – 14:25	Disabled People who face multiple discriminations
14:25 – 14:35	Data on disability and the workplace on national and international level
14:35 – 14:50	Legal Framework for the employability of disabled people
14:50 – 15:10	Legal, Technological and Funding Tools for the Promotion of Employability of Disabled People in Greece
15:10 – 15:30	Recap and Closure

### SESSION 6: ROMA PEOPLE AND THE WORKPLACE

11:00 – 11:05	Greeting and Introduction
11:05 – 11:10	Terminology
11:10 – 11:20	Fields of Work and Barriers for Roma People in the Labor Market
11:20 – 11:30	Recommendations for the Support of Inclusion
11:30 – 11:35	Training of Non-Roma People
11:35 – 11:50	Positive Examples
11:50 – 12:10	Questions and Discussion
12:10 – 12:30	Recap and Closure

1. I felt comfortable expressing my views and sharing my experiences during the discussion.  
(1: Not at all - 5: Very much)

1  2  3  4  5

2. The topic was relevant to work and my experience in the workplace.  
(1: Not at all - 5: Very much)

1  2  3  4  5

3. I feel capable of addressing this topic from now on.  
(1: Not at all - 5: Very much)

1  2  3  4  5

4. The facilitator created an inclusive environment where everyone had the chance to participate.  
(1: Not at all - 5: Very much)

1  2  3  4  5

5. What is something you believe contributed well to the facilitation of the discussion?

6. What is something that could be improved in future dialogue sessions?

7. Could you recommend other topics you would like the company to approach?

8. Was there a moment when you felt uncomfortable because of something that was said during the session? If so, please provide as much detail as possible, as [name of the company] wishes to create and maintain inclusive networks and environments. An incident deemed inappropriate and beyond the session's boundaries will be reviewed by a small committee with members of the Senior Management and it will be addressed in a timely manner. The review may include contacting other participants and the facilitator.

<b>CSOs</b>	Civil Society Organizations
<b>DEI</b>	Diversity, Equality and Inclusion
<b>DYPA</b>	Greek Public Employment Service
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>LGBTQI</b>	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>SMEs</b>	Small and medium-sized enterprises

## Footnotes

- 1 Eurobarometer survey, 2017, available [here](#).
- 2 Mahajan, D.; White, O.; Madgavkar, A. & Krishnan, M., 2020, Don't Let the Pandemic Set Back Gender Equality. Harvard Business Review.
- 3 COM/2019/653 final, available [here](#).
- 4 European Network Against Racism, 2017, available [here](#).
- 5 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2020, available [here](#).
- 6 COM/2020/152 final, available [here](#).
- 7 COM/2020/565 final, available [here](#).
- 8 COM/2020/698 final, available [here](#).
- 9 Council Directive 2000/78/EC, available [here](#).
- 10 Council Directive 2000/43/EC, available [here](#).
- 11 Eurostat, 2020, available [here](#).
- 12 Eurostat, 2020, available [here](#).
- 13 National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2021 - 2025, available [here](#).
- 14 National Action Plan against Racism and Intolerance, available [here](#).
- 15 The National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) "Greece 2.0" is structured on four pillars: (a) Green, (b) Digital, (c) Employment, skills, and social cohesion, (d) Private investment and transformation of the economy and will be funded under the Recovery and Resilience Fund. Under Pillar 3, there is a dedicated component (3.4) aiming to "increase access to effective and inclusive social policies", page 83, available [here](#).
- 16 The presented data was selected and taken from "PROGEDI Baseline Assessment Report: Perspectives on the added value & benefits of Diversity & Inclusion in the workplace, current DE&I practices, and organisational needs of SMEs & Non-Profit organisations in Greece" (2023, p. 30-33).
- 17 European Network Against Racism, 2022, Structural Racism in the Labor Market, available [here](#) (p. 6-7).
- 18 The above information was presented by the Association of Greek Romani Mediators and Partners at the dialogue session that was organized the PROGEDI project, on 19 January 2024.
- 19 The Greek Public Employment Service supports people in Greece with the provision of various services related to employment, unemployment, vocational training and other social protection benefits (e.g. special maternity leave, etc.).



**Generation 2.0**  
For Rights Equality & Diversity

