

MODULE 3: UNDERSTANDING DIVERSITY

Time: 1 hour

Objectives:

- Encouraging trainees to explore the diversity of their own identities so that to acknowledge the multiple aspects of 'identity' and the various meanings attributed to such aspects, both for ourselves and for others.
- Encouraging trainees to explore their privileges and vulnerabilities and acknowledge them.
- Defining diversity.
- Introducing trainees to a range of diversity issues informed by race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, religion, and class.
- Displaying the importance of cultivating understanding and respect for diversity.
- Introducing workplace diversity and how it can positively affect work.

Materials:

Projector

Slides PP 4.1 & PP 4.2

Flipchart

Markers

Cards/ paper

Tape

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1) Trainers ask the group to give their definitions for diversity and trainers write them on the flipchart.
Or
Trainers pass cards/ paper and ask the trainees to write their own definitions for diversity. Trainers collect the answers and post them on the flipchart/ wall/ board.
- 2) Trainers discuss the responds.
- 3) Trainers present PP 4.1.
- 4) Trainers ask the participants if they think diversity is relevant only to specific groups of people or not. Trainers encourage participants to identify their own diversity, acknowledging their multiple identities.
- 5) Trainers ask the group to brainstorm on the various elements of diversity (race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, religion, class, etc.) and trainers write them on the flipchart.
Or
Trainers pass cards/ paper and ask the trainees to write their answers. Trainers collect the answers and post them on the flipchart/ wall/ board.
- 6) Trainers ask the group to discuss the role of diversity in the workplace.
- 7) Trainers present PP 4.2.
- 8) Trainers are encouraged to use any of the activities below, depending on their time, if they are implementing an extended version or not, and on what they find useful for the group, taking into consideration also if the group is newly-arrived migrants or migrants who have already been in the country for a long time. For the current version of 7hour training, it is recommended that they use only 1-2 activities. For migrants who have been staying for long time in the host country and/ or migrants who are syndicalised and/ or migrants who are active in their communities and/ or

otherwise active in issues of integration in the workplace, all activities are recommended. For migrants who do not have such experience and/ or newcomers, activities A or/ and C are recommended. For migrants who have been staying for long time in the host country and/ or migrants who are syndicalised and/ or migrants who are active in their communities and/ or otherwise active in issues of integration in the workplace, activity B is also recommended.

Notes for trainers

When we discuss diversity, it is common to acknowledge individual differences, mainly in relation to physical characteristics. Yet, diversity is a much broader subject and it may include many aspects of our lives, such as:

- Race
- Ethnicity
- Gender identity
- Sexual orientation
- Disability
- Religion
- Class
- Age
- Culture
- Migratory background
- Refugee experience
- Education
- Emotions
- Family/ marital status
- Generational differences
- Geographic location
- Income
- Language
- Personality
- Physical characteristics
- Values
- Work experience
- Political beliefs

It is important to acknowledge that identities are social constructs that inform our personalities, conducts, and lives in general. For example, race, gender, class, religion, and language are social constructions. Yet, they have real influences and impacts on people's lives. Race relates to ethnic origin, socio-cultural groups and self-identification. Although historically, 'race' was coined by scientists in the fields of biology, anthropology and genetics, modern science does not recognise this classification as scientific anymore. In a historical context, race has played an important role in the shaping of our societies, of the way we view others, and of how we experience our lives. All of the traits in the above list may be important to one's identity, some in a greater extent and others in a lesser extent, depending on the person and their culture.

Everybody has multiple identities. Identities can be personal and social. Personal identity include one's name, personality, unique characteristics, background, history, and other traits that distinguish one from

another. Social identity includes one's kinships with other people; values that one encompasses; societal norms and behaviours embedded to them.

Diversity is the mosaic of people, who bring with them a variety of backgrounds, perspectives, values, styles, and beliefs as assets to the groups in and with which they interact.

Acknowledging the value of individual differences is important. Workplace diversity should be acknowledged as one of the greatest strengths of any enterprise and embraced as such. Embracing diversity in the workplace entails creating a safe environment, where everybody will be valued and supported for who they are and their contributions through their differences will be also acknowledged.

Workplace diversity can assist in building an inclusive and supportive work environment, improve teamwork, and increase productivity. It can also improve creativity and encourage thinking out of the box, different ways of thinking for more effective decision-making and problem solving, and innovative ideas.

Benefits of workplace diversity:

- Improves understanding, especially of those you work for (clientele, market), with (colleagues), and around. It improves our understand of each other, both in the workplace and outside it. It improves employees and human beings at the same time.
- Contributes in creates a positive and safe work environment, which allows everybody to reach their full potential.
- Reduces complaints by employees.
- Provides multiple perspectives, which is especially useful in problem solving and decision-making.
- Improves performance.
- Increases employee productivity.
- Boosts employees' confidence and determination.
- Increased retention rates.
- Improves the relations between the enterprise and its clientele/ market.
- Encourages innovative ideas.
- Improves marketing ideas.
- Improves communication (internally as well as between the enterprise and the market and the society in general)

Respect of diversity must be not only theoretical, but also reflected in the enterprise's strategies promoting and supporting diversity and inclusion. Diversity strategies assist in building and/ or developing the enterprise's relationship with the community. Research shows that diversity strategies also enhance employees' productivity. Moreover, diversity strategies help an enterprise to improve the quality of its work, including products, services, and projects. Diversity strategies can also contribute in improving employee retention, reducing costs in the recruitment process.

Skills of employees that enterprises can make use of through diversity strategies:

- Ideas
- Opinions
- Background
- Personality

- Uniqueness

Diversity in society and diversity in business are not separate but intersect. Diversity in society requires products and services as well as marketing that satisfy the needs of a diverse market. At the same time, workplace diversity may affect not only employees' productivity, but also their core beliefs, helping them to question societal norms and social conditioning. Workplace diversity may improve labour rights as well as human and civil rights.

According to research, workforce diversity is positively associated with higher performance and with more effective group processes and performance. Moreover, according to research, diverse teams are more creative and have better performance in problem solving than homogeneous teams. Yet, in order for diversity to have such positive results, it needs to be accompanied with relevant strategies, as well as with people-oriented cultures. On the contrary, if diversity is overlooked, not respected, and not supported, the results may be damaging.

Activity A: Identifying diversity and its aspects

Time: 20 minutes

Materials:

Flipchart

Markers

Pens

Note-books

Projector

Slide PP 4.1 & PP 4.2

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1) Trainers ask participants to form groups or couples to discuss the following questions:
 - What does diversity mean to each one of you personally?
 - Do you think diversity is important and to which context? Why?
 - **Do you think workplace diversity is important and why?**
 - How do you think enterprises can promote workplace diversity and why?
- 2) Trainers give couples/ groups 5 - 10 minutes for each question and after each question, they ask them to share highlights of the conversation aloud.
- 3) **Trainers take notes on the flipchart.**
- 4) **Trainers show slides PP 4.1 & PP 4.2 and discuss them.**

Activity B: Exploring the diversity of our own identities and acknowledging the multiple aspects of 'identity'

Time: 20 minutes

Materials:

Handout 4.1

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1) Trainers distribute handout 4.1 and ask participants to fill it in anonymously.
- 2) Trainers ask participants to keep their answers and share, if they wish, with the group:

- If they have now become aware of identities they had not really acknowledged before.
- If they have identified a mostly diverse or homogeneous group of people in their surroundings.
- How they feel about the above results. Do they like them? Is there anything they would change? Would they prefer a more normative identity or a more diverse one? Would they prefer a more diverse or homogeneous group of people in their surroundings?
- Have they identified any way(s) to enhance diversity in their lives, in case this would interest them?

Handout 4.1						
	Gender identity	Race - ethnic origin	Sexuality	Class	Disability	Religion
I am						
My colleagues are						
My supervisor is						
My manager is						
My classmates were mainly						
My teachers were mostly						
Most of my friends are						
My spouse is						
My neighbours are mostly						

Notes for trainers

The objective of this activity is to help participants identify and acknowledge their own diversity of identities and the diversity in their lives. It should assist trainees clarify the diversity or homogeneity of their surroundings. If used critically, it can also help trainees find ways to enhance their exposure to multiculturalism in their daily lives. Most people are not conscious of such information and often, we are convinced that we are in rather diverse surroundings whereas this is not always the case.

Participants should not be forced to share/ discuss their answers. It is important they are not made to feel uncomfortable/ unsafe/ threatened. For this reason, it is recommended that trainers leave handouts to participants, who can further work with and by themselves in this activity. Having such information recorded allows people to use them in various ways as usually, we do not take notice of how diverse/ homogeneous our lives and surroundings are. Trainers are recommended to invite trainees to use such information internally, highlighting that our context greatly affects our perceptions and beliefs. The more diverse our context is, the more open and accepting we are towards other people and their perceptions and beliefs.

Activity C: Exploring our identities and acknowledging our privileges and vulnerabilities

Time: 30 minutes

Materials:

None

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1) Trainers ask participants to line up in a straight horizontal line, allowing room to move forward and backward. By the end of the activity, people should be in various positions, with the most privileged in front and the least privileged at the back.
- 2) Trainers ask participants to move a step forward or backward, as instructed below, until the end of this activity. Trainers clarify that when in doubt, participants should remain in place.
 - **Move one step forward if you are a man. Move one step back if you are a woman and two steps backward if you are any other gender.**
 - Move one step forward if you are white. Move one step back if you are a person of colour.
 - **Move one step forward if you are a member of the family of an EU/ Cypriot citizen. Move two steps forward if you have been naturalised as a Cypriot. Move one step back if at any point in your life you were undocumented and two steps back if you currently are undocumented.**
 - Move one step forward if you are abled. Move one step back if you are disabled.
 - Move one step forward if you are a cisgender person (if your gender identity and the gender you were assigned match). Move one step back if you are a trans person. Move one step back if you are an intersex person.
 - Move one step forward if you are heterosexual. Move one step back if you are a lesbian/ gay/ bisexual/ polysexual/ pansexual/ queer.
 - Move one step back if you are a single parent.

- Move one step forward if you are an Orthodox Christian. Move one step back if not and two steps back if you are a Muslim.
- Move one step back if you were forced/ pressurised at some point in your life to change/ hide your religious/ political beliefs.
- Move one step back if you were forced/ pressurised at some point in your life to change your appearance, mannerisms, dress, behaviour to avoid being judged or ridiculed or to avoid violence.
- Move one step back if you were forced/ pressurised at some point in your life to lie/ hide the truth about your family/ culture/ background to avoid being judged or ridiculed or to avoid violence.
- Move one step forward if you had two parents through your childhood (up to 18 years of age). Move one step back if you had one parent through your childhood and two steps back if you had no parent.
- Move one step forward if you parents were married and remained married while you were a child. Take one step back if they were divorced/ separated while you were a child.
- Move one step forward if you always had enough food while a child. Move one step back if not.
- Move one step forward if you always have enough food now. Move one step back if not.
- Move one step forward if you had access to healthcare as a child. Move one step back if not.
- Move one step forward if you always had and currently has access to healthcare as an adult. Move one step back if at times you had not and two steps back if you currently do not.
- Move one step forward if your parents were always employed. Move one step back if at times your parent(s) was/ were unemployed and they needed employment. Move two steps back if your parent(s) was/ were always unemployed and they needed employment.
- Move one step forward if you as an adult are employed. Move one step back if at times you were unemployed and you needed employment. Move two steps back if you are still unemployed.
- Move one step forward if your family always had a house and two steps forward if they owned their house. Move one step back if you rented and two steps back if at times you were homeless.
- Move one step forward if you never had to move because of housing/ living costs or because the owner of the house asked you to leave. Move one step backward if you ever had to move because of housing/ living costs or because the owner of the house asked you to leave.
- Move one step forward if you always lived in a safe neighbourhood. Move one step back if at times you did/ do not feel safe in your neighbourhood.
- Move one step forward if you only moved once or not at all while growing up. Move one step back if you had to move several times.
- Move one step forward if you were able to go for holidays abroad as a child. Move one step back if you have never gone for holidays abroad.

- Move one step forward if your family could afford what you wanted for holidays and birthday as a child. Move a step back if not.
- Move one step forward if at least one of your parents living with you had a university degree. Move one step back if not.
- Move one step forward if your parent(s) could support you for most or all of your years at university/ college, at least for undergraduate studies. Move one step back if not. Move two steps back if you have not been able to study because of financial reasons.
- Move one step forward if you attended private school.
- Move one step forward if you have studied the culture, history, and language of your ancestors/ community in school.
- Move one step back if you have seen members of your race/ ethnic origin/ gender identity/ sexual orientation/ disability status portrayed in the media in degrading roles.
- Move one step forward if you are confident to move around without people judging you or being afraid of you, or thinking of you as a potential threat to their safety.
- Move one step back if you were ever uncomfortable because of a joke related to your race/ ethnic origin/ gender identity/ sexual orientation/ disability.
- Move two steps back if you were ever the victim of violence on the basis of your race, ethnic origin/ gender identity/ sexual orientation/ disability.

3) Trainers facilitate a discussion around the following questions:

- What do you see around the room? We started with everybody at the same place in the room. Is everybody in the same place in the room now?
- Do you think that what you see around you reflects your community? How?
- How do you feel about where you are in relation to the others in the room?
- How do you feel about where others are in relation to you?
- What were you thinking as you moved forward and backward?
- Did you find any of the above statements strange? Why?
- Did you find any of the above statements hurtful? Why?
- What does your position in the room say about your privilege?
- How has privilege/ vulnerability affected you, your family and your community, in terms of opportunity, access to rights, and success?

Trainers notes

Trainers are strongly encouraged to actively participate in the exercise and not pressurise participants to respond to any of the questions if they do not feel comfortable to do so. Trainers must highlight that we all have privileges, yet some people are in a more privileged position than others. Having privileges is not bad and nobody should feel bad for their privileges. It is important that we acknowledge our privileges and support others in accessing them too. It is important that everybody has access to the same privileges while retaining their diversity.