

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Online Course

Module 2: Guiding Principles of DEI

Transcript

Hello and welcome to the second module of the online self-paced course on introduction to diversity, equity and inclusion. In this module, we're trying to go over some of the most important guiding principles of diversity, equity and inclusion-related initiatives. This course has been brought to you by One Future Collective in collaboration with ICVA, the International Council of Voluntary Agencies.

Quick Recap

Before we jump into exploring what some of the guiding principles of DEI are, let's begin by recapping what we've learned so far. The first thing we tried to do is understand what diversity, equity, and inclusion mean as concepts and try to understand if they are one and the same. The answer was a resounding no, and we understood that diversity, equity, and inclusion are distinct concepts having very distinct consequences, but do, however, share a very, very strong interrelationship. This means that diversity, equity, and inclusion, although separate topics and themes and concepts, they require one another to be fully realized.

What are some of the arguments and rationales that organizations have used in order to invest resources in diversity, equity, and inclusion related initiatives? We also try to understand whether what rationale an organization uses is at all relevant if all of the rationales lead to the same outcome which is that the organization is invested in diversity, equity, and inclusion. A key thing that we discussed in the previous video was that even though these rationales may seem like they have the same outcome, depending on the severity and the seriousness of the rationale that an organization approaches DEI with, it can have severe positive or negative consequences on the accountability the impact, and the reach of the DEI initiative.

The third thing we tried to look at was also what are the some of the important impacts that DEI initiatives can have for an organization. Every time an organization is deciding whether they should be investing resources into any sort of initiative, they do a cost-benefit analysis. And when they do that, they arrive at a decision whether something is worth investing in or something isn't. DEI is no exception to that rule. We therefore try to understand what is the real value-add that organizations can expect to experience if they start engaging in and investing in DEI.

The last tool that we looked at in the first video was the DEI Continuum tool. In this tool, we try to map out the journey of organizations who may be just starting on their DEI journeys and also try to explore what the future of their journey can look like. The Continuum serves as an important tool to help us understand where an organization is in its current journey on its DEI-related initiatives, but also helps us prepare a futuristic, forward-looking roadmap to understand where we want to be transformative in our DEI Initiatives. We hope that so far you've had a good foundational understanding of what diversity, equity, and inclusion are about where we can place our own organizations on the continuum.

Key Concepts Guiding principles of DEI

In today's video we're going to be identifying and understanding some of the guiding principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Thank you

Let's get started towards unpacking what some of the key guiding principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion are and what they can look like in practice.

Please bear in mind that this is by no means possible. No means an exhaustive list of principles and just an introduction for you to start thinking about whether these principles apply to you, whether there are some principles that we haven't thought of, and if there's anything else that's coming up for you as we try to unpack and chatter what these principles look like. For us, it's important that we start talking about guiding principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion right at the beginning because that helps us identify an anchor and a guiding point to go back to every single time we feel a bit lost or we feel a bit confused about where we are heading with our DEI initiatives. They can also help us prepare a more detailed and holistic comprehensive roadmap towards ensuring that we're able to build off previous initiatives and experiences rather than having to start from scratch first

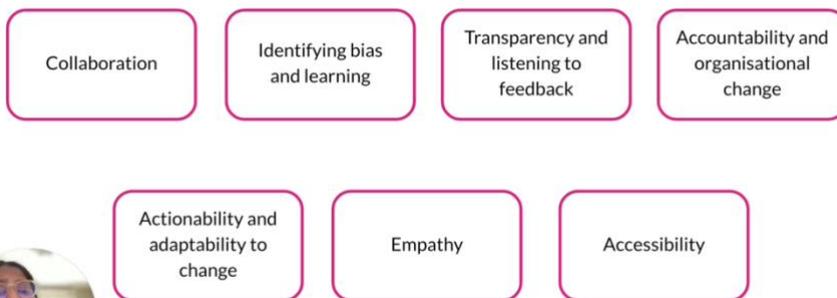
The first guiding principle that we're going to be looking at is that of collaboration. Diversity, equity, and inclusion is not only a new subject, but is also a very, very complicated subject. It is often possible that we may feel quite lost when we try to engage with it. And we may therefore need the help of other experts and other leaders within the field to be able to inform our own DEI strategy. Not only that, DEI also requires a concerted collaborative effort within the organization's leadership. It is not enough if only the top leadership of an organization is invested in running DEI as an agenda. On the other side, it's also not enough if only the employees are interested in DEI, but the top leadership is not responsive to these needs. There is therefore a need for both internal and external collaboration for us to be able to develop effective DEI strategies and initiatives which can lead to the most amount of benefit for everyone involved.

The second key element about DEI for the next session is the focus is on identifying our own individual and collective biases and also learning to unlearn these biases. Biases in the workplace involve having thoughts or attitudes about a person or a group of people, based on the traits that affect how we think about them or how we perceive them and can be a result of their race, their ethnicity, their gender, their sexual orientation amongst many other identities. There is some research which has identified that of the workers report encountering bias frequently and 83% classify these biases in the workplace as subtle, indirect or even characterize them to be microaggressions. It can also, in some cases, lead to direct violence. This affects important company decisions, such as recruitment, job advancement and development of the different employees as well. Identification of biases, acknowledgement of these biases, learning about strategies on how we can transform these inherent beliefs and attitudes can therefore be an important guiding pillar of the practice of diversity, equity and inclusion. It is therefore important for us to understand that the core person against whom these are directed feeling a little confused about what really happened in a particular situation. It is therefore important for us to understand that the core of diversity, equity and inclusion related initiatives is really an attempt at us trying to be able to identify these inherent biases that we may have. And while this is a long and complex journey and can take us a lot of time, it is important that we start from the first step. The first step is recognizing that each of us has biases and we are not right or wrong to have them, but it is our obligation to keep them in check.

The third guiding principle of diversity, equity and inclusion is transparency and being able to listen to, elicit and acknowledge feedback. Giving employees access to pertinent information across the organization, and this is not limited just to diversity, equity and inclusion related information, but being transparent for example in your pay scales, being transparent in hiring decisions, trying to be as objective as possible. While deciding whether we should be going ahead with a particular initiative or whether we should not be going ahead with them can also help employees try and understand that certain decisions are being made on the basis of objective decisions and are not informed by certain biases. This objectivity feeds into ensuring that there is greater enhanced transparency within the organization allowing employees to feel

confident in their decision making and also confident in the decision making of their employees and the people that they report to. Without transparency, a culture of mistrust is very, very likely to develop which can in turn affect worker productivity, it can impact their morale and also negatively impact their performance. Employees often desire the challenge. This is a chance to speak honestly and freely with their management about any issue including team dynamics and workplace environments which they may not be able to do if this culture is not already present. More than making a space for people to be able to come forward and share their experiences, it's also important for us to be able to build an atmosphere where people feel drawn and inspired to be able to do so. It's not enough for us to say we held an open consultation. Was the consultation accessible? Was the consultation accompanied with the protection of confidentiality and anonymity depending on what the consultation was about? Was the consultation done in a language and an environment where the employees or the stakeholders who we were looking to get responses from felt comfortable?

Guiding Principles of DEI



These are just some very basic questions and things to start thinking about while we try to think about transparency and how we can weave in feedback into most company decisions. The guiding principles of diversity, equity and inclusion is that of accountability and organizational change. When an organization starts talking about

diversity, equity and inclusion, it is very likely that there might be a lot of change within the organization. Change may be very incremental and therefore very slow, or it can also be sudden and widespread and have almost immediate impacts on certain groups of people.

This is likely to result in some sort of resistance, in some sort of confusion, in some sort of discomfort among some groups within the organization. It is important that as an organization we are able to account for and be able to foresee the discomfort or the challenges that may be accompanying such organizational changes. This foreseeing will also help us plan for these changes in a way that helps us understand that these are some measures we are going to undertake or we are going to have to undertake in order to ensure that there is greater uptake of the DEI initiative.

The flip side of this is accountability. A lot of DEI initiative, like I said earlier on, is uncharted territory. We may not be fully comfortable about what are the 100% successful solutions. What is the best way to achieve an outcome? What are the most successful outcomes and how can we measure the impact of an initiative? These questions are very new and can result some error, some trial, some frustration. It is important that as an organization we are able to take accountability for all of the changes that we are making as a result of our investment in DEI, but also take accountability for instances where we are likely to go wrong, if not now perhaps sometime in the future. Accountability also becomes relevant as a key starting point for an organization to shift from a place where there was absolutely no DEI to a place where they want to start thinking about DEI. A transitionary phase will often require organisations to look inwards and

take accountability of the fact that maybe there were some considerations they were not really taking into account when making organisation- wide decisions. In these cases accountability not only becomes a point of contention or something that we have to demonstrate after we've done an initiative, but also even before we're willing to engage resources and speak about building a new initiative within the workplace.

The next thing that we're going to be talking about is actionability and adaptability to change.

Accountability or desire. Failure to change, transparency, setting up our processes and learning programs that address biases are all very, very useful interventions.

However, if they do not lead to actionable change within the organization, their impact will start to occur sooner or later. It is therefore important that each of these elements is accompanied with a very strong actionable roadmap that demonstrates not just to the employees but also to your own colleagues and to your leadership that there is an actionable product coming out of this. It is not enough for us to do one training about unconscious biases, for example, with our employees. What is important is for us to ensure that there is a sustained effort arising from that particular work.

We all understand that diversity, equity, and inclusion are extremely slow-moving, cultural, mindset, mental model changes, and this requires repeated concerted effort to train our employees. We all understand that diversity, equity, and inclusion are extremely slow-moving, cultural, mindset, mental model changes. Try and understand how we can make them more and more effective. In order for DEI initiatives to be useful or even effective, it is important that we are able to demonstrate what they look like tangibly and also articulate what is the tangible outcome that we are expecting from a particular initiative? As we have discussed before, it is possible that we may start an initiative, but it may not achieve the results we thought it would. Maybe you started an initiative where employee resource groups were formed. However, you realize very quickly that employees are not really interested in participating in these ERGs. They don't have the time, or maybe they just don't have the interest. It is therefore important for you to be very agile in how you think about DEI at the workplace, go back quickly to the whiteboard and try and understand how that program can be adapted to enhance the uptake within the employees. This is of course just one example, but it really tries to demonstrate what does adaptability mean in the context of DEI.

A key element of any diversity equity and inclusion related initiative or any diversity equity and inclusion related work within an organization is hinged on empathy. Empathy is the ability to relate to the feelings thoughts and experiences of others. It is the ability of an individual to really be able to understand and to also be able to get a stronger sense of where an individual is coming from, how their life experiences have shaped who they are and also develop an understanding of how they may experience the world and how that can be different from how you may experience the world. 15:42 Empathy serves as a foundation for diversity, equity and inclusion. And really focuses on building a culture of respect and curiosity amongst the employees rather than one where we are willing to buy into existing biases and therefore let them shape our behavior towards others. Accessibility is one of the key guiding principles of diversity, equity and inclusion as well. Increasing accessibility to enable individuals to fully engage in work-related activities entails identifying and removing obstacles and making modifications while prioritizing equal and equitable opportunity for all employees.

Diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, in our experience, begin often from the concept of trying to bring about gender equity. And while gender is a very key component of DEI, it's important that we don't fall into the trap of looking at gender as being equated with all DEI efforts. It is therefore important for us to ensure

that these initiatives are not just evidence-driven, not just actionable, and not just adaptable, but also accessible by those people for whom these initiatives are being made.

Reflection Questions

These are just some of the principles that we've been discussing so far, I am 100% sure that there are principles we haven't spoken about, there are principles that are more relevant to you that we haven't discussed here. Between these principles you may feel more drawn towards some of them than towards some of the others. I therefore want to leave you with a few reflection questions at the end of the second module.

Do any of the identified principles reflect in your organization's DEI policies? They may not reflect directly, they may be subtle hints, or even if not on your policy, do they reflect in your organizational culture? If yes, how do they show up and how are they reflected?

Second, what steps can your organization take to ensure that these principles are put into practice a lot more effectively than they are currently? It is possible that when we start speaking about principles or foundational pillars, the conversation can seem a little vague and it can also leave from a point of accountability. It is easy for me to sound vague and not be held accountable than for me to give you an objective list of actionables from my end as the organizational leadership. In such cases, I request you all to please take a step back and try and understand what does your organization really need to be able to put the principles into action.

While we were discussing all of these principles, were there other principles that really stood out to you?

Were there principles that were coming up for you that you didn't see in your screen?

Are there principles amongst these that you want to prioritize? Take a piece of paper, write down what these principles look like for you and also try to map out what these principles look like in action for you.

We'll meet in the next module and try and understand where this leads us towards exploring what are some of the key concepts and themes that we need to unpack if we want to be working in DEI.