Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Online Course
Module 5: Translating DEI into Action for your Organisation
Transcript

Hello and welcome to the fifth module of the online self-based course on Introduction to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. In this module, we'll look into translating DEI into action for your organization. This course is brought to you by OneFuture Collective in collaboration with ICVA, International Council for Voluntary Agencies. Before jumping into the key concepts of module 5, I want us to start off by looking at a quick recap of what we discussed in module 4.

Quick Recap
We started off by unpacking the unique relevance of DEI within the humanitarian sector. While we have understood the relevance and importance of DEI in general, in this module we try to explore whether DEI is uniquely relevant to the humanitarian sector. From there we tried to explore the question of how many organizations within the sector have been able to meaningfully engage with DEI. The statistics demonstrated that very few organizations have been able to demonstrate a meaningful engagement with DEI with several humanitarian aid workers, expressing that they do not feel comfortable reporting concerns about DEI or even that their representative leadership is not diverse enough.

We then moved on to the not obvious question of what is it that is coming in the way of organizations within the sector being able to engage with DEI? What are some of the key challenges which act as barriers for organizations to be able to engage with DEI as a whole?

Key Concepts
In this module, we are going to try and understand what does the DEI Roadmap look like within the organizational context. In relation to the DEI Roadmap, we mainly want to try and understand what are the different activities or milestones, that an organization should account for and prepare for in order to be able to engage with DEI. From there, we are going to move a step further and try and understand now that we have done these activities or we want to do these activities, what are the larger ecosystemic support structures that need to be in place for an organization to be able to engage with DEI. We are going to conclude the module by trying to understand and exploring what is continuous learning and development of DEI look like for an organization.

DEI Roadmap
Let's begin with going over the DEI roadmap. Before doing this, I do want us to start off by keeping in mind two main caveats. First, that this roadmap is only identifying some of the larger, big picture milestones that may come in the way of an organization trying to engage with DEI. That is not to say that these are not significant or important, but to say that while we are trying to resource for and plan for DEI, we should also be mindful of the smaller things that may not have made the cut when it comes to this roadmap, but maybe be necessary for us to be able to reach the milestones that you can see on your screen

The second caveat that I want us to keep in mind is also the fact that this journey which looks very neat and linear put together on your screen may not actually be how your engagement with DEI translates into action. It is possible that you have a strategy in place but you may not have gathered any particular information. It is possible that you have implemented a DEI strategy but you did not invest enough resources into monitoring and evaluating its successes. Maybe you have the goals ready but you may not have a strategy in place and you have spent time evaluating whether the goals themselves are relevant. I am here to remind you that each of these initiatives matter and that none of these initiatives is wrong. This diagram is just a tool that helps us envision what an ideal journey towards DEI can look like. And it's not by any stretch of imagination, a prescription of what this journey should continue to look like as well.

So let's get started. We begin with the information gathering phase to try and understand what is the stakeholder perception of our organization? What is it that they need? Where does diversity exist? And where do we become more and more homogenous? And what is the reason for this? What do they expect from a workplace that seems to be diverse, equitable and inclusive? What according to them is our strength? What according to them is our weakness? The key question here is how can we engage

as many stakeholders as possible, as diverse stakeholders as possible, so that we are able to inform our DEI journey in a way that is really diverse and equitable and inclusive from the start.
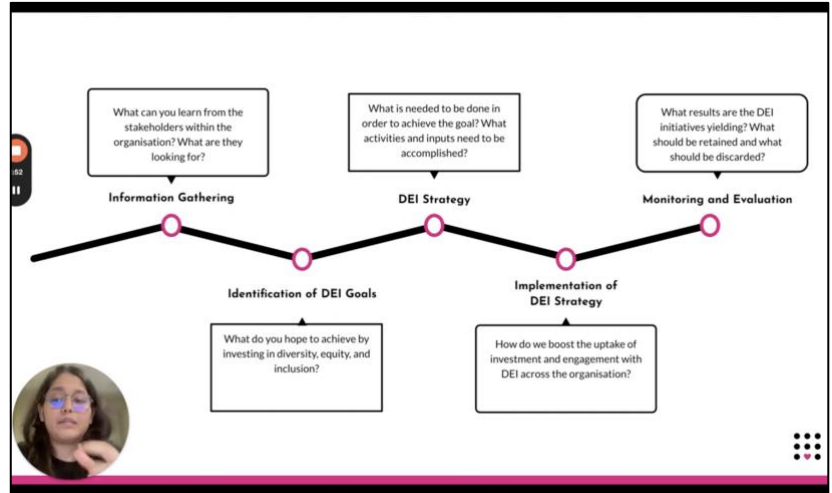
While doing this, it is important that we not only identify the most diverse stakeholders in terms of identities, but also in terms of their age, their experience, their level of involvement with the organization and multiple other such criteria. Once we have this information in place and once we have the data in place, it is now important for us to try and condense this through qualitative research, quantitative research and arrive at some of the larger DEI goals.

And when you try to identify the DEI goals, please be mindful of the fact that they can also be broken down further into short-term goals, medium-term goals and long-term goals so that you don't feel very overwhelmed to be able to achieve every single goal that is coming up within an unrealistic timeline So, the question here is, what do you hope to achieve by investing in diversity, equity and inclusion? Or alternatively, as we like to say it, what changes in your organization if DEI becomes a reality?

Once you have these larger goals in place, and this larger vision in place, it's now time to get down to business. It's now time to try and ask ourselves the question, what is needed for us to be able to really achieve those goals? And therefore, we will come up with something called the DEI Strategy.
A strategy is a way for us to be able to achieve our larger goals by breaking them down into activities, inputs, outputs and outcomes. The strategy is a way for us to be able to ensure that we're really understanding what is needed to be able to meet with a goal rather than just articulating a goal without actually talking about what is needed to be able to meet with it. The question by developing the strategy

therefore is what is needed to be done in order to be able to achieve the goal? What activity and inputs need to be accomplished for us to move one step closer to the goal we have set for ourselves.

Once we have this strategy in place, it's also important that we then start moving towards implementing this strategy. It's all well and good for us to have our goals in place, have a neatly written strategy but then nothing really comes out of it. And that is the key part in the fourth stage here.We want to really start implementing the activities, we want to start implementing the decisions we've made as part of the DEI strategy. How do we boost the uptake of investment and engagement with DEI across the organization should be the key question that we keep asking ourselves when we implement the DEI strategy.

A key core accompanying factor of implementing the DEI strategy is also monitoring and evaluation. The key mistake that a lot of organizations end up making is that they see monitoring and evaluation as a step that happens after a particular strategy has been implemented in its entirety. And while that can be an important place to be conducting the monitoring and evaluation, I also urge you to consider monitoring and evaluating the implementation strategy while it is in the stages of being implemented as well.This presents us with the opportunity to conduct regular feedback and try and alter what we can about the implementation of the strategy to the extent possible while we are trying to implement it.

Common pitfalls to avoid
That brings me to the next slide where I want us to discuss some common pitfalls that often come in the way of developing and implementing DEI strategies within an organization. Often organizations try to put in a lot of effort into developing goals or visions for the organization and this can often be prioritized over building a strategy or can be also in a situation where there is no strategy at all.
Having a goal without a strategy will not lead to any outcomes because there will not be any actionable against this particular goal and therefore there is no real way to accomplish a particular goal that we have set for ourselves.

The second common pitfall is that DEI is a really vast sea and it can seem really overwhelming to engage with it as a broad, homogenous concept. Organizations who are just starting out, or even organizations who have some experience with DEI, often make the mistake of trying to do everything at once. By itself, that can prove as a situation where the investment with DEI becomes extremely limited.

The third point, already covered in the previous slide to some extent, is not making space for enough engagement. An engagement here can take up many different forms. Are we holding space for conversation? Are we holding space for self-reflection? Are we holding space for feedback? All of these are important questions which come in the way of us being able to determine whether a particular strategic initiative is even relevant and is even achieving the goals it set out to achieve.

The fourth thing that often happens is also that measurable outputs or measurable indicators are not prioritized. It is difficult to be able to come up with these indicators but it is not impossible. It is therefore important that at each stage we are able to come up with some indicators that help us measure success.
The fifth and the sixth points here are very interrelated. Often organizations get stuck in the rut of trying to be extremely perfect in their approach and therefore get around to doing nothing at all. I invite you to remember that DEI is the relatively complex subject and there is no one size fits all approach to it either.

There is also no ideal vision of what the perfect DEI ecosystem looks like and therefore when we are aiming for perfection we are actually aiming for nothing at all. And in doing that we take away the opportunity from ourselves to be able to make mistakes to learn from them and adjust and learn as we go.

Which ties to the next point about not being able to embrace a certain sense of agility that we can associate with initiatives pertaining to DEI. Maybe halfway through an initiative where we are getting the sense that not enough people are getting engaged, not enough people are having fun doing this, not enough people are being included in the process. Do we have what it takes to take a stop right there and then change how we are approaching the process?

Finally, the seventh point is also covered in some of the previous points is we are working alone without inputs and feedback. We often try to find solutions by ourselves without really engaging with experts in the field, without working with other organizations, trying to hold space to understand what are mistakes and failures that we have faced as an organization ourselves, but also from the experience of the collective organizations of our sector. When we hold space for that, we hold space for collective learning and to be able to understand what are some common mistakes that we should try and avoid for us to be successful.

Support Ecosystem to sustain DEI

Now that we have gone over the roadmap and we have tried to identify what are some larger big picture milestones that we may have to be prepared for, let us move into looking at some of the support ecosystems that we need to be able to sustain our initiative with diversity, equity and inclusion.

The first thing that we will look at is will building motivation. Like I said, engaging with DEI can seem like a really long and never ending process. In such cases, it is important that we are investing in building the will, the collective will of the organization and also engage in motivating the organization to constantly push themselves further and try and ask themselves what more can be done for DEI.

The second thing we need to keep in mind is resourcing DEI. A lot of the times organizations believe and have acted in a way where diversity, equity and inclusion is considered to be just part of existing initiatives within existing teams and departments within the organization. And while that may make sense operationally, if we don't resource for DEI, there is a grave risk that we are running that we will never actually be able to make any progress on it. Resourcing here may not necessarily only mean financial resourcing. While that is important, we also need to be able to resource DEI from the point of view of having the relevant expertise to be able to help organizations to work with them one-on-one or collectively to build your DEI strategy. So, it is not enough for us to have goals and to have all of these strategies, but also for us to be able to understand are we able to resource DEI in the most meaningful way. Resourcing is

also important from a sustenance point of view to ensure that because DEI is such a long lasting journey, it is also important that we have the resources to be able to sustain that long lasting journey.

The third and the fourth points about building a supportive ecosystem are fairly one and the same and have a fair degree of overlap as well. It is important that we are able to embed DEI with an organizational culture, practice and communication and reinforce it at every possible opportunity. This really helps us understand that even though there is a policy within the organization which talks about non-discrimination. Without an organizational culture of transparency and honesty, it is very not likely that people are going to come up and be able to file complaints about DEI related discomfort that they may be feeling. If DEI is not embedded with in culture, within practice and also within internal as well as external communication, there is a lack of belief and trust within the organizational system. Similarly, it is important that DEI is weaved in across organizational policy, operational, as well as programmatic infrastructure. Here, it is also recommended that we start viewing DEI as a measurable indicator of organizational success as well.

While we are able to measure what is our human resource like, how many employees have joined us, how many employees have left us, that is a key, that is increasingly becoming a very key element of organizational success. We really encourage organizations to be able to engage with DEI in a way where it is able to be weaved into different programmatic operational and policy level changes to the extent that we are also able to talk about it as part of our vision and mission statement. This ensures not just accountability both internal and external, but also helps us ensure that organizations are able to be held accountable. And that that accountability can motivate us to be able to do more when it comes to DEI.

 The fifth thing that we will talk about when it comes to DEI is investing in and learning and expertise building. Like I said, DEI is a field that is not fully explored yet, it doesn't have perfect solutions, it definitely does not have one size all fit solutions. Which requires us to be able to be very comfortable to learn and to build our own expertise, sometimes even from scratch. It is important that as organizations, when we are talking about resourcing for DEI, when we are talking about building a DEI infrastructure, we are also holding space for and providing opportunities for everybody within the organization to learn about DEI and to build their own expertise. Some of the other skills that one may require within the workplace, such as some of the more technical skills, may not be something that every single person within the organization, irrespective of job profile, irrespective of where they are on the organizational ladder, may need to have. But that is not true for DEI. It is therefore important that we are holding this space for everyone to be equally engaged within the theme of study here.

While doing this, it is also important for us to be mindful of the fact that we need to be able to build an atmosphere where employees do not feel overburdened by DEI. A lot of the times I have noticed when we have worked with organizations in the past that DEI becomes a severely under prioritized area for employees and this under prioritization is of course a result of a certain level of conditioning but is also a result of them not being able to make time to engage with it meaningfully. For instance, if an organization requires that their employees complete a course on DEI, it is important that they are given the organizational time to be able to do so. It is unrealistic to expect them to continue engaging with DEI outside of work hours without it affecting or reducing their existing work responsibilities in some way. This is not to say that we need to give away work responsibilities in lieu of DEI. But definitely to say that for realistic engagement expectations to be met with, we need to be able to also understand what is required for employees to be able to engage meaningfully with DEI.

Finally, and this has been something we've been talking about for a long time now, accountability, transparency, and collaboration needs to happen not just in terms of documents and policies, but also in spirit. Are we being held accountable? Are we being transparent about our learnings, our failures, also our successes? And are we collaborating with the right individuals to be able to engage? Are we being able to achieve success when it comes to DEI within our organization? And collaboration here may not always necessarily mean that we're hiring someone external as DEI experts, but also sometimes just talking to someone who you don't think holds a leadership position so to say but may have a very, very different opinion and a very valuable one on how DEI should be engaged with within an organization.

Sustaining DEI

We'll now move on to talking about what it takes to really sustain diversity, equity, and inclusion. Like I said, this long-term process, something that takes place over weeks, over months, over years even.
In that case, what are some of the things that we should do? We should probably start off by integrating it with organizational vision, mission, and strategy. The reason I say this is because it holds us accountable to plan for it and initiate and divert resources towards it as necessary rather than as an afterthought.

Second, we should try and identify measurable goals and introduce the practice of transparent reporting as part of our annual or quarterly reporting whaterver the standard is within your organization. This can also involve a very small change to your annual report by adding a segment on what diversity, equity and inclusion looks like within your team.
It's also important, like I have said, to be able to collaborate with different stakeholders at different points in time. And finally, it is important for us to record incremental success. Some successes with DEI specifically may be very, very small, may be very limited, but it's still important that we record them. We learn from them. And the same applies to failures as well.

Your DEI Canvas

That's all from us in terms of what it takes to be able to translate your DEI commitments into action. And now I want to leave you with a very, very quick tool, your DEI Canvas. You don't have to use this, but you are very, very welcome to print out a copy of this. You will have a resource link to this. Feel free to take a copy of it and try to write down whatever comes up for you.
Over here, it tries to give you some space to highlight some of the key insights that you have reached by gathering information from different stakeholders. From that we are trying to understand what are your goals, what are your priorities, and what are your strengths, your weaknesses, when it comes to practising DEI within your organization.
The reason goals and priorities are different is because you may have many different goals, but like I said, we have to be realistic about the resource scarcity that we are working within.
In that context, what are your priorities and what are goals you definitely want to meet and at the earliest possible? It is also possible that our priorities are informed by what is doable for

me. It is much easier for me, may not be much easier, but it is definitely less influenced by the larger buy-in for me if I want to pass a policy pertaining to DEI. That can be my immediate priority within the next 6 months I want to have this policy in my organization. However, if your priority, which is also a very realistic priority, is to ensure that everybody in the organization has an attitudinal and behavioral shift when it comes to DEI, that can take much longer than just having more one or two trainings in a month.

So, what are your goals, what are your priorities, when do you want to achieve them by, what are your strengths and what are your weaknesses. We are now moving into the little bit of a meat of the canvas, we are trying to understand now that you have your activities in place you have a priorities in place, what do you need to do.

And here I really request you to not hold yourself back. Try and go as bold as you can, as creative as you can, as fun as you can make it. Try and identify the different activities that you can do in order to achieve these priorities.

Once you have this huge barrage of activities, I imagine now you want to move into the logical step of trying and restricting yourself to the most useful activities, to the activities that are most doable in the context of your organization as well.
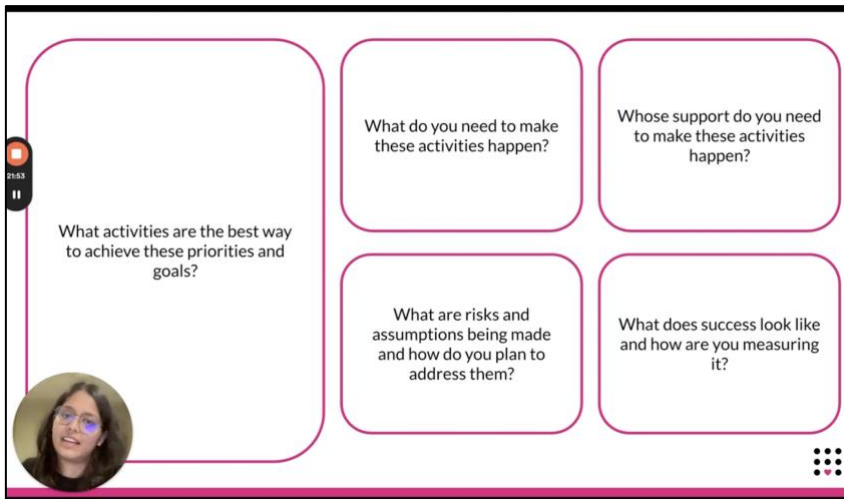
Once you have his long list and this short list of activities, I want us to move on to try and understand what do we need to make these activities happen. Do we need money? Do we need external expertise? Do we need the employees to even start caring about DEI? Do we need senior leadership to talk about it?What do we need to make this happen and whose support do you need to make this happen? Do you have internal ambassadors that you can probably use to be able to push this agenda out there and get more people engaged? So whose support do you need and what resources do you need to make these activities happen?

A key thing that we also need to account for right off the bat is what are some of the risks and assumptions that are being made and how do we plan to address them in the long run. Some of these risks may be something that we can manage. Some of these risks may be some things that we cannot manage. But are we cognizant of them? Do we have some sort of a plan? Do we at least have a way to identify when a risk or an assumption is falling apart so that we can go ahead take a step back and try and restrategize. Finally, what does success look like? How are you measuring it? And what are you learning from this particular success measurement?

Once more, just a quick overview of what the canvas looks like. We start here. We start from gathering, goals, priorities, strengths and weaknesses. We go over what are the activities, what you need the activities, what you need the activities for, what you need to make the activities a success, some risks, some assumptions. What does success look like? What does learning look like?
Try and take a printout of this. Try and really fill this out. Go ahead and work with your colleagues. Try and involve as many people as you think are relevant to this conversation and let's see what comes out of it.
I hope you have a good time trying to fill out this DEI canvas for yourselves and I also hope that you've had a great time throughout this entire module as we are able to try and think of different ways by which we can operationalize and put into action our DEI commitments.

With this, we also come to the end of this self-paced course and I genuinely believe and hope that you are able to. With this, we've come to the end of Module 5 and also, fortunately, we are, unfortunately, to the end of the self-paced course. I really do hope that this has been a learning journey for you and a journey of reflection and motivation for you to be able to take Diversity, Equity and Inclusion back to your teams and to your organisations.
Thank you.

Closing

With this we come to the end of the online self based course on introduction to diversity equity and inclusion. This course is brought to you by one future collective in collaboration with ICBA, the international council of voluntary agencies. We hope that this course has served as an opportunity for you to gather new learnings, reflect on your role in DEI both personally, as well as organizationally, while also providing you with some insight on what you need to get the best for the future and are very excited to know more about how you engage with DEI and what that has changed for you as