



ENHANCING INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

Diversity at workplaces in 10 European countries



MANGFOLD I ARBEIDSLIVET

Diversity at Work, Norway
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European workplaces experience major transformations

- Economical and political changes in Europe
- Vast increase in cultural diversity
- The expansion of the EU
- Labour shortages in many countries
- Increased mobility both within EU and outside
- Refugees and asylum seekers
- Workplaces as microcosmos of a culturally diverse society
- A challenge: *To tailor an European project who identify good practices and tools for a new mind-set and repertoire of skills in order to interact with diverse cultural groups at the workplace* (The European Intercultural Workplace Project (2004 IE/04//C/F/TH-81200))



Coordinator:

Ireland: Dublin City University

Partners:

Bulgaria: The European Centre for Education and Training, (ECET)

Finland: The Adult Education College of Västra Nylands

Germany: Institute for Project Support and Competencies Development

Greece: Hellenic Regional Development Center (HRDC)

Italy: CONFORM - Consorzio Formazione Manageriale Collina Liguorini

Norway: Mangfold i Arbeidslivet – MiA (*Diversity at Work*)

Poland: The Academy of Humanities and Economics in Lodz

Sweden: University of Gothenburg

UK: University of Westminster

Products

- National reports from 10 European countries with case studies in 6-8 companies
- DVD with 13 scenarios
- CD-rom with reports and material
- Sector specific reports from Education, Health and Care and SME (private sector)
- Website www.EIWorkplace.net

QUALITATIVE METHODS FOR CAPTURING PARTICIPANTS VIEWS AND OPINIONS IN FOCUS GROUPS

(The picture is from focus group discussions with Pakistani women)



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Situation Analysis

- The context of Cultural Diversity in each of the 10 European countries
- Government response
- Civic society response
- Business community response
- Academic community response
- Media response
- Cultural Diversity in the Private Sector, in the Public sector and in Education

The workplaces in Norway

- The case studies have been implemented at the following workplaces:
- School (Etterstad upper secondary school /vocational training)
- School (Linderud primary school and lower secondary school)
- Municipal Bus Transport Company of Oslo
- Health Care (Nursing home in Oslo)
- The Construction Workers Union in Oslo
- Wine and liquor Workers Union in Oslo
- University College of Oslo (HIO)
- NRK Norwegian National Broadcasting



Methodology

- A common questionnaire was developed that was considered to be acceptable for all work places in the different countries.
- The questionnaire was either filled out in cooperation with the informants or given to the informants to complete and return to the researcher.
- Issues in the questionnaire were related to language, communication styles, integration with people from other cultural backgrounds, as well as attitudes towards: time-keeping, colleagues with different religious beliefs and traditions, provision of suitable food during breaks, implementation of management hierarchies, and gender related issues at the workplace.
- Qualitative interviews were followed up by interviews with informants and focus groups.
- The Focus group interviews dealt with the key questions in the study to get more deep information as the individual interviews.
- The Case studies had a description of the work place and area of work, good practices and conclusions and recommendations.



Cultural codes and practices

Food Does the canteen offer Halal food, vegetarian food etc?

Any interest for diversity in food selection at the work place?

Clothing- what about veil/turban at work?

Religion- religious symbols?

SOME OBSERVATIONS

Eating alone and not joining co-workers

- Described as Norwegian attitudes at the workplace
- little contact with ethnic minority co-workers
- Little contact with ethnic minorities outside workplace

Best practices

- Bilingual education- a model in the primary school system in the late seventies
- The celebration of United Nations day with entertainment and international food

Need to change the prevailing pattern

- Display interest to learn about traditions and cultures

Religious dress

- Negative attitudes against wearing veil as clothing at the workplace
- Positive and welcoming attitudes to wearing veil as clothing

Agents of change?

- The management in the focus groups did not see any need for changing attitudes towards minority groups at the work place
- Some work places welcomed a change and made plans for further development

Reliability and validity

- The methodology chosen in this study produced relevant qualitative data.
- The questionnaires were developed to reveal the informants opinions of the company`s or organisation`s diversity policy and the context in which it was operating.
- The data are valid for the workplaces in the study and provide interesting and useful insights from the worker`s perspective as well as the manager`s perspective on the practices related to cultural diversity at the workplace.
- The trends described in the reports can not be generalised to other workplaces.
- However, one can trace analytical findings of importance to the understanding of cultural diversity at similar workplaces in Europe.

Recommendations and dissemination of the project's products

- The project aimed to identify good practices and tools for a new mind-set and repertoire of skills in order to interact with diverse cultural groups at the workplace.
- The testing of the project's products has evoked interest in Norway in the Educational sector for vocational training, nursing homes, and at several workplaces.
- There has been an interest to include scenarios from the DVD in new Leonardo da Vinci projects for vocational training that MiA is involved in at present; *Tools for Diversity*, T for D (2006-2008), and *Care for Senior Ethnic Minorities* (2007-2009).
- **Several partners in different countries use the DVD in training and lectures. Further initiatives will be taken to impact on intercultural communication and diversity at European work places through targeted training and courses. Local plans exist in all the 10 countries.**
- **In Norway the authorities and the private sector have shown interest.**
- **The products will be sold, distributed and used within the framework of the "Diversity mirror" and leadership training at work places.**