

EMEA DIVERSITY NEWS 36

PUBLIC EDITION



Summer 2010
Editorial

Dear Readers,

In my morning commute, I take great pleasure in the colourful array of flags from around the world displayed in windows, hanging from balconies and even draped across people in the street. The World Cup in many ways embodies successful Diversity & Inclusion. The diversity of teams, many of which play alongside their opponents in local leagues, spans across all continents and draws support from citizens of other nations. Team identity and national identity blend together for this one month of football, once every four years. The inclusion of the variety of teams at the World Cup is also notable, ranging from the world's greatest, to the underdogs and even the politically controversial. And just like life, team skills with the slightest stroke of luck can bring an unexpected victor. As the games continue, it is almost as if the world stands together on the stadiums to celebrate and cheer D&I, and when we return to normal life, the borders will rise again.

In some other areas, national divides are becoming unusually fuzzy. A recent study in France revealed that 2/3 of the French would like to “adopt” French-speaking Belgium (Wallonia) into their borders. Oddly, has yet to be asked if they would like to be a part of France. The relatively recently created nation of Belgium with an initially imported king and a religiously founded *raison d'être* of not wanting to be with the protestant Netherlands, the bilingual country keeps on struggling with its integration – despite some of the major EU institutions being located there. And Belgium also did not make to the football World Cup. Perhaps the Diversity Charter that exists in the Brussels Capital Region can serve as an impetus for future unification.

In this month's Corporate edition, explore how France is supporting large families, how mentoring programmes are becoming more innovative, and how Italy is balancing home responsibilities. Also, discuss our People Management focus on stress at work, find out which organisation just promoted three women to top management, and much more.

Enjoy reading and until time,

Perry Hwang

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DIVERSITY DIMENSIONS

European Summit agrees on 2020 strategy

EU Heads of State and government leaders met on 17 June on the occasion of the Spring European Council in Brussels. Leaders approved the sustainable growth economic strategy "Europe 2020", which will promote a series of reforms aimed at competitiveness and employment, placing research and development at the centre of economic initiatives for the next decade. According to the conclusions of the meeting, this strategy will form a framework for the Union to mobilise all its instruments and policies, and for member states to act with greater coordination, with the objectives of reaching a 75% employment rate for men and women, lifting at least 20 million people out of poverty, reducing school drop-out rates below 10%, and increasing participation in tertiary education above 40%. According to the Spanish government, all the reforms that have been approved are "a fundamental step" towards the "second great objective" that the Spanish Presidency of the EU had set itself, an economically stronger and more stable Union, after experiencing an unprecedented financial crisis.

France and Germany: Supporting Disadvantaged Youth

With programmes such as 'Espoir Banlieues' and 'Chance'², France and Germany are concretely fighting inequality for disadvantaged youth. The 2010-revised French programme 'Espoir Banlieues' (transl. 'Hope Suburbs') began in 2008 and supports the employment and employability of young people from "les banlieues", the low-income districts with a high percentage of non-integrated minorities. Since the launch of the programme by the French Ministry of Economy, Industry and Employment, 38 CEOs, mostly from large public companies, have committed to employ 22,000 young people from disadvantaged areas as part of internships or training contracts. In addition, the state along with the signatories have agreed to support 45,000 young people under 26 with a "contrat d'autonomie", a new form of contract for professional inclusion, which provides a half year of government support measures for vocational integration (active job search, training, coaching, etc...). At the end of this period, this group would be placed in sustainable employment with their apprenticeship skills and qualifications.

Germany's support for disadvantaged youth comes in the form of education. With the new programme 'Chance'², pupils in the 9th and 10th class with migrational and non-academic backgrounds will be concretely supported to reach their Bachelor's degrees. The University of Duisburg-Essen (UDE) will develop the new program over a period of seven years with the donation of €2.3 million from the Mercator Foundation. With a goal of increasing the graduation numbers of disadvantaged youth, the organisation hopes to activate hidden potential. The long-term goal is to abolish the existing inequality in education between those with and without migration

backgrounds. In the 4 years before A-levels, the four focus areas are: writing and speaking, field of study, trial-time at Universities and mentoring. In addition, the pupils will receive a educational stipend for expenses such as books and materials. If the participants chose to continue their studies at UDE, they will enter the second phase of the programme and will continue to be supported practically and financially until they complete their degree. During the two phases, the participants will have continual support by the same educational aides. In addition, the participants' parents and schools will be invited to various informational events. By this coming winter semester, a group of 30 pupils and 20 first semester university students will begin the programme and will be supported until their graduations.

ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGIES

Gender Mentoring Expands Across Organisations

AXA Winterthur, with the support of European Diversity Research & Consulting, has established a Gender Mentoring programme to bring their career motivated women into higher ranks. With the participation of the entire board, 77 women applied for the programme and 43 were matched with higher-level Mentors in the first year. The symbiotic relationship provides the opportunity for each pair to learn from each other through exchanging experiences, asking specific questions about career management while receiving personalised tips for success, and networking in different business areas and levels. With the full support of top leadership, the interest of high potential women and a successful first round, AXA Winterthur is propelling change towards gender equality.

Organisations in France are also beginning to work together to reach gender equality through a new programme from BoardWomen Partners (BWP). This programme utilises the best of French business leaders, including a AXA Group Head, to increase the percentage of women on the executive levels and boards of large companies in France. For the first time, the CEOs and presidents of boards of very large companies in France who believe that gender diversity will contribute to better governance are working together towards a common goal.

Based off the 'FTSE 100 Cross-Company Mentoring Programme' created by Peninah Thomson, the programme develops a pool of pre-nominated women through direct access to CEOs and Chairmen of the boards. The pairs consist of a mentor, who is a president of a participating company, and a Mentee, the member of another company participating in the program. Each Mentor nominates one or more high-level women to be matched with another mentor. To date, the programme has brought together 20 presidents and 20 Mentees.

Supporting Large Families in France

French families and families from EU countries legally residing in France with at least three children under 18 years old can benefit from a card offering a range of discounts. The card, called a 'Carte Familles Nombreuses', includes discounts for national museums, supermarkets, shops and fun parks. Under the scheme, each member of the family is provided with their own card upon application, which includes a management fee of €19 for all cards issued to the family.

When the card was created in 1921, it gave cardholders discounts on journeys using the French national railways. Families with six children or more benefit from a 75% reduction, those with five children from a 50% reduction, those with four children from a 40% reduction and those with three children from a 30% reduction. Parents who have or have raised five children at the same time benefit from a 30 % reduction on second class tickets.

The card was opened up for commercial partners to give discounts in 2006, with 22 partners joining the scheme that year. By January 2010, there were 93 partners. In May 2007, the French Health Ministry reported that over three million people held the card out of a maximum possible of seven million people. Visit www.voyages-sncf.com to receive an application kit.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Italy: Mandatory Paternity Leave

On June 2nd, the Italian House of Deputies began debating a new bill requiring a mandatory four-day paternity leave for all new fathers. If the bill is approved, Italian fathers will be obligated to take four days off immediately after the birth of their new child. The four-day paternity leave would be fully paid by the employing companies or by the Italian social security system for self-employed fathers. Although some companies have already implemented a mandatory paternity leave, such as Nestlé and Intesa San Paolo, the current percentage of fathers taking this time off to support their families is less than 4%. The four days may only hold a symbolic value, but they definitely represent a first step towards better balance in Italian familial responsibilities, especially regarding child care, which is still perceived as only "mothers' responsibility", commented Anna Mazzolari, European Diversity's Italian project associate. According to Barbara Saltamartini, signatory of the PDL party's proposal, "The real goal is to pass from equal opportunities to equal responsibility. We shouldn't just think of protecting women, instead we should think of a system that allows families to reorganize themselves." The regulations on compulsory paternity leave across Europe vary with as much as 30 days leave for fathers in Sweden, where the days can be split into 4 periods over one year, and 11 days in France. The majority of countries offer a smaller number of days, with Spain requiring 4 days plus an optional 30 days, and 3 days for the UK, Germany, Portugal and Spain.

Spain: Protecting the Use of Headscarves in Classrooms

The Spanish government will create a law on Religious Liberty to establish the use of the Islamic headscarf in public spaces, including in educational facilities. The Minister of Justice, Francisco Camaño, stated that the new legislation “must be clear” with respect to the use of religious symbols in public spaces. Even though the content of the new law is still to be determined, the Minister has stated that “all veils are not equal”, and that just as it is regarded as “common sense” to carry a cross from the first communion in all classes except physical education, the type of activity in question will determine whether a hijab can be worn. The Minister has stated that the new legislation will specify which religious accessories can be worn by citizens and in which public spaces, but their articles must be “compatible with and according to the surroundings”. Therefore, the specific regulations of different facilities -such as schools, hospitals, or military centres- will be the ones to determine which religious elements can be worn or not and in which circumstances. “It is interesting to see that some countries are supporting religious diversity and inclusion while others are trying to eliminate or ban religious clothing or symbols,” comments Diversity expert Michael Stuber, “The emergence of more initiatives, pull-backs and progress will increase over next five to ten years until eventually a consistent European approach will be found”.

BUSINESS CASE

The Business Case for Global Gender Balance

According to a new report from the European Commission, the economy would benefit by having full representation of both men and women in top positions. The report, “More women in senior positions – key to economic stability and growth,” shows that women continue to be severely under-represented in economic decision-making. In many European countries men outnumber women by at least two to one in the top two tiers of the civil service. Moreover, there appears to be a tendency for women to be given senior positions in ministries with “soft” portfolios rather than those with key economic functions. The difference is much lower in the smaller service of the European Parliament where women hold 41% of the most senior positions. However, the gender balance in national governments is improving steadily with the share of women in EU governments up from 16% in 1994/5 (EU-15) to 26% in 2009 (EU-27).

Evidence of the importance of involving women in the economy comes from the study “Women & Mobile: A Global Opportunity”. On a global average, a woman is still 21% less likely to own a mobile phone than a man. This figure increases to 23% if she lives in Africa and 24% if she lives in the Middle East. There is considerable evidence that greater mobile phone penetration rates are associated with faster economic growth, job creation and profitable businesses. A recent study by Ovum (2006) showed that the mobile industry had already created 3.6 million jobs (directly and indirectly in India and was expected to add a million more jobs annually). Additionally, a survey in

South Africa and Egypt found that 62% of businesses in South Africa and 59% in Egypt attributed increased profits to mobile phones (Vodafone, 2005).

Women business owners in particular perceive the phone as an essential productivity tool, with more than half saying they have used a mobile phone to earn additional income. These statistics indicate a strong link in increases in mobile phone penetration and faster economic and business development. However, “the business case for Gender Diversity is crystal clear for most senior leaders,” reports Diversity consultant Michael Stuber from his talks, presentations and workshops with top managers. “The real challenge is to get the male middle ranks beyond their emotional reservations based on stereotypical perceptions of women”. This assessment is backed by many surveys of female talent, that shows prevalent biases that are often difficult to address.

People Management Focus: Stress at Work

22% of workers from the EU 27 are affected by stress, the second most frequently reported work-related health problem. Studies suggest that stress is a factor in between 50% and 60% of all lost working days, which represents a huge cost in terms of both human distress and impaired economic performance. 79% of European managers are concerned by work-related stress, but less than a third of companies have set procedures to deal with it.

In addition, findings published by AXA late last year found that almost 25 million Brits were suffering from financial anxiety, and 1.4 million were taking time off as a result. Money worries continue to be the biggest cause of stress and depression in the UK with stress-related illness costing £3.7 billion a year in lost productivity and healthcare costs. The results of this data, paired results from a recent UK study by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), shows that being aware of the stressors and needs of your employee base can make a huge difference on productivity.

According to the study *‘Managing Tomorrow’s People’*, flexible working arrangements were rated the most important benefit by 47% of those surveyed, above performance related bonuses, which came second (19%). Flexible working was given fairly equal priority by men and women, with 41% and 54% respectively ranking this benefit as the most valuable. Moreover, a better work-life balance was seen as more achievable in the long term by 42% respondents than vastly increased responsibility and salary (39%). European Diversity Project Manager Perry Hwang commented, “This shows a monumental shift in family balance and occupational values as younger generations are establishing themselves in the workplace. All research indicates that the era of the traditional 9-5 job for the male breadwinner is gradually coming to an end.”

MEDIA & BITS

Ireland: Jump in Number of Voting Migrants

Following a campaign which encouraged more immigrants to register and vote by the Africa Centre and the New Communities Partnership, this year showed a 44 percent increase in the number of immigrants who voted compared to last year's local elections. The campaign aimed to encourage 10,000 more immigrants in 10 local authority areas to get involved in the June elections. An additional 15,681 immigrants registered and voted in those 10 areas.

While Irish citizens may vote in all elections and referendums, non-EU citizens may only vote in local elections. Eric Yao, of the Africa Centre, said there had been an increase in immigrant candidates standing for election and "although we didn't see a lot of immigrant candidates winning the election, we think this is a first step in the right direction". Minister of State for Integration Mary White said it was "vital" that immigrants be encouraged to participate to the greatest extent possible in the political system. "People from migrant backgrounds bring a new perspective, experience and vision to local and national politics," she said.

Female Leadership: African Development Bank

Three women have been selected to fill senior-level positions at the African Development Bank, AfDB president Donald Kaberuka announced last month. Cecilia Akintomide will serve as the first-ever female Secretary-General of the bank, while Hela Cheikhrouhou will head the New Energy, Environment and Climate Change department. Gemina Archer-Davies will direct the Corporate Human Resources Management branch. "I am delighted to make these appointments to key senior positions and to increase the number of women at senior levels," Kaberuka said. Women account for 45% of AfDB staff but are found in less than 20% of top-level positions. "All three appointments are well merited," he added. "I very much hope that they will be role models for the many younger staff who I know have great potential."

Moroccan MP Saloua Kerkri-Belkeziz lauded the appointments as "a major step forward for Africa", and she hopes they will be an inspiration for Morocco to appoint more women into economics and finance management positions. Bochra Belhaj Hmida, former president of the Tunisian Association of Democratic Women, had mixed feelings about the appointments. "Of course this is a positive step towards gender equality and the encouragement of women to access decision-making positions," she said. But appointing women to high-level jobs should not be a newsworthy event, Belhaj Hmida said. "Stressing that appointments are 'due' is nothing but a proof that there is a continuous need to provide justification in order for women to have their rights – and that is not normal," she added.

NEWS ABOUT US

European Institute for Managing Diversity: Free Checklist

The European Institute for Managing Diversity (EIMD) is about to release its newest tool: 'How to Select a Diversity Consultant', a checklist for corporate and organisational practitioners. This tool aims to support companies in finding the best Diversity vendor for their specific situation. With tips on defining a project, identifying partners, requesting and evaluating proposals, this European D&I tool will ensure that you find a service provider to best provide your company's specific needs – and apply a meritocratic process in your search and selection of a Diversity vendor. For more information on the EIMD or for further information on the checklist, contact Anna Mazzolari at research@europeandiversity.com.

The 13th European Dance Festival

Every year, the Cyprus Ministry of Education, the Rialto Theatre in Limassol and the embassies of the member-states of the European Union co-organise a European Dance Festival. Of the three candidates proposed by the German Goethe Institut, the DIN A13 Tanzcompany, featured in European Diversity's "Dance with Diversity" DVD in 2008, was selected to represent Germany in the competition. The Cologne-based dance company in cooperation with the Ghanaian Dance Factory Accra is one of the few dance companies worldwide whose members consist of both abled and disabled dancers. The Cyprian Ministry and the jury accepted the Goethe Institut's proposal as "an opportunity to open the European Dance Festival not only to cultural and aesthetic diversity, but also to allow diversity in the realm of contemporary dancing itself - diversity that breaks open common aesthetic paradigms and gives space to dancers with different physical abilities".

IMPRINT

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