

EMEA DIVERSITY NEWS 51 EDITORIAL

by Michael Stuber, Owner Manager



“IT IS IN YOUR HANDS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE” (NELSON MANDELA)

The Republic of South Africa was the first country to ban discrimination based on all the core dimensions of Diversity, gender, race, age, disability, religion and sexual orientation, not just in the Civil Code but in their Constitution. This is one of the many enduring elements supporting diversity, respect and inclusion which the grand personality and far-sightedness of Nelson Mandela has created for his country in the course of his exceptional life. His autobiography ‘The Long Walk to Freedom’ contains impressive descriptions of decades of apartheid and how he survived cruelty. He described his personal journey as if it naturally led to his spirit of reconciliation – instead of revenge – which facilitated South Africa to recreate its identity under the slogan ‘Proudly South African’. This pride was extremely unlikely to include all South Africans as apartheid had established a fiercely segregated society for decades.

Having worked in South Africa and with South Africans on a large global D&I programme, I had the opportunity and pleasure to discover in depth the multiple layers on which Nelson Mandela’s leadership has created understanding and respect for differences including gender, the many local tribal groups, international ethnic groups and sexual minorities. It has been the consistency if not rigorousness that has made much of the difference in his acts. And this is where today’s and tomorrow’s politicians should learn from him to remove the many disadvantages, discriminations and segregations that continue to exist – or are even newly created! – in too many countries, even in developed regions. Their ambitions to create strong and prosperous nations could be achieved more effectively and to a greater extent if they were able to unity people under an umbrella of diversity rather than exclude many groups for ideological reasons.

And of course we Diversity practitioners can learn from the many ways in which Nelson Mandela did things differently and even in revolutionary ways to bring formerly segregated people together and let them create an understanding for each others perspectives, needs and approaches. Please, let his spirit guide you when reading the latest EMEA DiversityNews. Then go celebrate D&I – it is what the creator of the rainbow nations would have wanted you to do.

Michael Stuber

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DIVERSITY DIMENSIONS

Alarming EU-Survey uncovers widespread Anti-Semitism in Europe

Almost 70 years after the liberation from the inhuman Nazi dictatorship, anti-Semitic beliefs and acts should have been eliminated from European societies as demons of darkest history. Unfortunately this turns out to be an all too optimistic wish. For the first time in EU history a cross-national survey of 5,850 Jews from eight countries was conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA). The resulting report reveals ongoing insults, discrimination and physical violence against Jews. The findings are hoped to serve as an impetus for European and national decision makers to strive for a peaceful and anxiety-free environment for Jewish communities.

It should come as a surprise that only 13 of the 28 EU member states actually collect data on anti-Semitic crimes; and the scope and quality of the data differs a lot. Therefore an online survey among the Jewish population in Belgium, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Sweden and the UK was the only way to analyse living conditions of Jewish communities in a comparable way. According to the FRA roughly 90% of all European Jews live in these 8 countries. Even if the survey is not representative for the whole Jewish population, the bare figures are alarming: Two thirds of respondents consider anti-Semitism a fairly big or very big problem in their respective society; 76% of all respondents think that anti-Semitism has worsened over the past five years in their home countries. Similar results were found for the online sphere.

One in five respondents (21%) had experienced at least one anti-Semitic incident, either verbal and/or physical attacks (4%), during the year before the survey. These experiences create a constant fear of becoming a victim of anti-Semitic discrimination: Almost 50% of the respondents are afraid of insults or harassments; one third lives in fear of physical attacks because they are Jews. However, huge differences occur between the eight countries. While a large majority of French and Belgian Jews worries considerably to become a victim of anti-Semitic incidents, Italian, Swedish and British Jews exhibit lower levels of fear. The German-Jewish community is slightly above the European average.

The FRA developed a couple of recommendations for politics and society: First of all an enhanced cooperation and coordination of all governmental and civil partners is necessary. A systematic European database on hate crimes needs to be established and victims of discrimination should be encouraged to report their experiences. Finally new ways against online harassment need to be elaborated. But public institutions are not the only key players against anti-Semitism, companies should consider religious diversity more often and more concretely. The FRA report found that most anti-Semitic incidents take place at the workplace (11% of all working respondents) or during the application process (10% of respondents who have been looking for work). “Too many people believe in the proclaimed secular reality”, Diversity expert Michael Stuber points out, “Most Western societies are not aware of the implicit Christian norms and assumptions and how these can easily

create subtle or concrete forms of bias against, e.g., Jews or Muslims”. Religious aspects should therefore be included in the D&I agenda, especially regarding corporate culture, he adds.

The marginalized Billion – World Report on Disability includes the workplace

Worldwide about 1 billion people are affected by some type of disability, according to estimations of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the World Bank. The two international organisations released a 350-page report on living conditions of disabled people worldwide. The economic and societal situation for those 15% of the total population could be far better: WHO and World Bank state that people with a disability are among the most marginalized groups in the world, having poorer state of health, lower education achievements, less economic participation and higher rates of poverty than people without disabilities. As a consequence, disabilities disproportionately affect the most vulnerable parts of a population: the poor and less educated people.

Economic discrimination starts during childhood and in education. Many countries do not achieve equal opportunities for children with a disability at school or in universities. The report finds education completion gaps “across all age groups in all settings, with the pattern more pronounced in poorer countries”. The lack of education leads to higher probabilities of unemployment. Handicapped people are more likely to suffer from poverty than non-disabled people. Due to extra costs such as medical care, assistive devices or personal support, people with disabilities are generally poorer than non-disabled people with similar incomes. Especially in less developed countries with weaker health and welfare systems, disabled people often suffer from insufficient food, poor housing, and lack of access to safe water and sanitation.

Integration in the workplace is not only desirable for the disabled, it is also essential for companies. This publication has repeatedly reported about the waste of economic potential created by the exclusion of employees or customers with a disability. Fortunately, some companies are actively tapping into this potential and a few small, middle-sized and large businesses have just been awarded with an Inclusion Award for being outstanding practitioners of inclusion. The global automotive producer Volkswagen, for example, has spent more than one million Euro to offer 1,000 workplaces in line with special demands. “Companies must learn not to oversee the abilities of people with a disability”, Michael Stuber, owner manager of European Diversity Research & Consulting says. “The sometimes required reasonable accommodation is deliberately called reasonable”, he adds. The World Report on Disability also argues that rehabilitation maximizes functioning, but also says that only 26–55% of people with a disability receive the medical rehabilitation they need.

This is one of the facts confirming that many societies, governments or employers do not meet their responsibility to improve the participation of handicapped persons. The WHO and World Bank conclude: “People are disabled by society, not just by their bodies.”

ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGIES

The Art of Networking: First Event of EMEA Intel Female Executives

Exchanging experiences and useful tips within the workforce is one efficient way to advance and encourage corporate and personal development. The globally operating Intel Corporation tried to strengthen domestic ties by convening the members of their EMEA Intel Senior Female Network for a networking and leadership event in Paris last month. The network, established in late 2012, was set up to enable female leaders to make personal progress and increase collaboration and networking in the EMEA region.

The 33 women of the network are all successful in their own careers and comprise a mix of directors, factory and business leaders, among them currently four female vice presidents in the EMEA region. After the members had some virtual meetings they decided to come together in Paris and increase their interaction with the event titled “Unleashing the power of our leadership presence and network in EMEA”. According to the participants this unique meeting looked and felt different to standard conferences, it was not only an event to connect and network, it also focused on building key capabilities and business opportunities using the wider skill set people have beyond their jobs.

The first day started with personal stories as ice breakers. The opening session was chaperoned by a general manager and included a panel with corporate vice presidents from the EMEA region. External speakers delivered speeches about relevant aspects of leadership, mentorship and the future of Intel business. The second day contained concrete development work and discussions about the vision of the network and its mission as a corporate group. Future tasks and a general outlook need to be determined: Should the participants make it more inclusive and how can the numerous female Intel employees in the EMEA region profit by the network?

Those questions are not ultimately answered yet and will definitely be part of future exchanges. For the Paris event the 25 participants draw positive conclusions. Each member described personal key learnings and actions to share with their managers and teams. They strengthened their leadership capabilities by exploring their presence, vision and influence. The event has energised and encouraged their commitment to leadership and the personal advancement of women at Intel.

Fighting the Brain Drain: How African Companies manage their Talents

While Western countries like the U.S. and many EU member states are still struggling with the recent recession, the so-called emerging countries are catching up economically. In addition to the BRICS countries, African countries show high growth rates and both technical and human resources are required to expand business. In this context, the auditing firm PriceWaterhouseCoopers has just published the detailed 3rd edition of their “African Business Agenda”. PwC interviewed 301 CEOs in 19 African countries about their personal economic perceptions, their business and related

challenges. One chapter of the survey is dedicated to African talent management, an important issue for 84% of the interviewed CEOs. More so, as African countries do not want to become another international workbench but rather see their future as equal partners and a place for homemade innovations and developments. Hence a number of African companies invest heavily in their talents, e.g. through training of their future managers.

Skill shortages or brain drain can be severe barriers to economic development, according to many African CEOs. To respond to these trends companies look at a variety of tools. First and foremost, their own talent pools and schools are established and nurtured, like for instance a Senegalese campus by mobile telecom operator Orange or the Dangote Academy set up by the Nigeria-based industrial conglomerate Dangote Group. Both institutions focus on training managers in operations across the continent and develop their technical and vocational skills. Attracting African expatriates and reversing the brain drain is a second promising approach for many companies. They actively engage in searching those talents to offer them bright perspectives, for they appreciate their acquaintance with international standards combined with knowledge of the local African cultures. “You can’t put a price tag on that value”, Anita Omoile, CEO of the Nigerian Deep Blue Energy Services, says. She also expects the former expats to rise the bar for everyone and the Rwanda Development Board asks freshly recruited expats to work as mentors and coaches for at least two years. Hence international experience is leveraged by African talent managers.

The fierce competition for the best talents also led to a focus on talent retention. The corporate culture needs to work as an incentive to stay with the company for a longer period. A competitive salary is only one aspect among many including “career plans and a participative social climate”, as a PwC executive states. The diversification of rewards and benefits matters a lot to the new generation, according to Pascal Lesoinne, managing director of Tanzania Portland Cement Company, they differ “from the older employees who think that one size fits all for rewards, as in everyone should be rewarded the same.” African CEOs also try to include lower management ranks in high level decision making. Some initiatives foster soft skills or motivate employees to assume responsibility in their own projects.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Women Wanted: Solar Energy Sector in Middle East campaigns for female engineers

Combining the fight against climate change with the advancement of female participation, the new initiative “Women in Solar” sounds like a masterpiece in this respect. The initiative is aimed at engaging more women into roles within engineering and encourages female engineers to take up a career in the renewable energy sector. And to make the programme even more outstanding, it

happens in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, the region of unlimited oil wealth and rather poor women's rights.

The Middle East Solar Power Association has formed the programme to grow the pool of skilled talents competing for jobs. Moreover, innovations and creativity are stimulated by allowing new perspectives within the energy sector, another field which has mainly been dominated by men. In order to include more women a mentoring programme was initiated, the Association also organises events with female role-models, who already have climbed the solar power career ladder. Dalya Al Muthanna, a member of the advisory board and a director at GE Power & Water in the Middle East, North Africa and Turkey explains the main thought behind the initiatives: "Diversity has always been a tool to foster innovation, to challenge ideas." So far, however, only 48 women work with 260 men in engineering and technology positions at GE.

Observers now hope for a spill-over effect and expect to see a further surge of interest as a consequence of the media coverage of the initiative. Over the past decade, the Middle-East unfolded an immense economic potential, but a higher female participation is needed to sustain the economic attractiveness. Still, the ratio of women and men is not good enough in the Middle-East, a situation which is weakening local companies in their international competition and which also has a devastating effect on international investors. EMEA Diversity expert Michael Stuber confirms this: "In my work and discussions with global Diversity Officers reservations about many Arabian parts of the Middle East prevail. International employers clearly have issues when they face restrictions in sending female or homosexual top talent out to this region." He also hopes that economic benefits from the new female potential in the solar energy sector will serve as a showcase for others in the region.

Ending the Myth of the female Fault for the Demographic Change

The EU member state Hungary serves as an example for the so called demographic transition. Fortunately, Hungarian women have good chances of getting quality education and building their careers. In the meantime, however, the Hungarian population shrunk by about 2% over the last decade and the birth rates are still decreasing. Some voices blame the women for this development, demanding they have to abstain from a career in order to fight the demographic decrease. In this context, the Hungarian government is about to draft new family support measures with the admitted goal of convincing women of childbearing age to have more children, rather than spending their youth at work. "The Hungarian messaging on this topic is really unfortunate, if not insulting", Diversity expert Michael Stuber comments the move, "and it will probably have the reverse effect which Italy and Germany already experience".

The new Hungarian family initiatives will include incentives that are partly mostly already available in other EU countries and will probably become effective in 2014; they comprise an expansion of family tax benefits, mothers entitlement to maternity pay and special deductions of student loans if

women bear children. Those laws and the underlying reasoning are based on the societal paradigm of a female responsibility for raising the children. But are women solely responsible, even if they give birth to the children? OECD statistics prove that the statistical relation between those two figures has dramatically changed since the 80ies. In 1980 there was a clear negative correlation between female employment and fertility rates. In 2010, apart from the general increase in female employment, OECD countries with higher rates of female employment also had relatively high fertility rates. Substantial cross-country differences occur: Combining childrearing and being in employment is most difficult in the Eastern European and Mediterranean countries, while it seems mostly compatible in Australia, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, the Nordic countries, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Hence a high female workforce share and sufficient birth rates cannot be presented as conflicting targets. Different paradigms and different political measures make the real difference. The French and Swedish societies for instance have been seeing working mothers as a natural norm for a long time. French or Swedish women do not see a sense nor need in neglecting their professional ambitions while raising children. Moreover, they are supported by better childcare than in most other countries and take the opportunity of maternity leaves. In a nutshell, the demographic transition is certainly not the women's fault while it has a strong linkage to legal frameworks. Women should therefore be strongly supported by governmental and corporate programmes to pursue both objectives. Gender balance is another key word pointing to men who should assume their responsibility as an equal partner on the parental team. "Reality shows that more children are born when people are able to live the life they want," Michael Stuber explains, "This can be seen from hard data and from anecdotal information on high birth rates in hip urban neighbourhoods or post the football championship in Germany". Feeling good encourages people to have families – making them feel guilty will always discourage them.

BUSINESS CASE

Investing in Gay-Friendly Companies: The Credit Suisse Equality Index

Credit Suisse has launched a LGBT Equality Index, making it "the first index to track the equity performance of companies with LGBT-friendly policies," according to the bank's announcement. The pursuit of profit is not the only reason for the new index. The bank also wants to raise awareness for the need to recognise sexual minorities in the business world and hence to improve their societal situation. By allowing shareholders – and other stakeholders – to track the positive economic impact of an open-minded and inclusive corporate culture, Credit Suisse promotes one of the most important and convincing argument for Diversity Management.

The index is based on evaluations by the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), the largest LGBT equality-rights lobbying organisation in the United States. The NGO calculates a Corporate Equality Index (0-100) based on evaluation of corporate policies and practices related to LGBT employees,

for instance whether they offer health benefits to same-sex couples or provide transgender-inclusive health insurance. The 201 companies with a rating higher than 80 are included in the Credit Suisse's LGBT-index and will hence benefit not only from their high ranking but also from additional funds. "The one sad thing though is, that the index only looks at the U.S. ranking of HRC," Diversity expert Michael Stuber comments. He had carried out a feasibility study on (comprehensive) D&I benchmarking for the European Commission and initiated the first LGBT benchmarking in Europe. "The index would have been an opportunity to expand the LGBT index to the main European markets," he adds. In the UK, Stonewall also publishes a selective ranking list.

Credit Suisse's index, however, underscores the pivotal role of the financial industry in LGBT issues. 32 financial institutes and the large Swiss banks in particular received top ratings from HRC. Equality programmes and campaigns were started far earlier in the financial sector than in other industries. In 2008, UBS and Credit Suisse had developed gay banking offers to meet special requirements and legal issues of homosexual clients, e.g. gay or lesbian couples. Similar to a number of earlier Diversity indices that were created to offer investment funds, smart investors can now deliberately invest in LGBT-friendly shares. Over the past year, the index has climbed mightily 22%.

Study: Time away from work affects later cognitive abilities

Sometimes the solution to a task or a basic problem is simply a time out. In the case of a tiring daily routine a long trip or dealing with other issues and exercises is refreshing and allows us to regain our strength. In contrast involuntary time outs due to illness or unemployment causes stress and sorrows and hardly leads to well-being. For the first time a scientific analysis by researchers at the University of Luxembourg examined how career breaks affected the cognitive abilities, meaning a reduction or expansion of mental potentials in old age.

Career breaks due to unemployment, illness, long-term domestic work, education and training or parental leave are correlated with the cognitive functions of workers. They either speed up or slow down the age-related cognitive recession later on. This is the core result of the "Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe" (SHARE), which looked at complete curriculums and extensively examined cognitive functions of a group of respondents in 13 countries. Anja Leist, part of the research unit INSIDE at the University of Luxembourg, is particularly excited about the possibility to confirm or reject the hypothesis that "career breaks can potentially increase the cognitive reserve during the professional life." Training opportunities and further education might lead to a higher socio-economic status in future, while a parental leave reduces the stress to combine family and work commitments. Both have, in contrast to periods of illness or periods of unemployment, positive effects on cognitive abilities in old age.

According to the researchers the results need to be replicated and verified in further studies to put them on a solid ground. Nevertheless the results are already another good reason for companies to offer a wide range of upgrade training courses or encourage parents-to-be to take a parental leave. In

case of unemployment professional training programmes, offered by the public sector, are equally important to preserve mental abilities. Only in this way the cognitive potential can be optimally utilized to old age.

MEDIA & BITS

What men actually think about gender relations and emancipation? Traditional attitudes in Germany

The past 50 years have changed the relations between both genders a lot. Along the way, women had to demand their equal share in society, economics and politics, and this so-called emancipation has brought a lot of positive aspects for everyone. But the term emancipation is used as combat term at times, and some men or women misinterpret equal opportunities as a sign for an ongoing gender battle. Therefore it is essential for successful Gender Diversity programmes to acknowledge and include male reservations and fears. Clearly, the formerly dominant group has to be part of the change needed, and what could be worse than starting with accusations that fuel the perception of a zero-sum game – while it can be a win-win perspective?

What is the perception of gender diversity and gender balance among men – especially from the so-called Generation Y? Mazars Group, a globally operating auditor, has surveyed 750 men from 60 different countries about their attitudes towards male/female relations and continuing emancipation. The highest score in the entire survey shows a spirit of partnership: 88% of the respondents accept Gender Diversity at the workplace and a smaller but still large majority prefers working in a gender-mixed team, because it offers a more pleasant atmosphere, enables greater balance and more innovation. For 15% of the respondents Gender-Diversity is strongly related to sexual aspects and a quarter thinks the topic is of no importance and does not require attention any longer. This group thinks Diversity is already sufficiently established as a norm and a small group of 9% even thinks women “have gained too much headway”. These figures should worry us if we assume that these 9 – 15 % of men might make it to the top of an organisation that must rely on the best available talent and high performing teams...

And what is it that people have in their heads when they intuitively think about women or men? The attributes related to men and women are constantly becoming more multi-faceted and hence more vague. Nearly half of the respondents think that men increasingly acquire feminine traits and vice versa. As one consequence, shared domestic work is perfectly normal for 80% of the respondents. Nevertheless this is rather an imagined concept than reality. The actual gender roles are much more traditional: The majority associates ironing, cleaning, doing the laundry, cooking or giving a bath to the children with female tasks, while men should take over do-it-yourself tasks and drive the car. Only 26% of the men are willing to slow down their career in order to care for their children, another 44% would put their career on ice temporarily.

Meanwhile a recent survey in Germany confirms the above insights. Three quarters of the male respondents think that the current state of emancipation is completely sufficient, one in four respondents declared to be on edge due to the topic. The changing and fading attributes related to the genders are problematic as well, more than one third of all respondents notice to have problems to fulfil gender-related expectations. Still traditional roles in domestic work persist, and it is quite concerning that younger men do not differ in regard to their attitudes when compared to older generations.

What the data suggests, though, is that gender-equal values are more pronounced at the workplace than in the private sphere. But: In which direction will spill-over be more likely to happen? “Our work has been showing that for the most part, people bring their private background, values and attitudes to work, not the other way round”, says Diversity expert Michael Stuber. This is one reason why companies have to make substantial efforts to eliminate unwanted effects, e.g. when privately acquired bias threatens sound business decisions. “Helping people realise the linkages and how to manage them is a key component of effective D&I education”, the experienced consultant adds.

Study (E&Y): Global Mobility Programmes fail to foster Talents

International experiences and cross-national exchanges are among the most wanted aspects in globally operating companies. Transferring these ideals to reality seems to be more difficult, as Ernst & Young’s sixth annual “Global Mobility Effectiveness Survey 2013” suggests. The study examines business practices and movements of expatriates and business travellers and gives detailed information about the practical relevance, successes and barriers of global mobility in organizations. More than 260 senior mobility executives participated in the survey and answered questions about how they channel talent and ensure internal mobility particularly to growth markets.

According to a huge majority (83%) of respondents, mobility generally has a positive impact on careers. Despite that, businesses fail to link mobility to talent management. A significant share of 42% do not have a global talent management agenda, mobility teams in 56% of the companies involved in the study were not involved in talent management at all. Ernst & Young concludes that companies only strive for filling up vacancies with incoming or outgoing expats, but do not ask themselves who might be strategically the best employee for a certain position. Even if companies are more aware of Diversity in international environments, only 6% of all companies actively encouraged minorities to go on assignments.

Family issues or private circumstances are the biggest obstacles for international assignments. 65% of respondents cited personal matters as insufficient schools or a lack of working opportunities for life partners as reasons for failed assignments and early repatriation. But even if international exchanges take place, most companies (78%) fail to measure the ROI of their mobility programmes. Very often employers also miss to track an employee once an assignment is finished, with bad consequences for employee retention and career progression: 16% of assignees leave the company after a period of two years after coming back, probably due to dissatisfying rewards for their international experiences.

NEWS ABOUT US

Readers Discount available: International D&I Experts meeting in Barcelona

For the seventh time, a mixed group of D&I experts will be meeting in Barcelona at the end of February. For the fifth time, European Diversity Research & Consulting is involved in the event. This also brings benefits for the readers of our EMEA DiversityNews. You can easily get 15% discounted registration rates. Please ask for the respective code by emailing us at team@diversity-consulting.eu

What our Clients say 'about us': Bayer Material Science

“European Diversity Research & Consulting has contributed to develop a very specific Bayer MaterialScience storyline, which integrates Diversity & Inclusion as a business imperative supporting the execution of our business strategy. Through his experience in rolling out Diversity & Inclusion programs in global companies, Michael Stuber has been and is a valuable sparring partner with high credibility for our top leaders as well as the members of the Executive Committee.”

Dr. Tony van Osselaer, Executive Committee member of Bayer MaterialScience and Sponsor of the Diversity & Inclusion initiative (July 2013)

IMPRINT

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