

The background of the entire page is a repeating pattern of stylized, overlapping leaves. Each leaf is outlined in black and filled with a light green color. The leaves are arranged in a way that they appear to be growing from a central point, with some leaves pointing upwards and others downwards. The pattern is dense and covers the entire page.

DIVA:

A Handbook for Civil Society Organisations

Compiled by Sylvie Mantis



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Diversity

Inspired

Volunteer

Activities

A Handbook for Civil Society Organisations

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FOREWORD

This booklet has been produced within the scope of the '**Celebrating Diversity and Volunteerism across Cyprus**' European Commission funded project implemented by the Cyprus Turkish Association of Managers in partnership with the NGO Support Centre.

The overall objective of the project aimed to strengthen the role and capacity of Turkish Cypriot civil society as well as civil society within the Greek Cypriot community, to promote a more conducive environment for further development of trust, dialogue, cooperation and closer relationships between the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots.

The project worked in close conjunction with ten civil society organisations during a series of capacity building trainings, seminars and consultations.

These included:

1. Capacity Assessments and Strategic Planning
2. The creation of websites and a tutorial on 'How to Manage Your Website'
3. Increased knowledge on Diversity Issues
4. Volunteer Policies and Management
5. Membership Relations Management
6. Fundraising Strategies
7. Communication Strategies
8. The creation of a Diversity Incorporated Volunteer Activities Timeline
9. Research into the 'Obstacles Preventing Disadvantaged Groups from Volunteering'
10. Research into 'Potential Donors and Sponsors in Cyprus'
11. A comprehensive Volunteer Database
12. An EU Workshop on European CSOs and 'How to write an EC Project proposal'

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Akova Women's Association
 Catalkoy Development and Culture Organization (CADER)
 Deftera Development Association
 Hands across the Divide
 Hope for Children - Office for Children's Right
 International Students Association
 Pan Cyprian Blind Organization
 The Cyprus Turkish Diabetes Association
 The Cyprus Turkish Orthopaedic Disabled Association
 The Environmental Society of Lefke



CONTENTS

Diversity and Us
Volunteerism and Inclusion
What Can You Do?
References/Resources
Index

"We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their color". -- Maya Angelou

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world: indeed, it's the only thing that ever has". -- Margaret Mead



Diversity and Us:

Europe has an increasingly diverse working and living population, with people of many different backgrounds playing a greater role in the European labour market and contributing to a changing social mix. This diversity reflects not only population changes due to immigration and mobility between regions and EU member states, but also an increasing recognition of the challenges and issues facing a range of marginalised groups, such as but not limited to, women, people with disabilities, people with varying sexual orientations, and third generation groups.

Research conducted through the euro barometer would indicate that the forces which are driving the tendency towards greater heterogeneity are still on the rise. It seems clear that the European labour market of the future will contain, for example, larger numbers of older workers, women, migrant groups and people with disabilities and that geographical mobility of workers will continue to increase. Therefore, with this movement also comes the social and community changes as workers move into new areas.

[A] recent Euro barometer survey

Discrimination in the European Union: Perceptions, Experiences and Attitudes (2008) [revealed]:

Almost 1 in 6 Europeans have been discriminated against in the last 12 months;
1 in 3 have witnessed someone else being discriminated against in the last year

www.ec.europa.eu/employment_social

The prospect of a structurally diverse European workforce and labour market demands a response which is integrated, proactive and effective. In the same sense that the working population will continue to evolve, and become a diverse and open environment, so too, will the social and community areas that these working populations inhabit.

"Laws exist throughout the European Union to protect everyone against discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation in the workplace and on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin in all areas of life."

www.ec.europa.eu/employment_social

We all bring with us perspectives; work experiences, life styles and cultures. **Diversity** is therefore, any dimension that differentiates groups and individuals from one another. As a source and driver of innovation, **diversity** is a "big idea" in business, in society and more importantly in our community and civil society. It is necessarily the agent that brings about and stimulates change. **Diversity** is the creative and fundamental force towards us

evolving and including all members of our community in our vision for change. At its base level, understanding, accepting and including expressions of the individual, ways of being that might be different or alternative to your own is the beginning of tolerance. From the opposite angle, oppression tends to bring about a conformity which is only superficial more often than not leading to suppression of creativity, reciprocal respect and a sense of true community. Cypriot civil society, in general, works towards improving the quality of life of its members, as diverse as they are and whatever their needs. This necessarily implies tolerance, acceptance and inclusion.



To help us to understand how basic and within us diversity is, it is helpful to begin with a few ideas about what diversity might look like in our everyday lives. Often, the different aspects of diversity are divided into aspects or dimensions. This helps us to understand that being unique is not something we can always choose to be or to hide. In simple terms, you can look at diversity as having two main dimensions: *a primary dimension and a secondary dimension*. Primary dimensions are basic and cannot be changed by the person. A primary dimension might be your national background, age, gender or sexual orientation. Secondary dimensions can be influenced more easily, since these are dimensions individuals can choose to include or exclude, to a large extent, in their lifestyle. From education level to political preferences, as well as whether to marry or have children, secondary dimensions are a level or expression of self that can define you and indicate to others what is and isn't important to you. Through expressing your secondary dimension you can choose which groups you *want* to belong to openly.

This is just one way to begin to view diversity as a fundamental building block in your life. The diagram below gives a clearer view of this. The inner circle are parts of yourself you can't readily – if at all – change. The outer circle gives an indication of the kinds of groups we might belong to or choose to belong to. And each of us becomes a mixture/combination of these parts.

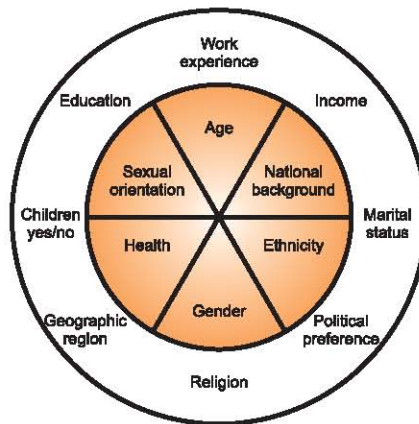


Fig. 1: Primary and secondary dimensions of diversity (After Kreitner, R. en Kinicki, A. (1995) *Organizational Behaviour*, Chicago: R.D. Irwin Inc.)

Aspects of diversity are not only grouped into primary and secondary dimensions. While this is a helpful way to begin to look at what we are and how each of us is not only unique but also diverse, there are other ways we can look at how diversity influences us. For instance, we can also choose to group dimensions of diversity by how visible they are to people around us. The more visible a characteristic is, the stronger its influence on how others see us. It is hard to escape from highly visible aspects of diversity. For instance, an individual can put a ring on a specific finger and pretend to be married, but pretending to be white when your skin is black is much harder. This concept



helps us to understand that although we can sometimes have the choice to conform to some social characteristics around us, there are other characteristics of our **diversity** which we are not able, or even want to change, such as our age or original gender or sexual orientation.

"We have always had a diversity... it's just now we are more aware."

Deftera: Constantino 2010

All aspects in which people differ and more.

I found diversity very useful in re-organizing the exec committee for example ... so that the responsibilities are given at the time of election at the agm . so that they will be more motivated.

Aysel Bodi Akova women's group . 2010

Effects of Diversity

Both primary and secondary dimensions, visible and non-visible characteristics, are part of the personal identity of an individual. These parts of our self have a strong influence on our values, needs, priorities, aspirations and perceptions. They influence how we see our environment and how we behave. They also have a strong influence on how others see us, and this, in turn, influences how we see ourselves.

However, Diversity is more than the differences between people.

- The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing our individual differences. These can be along the dimensions of **race**, **ethnicity**, **gender**, **sexual orientation**, **socio-economic status**, **age**, **physical abilities**, religious beliefs, **political beliefs**, or **other** ideologies.
- It is the exploration of these differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment.
- It is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual.



In broad terms, diversity is any dimension that makes groups and people distinctive from one another. Understanding and implementing diversity means **respect for** and **appreciation of** differences in ethnicity, gender, age, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, education, and religion. And it is more than this.

On using diversity dimensions

"I definitely noticed that my awareness is raised after the diversity workshop.. one thing I did... when I choose or select people, since I am the trainer, I especially take care of the diversity in the group. I also encourage people around me to do that. When someone complains about something I remind them that this diversity."

Emete Imge - Diabetes group 2010

Demonstrate Cultural Sensitivity:

Encourage your volunteers and your friends to explore a range of ideas, perspectives, and styles – and remember :

- There is more than one right way to do things
- be aware of cultural and other differences
- communicate effectively with people from different cultures
- act without bias

Promote Implementation & Integration of Diversity

- Understand and communicate how your NGO can grow and succeed by leveraging diversity
- Seek opportunities in diversity through funding, eu sponsors, community participation, project collaborations with other NGOs either in your area or within the EU
- Acknowledge others for supporting diversity. Show your support for individual and group inclusion activities such as through a newsletter or group event
- Include diversity as an aspect of your strategic plan
- Ensure that activities your NGO undertakes include it's volunteers and their uniqueness
- Seek out activities that celebrate all aspects of your NGO and your vision and mission statement
- Review your mission statement and update it to include the changing social and civil environment you now work in
- Offer workshops and training to your staff/volunteers to encourage tolerance
- Avoid implementing artificial barriers to communication and work on conflict resolution instead.

"There is only one way of looking at diversity.. include everyone or no-one you can't have selective diversity"

Magda Zenon - Hands Across the Divide (HAD) 2010



In simple terms,

Diversity is the mix; inclusion is getting the mix to work well together.

Our differences can be of **race**, ethnicity, **gender**, **sexual orientation** or **identity**, **socio-economic status**, **age**, physical abilities, **our religious beliefs**, political beliefs, or **other** ideologies.

Understanding and Valuing Diversity ,

- Recognize your own prejudices, biases and assumptions
- See difference in people as valuable assets to your NGO
- Encourage open dialogue and share experiences, exploring how you could use these to enhance your NGOs vision and mission
- Speak in a way that supports the inclusion of everyone who could potentially offer support to your NGO

What volunteerism means in HAD.

"We put together a volunteer policy. What we need volunteers for and how we can handle them. This is what you can expect from us and this is what we can expect from you. A joint effort with everyone's inclusion."

Volunteerism in the purest sense is a patriarchal theory [and] Altruism works only up to a point. Then you need to acknowledge the passion and to acknowledge the hours people put in. Sometimes it's got to go beyond the thank you."

Magda Zenon - Hands Across the Divide (HAD) 2010



Volunteerism and Inclusion

On working with volunteers

"the way to overcome that lack of commitment is to give the volunteers some responsibility..so the people receiving training are also voluntary helpers to promote that project as well... they claim ownership and sustainability..... At first I didn't think I could do anything like that. And then I realized that sustainability is the most important thing and getting people involved so that they own it, keeps it going. It's a big asset."

-Aysel Bodi Akova women's group

Inclusion is about being valued, respected and supported. It's about focusing on the needs of every individual and ensuring that the right conditions are in place for each person to achieve his or her full potential. Increasing the contribution of volunteers in an NGO organization means that reflected in the organization's culture, practices and relationships, is the ethos to support a diverse approach to meeting project targets and deadlines. This could be anything from the inclusion of a diverse range of skill sets (e.g. leader/organizer/admin etc) to the inclusion of a diverse range of backgrounds, abilities and ages. Volunteers with diverse life approaches and experiences can enhance the whole process of change and development within the community and NGO world. They contribute to the fabric of an organization by being representative of the wide and varied cross-section of the community. The involvement of volunteers in all aspects and levels of your NGO, keeps

individuals passionate and involved not only because they are being helped and supported, but also because they are being valued and included, contributing to the sustainability of a project.

All of the Cypriot NGOs that participated in the ENGAGE project **"Celebrating Diversity and Volunteerism Across Cyprus"**, stressed that they would not be able to fulfill their vision without their volunteers, some relying heavily on the support and commitment of the often very few active members they have. Keeping volunteers interested and involved in the current climate, when the demand on peoples' time has increased, is the biggest challenge most organizations face. There are often too few volunteers involved in more than one organization. In Cyprus, civil society has not only been influenced by the political climate it is submersed in but also by the changing nature of social, economic and cultural trends. As Europe has moved closer and migration has increased the 'traditional' Cypriot pass times and interests have changed as have their needs. The role of civil society is often central to supporting minority groups and those in need. Maintaining sustainability and quality of service often relies on the support, time wise, as well as financially, of unpaid workers, volunteers, members, who support of your cause. Ensuring volunteers stay valued and active is one of the biggest challenges facing NGOs in Cyprus today.



Including the voice, perspective and energy of your volunteers as part of your routine operational strategy can help to encourage inclusion, in particular in areas of decision making which affects them (such as timing of an activity or type of activity, where you would rely on volunteers to support the success of the event). If your organization can give a value to the time commitment of a volunteer, either through a celebration event, an acknowledgement or an achievement award, volunteers will not only feel included and more valued, but are more inclined to remain active within your organisation.

Work for Change

- take risks and challenges the status quo in your community when you see that discrimination is taking place. Ensure inclusion in part of your NGO's mission statement
- deal with conflict and inappropriate behaviour as it arises. Don't let behaviour that discriminates pass without action.
- See your NGO as a change agent, promoting change and positive action so your community can grow.

What You Can Do

There are lots of ways you, your family, your community, or neighbourhood and your NGO can contribute to including diversity as a way of change. This section will get you started on some ideas you might consider. Start from yourself and work outwards.

Diversity days:

These have been set up by the EU and you can do them within your organisation and or with other organisations to promote the variety and diversity of your neighbourhood, your organisation and your volunteers.

Diversity Symbols:

The **Respect Diversity Symbol Campaign** is a multi-levelled project that encourages students and friends to focus on a diversity issue such as human rights, global unity, special needs, or religious tolerance. After expressing their ideas, participants collaborate to create a symbol of respect that.

On the value of Volunteers

"It's a small organization. If we didn't have volunteers we wouldn't be able to do so many things!"

Joseph-Varughese Kokkatt
HFC "Hope For Children" Office for Children's Rights



Celebrating differences

Your NGO could organise an event where volunteers are encouraged to bring their uniqueness and together everyone celebrates how this contributes to the vision and the mission. You could do this alone or with NGOs working in different areas to yours.

Bully out there

Visit schools in your area and talk about bullying. Organise a campaign in collaboration with other NGOs to highlight the dangers of bullying. Bullies single out differences and uses them to intimidate others. Work with local youth organisations/schools to encourage celebrating differences.

Question yourself and others

Be willing to question the status quo and initiate open dialogue around "standard practices" and "accepted behaviours" that prevent diversity within your NGO. Be willing to speak up and encourage independent thinking around roles, practices, policies, and norms within your NGO. Publicly challenge systems and behaviours that could get in the way of leveraging diversity. Show initiative, be proactive, and take action. This is the essence of leveraging diversity.

Setting up peer groups

You can encourage an environment which brings your volunteers and staff together on a regular basis in order to share successes and frustrations. Participants can problem solve and learn from each other, whilst seeing how similar and different they are.

Problem solving

Setting up groups for effective problem solving and shared decision making

Include a variety of members










Remember, there needs to be a reasonable degree of emotional competence of all those involved.

Take a close look at what usually happens in your organisation. Do you keep future plan separate from your actions and from your review. Who does what and how? How could you include a wider spectrum of your organisation?






Building bridges

Organise and conduct a sale where the community donates items for sale. With the proceeds give something back to the community/neighbourhood, such as using the money to improve a children's play area to accommodate children with disabilities or supporting a community centre program that works with a variety of people with a diverse set of needs. You might celebrate the event by holding an open picnic or cake day.












-  Start a "language bank" of volunteer interpreters. You might start by discovering which languages the members of your NGO speak and celebrating that. Add to that by searching out volunteers willing to give their time to translate your documents or spoken words, so that your NGO is more accessible. You might consider your 'language bank' useful in working with other NGO's.
-  Organise a training day on diversity and invite other NGO's to participate with you in learning about each other and how you can build on the differences of your organisations to create projects for your communities.
-  Send a delegation of staff and volunteers to an international diversity conference. Encourage them to search for partners for projects and learning experiences. Apply for funding to sponsor their trip.
-  Build a peace garden. Group together with NGO's that are diverse and different from yours and build a garden that can be communal, and that could be a good place to meet, have meetings, or just to socialise.
-  Create a Website for your NGO. Include your vision, mission, past and current projects. Think about what kinds of open invitations you could include that would attract other NGOs to join you in a project idea.
-  Participate in a blood drive, or clean up a local stream. Identify issues that reach across racial, ethnic and other divisions and forge alliances for tackling them.
-  Start a monthly "diversity roundtable" to discuss critical issues facing your community.
-  Make sure that antidiscrimination protection in your community extends to gay and lesbian people.
-  Host a "multicultural extravaganza" such as a food fair or art, fashion and talent show.
-  Create a mobile "street library" to make multicultural books and films widely available.
-  Establish an ecumenical alliance. Bring people of diverse faiths together for retreats, workshops or potluck dinners. Be welcoming to agnostics and atheists, too.



-  Write a letter to the editor if your local newspaper ignores any segment of the community or stories about cooperation and tolerance.
-  Start a campaign to establish a multicultural centre for the arts. Ask local museums to host exhibits and events reflecting diversity at home and elsewhere.
-  Present a "disabilities awareness" event with the help of a local rehabilitation organization.
-  Do police officers receive training about hate groups, hate crimes and domestic violence? How can you campaign to get this done?
-  Establish diversity training for all volunteers, to utilize community-based policing and to eliminate the use of inequitable tactics like racial profiling.

Start with yourself

-  Attend a play, listen to music or go to a dance performance by artists whose race or ethnicity is different from your own.
-  Ask a person of another cultural heritage to teach you how to perform a traditional dance or cook a traditional meal.
-  Learn sign language.
-  Participate in a diversity program.
-  Take a conversation course in another language that is spoken in your community.
-  Teach an adult to read.
-  Think about how you appear to others. List personality traits that are compatible with tolerance (e.g., compassion, curiosity, openness). List those that seem incompatible with tolerance (e.g., jealousy, bossiness, perfectionism).
-  Imagine what your life might be like if you were a person of another race, gender or sexual orientation.
-  Read a book or watch a movie about another culture.



Section 4 Resources / Links

European Commission for Diversity and against Discrimination

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/fdad/cms/stopdiscrimination?langid=en

Diversity Pride Events

<http://www.diversitypride.com/>

National Diversity Day

<http://www.nationaldiversityday.com>

European Commission funded research on diversity and tolerance

<http://www.accept-pluralism.eu/Home.aspx>

Toolbox for working with prejudice

<http://www.understandingprejudice.org/>

Pinwheels for peace

<http://www.pinwheelsforpeace.com>

Diversity days calendar

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/fdad/cms/stopdiscrimination/downloads/Calendar/Calendrier_Posterbis_091103.pdf

A journal for leaders of Volunteers

<http://www.e-volunteerism.com>

Products:

Diversity calendar you can buy:

<http://store.globalnovations.com/>





Be the change you wish to see reflected in the world.
-- Mahatma Gandhi

