

Forming a semi-structured DEI department within a research team that has technological focus

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Abstract

The proposed thesis will be planned as the foundational principles for creating a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI) semi-structured department within a research team with technological focus, with the aspiration to be used by other organisations as well. Reflecting on what I have learnt in the first year of my Master Programme Gender Studies – Intersectionality and Change I began to observe my work environment and how they address diversity, inclusion and equity. I realised there were a lot of things to improve so I started pressing the administration and the high management team for immediate actions. After several months, they agreed to form a semi-structured DEI department without allocating specific members and budget. Subsequently, I started more as an activist to inform, influence and engage in what I thought as important and disseminate my knowledge.

I also used as an argument the call of European Commission (EC) for interdisciplinarity (Allmendinger, 2015) and the close collaboration for Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) and technology experts. EC prioritize this collaboration to increase competitiveness and societal impact of European R&I funding programmes. Technological progress must go hand in hand with social inclusion to fulfill Europe's core values for prosperity, equity, freedom, peace, and democracy within a sustainable environment (EC, 2025).

Although the international momentum on DEI policies and the acceleration on human rights is negative, I imagine I will create a domino effect for positive change.

Even EC is preparing to spend a lot of the allocated fundings in defence programs and one may presume that money from social acts and humanitarian policies may be lost.

The aim of this study was to set the axes when creating a DEI department within research teams in Greece and to manage to inform, influence and engage as many researchers as possible to form a more inclusive and safe work environment. My approach could be used as the foundation for other research teams in Greece to form a DEI department as well.

I always choose to be optimistic. "Partager est un idéal" is a phrase that follows me since my courses in Sorbonne and describes my mentality and my purpose, share your ideals and your knowledge.

As for my methodological approach, I derived insights from "radical looking" and

ethnography as I was a member of the workplace I studied and being able to interact with my sample. I chose for my project mixed methods of quantitative and qualitative data to achieve triangulation ending up with some very interesting findings. I succeeded in having a sample of 70 responders to my survey and I conducted three semi-structured interviews. Thus, my project was based on the Social Justice Theory, on Intersectionality and on the Organizational Change Theory.

Key words

DEI (abbreviation of diversity, equity, and inclusion), Social Justice, Intersectionality, Organizational Change, mixed methods.

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List of Abbreviations & Acronyms

No	Abbreviation or Acronym	Description
1.	DEI	Diversity, equity and inclusion
2.	EC	European Commission
3.	EGE	European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies
4.	EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
5.	EU	European Union
6.	GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
7.	GEP	Gender Equality Plan
8.	GEARnet	Greek Network of Gender Equality and Antidiscrimination Committees in Research Centers and Independent Research Institutes
9.	LiU	Linköping University
10.	NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
11.	OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
12.	PAR	Participatory Action Research
13.	SSH	Social sciences and humanities
14.	TEMA	Department of Thematic Studies
15.	UN	United Nations
16.	VSD	Value-Sensitive Design

1 Introduction

*“The answer to all questions is the human being.”
— attributed to André Breton*

Reflecting on the courses of the Master Programme I started to observe all the power relations in all aspects of my life. Who is exercising power over, to and with (Avelino, 2011). One of these was also my work environment. How diverse and inclusive this was? How was delivered the equity? Who had the power to change this? In which ways? The distinctive feature of observation as a research process is that it offers the opportunity to gather ‘live’ data from naturally occurring social situations. In this way, the researcher can look at what is taking place in situ rather than relying on second-hand accounts. The use of immediate awareness or direct cognition, as a principle mode of research, thus has the potential to yield more valid or authentic data than would otherwise be the case with mediated or inferential methods. And this is observation’s unique strength. (Cohen et al., 2011: 456)

Learning all the sufficient tools to address DEI I proposed to my supervisors to set the foundation of a semi-structured DEI department in order to inform and disseminate the knowledge I wished to share and in order also to be aligned to the requirements of our Gender Equality Plan (GEP)

The DEI department will be based to openness, dedicated to the values of participatory and inclusive research, a safe space to collaborate following the Participatory Action Research (PAR) Approach.

Unfortunately, this came in the same period that Donald Trump and all the international environment was not at all friendly and supportive, creating shadows and doubts to such an important outcome for me.

To my mind participating in a Master Program in Gender Studies made an excellent match with my first Master in Social Innovation where I got familiar with the principles of co-design, co-operate, co-evaluate in order to be transparent and provide solutions and services for social change and positive social impact. Participatory design is a democratic way to operate.

Thus, my background in pedagogy where a person’s progress, a better quality of life, a better future was always my goal.

But why to care (Weinstein, 2025)? Why is keeping bother me a diverse, equal and inclusive work or life environment? Because the matter, matters (Just, 2020) and this is

how I am and I cannot escape from myself. I cannot live and operate if the above principles do not exist and luckily what I have learnt the past one and a half year magnified it and I was equipped to disseminate this. I somehow believed that if I introduced to my colleagues these definitions, learning to identify non diverse, not equity, nor inclusive environments or maybe identify any kind of discrimination one maybe can follow these examples to their lives, outside our professional setting. In one hand it is a personal matter to care but on the other hand you can be educated. I got educated this year why not circulate my new knowledge and influence others in this direction that places all humans in the center of all decisions?

The concept of Garland-Thomson's (2011) of "fitting" and "misfitting" offered me valuable insights to reflect on my colleagues that might felt as misfits in our workplace due to lack of DEI policies. The same applies for the knowledge and everything we produce that might lead someone to feel misfitted and left behind. Although originally introduced as a state in which "a harmonious and appropriate interaction occurs between a body with a specific shape and function, and an environment that supports that body" (Garland-Thomson, 2011, 594) the misfit concept may apply to other environments as well.

Having as a starting point on this journey radical looking and curiosity about the systems, cultures, practices and policies on my working place I needed to investigate familiar things to alternative ways of seeing (Clough & Nutbrown, 2012: 52,53)

The first step was to set up my survey and distribute it in my team. The second was to decide who would be my interviewees and although at first, I thought I would ask pretty much the same questions as in the survey after the first batch of my responses I thought it would make better sense to find some key persons to discuss the results of the survey.

By combining qualitative and quantitative methods, I expected to achieve methodological triangulation (Jick, 1979) that will stimulate me to better define and analyze my research questions and results. As for my Theories I tried to make connections between Social Justice Theory, Intersectionality and Organisational Theory.

1.1 Positionality

Questioning always my privileges and my positionality, trying to unlearn or flourish

my situated knowledges was a wonderful passage. If we want to expand our hopes for accountability we must learn to converse (Haraway, 1988).

Thus, reflecting on my origins, a wonderful but underprivileged island of Greece, Ikaria always kept me on earth and helped me to observe how different one can live, far away from the noise of a city, far away from the techno-capitalist world.

What would be my response to that? According to Rosiek (2020) a question presumes an answer and if you have no answers, you have your answerability to respond and act according to your community needs or at least what I thought of their needs.

Why is it important to be educated becoming more humanist, paying attention to tackle any forms of discrimination? Because in my work environment we produce all the digital, technological products and services of the future in all cutting-edge technologies. How can we leave out the main user, the main consumer, humans?

One way to achieve this is to present to my team the methodology developed in human-computer interaction research, the Value-Sensitive Design (VSD) approach that can serve as an engineering education tool which bridges the gap between design and ethics for many computer and engineering disciplines. When applying the VSD approach, twelve specific human values have been determined to have ethical import that should be considered in the design process: human welfare, ownership and property, privacy, freedom from bias, universal usability, trust, autonomy, informed consent, accountability, calmness, identity and environmental sustainability (Cummings, 2006). Reflecting on the research we perform the above values would be an excellent guide to follow. VSD provides a road map for instructors on how to include ethical considerations into design projects, even if they are not trained in philosophy or ethics. Unfortunately the VSD wasn't referred to any of my questions in my survey or my interviews as I was introduced to it on a later stage of my research but I plan to include this approach to one of the first seminars I will form. We are inventing the future to meet our expectations, how can we ignore the values we should accompany the future?

Our knowledges as well as our imagination is situated, contextual and grounded in specific geopolitics and corpopolitics of sensing, of being, of memory (Fry, T., & Tlostanova, M., 2020).

Why don't we fight aphantasia and reinforce collective imagination to a world that diveristy, equity and inclusion are of key elements?

2 Aim and Research Questions

2.1 Aim

The research aim of this study is to set the axes when creating a DEI department within research teams in Greece. My approach could be used as the foundation for other research teams in Greece to form a DEI department as well. Influenced by the feminist theory allows its practitioners to understand and experience life differently, I was captured in a mix of utopianism and optimism (Coleman & Jungnickel, 2023). In this way I will be able to inform, influence and engage as many researchers as possible to form a more inclusive and safe work environment. Finally, my personal aim is to become a DEI and gender expert and eventually use all this knowledge as a professional.

2.2 Research Questions

My research questions were:

- What will be the axes when proposing the foundation of a semi-structured DEI department?
- Why is important to have DEI departments in research teams in Greece?
- How can the theories of intersectionality, Organizational change and Theory of Rawls facilitate such an initiative?

3 Material

Discussing with my supervisor which tool to use, we decided that it was an excellent opportunity to have access on my team which consists of more than 150 persons. We are more than 150 researchers and admin staff. The background of the researchers is on computer science and on engineering while the admin staff has background on SSH, finances and public relations. I decided to set a survey and prepare my questions for my semi-structured interviews.

In order to distribute my online survey, I had to take the permission of my director and my supervisors. This caused some delays but on the 15th of April 2025 I sent the first email. By 25/4 I had received 51 responses, I was expecting more replies but we had our Easter vacations so no one was online thus I couldn't force the procedure as

they were my colleagues, and I had to respect our work boundaries. In the meanwhile due to health issues I had to pause my Thesis and inform my supervisor and my responsible professor to proceed with the catch-up period. By June 2025 I had received 70 replies.

3.1 Survey

My survey had 18 questions and I tried to have quick and easy options for replies, eg multiple choices and linear scale so that to engage as many as I could and I only had two open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions would be easy for me to analyse and efficient for my respondents while the two open-ended questions encouraged further reflection and uncovered unexpected themes. A preview of the selected questions can be found in the appendix A. I didn't follow the rigorous standards on forming a survey but I based my survey on questions that could highlight the axes to set a DEI department, and the willingness of my team to embrace such an initiative. Furthermore, the questions were based on the Institute's Gender Equality Plan and the mandatory process-related requirements and the recommended content-related (thematic) areas that EC has set on implementing Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) on research institutes (EC, 2021). These requirements describe the implementors of a DEI department as a focal point to address gender dimensions on research, to address awareness-raising and training actions, foster equal representations on panels, preoccupy on the prevalence of sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence and to tackle unconscious bias and any form of discrimination in every activity and for all staff of a research institute and research team.

3.2 Semi-structured interviews

During October 2025 I conducted three semi-structured interviews based on the results I received from the survey and as I have stated earlier, I used mixed methods. Who will I recruit? Drawing insights from ethnographic research projects, I couldn't randomly recruit my sample (Ladner, 2014) but I have to derive insight about attitudes, values and beliefs and more deeply understand the importance of DEI department within our team. As a result, I targeted women in high management positions, already knowing they were in favor to my topic and the initiative I proposed. My decision was based on my positionality and led me to those persons who were familiar with DEI practices and willing to take this road together with me. Proposing the creation of such an initiative has its roots in building alliances and it

would work best if it is structured as a team, rather than just one person working alone (EC, 2021). Building coalitions at such an early stage would help me to find collaboratively the ways to influence those colleagues that are the opposite site, totally unfamiliar or even negative to my initiative. For many, collaboration itself constitutes a feminist practice. When working in intentional pairs or groups, feminist forms of collaboration can reshape conventional power relations, disrupt normative hierarchies, and foster enduring care, mutual support, and shared inspiration (Coleman & Jungnickel 2023). Working alone in silos could have negative impact. Why did I choose to perform semi-structured interviews? Unlike to everyday conversations with friends or family members, qualitative interviews are not conducted for their own sake but are staged and conducted to fulfil the researcher's goal of producing knowledge (Brinkmann, 2013). Thus, semi-structured interviews can make better use of the knowledge-producing potentials by allowing for following up on the important issues the interviewer sees. In that way the interviewer has a better chance of becoming visible as a knowledge-producing participant in the process itself and compared to unstructured interviews, the interviewers have a greater saying in focusing the conversation on issues that they deem important in relation to each research project (Brinkmann, 2013).

Regarding a structured interview I would have to follow the same logic as my survey and passively record of my interviewees' opinions and miss the knowledge a conversational production could reveal. Similarly, an unstructured format could lead me to insignificant information. My interviews and the specific selection of my interviewees had a purpose to reply on "What" and "How" and provide descriptions on real life work experiences that would then been interpreted by me considering the aim of my project. In relation to qualitative interviewing, as in qualitative research in general, there is never one correct way to understand or practice a method or a technique because everything depends on concrete circumstances and on the researcher's intentions when conducting a particular research project (Brinkmann, 2020).

4 Previous Research

My literature review was based on my aim and my research questions. Taking into account my participation to the Greek Network of Gender Equality and Antidiscrimination Committees in Research Centers and Independent Research

Institutes (GEARnet) and our internal commitment to gender equality and antidiscrimination policies I realized that all participants are trying to build knowledge and follow best practices that are already performed in other European and beyond countries. There is no previous, solid knowledge performed in Greece. Yet none of the other participants has a background in Gender studies so they tend to approach the network's goals for creating a good social impact from their educational background mainly in natural sciences and engineering and as project managers missing the valuable theories and tools Gender studies and SSH professionals may provide. After all, it was only in 2022 that became obligatory to have a GEP and the most recent Greek law took force on 2021, so a knowledge gap is profound.

The first axe on setting the foundation of a DEI department was to check their familiarization with the DEI definition, the second axe was based to their willingness to participate in seminars, webinars, committees under our theme, the third is related to the use of a neutral language in all the material, written and digital (formal documentation, contracts, job openings, dissemination material, social media posts and deliverables) we produce, the fourth is connected to inclusion of our meeting venues and websites, mainly seeking the visibility and the intention to provide inclusive solutions and the fifth is connected to their thoughts to form an antiharassment sexual policy.

How did I conclude these five axes? I drew inspiration from our existing GEP and the progress that has already taken place in other organisations across Europe. Since 2022, EU made it obligatory for each research institute to set a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) in order to set, implement and monitor equality, diversity and inclusion principles embedded into to Governance and Strategic Planning, any research activity and research outcome.

To my understanding their familiarization with DEI definitions will tackle some stereotypes. Their willingness and commitment to be educated and informed in DEI aspects will have a domino effect in their lives as well. Additionally, language and communication play a pivotal role in shaping our attitudes and behaviors and norms in society (EIGE, 2024). They hold significant potential for not only supporting but also promoting gender equality and are the media to communicate human rights (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2022). Using gender-inclusive language involves communicating in a manner that avoids exclusion or discrimination based on sex, gender or gender identity. It also aims to prevent the reinforcement of sexism or gender stereotypes. This approach includes recognizing and respecting individuals who

identify outside the traditional gender binary (Council of Europe, 2023). Exploring further this, our language should reflect our values and work (Oxfam, 2023).

As we are a research team mainly occupied with European Union (EU) research projects, we have to be aware and follow all the relevant guidelines of EU except of our national laws.

Another development is the European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies (EGE). The EGE is mainly providing the Commission with high quality, independent advice on all aspects of EU legislation and policies, where ethical, societal and fundamental rights issues intersect with the development of science and new technologies.

Yet another guideline for us is the EU AI Act (2024) that specifies the ethical use of AI.

Besides the EU reports and legislations eg from European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE 2019, 2024), I focused on reports on DEI policies and good practices in other research organisations and institutes as well as on reports of all major policy makers such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the World Economic Forum.

As for OECD (2025, p. 32) my axes are similarly described to Capacity Building initiatives of the organization. In more detail, digital and physical accessibility assessments, the expansion of learning opportunities of new training programmes and introduction guidance on domestic and sexual violence were in the core actions for this year. In a report of the World Economic Forum (2025) was clearly stated that DEI efforts will enable companies to navigate macroeconomic shifts and help businesses thrive in an era where adaptability and resilience are paramount. Well-designed DEI strategies are creating an environment where all employees are able to perform at their highest potential, thereby boosting business performance. Finally, such strategies foster internal transparent systems and build trustful channels of communication. Scientific and research papers were also a source of the previous research to be mentioned.

There has been extensive research on DEI policies on private and public bodies and although there is a lot of negative actions mobilized by the President of the USA, Donald Trump in Greece there is a momentum to act and create change.

In 1996 Thomas and Ely introduced the importance of diverse groups in a work place in USA.

As for Europe, same developments were occurring (Pollack & Hafner-Burton, 2000)

having as main scope the gender mainstreaming. In Greece the most recent law is from 2021 (4808/2021) that covers all the important axes in gender equality and antidiscrimination policies.

Moreover, there are some ongoing EU research projects that are occupied with DEI and antidiscrimination policies and gender equality and I chose to refer to only three of them.

The EU-funded Push*Back*Lash project is targeting the backlash against feminism and gender equality and its impact on democracy. It examines phenomena such as hate speech in social media, anti-equality debates in political parties and parliaments, and citizens' attitudes towards democracy and feminism. The project brought together gender activists, EU experts and researchers from several fields such as political science, anthropology, communication and media, philosophy, sociology and social psychology.

Another EU project is “pICTureURpath – Fostering gender balance in pursuing ICT related studies and professions” project that aims to identify the key factors and actors that influence girls' aspirations in pursuing Information and Communications Technology (ICT) studies and professions in Europe, with the scope to design a pedagogical framework and policy recommendations that have high potential for increasing the number of girls whose career choice or learning pathway leads to an ICT. The EU-funded GenderSAFE project promotes zero tolerance for gender-based violence in the European Research Area and supports research and higher education institutions in establishing safe, inclusive and respectful environments by setting up comprehensive policies. Gender-based violence is a persistent problem in higher education and research institutions with severe consequences at the individual, institutional and societal levels.

Although the majority of previous research had as main scope the economic growth DEI policies (Kochan et al, 2003) may offer I am not sure if my scope will be directly related to economic advance. Yes, I believe diversity and cross cooperation will be only beneficial long term in terms of finances but my initial thought is related to humanitarian ideals. Actually, this was also indicated by my responders in question No. 15 where the financial growth as a beneficial aspect of a DEI department received only two votes.

Research institutions and universities grapple with demands related to greater equity, inclusivity, and representation across various contexts (Alzahmi et al, 2025).

Additionally, as a research team of a research institute that acts as the research arm of a university, we are playing a role in transforming societies, by educating decision-makers, leaders, entrepreneurs, and academics with main scope to serve the greater public good (Lozano et al, 2013).

Organizational change goals may target individuals or structures. Managing DEI strategies that emphasize on everyone's unique contribution to an organization, similarly value employees' diversity. Furthermore, differences are positive. Heterogeneity is valuable and can be utilized to enhance an organization's effectiveness (Benschop & Verloo, 2011).

DEI policies across research and educational workplaces foster innovation, build trust, and reduce inequities, while the absence of them reinforce systemic barriers and weakens social cohesion. Work is a central fact of human life and everyone has the right to work under just and favourable conditions (Baker et al, 2004). DEI therefore requires structural reforms that influence hiring, curriculum design, workplace culture, and access to opportunity for everyone (Rosa, 2025).

Inequalities can take many forms, and a DEI department can help identify, document, and address them. Such inequalities arise from loosely connected practices, processes, actions, and interpretations that create disparities among organizational members.

The visibility of inequality, meaning the extent to which such inequalities are recognized varies across organizations. Lack of awareness may be either intentional or unintentional and diversity programs and policies often focus primarily on addressing subtle discriminatory processes that divide organizational members through education and awareness-raising initiatives (Acker, 2006).

Employers of any industry (businesses, universities, nonprofits, governmental agencies, etc.) acknowledge that they are duty-bound to ensure a harmonious, equitable, and safe work environment devoid of any form of discrimination, harassment, and intimidation. Dedicated DEI programs with strategies, training, hiring and promotion metrics, and monitoring with metrics and audits are running globally but achieving equality requires a systematic approach of investigative organizational/institutional auditing, mapping, and diagnosing the ills that constrain collaboration and reduce productivity (Souza & White, 2024).

DEI policies are highly interconnected to anti-bias training, remembering the famous quote routed to ancient Chinese philosophy “*Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.*”

The University of Auckland in their everyday policies in DEI and in order for the university to foster an environment where all members of its community can thrive have set specific steps towards

- ✓ Leadership Training
- ✓ Research, teaching and learning
- ✓ Communications and events
- ✓ Policies procedures and other initiatives
- ✓ Data and qualitative information
- ✓ Services, Spaces and facilities

A culture of trust and psychological safety is one of the 6 Key Levers of a Successful Organizational Transformation (White et al, 2023). Everyone wants to be seen, listened to, and heard by another person. This can motivate us to work harder, and help assuage emotions like doubt, fear, anger, and sadness.

Psychological safety could be the baseline. A trustful environment can voice concerns without fear. Focus on those most at risk according to intersectional lenses. Hold leaders accountable. Measure real outcomes and take action when progress is on hold. Address bias everywhere. Review recruitment, advancement, and daily interactions for fairness. Keep dialogue open and pay attention to power relations that may be disguised. Regularly invite feedback and revisit the procedures (Diversity, 2025).

To paraphrase Ahmed (2012:26), institutions and organizations need to overcome their “institutional inertia” when it comes to DEI. To value DEI is to value those who can “be heard and act” under its name. Also implementing DEI requires time, energy, and labor and DEI instructors aim to intervene in how an organization surfaces.

According to Saeed Aldulaimi (2018) there is a strong connection between DEI and soft skills in Higher Education Institutions. My research project regards a research team that is located and monitored by a higher education establishment and hard skills, the technical skills although essential for the operation, the soft skills, eg building trust, the mentoring and coaching, a supporting system, emotional intelligence, empathy, accountability, friendliness, unselfishness, cultural and Diversity Awareness directly influence the organizational performance of an institution.

According to my literature review there are positive developments from all key policy players (EC, OECD etc) that could be used as a fine base while the scholarly is divided on the social positive impact on one hand and on the financial growth on the hand. My project could bridge the gap on DEI policies on the Greek research ecosystem as

although research institutes are usually nonprofit foundations they somehow embrace corporate-style management practices.

5 Ethics

The Master Thesis was based on LiU's GDPR and ethics policy. The participants of the survey were informed for the scope of the survey and that their data were gathered anonymously having the free choice to withdraw their participation at any given time.

Forming a semi-structured Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI) department in a research team with technological focus.

Dear Participant,

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!

I am conducting this survey as part of my Master Thesis at the Master's Programme: Gender Studies Intersectionality and Change of the Linköping University. This research focuses on exploring DEI aspects within a research work environment.

Your participation will provide valuable insights that will contribute to a deeper understanding of this important topic.

Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time.

This survey is anonymous and it will take you approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. Your responses are confidential and will be used solely for academic purposes.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact the student Ms Despoina Kaneti (Student Id 19840505-T668) at deska015@student.liu.se

Figure 1 Screenshot from the informative message of my survey

The interviewees were also informed about the scope of the semi-structured interviews and that no personal data was collected and they could withdraw their participation at any given time. Their responses weren't recorded by any digital tool or application for transmissions.

6 Methodological approach

Regarding my methodological approach I was influenced by ethnographic elements

given the fact that I was a member of the workplace I studied and I was able to observe, participate and interact with my sample. Fieldwork is the symbolic act of “walking in the shoes” of my participants.

My challenge was to maintain my critical reflection as a researcher and this is analysed in the chapter of my limitations.

Following the ethnographic approach I tried to witness, inquire and analyze culture (Ladner, 2014) and as for my interviewees I tried to find participants who may offer the greatest potential for understanding the topic I research. My project was based on Social Justice Theory on Intersectionality and on Organizational Change Theory that I will analyse further below and I used mixed methods, a survey as quantitative method and three semi-structured interviews as qualitative method.

6.1 Theories

My research was based on Social Justice Theory (Rawls, 1971), on Intersectionality and on Organizational Change Theory (Kotter1996, Dawson 2003).

Getting familiar the past few months with Intersectionality either as a method, theory or methodology I tried to make a connection with Social Justice Theory. As stated above in my sample I could only examine certain intersections (gender, age, educational background, sexual orientation and family status) and as a result I couldn't rely on Intersectionality as a methodology for my whole project.

However, reflecting on Intersectionality as a theory is what gives feedback to DEI policies and the existence of DEI policies in any organization may contribute to Social Justice Theory.

Intersectionality firstly introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) that commented that there more than one factors for a woman to be marginalized offers a more layered perspective on identity, acknowledging that people may experience intersecting forms of privilege and discrimination at the same time, shaped by social categories such as race, gender, class, and sexuality (Davis, 2014).

Connecting Intersectionality and Social Justice Theory, both theories share the goal to address and dismantle systemic inequalities. Intersectionality provides a framework for understanding how different forms of discrimination (e.g., racism, sexism, classism) intersect, while Social Justice Theory focuses on creating equitable access to resources, opportunities, and rights for all individuals. Furthermore, Intersectionality emphasizes

the complexity of social identities and how they interact in unique ways while Social Justice Theory benefits from this approach by recognizing that individuals may face multiple, overlapping forms of oppression, which may require nuanced solutions. In Power Dynamics, both frameworks analyze power dynamics within society. Intersectionality examines how power operates through intersecting identities, while Social Justice Theory seeks to challenge and change these power structures to promote fairness and equity. Intersectionality encourages critical reflexivity, where individuals and researchers examine their own positionality and biases. This self-awareness is crucial in Social Justice Theory to ensure that efforts to promote equity are inclusive and effective. Regarding their transformative potential, Intersectionality is a tool for social justice, highlighting the compounded effects of multiple forms of discrimination though Social Justice Theory uses this insight to develop strategies that address these complex inequalities, aiming for transformative change. Finally, on their practical application integrating Intersectionality into Social Justice on Policy Development policies that address the needs of individuals with intersecting identities, on education and training by educating stakeholders about the importance of Intersectionality in understanding social justice issues and on research and advocacy by conducting research that incorporates intersectional analysis. As a conclusion by combining these approaches, we can better understand and address the multifaceted nature of inequality and work towards a more just and inclusive society.

Moving forward to organizational change theories, Kotter's model is considered "classic" for the field of organization change in university and research institutions, taking balances of power and politics that are characteristic parts of academic systems (Vlachopoulos, 2021).

Regarding the Kotter 8-Step Process Organizational Change Theory my proposal for founding a semi-structured DEI department will be based on the below steps.

EIGHT STEPS TO TRANSFORMING YOUR ORGANIZATION

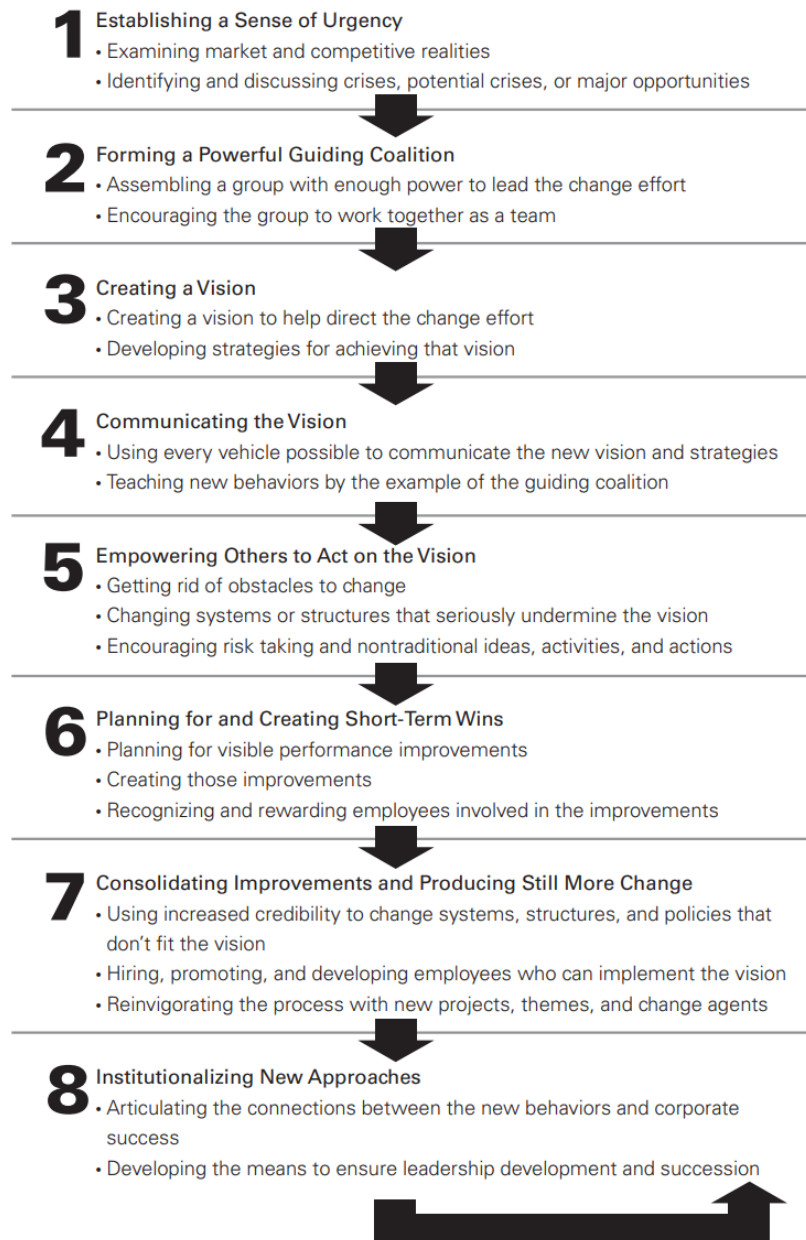


Figure 2 Kotter, J. P. (1995). *Leading change: Why transformation efforts fail*. *Harvard Business Review*, 73(2), p. 62

Similar to Kotter's steps, Dawson (2003) introduced a five-step model

- 1 identifying a need for change
- 2 selecting an intervention technique
- 3 gaining top management support
- 4 overcoming resistance to change
- 5 evaluating the change process

Heracleous (2001) suggested the following process to achieve organizational change.

- a. Situation analysis: where are we now?

This regards the understanding of the basic assumptions and beliefs of core business

- b. Policy and strategy making: where do we want to go?

This is to clarify how assumptions and beliefs govern existing strategy when contemplating strategic reorientation or organizational change triggered by some internal or external incident.

- c. Organizational implications: which values need to be changed in accordance with new strategy and which do not?

- d. Change management: focusing the organizational dimensions that should be changed in order to accomplish strategic change.

- e. Monitoring and evaluation: tracking the progression of ongoing organizational change.

For Callerstig (2012) possible and positive change consists of creating legitimacy for the work and get the management engaged. A second step is the new alliances and especially with the more influential. Lastly, provide professionalism and disseminate the good work are of key factors in achieving change.

As for Rao and Kelleher (2005), a range of challenges hinder organisations tasked with mainstreaming gender in development. These include insufficient support from senior management, weak accountability mechanisms, and limited DEI and gender-related knowledge and skills among high-level staff. A ‘politics of solidarity’ though is needed to infuse our work with vision and energy. A politics of solidarity can help us to assess strategically how to advance a transforming agenda, particularly when different persons are trying to work in synergy.

To obtain Organizational Change one must understand the organizational ontology of an organisation. This refers to their collective understanding of how they operate, the hierarchy, rules, codes of conduct, how they perform and distribute work tasks, and how they collaborate across departments. That is to say, there is a shared set mode of operations; a set way of doing things to legitimize work. However, certain ontologies also exist within the separate departments. They all have their academic and occupational methods of doing things, they draw on theory from their field of expertise, and they are used to doing things a certain way within their field (Skov, 2022). Understanding will be the first step in order to attain Organizational Change towards DEI developments.

Reflecting on communicating the vision, the format of communicating the axes of the DEI department could be based on the guide of EC on writing policy briefs for impact (EC, 2025).

It would be tailored to my audience, highlighting key messages by focusing on the essentials, why it matters and what should be done. I would include clear recommendations and provide evidence based on reliable data and references to external sources. I would be transparent and follow a structured format and I would use plain language accessible to all.

6.2 Methods

As for the methods I used mixed methods. Considering I had access to a broad sample (more than 150 co-workers) a survey was distributed and was asked to filled in voluntarily and according to ethics policy of LiU. A preview of the selected questions can be found in the appendix A as stated before. The results provided some valuable insights on how familiar my colleagues were with DEI definitions and policies, their willingness to participate and embrace new initiatives, such as participation in webinars and voluntary committees, learn how to use gender-neutral language, choose inclusive venues, create inclusive websites and support the creation of an antiharassment sexual policy. As a second step, building upon the findings of the survey I performed qualitative method in the form of 3 semi-structured interviews. Both methods provided me with a broader perception by capturing numerical data (quantitative) and contextual insights (qualitative).

Using mixed methods allows a study of a given research topic a broader and deeper perspective, so as to attain richer and more varied data which might draw from different approaches and paradigms.

Mixed methods seen as sequential contributions for the strengths of the first method to enhance the performance of the second method. This approach relies on the fact that each method serves a different purpose and one method builds on what you learned from the other (Morgan, 2014).

7 Analysis of the material

In this chapter I will analyze the responses I have received to my survey and to my semi-structured interviews.

7.1 Analysis of the survey

Some general personal comments on the responses of my survey I would like to focus on the fact that I have received more responses from my male colleagues instead of my female colleagues which I thought they will be more sensitive in the aspects of a DEI department. Of course, we have more male staff but why my initiative thought was that I will receive more answers from females? I came to a point to think that I reproduce stereotypes and this was a reminder to reevaluate my positionality and my situated knowledges.

My sample was highly qualified and well educated (Master/MBA/PhD). More than 50% of my sample was unfamiliar with DEI definitions. As for the aspects, equity and inclusion interest them the most and as regards diversity gained less attraction. While I read and analyze this difference, I can only presume that perhaps they cannot understand the boundaries between the definitions and this is something to further explore when we form the department and perform the first introductory seminars.

Regarding the voluntary participation on a DEI internal committee my sample was almost equally disturbed positively and negatively. This would need further exploration when we form the semi-structured DEI department. How will I be able to engage them? Unfortunately, I haven't mentioned that there will be rotation and perhaps one might think that it would be a long-term and time-consuming procedure.

I was positively surprised by their willingness to participate in trainings/seminars/webinars regarding DEI policies and developments. One can witness willingness for new knowledge and luckily having explored the Greek and European ecosystem I would be able to propose experts to help us organize such events. Regarding their awareness to Gender-biased language or Gender-discriminatory language, the majority replied they are unfamiliar but they are eager (per 80%) to consider using Gender-neutral language in all our communications or any material we produce.

On the question of the accessibility standards for our event venues, 63% stated that we follow accessibility standards and 70% believe that our official website or the websites of the projects we manage are inclusive but unfortunately, they are not. 61% have participated in panels.

In the question if a DEI department would be beneficial for our work environment, I would expect more positive responses taking into account the response I received in the

open question No. 6.

Defining the beneficial for them in terms of collaboration, innovation, financial growth, open communication, fostering togetherness and Other, collaboration and togetherness hit the biggest ranking.

Regarding their previous experiences in DEI policies/developments in their work career, the greater part replied negatively highlighting the broad spectrum to flourish such initiatives in the Greek work ecosystem.

Finally, I was shocked to see that 80% of my responders are interested in forming an anti-harassment sexual policy. This surprised me as the majority are men and again, I found myself biased and reproducing stereotypes that perhaps men wouldn't have been so sensitive in such an initiative since women have increased possibilities to become victims.

In the final question which was the second open question I received very few answers which confirmed my decision not to have many open questions in order to have as many participants as I could. Two of my participants commented the form of the anti-harassment sexual policy and one commented that I should have included the option "I do not know". I read carefully this comment and although at the beginning I felt sorry for this, then I concluded this is why we should form such a department to educate those who are unfamiliar.

I believe by mistake I haven't made this question obligatory as well and I will have to examine it further.

I also regretted not to give the option in question No. 5 to reply "all" and also provide the response ethical consideration in question No. 15. This was something that captured my interest after having distributed the survey while exploring my literature and the Value-Sensitive Design Approach.

Finally, I received informal, oral messages that for some responders it felt limited to have only "yes" or "no" in the answers and not include "maybe". This will be taken into account on future projects.

Besides the direct results I extracted, in some questions I tried to explore the gender aspect. Consequently, in questions No. 4, 7 and 9 I had a dual analysis.

Furthermore, on question No. 6 I made further interpretation of the results by dividing their responses to ones related to work and to ones related to society.

In more detail:

On Question **No. 1** about **Gender**

1. Gender
70 responses

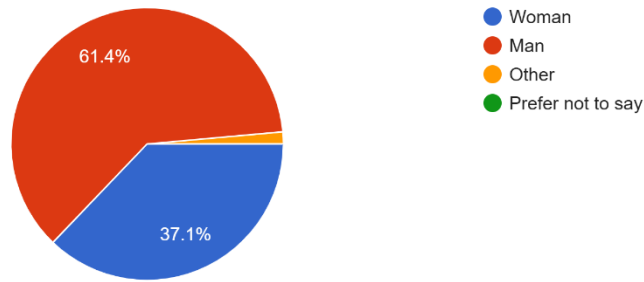


Figure 3 Replies on Gender

Men	61,4 %
Women	37,1 %
Other	1%

Table 1 Replies on Gender

I received more responses from my male colleagues.

On Question No. 2 for **Educational Background**, I received the following responses

2. Educational Background
70 responses

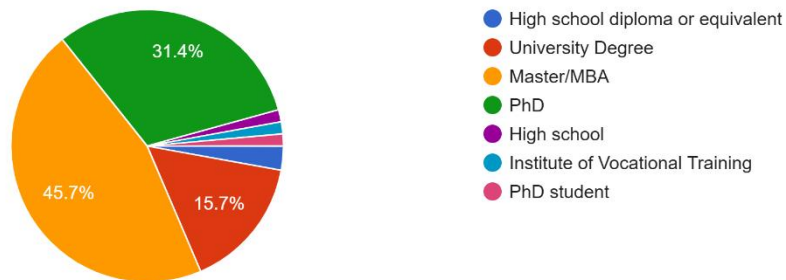


Figure 4 Replies on Educational Background

High school diploma or equivalent & High School ¹	4,3%
University Degree	15,7 %

¹ Regarding the High school option, I mistakenly had twice the same option and I decided to summarize it in one answer.

Master/MBA	45,7%
PhD	31,4 %
Institute of Vocational Training	1,4 %
PhD student	1,4 %

Table 2 Replies on Educational Background

As we see the majority of my respondents holds a Master/MBA and the PhD was the second highest score.

On Question **No. 3** about the **current position within our team** as I mention in the question, the questions were intentionally left broad to confirm the anonymity, I received the following responses.

3. Which is your current position within your team? * the categories are intentionally broad to confirm anonymity
70 responses

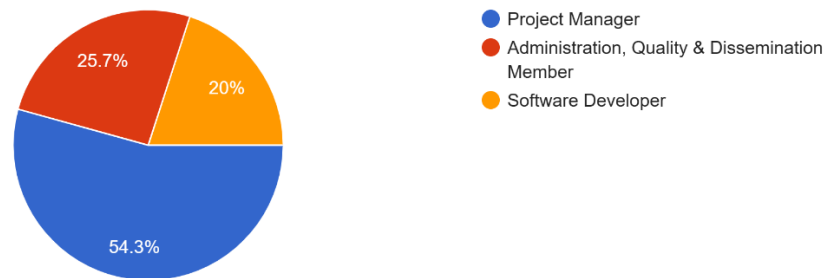


Figure 5 Replies on current position

Project Managers	54,3 %
Administration, Quality and Dissemination	25,7 %
Software Developers	20%

Table 3 Replies on current position

Most of my respondents were Projects managers.

In question **No. 4** about their **familiarity with the DEI definition** in a linear perspective of 1 was the least and 5 scored for the most I received the following replies.

4. Are you familiar with the DEI definition

70 responses

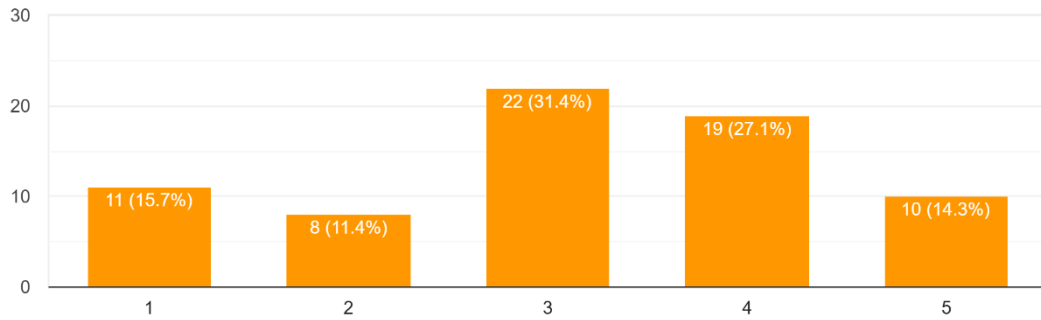


Figure 6 Replies on familiarity with the DEI definition

1	15,7 %
2	11,4 %
3	31,4 %
4	27,1 %
5	14,3 %

Table 4 Replies on familiarity with the DEI definition

Although we can see the higher score was on 3 if we add the percentages of 4 and 5 more than 40% is familiar or very familiar with the DEI definition.

Regarding the gender aspect of this question both women and men highly scored on linear scale No. 3 while we see on scale No 5 male participants scored the lowest score.

Familiarity with the DEI definition	Among Men	Among Women
	Percentage	Percentage
1	20,93%	7,69%
2	11,63%	11,54%
3	30,23%	34,62%
4	27,91%	26,92%
5	9,30%	19,23%

Table 5 gender aspect on DEI definition

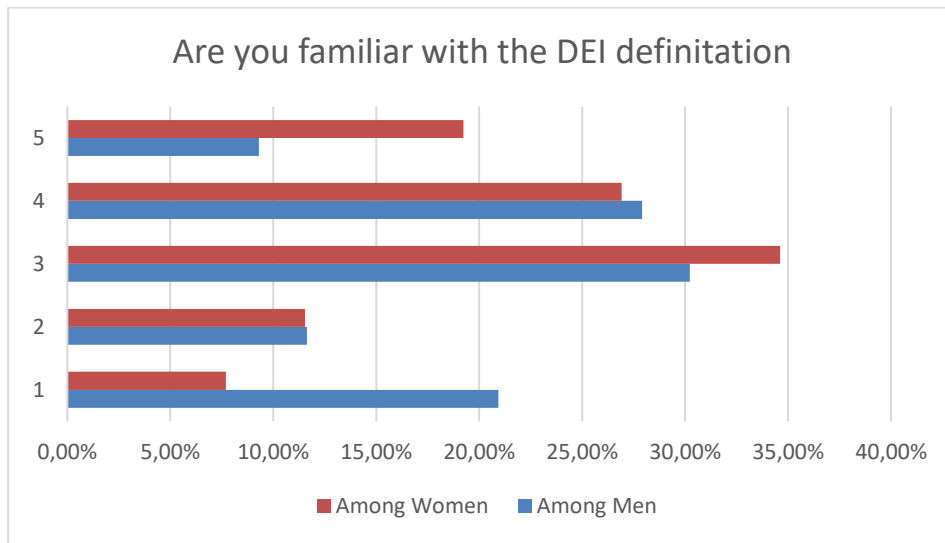


Figure 7 Visualization of the gender aspect

In question **No. 5** regarding **which aspect of DEI interests** them the most, the participants chose the following.

5. Which aspect interests you the most?
70 responses

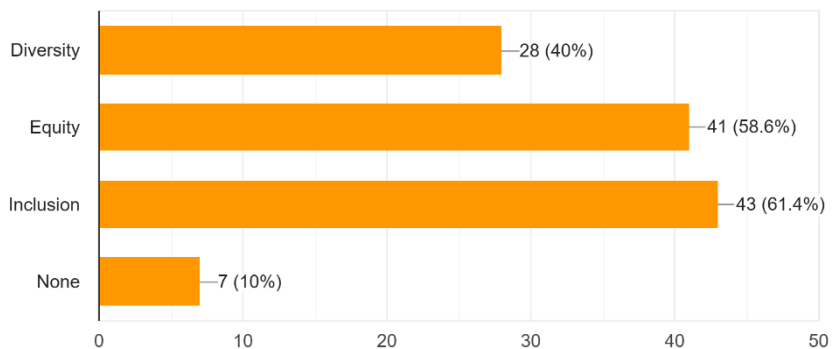


Figure 8 Replies on the aspect of DEI that interests them the most

Diversity	40 %
Equity	58,6 %
Inclusion	61,4 %
None	10 %

Table 6 Replies on the aspect of DEI that interests them the most

We can identify that they had the opportunity to choose more than one answer as a result I received in total 119 responses out of 70 responders. In more detail, **Diversity**

was voted **28 times**, **Equity** was voted **41** times and **Inclusion** **43** times while none of these received 7 votes.

In question **No. 6** where I asked for the **reasoning behind their previous responses** (question No. 5), I received 68 responses.

Question 6 was one of the two open questions I have included in my survey.

The complete list of the responses can be found as Annex B at the end of the document.

Below I have pointed the responses that mainly highlight the connection of forming a DEI department with my Theories.

The following responses deeply resonate to Intersectionality as participants #4, #20, #41, #46, #47, #67 connect a possible DEI department to access and fairness recur and several stress equity as removing structural barriers while #15 set it as the “first pillar”, #40 as the “base”, #65 “equity provides not just the same treatment, but the right support”. Equal treatment isn’t sufficient when starting points differ and the responders reject one size fits all “equality” and ask for situated supports.

A few link DEI to human rights and gendered discrimination (#13, #29, #52 “gender gap” and “prejudice against women”), while the research/tech context appears often (#1 “research purposes should include societal considerations”, #14 “technology solutions should be inclusive”, #30, #34, #36, #64, #70), hinting that different roles and identities (researchers, engineers, Project Managers) experience inclusion differently.

The equity first responses (#15, #40, #65) already speak this language: they implicitly reject one size fits all “equality” and ask for situated supports.

Linking of psychological safety and sense of belonging (#37, #38 “Individuals working in inclusive environments feel welcome and respected”, #53, #63) also resonate with intersectionality’s emphasis on lived experience and voice: people at different intersections need different conditions to participate fully.

Reflecting on the interconnection to Social Justice Theory, my responders replied that fairness/justice language is strong (#4, #20, #29 “it allows individuals regardless of their background, identity etc. to feel respected and equally treated and have equal rights”, #41, #46, #47, #67), and some explicitly invoke human rights (#13 “Sensitive to human rights”, #29) and gender injustice (#52).

Many see belonging as a justice outcome (#19, #37, #38, #53, #63 “By creating a

welcoming and supportive environment, everyone feels valued and able to contribute their best”, #70), not just a “nice to have.” Participants #15, #40, #65 place equity as a solution to remedy material/structural disadvantages, while #37, #38, #50, #53 use Inclusion to repair status injuries and cultural devaluation.

Representation as “all voices heard” (#20, #50) and the research design emphasis (#1, #30) ensuring parity of participation.

DEI policies strengthen the fairness and quality of decision making (clear criteria, wide pools, bias checks) and the Social Justice Theory provides the tools to implement it.

Moving to the connection of the replies to Organizational Change Theory, for responders (#12, #44, #50, #68) Inclusion is “the key” and is the aspect that repeatedly tied to everyday practices: meetings, collaboration, leadership, culture (#38, #50, #53).

As regards the Equity aspect as base/process (#15, #40, #51, #54, #65) implies systems (transparent hiring, evaluation, progression) rather than ad hoc goodwill, while Diversity meant as innovation (#21, #23, #28, #36, #51) links DEI with performance and learning, core arguments in change management.

Finally, some mention that tech should be inclusive by definition (#14) and research design should embed societal considerations (#1, #30) align with change embedded in workflows, not just HR policy. That’s classic organizational design.

Further to the above analysis, on summarizing the raw data by using SPSS I found out that in many replies they chose to refer to more than one aspect of DEI definition.

My interpretation on open-ended question	Frequency	Percentage
Diversity	3	4,35%
Diversity, Equity	3	4,35%
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion	20	28,99%
Diversity, Inclusion	4	5,80%
Equity	14	20,29%
Equity, Inclusion	6	8,70%
Inclusion	10	14,49%
N/A	9	13,04%

Table 7 My personal interpretation on the open-ended question No. 6

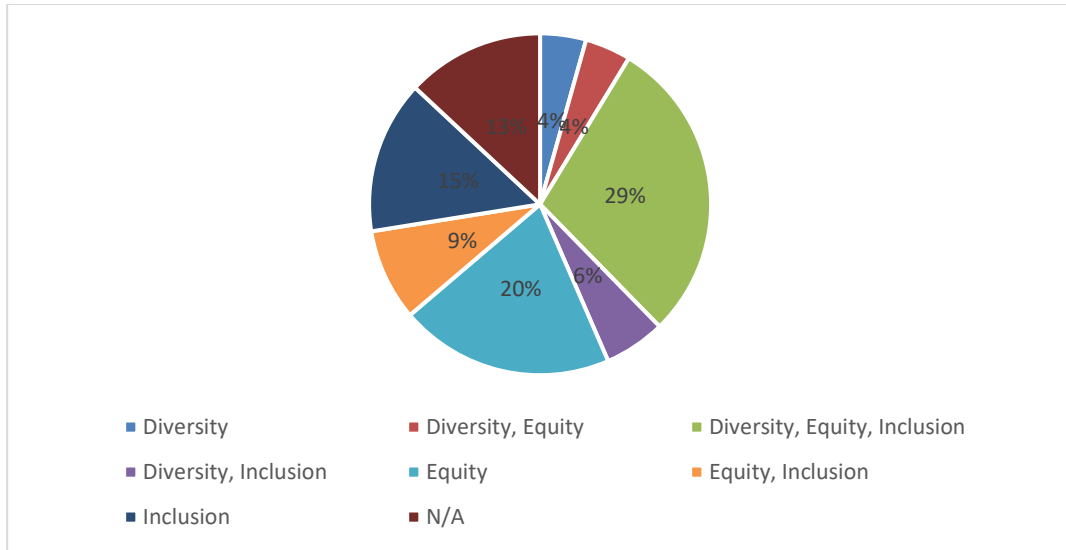


Figure 9 Visualisation of my personal interpretation on the open-ended question No. 6

Additionally, and although the survey was distributed on a work environment asking questions to form a DEI department within our team there were responses that connected DEI to society and not only to the impact could have on our work. The option N/A that stands for “Not Available” included responses that couldn’t be added to my choice on society, work and work-society together.

Connecting the DEI policies to work or society	Frequency	Percentage
society	12	17,14%
work	22	31,43%
work, society	13	18,57%
N/A	23	32,86%

Table 8 Connecting the DEI policies to work or society

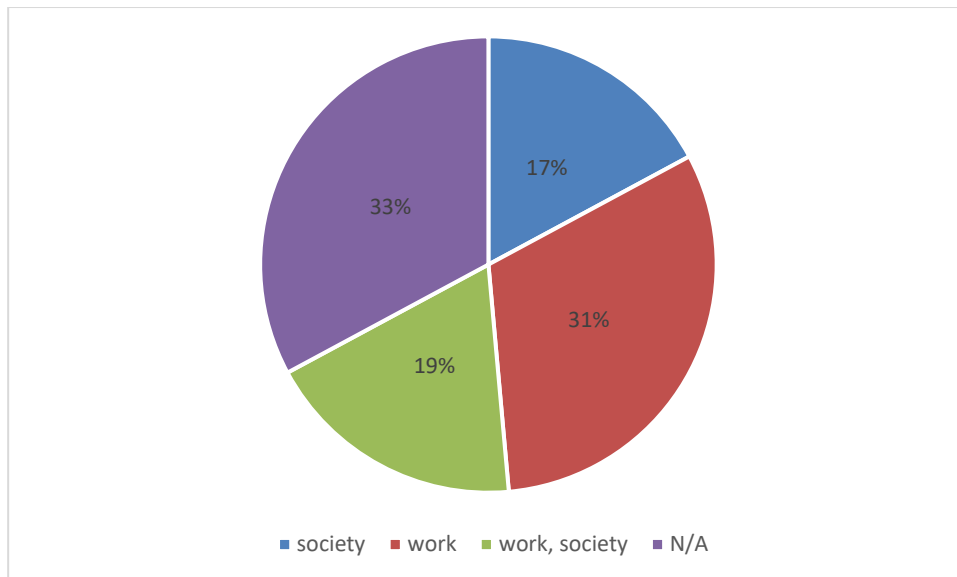


Figure 10 Connecting the DEI policies to work or society

This specific aspect intrigued me as it is a clear evidence that DEI is interconnected to Social Justice Theory.

Concluding the analysis of my survey, I can identify some hesitation around “forced diversity” (#58) and merit (#11) perhaps revealing anxiety about how policies meet lived identities and indicating a need to reconcile justice with perceived fairness of process.

Regarding the negative response or no responses #6, #7, #26, #31, #49, #56, #69 it is expected and almost natural given the amount of the responders to receive some denial of what I am proposing either due to unfamiliarity or due to resistance in something new. It is not something that threatens me, it is just showing the extra effort I have to put to engage as many as I can.

In question **No. 7** about the **possibility to participate to a DEI voluntary internal committee** they replied the following taking into account that 1 stand for the least possible and 5 indicates the very possible.

7. Please indicate how possible you find to participate to a DEI voluntary internal committee?

70 responses

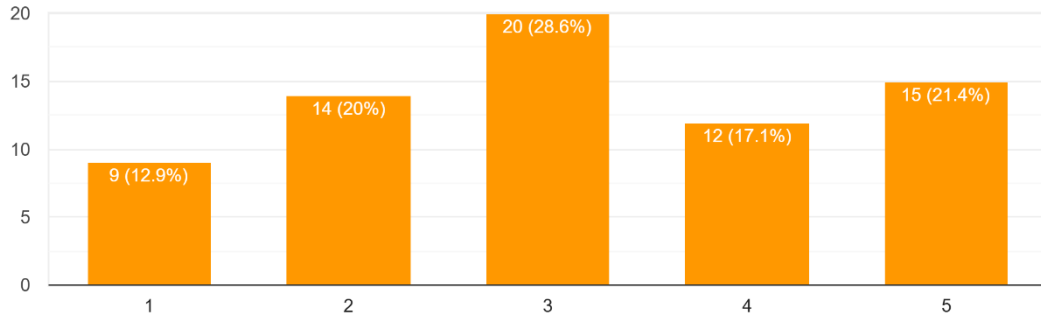


Figure 11 Replies on the possibility of participating in a DEI voluntary internal committee

1	12,9 %
2	20 %
3	28,6 %
4	17,1 %
5	21,4 %

Table 9 Replies on the possibility to participate in a DEI voluntary internal committee

I can identify that almost 40% of my responders are willing to engage in the initiative I am proposing. Training is a key factor in when proposing organizational change. Regarding the gender aspect on the replies of this question women are ranking the highest scores on the linear scale of 4 and 5.

Possibility to participate to a DEI voluntary internal committee	Among Men	Among Women
1	16,28%	7,69%
2	25,58%	11,54%
3	32,56%	23,08%
4	11,63%	26,92%
5	13,95%	30,77%

Table 10 Gender aspect on the possibility to participate to a DEI voluntary internal

committee

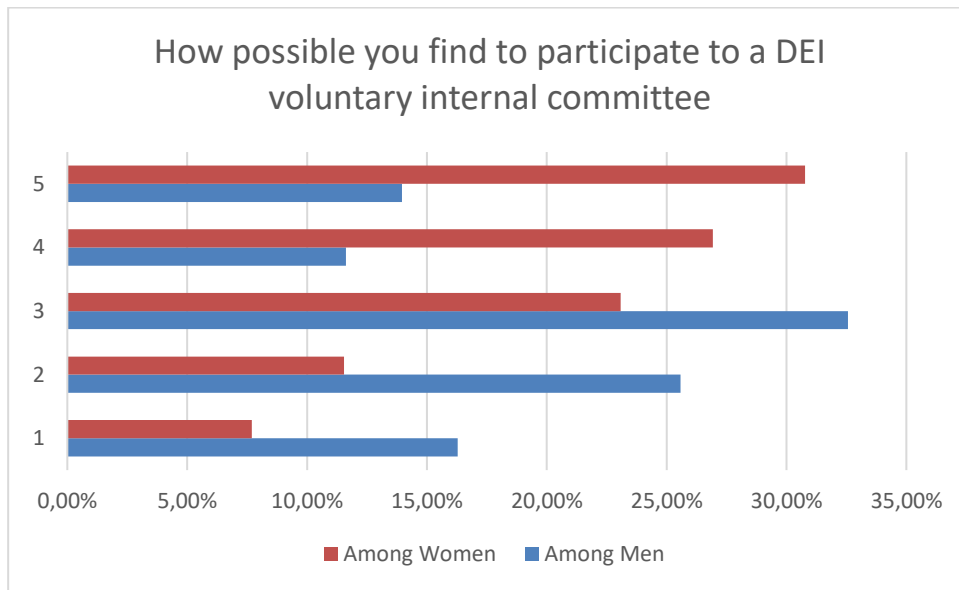


Figure 12 Gender aspect on the possibility to participate to a DEI voluntary internal committee

In question No. **8 about their willingness to participate in trainings/seminars/webinars** regarding DEI policies/developments 75,4% replied positively and 24,6% negatively.

8. Would you participate in trainings/seminars/webinars regarding DEI policies/developments?
69 responses

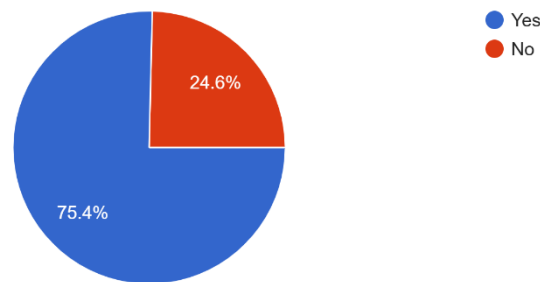


Figure 13 Replies on their willingness to participate in trainings/seminars/webinars

The result is promising for me and for what I am proposing and if the high management team embraces the idea and examines carefully the results we can have a smooth start. Participation in DEI trainings, seminars, and webinars is essential when forming a DEI department because it ensures that practitioners can effectively integrate intersectional analysis, social justice principles, and organizational change theory into their work. A DEI department grounded in continuous learning is better prepared to:

- understand and challenge intersecting systems of oppression,
- design equitable and transformative policies,
- navigate organizational resistance,
- amplify marginalized voices,
- and create sustainable structural change.

In question **No. 9** about their **familiarity with the Gender-biased language or Gender-discriminatory language**, 51,4 % were familiar and 48,6 % unfamiliar.

9. Are you familiar with the Gender-biased language or Gender-discriminatory language?
70 responses

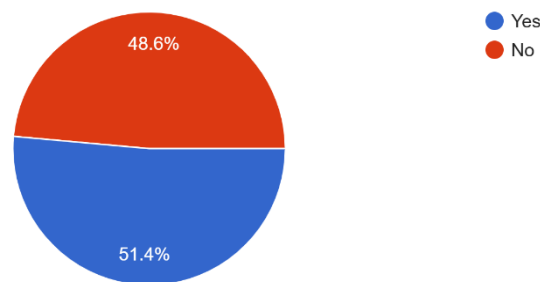


Figure 14 Replies on their familiarity with the Gender-biased language or Gender-discriminatory language

Regarding the gender aspect, women are more familiar to gender-biased language

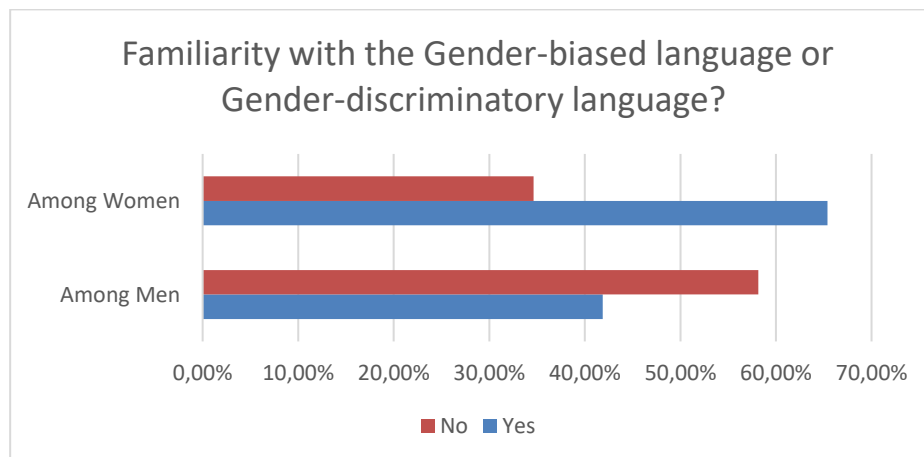


Figure 15 Gender aspect on their familiarity with the Gender-biased language or Gender-discriminatory language

This was surprising for me taking into account that Greek language is a gendered language, distinguished between two grammatical genders: masculine and feminine and by using only the male one contributes to gender stereotypes. Words matter and staying informed and committed, learning to identify the unconscious bias everyone

can play a crucial role in fostering a more gender-equal, inclusive and equitable work environments. Gender-biased or gender-discriminatory language is not merely a linguistic problem, it is a mechanism of power, a cultural practice that maintains hierarchies and reproduces inequalities. By bringing intersectionality and social justice theory into the analysis, we can understand gender-biased language as a structural, relational and multi-layered form of injustice, rather than a superficial communication issue. Thus, gender-biased language becomes a symbolic form of discrimination embedded in everyday interaction, policy documents, job ads, evaluation forms, and organizational culture.

On question **No. 10 if they consider using Gender-neutral language** in their communications or any material they produce I received the following responses. 80% voted positively and 20% voted negatively.

10. Would you consider using Gender-neutral language in your communications or any material you produce?
70 responses

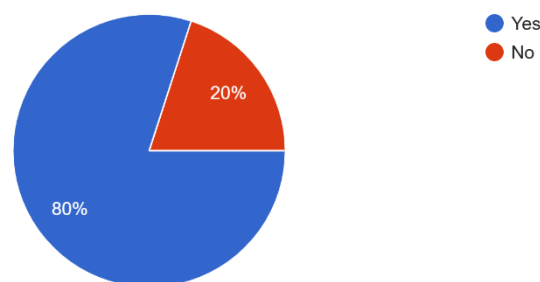


Figure 16 Replies on considering using Gender-neutral language

Although questions No. 9 and 10 have close meaning, in question No. 9 they replied unfamiliar with gender biased language and in question No.10 we can identify their willingness to use neutral language perhaps identifying that gender-neutral language would foster the DEI aspects. Gender-biased language operates as a mechanism of symbolic power that reproduces inequality, when analyzed through the lens of intersectionality, it becomes evident that linguistic discrimination is unevenly distributed across intersecting identities, and social justice theory underscores the necessity of transforming these linguistic practices to ensure recognition, equity, and participatory parity within organizations. Their willingness to change this is a positive outcome.

In question **No. 11** about their knowledge of the **accessibility standards of our meeting venues** I received 61,8% positive replies and 38,2% negative.

11. To your knowledge, do our event venues meet accessibility standards?
68 responses

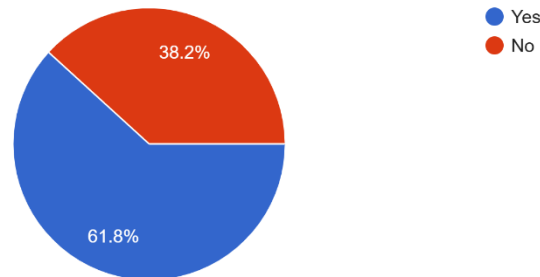


Figure 17 Replies on the accessibility standards of our meeting venues

To my knowledge we don't follow any specific guidelines so I can comment that it is only their aspiration that our meeting venues are accessible rather the reality.

Ensuring that meeting venues meet accessibility standards is not simply a matter of compliance, it is a matter of equity, justice and inclusion. When examined through intersectionality and social justice theory, accessibility becomes a structural requirement for creating environments where all participants can engage fully and meaningfully.

Accessibility standards in meeting venues are fundamental to practicing intersectional social justice because they dismantle structural barriers, ensure equitable participation, and recognize the diverse needs of individuals whose experiences of disability intersect with gender, race, class, sexuality, and other axes of identity.

Designing accessible meeting spaces is therefore not only a matter of accommodation but a core practice of justice, dignity, and inclusive organizational change.

In question **No. 12** about our **official website or the websites of the projects we manage if they are inclusive**, 70,6 % believes that they are inclusive and 29,4 % disagrees on that.

12. Do you think our official website or the websites of the projects we manage are inclusive?

68 responses

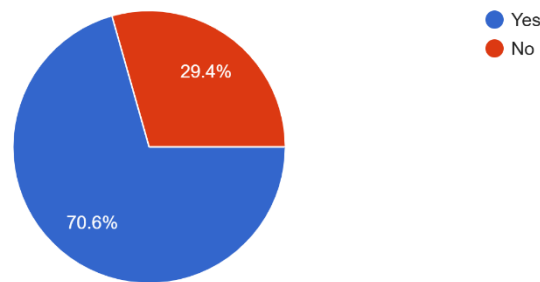


Figure 18 Replies on the inclusiveness of our official website or the websites of the projects we manage

Unfortunately our websites are not inclusive and do not follow the universal design principles. I can only assume that taking into account the broad spectrum of research activities we perform and having an allocated UI/UX team it could be easy to accomplish this. After all, an organization's official website, or the websites of our projects, is one of its most visible public interfaces. Designing these websites to be fully inclusive is not just a technical or aesthetic choice, it is a social justice practice guided by the principles of intersectionality and equity. Creating inclusive official and project websites is an essential practice of intersectional social justice: it ensures that diverse users across gender, race, class, ability, sexuality, age, and linguistic background can access information, participate meaningfully, and experience digital environments free from structural exclusion. Through an intersectional lens, inclusive web design becomes a mechanism that combats overlapping inequalities while social justice theory frames it as a necessary redistributive and recognition-based intervention.

On question **No. 13** about their **participation in manels** (panel sessions with only male participants) 64,3 % replied positively and 35,7% negatively.

13. Have you ever participated in manels (panel sessions with only male participants)?

70 responses

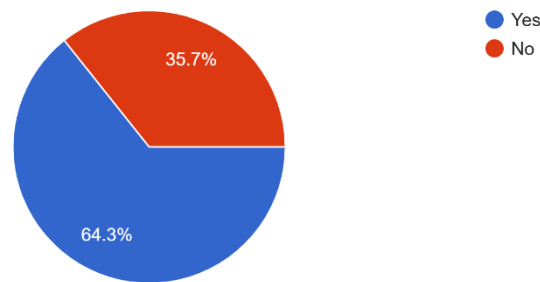


Figure 19 Replies on participation in manels

Having checked our latest participation on events, conferences and congresses I was able to identify many manels. Participation in all-male panels reinforces structural inequalities by centering male, often white and privileged, expertise while marginalizing the voices of women and minoritized groups. Using an intersectionality lens reveals how manels perpetuate overlapping forms of exclusion, while social justice theory shows that they violate recognition, redistributive, and participatory justice. Rejecting manels becomes an organizational change strategy that challenges entrenched cultural norms, disrupts homogenous networks, and promotes a more equitable, inclusive, and socially just institutional environment.

Here, I should take into consideration that the majority of the admin staff and the developers do not participate in events that often. Regarding this question it draws to another personal and scientific interest on women's representation.

Reflecting on questions No. 8 to 13 the available responses were only "yes" or "no" which at the time I was analysing the material seemed that I offered my participants limited options but in the same time, in that way it was easier for me to quantify and analyze statistically and it was faster for my respondents to complete the questionnaire. The close ended questions gave me the insights I was looking for the purpose of this project that as stated before were based to our GEP and to EC's policies.

On question **No. 14 to indicate if a DEI department would be beneficial for our work environment**, I received the below answers taking into account that 1 stands for less beneficial and 5 indicated the very beneficial.

14. Indicate if a DEI department would be beneficial for your work-environment.

70 responses

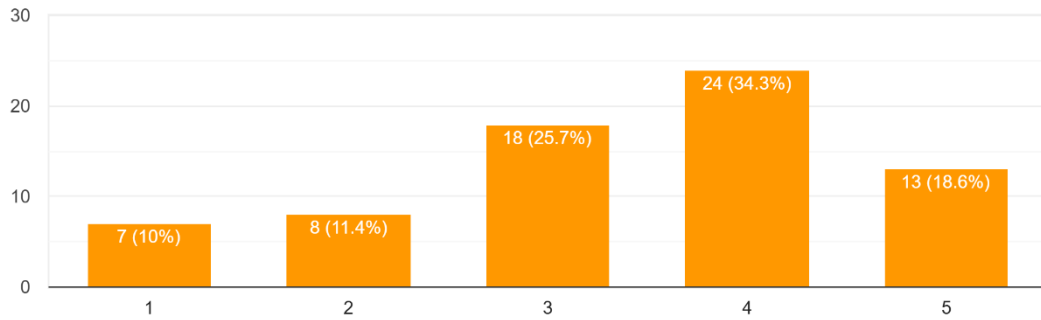


Figure 20 Replies on indicating if a DEI department would be beneficial for our work environment

1	10 %
2	11,4 %
3	25,7 %
4	34,3 %
5	18,6 %

Table 11 Replies on indicating if a DEI department would be beneficial for our work environment

One can identify that more 50% would found it beneficial.

Forming a DEI department is not merely a symbolic gesture, it is a strategic, structural, and ethical investment in the overall effectiveness and sustainability of our team. Drawing from Intersectionality, social justice theory, and organizational change scholarship, the argument for establishing a DEI department becomes especially compelling. It ensures fair and equitable distribution of opportunities, enhances employee well-being, addresses structural barriers, and builds a more resilient, innovative, and inclusive work environment capable of navigating complex social realities.

On question No. **15 to Define what beneficial means to them**, I received the following answers:

15. Define beneficial:

67 responses

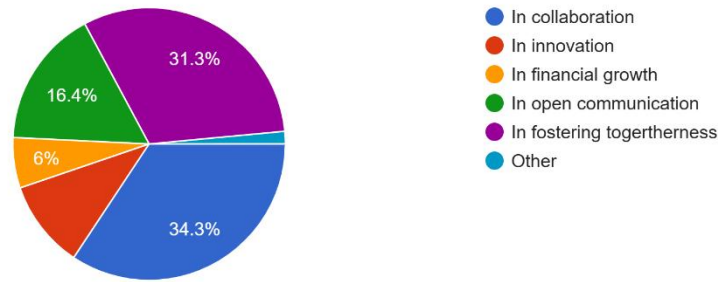


Figure 21 Replies on defining the beneficial aspect

In Collaboration	34,3 %
In Innovation	10,4 %
In financial growth	6 %
In open communication	16,4 %
In fostering togetherness	31,4 %
Other	1,5 %

Table 12 Replies on defining the beneficial aspect

The answers to this question indicate that DEI has strong connection with human relations, the sense of belonging and building communities that foster collaboration, communication and togetherness. Participants' belief that a DEI department would enhance collaboration and foster togetherness directly aligns with intersectionality, social justice theories, and organizational change principles. Intersectionality explains how inclusive structures allow people with diverse identities to collaborate equitably, social justice theory highlights how recognition, redistribution, and participation create environments where togetherness can thrive; and organizational change theory shows that a DEI department institutionalizes these values, producing sustainable cultural transformation that strengthens cohesion across the organization. Moreover, I was amazed to see that togetherness and collaboration were the most popular responses while the financial growth had the lowest rate. This surprised me in a way that although we operate in a very competitive ecosystem in terms of our funding and for our continuity my responders do not prioritize it. Would togetherness and collaboration may foster our financial maintenance? Yes, my literature research showed that groups

alerted and well informed on DEI developments perform better and more efficiently. In question **No. 16** if they have **experienced DEI policies/developments in their work career?** 58,6 % replied “No” and 41,4% replied “Yes”.

16. Have you experienced DEI policies/developments in your work career?
70 responses

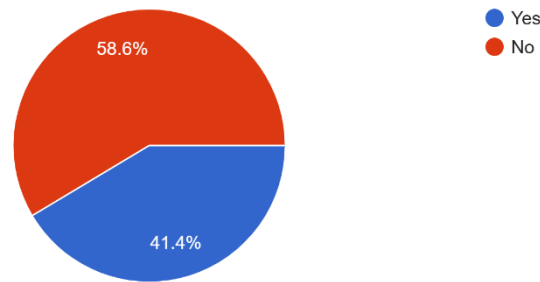


Figure 22 Replies on previous DEI policies/developments in their work career

In this question I wanted to search if my colleagues could give some insights during the implementation phase. Given the fact that the majority don not have previous experience highligh the importance of what I am proposing to tackle the knowledge gaps and of course take advantage and inspiration from those who have to share best practices. As stated previously, such an initiative cannot be realised by one person, it is rather a collaborative effort.

On question **No. 17** if they would be **interested in forming an anti-harassment sexual policy**, 82,6 % replied “Yes” and 17,4 % replied “No”.

17. Would you be interested in forming an anti-harassment sexual policy ?
69 responses

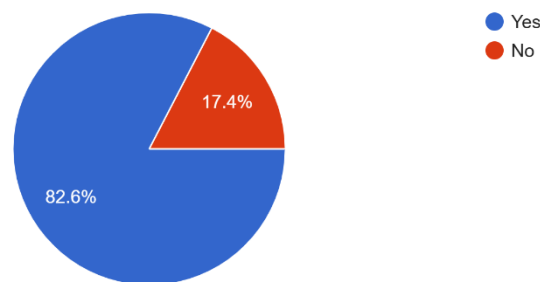


Figure 23 Replies on interest in forming an anti-harassment sexual policy

An anti-harassment and sexual-harassment policy is not only a compliance tool, it is a structural intervention that reflects an organization's commitment to equity, safety,

and dignity. When viewed through the lenses of intersectionality, social justice theory, and organizational change, its deeper significance becomes clear.

An anti-harassment sexual policy aligns directly with intersectionality, social justice theory, and organizational change because it acknowledges the diverse and overlapping vulnerabilities employees face, provides structures that protect dignity and equitable participation, and functions as a formal mechanism to transform workplace norms and power relations. In this sense, such a policy is not merely regulatory, it is a foundational social justice intervention and a catalyst for sustainable organizational change.

18. Would you like something to add/propose?

On the second open ended question I only received 14 responses out of 70 participants. This was a mistake as I falsely didn't make this response obligatory. Nevertheless it also proves that the majority was unwilling to engage to a second open-ended question. The responses as raw data can be found in Annex C of this document. In more detail ten participants replied they "don't have something to add", two participants commented on the anti-harassment policy and how cautious we have to be when forming it as the responder was a male offered me the male gaze, the worry of men to be accused as a harasser based on lies. One participant commented that missed the "I do not know" option as a possible reply and one participant commented the need on bottom-up approaches instead of top down when forming such a department.

7.2 Analysis of the semi-structured interviews

All interviewees had already taken part in the survey and my questions to them were the same except the interviewee No 3 who had two extra questions which I will analyse later.

By the interviews I wanted to gain some insight to be better prepared when I form the DEI semi-structured department, overcome the challenge to change and be innovative.

Here I present some steps that I followed for my interviews

- Sampling according to my positionality
- Fieldwork
- Kit ritual, making sure that I will have everything that I will need and also making a safe and comfortable place for my interviewees

- Punctuality
- Analysing
- Reflect on visualizing of my data
- Reduce and quote
- Draw conclusions and verify

In all three meetings, we met in an office alone, in a familiar place for all of us which was quiet and calm. The semi-structured interviews lasted from 30 to 45 minutes and were held in Greek.

These are the questions they were asked.

1. Which aspect of DEI interests you most?
2. What surprised you positively or negatively in the responses?
3. What do you think I may have omitted?
4. How structured should such a department be, and to what extent should it rely on volunteer work or voluntary committees?
5. How much time should we allow to see organizational changes?
6. Has the absence of such strategies already made your work more difficult?
7. Could you share your experience or examples of successful or unsuccessful DEI practices from your professional journey?

Interviewee No. 1

The interview with my interviewee No. 1, a colleague who has the position of a Project Manager took place on October the 10th. This person has taken part in my survey and had expressed interest to be informed about my results once they were published. Our semi-structured interview took place after our annual work event where I presented some of my results in order to inform my colleagues on what we have accomplished already in terms of Gender equality, gender balance and DEI policies and where we will focus in the next few months. Our director already found the results insightful and proposed having a survey like that or similar to that on an annual basis and encouraged more colleagues to participate in our future surveys. The conversation took place in Greek to avoid the language barrier between us and then it was up to me to transmit unbiased the replies.

Knowing that my interviewee No. 1 could have actual interaction on the semi-structured DEI department in some points we were envisioning a future situation.

As an overall statement she was positively surprised with the eagerness for the majority of my survey contributors to be informed on DEI policies, participate in DEI committees, and their request to participate to new trainings.

As a general comment she pointed out that she missed out a wider spectrum of possible replies.

Discussing on the differences between the words diversity, equity and inclusion taking into account that the diversity received the fewer responses the person reflected on that by saying that to her, this term is closer to diversity on sexual orientation and the social genres or to age diversity and taking into account the difficulties for Greek people to discuss these aspects on workplace perhaps my responders avoided it. It is interesting though that they were keen on inclusion. So, if one is in favor to inclusion it is the diverse groups to include.

Regarding my question, where to start. She replied that the webinars would be a safer option. This aligns to Dawson's second step "selecting an intervention technique".

Discussing on her previous knowledge, having worked abroad, to another country, with other culture she noticed that the starting point would be raising awareness on showing respect and politeness to each other and afterall having DEI policies is respecting the Human Rights. The connection to DEI with Human Rights was also mentioned in my open question No. 6.

In her previous work setting, they had a dedicated department on seminars that targeted any form of diversity. They performed webinars among others on mental health, autism and alcoholism and we discussed if she could bring that knowledge to us.

Regarding her views on organizational change she said that she believed it would be tough, and it will need time to overcome the resistance. According to Blomqvist & Frennberg (2012) a possible solution to resistance is the collaboration and the negotiation.

Reflecting on the procedure, I had an anxiety about not being well prepared and perhaps I intervened too much. Regarding the questions and the procedure, we missed the questions No. 1 and 6.

Interviewee No. 2

My interviewee No. 2 is a female leader within the top management of the organization with her educational background on engineering, currently managing 25 persons while the majority of them in administrative and dissemination positions.

Her previous experience, her participation to events and her personal achievement having supported the promotion of certain female colleagues who started from junior positions and now are ranking high in the organization's hierarchy were the main reasons to choose her for my interview.

On my question what interests her the most she replied she is in favor to equity as she is a woman, half of the global population are women and it resonates to her the most. In fact, she envisions that we will manage within the next few years to have a 50% of male and 50% of female colleagues. Because of her background and her dual positions (engineer and team leader of administrative and dissemination teams), she emphasized that in her research she always tries to take into consideration diversity in her human subjects.

She was negatively surprised that there were participants that were unfamiliar with the DEI aspects and haven't thought of how gender-biased our language is in every written or digital material we produce.

Also, she was surprised that the majority of participants haven't realized how common it is for our team members to participate in manels.

As regards the open question she was interested in the replies that tried to give a definition to DEI.

Taking into consideration the high score I received on the willingness to participate in seminars we had the opportunity to discuss on what she thinks about the structure of such a department. She believes that it must have a structure and at least the HR and the top management to participate and specific budget should be allocated if we want to succeed. The involvement of top management is organizational change is also pointed by scholarly as well, Dawson (2003), Callerstig (2012).

Regarding my question on previous experiences on DEI developments, she commented I should have asked my responders to mention some of them in order to get inspiration and have insight in best practices of other organizations. Indeed, this is something I haven't thought of as mainly I thought that this would be asked on another occasion after forming the department. Also, this was based on my positionality because I work there many years and I have no personal experience from other work environments.

As for how much time we will need to see organization change, she replied that for small changes we will need months and for bigger changes we will need years.

She also commented that within the DEI development it should be included women's

career development. In recent internal events it was notable the lack of women representation and she is keen to explore if this is related to lack of motivation. She mentioned mentorship programs and role-model's programs. Answering my question on how we can form that, she believed the mentor should be woman training other women. I must admit I haven't thought of that. It's truth I am not familiar if there is something already formed from the HR department although I believe I would have known.

During my research for the implementation of this Thesis I haven't searched much on gender scholarly on mentorship.

But after all I am glad to add another axe of action and I am also happy I already have a supporter. Knowing in advance she is in favor to my proposed initiative it was already decided she would be one of my interviewees.

As for sexual harassment she informed me that she has missed already two to three times a policy for verbal communication on sexist and gender stereotypes comments. An existing policy would have made her work easier.

Interviewee No. 3

My interviewee No.3 was a female colleague with educational background in finances and recently she obtained her MBA with her thesis on how Gender Representation in Research Leadership shapes Women's Career Growth and Retention in STEM fields. For this reason, I added two more questions on common aspects with her thesis and common aspects on DEI and women empowerment. She is a leader of a mixed group in terms of gender, age and educational background. We are friends and I already knew she was interested in my initiative. She and her team are members of the administrative staff.

In my question about which aspect of DEI interests her the most, she replied that she is more interested in inclusion as she wishes everybody could feel that they belong somewhere and for her the world inclusion has a positive and uniting impact.

On my second question which was the most surprising fact she said that she found awkward but positive that more male responders replied. But she pointed out that this is positive because the majority of our male colleagues have positions on our technological divisions. She also found it positive the willingness to participate in committees and be trained. She commented negatively that I received many replies that were unfamiliar with the DEI definition. In my question if she believes I missed an important aspect or I haven't highlighted something she replied that as this was the

first time a survey like this was distributed, she found it a fair try. If we repeat the procedure she could add or propose some ideas on extra questions. Regarding my fourth question on how structured such a department should be, she replied that it should be a basic team occupied with this and then the voluntary committee could rotate and have members from all departments and all hierarchical positions. She as a person and as professional she believes a basic and solid structure should be the first thing. Regarding the time we can expect to see changes, she believes that internally we need at least a year but taking into account that we, our research team, are part of a bigger ecosystem of the research institute we belong we need two years. As regards my question whether she has faced any barriers since we don't have a DEI policy she replied negatively as she has never felt any form of discrimination and she believes as a manager she has not made discrimination inside her team. But in this point she reflected on the fact that she and her team belong to the administration department and not to a technological division. She didn't have anything to add regarding previous work experiences. Regarding my question if she has spotted common questions with her Thesis she commented that from her research she found out that there is a general intention, we have access to best practices, reports, guidelines but we miss the monitoring and the actual implementation of such initiatives. On her research on retention she found out that women who had women supervisors were feeling more included and had positive attitude toward diversity.

As regards my final question about common aspects on DEI and women empowerment, she replied that women empowerment is part of the DEI policy. DEI includes all people and has a broader aspect and to her empowerment is connected to mentorship, education and fair participation.

As a final comment, she introduced to me to the "reverse mentoring" which she believes is very important because younger people in terms of age and in terms of seniority have a lot to offer to a team. We also talked about the confidence gap many women are facing to apply for better positions in their organisations and that internal movement is better in financial terms, it creates less burden and give motivation for people already inside to an organization to apply.

7.3 Personal interpretation

Reflecting on my choices I realized that all my interviewees were women from admin departments and not from the technological divisions, as a result I missed the male

gaze on my semi-structured interviews.

As we can see interviewees No 2 and 3 pointed out the importance of the mentorship especially for women which will be included as an axe of influence on the new department.

Given that a significant obstacle to the broad implementation and sustainability of DEI programs is the lack of rigorous methods for measuring and reporting their impact, the conversation around the purpose of DEI must shift to highlight its connection with mentoring. Currently, many institutions have DEI departments but lack dedicated mentoring offices/departments (Kwon & Alberti, 2024).

Reflecting on the connection between my theories and the responses of my interviewees their responses on organational change are interconnected to Organizational Change Theory. It was clear to me that my good intention and my personal aspiration could not be sufficient for such a project. Many people should be involved in the top management in all steps and in all decisions. The steps No. 2, forming a powerful guiding coalition, No. 5 on empowering others to participate and No. 6 to create short term small wins of Kotter's theory were pointed out from my interview responders. Reflecting on their responses to DEI aspects they pointed out the fainess, the sense of acceptance and belonging when DEI exists and they make a connection to Human Rights all statements clearly connected to Social Justice Theory.

7.4 Feasibility and reliability

The study is feasible due to the accessibility of the responders, the manageable scope of data collection, and the availability of necessary tools and institutional support. The methodological approach and the methods (survey and interviews) are realistic within the constraints of a master's thesis, and the confidentiality requirements are attainable. Time, resources, and participant access align well with the research plan, ensuring an effective completion of the project.

Reliability was ensured through consistent application of data collection instruments, a transparent and well documented analytical process, and reflexive engagement with my positionality. All participants received the same feedback, and data were analyzed systematically using an established framework. Dependability and transparency were prioritized to ensure trustworthy findings.

8 Limitations and Delimitations

In this chapter I will analyze the limitations and the delimitations I faced during writing my Thesis.

8.1 Limitations

Regarding the Limitations in a sense to comment the facts I couldn't control were the language barrier as I am not a native user of the English language. In time constraints I was obliged to make quick decisions while I needed more time to reflect in pretty much all chapters eg regarding the questions of my survey. Thus, I didn't have the chance to run a pilot survey and regarding my sample I had to take the permission of my supervisors and I was only allowed to send one reminder. Regarding the theories, methods and methodologies there were times that I was unfamiliar and skeptical but during the online meetings with my supervisor I was able to reflect on the probability to continue my effort with any given result as long as I was able to justify my choices. This felt deliberating and opened a new path in this journey. I learnt not to be afraid of my weaknesses but to use them as an example to explore knowledge and perhaps not to repeat the same mistakes on a future project. There were times I was wondering if my passion for this new chapter of my life and the courses of this year would be sufficient to finalize my Thesis.

Concerning my results I had to maintain my critical reflection as a researcher during the whole procedure.

As for the limitations of my semi-structured interviews I regretted not doing more, not including male interviewees and due to my unfamiliarity, I was anxious to miss the balance guiding the conversation while allowing openness.

8.2 Delimitations

As for my delimitations for my survey I chose to focus my research in only one research team and not the whole research institute we belong to. This would help me to have insights in a team I know, I know how operates and would be easier to propose improvements. An escalation of what we are planning in a broader sample could be the topic of another project. Thus, one second delimitation was to keep a broad category in the position and perhaps I missed the comparison of the high-level responders to the

employees in medium or entry positions.

The delimitations of my semi-structured interviews were that they were performed during working hours and there were times I felt it was made under pressure in a sense I couldn't ask for more time and I had to accept their time boundaries. Another part that felt confusing was that sometimes the semi-structured interview was more than a conversation. Since I already knew they were already in favor of my initiative and had some previous knowledge the conversation went steps ahead and beyond my questions. It was like forming together the department and adding information. It was more a collaborative and sharing procedure, learning from each other than having the control of this. It was more than a reflexive dialogue and reflexive approach (DeShong, 2013).

9 Discussion

By the time this Thesis is written (April-November 2025) the international momentum in DEI policies is having a backlash. In the USA, President Donald Trump had announced the freezing of billions in federal research grants of Harvard in DEI programs, demanding ideological audits of academic departments, monitoring international students and restricting campus protests, particularly those related to Palestinian activism. Questioning the independence of the University or constitutional rights is something that should alert us.

Furthermore, there is an online list which 197 words to avoid if you are applying for a federal funding (Lee, 2025) from the US National Science Foundation. In the list you may find the words, women, diversity, equity, inclusion, discrimination, barrier, underappreciated, underrepresented etc. while ChatGPT advocates are trying to disguise the above words with synonyms that may pass the evaluation.

But why I chose these two examples? If such a pioneer university with exceptional research programs that shape the way to smaller ones is having difficulties to address DEI policies what worst can we expect? Thus, the evaluation criteria of NSF could be easily adopted by other national, European or international private and public organizations and agencies as well.

Are we in a post DEI era? Should we rename DEI to FAIR framework or whatever any consultant and strategist propose in order to continue advocating DEI developments (Harvard Business Review, 2025)? How fresh is what I propose? Lucky for me, I am

based in Greece, influenced by EC policies and yes there is still a resistance, while in Greece there is a momentum.

But is it ever late, outdated, old-fashioned to be human and place human needs and protect humanity? My answer would be no. It is always crucial to be reminded and advocate for the knowledge you produce and for the empathy you choose to show or not show. If you do not stand for fairness or if you position yourself neutral in situations of injustice you are with the side of the oppressor (Tulshyan, 2022). Is it a utopia (Shafiei, 2021) to seek for change, to place human dignity in the center?

I had been in lectures in Greece where SSH experts had proposed basic topics of gender and DEI studies to be accessible for all university students so that to get used to universal design and ethics that will allow humanity to exist and make progress. That would be an excellent and promising outcome that would benefit science interdisciplinarity within research ecosystems. Persistence to resistance of the backlash of DEI policies would be my proposal to future discussions and my proposal on setting the foundation of a DEI department within a research team would be an action of resistance and a reminder to place humans in the center of every activity.

10 Conclusions

This thesis combined academic knowledge from the master and my deeper and personal commitment to respecting diversity, equity, and inclusion. Through this research, I have come to appreciate the power of knowledge not just to understand the power relations of the world, but understand there are specific tools, theories and methods to change it. To my opinion, it was important that my research wasn't only on a theoretical basis but it mattered to real persons, to a real workplace and it was a vivid, real time and on going procedure. Of course the answers I received on my survey and from my interviewees kept leading me to interesting ideas, aspects, parameters that I haven't thought of and I had to revise my literature, my theories and my positionality.

My decision to use mixed-methods offered me insights and a broader perspective that research can be both rigorous and compassionate, grounded in data, yet driven by values.

I really appreciated the insights I gained from my ethnographic and "radical looking" approaches. The theories helped me to deepen the analysis of my material. The Social Justice Theory and the Intersectionality complementing each other highlighting the social

and human aspects of a DEI initiative while my interviewees made significant interconnections to the Organizational Change Theory.

I believe I managed to respond to my research questions on the axes and pillars to start with small and easy changes on setting the foundation of a DEI department, by reflecting and by placing yourself on the position of another person that has the right to participate on your open events, be informed on the new research outcomes, be heard, seen and feel respectful. Thus, work environments are small steps to our lives. It is important to get fulfillment and gain new knowledge, features that a DEI department can provide.

Considering my contribution to the Greek research ecosystem my work could be used as a base, as a foundation to form relevant initiatives, remembering that creating such a department requires teamwork, while the commitment of high management is more than desirable. Thus, the selection of my theories were the most appropriate, proving insights, pros and cons to be used in forming the foundation of a DEI department. They can be used either as theories and as tools to formulate the steps of creation.

Reflecting on my work, I think I wouldn't change anything. I would choose the same questions and the same interviewees. I am grateful for the knowledge I gained and the whole experience brought me closer to my personal aim of becoming a Gender and DEI expert. Reflecting on the literature and how easily such initiatives fail due to structural resistance, pushbacks, critique, body language, small sabotages as the negative aspect has many names (Blomqvist & Frennberg, 2012), as DEI facilitator and change agent I will focus on the "How" of the process.

I didn't feel fear or threaten either from the negative responses or my mistakes that I immediately acknowledge, I am used on celebrating every little step of a procedure, the "small wins" (Benschop & Verloo, 2011) and I am not here writing to solve the global problems of organisational change. I am here to remind myself and to my possible readers to dream better and collective futures by respecting every human being and by facilitating their time spent in a work place.

For the questions that were left unanswered perhaps they could be answered during a future project.

A second project perhaps as a Thesis of the second year, could explore the following research questions. How will I manage to engage as many colleagues as I can considering the interdisciplinary nature of my responders? How to maintain sustainability of such a department? Does a formal and structured, instead of a semi-

structured form would have provided more visibility and sustainability? What would be the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of such a department? How can mentorship programs contribute to DEI policies?

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12 Appendix A

Questions for the survey and the link to the survey

<https://forms.gle/5kZ1RCsm6CQaYymU8>

1. Gender
2. Educational status
3. Position in the team
4. Are you familiar with the DEI definition?
5. Which aspect interests you the most?
6. Explain the reasoning behind your previous response.
7. Please indicate how possible you find to participate to a DEI voluntary internal committee?
8. Would you participate in trainings/seminars/webinars regarding DEI policies/developments?
9. Are you familiar with the Gender-biased language or Gender-discriminatory language?
10. Would you consider using Gender-neutral language in your communications or any material you produce?
11. To your knowledge, do our event venues meet accessibility standards?
12. Do you think our official website or the websites of the projects we manage are inclusive?
13. Have you ever participated in manels (panel sessions with only male participants)?
14. Indicate if a DEI department would be beneficial for your work environment.
15. Define beneficial
16. Have you experienced DEI policies/developments in your work career?
17. Would you be interested in forming an anti-harassment sexual policy?
18. Would you like something to add/propose?

13 Appendix B: Replies on Question No. 6 of the survey

1.	I believe diversity and inclusion are linked and need to be addressed in priority given the fact that we live in multicultural societies that need to accept and include in most processes diverse individuals. This is even more important for research purposes where the teams created as well as the results need to include societal considerations by design, and account for the needs of all citizens.
2.	All three equally important
3.	because it does not exist between woman and men
4.	Everybody in the team should have a fair and just treatment
5.	Most important
6.	All of the above are self-evident
7.	?
8.	As a senior project manager I want to learn how to be equal among all members of a team and avoid exclusions on purpose or by mistake
9.	If people had equal access to opportunities then the other 2 above will come
10.	Actually I am interested in all three aspects but no such option was given :)
11.	I wish to be include and accept for my quality and work, not because of DEI policy
12.	I personally believe inclusion to be more important than the other two terms.
13.	Sensitive to human rights
14.	Technology solutions which are part of my job should be inclusive by definition
15.	Equity is the first pillar
16.	This aspect highlight the fact that differences truly exist and should be properly and consistently valued. The other aspects could hinder the recognition of differences under biased interpretations.
17.	I am more familiar with those aspects, and I believe that they have been a barrier to our social, economical, research and other interactions for far too long, and this needs to change.
18.	I consider them as the most important issues that we need to take action
19.	Because such policies or practices make everyone feel welcome and safe
20.	E and I are fundamental for creating fair opportunities and ensuring that everyone feels valued and heard
21.	To me all the aspects are of the same importance because Diversity in the team will bring different ideas on the table, equity and inclusion will bind and unify the team and make it work as one.
22.	It mostly derives from relevant studies
23.	Through Diversity and differences comes the best synthesis and Inclusion in a society that mostly excludes means that you are actually making a meaningful effort on something.
24.	All three super important
25.	All three are interdependent and essential in all aspects of life and especially in the working field.
26.	
27.	Fulfilling my believes

28.	m most interested in Diversity because it brings together people with different backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences
29.	Because it allows individuals regardless of their background, identity etc. to feel respected and equally treated and have equal rights.
30.	All the above elements formulate principles of societal considerations under technological development projects and teams that are equally important for interdisciplinary research and representation of different perceptions, opinions, needs and concerns.
31.	I wasn't familiar
32.	I believe that everything is important
33.	All the above promote community and atomic development
34.	Diversity and inclusion in research related activities
35.	i prefer a monetary equity of the people in the organisation cause i think that inclusion and diversity are subsequent notions of equity (either financial or sexual)
36.	I believe that equity and diversity are a key factor in creating sustainable innovation
37.	Inclusion focuses on creating a culture where everyone feels welcomed, respected, and able to contribute meaningfully.
38.	Individuals working in inclusive environments feel welcome and respected. This promotes psychological safety in the working environment, which is essential for allowing people be themselves, express freely their opinion and share knowledge. This fosters engagement and results to better productivity of the organisation as a whole.
39.	I do believe that the 3 aspects are closely interlinked and therefore should be considered together.
40.	Reduction of the inequities is the base upon which progress can be achieved
41.	Equality is very important for a society
42.	inclusion is intended towards the less privileged parts of society. Diversity can mean different things depending on the specific set-up/group of people and equity is less radical than inclusion in the sense that the social group striving for equity are already "included" in the core societal group.
43.	Diversity and inclusion are pretty much self-explanatory, while equity is an interesting concept with much room for discussion
44.	In my mind if you include someone you can have equity and Diversity at the same time. Inclusion is key!
45.	Equity results to fair treatment, while inclusion to full participation
46.	Everybody needs to feel he has equal rights and is not subject to discrimination at work.
47.	In the sense that everyone is given equal opportunities, regardless of race, gender, or religion.
48.	All of them are equally important and require one another to co-exist.
49.	not familiar with the exact meaning of each term, not sure i can tell the difference
50.	Inclusion goes beyond just having diverse people in the room. It ensures they feel seen, heard, and valued. You can hire diverse talent and tweak policies for equity, but without inclusion, people may still feel isolated or overlooked. Inclusion is where all the DEI work becomes tangible in

	people everyday experiences, - in meetings, collaborations, leadership, and culture.
51.	1)Diversity:It allows access to different points of view on a given topic, which enriches discussion, broadens understanding, and fosters creativity. 2)Equity: It is the base of Inclusion, and more efficient to complete the tasks. 3) Incusion: If everyone feel welcome in th e company it is more possible not to create issues and be more productive
52.	Based on my experience, there is a gender gap in many areas, with women suffering discrimination and prejudice
53.	When we talk about inclusion, it’s about how people feel—feeling appreciated, welcomed, and accepted. It’s essential for everyone to help cultivate a culture of belonging and to ensure psychological safety. Inclusion means creating an environment where individuals are encouraged to express themselves freely and actively participate in all processes.
54.	I think equity is the most important aspect that drives the rest of aspects
55.	I suppose that each of the previous aspects is very important
56.	It is self-explanatory. No further discussion is needed
57.	We encounter these aspects everywhere and we will have to be aware of them
58.	I don't feel comfortable with forced diversity, I don't think it's necessary 100% of times or that it should be forced.
59.	equity should be there for everyone included
60.	I know that there are problems in our society on all the aforementioned areas, so I want to remedy that as much as I can
61.	I think they are all important factors of a teams success
62.	I believe that successful inclusion presupposes diversity and equality.
63.	By creating a welcoming and supportive environment, everyone feels valued and able to contribute their best
64.	It is strongly bound to multidisciplinary scientific fields and thus interested to acknowledge
65.	Equity addresses the systemic barriers and unequal starting points that individuals face, ensuring that everyone has the specific resources and opportunities they need to succeed, not just the same treatment, but the right support.
66.	all people involved
67.	Equity are important because it ensures that every individual (at our institution)has a fair opportunity to succeed, no matter their background, identity, or circumstances.
68.	all three aspects are very important; inclusion is the result of being fair and creative with diverse people so i consider it quite important and something that can be managed by an organization even if society is not giving all people the same chances. in our working environment there are not explicit barriers to who can apply to become a member of the team. however, to apply inclusivity in practive is harder since not all new members are treated with respect and based on their peculiarities.
69.	Haven’t heard of it
70.	As a woman in my forties working in research and engineering, equity, inclusion, and diversity are things I care about. For me, it’s about creating a

	work environment where everyone feels like they belong and where people have a fair chance to grow.
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14 Annex C: Replies on Question No. 18 of the survey

1.	No
2.	At the moment no
3.	No
4.	yes
5.	question 17 is ambiguous, i will form a policy, my org form a policy and i will accept it as is?
6.	no
7.	No thanks
8.	Yes, implementing an anti-harassment sexual policy is a responsible step toward creating a safe and respectful environment. However, we must be cautious because such policies, if poorly defined or overly broad, can inadvertently suppress interactions, or be misused. A balance between protecting individuals and preserving open, authentic engagement without fostering a culture of fear or performative compliance.
9.	No
10.	i am not familiar with the actual meaning of the terms so in most questions the appropriate answer (not available as an option) is "i do not know"
11.	nothing to add right now , but id be happy to contribute in the future.
12.	No, thanks for asking
13.	n/a
14.	I am not entirely sure that these things are protected and respected through organizations' policies. or it is a matter of change in culture through mainly education and by forming communities and self-formed work teams discussing things like that. (bottom up approach instead of top down)

