

WP2

Innovative model "D&I for Corporate Welfare in Microenterprises"

Summary

AN OVERVIEW OF PARTNER COUNTRIES

Achieving equality in the workplace has always been a challenge, especially for women and individuals within the LGBTQ+ community; due to the discrimination they face, these groups often encounter significant difficulties finding employment, keeping jobs and securing high-profile positions. Women and LGBTQ+ both face work-related discrimination, each in their own way.

Women are often subjected to gender stereotypes, presumptions and biases that do not allow them to express their full potential. In the workplace, this often translates into acts of microaggression, such as being the target of sexist jokes, being ignored during meetings, or being passed over for promotions. Microaggressions and biases prevent women from advancing in their career, creating the so-called glass ceiling.

The LGBTQ+ community shares some of women's burdens, such as reaching high-profile positions and dealing with microaggressions. Additionally, they often choose not to come out at work, as they fear it might harm their career and/or their personal relationship with the colleagues; when they do come out, there is a significant chance that they'll experience some kind of negative reaction, such as discrimination and exclusion.

Nonetheless, even with increased awareness, efforts and legal protections, there is still much work to be done. In fact, despite numerous companies considering workplace inclusion a priority, most of them fail to actively engage in promoting diversity. Companies usually lack specific measures, formalized policies, guidelines, a dedicated budget, or department.

The Covid-19 emergency exacerbated these challenges, disproportionately affecting gender minorities, even if today sexual and gender discrimination in the workplace is regarded as an important issue in the European Union.

The Covid-19 emergency has had a significant impact on small and medium enterprises. Therefore, it is understandable that the major concern of these companies is to get back on track rather than focusing on implementing inclusion. However, this attitude might soon change as it is proven that a more diverse workplace is beneficial to both the workers and the companies. Inclusive businesses are more innovative, productive, profitable, and competitive.

More details and a list of best practices for each country in the project consortium can be found in the full document.