DIVERSE

Diversity Improvement as a Viable Enrichment Resource for Society and Economy

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Policy Brief Ostrobothnia, Finland – English version

In each country the Policy Brief should be written in accordance with the priorities emerging from the research and from the suggestions provided by the key actors involved in the process. Therefore this is a policy which is made from the viewpoint of Finland and its context.

There should be more research and basic statistics in Finland concerning diversity and diversity management in the near future. It is the only way to get enough knowledge of the diversity management practices of TCNs'. There are short surveys, some basic data as well as policies in different kinds of organization, but not any kind of scientific study, which considers all the important issues of diversity management. We could make more comparative studies in different kinds of methods. Maybe even some basic research could be done. These questions should be discussed in more detail in the future. Anyway, it is hard to develop diversity management, if we are not sure, what kind of management we are talking about.

Diversity management practices should be developed with help of different kind of development projects. It might be easier to get some organizations involved in development projects than in research project. Therefore we need also this kind of development. The other reasons are that organizations are used to manage projects and there are already some projects, which have shown, that project work is suitable for many organizations for the purposes of management development.

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When we think about the development of the issues mentioned in this project, we could use change management implementation as a frame of reference while thinking about the policy for Finland. The important things to do in Finland could be classified as following:

A. Create a sense of urgency. In the case of diversity management there may already exists urgency.

 A.1. Economy of Finland depends quite much on export trade and international business. At the Vaasa region there are more energy business companies than in any other area in Nordic countries and all the business is international by its nature. Biggest companies operating in the industry are giving work for a lot of smaller companies and also for public sector. This means that the whole area is focused on international business.

 A.2. Diversity and diversity management is naturally a part of every-day operations of bigger companies in international business, because there is a need to make business in different countries and with different people. The personnel are and it will be diverse in the future.

 A.3. Because it was supposed in this study, that there will be more foreigners working in the companies in the future, both in energy business and subcontractors operating in that industry and in service companies offering facility services there is a need for diversity management. It is also obvious that the development of the diversity management could be useful.

 A.4. Even though there are already some kinds of diversity management practices in the bigger companies, there should be same kind of practices also in smaller organizations.

B. Build a guiding team.

 B.1. Diversity management should be developed into systematic management system just like any other kind of systems. This means that there should be some sort of guiding team in an organization which is in charge of implementation of diversity management. It should coordinate the implementation from the top of the organization to the shop floor level. Naturally we should apply the diversity management in a way that is suitable for the context of an organization. This means that the strategy, size, operation environment etc. should be taken into consideration during the implementation process.

 B.2. The theme described above could be subject of research project or development project.

C. Create a vision for the diversity management.

 C.1. There should be vision made in every organization to help them develop management and make strategies to achieve the vision. It should be discussed, if there is a need for some sort of training for organizations to help them make visions.

D. Communicate a vision with help of diversity policy and diversity training.

 D.1. Communication was seen as very important thing in all interviews in this study and therefore we can suppose that this could be important part of diversity management. Vision of diversity management could be communicated with help of diversity

training and policy, which is less abstract description of the vision. Communication should help organizations to understand the meaning of the vision in practice and what kinds of activities are needed to achieve the vision. Training should include both clarification of the concepts of diversity and diversity management and organization-specific issues important in implementation of the diversity management.

E. Empower action calls for clarity of objectives, support from key constituencies (particularly from senior management), and resources to achieve these objectives and authority to make decisions and enforce non-performance.

    E.1.   Clarification of the objectives could be done with help of communication, like training and policy, but also other activities should be considered. One of them could be building of the measurement system for diversity management, because as it was supposed in this study too, "what you measure, you understand".

    E.2.   Top management should show their commitment to diversity management and as a part of this allocates resources for diversity management practices and give authority for those people implementing the management, if needed.

F. Produce short-term wins to avoid organization to lose its heart interest to diversity management.

    F.1.   The short-term wins are made for motivating people for diversity management. We should find out what kinds of short wins there might be in organization. They may be found by thinking about the positive impacts of diversity management, evaluating those impacts as well as showing the positive impact to the staff. Maybe there is social impact, economic impact or some other kinds of positive things.

G. Don't let up, because diversity management is like cultural change and therefore it takes time and need constant attention and consistent action.

    G.1.   Diversity management could be considered as a management system, which does not give quick fix for every situation but calls for continuous improvement of an organization. Every organization could try to change culture incrementally and develop diversity management but maybe it is sensible to think how to apply the diversity management in a certain organization culture. Different kinds of tools used in diversity management should be used in a way that they are suitable for the organization culture.

    G.2.   The development described above could be implemented with help of development projects of research. We should find out how to connect diversity management into other management practices of an organization. Is it part of human resource management, corporate social responsibilities or maybe part of quality management practices usually improved continuously without any quick fix –dreams.

H. Make change stick. Try to measure diversity management, because "what gets measured, gets done"

    H.1.   We could build a diversity management measurement system. Management literature is full of different kinds of frame of references for measurement of operations and results of organizations. The challenge is, that diversity management measurement

should be connected to other measurement and there should be some sort of procedures for helping organizations to choose appropriate measures and use them in a right way.

H.2.   This kind of development can be done with help of development project or research project.

The above policy brief is based in this study in Finland. It could be useful to compare it to the policies in other countries. By comparing all the ten countries involved in this project we could find tips for every country for the development of the diversity management.

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