Evidence Review

Anti-racism, diversity and inclusion in organisational settings

December 2021

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ECCV acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria and their continuing connection to land, water and community. We pay respect to their Elders past and present.

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Introduction

The Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV) commissioned Victoria University to prepare an evidence review on anti-racism, and diversity and inclusion measures in employment contexts and related organisational settings.

As part of ECCV's anti-racism initiative *All One Together* (AOT), this evidence review has a primarily practical purpose. It seeks to offer an analysis of empirical evidence to assist decision-makers, in AOT ambassador organisations and workplaces and organisational settings more broadly, in developing and implementing policies, programs and actions to create a more diverse and inclusive environment and tackle all forms of racism within their organisations.

As the AOT campaign is an anti-racism initiative, it is important to note how diversity and inclusion measures are related to **anti-racism** in organisational contexts:

- Preventing and responding to racial discrimination, microaggression and other forms of exclusion and racism is an inherent part of workplace inclusion measures. As such it is an essential element of inclusion policies and programs, but it needs to be complemented with *proactive* measures that promote inclusion.
- Increasing representation of previously under-represented (minority) groups through diversity management measures addresses structural inequalities shaped by systemic and institutionalised racism.
- A lack of inclusion in organisational contexts perpetuates patterns of exclusion, marginalisation and racism and cements existing power imbalances and cultural superiority claims.

Following the established literature, it is a key premise of this review that diversity (representation) and inclusion are **closely intertwined**. Measures aimed at achieving these goals must be interconnected and complement one another. Rather than focusing merely on increasing the representation of individuals from diverse and under-represented backgrounds, it is crucial to acknowledge the mutually facilitating and reinforcing relationship between inclusion and diversity. Inclusive workplaces cannot be achieved without diverse representation, and diversity will not thrive, nor be maintained, without inclusive workplace policies and practices.

This review presents key findings on these complex issues and seeks to provide practical insights that can assist organisations in building a more diverse *and* a more inclusive environment. We analytically divide the evidence review into three thematic areas:

1. **Diversity management** aimed at increasing representation within and across all levels of an organisation
2. **Diversity and anti-racism training**, including unconscious/implicit bias training interventions
3. **Concepts and practices of inclusion**, defined and operationalised in a way that enhances employees' full integration into the work group ('belongingness'), whilst also valuing and acknowledging their unique skills and contributions ('uniqueness') (Shore et al 2011).

Diversity management

In order to increase diversity across all hierarchical levels of an organisation, four key areas of action have been identified as being particularly effective: recruitment; institutionalisation of diversity management through diversity managers or task forces; establishment of employee networks and affinity groups; and mentoring programs.

1. A key approach to increasing diversity is through targeted **recruitment** processes and strategies. While the empirical evidence suggests that anonymous ('identity-blind') application processes are largely ineffective or even counterproductive, research has consistently found that three recruitment approaches yield positive effects on building a more diverse workforce:

Increasing the pool of potential applicants, for example through proactive, alternative and targeted outreach measures
Including visual representation of diversity in the advertisement material
Highlighting the organisation's commitment to diversity in the recruitment and advertisement material

Overall, the evidence indicates that, rather than limiting the control of recruiting managers and HR decision-makers, it is more promising to increase their 'accountability as well as providing recognition for unbiased hiring' (Derous and Ryan 2018), for example, by explicitly discussing the organisation's diversity goals or establishing diverse recruitment panels.

2. Research has shown that institutionalising diversity management through establishing **diversity managers or task forces** constitutes one of the most effective ways to increase workforce diversity, in particular on a managerial level (Kalev et al 2008). Such institutionalisation with clear structures, tasks and responsibilities for diversity management establishes authority, expertise and accountability to diversity initiatives and goals within an organisation.
3. Setting up identity-based **employee resource groups or affinity groups** for under-represented staff has proven

to have positive effects on minority staff retention and contribute to fostering a climate of inclusion within an organisation. It can help decrease a sense of isolation among minority staff, promote community-building and career development, and encourage members to develop strategies to respond to microaggression. Such affinity groups can also play an important role in raising awareness of diversity, racism and inclusion in the broader organisational context.

4. **Mentoring** programs have shown to be effective in increasing and maintaining representation of certain ethnic minority groups in management. While the nature of such mentoring programs differs widely, the overall empirical evidence points to positive effects on minority staff retention and career advancement as well as on employees' abilities to develop strategies to deal with racism in the workplace.

Anti-racism and diversity training

Large meta-studies have generated robust empirical evidence that diversity training can lead to positive change among participants.

The largest effects have been recorded in the area of cognitive skill development, i.e. participants acquired knowledge, for example, about cultural diversity issues. Many of these training measures also have the potential of behavioural or skill-based changes, while effects on participants' affective or attitudinal changes tend to be significantly smaller. Some of the factors that increase the effectiveness of diversity training are:

- Duration: longer is better (over four hours)
- Format: in-person is more effective than online training; opportunities for social interactions and the combination of active and passive teaching/learning methods also increase effectiveness
- Content: cognitive awareness raising plus skill-building elements (e.g. concrete actions)
- Trainers: supervisor/manager-led training is more effective than HR/ diversity manager-led training
- Integration in organisational context instead of one-off training

One particularly popular type of training intervention is implicit or unconscious bias training. This type of training has received more ambivalent reviews, with some studies pinpointing the potential risk of aggravating biases and causing a backlash or defensiveness among participants. Nevertheless, some evidence suggests that implicit/unconscious bias training can have positive effects on reducing biases depending on how these trainings are designed and delivered. Moreover, research suggests that such training may not have an immediate effect but can increase participants' sensitivity to bias in their social environment, which can contribute to a reduction in personal biased behaviour.

Inclusion

There is a broad scholarly consensus that while representation can be increased with targeted diversity management interventions, creating a climate of inclusion at work or similar organisational settings is more complex. It cannot simply be legislated and often relies on voluntary actions that cannot be mandated through top-down policies.

This makes inclusion much more challenging to achieve than diversity representation. Organisations are tasked with enhancing the internal culture of inclusion by 'creating an environment that acknowledges, welcomes, and accepts different approaches, styles, perspectives, and experiences, so as to allow [all staff] to reach their potential and result in enhanced organizational success' (Winters 2014: 2006). The ultimate answer as to whether an organisation has achieved an inclusive climate lies in the individuals' perceptions – not in the assessment of management or leadership. Mor Barak (2017: 147) describes this succinctly:

The concept of inclusion-exclusion in the workplace refers to the individual's sense of being a part of the organisational system in both the formal processes, such as access to information and decision-making channels, and the informal processes, such as "water cooler" and lunch meetings where information exchange and decisions informally take place.

The sense of being fully included in formal and informal processes in the workplace and being treated as an 'insider' of the work group constitutes one key dimension of an inclusive environment. This is often referred to as **'belongingness'**. To achieve a climate of inclusion, this needs to be complemented by measures and processes that positively acknowledge the unique characteristics of individual employees and values these for the work group's or organisation's success. This second key dimension is typically referred to as **'uniqueness'** (Shore et al 2011).

Based on this combination of 'belongingness' and 'uniqueness', Shore and colleagues (2018) identified six key elements of an inclusive work environment:

'Influence on decision-making' – sense of having a voice and believe one's views and ideas are influential	*'Feeling respected and valued'* – feeling as an 'appreciated and esteemed member of the group and organisation'
'Involvement in the work group' – sense of being treated as an 'insider' with full and equal 'access to critical information and resources'	*'Feeling safe'* – individual and group-based 'psychological and physical safety associated with sharing different opinions and views from others'
'Authenticity' – organisational support to ensure everyone feels they 'can share valued identities that may differ from dominant organisational culture or employee lifestyle without repercussion'	*'Recognising, honouring and advancing of diversity'* – 'fair treatment, sharing of employee differences for mutual learning and growth, and top management showing their value for diversity through words and action.'

A climate of inclusion means more than the absence of exclusion, racism and microaggression against under-represented (minority) employees and the promotion of equal opportunity (*discrimination-and-fairness paradigm*). It also goes beyond the *access-and-legitimacy paradigm*, where diversity is only used as an instrumentalist strategic advantage to access new markets (Ely and Thomas 2001). Creating a climate of inclusion requires authentic commitment and a range of workplace specific measures, from all levels of leadership and across the organisation, to 'strive for growth and accomplishment in the pursuit of the goal of an inclusionary organization' (Shore et al 2018: 185). This is captured by the **integration-and-learning paradigm** (Ely and Thomas 2001: 240), where diversity becomes 'a resource for learning and adaptive change' and where minority staff see their own identity as a 'source of value…, a resource for learning and teaching and a source of privilege for whites to acknowledge.' (p. 261). Empirical research, including a study on inclusion climate across 100 Australian-based companies (Li et al 2019), has consistently highlighted that an *integration-and-learning paradigm* is paramount to the effective development of inclusive organisational environments.

A key factor in achieving a climate of inclusion is **inclusive leadership**. Emerging evidence suggests that leaders, both on executive and managerial levels, are the 'architects of inclusive work group climates' (Nishii and Leroy 2020), as they play a central role in what Mor Barak and colleagues (2021) refer to as the challenge of 'policy-practice decoupling', i.e. ensuring that all levels of an organisation do not only have policies in place but also effectively implement these in everyday practice.

Inclusive leadership needs to be transformative, relationship-centred and 'specifically focused on fostering group members' perceptions of both belonging and value for uniqueness as a group member' (Randel et al 2018). According to Randel and colleagues (2018: 193), the following three leadership characteristics help promote **belongingness**:

1. *supporting group members* by creating a work environment where everyone feels comfortable and experiences a sense of community; inclusive leaders demonstrate 'care and acceptance in group interactions' and establish 'routines of inclusion through role modelling or by instituting inclusive practices.'
2. *ensuring justice, fairness, and equity*; inclusive leaders show 'fair treatment of group members and thus indicate to members that they are a respected part of the group' and 'proactively consider how decisions unintentionally could create a lack of equity across group members.'

3. *providing opportunities for shared decision-making* 'with an emphasis on sharing power, broadening consultation on decisions, and helping decide how work is conducted'.

Further, Randel et al (2018: 193–194) identify two leadership characteristics to promote **uniqueness**:

4. *encouraging diverse contributions*; inclusive leaders pay 'special attention to soliciting different points of view and approaches' that sit outside workplace norms, whilst 'constructively managing any conflict that may arise'; they also create an organisational culture where alternative ways of thinking are welcomed and encouraged (p. 194).
5. *encouraging group members to 'fully offer their unique talents and perspectives to enhance the work of the group'*; inclusive leaders seek to ensure everyone 'can bring their full selves to work and do not need to downplay or hide any differences'.

Benefits and challenges

As Mor Barak (2015: 85–86) maintains, 'increasing diversity representation and achieving workforce inclusion is a two-stage process with each stage affecting the other in a circular way'.

Measures, discussed in this review, often do not fall neatly under one category. Many diversity measures, for example, seek to increase retention and career advancement for minority employees (diversity representation) by creating a more inclusive environment where people feel safe, respected and valued as full and equal 'insiders' of the organisation and work group. Vice versa, measures aimed at enhancing a 'climate of inclusion' tend to promote job satisfaction and decrease turnover rates, which contributes to greater diversity representation in the organisation. Diversity and inclusion are fundamentally intertwined.

Accordingly, any organisation committed to promoting anti-racism, equity and inclusion needs to conceptualise and implement representation-enhancing diversity measures in conjunction with inclusion measures. This promises to yield a range of **benefits** for the organisation and its employees, from higher levels of work performance, job satisfaction and wellbeing to lower

turnover rates. The evidence identified in this review highlights that there is **no one-size-fits-all strategy** when it comes to developing and implementing diversity and inclusion measures. While there are several concrete measures that have proven effective, there are no 'box-ticking' guides that organisations can simply follow. This applies in particular to any efforts to promote inclusion, which relies on informal everyday practices and interactions at least as much as on formal processes and policies.

This review identifies several **challenges**. These include:

1. Risks associated with focusing primarily on increasing diversity without also working towards an inclusive work environment

2. 'Policy-practice decoupling' (Mor Barak et al 2021): the potential gap between the adoption of diversity and inclusion policies, and their implementation in everyday organisational practice

3. 'The paradox of diversity in leadership and leadership for diversity' (Bebbington and Özbilgin 2013), given the persistent lack of diversity in leadership positions in many organisations

4. 'Diversity resistance' (Thomas and Plaut 2008): personal and organisational behaviour and practices that can undermine diversity measures and any attempt to build an inclusive environment where significant segments of an organisation perceive increasing diversity as a threat to their 'status, power and influence'.

Introduction

As part of its anti-racism initiative *All One Together* (AOT), the Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria has commissioned Victoria University to compile a purpose-driven selective evidence review on anti-racism, and diversity and inclusion measures in employment contexts and related organisational settings.

This evidence review has a primarily practical purpose. It seeks to offer an analysis of empirical evidence that can assist decision-makers, in AOT ambassador organisations and beyond, in developing and implementing policies, programs and other actions aimed at creating a diverse and inclusive environment and tackling racism in the workplace and similar organisational contexts, including not-for-profit organisations.

Scope and focus

While this review focuses on how various measures can contribute to reducing attitudinal, behavioural and structural manifestations of racism and exclusion, the broader context of the measures covered in this review fall under three interconnected principles of diversity, equity and inclusion. These are commonly referred to by the acronym DEI, or D&I, whereby in the latter case the 'equity' element is covered by a broader notion of 'inclusion'.

- **Diversity** refers to the representation of people (e.g. employees, volunteers, members) from different backgrounds or identities, such as gender, ethnic or religious background, within a given organisational context.
- **Equity** differs from equal treatment of diverse teams; it acknowledges the breadth of different experiences and needs and focuses on outcomes where everyone has equal and fair access to opportunities and resources.

- **Inclusion** refers to full and barrier-free participation, where everyone, regardless of their background or identity, feels equally valued; it plays a central role in creating a culturally safe environment and achieving equity.

Given that the AOT campaign is an anti-racism initiative, the question arises as to why and how DEI or D&I measures are related to anti-racism work in organisational contexts. There are three interrelated answers to this question, which all align with the well-established principle that anti-racism goes beyond mere 'non-racism' (Paradies 2016):

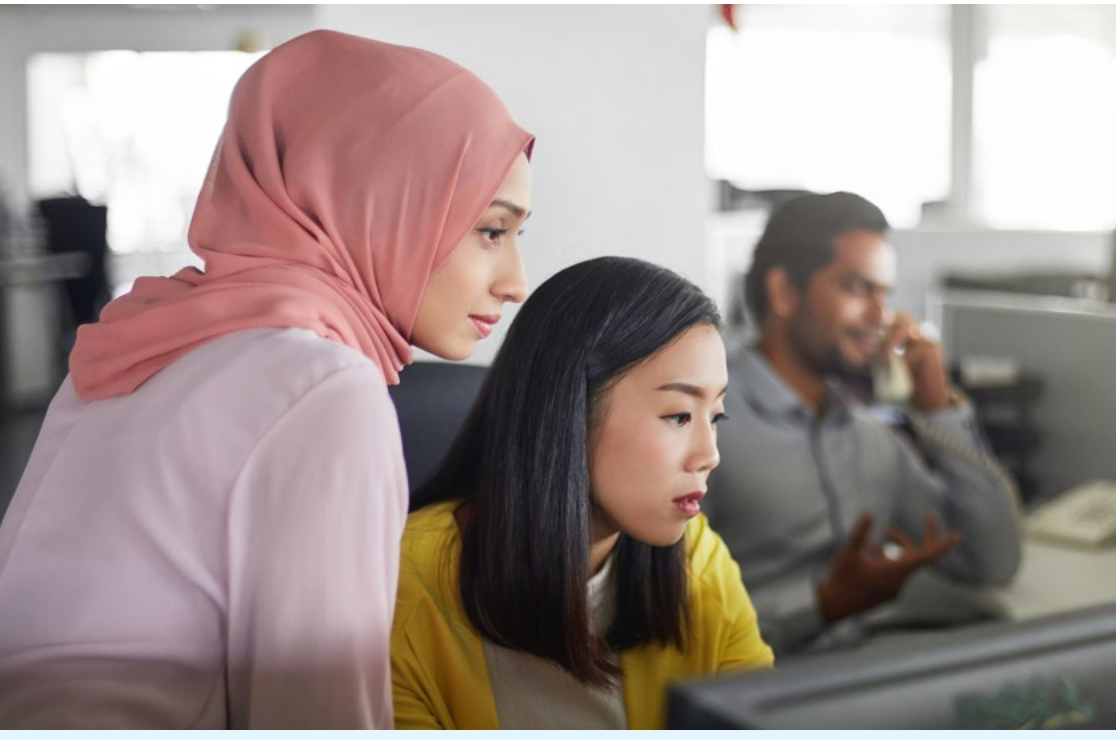
- Preventing and responding to racial discrimination, microaggression, and other forms of exclusion and racism is an inherent part of inclusion measures in workplaces and similar organisational environments. As such it is an essential element of inclusion policies and programs, but it needs to be complemented with a range of other ***proactive*** measures that promote inclusion.
- Increasing representation of previously under-represented (minority) groups through a range of diversity management measures addresses structural inequalities shaped by systemic and institutionalised racism.
- A lack of inclusion in organisational contexts, such as workplaces, perpetuates patterns of exclusion, marginalisation and racism and cements existing power imbalances and cultural superiority claims.

The literature on diversity, inclusion and equity in the workplace has grown exponentially over the past few decades. It includes thousands of academic studies, articles and books as well as a plethora of reports and contributions from practitioners. While this review fully acknowledges the enormous wealth and breadth of the work of diversity trainers and consultants, some of them with lived experiences of racism, it focuses specifically on the ***empirical evidence*** generated by academic studies. It seeks to equip decision-makers with an understanding of what research has found about what approaches

are particularly promising and under what circumstances. To that end, we analysed mainly peer-reviewed articles (but also include academic grey literature where it added significantly to the review). Most of the empirical and conceptual studies in the review were conducted overseas (often in the United States), but we also sought to include findings from Australian-specific research where possible and useful.

Structure of the report: Diversity and inclusion

Diversity, equity and inclusion are **closely intertwined**. As the evidence consistently highlights, measures aimed at achieving these goals must be not only multi-pronged, but interconnected and complementary (Dobbin and Kalev 2015). For example, strategies to establish and retain a diverse



workforce (or volunteer or membership structure) can only succeed when combined with measures that create an environment of inclusion and equity. There is little point in implementing a diverse recruitment campaign if, once recruited, employees find themselves in an organisational culture that does not value their contribution and diversity more broadly (Kulik and Roberson 2008).

Hence, rather than focusing merely on increasing the representation of individuals from diverse backgrounds, it is crucial to acknowledge the mutually facilitating and reinforcing relationship between inclusion and diversity. Inclusive workplaces cannot be achieved without diverse representation, and diversity will not thrive, nor be maintained, without inclusive workplace policies and practices.

Michàlle E. Mor Barak (2015), a renowned scholar in the field, describes inclusion as the 'key to diversity management', differentiating between reactive and proactive measures, connected in a circular two-stage process (Figure 1):

> **Increasing diversity representation and achieving workforce inclusion is a two-stage process with each stage affecting the other in a circular way... The first stage is reactive – organisations recruit and employ a more diverse workforce. The second driver is proactive – organisations invest efforts in active diversity management with the aim of enhancing inclusion and fostering organisational effectiveness in their workforce.**
>
> – Mor Barak (2015: 85–86)

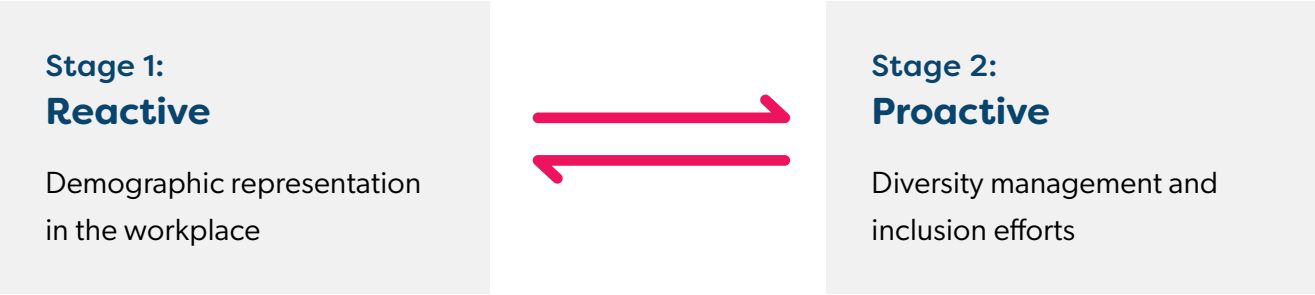


Figure 1: Reactive and proactive elements of diversity management (Mor Barak 2015)

This model reflects the multilayered complexity and interconnectedness of DEI or D&I strategies in organisational settings, indicating that clear distinctions between diversity management and inclusion measures are often difficult to draw. Mor Barak and colleagues (2016: 308) therefore propose bringing both together, calling for 'diversity management for fostering a climate of inclusion.'

This review presents key findings on these complex issues and seeks to provide practical insights that can assist organisations in building a more diverse ***and*** a more inclusive environment. Acknowledging the interconnectedness of DEI or D&I approaches and strategies, we analytically divide the evidence review into three thematic areas.

The **first part** presents empirical evidence on a number of **diversity management** measures aimed at increasing representation within and across all levels of an organisation. Four key areas of actions are discussed here: recruitment; institutionalisation of diversity management through diversity managers or task forces; establishment of employee networks and affinity groups; and mentoring programs.

The **second part** discusses the evidence about the effectiveness of **diversity and anti-racism trainings**, including unconscious or implicit bias training interventions, which have received a great deal of interest in many organisations in recent years. As this is a very well-researched area, the section in this report examines in particular the results of several systematic meta-studies to offer insights in the current empirical evidence.

The **third part** focuses on **concepts and practices of inclusion**. It discusses how inclusion has been defined and operationalised in a way that enhances the employees' equal access to resources and communications and full integration into the work group ('belongingness'), whilst also valuing and acknowledging the unique skills and perspectives of every employee as central to organisational culture and success ('uniqueness') (Shore et al 2011).

The **fourth part** of this review offers a **concluding discussion** of key findings and how they can guide the implementation of effective diversity and inclusion measures. This section also addresses some of the challenges that organisations may face when developing and pursuing such a holistic and multifaceted strategy.

Diversity management

Ways to increase and retain a diverse workforce

Although the term diversity management is sometimes used more broadly to capture any measures aimed at fostering inclusion and equity, as well as increasing diverse representation, this section focuses on the latter.

It presents the reviewed empirical evidence on how organisations can improve the internal representation of diverse and previously under-represented groups at all organisational levels, including management, through structured and targeted interventions (Onyeardor 2021, Dobbin and Kalev 2015, Vinkenburg 2017). This may encompass a number of interconnected areas of action. As Mor-Barak et al (2016: 308) state, 'diversity management involves specific policies and programs to enhance recruitment, inclusion, promotion, and retention of employees who are different from the majority of an organization's workforce'.

While the diversity management literature is vast, the empirical evidence on what measures are effective remains under-developed, as Kalev and colleagues (2006: 610) maintained in the mid-2000s. Almost ten years later, this has not fundamentally changed. Referring to the U.S. context, Dobbin and Kalev (2015: 170) still argue that 'we have a long tradition of work on the causes of race, ethnic, and gender inequality in the U.S. workplace', but robust empirical evidence into 'the efficacy of inequality reduction efforts' has been relatively limited (see also Curtis and Dreachslin 2008).

The following paragraphs present the reviewed empirical evidence on diversity management measures in four areas that have shown promising outcomes:

1. recruitment,
2. diversity management and task forces,
3. networking and affinity groups, and
4. mentoring.

Recruitment

Overall, the empirical evidence and academic discussion point relatively consistently to 'identity-conscious' approaches being more effective.

Following Mor-Barak et al's (2016) conceptualisation of diversity management as a cyclical two-stage process, recruitment of a diverse workforce plays a central role in the 'reactive' stage. The Diversity Council of Australia calls for 'inclusive recruitment' and describes this as 'the process of connecting with, interviewing, and hiring a diverse set of individuals through understanding and valuing different backgrounds and opinions.'[1]

Diversity recruitment strategies differ widely, usually falling under one of two categories: 'identity-blind' or 'identity-conscious.' While the former generally seeks to reduce the impact of personal and systemic biases in the selection and hiring process, the latter refers to processes where the 'decision-maker … consciously and deliberately use an applicant's group identity as input into the hiring decision' (Kulik and Roberson 2008: 272) with the goal to increase diversity. Overall, the empirical evidence and academic discussion point relatively consistently to 'identity-conscious' approaches being more effective, but also warn that these can also have a number of 'adverse consequences' (Kulik and Roberson 2008; McKay and Avery 2005). Moreover, some scholars have put forward a more fundamental critique of identity-blind recruitment highlighting their focus on meritocracy, which fails to take into account the effects of systemic racism and historically ingrained inequalities (Awabi and Eizadirad 2020).

[1] https://www.dca.org.au/di-planning/inclusive-recruitment

A typical and much discussed example of an identity-blind recruitment strategy is the use of anonymised ('blind') job application processes where the applicants' cover letter and CV do not contain their name or other information that directly reveals the person's ethnic, cultural or religious background (or gender, age, etc.). The rationale behind such identity-blind application processes is to respond to the empirically well-established fact that job applicants with names that suggest their minority background receive significantly less call-backs, despite equal levels of qualifications and job-relevant experiences (for an Australian study, see Booth et al 2012). To reduce the effects of these discriminatory biases in the hiring process, such processes require the employer to decide who to invite to a job interview without knowing the applicants' background.

The empirical evidence on the effectiveness of such anonymised application processes is inconclusive and mixed. Åslund and Skans (2012), for example, found in their large-scale study in Sweden that anonymisation was effective in the first stage of the hiring process. Female applicants and applicants with a 'non-Western' name advanced significantly more often and without being disadvantaged to the second stage of the selection process. However, 'a large and significant disadvantage in terms of job offers … prevailed' for those of non-Western background, which, according to Åslund and Skans (2012: 82), suggests that 'barriers at the interview stage fully counteracted the initially positive effects of [anonymous application procedures] for this group.'

Other studies even identified negative effects of anonymisation. Behaghel et al's (2015) French study found that public employers who trialled anonymised résumé-based processes were less likely to hire applicants of minority background as 'anonymization prevents the attenuation of negative signals when the candidate belongs to a minority.' For example, a minority candidate with an interrupted employment history 'can be penalized if anonymous

résumés prevent recruiters from interpreting those signals in light of the circumstances faced by the candidates' (p. 3). In another recent French study, Lacroux and Martin-Lacroux (2019) came to similar conclusions.

Reviewing the existing empirical evidence, Derous and Ryan (2018: 120) caution against putting too much hope in anonymisation: 'with anonymous resume screening, resumes are decontextualised and depersonalised. As a result, HR professionals have less possibility to understand and attenuate negative signals … and therefore might – paradoxically – engage in categorisation.'

> **…creating accountability as well as providing recognition for unbiased hiring can be an important lever in ensuring effective resume screening.**
>
> – Derous and Ryan (2018)

This resonates with the empirically based argument, put forward by Dobbin and colleagues (2015: 1034), that recruitment measures 'designed to control managerial bias lead to resistance and tend to backfire', whereas those measures that engage directly with managers and train and motivate them to take a more proactive approach toward hiring a more diverse workforce are more promising (see also Vinkenburg 2017). Dobbin et al (2015) further argue that mechanisms that increase the decision-makers' accountability, such as the establishment of a dedicated diversity manager in the organisation, can help make diversity-oriented recruitment more effective. Similarly, Derous and Ryan (2018: 122) conclude that 'creating accountability as well as providing recognition for unbiased hiring can be an important lever in ensuring effective resume screening' in the recruitment process. One way

of increasing accountability and reducing bias in the selection process is through panel recruitment, where a team of people (ideally representing diverse backgrounds) jointly assess job applications.

Empirical studies have identified several practical measures that organisations can take to effectively recruit a more diverse workforce. Three prominent measures mentioned in the reviewed literature are related to:

1. expanding the general recruitment pool,
2. emphasising the organisation's commitment to diversity and inclusion in public-facing job advertisements, and
3. the use of imagery in the recruitment material that reflects diversity.

Several studies highlight the effectiveness of targeted recruitment efforts to **increase the pool of potential job applicants**. On a very basic level, this may involve considering new channels through which job advertisements are publicised. Kulik and Roberson (2008: 272) propose, for example, that an employer 'might expand the number and type of publication outlets in which its … ads appear in an effort to make a larger segment of the labour market aware of its job opportunities.' Others, such as

Recruitment for diversity – some practical suggestions

Work with the HR department and hiring managers to discuss the organisation's diversity goals:

- Increasing accountability in the hiring process
- Considering panel recruitment and joint hiring decisions by a diverse team
- Expanding the pool of potential applicants through targeted outreach measures and alternative channels, e.g. communication channels of diverse community organisations
- Demonstrating your organisation's commitment to diversity and inclusion in the recruitment and advertisement material; this may also include visual depictions of diversity

Collins (2011) or Dobbin and colleagues (2015), highlight the effectiveness of deliberate outreach recruitment strategies, such as having a presence at job fairs or running targeted graduate recruitment programs at community colleges and other educational institutions with a particularly high proportion of students of minority background.

Several empirical studies (e.g. Rau and Hyland 2003; Kim and Gelfand 2003) have found that explicitly mentioning a company's **commitment to diversity in the recruitment or advertisement material** can be effective in attracting and, ultimately, recruiting a more diverse workforce. This was confirmed by a recent study by Flory and colleagues (2021), which concluded that the use of recruiting materials that signals 'explicit interest in employee diversity can reverse the ethnicity gap.' Their study found that the use of such material had a 'strong positive effect on interest in openings among racial minority candidates, the likelihood that they apply, and the probability that they are selected.' As Kulik and Roberson (2008: 275) highlight, such measures are not only effective and low-cost but also less likely to trigger a backlash from those who are not from a minority background, 'because pro-diversity statements are unassociated with preferential treatment based on race or gender.'

In addition to textual references to an organisation's commitment to diversity and inclusion, empirical evidence indicates that the **visual depiction of diversity** in recruitment material can also have a positive effect on recruitment as it increases positive perception of the company among people from minority background (Perkins et al 2000). Such depictions did not have a negative effect on how Whites rated the company. Avery and colleagues (2004) further concluded that the positive effects on applicants even occurred when the depicted minority was of a different (minority) background than the applicants themselves. Avery's (2003) study findings added an important nuance to this, highlighting that Black study participants only expressed a higher level of interest when the advertisement depicted diversity not only on the co-worker level but also on the supervisor level.

If workplace experiences do not align with the promises of diversity and inclusion made in the recruitment process, diversity recruitment practices can backfire.

Overall, the empirical evidence on the effectiveness of specific diversity recruitment measures is limited but relatively consistent. What several scholars highlight in this context is that diversity recruitment needs to be complemented with post-hiring policies, programs, and other measures in organisations aimed at enhancing diversity across all levels of the organisation and building a 'climate of inclusion' (Mor Barak et al 2016: 308). As Kulik and Robersen (2008: 276) highlight, 'pre-hiring expectations will be "trumped" by actual on-the-job experiences.' If actual workplace experiences do not align with the promises of diversity and inclusion made in the recruitment process, 'diversity recruitment practices may contribute to increased turnover among new minority hires' (McKay and Avery 2005). This underscores the fundamental argument that measures to increase representation and diversity must go hand-in-hand with equity and inclusion measures.

Diversity managers and task forces

A range of studies pinpoint the importance of implementing structures that can provide authority, expertise and accountability to diversity initiatives and goals. Such structures or institutional measures can come in a variety of forms, such as establishing dedicated roles for diversity managers, or diversity departments, councils, or task forces (Kalev et al 2006; Dobbin and Kalev 2015).

Kalev and colleagues' (2006) much-cited U.S. study, based on a systematic analysis of data from 708 private companies (1971–2002), differentiates between three main diversity approaches:

- establishing internal organisational responsibilities;
- measures to reduce biases in hiring and promotion decisions; and
- reducing workplace isolation of women and minority staff.

Diversity managers and cross-departmental diversity task forces have a particularly strong positive effect on diversity in managerial positions.

Their empirical analysis found that, out of these three approaches (which are, of course, not mutually exclusive), the 'most effective practices are those that establish organizational responsibility: affirmative action plans, diversity staff, and diversity task forces' (Kalev et al 2006: 602). Importantly, these organisational changes also enhance the effects of other measures such as

'diversity training and evaluations, networking, and mentoring' (p. 589). More specifically, setting up a diversity committee or appointing full-time diversity staff in organisations significantly increases the odds for black men and women in management positions. Based on these findings, Kalev et al (2006: 611) conclude that 'structures that embed accountability, authority, and expertise (affirmative action plans, diversity committees and task forces, diversity managers and departments) are the most effective means of increasing the proportions of white women, black women, and black men in private sector management'.

In 2015, Dobbin and Kalev published a follow-up study that reached similar conclusions. Combining quantitative analysis of data from 800 companies and qualitative interviews with management, they found evidence that the appointment and work of diversity managers and cross-departmental diversity task forces have a particularly strong positive effect on diversity in managerial positions:

> **Historically underrepresented groups show significant gains in the average firm after a [diversity] manager has been appointed, and after a task force has been appointed. The effects of these programs outpace those of most other diversity initiatives, such as diversity training, diversity performance evaluations, and affinity groups for underrepresented employee constituencies.**
>
> – Dobbin and Kalev (2015: 170–171)

Dobbin and Kalev (2015) identify two interrelated mechanisms that explain these positive effects.

- First, diversity managers and task forces are responsible for monitoring processes and outcomes of diversity measures which 'stimulates "evaluation apprehension"' and **increase accountability**. In doing so, they encourage decision-makers to consider their actions (e.g. 'avoid the appearance of bias'), for example, in the recruitment and promotion process. This aligns with the conclusion of another study by Dobbin et al (2015) which shows that increased accountability of hiring managers is an effective element of an organisation's diversity management strategy (see also Kilian et al 2005).
- Second, as diversity managers and task forces track diversity progress, they can 'adjust course when progress seems to slow or stall' (Dobbin and Kalev 2015: 194) **by identifying weaknesses and developing company-specific solutions**. Here, Dobbin and Kalev (2015) highlight that diversity task forces composed of representatives from across different departments of the company appear particularly effective as they can 'distribute responsibility for implementing innovations, and promoting diversity generally, to managers across the firm' (p. 194).

Networking and affinity groups

The abovementioned U.S. study by Kalev et al (2006) also found that, while institutionalising diversity management responsibilities within an organisation leads to the strongest effect on enhancing diversity in management, strategies to reduce workplace isolation for women and minority staff (e.g. through networking and mentoring programs) also had positive effects. Other studies confirm the potential of such programs as part of an organisation's diversity management strategy.

One type of networking program related to diversity and inclusion in the workplace is affinity groups or employee resource or network groups. According to Douglas (2008: 12; quoted in Welbourne et al 2017: 1817), the first affinity group (or 'caucus group' as it was referred to back then) was formed in the U.S. in the 1960s by the CEO of the Xerox Corporation in response to racial tensions in the state of New York: 'it was with the [CEO's] support that the black employees within Xerox formed the first caucus group to address the issues of overt discrimination and agitate for a fair and equitable corporate environment.'

There are different types of employee resource groups (ERG), but those most relevant to diversity and inclusion seek to bring together employees who share a social identity (Scully 2009), often women or LGBTIQ+ or ethnic minority staff. Welbourne and colleagues (2017: 1817), who conducted the first review of the academic literature on such networking groups, describe employee resource or affinity groups as 'relatively horizontal', usually without a formal hierarchy; they seek to 'provide social and professional support for members' (e.g. mentoring), 'support advocacy', and 'provide avenues for information sharing.'

While the empirical literature on the effectiveness of such networking initiatives is still limited (Welbourne et al 2017; Cenkci et al 2019) and draws mainly on individual case studies, the emerging evidence indicates that identity-based employee resource groups or affinity groups can have positive effects on minority staff retention whilst also contributing to fostering a climate of inclusion within an organisation.

McPhee and colleagues (2016: 1104), for example, found in their qualitative study of an Aboriginal employee resource group at a Canadian banking organisation that the group reduced the members' sense of isolation and 'played an important role in helping Aboriginal employees maintain a sense of identity within the workplace and to connect with the broader organizational culture.' The group also contributed to cultural changes and increased awareness within the company, most significantly through their role in co-organising an annual three-day conference where employees learned about 'cultural aspects of aboriginal heritage'. The leadership of the firm also used this conference as an ' impetus to discuss strategic plans that involved Aboriginal business endeavours, and for further communication throughout the year' (p. 1111). Moreover, the study concluded that this Aboriginal networking program contributed to increasing retention among Aboriginal staff and 'helped them to be mentored by senior managers, to better position themselves for promotion, to ask group members about career development, and to better prepare for internal job competitions' (p. 1112).

Affinity groups can have positive effects on minority staff retention and contribute to fostering a climate of inclusion.

The potential effects of affinity groups on the members' sense of cultural safety and community, professional development as well as the workplace climate beyond the group itself were also identified by Green's (2018) qualitative U.S.-based case study. Green found that such groups offer spaces to discuss sensitive issues such as personal experiences with microaggression or 'frustration at the overall lack of understanding of cultural issues' and explore strategies on how best to address these issues (p. 640). Moreover, they engaged in a number of formal and informal education activities aimed at promoting professional development of their members, including new staff.

Green concludes that a 'second and equally important area for the ERGs was to create learning events for the broader employee population' (p. 642). This included, for example, bringing in external guest speakers or holding cultural awareness raising events (e.g. 'cultural heritage months'). While the effects of these events were not measured by Green, the 'participants felt that increased understanding and awareness of their culture and experience had the potential to reduce bias and stereotypical thinking' (p. 642).

Cenkci et al's (2019) qualitative study of several employee resource groups at a U.S. retailer, including one for African-American staff, also found support for the positive effects of such groups. Their analysis indicates benefits for workplace engagement (e.g. higher motivation), workplace connectedness, and a sense of inclusion, which was manifested by increased feelings of being valued and respected at work.

A few studies have come to more mixed results, some of them identifying specific factors that may contribute to the effectiveness of employee resource groups or make them less likely to achieve their goals. Friedman and Holtom's (2002) survey-based U.S. study, for example, concluded that, while such groups can help reduce turnover among its members, the positive effects applied only to minority employees on a managerial level (p. 411). They also found that these positive effects were particularly likely when more top-level managers (from the respective minority group) were included in the group (p. 413).

Dennissen et al's (2019) Dutch case study of several 'diversity networks' within a financial service organisation found that minority employee resource groups are 'valuable for the career advancement of their members' and useful mechanisms for 'community building' (p. 976) and reducing isolation. One of the main goals of the ethnic minority network was 'to connect employees throughout the organization', 'among employees with an ethnic background as well as between all employees' (p. 972). However, Dennissen and her

team also identified concerns around the visibility of their ethnic identity in these diversity networks, as this was seen as possibly increasing isolation and reinforcing stigmatisation. Related to this, Dennissen and colleagues (2019: 977) found a tendency to 'restrict inclusion to belongingness only and shy away from too strong claims to the difference and uniqueness of their members', asserting that 'only when networks also address difference and the unique contributions of their members, and foster their sense of belongingness to the organization…, can diversity networks contribute to inclusion on the organizational level'.

Mentoring

Mentoring is mentioned in several studies as an element of employee resource groups, but it can also be a separate measure within an organisation's diversity management strategy, aimed primarily at (minority) staff retention and career advancement (Clutterbuck 2012). Mentoring can take a range of forms (Killian et al 2004); for example, it can be formal or informal, and the mentor may or may not be from the same minority background as the mentee.

While some smaller cases studies have shed light on the effects of specific mentoring interventions (e.g. Christian et al 2021), larger studies have identified mentoring programs more generally as an important part of diversity management practice. Curtis and Dreachslin's (2008: 124) systematic synthesis of empirical studies on diversity intervention, for example, concluded that, while specific empirical evidence was limited, 'mentoring programs for racial/ethnic minorities were deemed effective, with results measured by self-report satisfaction as well as some objective metrics.'

The findings of Kalev et al's (2006) and Dobbin and Kalev's (2016) quantitative studies analysing the correlations between minority representation in managerial positions and the presence of certain diversity management policies and measures suggest that mentoring programs are associated with higher representation of certain ethnic minority groups in management; the association was much stronger for minority women than for minority men.

Robinson and Reio (2012) found in their analysis of a survey among 359 African-American men from various professional backgrounds (of which 45% had received formal and 31% informal mentoring) that those with ***formal*** mentoring experiences slightly more often considered these experiences as useful (73%) compared to those who had received informal mentoring (51%). However, the analysis did not establish a systemic effect difference between formal and informal mentoring.[2] Robinson and Reio (2012: 414) conclude that mentoring was 'significantly related' to both higher levels of job satisfaction and organisational commitment, compared to those who did not receive mentoring. These results resonate with the findings from Giscombe and Mattis's (2002: 108) U.S. study among women of colour: 44% of survey respondents considered 'having an influential mentor or sponsor' in the company as important for career advancement, and 47% stated that not having an influential mentor or sponsor had 'prevented them from advancing in their companies.'

Small case studies on specific mentoring interventions overall confirm the importance of mentoring in the context of diversity management, and that these benefits can go beyond career advancement and job satisfaction. While the current evidence is not robust enough to definitively indicate what kind of mentoring is most beneficial (and in what way), these study findings can help identify potential factors for success.

[2] Underhill's (2006) meta-review of studies on mentoring more generally – and not in the context of diversity – concluded that informal mentoring was overall more effective for improving career outcomes than formal mentoring.

In a study of three U.S. organisations, Thomas (2001) found (apart from confirming that whites moved into executive levels more quickly) that those minority employees who ultimately reached the executive level 'share a key resource: a strong network of mentors and corporate sponsors who provide instruction, coaching, and – most important – long term, close developmental support'. Moreover, Thomas argues that the type of mentoring may play a role in the advancement of minority employees. Those who ended up in executive positions tended to draw on a mix of both white and African-American mentors, while those who did not, 'relied almost exclusively on members of their own racial group for key developmental support or they relied predominantly on whites.' Moreover, Thomas (2001: 7) concludes that for mentoring to be effective the mentors need to combine the role of a 'coach' and 'counsellor'; as the former, they offer instructional technical support, and as the latter, they provide emotional support and opportunities to reflect on the mentees' experiences.

Olson and Jackson's (2009) analysis of two 18-month mentorship programs in the health care sector in the U.S. also showed positive results. A majority of the 34 participating minority employees were either promoted (14) or received a 'role expansion' (12),

Diversity management strategies that have proven effective

- Establishing organisational responsibility by appointing diversity managers or task forces. They help create accountability, can monitor diversity progress, identify weaknesses and develop targeted measures. They also enhance the effectiveness of other diversity measures such as networking, mentoring and diversity training
- Encouraging the establishment of employee resource or affinity groups. They contribute to a sense of cultural safety, strengthen inclusion and improve retention rates for under-represented groups
- Developing targeted mentoring for ethnic minority staff and other under-represented groups to foster their retention and career advancement

and minority representation increased across all leadership levels of the organisation. The mentorship program had two specific features: the mentors were all senior level and white, and the program encompassed specific training modules for the mentee and the mentor, the latter covering, among other items, cultural competency. These seem to have contributed to initiating learning processes among both mentors and mentees.

Particularly insightful for the Australian context is Burgess and Dyer's (2008) case study of a workplace mentoring and traineeship program for Indigenous people at the University of Newcastle. The program encompassed both formal training and informal, flexible support in response to the specific needs of the mentees. In contrast to the program in Olson and Jackson's (2009) study, the Indigenous mentees were all paired with an Indigenous mentor. The outcome was similarly positive in enhancing retention and career development. In addition, participants reported that mentors often helped them deal with issues such as racism and workplace discrimination by discussing strategies to redress racism, 'such as providing cultural awareness training for other staff in the work area and exploring ways that the trainees could enlighten those with racist views' (p. 478).[3]

The relevance of workplace mentoring for the development of better strategies to respond to racism was also identified in another recent U.S. study by Nair and Cain Good (2021). Focusing on microaggressions in the workplace, they concluded that 'mentoring can help with either ameliorating the impact, processing the experience, or even countering and responding to the microaggression in appropriate ways' (p. 16).

While the empirical evidence consistently pinpoints the effectiveness of mentoring programs to increase minority employees' career advancement, such programs also have additional potential – depending on their specific design – to contribute to addressing racism and discrimination and building a more inclusive work environment.

[3] We acknowledge the 'cultural load' problem: those affected by racism can be urged to become the ones who need to teach others about racism. The study presented here did not further discuss this issue.

Diversity and anti-racism training

According to Pendry and colleagues (2007), diversity training refers to 'any discrete programme ... which aims to influence participants to increase their positive – or decrease their negative – intergroup behaviours, such that less prejudice or discrimination is displayed towards others perceived as different in their group affiliation(s).'

As such, diversity training can constitute an important part of any effort to build and enhance an inclusive organisational environment, be it at work, a sports club, or elsewhere.

As the demand for diversity training has grown significantly in recent years, so has the number of research studies examining the effectiveness of these forms of educational interventions in the workplace or similar organisational settings. Given the many different academic disciplines contributing to this expansive body of work, Bezrukova et al (2016: 1228) critique the 'increasing fragmentation of knowledge generated by researchers in various diversity training subfields.' As this fragmentation and the large volume of research on diversity training makes it impossible to review all relevant evidence, we refer primarily to the findings of several key studies, including and especially those that offer a systematic review of individual studies (meta-studies), on diversity training in general as well as, more specifically, unconscious or implicit bias training (IBT).

An early synthesis of this pertinent literature, published between 2000 and 2005, concluded that the limited empirical evidence available indicates that diversity training can be effective in achieving three goals, 'given proper attention to planning, framing, design, and workforce demographics' (Curtis and Dreachslin 2008: 113).

These three goals are:

1. raising awareness of exclusion, discrimination and biases;
2. helping employees acknowledge their own prejudice and biases and develop their capacity and motivation to reduce these biases; and
3. fostering a positive perspective on diversity as an organisational asset to enhance performance.

Overall, this review indicates a level of effectiveness of diversity and anti-racism training programs under certain conditions. However, evidence also demonstrates their pitfalls and limitations, and even the risk of causing counter-productive backlash. There is a broad consensus that, as a stand-alone workplace intervention, training is insufficient; rather, it needs to be used to complement more systematic organisational changes to achieve diversity, equity, and inclusion. Training alone will not change representation in a given organisational context.

Our review of the evidence highlights if, how and under what conditions diversity training can lead to desired changes and what has been identified as their pitfalls and weaknesses. We refer here primarily to two meta-analysis studies:

- First, Kalinoski and colleagues (2013) systematically reviewed 65 studies (most of them published in the 2000s) to examine 'affective-based, cognitive-based, and skill-based outcomes' of diversity training as

well as training design and related moderating factors that may increase training effectiveness.

- Second, Bezrukova and colleagues (2016) conducted the to-date most comprehensive meta-analysis of 260 studies (with together almost 30,000 participants) on diversity training effectiveness.

Both these meta-analyses conclude that diversity training can lead to positive change among participants. The largest effects are typically recorded in the area of cognitive skill development, i.e. trainees acquired knowledge, for example, about cultural diversity issues.[4] To a slightly smaller extent, these training measures also result in behavioural or skill-based changes (measured either as self-reported behavioural intentions or actual performance), while the measured effects on participants' affective or attitudinal changes tend to be significantly smaller. 'Diversity training programs seem less effective in changing attitudes', Bezrukova and colleagues (2016: 1242) conclude. They further found that effects on attitudes tend to diminish quickly after training, whereas 'training effects on cognitive learning remained stable or in some cases even increased in the long-term', speculating that

> **"cues in the workplace or elsewhere could reinforce cognitive responses that trainees learned. Perhaps people are reminded of scenarios or situations they have learned while in training, which then is more readily maintained and even strengthened over time.**
>
> (p. 1243)

Based on the empirical evidence in these two meta-analyses, how should diversity training be designed to enhance intended outcomes?

[4] A small-scale 2001 Australian study of an anti-racism education program (focused on imparting knowledge on, and reducing prejudice towards, Aboriginal people) for employees of a large public service organisation, for example, showed significant short-term effects in both knowledge and prejudice reduction, but after three months only the changes in participants' knowledge remained, while prejudice levels did not differ compared to pre-intervention levels (Hill and Augoustinos 2001).

What factors influence the effectiveness of diversity training in reaching cognitive, behavioural, and affective-attitudinal change?

Duration: Both meta-studies found that longer instances of training are more effective than shorter ones. Kalinoski and colleagues (2013) conclude that training programs longer than four hours are more effective in achieving affective changes. Similarly, Bezrukova and colleagues' (2016) analysis shows that training length is strongly and positively associated with greater effectiveness across all three areas of change (cognitive, behavioural, and attitudinal), possibly due to more opportunities for personal contact between different groups (assuming the training sessions are mixed).

Format: In-person training courses are much more effective than computer-based/online courses. Related to this, courses that offered more opportunities for social interaction between participants tend to have significantly stronger effects on both cognitive and affective/attitudinal changes. Moreover, courses that used a combination of both active (e.g. role-plays, games, discussions) and passive (e.g. video, lectures) forms of instruction yield much greater effects than merely passive methods of content delivery (Kalinoski et al 2013). Overall, no major differences were noted between voluntary and mandatory training courses, although Bezrukova et al (2016: 1244) conclude that 'mandatory diversity training seemed more effective for behavioural learning', which resonates with previous findings from mandatory intergroup contact intervention measures. On the other hand, a higher level of initial motivation among trainees was found to be associated with better outcomes in the area of affective change (Kalinoski et al 2013).

Content: Diversity training is more effective when they encompass both (cognitive) awareness-raising elements (e.g. awareness of trainees' own cultural assumptions and biases) and skill-building elements (Curtis and

Dreachslin 2008: 120) that help trainees expand their behaviour and repertoire of discrete actions (e.g. how to monitor one's actions, behaviour in intergroup communication) (Bezrukova et al 2016). The evidence on the question of whether training should focus on a single attribute (e.g. race) or frame diversity in more generic terms (race, gender, religion, etc.) remains inconclusive. Kalinoski et al (2013) found that an attribute-specific focus tends to be more effective, while Bezrukova et al (2016) conclude that there are no significant differences in the effect size.

Trainers: According to Kalinoski et al (2013), it matters who runs the training course. Especially affective-based outcomes were significantly more positive when the trainer was the direct supervisor or manager of the trainees rather than the organisation's diversity manager, HR staff, or another internal staff member.

Integration into organisational context: A one-off standalone training course is much less effective than training that is integrated into a broader organisational strategy and broader sets of DEI measures. Bezrukova et al (2016: 1244) argue that 'integrated efforts may signal managerial commitment to diversity above and beyond that of a single class or seminar, substantially increasing the motivation of participants to learn'. Moreover, they argue that, ideally, the training can be linked to and complement other measures such as

networking and mentoring. According to Bezrukova et al (2016: 1244), 'the strong effects we found reveal the criticality of offering diversity programs as part of a well-thought-out package or portfolio of diversity-related efforts.'

One particular strand of diversity training that has received a great deal of attention in recent years is **Implicit Bias Training** (IBT) or **Unconscious Bias Training** (UBT). Noon (2018: 198) describes UBT as

> **the latest fashion in diversity management ... whereby managers and employees are first put through online tests [usually an Implicit Association Test[5]] that almost invariably prove they are all biased and are then required to discuss how they can manage this bias to prevent it having a negative effect on workplace social interactions and decisions.**

The evidence on the effectiveness of IBT or UBT is mixed and contested, especially in terms of long-term effects, and many academics and practitioners are sceptical of such interventions for a variety of reasons. From an empirical perspective, many questions remain unanswered, but several studies have shed some empirical light on the usefulness and effectiveness of IBT/UBT.

In a systematic review of studies of 47 implicit bias and stereotype interventions (published in 30 different studies[6]) Fitzgerald et al (2019: 9) found that 'many interventions are ineffective; their use at present cannot be described as evidence-based'. The results did not point to any 'clear path to

[5] The Implicit Association Test (IAT) is the most commonly used test aimed at measuring implicit biases; it is 'usually administered as a computerized task where participants must categorize negatively and positively valenced words together with either images or words, e.g. white faces and black faces for a Race IAT. The tests must be performed as quickly as possible' (Fitzgerald et al 2019: 2).

follow in bias reduction', with some interventions possibly even increasing biases. However, their review also identified that some bias-reducing approaches did lead to (at least short term) changes and thus merit further attention as they may help design more effective IBT/UBT training programs. They found, for example, that interventions where participants had many opportunities to identify with people in the case study scenarios used in the training, showed promising outcomes. Several types of interventions showed positive results, in particular those that 'associated sets of concepts, invoked goals or motivations, or taxed people's mental resources' (10); these include the following three types of IBT/UBT interventions (7):

- '*Exposure to counterstereotypical exemplars* – participants are exposed to exemplars that contradict the stereotype of the outgroup'
- '*Evaluative conditioning* – participants perform tasks to strengthen counterstereotypical associations'
- '*Intentional strategies to overcome biases* – participants are instructed to implement strategies to override or suppress their biases'

Little evidence exists on the long-term effects of implicit bias interventions and possible behavioural changes, according to this study. Fitzgerald et al (2019: 9) argue that long-term changes are unlikely due to the fact that such biases are usually 'generated [and] maintained by culture'.

> **Any counter-actions, even if effective immediately, would then themselves be rapidly countered since participants remain part of their culture from which they receive constant inputs. To tackle this, interventions may need to be repeated frequently or**

[6] These 30 studies include Lai et al's (2014) systematic review of 17 interventions. The findings are included in Fitzgerald et al's analysis presented here. Lai et al (2014: 1765) summarise their own results as follows: 'Eight of 17 interventions were effective at reducing implicit preferences for Whites compared with Blacks, particularly ones that provided experience with counter-stereotypical exemplars, used evaluative conditioning methods, and provided strategies to override biases. The other 9 interventions were ineffective, particularly ones that engaged participants with others' perspectives, asked participants to consider egalitarian values, or induced a positive emotion'.

somehow be constructed so that they create durable changes in the habits of participants.

Accordingly, Fitzgerald et al (2019: 9–10) call for 'a commitment to more in-depth training' instead of one-off sessions, and 'implementing widespread structural and institutional changes that are likely to reduce implicit biases.' This resonates with Noon's (2018) critique of IBT/UBT interventions, arguing against psychologising racism and ignoring the structural nature of racist and other biases that 'militate against pro-diversity actions.'

These sceptical assessments of IBT/UCT interventions contrast in some ways with the findings of one psychological study by Forscher and colleagues (2017). The research team conducted the 'habit-breaking intervention' method with a study group of 136 people, measuring the effects on their implicit biases and factors related to intergroup conflict. The habit-breaking method treats unconscious bias as a form of 'unwanted habit' and teaches participants about the nature of 'bias and strategies to overcome it' (Forscher et al 2017: 134). More specifically, the intervention consisted of

1. an education session where participants learned about implicit bias and how it affects racial minorities, and
2. a training session that introduced participants 'to the idea that implicit bias can be overcome through a combination of motivation, awareness, and the use of bias-reduction strategies'; five such strategies were discussed: stereotype replacement, counter-stereotypic imaging, individuating, perspective-taking, and increasing opportunities for contact.

Following the intervention, the participants' results were compared to their bias scores prior to the intervention (measured using the Implicit Association

Test [IAT]) and to those of a control group who did not participate in the intervention. The research team found that both the control group and the intervention group showed an initial decrease in their implicit bias, but this effect vanished again after two weeks for both groups. However, the people in the intervention group remained more concerned about racial discrimination and were more likely to notice and condemn bias in the world around them and have interracial interactions with strangers. Even two years after the intervention, they were still more likely to notice and confront bias in others.

Forscher and colleagues (2017: 145) interpret these results as 'promising evidence for the habit-breaking intervention's effectiveness in producing lasting psychological change'. They highlight, however, the ***indirect*** nature of these effects of the intervention. While it does not itself reduce the implicit bias of participants, it seems to 'increase people's sensitivity to bias, particularly when others act with bias, and increases the probability that, when a person encounters bias, he or she will label that bias as wrong' (144). The research team argues that the effectiveness of such programs is based mainly on building 'knowledge about how biases can affect behaviour unintentionally, whether one's own behaviour is or could be biased, and whether the unintentionally biased behaviour has adverse consequences' (144).

Despite the current popularity of IBT/UBT interventions in the workplace and similar environments, scepticism about the merit and effectiveness of such training programs prevails. Many experts in the field have highlighted that such trainings, even if and when they are effective, is no fix for racial inequality and under-representation (Onyeador et al 2021; Kalev and Dobbin 2018).

Onyeador and colleagues (2021) argue that one reason for the popularity of IBT/UBT among some practitioners is linked to what they consider some (white) people's defensiveness to allegations of racism. Cloaking the problem of under-representation, racial inequality, prejudice and/or discrimination as unconscious and somehow beyond one's personal control 'might thus mitigate that defensiveness' (20). Onyeador et al (2021), however, pinpoint the **pitfalls of such a focus on implicit bias**, including the risk of aggravating prejudiced behaviour among some, and the problem of lower levels of accountability for supposed implicitly biased behaviour. Moreover, they argue that White employers or employees may 'also respond defensively to information indicating that they have, or even ***might*** have, implicit racial bias' (p. 20). Instead of trying to avoid this response from majority group members, diversity training (and other diversity initiatives) should plan for and directly address this **defensive reaction** and assist 'majority group attendees recognize and address potential defensiveness', for example, through re-affirming their values of equality and anti-racism, and 'linking diversity efforts to the organization's mission, values, and goals' (p. 21).

While not opposed to IBT/UBT and diversity training programs in general, Onyeador and colleagues (2021: 21) draw on empirical evidence (see above), to conclude that organisations should 'use training as an opportunity to educate members about an organization's diversity metrics, goals, and plans for addressing representation and inclusion'. This could then also send the message that the organisation is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Most importantly, this commitment needs to manifest in substantial structural changes within the organisation. The next section discusses such structural changes through the lens of inclusion.

Concepts and practices of inclusion

'Inclusion is the Key to Diversity Management, but What is Inclusion?', Mor Barak (2016: 83) asked in her editorial for the journal *Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership & Governance*. This section seeks to answer this question and discuss the evidence that can assist decision-makers within organisations in promoting a 'climate of inclusion' (Nishii 2013).

In 2018, Shore and colleagues (2018) published the findings of an extensive review of the academic literature on inclusive workplaces. They conclude that, despite a significant increase in both academic and practitioner attention to inclusion and interest in exploring what practices of inclusion may be particularly effective, 'scholarship focused on inclusion is still in the initial stages' (p. 177). The academic work has 'not crystalised into a clear and well-defined set of constructs with associated empirical testing' (p. 182). They further noted that the majority of studies have been conducted in the U.S., arguing, however, that many of these findings appear applicable also in other national contexts (p. 177). Acknowledging that this is a still-emerging field of research, our evidence review identified a number of conceptual and empirical perspectives on inclusion that can help build and enhance inclusion in organisational contexts.

Inclusion focused strategies are more complex than a set of programs, policies, and actions to be implemented by an organisation. They are about changing organisational culture.

While traditional diversity management strategies aim to increase the representation of previously under-represented and marginalised groups within an organisational setting, inclusion focused strategies are about changing organisational culture. Some scholars in the field speak of creating a 'climate of inclusion' (Nishii 2013; Mor Barak et al 2016; Shore et al 2018) that 'promotes employee perceptions of the organizational context that leads to the full acceptance of all employees and provides an environment in which the full spectrum of talents of individual employees are used' (Mor Barak et al 2016: 309).

This understanding underscores the importance of **individuals' perceptions and personal sense of acceptance and appreciation**. As Ferdman (2014: 4) argues, 'the core of inclusion is how people experience it' (see also Ely and Thomas 2001). It cannot simply be mandated or legislated, which makes it much more challenging to achieve than diversity (Winters 2014). Instead, organisational leaders are tasked with enhancing the organisational culture of inclusion by 'creating an environment that acknowledges, welcomes, and accepts different approaches, styles, perspectives, and experiences, so as to allow people to reach their potential and result in enhanced organizational success' (Winters 2014: 2006). This requires thorough assessments of organisational and managerial structures and everyday practices and routines to ensure 'equal access to valued opportunities' for all members of an organisation (Shore et al 2018: 177).

The ultimate answer as to whether an organisation has an inclusive climate lies primarily in individuals' perceptions – not in the assessment of management or leadership. Mor Barak and her colleagues (2017: 147) emphasise this subjective experience, whilst highlighting that both formal and informal processes play a role in achieving a culture of inclusion:

> **"The concept of inclusion-exclusion in the workplace refers to the individual's sense of being a part of the organizational system in both the formal processes, such as access to information and decision-making channels, and the informal processes, such as "water cooler" and lunch meetings where information exchange and decisions informally take place.**

Models of inclusion

Scholars have sought to operationalise inclusion since the 1990s, mainly to measure the effects of inclusion on, for example, workplace satisfaction, employment tenure or performance. One of the first models, developed by Mor Barak and Cherin (1998), draws on organisational and psychology literature to develop an inclusion-exclusion scale. It operationalises workplace inclusion based on three factors[7]:

- **Involvement in the work group:** feeling of being part of informal discussions, feeling of isolation, feeling listened to, judgement respected by others, feeling of being part of a group's decision making
- **Influence in decision making:** ability to influence organisational and assignment decisions, consulted about important project decisions, having input as to how work is performed
- **Access to communication and resources:** feedback by supervisor, access to training and materials needed.

> **Inclusion means everyone is treated equally as an insider of the group ('belongingness'), while at the same time the unique characteristics of each individual employee are valuable and regarded as positive for the group's success ('uniqueness').**

While Mor Barak and Cherin's traditional inclusion model clearly operationalises how individuals are integrated into the work group and organisational environment, it does not fully account for the complexities linked to a person's specific 'social identities.' This shortcoming is addressed

[7] Pelled et al (1999) developed a similar measure of inclusion based on (a) decision-making influence, (b) access to sensitive work information, and (c) job security.

by a very prominent and more recent model of inclusion, developed by Shore and colleagues (2011). Drawing on an analysis of the inclusion and diversity literature, they define inclusion of employees in the work group based on the degree to which they feel their needs for **'both belongingness and uniqueness'** (p. 1265) are being satisfied.

Here, 'belongingness' refers to being treated as an 'insider' of the work group, while 'uniqueness' refers to whether the unique characteristics of individual employees are regarded as valuable and positive for the group's or organisation's success (see also Chung et al, 2020).[8] Shore and colleagues (2011) then use these two factors to develop a four-fold 'inclusion framework', differentiating between exclusion, assimilation, differentiation and inclusion (see Figure 2).

	Low Belongingness	High Belongingness
Low Value in Uniqueness	**Exclusion** Individual is not treated as an organisational insider with unique value in the work group but there are other employees or groups who are insiders.	**Assimilation** Individual is treated as an insider in the work group when they conform to organisational/dominant culture norms and downplay uniqueness.
High Value in Uniqueness	**Differentiation** Individual is not treated as an organisational insider in the work group but their unique characteristics are seen as valuable and required for group/organisational success.	**Inclusion** Individual is treated as an insider and also allowed/encouraged to retain uniqueness within the work group.

Figure 2: Inclusion Framework (Shore et al 2011)

[8] Chung et al (2020) empirically validated these two factors of work group inclusion and demonstrated that inclusion correlates positively with job performance and creativity (based on supervisors' assessment).

Similarly, Nishii (2013: 1757) defines a 'climate of inclusion' – a term she coined and introduced to the academic debate – along three dimensions:

- 'fairly implemented employment practices and diversity-specific practice that help to eliminate bias', signaling the importance of a 'level play field';
- 'integration of difference', whereby employees from diverse backgrounds work together and everyone can enact the 'core aspects of their self-concept and/or multiple identities (…) without suffering unwanted consequences;
- 'inclusion in decision making', whereby 'diverse perspectives of employees are actively sought and integrated, even if expressed ideas might upset the status quo'.

Without explicitly using Shore et al's (2011) terminology, Nishii's (2013) 'climate of inclusion' model posits that workplace inclusion is dependent on employees' being fully integrated into the work group and decision-making processes, ***as well as*** being able to enact, and be valued for, their unique identities and perspectives.

These models have helped enhance the conceptual clarity of inclusion, and they have prepared the foundation for the exploration of how inclusion can be enhanced in practice. While the empirical scholarship is still in its early stages, there is emerging evidence that can assist decision-makers in developing measures to promote inclusion.

Towards good practice of inclusion

Drawing on the currently most comprehensive review of the inclusion literature, Shore et al (2018) developed a 'model of inclusive organizations', which they regard as a 'framework that can be used for theory building, empirical testing, and practical application'. The latter purpose is particularly relevant for this section. The model encompasses six key themes that need to be taken into account when building an inclusive environment within an organisational setting (p. 182 and 185):

1. **'Feeling safe'** – individual and group-based 'psychological and physical safety associated with sharing different opinions and views from others'
2. **'Involvement in the work group'** – sense of being treated as an 'insider' with full and equal 'access to critical information and resources'; this resonates with Shore et al's (2011) belongingness and elements of Mor Barak and Cherin's (1998) model of inclusion.
3. **'Feeling respected and valued'** – feeling like an 'appreciated and esteemed member of the group and organization'
4. **'Influence on decision-making'** – the sense of having a voice and belief one's views and ideas are influential; align with a key factor in Mor Barak and Cherin's (1998) model of inclusion.
5. **'Authenticity'** – similar to the uniqueness dimension in Shore et al's (2011) model; referring to organisational support to ensure everyone feels they 'can share valued identities that may differ from dominant organisational culture or employee lifestyle without repercussion'.
6. **'Recognising, honouring, and advancing of diversity'** – referring to 'fair treatment, sharing of employee differences for mutual learning and growth, and top management showing their value for diversity through words and action'.[9]

[9] Jannsens & Zanoni's (2008) study mentions the example of, among others, flexible working hours to accommodate religious needs and holidays.

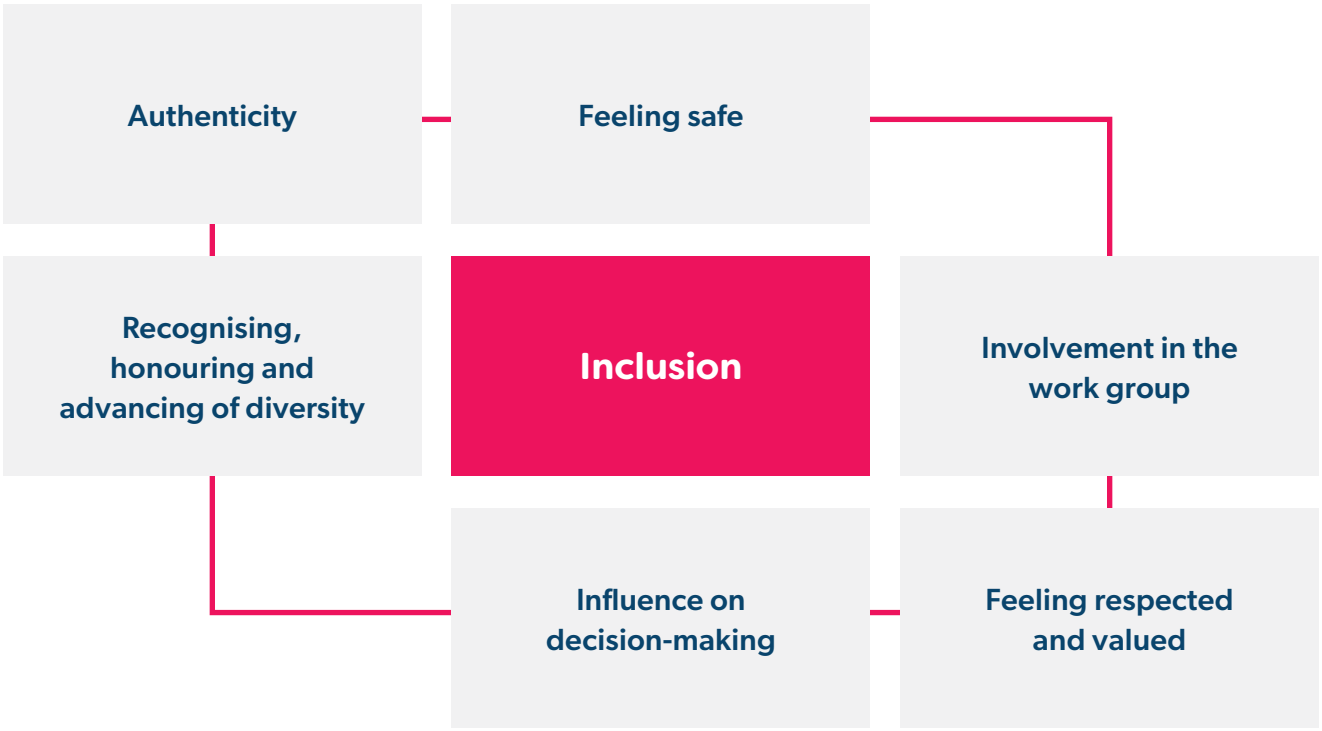


Figure 3: Six key elements to build an inclusive environment (Shore et al 2018)

Based on their literature review, Shore et al (2018: 185) further argue that to achieve inclusion, organisations need to combine two complementary approaches, which they refer to as 'management prevention orientation and management promotion orientation'. The former is aimed at **preventing exclusion and racism** as well as effectively managing 'microinequities and subtle discrimination' if or when they occur. This prevention approach is essential but in itself insufficient to create an inclusive environment, and it needs to be complemented, according to Shore and colleagues, with various efforts to **promote inclusion**, whereby managers take a range of measures to 'strive for growth and accomplishment in the pursuit of the goal of an inclusionary organisation.'

Such a double strategy, when implemented with genuine commitment, is most effective in achieving diversity representation across all levels of the organisation and offers the greatest chance of **harnessing the various benefits** of an inclusive environment, including higher levels of retention and growth of talent, and innovation as well as employees' sense of psychological (cultural) safety, as a number of empirical studies have found (Allen et al 2003; Hwang and Hopkins, 2012; Carmeli et al, 2010; Hirak et al, 2012; Nembhard and Edmondson, 2006; Chung et al, 2020).

Sessler Bernstein and Bilimoria's (2013) empirical study is among those included in the meta-analysis by Shore et al (2011). It is particularly noteworthy because it focuses on diversity and inclusion in the not-for-profit section, and more specifically, within the boards of not-for-profit organisations. It is also insightful as it argues – and empirically tests – what inclusion related approaches and rationales are particularly effective. Sessler Bernstein and Bilimoria (2013) use Ely and Thomas's (2001) prominent differentiation between three paradigms of work group diversity, each one offering its own rationale for strengthening diversity and inclusion:

- **Discrimination-and-fairness perspective** focuses on providing equal opportunity (e.g. in the recruitment process) and preventing exclusion and discrimination; establishing a culturally diverse workforce is regarded 'as a moral imperative to ensure justice and the fair treatment of all members of society' (Ely and Thomas 2001: 245).

- **Access-and-legitimacy perspective** is driven by the rather instrumentalist goal of accessing and gaining legitimacy in what is recognised as culturally diverse markets; here, diversity is seen as a positive tool used only 'at the margins' of an organisation, but the specific perspectives of a diverse workforce are not incorporated 'into their core functions' (p. 243).
- **Integration-and-learning perspective** acknowledges, values, and uses the different perspectives and skills of a diverse workforce 'to rethink its primary tasks and redefine its markets, products, strategies, and business practices in ways that will advance its mission.' Here, diversity becomes 'a resource for learning and adaptive change' for and across the entire organisation (p. 240).

Ely and Thomas (2001: 260) argue on the basis of their small empirical case studies that

> **"all three types of work group diversity perspectives were successful in motivating managers to diversify their staff, but only the integration-and-learning perspective provided the kind of rationale and guidance people needed to achieve sustained benefits from diversity.**

Moreover, it was the only diversity paradigm that resulted in a work environment where 'all employees feel fully respected and valued' and where people of colour see their own identity as a 'source of value…, a resource for learning and teaching and a source of privilege for whites to acknowledge' (p. 261).

Sessler Bernstein and Bilimoria (2013) examined how these three diversity perspectives affect individual inclusion experiences of ethnic/racial minority non-profit board members. Confirming Ely and Thomas's assessment, they found a 'direct path' between these individual experiences of inclusion and integration-and-learning perspectives (and not for the other two paradigms), 'demonstrating that individuals feel most included when they perceive they are valued for their talents, contributions, and abilities to assist the board to serve its mission' (p. 648).

> **The 'integration-and-learning perspective' is the only diversity paradigm that resulted in a work environment where 'all employees feel fully respected and valued' and where people of colour see their own identity as a 'source of value..., a resource for learning and teaching and a source of privilege for whites to acknowledge'.**
>
> – Ely and Thomas 2001

Linked to that, Sessler Bernstein and Bilimoria (2013: 649) further found that inclusive boardroom behaviour correlated strongly with experiences of inclusion: 'That is, when boardroom behaviour focussed on respect for individuals, treated all board members as equals, opened leadership positions to everyone, and did not tolerate individuals being less than decent to one another, minority board members experienced inclusion'. In their conclusion, they refer to Shore et al's (2011) conceptualisation of inclusion, arguing that inclusion brings together both 'uniqueness' and 'belongingness'.

Their study, together with Ely and Thomas's (2001) work, highlights the importance of inclusive everyday behaviour and a culture of inclusion, on the one hand, and the shortcomings of relying merely on compliance with certain inclusion policies and procedures, on the other. It also warns against an instrumentalist perspective of using the skills of a diverse workforce only to access new markets and increase profit.

Reviewing 45 empirical studies on inclusion and diversity climate, Dwertmann and colleagues (2016) concluded that the overwhelming majority of research attention has been directed to what they call (drawing on Ely and Thomas [2001]) the ***fairness and discrimination*** perspective, that is, focusing on the extent to which workplaces provide an environment of fairness, free from discrimination. In contrast, the **'synergy perspective'**, which is closely related to Ely and Thomas's

Towards Inclusion: 'belongingness' and 'uniqueness'

'Scholarship focused on inclusion is still in the initial stages' (Shore et al, 2018: 177), but that does not mean there is no evidence that could guide organisations in their endeavour to create a climate of inclusion.

Inclusion in organisational contexts requires leadership and managerial commitment in combination with targeted policies, measures, and everyday practices. These need to be identity-conscious without essentialising individuals and give space to, and value, the expressions of cultural identities even where this may challenge the status quo ('uniqueness').

As Nishii (2013) maintains, in inclusive climates, the questioning of dominant assumptions is not seen as a threat, but rather as a value-enhancing proposition. At the same time, these practices and policies, and measures need to effectively pursue fair treatment for all and full integration into workgroups and the organisation as a whole, with equal access to resources and information ('belongingness').

integration-and-learning paradigm, has been 'poorly integrated in diversity climate research' (Dwertmann et al 2016: 1137). Moreover, the review identified 'a clear lack of … studies' that 'identify interventions and managerial behaviours that effectively improve the diversity climate of a work group or organization' (p. 1163). This confirms the review undertaken for this report: empirically grounded evidence on what practical steps – from principles and policies to programs and practices – can be taken to effectively build an inclusive work environment remains underdeveloped.

Several reviewed studies contribute to further operationalising these factors. Daya's (2014) South African case study, for example, sought to better understand the elements that foster the perception of a diverse and inclusive workplace. Daya developed an empirically driven set of considerations for the promotion of inclusion on **organisational, interpersonal, and individual levels:**

- At the ***organisational*** level, the importance of senior leadership appearing committed to and valuing diversity, as well as an inclusive structure that offers flexible working arrangements, and clear and transparent communication, and fair and transparent recruitment and promotion processes are highlighted.
- At the ***interpersonal*** level, factors that were highlighted as important included respect and acceptance, positive, inclusive engagement with an individual's immediate line manager, a culture of engagement, and the alignment of an individual's values and goals with that of the organisation.
- On a ***personal*** level, personality, self-confidence, and having a perceived sense of control are highlighted as important.

These international study findings align well with the small body of evidence from **Australian research**. Li and her colleagues (2019), for example, examined 'the antecedents and consequences of organization-level inclusion climate' across 100 Australian-based companies, differentiating between an identity-blind 'fairness climate' (similar to the ***fairness-and-discrimination*** paradigm) and identity-conscious 'inclusion climate' (similar to the ***integration-and-learning*** paradigm). Li et al emphasise that both management approaches are not mutually exclusive. Rather, following Jannsens and Zanoni (2008), identity-conscious measures can be layered over identity-blind practices, measuring and monitoring outcomes of fairness procedures (Li et al 2019: 23). Their analysis found those companies with **identity-conscious diversity** management were strongly associated with an inclusive climate (while controlling for the effect of identity blind programs), according to the assessment of employees, including those from 'historically disadvantaged groups.' They viewed the organisation more favourably as fulfilling its diversity obligation, which also had a positive effect on their 'affective commitment' to their work. The authors conclude: 'Our research shows that such organization-level actions should include the adoption of formal identity-conscious programs.' (p. 362). These include, among others, the following actions (p. 362):

- setting goals for the demographic composition of the workforce (diversity representation),
- collecting diversity data and monitoring,
- measuring the achievement of diversity goals,
- auditing the demographic composition of the workforce, and
- including the achievement of each department's diversity goals in line managers' performance indicators.

These measures, which would commonly be under the responsibility of a diversity manager or task force (see Dobbin and Kalev 2015), can enhance employment opportunities for members of minority groups and help monitor and demonstrate the effects of mentoring, network groups, and diversity training. Importantly, this can encourage employees to 'gradually develop shared perceptions of organizational inclusiveness' (Li et al 2019: 362).

Inclusive leadership

There is a broad agreement among scholars and practitioners that leadership plays an important role in fostering inclusion in an organisation (Randal et al 2018; Mor Barak et al 2021; Ashikali and Groeneveld 2015; Brimhall et al 2016). On the most basic level, it can be argued that without some high-level leadership commitment to promoting diversity and fostering inclusion, it is unlikely that diversity and inclusion policies are being implemented in the first place. The effects of executive leadership on inclusion have not received much attention in the scholarship, but there is emerging evidence on the importance of **managerial leadership**. Drawing on conceptual and empirical work, many maintain that leadership crucially shapes the organisational climate and hence plays a critical role in promoting inclusion as well as the retention of a diverse workforce and work performance (Jin et al; Ashikali and Groeneveld 2015; Nishii and Mayer 2009; Nishi and Leroy 2020; Shore and Chung 2021).

In this context, leadership is considered a 'key driver of policy-practice decoupling' (Mor Barak et al 2021), addressing the potential gap between the adoption of diversity and inclusion policies, on the one hand, and their actual implementation in everyday practices with the organisation, on the other (see also Myers 2003). 'Simply stated, decoupling refers to failing to "walk the talk"', as Mor Barak and colleagues (2021: 3) put it – and inclusive leadership

appears to be pivotal for establishing a 'positive congruence' between policies and practice (p. 5). While most of the pertinent literature has focused on leadership at the supervisor and manager level, Mor Barak and colleagues also include the executive top-level leadership in their conceptual discussion of three different locations where this policy-practice gap can occur:

1. between the CEO and the supervisor level, when inclusion policies are not implemented in practice;
2. on the executive level, when the top leadership formulate inclusion policies but their 'enacted practice' does not live up to it;
3. on the work group level, when the line-manager or supervisor formally endorses inclusion policies but does not act accordingly.

What kind of **leadership qualities** have been identified in the diversity and inclusion literature as being particularly effective in promoting inclusion and diversity policies?

In a recent Dutch study on the impact of leadership on employees' affective commitment to inclusion, Ashikali and Groeneveld (2015) refer to supervisors who display **transformative leadership** as 'the implementers of diversity management and as agents in creating inclusiveness'. They found in their empirical analysis that employees are much more likely to 'experience an inclusive organizational culture' at work and to 'feel a sense of belonging to and identification with the organization' when their supervisor 'displays a transformational style of leadership' (p. 159). Drawing on the work of, among others, Avolio et al (1999) and Bass et al (2003), Ashikali and Groeneveld (2015: 152) describe transformative leadership as 'a charismatic inspirational style targeted at aligning the goals of the team and its members, and with an ability to change the organizational culture'.

It combines four characteristics:

- 'Idealized influence': leaders act and are seen as a 'trusted and respected … role model [who] builds employees' confidence and pride in the organization';
- 'Inspirational motivation': leaders seek to promote 'a sense of collective vision, mission, and purpose among employees by providing meaning and challenge to their work';
- 'Intellectual stimulation': leaders 'intellectually stimulate employees' efforts to be innovative and creative by questioning known approaches to resolving problems and perspectives on established work practices', and
- 'individualised consideration': leaders recognise and support 'individual needs for achievement and growth' and create new learning opportunities.

As Mor Barak (2017) convincingly argues, this relationship-centred conceptualisation overlaps strongly with the notion of **inclusive leadership**, which has become popular in the literature on how to enhance inclusion in organisational settings (see Table 1). Nembhard and Edmondson (2006: 947) are credited for introducing the concept of leader inclusiveness as 'words and

deeds exhibited by leaders that invite and appreciate others' contributions.' Carmeli et al (2010) further emphasised the relational nature of inclusive leadership, where leaders display three characteristics in their interactions with their staff: openness, accessibility, and availability (Shore and Chung 2021; Mor Barak et al 2021).

With a similar emphasis on the relational nature of inclusive leadership, Nishii and Leroy (2020) refer to 'leaders as architects of inclusive work group climates.' This requires, first, on an interpersonal level, an 'ability to connect with and motivate followers from diverse backgrounds and their understanding of their own identities vis-à-vis those of others', and, second, on an organisational level, their 'unwavering commitment to weave inclusion principles into the core values and practices of the organization.'

Transformational Leadership	Inclusive Leadership	Climate of Inclusion
Individualised consideration	Recognises each individual's unique talents	Uniqueness
Intellectual stimulation	Promotes seeking out different perspectives	
Idealised influence	Creates a shared sense of purpose and common goals	Belongingness
Inspirational motivation	Motivates everyone to participate	

Table 1: Transformative and inclusive leadership (adapted from Mor Barak 2017: 227)

Randel and colleagues' (2018) review draws on the prominent framing of inclusion as a way to recognise and promote both employees' uniqueness and belongingness, proposed by the above-mentioned work of Shore and colleagues (2011). Inclusive leadership manifests when leaders are 'specifically focused on fostering group members' perceptions of both belonging and value for uniqueness as a group member' (Randal et al 2018). This is aligned with the definition of inclusive leadership proposed by Mor Barak (2017: 227):

> **Inclusive leadership refers to the ability to recognize and celebrate the uniqueness of the group or organizational members and, at the same time, promote their sense of belonging along the three dimensions of decision making, information networks and participation in groups and the organization as a whole.**

Randel et al (2018) identify five characteristics and types of behaviours of inclusive leaders that can promote belongingness and uniqueness in diverse work environments.

According to Randel et al (2018: 193), the following three leadership characteristics help promote **belongingness:**

1. *supporting group members* by creating a work environment where everyone feels comfortable and experiences a sense of community; inclusive leaders demonstrate 'care and acceptance in group interactions' and establish 'routines of inclusion through role modelling or by instituting inclusive practices.'

2. *ensuring justice, fairness, and equity*; inclusive leaders show 'fair treatment of group members and thus indicate to members that they are a respected part of the group' and 'proactively consider how decisions unintentionally could create a lack of equity across group members.'
3. *providing opportunities for shared decision-making* 'with an emphasis on sharing power, broadening consultation on decisions, and helping decide how work is conducted'.

Randel et al (2018: 193–194) identify two leadership characteristics that can promote **uniqueness:**

4. *encouraging diverse contributions*; inclusive leaders pay 'special attention to soliciting different points of view and approaches' that sit outside workplace norms, whilst 'constructively managing any conflict that may arise'; they also create an organisational culture where different approaches and ways of thinking are welcomed and encouraged, for example, by 'forming positive, individualized relationships with members and recognizing the way that each individual is able and willing to contribute' (p. 194).
5. *encouraging group members to 'fully offer their unique talents and perspectives to enhance the work of the group'*; inclusive leaders seek to ensure everyone 'can bring their full selves to work and do not need to downplay or hide any differences'.

While Randel and colleagues (2018) did not directly draw on specific empirical data when developing these behavioural characteristics of inclusive leadership, Mor Barak et al (2021) argues that Randel et al's (2018) conceptual work has been confirmed by empirical studies (see, for example, Daya 2014).

Responding to racism

Drawing on Shore et al's (2018: 185) differentiation between 'management prevention orientation' and 'management promotion orientation', strengthening inclusion within an organisation requires both the prevention of exclusion, discrimination and racism ('fairness-and-discrimination' perspective) and the promotion of inclusion ('integration-and learning' perspective). However, one particular aspect of Shore et al's 'prevention orientation' has received very little attention – how to manage discrimination, racism, and 'microinequities' if or when they occur. The empirical evidence on how organisations can effectively respond to incidents of racism in employment or similar organisational settings and, more specifically, manage and process racism related complaints remains very underdeveloped (Bergbom and Vartia 2021).[10]

A large body of work has examined various facets of workplace bullying, with some scholars paying particular attention to anti-bullying policies and workplace bullying complaints processes. However, bullying is, on the one hand, too specific to capture the multitude of manifestations of racism, and, on the other hand, too unspecific as it is not primarily concerned with racism (although racist harassment is sometimes seen as a form of bullying; see Catley et al [2017]: 106). Therefore, the empirical work on complaint procedure in the context of bullying, which is itself still in its infancy, (Catley et al 2017) is only marginally useful for the purposes of this report.

Existing evidence highlights significant shortcomings in the ways minority employees' experiences of racism and discrimination are being handled. In their qualitative analysis of the U.S.-based Race at Work survey, Ashe and Nazroo (2016: 22) found that many ethnic minority employees were

[10] Numerous studies, in particular in the U.S., have examined issue of racial discrimination in the workplace from a legal or litigation perspective. They are not discussed further in this review as they are of very limited use for the Australian context and the specific purpose of this review.

'encountering organisational and institutional indifference when trying to challenge racism.' Similarly, Fox and Stallworth's (2005: 453) study concluded that those employees who have experienced racial bullying have 'less confidence in the ability of their organizations to deal effectively with these types of incidents, particularly when the perpetrators are their supervisors.'

One of the very few empirical studies in our evidence review on the response to racism and racial discrimination in the workplace examines in particular employees' coping strategies and how they related to internal communication processes. Li and colleagues (2021), drawing on survey data from 453 employees across various U.S.-organisations, differentiate between two typical employers' responses to racism: an 'emotion-focused', 'avoidant' response, and a problem-focused coping strategy. They found that the former was more common, aimed at minimising 'emotional consequences of the situation … by remaining silent, distancing from the threat, or venting of emotions' (p. 2) This response was negatively associated with positive 'employee-organization relationship' of trust, commitment, and satisfaction. In contrast, in contexts where affected employees followed a 'problem-focused coping strategy', addressing the incident either by lodging a formal complaint or asking their supervisor to intervene, the research team found higher levels of positive employee-organisation relationships.

According to Li et al (2021), the problem-focused strategy was more commonly adopted where organisations had 'transparent communication processes' in place, which are described as

- 'participative': company helps people find relevant information
- 'substantial': company provides complete information
- 'accountable': company is open to take on criticism

Based on these findings, Li and colleagues (2021: 9) make practical recommendations in relation to enhancing internal communication processes to encourage more people to pursue a problem-focused coping strategy in response to experiences of racism. They propose that leaders and HR managers need to ensure that minority staff are 'well-informed about organizational policies and procedures regarding diversity practices and workplace discrimination incidents.' They further suggest establishing 'formal and informal communication meetings with managers and communication practitioners (e.g., townhalls) and invite racial minority employees to … identify their specific informational needs regarding their experiences of unfair treatment at work.'

Such improvements to internal communication processes are not a substitute for specific (internal or external) complaint procedures or grievance systems for employees who have experienced racism and exclusion in the workplace. While our evidence review did not find any significant empirical evidence on how such procedures should look like, research suggests that such procedures can only be effective when embedded in a broader diversity management and inclusion strategy. Dobbin et al's (2015) study of the effects of organisational intervention on managerial diversity in 816 U.S. workplaces found that the introduction of 'Civil-rights grievance procedures' was associated with a ***decrease*** in managerial diversity of most minority or under-represented groups analysed (p. 1026). 'Managers appear to rebel against grievance systems, which threaten their autonomy by opening them to rebuke' (Dobbin et al 2015: 1019). Importantly, however, where grievance procedures were in place and a diversity manager was appointed in the organisation, the study found positive effects on managerial diversity (p. 1029). These results should not be interpreted as an argument against introducing internal complaint processes [11], but they underscore that diversity and inclusion requires a holistic, multi-faceted strategy, inclusive leadership and genuine commitment at all levels of the organisation.

[11] In the absence of more substantial empirical evidence on how an organisation can effectively manage and respond to 'microinequities and subtle discrimination' and support those affected, we refer to the 'good practice guidelines for internal complaint processes', developed by the Australian Human Rights Commission (2014).

Conclusion

Effective multi-level implementation, challenges and genuine commitment

In this report, we differentiate between **diversity measures**, on the one hand, and **inclusion measures**, on the other. The former set of measures relates to practical actions taken with the aim of improving representation of minority background employees, staff or other members across all levels of an organisation. The latter inclusion-related measures are more complex to implement as they often rely on 'voluntary actions' that cannot be mandated through top-down policies (Winters 2014: 206).

They seek to ensure equal access to resources and communication, foster full integration in the work group ('belongingness') and promote a climate where all employees feel their unique characteristics are valued and regarded as positive for the organisation's operation, mission and success ('uniqueness').

While such a differentiation between diversity representation and inclusion is helpful for presenting the empirical evidence in a structured way, it does not adequately reflect the **interconnectedness** of both facets in practice. The reviewed evidence consistently highlights their interplay. As Mor Barak (2015: 85–86) maintained, 'increasing diversity representation and achieving workforce inclusion is a two-stage process with each stage affecting the other in a circular way'.

Measures, as discussed in this review, often do not fall neatly under either category. Many diversity measures, for example, seek to increase retention and career advancement for minority employees (diversity representation) by creating a more inclusive environment where people feel safe, respected and valued as full and equal 'insiders' of the organisation and work group. Vice versa, measures aimed at enhancing a 'climate of inclusion' tend to promote job satisfaction and decrease turnover rates, which contribute to greater diversity representation in the organisation. Diversity and inclusion are fundamentally intertwined.

Accordingly, any organisation committed to promoting anti-racism, equity and inclusion needs to conceptualise and implement representation enhancing diversity measures in conjunction with inclusion measures. This promises to yield a range of **benefits** both for the organisation and its employees, from higher levels of work performance, job satisfaction and wellbeing to lower turnover rates. But, as McKay and Avery (2005) argue, attracting minority background employees with effective diversity recruitment strategies can backfire for the organisation and ultimately lead to higher – not lower – turnover among minority staff if the workplace does not live up to the promise of an inclusive environment.

Another potential pitfall of organisational diversity and inclusion strategies revolves around what Mor Barak and colleagues (2021) call **'policy-practice decoupling'**, that is the potential gap between the adoption of diversity and inclusion policies, and their implementation in everyday organisational practice. The crucial role of **inclusive leadership**, both on the executive and supervisorial level, for bridging this potential divide between policies and practice has been emphasised in recent studies. The coupling of diversity and inclusion policies and on-the-ground practice ('walk-the-walk') needs to occur within the executive level, the work group level as well as between the leadership and work group level.

Related to this is another challenge of diversity and inclusion work that Bebbington and Özbilgin (2013) describe as 'the paradox of diversity in leadership and leadership for diversity'. While leadership is widely acknowledged as a key driver in achieving diverse, equitable and inclusive organisations, there is a persistent lack of diversity in leadership positions in many organisations. This remains a significant challenge for many private companies, public employers and third-sector organisations, and it further underscores the necessity to holistically pursue diversity and inclusion measures in tandem.

There is evidence that anti-racism, and diversity and inclusion measures in organisational settings can also be met with scepticism and reluctance and may cause backlash from those who do not identify as belonging to a minority or under-represented group. Thomas and Plaut (2008: 5) define **'diversity resistance'** as (inter)personal and organisational behaviour and practices that – intentionally or unintentionally, subtly or overtly – 'impede diversity initiatives and access to fair treatment of minority (broadly defined) workers.' Diversity and inclusion measures need to take into account, and be prepared to respond to, the possibility of backlash from non-minority staff.

This can pose **significant challenges**, also because evidence shows that for diversity and inclusion measures to be effective they cannot solely rely on identity-blind actions but need to adopt also an identity-conscious approach, which tends to face higher levels of diversity resistance. Moreover, anti-racism training can trigger a defensive response among some employers or employees when confronted with 'information indicating that they have, or even ***might*** have, implicit racial bias' (Onyeador et al 2021: 20). What Onyeador and colleagues (2021) propose in the context of tackling defensiveness to anti-racism trainings may also apply to the implementation of diversity and inclusion measures more broadly. Diversity resistance needs to be acknowledged, planned for and actively addressed, for example, by emphasising the organisational and leadership commitment to diversity and inclusion as a core principle of the organisation's mission and ethos. An inclusive climate is difficult – if not impossible – to achieve where significant segments of the organisation perceive increasing diversity as a threat to their 'status, power and influence' (Thomas and Plaut 2008: 3).

The evidence identified in this review pinpoints that there is **no one-size-fits-all** strategy for organisations. Developing and implementing diversity and inclusion policies and programs needs to take into account the specifics of each organisation. While this review presents a range of actions and

approaches that have proven effective in some or many organisational contexts, there are no 'box-ticking' guides that organisations can simply follow. This applies in particular to any efforts to promote a 'climate of inclusion', which often cannot be directly mandated and instructed but relies on informal everyday practices and interactions at least as much as on formal processes (e.g. access to resources and decision-making). Moreover, the assessment of how inclusive an organisational environment is does not sit with management or leadership but is ultimately up to the subjective experiences of individuals, in particular those of minority background.

Representation enhancing diversity measures are considered to be easier to implement, and measuring their effectiveness can also be more straightforward, using internal statistics, where the organisation chooses to collect such data. The evidence review discussed a number of **practical actions** that can help build a more diverse organisation – from targeted recruitment strategies, establishment of affinity groups and mentoring programs to, possibly most importantly, institutionalising responsibilities and accountability for diversity and inclusion through diversity task forces or managers.

The manifold positive effects of having a diverse workforce and an inclusive organisational environment have been highlighted by numerous studies. This ranges from success in attracting and retaining a highly talented workforce, higher levels of innovation and performance, to greater job satisfaction and employee wellbeing (which is again linked to lower turnover rates). These empirically well-established positive effects are important arguments for the case of building a more diverse and inclusive organisation. However, there is empirical evidence that calls for caution against a primarily instrumentalist motivation for the implementation of diversity and inclusion policies and measures. Establishing and expanding an organisational 'culture of inclusion' requires a genuine whole-of-organisation commitment, all-level leadership,

policies, programs and practices. All these factors need to reflect what Ely and Thomas (2001: 240) called the **'integration-and-learning perspective'**, whereby the unique perspectives and skills of a diverse workforce are acknowledged, valued and integrated into the organisation's mission. Diversity then becomes 'a resource for learning and adaptive change' for the entire organisation, 'even if expressed ideas might upset the status quo' (Nishii 2013: 1757). Such a genuine commitment to inclusion does not replace but complements the 'discrimination-and-fairness perspective' which includes measures aimed at providing equal opportunities and preventing exclusion and discrimination as well as the 'access-and-legitimacy perspective' where diversity is used as a vehicle to access new markets.

Private companies, public employers and third-sector organisations have enormous potential to create diverse, inclusive and culturally safe spaces, and many organisations have started to acknowledge both the moral imperative and the benefits of diversity. In this sense, they can play an important role in reducing internal structural barriers that have perpetuated inequity and exclusion for various groups and communities – and in doing so, lead the way towards a greater and deeper appreciation of diversity more broadly. But these organisations also operate within a society that continues to be shaped by and reproduce exclusionary structures and processes, which poses challenges to any organisation committed to diversity, equity and inclusion. Ultimately, organisations can play a key role in reducing racism and promoting inclusion but working towards an increasingly inclusive and just society, where everyone feels they can belong and be valued for who they are, remains a whole-of-society commitment.

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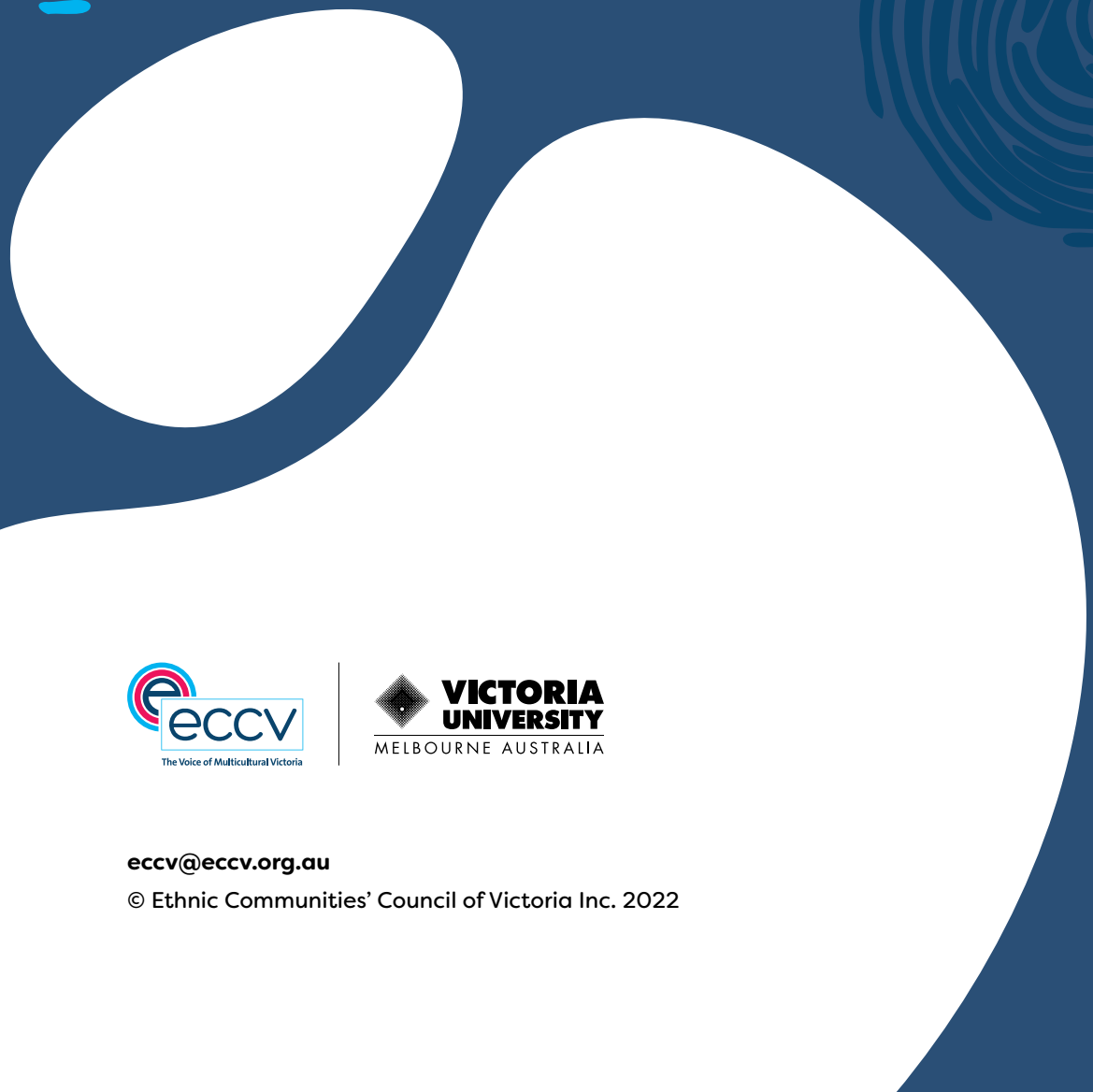


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