

Major Research Project

Unlocking the Multifaceted Value of DEI in modern Organizations

Submitted by

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May – 2024

Certificate

This is to certify that **Sonam Pawar, 2K212DMBA/128**, has submitted the project report titled “Unlocking the multifaceted value of DEI in modern organization” in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Business Administration (MBA) from Delhi School of Management, Delhi Technological University, New Delhi during the academic year 2023-24.

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Declaration

I, Sonam Pawar, a student of Delhi School of Management, Delhi Technological University, hereby declare that the Major Research Project on ‘Unlocking the multifaceted value of DEI in modern organisation’ submitted in partial requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Business Administration (MBA) under the guidance of Prof. DeepShree is the original work conducted by me. I also confirm that neither I nor any other person has submitted this project report to any other institution or university for any other degree or diploma. I further declare that the information collected from various sources has been duly acknowledged in this project.

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Acknowledgement

It is a great pleasure to acknowledge the help and guidance received during the research work. The project provided me with an excellent opportunity to deep dive into the impacts of introduction of DEI in the modern organisation. I am highly indebted to the Delhi School of Management, Delhi Technological University, for giving me this opportunity to work on this project.

I would like to express my gratitude to all the users/customers/companies for helping me during my research and giving specific valuable inputs.

I would like to express our gratitude to all those who gave me the strength and possibility to complete this innovative work. I would particularly like to thank my faculty mentor, Dr. DeepShree, Professor, Delhi School of Management, Delhi Technological University, for the projectand for giving me the freedom to work unbounded and innovatively.

Ultimately, I extend my gratitude to the almighty for giving me this opportunity. The moral support of my friends and family has been great for making this report in its present form.

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ABSTRACT

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) have emerged as crucial components in the modern organizational landscape, recognized for their potential to enhance innovation, productivity, and overall performance. This research project seeks to explore and unlock the multifaceted value embedded within DEI initiatives in contemporary organizations. Utilizing secondary research tools, including data gathered from company websites and diverse organizational sources, this study aims to delve into the strategies, policies, and practices implemented by a range of entities across various industries to promote DEI.

Through systematic analysis and synthesis of existing literature, organizational case studies, and empirical data, this research endeavors to elucidate the impact of DEI on workforce dynamics, organizational culture, and business outcomes. By shedding light on the diverse manifestations and implications of DEI efforts, this study aims to provide valuable insights for practitioners, policymakers, and scholars interested in leveraging DEI as a catalyst for organizational success in the modern era.

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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of DEI

The roots of DEI efforts extend far beyond the last decade, tracing back to the mid-1960s amidst the introduction of equal employment laws and affirmative action. These legislative milestones compelled organizations to embark on diversity training programs, aiming to navigate the challenges of integrating diverse workforces.

Historically, one prevalent approach adopted by executives involved the establishment of workplace guidelines and mandatory training sessions. These sessions, characterized by lengthy workshops and personality assessments, aimed to address biases and promote harmony among employees.

Starbucks was a pioneer in “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives, promoting a diverse workforce and inclusive workplace culture. In 1988, they extended full health benefits to all employees, including same-sex domestic partners. In 1996, they formed the first LGBTQ partner group, the Starbucks Pride Partner Network, which empowered thousands worldwide.”

However, prior to the 1990s, there was a dearth of empirical evidence and research substantiating the necessity of DEI efforts within business environments. Despite Starbucks' proactive stance, the broader business case for diversity and inclusion remained largely unexplored. It wasn't until the mid-1990s that scholarly inquiry into workplace inequity and the concept of emotional intelligence began to shed light on the critical importance of fostering inclusive work cultures.

1.1.1. Pandemic impact

The pandemic has led to a decline in social and economic inclusivity, worsening economic vulnerabilities and deepening social and political divisions. Recent events have shown how easily progress can be undone, such as the setback in achieving gender equality and the disjointed efforts towards racial and ethnic equity. “LGBTQIA+ individuals still face prejudice and bias, and there is limited focus on including people with disabilities in businesses.

There is an urgent call for collective and coordinated efforts from both private and public sector leaders to prevent further regression and establish organizations and economies that provide equal opportunities for everyone.” This is essential for sparking genuinely inclusive

and sustainable growth while promoting enhanced creativity and economic stability.

The avenues for positive transformation are expanding, with diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives “in the private sector evolving beyond workforce-centric approaches to encompass inclusive practices throughout entire businesses, including design, supply chains, and community engagement. Similarly, in the public sector, there is a shift towards integrating equity and inclusion considerations into” economic policymaking. For instance, recent initiatives aimed at gender mainstreaming explicitly acknowledge the importance of gender parity in driving economic growth and stability.

1.1.2. Road Ahead

A pressing need exists for united efforts from leaders across both public and private sectors to halt further decline and establish systems and economies that offer equal opportunities for all individuals. This is crucial for fostering genuinely inclusive and sustainable development while encouraging greater innovation and economic resilience.

The pathways for positive change are widening, with diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts in businesses advancing beyond just “focusing on the workforce to encompass inclusive practices across entire operations, including design, supply chains, and community involvement. Similarly, within the public sphere, there's a move towards” incorporating equity and inclusion considerations into economic policymaking.

Recent initiatives, such as those targeting gender equality, explicitly recognize the role of gender parity in promoting economic growth and stability.

This report outlines five key elements for success, by illustrated by eight case studies of initiatives. Additionally, it showcases effective strategies for design and implementation drawn from seven other initiatives. The most impactful factors common among initiatives targeting underrepresented groups include:

- (1) Thorough comprehension of underlying issues
- (2) Clear definition of what success entails
- (3) Committed and responsible business leaders
- (4) Tailored solutions addressing specific circumstances
- (5) Meticulous monitoring with room for adjustments

1.2. Problem Statement

Despite growing recognition of the importance of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives, organizations worldwide struggle to fully capitalize on their potential. While significant investments are being made (\$15.4 billion projected globally by 2026), substantial challenges persist, including:

- **Limited Progress on Key Metrics:** “The global gender gap is projected to take another 151 years to close, and data on racial equity, LGBTQIA+ inclusion, and disability inclusion remains scarce.”
- **Ineffective Implementation:** “Challenges like stakeholder resistance, resource constraints, and difficulties measuring impact hinder the effectiveness of DEI initiatives. Superficial efforts can even lead to backlash.”
- **Lack of Tailored Approaches:** A one-size-fits-all approach to DEI fails to address the intersectional dimensions of diversity (gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, socio-economic background) and their unique inclusion needs.

These issues highlight a critical gap between the growing investment in DEI and the realization of its multifaceted value. This research project aims to bridge this gap by:

- a) **Investigating the current landscape:** Assessing the prevalence and effectiveness of DEI initiatives in Indian organizations across diverse sectors.
- b) **Understanding the impact:** Examining the relationship between DEI and organizational success, focusing on employee well-being, organizational culture, and business performance.
- c) **Identifying barriers:** Highlighting the challenges faced by organizations in implementing DEI strategies.
- d) **Developing actionable solutions:** Providing recommendations for organizations to enhance the value and effectiveness of their DEI initiatives, fostering a more equitable and productive work environment for all.

By addressing these issues, this research project seeks to unlock the true potential of DEI in modern organizations, driving positive change and fostering a more inclusive future of work in India.

1.3. Objectives

The primary objective of this research project is to explore the multifaceted value of

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives in modern organizations. The research aims to:

- Investigate the current landscape of DEI initiatives in worldwide firms, including the types of initiatives offered and the extent of their implementation.
- Examine the relationship between DEI initiatives and corporate success, particularly in terms of employee well-being, organizational culture, and business performance.
- Identify the challenges and barriers faced by modern organizations in effectively implementing DEI initiatives and strategies to overcome them.
- Provide actionable insights and recommendations for organizations to enhance the value and effectiveness of their DEI initiatives.

1.4. Scope

The research project will focus on Indian organizations across sector diverse sectors, including but not limited to technology, finance, healthcare, manufacturing, and services. The scope will encompass:

- Survey-based data collection from a sample of Global organizations to assess the prevalence and effectiveness of DEI initiatives, with a particular emphasis on employee well-being programs.
- Exploration of the intersectional “dimensions of diversity, including gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, and socio-economic background, and their implications for organizational inclusion.”
- Recommendations for future research directions and practical interventions to advance DEI goals in Indian organizations, including policy advocacy, leadership development, and cultural transformation initiatives.

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. DEI Insights

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives have gained significant traction in modern organizations as a means to foster a more equitable and productive work environment. This literature review explores the multifaceted value of DEI, drawing insights from existing research, case studies, and organizational data. It aims to analyze the impact of DEI on organizations, both positive and negative, while highlighting successful strategies implemented by various organizations and suggesting potential pathways for future development.

Global Context and Trends:

The global expenditure on DEI-related efforts has been steadily increasing, with companies worldwide projected to spend \$15.4 billion by 2026, indicating a growing recognition of the importance and urgency of addressing DEI issues. Despite this investment, the global economic gender gap persists, with projections indicating it will take another 151 years to close at current rates. While data on racial equity, LGBTQIA+ inclusion, and disability inclusion remain sparse, initiatives such as the Global Parity Alliance (GPA) have been established to advance DEI efforts and identify successful strategies.

Case Studies and Effective Approaches:

This literature review examines case studies of organizations that have successfully implemented DEI initiatives, showcasing their strategies and outcomes. These case studies highlight the importance of tailored approaches, leadership commitment, and continuous evaluation and adaptation. Effective design and implementation approaches, such as inclusive recruitment practices, diversity training, mentorship programs, and resource allocation, are analyzed to provide insights into best practices for fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace culture.

Positive Impact of DEI:

Research indicates that organizations with diverse and inclusive workplaces experience various benefits, including improved innovation, decision-making, employee engagement,

and financial performance. By leveraging the diverse perspectives and talents of their workforce, organizations can gain a competitive edge in today's global marketplace.

Challenges and Potential Risks:

Despite the potential benefits, implementing DEI initiatives may also pose challenges, including resistance from stakeholders, resource constraints, and difficulties in measuring impact. Moreover, ineffective or superficial DEI efforts can result in backlash and reputational damage for organizations.

Conclusion and Future Directions:

In conclusion, this literature review underscores the importance of DEI in modern organizations and its potential to drive positive change. By adopting a holistic approach and incorporating the key success factors identified, organizations can unlock the full value of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Future research should focus on addressing data gaps, evaluating the long-term impact of DEI initiatives, and identifying innovative strategies to advance DEI goals in organizations worldwide.

2.1.1. Attention to DEI has increased

1. Increased Corporate Focus on DEI:

- Management teams across various sectors are “acknowledging the significance of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI).”
- In the United States, numerous CEOs and presidents have publicly committed to fostering inclusive workplaces, with approximately 2,200 leaders making such pledges.

2. Growing Market for DEI:

- The global market for DEI-related expenditures reached an estimated \$7.5 billion in 2020.
- Projections indicate a significant increase to \$15.4 billion by 2026, underscoring the escalating importance of DEI initiatives.

3. Factors Driving DEI Attention:

- Various societal movements, such as those advocating for racial justice, gender equality, LGBTQIA+ rights, and environmental justice, have heightened awareness and spurred public engagement.
- Evolving consumer expectations emphasize the accountability of brands and their societal impact, with a notable proportion of consumers making purchasing decisions based on a company's values.
- Social media platforms have facilitated increased communication between consumers and brands, particularly among younger demographics.
- Events like International Women's Day and movements like Black Lives Matter have catalyzed consumer expectations for companies to take a stance on relevant issues.
- Investor focus on Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) metrics has prompted organizations to prioritize DEI initiatives to attract capital.

4. Impact on Talent Acquisition and Performance:

- DEI considerations have become integral to talent acquisition strategies, with a substantial portion of job seekers evaluating potential employers based on their inclusivity.
- Younger generations, particularly millennials and Generation Z, prioritize diversity and inclusivity in their choice of employer.
- Ethnically and gender-diverse companies tend to outperform their counterparts financially, with studies indicating benefits such as improved decision-making, creativity, and innovation in inclusive environments.

2.1.2. Progress on DEI is slow

The slow progress in advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) despite increased commitment and investment is a complex issue with multifaceted causes. Here are some potential reasons for the slow progress:

1. **Implicit Bias:** Deep-seated biases, both conscious and unconscious, can influence hiring, promotion, and retention decisions, leading to the perpetuation of homogeneous leadership teams.

2. **Structural Barriers:** Structural barriers within organizations, such as lack of flexible work policies, unequal access to development opportunities, and discriminatory practices, can hinder the advancement of underrepresented groups.

3. **Tokenism:** Companies often overlook the importance of systemic changes in diversity initiatives, leading to tokenism, where a few underrepresented individuals are included to create the illusion of diversity.

4. **Lack of Accountability:** Without clear accountability mechanisms and metrics to track progress, initiatives aimed at improving DEI may lack teeth. Companies need to establish clear goals, measure progress transparently, and hold leaders accountable for achieving diversity and inclusion objectives.

5. **Resistance to Change:** Organizational diversity and inclusion efforts can face resistance from individuals or groups who fear losing power or privilege, preventing progress.

6. **Pipeline Issues:** Limited representation of underrepresented groups in the talent pipeline can pose a challenge for organizations striving to build diverse leadership teams. Addressing this requires proactive efforts to attract, retain, and develop diverse talent at all levels.

7. **Inadequate Resources and Support:** Some organizations may lack the necessary resources, expertise, or commitment from leadership to effectively implement DEI initiatives. Without adequate support, even well-intentioned efforts may fall short.

8. **Cultural Norms and Stereotypes:** Prevailing cultural norms and stereotypes about leadership qualities and behaviors can contribute to biases in selection processes, disadvantaging individuals from underrepresented groups.

Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that involves cultural and systemic changes within organizations, ongoing education and training, commitment from leadership, and collaboration with external stakeholders. It's essential for companies to

recognize that diversity, equity, and inclusion are not just moral imperatives but also critical drivers of organizational success and innovation.

CHAPTER 3 – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Descriptive Reserch

Descriptive research aims to describe characteristics of a phenomenon, and in this case, it involves describing the current state of DEI initiatives, their impact, and associated metrics within organizations.

Here's how a descriptive research methodology is been implemented for this project:

1. Data Collection:

- Gathering secondary data from a variety of sources such as academic journals, industry reports, organizational publications, government databases, and reputable online platforms.
- Collecting data on DEI-related metrics, including demographic diversity within organizations, representation in leadership positions, employee satisfaction surveys, turnover rates, financial performance indicators, and any other relevant measures.

2. Data Analysis:

- Organizing and categorizing the collected data according to key themes and variables related to DEI initiatives and their impact.
- The process involves employing statistical analysis techniques to discern patterns, trends, and correlations within the data.

3. Comparative Analysis:

- Comparing data across different organizations, industries, or time periods to identify trends, patterns, and variations in DEI practices and outcomes.

- Analyzing how diversity metrics correlate with “organizational performance indicators such as financial performance, innovation, and employee retention.”

4. Case Studies:

- Examining case studies of organizations that have implemented DEI initiatives to understand their strategies, challenges, and outcomes.
- Identifying common themes, best practices, and lessons learned from successful DEI implementations.

5. Future Predictions:

- Using trend analysis and extrapolation techniques to make predictions about the future trajectory of DEI in organizations.
- Taking into account elements like demographic changes, social trends, regulatory modifications, and technological progress that might shape the future of DEI practices.
- Creating scenarios or scenario-based forecasts to examine various possible futures for DEI within organizations.

6. Limitations and Considerations:

- Interpreting findings cautiously and consider alternative explanations for observed patterns.
- Discussing the implications of the research findings for organizational practice, policy-making, and future research directions.

7. Ethical Considerations:

- Ensuring ethical handling of secondary data by adhering to copyright laws, licensing agreements, and data usage policies.
- Maintaining “confidentiality and anonymize data as necessary to protect the privacy of individuals and organizations” represented in the dataset.
- Acknowledging ‘any limitations or biases inherent in the secondary data’ sources and address them transparently in the research findings.

3.2. **Five common success factors**

The DEI Lighthouse Programme identified five key success factors for underrepresented groups, guiding organizations in setting up successful DEI initiatives.

1. Nuanced understanding of root causes	2. Meaningful definition of success	3. Accountable and invested business leaders	4. Solution designed for context	5. Rigorous tracking and course correction
<p>Understand the problem with a deep fact base</p> <p>Identify the root causes</p> <p>Get input from the target population, initially and throughout</p> <p>Prioritize and sequence problem areas</p>	<p>Set clear and quantifiable aspirations (what and by when)</p> <p>Articulate a clear case for change that moves employees to action</p>	<p>Set initiative as a core business priority</p> <p>Hold senior leaders accountable for outcomes, not just inputs or activities</p> <p>Model and lead desired change, starting with the CEO and senior leaders</p> <p>Ensure resources for longevity in the budget, expertise and timeline</p>	<p>Develop solutions that address the root causes, with scalability in mind</p> <p>Integrate changes into key processes and ways of working, so impact is sustained</p> <p>Equip and encourage employees to contribute</p>	<p>Define KPIs and implement rigorous tracking process</p> <p>Use data and feedback to course-correct as needed</p>

FIGURE 1: What works for DEI initiatives: five common success factors

Source: WEF Global Parity Alliance Report

3.2.1 Nuanced understanding of root causes

Identifying the company's DEI-related challenges and root causes is crucial for prioritizing opportunities, setting goals, and designing solutions.

- Understand the problem with a deep fact base: To address a problem, perform an in-depth evaluation of the organization, including a detailed survey on employee experience and inclusion, as well as a comprehensive analysis of the talent pipeline.
- Identify the root causes: In-depth data analysis and employee focus groups can uncover potential problem areas and identify the root causes of issues, which may stem from internal barriers such as organizational policies or external barriers like

cultural beliefs.

- Get input from the target population, initially and throughout: The DEI initiative should be guided by the input of the target population, gathered through surveys, user interviews, and focus groups from the outset. It is essential to consistently seek feedback from the target population during the design and pilot phases to test and refine the solution.
- Prioritize and sequence problem areas: To improve to , prioritize and sequence problem areas by considering impact versus feasibility and urgency versus importance. Maximize potential impact by considering your organization's core competencies and unique positioning, rather than addressing everything at once.

3.2.2 *Meaningful definition of success*

The DEI initiative can be effectively guided and supported by setting clear, measurable goals and effectively communicating the rationale behind the initiative.

- Set clear and quantifiable aspirations (what and by when): To define success in an opportunity area, set measurable short- and long-term and goals and engage a diverse team. This process should be informed by root-cause analysis, which provides a nuanced understanding of the organization's strengths and needs, ensuring feasibility and success.
- Articulate a clear case for change that moves employees to action: The case for change outlines the organization's focus on effort and connects it to its values, mission, business outcomes, and "what's in it for me" at all levels, ensuring employees understand expectations and serves as a call to action.

3.2.3 *Accountable and invested business leaders*

Executive management's commitment significantly sets initiatives up for success by signaling importance and facilitating adequate resourcing.

- Set initiative as a core business priority: Incorporating DEI goals into quarterly and annual planning ensures the necessary resources, time, and attention are for secured for driving change.

- Hold senior leaders accountable for outcomes, not just inputs or activities: Encouraging senior business leaders to be held accountable through the performance incentives promotes continuous focus on the initiative's effectiveness, starting from the top of the organization.
- Model and lead desired change, starting with the CEO and senior leaders: Senior leadership can act as the public face of a DEI initiative, leading operations, advocating for its needs, and adopting desired behaviors, signaling the importance to the organization and encouraging employees to follow suit. They hold the most social capital, which can be used to advance DEI initiatives.
- Ensure resources for longevity in the budget, expertise and timeline: DEI initiatives require resourcing based on necessary capabilities, possibly involving a cross-functional team and expert access, possibly through external partnerships, to effectively execute the plan, like any core business activity.

3.2.4 *Solution designed for context*

To achieve effective and sustainable impact, solutions must address the root causes of the problem and be integrated into daily work.

- Develop solutions that address the root causes, with scalability in mind: The initiative should address systemic bias in hiring, performance the management, and policies that disadvantage the target population, and design solutions with scalability to prevent barriers like cost or operational complexity, ensuring potential impact isn't hindered.
- Integrate changes into key processes and ways of working, so impact is sustained: To achieve enduring change, the solution should address to the organization's systems, processes, and working methods, as well as a shift in employee mindset and behavior, such as addressing unconscious bias.
- Equip and encourage employees to contribute: Companies should not only provide employees with the necessary skills for change through the upskilling but also encourage them to do so by setting new expectations, measuring progress, and holding them accountable through performance management.

3.2.5 *Rigorous tracking and course correction*

Tracking progress against initiative goals helps leaders evaluate solution effectiveness and support resource utilization, revealing opportunities for adjustments or course-correction to enhance impact and maximize company resources.

- Define KPIs and implement rigorous tracking process: A measurement strategy involves selecting appropriate metrics and milestones to track at “regular intervals, such as before, during, and after a programme phase. Scorecards should track progress towards high-level aspirations, root causes resolution, and granular initiative actions.” Data collected should include qualitative feedback from target populations, aiming to reduce gender bias, increase promotion rates, and improve mentoring rates for women.
- Use data and feedback to course-correct as needed: Implementing the solution with the appropriate metrics and milestones can expedite adjustments, ensuring it effectively addresses the root causes.

CHAPTER 4 – CASE STUDY

4.1. Introduction

“Here is an overview of the range of cases selected:”

- Initiative geography: global, US, India, UK, Türkiye and Kuwait and Japan
- Initiative scope: internal only, external only and internal and external
- Target population: women, socioeconomically disadvantaged individuals and neurodivergent individuals
- Aspiration: gender diversity (including representation and pay equity), socioeconomic mobility and neurodivergent diversity
- Types of solutions: up skilling; opportunity creation; redesign of processes, policies, benefits and ways of working; mentorship and sponsorship; community-building and outreach
- Sponsor companies: represented seven different industries and varied in size from 25,000 to 100,000+ employees

The Cases addresses challenges affecting diverse identities in differing geographical areas, the majority of cases are focused on gender parity-related issues.









Organization	Description	Impact snapshot
	Inclusive recruiting processes and working environments for neurodivergent candidates and employees through upskilling and process redesign.	Neuro-Diverse Centers of Excellence launched across 19 cities in eight countries, with a 92% retention rate for neurodivergent employees hired through the programme.
	Gender parity in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) professions, for women and girls in Türkiye and Kuwait, through upskilling and opportunity creation.	53,000+ high school and university students and 275 teachers across 125 schools in 34 cities participated in the high school programme; -82% of graduates from the university programme secured full-time engineering roles.
	Social mobility for individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds in the United Kingdom through advocacy, community development, upskilling and inclusive workplace hiring practices.	18k+ students from socioeconomically disadvantaged areas received workplace skills training; 400+ students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds completed paid work experience, 600+ hired on Tech Degree Apprenticeships and 600+ social enterprises upskilled by programmes. PwC office opened in a social mobility "cold spot" (area with comparatively fewer educational and economic opportunities), creating 200+ jobs.
	Economic empowerment for at-risk women in the United States through upskilling and opportunity creation.	1,000 at-risk women enrolled in programme, with 95% of apprenticeship graduates advancing into long-term job opportunities.
	Pay equity across all offices, in over 100 countries, with a global-local compensation framework, supported by a robust governance and automated analytics.	By 2020, 99.6% of workforce covered by programme.
	Accelerating gender parity, at board and executive-management levels, for women employees in the Japan office and business community, through inclusive work policies, upskilling and community impact.	24% increase in the ratio of women leaders; 91% of programme participants felt motivated to work towards a promotion (vs. 50% prior to the programme).
	Advancing intersectional gender diversity for employees and students through inclusive work policies and recruiting processes, upskilling and sponsorship.	8.6% increase in percentage of women-identifying managers, 95% increase in applications received for the women-in-engineering scholarship programme, first transgender hiring programme in India.
	Social mobility for associates (employees) in the United States through free, career-enhancing education and upskilling.	89,000+ associates have participated and 15,000+ associates have graduated from the programme; hourly associates who participated in the programme were promoted at a 2x higher rate and retained at a 20% higher rate than non-participants.

FIGURE 2: 2023 DEI Cases

Source: WEF Global Parity Alliance Report

4.1.1 EY Case



EY Internal effort Neurodivergent inclusion

Inclusive recruiting processes and working environments for neurodivergent candidates and employees through upskilling and process redesign.

15-20% of the world's population is neurodiverse, with higher unemployment rates. In the United States, 2% of adults have autism, with 42% being unemployed, compared to the average unemployment rate of 5% for the overall population.

Company stats

- 100,000+ employees
- \$45.4b in revenue⁴⁶
- Global, headquartered in United Kingdom
- Professional services

Initiative context and objective

In 2016, EY launched Neuro-Diverse Centers of Excellence (NCoEs) to employ neurodivergent individuals and facilitate inclusive hiring, training, onboarding, and development practices. NCoEs help EY meet its growing talent needs by hiring individuals with aptitude, acumen, and interest in solving complex issues through data and emerging technologies. These individuals, including those with cognitive differences like dyslexia, autism, and ADHD, face significant employment challenges in the labor market.

Impact highlights

As of October 2022: NCoEs established across 8 countries in 19 cities, with 400 neurodivergent team members hired and trained since the first pilot in 2016.

92% retention rate of individuals hired through NCoEs.

1.2-1.4x greater productivity, quality and timeliness of output from teams with NCoE members than teams without NCoE members.

Nuanced understanding of root causes

- “Understand the problem with a deep fact base: EY examined its organizational structures and processes to discover new sources of talent for innovation and technical skills. In response to the increasing demand for innovation, they considered the potential exclusion of neurodivergent candidates due to conventional behavior-based interviews.”
- “Identify the root causes: EY assessed their organizational processes, such as interview assessments and performance management, to identify potential barriers for employees. They found that certain "soft skills" are often seen as indicators of good performance, but qualified neurodivergent candidates might not display these skills. Instead, alternative indicators could more effectively evaluate aptitude, acumen, and interest.”
- “Get input from the target population, initially and throughout: EY gathered the input

from neurodivergent employees, NCoEs, and community collaborators to identify initial barriers faced by the neurodivergent community, guiding programme design.”

- Prioritize and sequence problem areas: EY's business requires hiring and expanding a diverse talent pool for various analytical roles, adding urgency to their focus area.

Meaningful definition of success

- “Set clear and quantifiable aspiration (what, by when): EY aimed to create a sustainable and globally scalable NCoE model within the first three years of the program.”
- “Articulate clear case for change that moves employees to action: EY introduced a sustainable value model that boosts diversity, productivity, and creativity at all organizational levels. They emphasized their ability to drive innovation through a diverse community and support individuals at risk of workforce exclusion due to cognitive differences.”

Accountable and invested business leaders

- “Set initiative as a core business priority: EY has appointed the Global Vice Chair for Transformation to oversee the company's National Center for Customer Experience (NCoE) work, aiming to address the growing analytical talent shortage, recognizing NCoEs as strategic drivers for business agility, innovation, effectiveness, and efficiency.”
- “Hold senior leaders accountable for outcomes, not just inputs or activities: The NCoEs are evaluated based on work quality, productivity, and innovation contributions, led by a Director on EY's Transformation and Innovation services team, who reports to EY's Global Vice Chair for Transformation.”
- “Role model and lead desired change, starting with CEO and senior leaders: EY's Global Chairman, CEO, and Vice Chairs for Diversity, Equity & Inclusiveness discuss their aspirations for neurodiversity at both business and human levels. They publicly advocate for neurodiversity through media, business communities, and

educational institutions, addressing stigma and reframing it as a valuable cognitive difference. This approach aims to engage and mobilize employees.”

- “Resource for longevity with budget, expertise and timeline: EY applies the same level of rigor to its National Centers of Excellence (NCoEs) as it does to all its Transformation and Innovation initiatives. This involves assembling cross-functional teams comprising business managers, neurodiversity job coaches, and recruiting leaders. EY works in partnership with academic institutions, local governments, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to identify, train, and provide ongoing support to NCoE team members. Additionally, the firm collaborates on research projects and data collection to further enhance the effectiveness of NCoEs”

Solution designed for context

- “Develop solutions that address root causes with scalability, integrate changes into key processes, and ensure sustained impact.”
- “Recruiting and onboarding: The company implemented performance-based interview assessments to identify strengths and accommodate diverse individuals, and redesigned onboarding and management models to accommodate a wider range of learning styles.”
- “Ways of working: Neurodivergent team members have been provided with channels to communicate with EY leaders about their accommodation needs. Regular check-ins with managers are crucial for feedback. Communication practices have been adjusted to create a more inclusive environment, including multiple channels for information sharing. Accommodations have been provided, including noise-cancelling headphones and designated quiet office areas. Additional computer screens have been provided to help some members better focus and segment their work.”
- Career progression and development: “EY has adapted its performance management process for Neurodivergent Employees (NCoEs), focusing on fair assessment of technical and non-technical skills. This allows for more accurate evaluations of performance and maintains expectations.

EY also upskilled neurotypical employees on psychological safety and the advantages of cognitively diverse teams. They were educated to reframe disabilities as strengths and create inclusive environments. EY leaders are expected to uphold an inclusive workplace and are evaluated on inclusive leadership. EY shared NCoE team member stories through existing channels, triggering curiosity and engagement from the neurotypical employee and client base. This resulted in employees proactively encouraging clients to consider the NCoE model to better support their neurodivergent candidates and employees.”

Rigorous tracking and course correction

- Define KPIs and implement rigorous tracking process: EY monitored the recruitment, retention, and promotion of neurodivergent colleagues through NCoEs, as well as performance metrics for NCoE teams, including output, work quality, retention, and profitability.
- Use data and feedback to course correct, as needed: “The Neurodiversity Community Accelerator (NCoE) was developed based on participant feedback and experience from NCoEs. EY recognized the importance of engaging local stakeholders before creating an NCoE to establish and maintain the program effectively. The accelerator allowed EY to build stakeholder relationships, support neurodivergent individuals, and educate organizations on the benefits of the NCoE model in areas lacking strong sourcing, skilling, and support groups.”

Advice for others

“Extend impact beyond the organization by helping other organizations do better: EY used what worked for them to help their clients transform their hiring and working practices to be more inclusive of neurodivergent candidates and employees.”

“Collaborate with experts to continue to learn and improve: EY collaborated with academic institutions, NGOs and advocates of the neurodivergent community to share knowledge and identify new areas for improvement.”

4.1.2 PwC Case



PricewaterhouseCoopers UK (PwC UK) Internal and external effort Socioeconomic mobility

The UK is promoting social mobility for individuals from lower to the socioeconomic backgrounds through advocacy, community development, upskilling, and inclusive hiring and talent development practices.

The top 10% of global workers earn six times more than the bottom 50%. The UK has lower social mobility compared to other developed countries, with social mobility opportunities not being equitable across the country due to a lack of education and workforce opportunities.

Company stats

25,000 – 49,000 employees
£3,875m in revenue
Headquartered in the United Kingdom
Professional services

Initiative context and objective

PwC UK has launched a five-year plan to enhance social mobility in the UK through community development, upskilling, and advocacy programs, as well as internal initiatives aimed at hiring and creating an inclusive work environment. The aim is to empower individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds to develop necessary skills for success in their chosen careers.

Impact highlights

- External: “From 2020 to 2022, PwC has provided workplace skills programs to over 18k students in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas. Since 2018, 608 students have joined the Technology Degree Apprenticeship program, gaining professional skills and tech work experience. 414 students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds

participated in the paid work experience program. PwC's social mobility training and development programs have upskilled 600+ social enterprises.”

Additionally, 200+ individuals from diverse backgrounds were employed at the new PwC office in the Bradford Opportunity Area from 2019 to 2022.

- Internal: From FY 2020 to FY 2022, the proportion of new hires from lower socioeconomic backgrounds increased from 9% to 17%.

Nuanced understanding of root causes

- Understand the problem with a deep fact base: “PwC has acknowledged that young people from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds in the UK lack equal access to employment and skill development opportunities as those from privileged backgrounds during their ongoing DEI assessment.”
- Identify the root causes: “The lack of access to educational and professional experiences and encounters with employers is a significant barrier for young people, with those who have four or more work-related encounters in school being 86% more likely to receive higher education and employment opportunities as adults. This barrier exists at both individual and systemic levels.”
- Prioritize and sequence problem areas: “PwC, a major UK employer, was well-positioned to develop learning and job experience programmes due to their professional development and upskilling competencies, while also creating job opportunities for social mobility.”

Meaningful definition of success

- Set clear and quantifiable aspiration (what, by when): PwC has created a five-year social mobility action plan to assist 25,000 young people in developing workplace skills through programs in schools and colleges throughout the UK. The plan also includes providing 200 young people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds with paid work experience each year and offering 100 young people technology degree apprenticeships. Additionally, PwC will act as a cornerstone employer, supporting the government's social mobility agenda via its Bradford office and aiding the

development and skills training of 250 social enterprises across the UK.

- Articulate clear case for change that moves employees to action: “PwC's programme aims to support individuals disproportionately affected by socioeconomic barriers, increase workplace diversity by focusing on potential, and increase internal inclusion for employees of all socioeconomic backgrounds.”

Accountable and invested business leaders

- Set initiative as core business priority: The organization's Board of Directors has identified advancing social mobility as a top priority.
- Hold senior leaders accountable for outcomes, not just inputs or activities: “The Executive Board holds the Chief People Officer accountable for achieving the organization's social mobility goals, including program outcomes.”
- Role model and lead desired change, starting with CEO and senior leaders: “Senior leaders who faced socioeconomic barriers shared their personal stories through the "Social Mobility Stories" campaign, raising awareness about this often overlooked aspect of identity, and supported external outreach through speaking events and media.”
- Resource for longevity with budget, expertise and timeline: The UK Chairman of PwC sponsored a program aimed at enhancing social mobility in the UK, with a dedicated team and leader responsible for its development and implementation.

Solution designed for context

Develop solutions that address root causes with scalability, integrate changes into key processes, and ensure sustained impact.

- External: “PwC has launched various programmes to support social mobility in the UK. These include a workplace skills programme at schools and colleges, a technology skills programme in partnership with universities, a paid work experience programme for students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, and a social enterprise development programme. PwC also provides mentoring and training to

social enterprises to help them alleviate barriers to socioeconomic mobility.

Additionally, PwC has become a cornerstone employer in Bradford, a social mobility cold spot, providing skills, development programs, and workplace experiences for local students and community members. These initiatives aim to help students develop skills and access careers in business.”

- **Internal:** “PwC has enhanced its HR and training processes by expanding data collection on the socioeconomic backgrounds of its workforce, emphasizing potential over performance, and diversifying talent sources. The company also created a social mobility network, consisting of employees from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and their allies. This network has grown to 3,000 members and serves as a volunteer base for the program, including 120 champions who lead advocacy efforts and recruit volunteers.”

Rigorous tracking and course correction

- Define KPIs and implement rigorous tracking process: “PwC has publicly shared KPIs for each initiative objective, including student teaching through workplace skills and technology programs and young people employed through paid-work experience programs.”
- Use data and feedback to course correct, as needed: “PwC addressed the challenges of commuting for students by covering travel expenses for in-person learning programs and offering more virtual events. During the COVID-19 pandemic, students preferred in-person workplace learning experiences, leading to the launch of a hybrid work experience program in 2021. Social mobility champions also emphasized the importance of considering the location-specific needs of their communities in programme tailoring.”

Advice for others

Engage with the broader community to amplify impact:

- “PwC collaborated with academic institutions and NGOs to develop skills programs and collaborated with the UK government's founded social mobility

collaborations like Access Accountancy and RISE, and their leaders spoke on the subject at conferences and media. Social Mobility Commission to develop an employer toolkit and measurement guidance.”

Use data to inform resource allocation and make the most impact:

- “PwC designed outreach programs targeting schools with high income students receiving free meals and those in social mobility cold spots to reach their target population.”

4.1.3 TATA Steel Case

TATA STEEL

Tata Steel

Internal and external effort
Gender equity

The organization is promoting intersectional gender diversity among employees and students through inclusive work policies, recruitment processes, upskilling, and sponsorship.

India ranked 135th in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index in 2022 due to gender disparities in economic participation, wealth inequality, and women's health, safety, and survival. The country's mining workforce is predominantly male-dominated.

Company stats

50,000-99,999 employees
\$33.0b in revenue ⁷¹
Global, headquartered in India

Mining and manufacturing

Initiative

Tata Steel is targeting a workforce comprising 25% diverse employees by 2025, with a particular focus on enhancing gender diversity in core manufacturing and mining roles. This initiative seeks to overcome cultural and societal barriers that have historically excluded women-identifying individuals from these fields. The plan encompasses inclusive recruitment practices, supportive policies, upskilling programs, and sponsorship to reach this objective.

Impact highlights

“8.6% increase in percentage of women-identifying managers, from 11.6% in 2019 to 12.6% in 2021.”

“95% increase in applications received for the women-in engineering scholarship programme, from 500 in 2019 to 975 in 2021.”

“100 transgender women hired as of 2022 through the first ever transgender hiring programme in India.”

“18% increase in diversity mix from 2020 to 2022 (excluding newly acquired Tata Steel Meramandali).”

88% increase in women hired in managerial positions, from 16% in 2017 to 30% in 2022.

Nuanced understanding of root causes

- a. Understand the problem with a deep fact base: Tata Steel's CEO and Managing Director.
- b. highlighted that the organization should represent its society, recognizing that women, the the LGBTQIA+ community, and individuals with disabilities were underrepresented in its workforce.
- c. Identify the root causes: Tata Steel carried out an extensive evaluation of its systems and procedures, which involved conducting interviews with specific demographics, to pinpoint the structural obstacles hindering workforce inclusion.

- d. Stereotypes and lack of support structures: “Historically, mining and manufacturing work were viewed as suitable for able-bodied, cisgender, heterosexual men. Tata Steel operates in a society where diverse communities are not encouraged to pursue education or work experience for these careers.”
- e. Legal and geographic constraints: “The legislation for marginalized groups has historically protected them through prohibition rather than enabling them. Currently, not all states allow women to work in third-shift positions, limiting their equal participation in field work. Mining locations are often in remote areas with limited access to education for skill development.”
- f. Enduring consequences of historic marginalization: “Historically, marginalized communities and identities have not had access to quality education and employment opportunities, and while trends are changing, more work is needed to include these marginalized individuals in the workforce.”
- g. Non-inclusive policies and unsafe work practices: Certain work structures, particularly in mines, were not designed with the safety of diverse employees in mind.

Prioritize and sequence problem areas: Tata Steel aimed to address gender equity barriers in its impacted population, particularly transgender women and women from historically marginalized castes, by prioritizing problem areas based on potential impact and addressing intersectional gender barriers within that population.

Meaningful definition of success

- a) Set clear and quantifiable aspiration: Tata aims to increase diversity in its workforce to 25% by 2025, from 17% in 2019, and to increase women's representation on the shop floor to 10% by the same year.
- b) Articulate clear case for change that moves employees to action: Tata Steel asserts that prioritizing investment in cultural development is essential for achieving its goal of becoming the foremost steel organization worldwide. They emphasize that diversity and inclusion (DEI) form integral foundations of this cultural framework,

contending that these principles drive innovation and position the organization to lead in the future.

Accountable and invested business leaders

- a) Hold senior leaders accountable for outcomes: “Tata Steel's DEI agenda involves setting executive team goals, distributing them to each business unit, developing an integrated annual plan, and reviewing it by the Tata Steel Board, holding leaders accountable for progress towards the initiative goals.”
- b) Role model and lead desired change: “Senior leaders at various organizational levels led initiatives to accelerate progress. For instance, the vice-president of raw materials implemented women in mines and onboarded transgender colleagues. The vice-president of the Kalinganagar plant set his own goal to increase hiring of women and transgender employees. Business heads of operation and maintenance also participated in proactive initiatives. Leaders also participated in organization-wide sensitization training.”
- c) Resource for longevity: Tata Steel, led by its Chief Diversity Officer, DEI managers, and business leaders, collaborated with NGOs and external agencies to develop recruitment channels for transgender talent and educate on inclusion topics.

Solution designed for context

Develop solutions that address the root cause, integrate changes into key processes, and ensure sustained impact.

External:

- a) Scholarship programme: Tata Steel launched "Women of Mettle," a scholarship and work placement program for women engineering students, facilitated by senior managers who mentor and guide the students, providing invaluable experience and support.
- b) External upskilling: Tata Steel has launched an upskilling program to offer technical training to women in rural areas who lack access to education.

- c) Job opportunity creation: “Tata Steel, the first mining company to hire transgender women in mines and have an all-women team operating a mining site, proactively incorporated women into its mining and manufacturing teams.”

Internal:

- a) Inclusive policies: “Tata Steel has introduced several policies to promote an inclusive workplace for women, including a first-ever menstrual leave policy in India, gender-neutral adoption assistance, and a policy allowing women to return to the workforce after any leave.”
- b) Inclusive work infrastructure: “Tata Steel has enhanced safety protocols in mines by implementing CCTV cameras, women security guards, and GPS-enabled transportation. They also built childcare facilities, gender-neutral bathrooms, and sanitary pad vending machines at offices. They also appointed compliance officers to address non-inclusive behavior.”
- c) Internal upskilling: “Tata Steel has implemented sensitization training for their 35,000-person workforce to address biases affecting women employees. The trainings focused on inclusion and belonging, and were tailored for all organizational levels. Additionally, Tejaswini, an initiative, offers women employees on the shop floor opportunities to upskill and advance their careers.”
- d) Internal leadership programmes: “Tata Steel has implemented sensitization training for their 35,000-person workforce to address biases affecting women employees. The trainings focused on inclusion and belonging, and were tailored for all organizational levels. Additionally, Tejaswini, an initiative, offers women employees on the shop floor opportunities to upskill and advance their careers.”

Business unit leaders, management, workers, and vendors engaged in sensitivity workshops focusing on inclusion and acceptance prior to the deployment of women employees in shop floor and mining roles. Senior leaders and allies motivated employees to actively participate through awareness campaigns and various initiatives such as Tata Steel's "Call for Allies" program, as well as events like Women's Day, International Transgender Day of Visibility, Pride Month, and International Day for Persons with Disabilities.

Rigorous tracking and course correction

Define KPIs and implement rigorous tracking process: Tata Steel monitored promotion, retention, and employee performance metrics for women at all organizational levels, including the diversity mix, number of women employees, and engagement score. KPIs were reviewed at various leadership levels, from department heads to the board of directors, to ensure inclusivity and diversity.

Advice for others

Leverage media to influence cultural perceptions: “Tata Steel, a pioneer in India, has been actively advocating for women through public campaigns, such as a series of publicly broadcasted films, which educates and builds support for the transgender community in the workforce.”

Engage the local community to design and reinforce solutions: “Tata Steel consulted local NGOs on transgender rights to understand community connections, and gained public support from influential community leaders like pundits to ensure transgender employees felt welcome in rural communities where mines operate.”

4.1.4 Walmart Steel Case



Walmart
Internal effort
Socioeconomic equity and career mobility

Career mobility for associates in the United States through no-cost education and development.

75% of US adults avoid higher education due to financial constraints, with average student loan debt of \$28,95073, amounting to over \$1.7 trillion.

Company stats

100,000+ employees (2.3 million associates)
\$572.75b in revenue
Global, headquartered in United States
Retail

Initiative context and objective

In 2018, Walmart introduced "Live Better U" (LBU), a program funded by the company, which provides adult employees with opportunities for education and skill development through partnerships with 15 accredited institutions. LBU offers a range of options including high school completion, language courses, college degree programs, and skill-based certificates, along with continuous mentorship. The primary goal of the program is to enhance the skills of associates to improve retention, promote career advancement, and enhance overall performance.

Impact highlights

“89,000+ associates have participated in and 15,000+ associates have graduated from the programme since 2018.”
20% higher rate of retention for programme participants vs. non-participants and 4x lower attrition.
87.5% higher likelihood of promotion for Black employees in the programme vs. non-participants.
2x higher rate of promotion for participants vs. non-participants.
\$333+ million in education-related costs saved for associates since programme launch.

Nuanced understanding of root causes

- a) Understand the problem: Walmart regularly reviews its processes to identify and address any disparities in equity and accessibility for both employees and customers.
- b) Identify the root causes: “Walmart found that its large front-line workforce is not

securing higher-paying roles due to factors such as the size of the workforce compared to management roles, and the need for skill sets or degrees required for higher-paying roles. Barriers include the rising cost of education in the US and insufficient time for development.”

- c) Get input from the target population, initially and throughout: Walmart, in partnership with Guild Education, conducted surveys and interviews with front-line employees to inform the design of their program.
- d) Prioritize and sequence problem areas: “Walmart, with 1.5 million front-line workers, is well-positioned to skill these associates to meet its evolving business needs. The company's emphasis on career mobility adds urgency to this area of opportunity.”

Meaningful definition of success

- a) Set quantified aspiration (what, by when): “Walmart launched a program aimed at enhancing career mobility for front-line associates, thereby enhancing retention and advancement opportunities.”
- b) Articulate clear case for change that moves associates to action: “Walmart announced the program's potential to enhance recruitment, retention, and performance among front-line candidates and associates, potentially increasing diversity in higher levels, and supporting career mobility for a significant portion of the company's workforce.”

Accountable and invested business leaders

- a) Set initiative as a core business priority: The organization's employee learning and development strategy was restructured to incorporate objectives related to LBU.
- b) Hold senior leaders accountable for outcomes, not just inputs or activities: “Walmart's senior leaders integrated LBU enrollment goals into their segment's area goals as the program expanded.”
- c) Role model and lead desired change, starting with CEO and senior leaders: “The CEO chairs the Inclusion Council, which reviews the LBU initiative, and all officers,

including vice-presidents, are responsible for promoting LBU.”

- d) Resource for longevity with budget, expertise and timeline: “Walmart's initiative involved a core team of HR and Corporate Affairs leaders, along with a dedicated team of one director and two project managers. Funds were allocated through Walmart's learning and development operating budget. The team partnered with Guild Education for educational support and LBU's systems and administration and Lumina Foundation for metric tracking.

Solution designed for context

- a) Create solutions that tackle root causes, ensure scalability, and integrate changes into key processes for sustained impact.
- b) Updated benefits: Walmart has introduced LBU as an employee benefit that eligible participants can opt into from their first day of work.
- c) Direct tuition and fee payment: “Walmart has designed a program to directly pay college tuition, book costs, and related taxes for its associates, eliminating the need for upfront payment and the requirement for a stay period after graduation.”
- d) Customizable upskilling programmes: “Walmart offers tailored programmes for front-line workers, preparing them for the future of work and gaining expertise in areas like cybersecurity. These programmes are integrated into Walmart's broader learning ecosystem.”
- e) Flexible schedules and credit system: “Walmart offers tailored programmes for front-line workers, preparing them for the future of work and gaining expertise in areas like cybersecurity. These programmes are integrated into Walmart's broader learning ecosystem.”
- f) Ongoing mentorship: “Career coaches assist participants in creating timelines and goals based on their work and life priorities, while also providing social and academic mentoring to enhance their career readiness.”

Equip and encourage associates to contribute: “Walmart utilized various channels, including emails and digital signage, to promote LBU participation and incorporate information on it into orientation materials and internal trainings.”

Rigorous tracking and course correction

- a) Define KPIs and implement rigorous tracking process: “Walmart evaluated the effectiveness of its program by monitoring promotion, retention, and employee performance metrics for enrolled associates, and identifying and resolving barriers to entry among eligible employees.”

- b) Use data and feedback to course correct, as needed: “Walmart initially introduced a \$1/day fee for its program, but later reduced it to make it accessible to all frontline associates and alleviate debt burden.”

Advice for others

<p>1. Design inclusive solutions through an intersectional lens</p>	<p>“Walmart collaborated with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) to create a more inclusive program for its front-line workers and 18% of LBU's current participants.”</p>
<p>2. Engage partners that have the know-how</p>	<p>“Walmart collaborated with 15 educational institutions through Guild Education to create tailored programs that matched the values and programs of LBU participants.”</p>

3. Continuously improve programmes to maximize long-term impact	“Walmart has adapted its LBU programs to cater to changing skill needs, including college preparation courses and supply-chain management certificates, based on participant interest and business requirements, to ensure a future-ready workforce and meet anticipated business needs.”
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4.2. Data Analysis

4.2.1 Highlights: initiative design and execution

		Highlighted principle by topic	Company
Design	A	Leveraging core competency to design for deeper impact	Regeneron Pharmaceuticals
	B	Applying intersectional design lens to broaden scope of inclusion	Boston Consulting Group (BCG)
	C	Designing inclusive systems and policies	Salesforce
Execution	D	Using technology to scale faster	Cisco
	E	Using unique positioning and network to expand impact outside of the organization	McKinsey & Company
	F	Increasing visibility of diverse leaders and role modelling desired behaviours to encourage inclusion	Nokia
	G	Rewarding employees for leading DEI work to reward outcomes and desired behaviours, like any other business initiative	Bridgewater Associates

FIGURE 3: Highlights of initiative design and execution

Source: WEF Global Parity Alliance Report

4.2.2 Companies Case Index

Organization	Company		Initiative					
	Industry	Company size ¹⁴	Geography ¹⁷	Scope	DEI theme	Target population	Initiative description	Tags
EY	Professional services	100,000+	Global	Internal	Disability equity	Neurodivergent individuals	Inclusive recruiting processes and working environments for neurodivergent candidates and employees through upskilling and process redesign	Hiring processes; upskilling; ways-of-working; external partnership; internal community building
Limak	Infrastructure & urban develop	50,000 – 99,999	Türkiye and Kuwait	External	Gender equity	Women	Gender parity in STEM professions, for women and girls in Türkiye and Kuwait, through upskilling and opportunity creation	Upskilling; job and work experience; mentorship and sponsorship; external partnership
Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PwC)	Professional services	100,000+	UK	Internal and external	Socio-economic mobility	Socioeconomically disadvantaged individual	Social mobility for individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds in the UK through advocacy, community development, upskilling and inclusive workplace hiring practices	Upskilling; job and work experience; hiring processes; external partnership
Randstad	Staffing & human capital	25,000 – 49,000	US	External	Gender equity and socio-economic mobility	Women	Economic empowerment for at-risk women in the US through upskilling and opportunity creation	Upskilling; job and work experience; mentorship and sponsorship; external partnership
Schneider Electric	Professional services	100,000+	Global	Internal	Gender equity	Women	Pay equity across all offices, in over 100 countries, through automated analytics, robust governance and global-local compensation framework	Upskilling; performance management processes; policy and benefits; ways-of-working

Shiseido	Cosmetics consumer	25,000 – 49,000	Japan	Internal and external	Gender equity	Women	Accelerating gender parity at board and executive-management levels, for women employees in the Japan office and business community, through inclusive work policies, upskilling and community impact	Upskilling; hiring processes; performance management process; policy and work benefits; ways-of-working; mentorship and sponsorship; external partnership
Tata Steel (Tata)	Mining and manufacturing	50,000 – 99,999	India	Internal and external	Gender and LGBTQIA+ equity	Women	Advancing intersectional gender diversity for employees and students through inclusive work policies and recruiting processes, upskilling and sponsorship	Upskilling; job and work experience; hiring processes; policy and benefits; ways-of-working; mentorship and sponsorship; external partnership
Walmart	Retail	100,000+	US	Internal	Socio-economic mobility	Socioeconomically disadvantaged individual	Social mobility for employees in the US through free, career-enhancing education and upskilling	Upskilling; policy and benefits; external partnership

4.2.3 Design and execution highlights index

Organization	Company		Initiative						Tags
	Industry	Company size TM	Geography TM	Scope	DEI theme	Target population	Initiative description		
Regeneron Pharmaceuticals	Biotechnology	10,000 – 24,999	Global	Internal and external	Ethnic inclusion, racial inclusion	Underserved populations in medical research	Leveraging core competency to design for deeper impact	Initiative design	
Boston Consulting Group (BCG)	Professional services	10,000 – 24,999	Global	Internal	Gender equity	LGBTQIA+ individuals	Applying intersectional design to broaden the scope of inclusion	Initiative design	
Salesforce	Software	50,000 – 99,999	Global	Internal	Socio-economic mobility	Transgender and nonbinary individuals	Designing inclusive systems and policies	Initiative design	
Cisco	Digital communications	25,000 – 49,000	Global	Internal and external	Gender equity	Underrepresented populations in management	Use of technology to scale faster	Initiative execution	
McKinsey & Company	Professional services	25,000 – 49,000	Global	Internal and external	Gender equity	Black, Hispanic, Latino and Asian leaders	Use of unique positioning and network to expand impact outside of organization	Initiative execution	
Nokia	Telecommunications	50,000 – 99,999	Global	Internal	Gender and LGBTQIA+ equity	LGBTQIA+ individuals	Increasing visibility of diverse leaders and role modelling desired behaviours to encourage inclusion	Initiative execution	

4.2.4 Actions employees at every level can take

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the evolution of workplace norms and systems, making DEI a critical inflection point in companies and institutions. To accelerate progress, engagement at all levels of the organization is essential, from individual contributors to CEOs and board members. “The five key success factors shared in Section 1 can serve as a starting point for leaders to evaluate and refine DEI efforts. Meaningful change requires engagement from all levels, including individual contributors, managers, board members, and advisers. To contribute to DEI progress, all members of an organization can take actions such as creating inclusive environments, highlighting opportunities for improvement, and increasing ways to get involved in DEI efforts.”

4.2.5 *Actions that contribute to DEI progress*

	Create inclusive environments	Highlight opportunities for improvement	Get involved in DEI efforts
Actions for all employees to take	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be curious: Seek out perspectives different from your own to challenge your viewpoints. - Own your learning process: Reflect on your own identity, perspectives, biases and privilege. Educate yourself on the experiences of others through podcasts, books, art and spaces created by members of diverse populations. - Ask for feedback: Tell your teammates that you care about inclusion and ask for their feedback to help you improve. - Listen actively: Ask open-ended questions to help you understand before making a judgement. - Use inclusive language: Do not assume specifics about someone's identity, background or viewpoints. - Check in regularly: Try to better understand others' feelings, challenges and priorities, and ask how best to support them. - Address non-inclusive team dynamics: Proactively ask for certain team members' input, for example, if they are interrupted or are not invited to voice their opinions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use feedback channels and direct communication: This will help you share your experiences, highlight barriers and provide feedback on what could work better. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Volunteer your time and expertise towards your organization's DEI efforts: Whether through ERGs or the DEI department, connect with leaders at your organization to find ways to contribute. - Connect your organization with community partners: As appropriate, consider connecting your organization with external organizations (e.g. NGOs) to broaden DEI reach.
Additional actions for managers and team leaders to take	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Role model and reward inclusive behaviours: You have the opportunity to set the tone and establish your team's dynamic (e.g. express gratitude and engage further when a team member challenges your thinking; encourage a learning mindset that allows mistakes to be made). - Consider power dynamics and invite input: For example, invite missing perspectives to join the conversation; ask lower-tenured team members to share their perspectives first; in meetings, ask for input from everyone; solicit ideas in advance of a meeting so that all can be considered equally. - Lead with vulnerability and empathy: Get to know team members at a personal level, for instance, and ask them to share their needs in the working environment. - Give credit to your team: Notice when a new idea is being introduced and give credit to the original contributor. - Create opportunities: Allow all team members to perform to their fullest potential (not just those who look like you). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create feedback channels for your team: Conduct and prioritize regular check-ins and anonymous surveys that act as a "pulse check" for the team's experiences. - Use your social capital: Advocate for senior management to make needed changes in policies, processes and ways of working to address DEI gaps. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visibly role model commitments to DEI: Personally invest time in DEI efforts and encourage others to do the same. - Protect time: Make time for your team members to partake in DEI efforts. - Reward team members' investment in DEI efforts: Highlight contributions through feedback or, when appropriate, through formal performance management mechanisms.
Additional actions for board directors and external advisers to take	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Critically analyse the voices being brought to discussions: If perspectives are missing from the discussion, proactively seek out those voices. 	(The two actions above apply to managers and team leaders and to board directors and external advisers.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reinforce accountability: Hold the organization's senior business leadership accountable for delivering on DEI outcomes.

CHAPTER 5 – RECOMMENDATIONS & CONCLUSION

5.1. **Recommendations**

Thorough Data Collection and Analysis:

- a. Utilize a variety of sources, including academic journals, industry reports, organizational publications, and government databases, to gather comprehensive secondary data on
- b. DEI-related metrics.
- c. Collect data on demographic diversity, representation in leadership positions, employee satisfaction, turnover rates, and financial performance indicators to provide a holistic view of DEI within organizations.
- d. Employ statistical analysis techniques to discern patterns, trends, and correlations within the data, facilitating a nuanced understanding of the current state of DEI initiatives.

Case Studies and Comparative Analysis:

- a. Examine case studies of organizations that have successfully implemented DEI initiatives to identify best practices, strategies, and outcomes.
- b. Conduct a comparative analysis across different organizations and industries to identify trends, variations, and correlations between DEI practices and organizational performance indicators.

Incorporation of Success Factors:

Integrate the five key success factors identified by the DEI Lighthouse Programme into the project framework:

- a) Nuanced understanding of root causes
- b) Meaningful definition of success
- c) Accountable and invested business leaders
- d) Solution designed for context
- e) Rigorous tracking and course correction
- f) Ensure that each success factor is addressed in the research methodology, implementation plan, and evaluation process.

Ethical Considerations:

- a) Adhere to ethical standards in data collection, analysis, and reporting, including copyright laws, confidentiality, and anonymization of data as necessary.
- b) Acknowledge and address any limitations or biases inherent in the data sources to ensure transparency and integrity in the research findings.

Clear Communication and Actionable Recommendations:

- a. Communicate the research findings and recommendations in a clear, concise manner, tailored to various stakeholders, including organizational leaders, employees, and external partners.
- b. Provide actionable recommendations based on the research findings, highlighting strategies for enhancing DEI initiatives and maximizing their impact within organizations.

Continuous Evaluation and Adaptation:

- a) Establish a framework for continuous evaluation and adaptation of DEI initiatives, incorporating feedback from stakeholders and monitoring progress against established goals and metrics.
- b) Utilize data-driven insights to course-correct as needed and optimize the effectiveness of DEI strategies over time.

5.2. Conclusion

The importance of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in modern organizations has grown significantly in recent years, with a growing corporate focus and recognition of its importance by various stakeholders. ‘DEI is not just a moral imperative but a critical driver of organizational success, innovation, and resilience. However, progress on DEI remains slow due to implicit biases, structural barriers, tokenism, and resistance to change. Despite these challenges, the literature emphasizes the need for a comprehensive approach that involves understanding root causes, defining success, accountable leadership, designing context-specific solutions, and rigorous tracking and course correction.’

Organizations can navigate DEI initiatives effectively by prioritizing inclusivity, setting

clear goals, engaging leadership, designing context-specific solutions, and continuously tracking progress. This project calls for organizations to embrace DEI as a moral imperative and a strategic imperative for long-term success. By unlocking the multifaceted value of DEI, organizations can harness the full potential of their diverse workforce, drive innovation, enhance decision-making, and create more equitable and sustainable workplaces for all.

CHAPTER 6 – LIMITATIONS & FURTHER RESEARCH

6.1. Limitation

- a. Generalizability: “The findings and recommendations derived from the literature review and descriptive research may not be universally applicable to all organizations due to variations in industry, size, culture, and other contextual factors. While the research may offer valuable insights, implementing the suggested strategies might require customization to suit specific organizational contexts.”
- b. Data Availability and Quality: “The effectiveness of the descriptive research methodology heavily relies on the availability and quality of secondary data sources. Limited access to comprehensive and reliable data on DEI metrics within organizations could constrain the depth and accuracy of the analysis. Additionally, the reliability of self-reported data, such as employee satisfaction surveys, turnover rates, and diversity metrics, may vary, impacting the validity of the findings.”
- c. Bias and Subjectivity: Despite efforts to mitigate bias, interpretations of data and case studies, as well as the identification of success of factors, could be influenced by researchers' perspectives and biases. This subjectivity may introduce limitations in the objectivity and neutrality of the research findings, potentially affecting the validity of conclusions drawn.
- d. Long-term Impact Evaluation: “While the literature review may provide insights into the short-term effects of DEI initiatives, assessing their long-term impact on organizational performance and culture may prove challenging. Factors such as the time lag between implementation and outcomes, external market influences, and evolving societal dynamics could complicate the ability to accurately predict

sustained success or failure of DEI efforts.”

- e. Ethical Considerations: “Despite efforts to address ethical considerations in data collection and analysis, ethical dilemmas may arise concerning the privacy and confidentiality of individuals and organizations represented in the research. Ensuring ethical handling of data, particularly in sensitive areas such as diversity demographics and employee experiences, requires ongoing vigilance and adherence to ethical standards.”
- f. Resource Constraints: “Implementing the recommended strategies for DEI initiatives may require significant financial, human, and time resources. However, some organizations, particularly smaller ones or those with limited budgets, may face challenges in allocating sufficient resources to support comprehensive DEI efforts. As a result, the feasibility and scalability of proposed interventions may be limited in certain organizational contexts.”

6.2. Scope for further research

1. Longitudinal Impact Analysis:

“Conduct a longitudinal study to evaluate the long-term impact of DEI initiatives on organizational performance and culture. This study could involve tracking DEI metrics over several years to assess trends and patterns, allowing for a deeper understanding of the sustained effects of DEI efforts.”

2. Intersectional Analysis:

“Investigate the intersectionality of various diversity dimensions, such as race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and socioeconomic status, within DEI initiatives. Examine how different identity markers intersect and influence individuals' experiences within organizations, and assess the effectiveness of intersectional approaches in promoting inclusivity and equity.”

3. Organizational Resilience and Adaptation:

“Investigate how DEI initiatives contribute to organizational resilience and adaptability in the face of external challenges and crises. Explore how diverse and inclusive cultures enable organizations to navigate disruptions, foster innovation, and maintain performance during periods of uncertainty or change.”

4. Global Perspectives and Cultural Context:

“Examine DEI practices and challenges in diverse cultural contexts across the globe. Investigate how cultural norms, values, and societal structures influence the implementation and effectiveness of DEI initiatives, and identify culturally sensitive approaches to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion on a global scale.”

5. Innovative Technology Solutions:

“Explore the role of technology in advancing DEI goals within organizations. Investigate how emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and data analytics, can be leveraged to enhance diversity recruitment, mitigate bias in decision-making processes, and promote inclusive communication and collaboration.”

6. Sustainable DEI Strategies:

“Investigate strategies for embedding DEI principles into organizational culture and practices in a sustainable manner. Explore how organizations can overcome challenges such as resistance to change, leadership turnover, and shifting societal dynamics to ensure the longevity and effectiveness of their DEI efforts.”

7. Ethical Considerations and Impact Assessment:

“Evaluate the ethical implications of DEI initiatives, including potential unintended consequences or ethical dilemmas. Develop frameworks for ethical decision-making and impact assessment to guide organizations in navigating complex DEI issues responsibly and transparently.”

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PAPER NAME

MRP final_PlagCheck.docx

WORD COUNT

8360 Words

CHARACTER COUNT

53378 Characters

PAGE COUNT

38 Pages

FILE SIZE

1.3MB

SUBMISSION DATE

May 1, 2024 12:40 PM GMT+5:30

REPORT DATE

May 1, 2024 12:40 PM GMT+5:30

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