



EQUIP - Equipping Employers for a More Diverse, Equal and Inclusive Labour Market

The project “EQUIP - Equipping Employers for a More Diverse, Equal and Inclusive Labour Market” was about helping employers through capacity building measures to research, learn and discuss how diversity, equality and inclusion makes business sense and is good for business, rather than being just a mere legal or social obligation. The project had employers as its main target group but it also involved other stakeholders such as the KNPD (Commission for persons with disability), NCPE (Commission for Equality) and relevant NGOs. The project first tackled the issue from the employers’ perspective, gathering their opinions. The opinions of other stakeholders were also be gathered. Also, informational and educational measures took place to raise awareness about the importance of equality, inclusion and diversity in the work place.

The EQUIP project lead to more fruitful partnerships among key stakeholders in the field of employment and also equipped MEAL and employers to play a more effective role in social dialogue.

The main objectives reached included:

1. Promoting an equal and inclusive labour market, with a view to possibly changing current policies
2. Bringing together employers and other relevant stakeholders (such as NGOs that work actively to promote equality and inclusion at the work place, workers' unions, KNPD and NCPE) to discuss current policies pertaining to equality and equal opportunities at the place of work, how employers are coping, best practices, etc. This will lead to partnerships in the fields of diversity, equality and inclusion at the work place.
3. Disseminating information and educating employers and other relevant stakeholders about the benefits of creating a diverse, inclusive and egalitarian work space – for instance through the promotion of success stories. This will encourage employers to look at the benefits of a work space that provides equal opportunities to all. A dual approach will be taken, whereby employers will not only be provided with information but also given the opportunity to engage in dialogue with other stakeholders in the field of employment, with a view to improve employers' capacity to create better and more effective policies in the work place.
4. Equipping employers as well as the MEA itself to be better prepared for social dialogue and consultation pertaining to employers and equality and inclusion at the work place – through educational and informational tools.

The key activities of the project included:

- **A research study** - Employers (companies) took part in a research study, with a number of them participating in a one on one interview. The aim was to determine from an employers' point of view whether and how social responsibility, diversity, equality and inclusion at the work place make business sense and have positive effects for businesses. Particular attention was paid to the challenges employers face and what they feel are the obstacles (if any) to achieving this.

- **A Conference** - MEA organised a conference on 13th November 2015. 106 conference participants, including employers, stakeholders (such as workers' unions) and NGOs become more aware of and discussed the challenges and success stories of diversity, equality and inclusion in the business world.
- **Stakeholders' Meeting** - 18 key stakeholders participated in a stakeholder's meeting after the conference to discuss potential actions and policy development related to how employers can create a business environment open to diversity, inclusion and equal opportunities. The stakeholders in attendance discussed current policies and drafted a set of policy recommendations. MEA and the stakeholders recognized that each person has unique strengths and by embracing those strengths, employees can all contribute to making the business more successful. More than writing and setting policies, employers need to create a culture of inclusion and diversity as their way of doing business. Such culture and climate can evolve through ensuring respect for the individual employees, seeking to help them develop and grow in their abilities and strengths. In return, employees will be motivated and able to give their best, ultimately leading to better services and returns for the business
- **HR manual – printed, on USB and on a Mobile App** - Employers and other stakeholders benefitted from printed copies of MEA's HR manual revised to include enhancement of sections related to diversity, equality and inclusion. The manual is important to keep employers and other stakeholders informed on issues and developments related to the key issues targeted by this project – namely diversity, inclusion and equality. Employers and other stakeholders will be informed of any updates to the manual electronically - through the **mobile application** which was developed as part of this project and which is free to download and thus more accessible. Such updates can include for instance new or changes to existing EU legislation. The HR manual was also distributed among employers through **USBs**.
- **Printed Media (newspaper wrap with messages on inclusion)** - Employers, key stakeholders and the general public benefitted from media messages through a local news paper as an educational tool to promote good HR and employment practice including diversity, inclusion, equality and other important issues such as health and safety measures among employers to improve their administrative capacity, as well

as increase their knowledge and skills when it comes to being equal opportunity employers. MEA used a newspaper wrap (the outer pages of the newspaper – covering four A3 pages in total) with messages targeted towards employers addressing equality and inclusion issues.

- **TV Programmes** - Employers, key stakeholders and the general public benefited from the production of 8 social dialogue TV programmes to discuss the challenges and success stories of equality and inclusion in the business world. The TV programmes were aired during the lifetime of the project and reached a wide audience of employers and other stakeholders, complementing the previous activities.



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