DIVERSIFY NORDICS SUMMIT 2024

Best Practices Manual

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About Diversify

<u>Diversify</u> tackles systemic inequities rooted in historical, social, and ideological factors that perpetuate division, fragmentation, and polarization in societies, workplaces and communities. Our work operates at the intersection of social justice, democracy, health promotion, inclusion and belonging. We apply mixed-methods analysis, engage diverse stakeholders, and prioritize turning dialogues into decisive, impactful action.

We prioritize co-creating solutions alongside the communities we serve, fostering shared power, and cultivating cross-sector partnerships to deliver sustainable, high-impact change that aligns with the unique needs and aspirations of our beneficiaries.

OUR WORK CENTERS ON FOUR MAIN PILLARS, NAMELY:

- 🌀 **Economic Justice**

- 🌀 **Health & Wellbeing**

- 🌀 **Migration, Society & Integration**

- 🌀 **Global Issues & Inequality**

The Diversify team is composed of colleagues from diverse professional backgrounds, genders, identities, and countries across the world. Their unique expertise and contributions are invaluable to the organization's success.

About Diversify Nordics Summit (DNS)

The Diversify Nordics Summit (DNS) is the premier conference for leadership, innovation, and sustainable change across the Nordics and Europe, uniting leaders from diverse industries and backgrounds. With its Nordic and global outlook, DNS offers nuanced perspectives, practical insights, and actionable, measurable solutions for impactful change in workplaces and society.

DNS is sector-agnostic, bringing together stakeholders across industries, backgrounds, cultures, identities, and perspectives. It serves as a dynamic meeting ground for the corporate, public, non-profit, arts and culture sectors, civil society, and beyond.

Acknowledgements

A conference of this scale and impact is made possible through the dedication and support of many who contributed to our keynotes, panel discussions, and workshops. We are deeply grateful to our speakers for co-creating an unforgettable summit.

Bringing the Diversify Nordics Summit to life was a collective effort and a true labor of love. We extend heartfelt thanks to everyone involved in designing, implementing, and executing this event.

Special thanks to our partners: Google, AWS, Expedia Group, The Coca-Cola Company (Norway), HiBob, EY, Alda, Berlitz, Robert Bosch Stiftung, Ada Ventures, Centric Advisory, BMW Foundation Herbert Quandt, HR Norge, The Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi), TalentED by Poornima Luthra, Daba, Operation Smile, Shea Compassion, Diversify Consult, and HerSpace. Your support helped make this vision a reality.

We are also incredibly thankful to our volunteers for their commitment to making the summit accessible and welcoming to all. And to our participants—your presence and engagement were the heart of this event.

Finally, to the Diversify Team, whose dedication made this project groundbreaking.

With appreciation,
Chisom

Introduction

The Diversify Nordics Summit 2024 Best Practices Manual is a comprehensive guide that distills the insights, discussions, and forward-thinking ideas shared during our Summit. Within these pages, you'll find diverse perspectives dedicated to fostering inclusive workplaces, enhancing leadership practices, advancing sustainability, and leveraging technology to improve the well-being of all members of society.

The Summit was more than a gathering; it was a shared journey toward understanding and embracing the spectrum of differences that shape our communities. From powerful keynotes to dynamic panel discussions and interactive workshops, each session contributed to a broader narrative of progress and transformation.

The DNS2024 conference theme, **Scaling Hope, Justice, and Belonging**, anchored each conversation and session, with the topics stretching across the following 6 thematic areas:

- **Technology, Innovation & Investments**
- **Leadership, Governance & Policy**
- **People, Talent & Culture**
- **Climate, Energy & ESG**
- **Democracy & Freedom**
- **Immigration & Integration**

This manual offers summaries of all the sessions held during the 2024 Diversify Nordics Summit, featuring 5 keynotes, 1 fireside chat, 17 panel discussions, 2 workshops, and 2 wellness sessions.

What Are We Optimizing For?

Speaker: Chisom Udeze (She/Her), Economist, Strategist and Founder of Diversify, Diversify Consult and HerSpace

Definition of Terms

Belonging: the feeling of being seen and heard, a strengthened sense of connection to others. True belonging is about holding space for people's realities and coexisting in this world together. It requires vulnerability, empathy, honesty, accountability, and compassion.

Summary

In her keynote, Chisom Udeze discussed bridging differences amid growing polarization, conflict, and global crises. Drawing from proverbs and personal stories, Chisom emphasized the importance of truth-hearing and truth-telling in creating space for diverse perspectives and bridging divides. She questioned the notion of "common sense," often seen as self-evident truths, pointing out that it varies widely across cultures and backgrounds. Assuming it to be universal, she argued, risks alienating others. Instead, true connection requires humility: the awareness that our own norms are not absolute and that others' experiences, though different, are equally valid. There is power in recognizing what we don't know and in embracing perspectives beyond our own.

Chisom further advocated for collective responsibility in optimizing for a more inclusive future rooted in accountability, belonging, and genuine respect. Concrete steps towards such a future include fostering quiet and humble leadership, balancing harsh reality with unwavering hope, simplifying complex issues, and maintaining unrelenting discipline. Challenges like the double-edged role of technology, gaps in democracy, and the realities of climate sustainability

and justice demonstrate that problems are interconnected and urgent. The speaker called for courage to act and, drawing from an African proverb, concluded that even small efforts can be powerful, like the persistence of a mosquito.

Actionable Takeaways

⊙ Build bridges across differences. Foster connections by engaging in open, respectful dialogues, especially across cultural and ideological divides.

⊙ Speak honestly and listen actively to bridge divides. Create change by empathizing, even without agreement, to understand and connect across differences.

⊙ Balance hard truths with optimism to build resilience and drive meaningful impact.

⊙ Break down complicated problems with clear, focused goals for more effective solutions.

"*African proverb states: 'If you think you're too small to make a difference, you haven't spent a night with a mosquito'.*

How many people have spent a day or night with a mosquito? You know they are powerful. So, in a world where you could be anything at all, anything at all, be a mosquito."

– Chisom Udeze

Culture Shift: The Transformative Power of Leading with Purpose

Speaker: Lori George (She/Her), Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Strategist, Public Affairs & Communications Expert, Social Impact & Sustainability Specialist

Definition of Terms

Inclusive Leadership: a leadership style that drives an inclusive culture in the workplace based on accountability, resiliency, compassion and empathy.

Cultural Shift: a change in the shared behaviors and norms within an organization created through a virtuous cycle of trust.

Summary

Lori George delivered a keynote that reflected on inclusive leadership and its critical role in driving cultural shifts within organizations. Leadership, it was noted, is not just about large strategic decisions, but it is grounded in inclusion, compassion, accountability and trust. The keynote stressed that leadership and culture are interconnected, each influencing the other in a cyclical manner. Poor leadership creates toxic work environments driven by hostility and unrealistic expectations which negatively impact the team morale and trust within an organization. On the contrary, inclusive leadership fosters unity and collaboration through a virtuous cycle of trust.

Lori also discussed the importance of accountability in leadership through the case of Theranos Inc., where lack of checks led to a major corporate scandal. Accountability, together with resilience, is essential in building trust and achieving remarkable success. Finally, Lori advocated for leadership based on compassion and empathy, as these principles support a positive workplace culture where individuals feel valued and respected. According to her, successful culture shifts require leaders to act with integrity, respect, and consistency, influencing both small daily interactions and broader organizational change.

Actionable Takeaways

- ◎ Empathy and compassion are key to addressing the emotional aspects of leadership and creating an inclusive and supporting work environment.

- ◎ Resilience is crucial for effective leadership, especially in difficult times. Leaders should anticipate setbacks and remain adaptable in overcoming them.

- ◎ Leaders should lead by example and demonstrate core values such as integrity, respect and inclusivity consistently, influencing others through their own actions.

- ◎ Small, purposeful actions from leaders have the power to create lasting cultural change. Leadership is about daily intentional efforts that shape the overall culture in the workplace.

> *"Leadership drives culture, and culture drives leadership. They are cyclical and both are necessary for others to thrive."*
>
> – Lori George

Democratic Dispossession:
A Sámi Critique of the Nordic
Constitutional States

Speaker: Áslat Holmberg (He/Him), President of the Saami Council

Definition of Terms

Green Transition: the process of changing from an economy and society that relies heavily on fossil fuels to one that is more environmentally sustainable, often at the expense of Indigenous peoples' lands, culture and rights

Summary

This keynote, delivered by Áslat Holmberg, focused on the challenges Indigenous communities, particularly the Sámi, face regarding land rights, governance, and cultural preservation in the face of state-driven environmental projects. Áslat discussed how democratic systems, while promoting rule of law and fairness, often fail to protect Indigenous peoples, who are marginalized in decision-making processes.

The keynote underscored the tension between Indigenous communities and states, particularly in the context of green transition projects such as resource mining and wind power use. These projects often disproportionately affect Indigenous lands without proper consultation, perpetuating colonial practices. Áslat pointed out that while governments claim to promote sustainability, they exploit Indigenous lands, leaving local cultures facing environmental degradation and displacement. The speaker also highlighted how Nordic domestic courts perpetuate racist colonial ideologies, criticized political responses to conflicts in Ukraine and Palestine, and connected Sámi people's experiences with dispossession to global power and entitlement dynamics. Emphasizing that democracy alone cannot safeguard minority rights, Áslat advocated for an international order upholding human dignity, equality, and inclusive participation across all cultures.

Actionable Takeaways

◎ Indigenous voices must be actively included in decision-making processes that affect their lands and livelihoods. Green transition without Indigenous rights and participation perpetuates racist colonial ideologies.

◎ International law must be enforced to protect Indigenous rights, even when local courts fail to do so.

◎ Democratic systems need safeguards to prevent the majority from overriding the rights of marginalized communities.

◎ Indigenous rights have improved internationally but remain unrecognized in Nordic legislation. This needs to change with a shift from courts away from racist colonial ideologies towards effective protection of Indigenous rights.

> *"A green shift without protections of Indigenous peoples' rights is nothing but the continuation of colonization."*
>
> *– Áslat Holmberg*

What Are You Afraid Of? - 5 Nudges to Let Go of Fear and Scale Hope

Speaker: Dr. Poornima Luthra (She/Her), Associate Professor at Copenhagen Business School, Author of books such as "*The Art of Active Allyship*" and "*Diversifying Diversity: Your Guide to Being an Active Ally of Inclusion in the Workplace*", Founder and CEO of TalentED

Summary

Dr. Poornima Luthra's keynote explored the profound impact of fear on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts, highlighting that fear often stems from uncertainty and perceived threats to personal or cultural beliefs. Poornima identified five core fears associated with DEI: fear of change, fear of making mistakes, discomfort with challenging discussions, fear of taking action and its consequences, and fear of limited positive impact. To overcome these, she proposed five "nudges" necessary for progress: openness to diverse perspectives, curiosity for learning, vulnerability to face discomfort, courage to act, and resilience to sustain efforts despite setbacks. She added that reframing DEI as a shared opportunity rather than a threat, where inclusive practices create benefits for all, is essential to allow organizations and individuals to flourish.

Poornima stressed that openness encourages us to confront privilege and seek perspectives beyond our own. Curiosity fosters continuous learning, equipping us to address language or actions that might inadvertently exclude others. Finally, she discussed how vulnerability and embracing discomfort, together with courage, enable individuals to advocate for DEI as well as to tackle biases, and how resilience empowers us to stay committed despite setbacks.

Actionable Takeaways

- Recognize your privilege, actively seek different perspectives, and shift from a scarcity mindset to one where DEI benefits everyone.

- Get comfortable with discomfort and engage in empathetic, vulnerable conversations about sensitive DEI issues. Overcome the fear of getting it

wrong through education and learning from mistakes.

- ◎ Take courageous steps to address bias and discrimination while prioritizing self-care and setting boundaries to avoid burnout.

- ◎ Be patient, focus on small actions, and trust that your efforts contribute to lasting systemic change.

> *"If we overcome our fear and focus on resilience, we can transform workplaces into truly diverse, equitable, and inclusive spaces where everyone thrives."*
>
> *– Dr. Poornima Luthra*

Prioritise self-care by finding allies, setting boundaries, and giving yourself grace

uestions to have

When Bringing Your Authentic Self to Work Just Isn't That Simple

Speaker: Sarah Reynolds (They/Them), Chief Marketing Officer at HiBob

Definition of Terms

Covering: the act of hiding aspects of one's identity, such as gender, sexual orientation or cultural background, to fit in with the dominant workplace culture and avoid repercussions.

Summary

Sarah Reynolds discussed the complexity of bringing one's authentic self to work, especially in environments where individuals feel pressured to hide parts of their identity. They highlighted the concept of "covering," where people, particularly those in minority groups, conceal aspects of themselves out of fear of judgment or professional repercussions. Sarah stressed that everyone, to some degree, covers, but the burden is often heavier for marginalized groups.

They emphasized the importance of leaders setting an example by sharing their own stories and fostering a culture that allows for authenticity. Sarah also advocated for reviewing workplace policies, such as flexible work arrangements and inclusive event options, to support diverse identities. Lastly, they suggest that organizations gather anonymous demographic data through employee surveys to better understand the experiences of those who may feel compelled to conceal parts of their identity in the workplace.

Actionable Takeaways

- Leaders should share personal experiences. This courage can create space for others to feel safe and valued at work.

- Using anonymous surveys can help gather honest insights without pressuring employees to fully disclose personal details.

◎ Question existing norms and policies that seem neutral as they may inadvertently restrict authenticity.

◎ Rethink event planning. Consider all dietary, cultural, and social preferences, making workplace activities more welcoming for everyone.

❝ *"If we want people to feel comfortable sharing who they are, leaders have to go first."*

– Sarah Reynolds
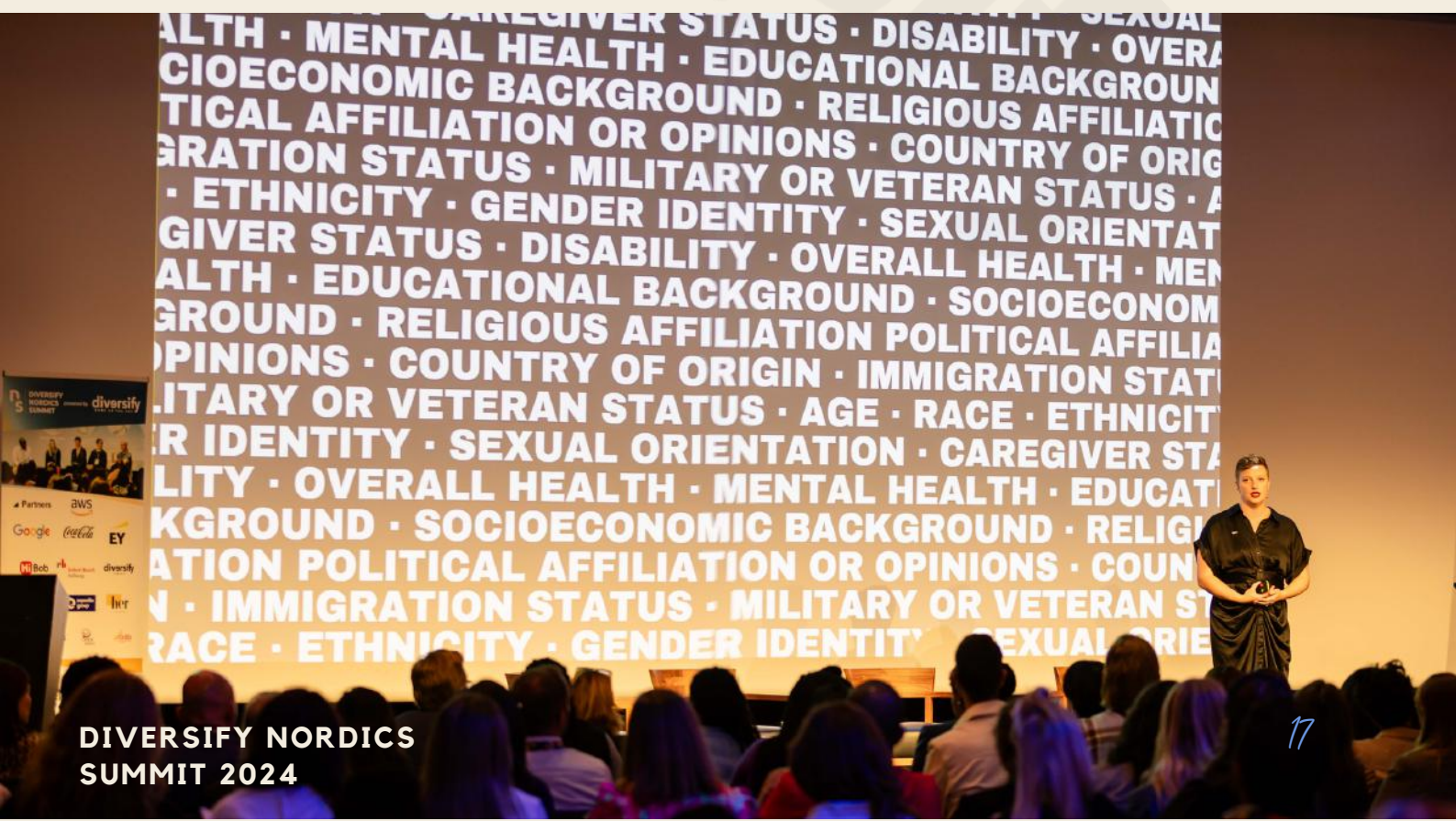
Nordic Denial 3.0

Speakers:

Thandi Dyani (She/Her), Regional Network Organizer, Africa and The Nordics at BMW Foundation

Chisom Udeze (She/Her), Economist, Strategist and Founder of Diversify, Diversify Consult and HerSpace

Definition of Terms

Nordic Denial: the disconnect between socio-economic and political challenges with the Nordic ideal of perfection, prosperity, equality and inclusion. The persistent denial and erasure of the challenges are interpersonal, systemic and structural in nature and often at the expense of underrepresented and historically marginalized groups.

Summary

This fireside chat delved into the challenges of psychological safety, identity, and equality in Nordic countries, with a focus on marginalized groups. Psychological safety, often considered a corporate ideal, was questioned as a privilege that many don't experience, particularly those who face racial or gender biases. It operates within hierarchies, where certain voices are prioritized while others are silenced. The speakers contrasted psychological safety with psychological bravery, meaning the ability to confront uncomfortable truths and engage in difficult conversation in hostile environments.

The conversation shifted to gender equality, with critiques of how it often centers around the experiences of white women, neglecting women of color and those with diverse gender identities. Nordic societies were characterized as conflict-averse, with a tendency to maintain a comfortable status quo that benefits the majority while ignoring inequalities faced by marginalized groups. This was

referred to as "Nordic Arrogance," where the perception of societal excellence prevents deeper examination of social issues. The conversation concluded by calling for more bravery in addressing these issues, encouraging open discussions about intersectionality, power dynamics, and the need for uncomfortable conversations to drive meaningful societal change.

Actionable Takeaways

◎ Prioritize psychological bravery and encourage environments that value having uncomfortable, honest discussions about identity and inclusion. Allow necessary discomfort in discussions about power and privilege to drive real change.

◎ Foster an environment where fear of conflict is addressed and people feel safe to discuss their fears and differences without judgment or retribution.

◎ Expand gender equality efforts. Include gender-diverse individuals and women of color, not just white women, in gender equality conversations.

◎ Critically examine the perception of Nordic societal perfection to reveal hidden inequalities as well as actively challenge and address power structures.

❝ *I think if we approach things or rooms or conversations with a certain amount of humbleness, it leaves a lot of room for different voices.*❞

– Thandi Dyani

❝ *Bravery means that we're able to engage in our truths and also hold space for other people's truths.*❞

– Chisom Udeze

Panel Discussions

Leadership, Responsibility and Accountability

Session Format: Case studies

Panelists:

Espen Rustad (He/Him), Head of Customer Engineering Google Cloud at Google Norway.

Arbab Dar (He/Him), Country Managing Partner, Nordic Head of CFO Advisory and EMEIA Financial Services at EY Norway.

Amruta Vaidya (She/Her), Country General Manager Norway & Iceland at Coca-Cola.

Kristine Steidel (She/Her), General Manager/CEO at Microsoft Norway

Discussion Facilitator: Lori George (She/Her), Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Strategist, Public Affairs & Communications Expert, Social Impact & Sustainability Specialist

Case Study 1: Diversity vs. Meritocracy

A tech company is struggling with diversity, particularly in leadership roles, where most positions are held by men. The HR department recommends promoting a qualified female employee to an executive position to improve gender balance. However, another candidate, who is a man, has slightly more experience and qualifications for the role. The leadership team is divided on whether to prioritize diversity, which is the inclusion of varied identities, perspectives, and backgrounds, or strictly follow meritocratic principles where individuals are advanced based solely on ability, talent, and achievements.

◎ **Perspectives:** The panelists highlighted that meritocracy, while seemingly

objective, often favors those already privileged. They argued that merit should encompass a range of skills and experiences, not just tenure. Diverse teams, they noted, foster creativity and better decision-making by bringing varied perspectives. Some emphasized that diversity and meritocracy are not mutually exclusive and that selecting the candidate who contributes unique viewpoints is crucial. They stressed the need for organizations to set minimum qualifications and, within that framework, choose candidates who will enrich the team's diversity.

Case Study 2: Feedback Culture

A company has recently adopted a 360-degree feedback system, where employees receive feedback from peers, subordinates, and supervisors. However, employees are hesitant to share honest feedback with senior leaders due to fears of retaliation or negative consequences.

Leaders are eager to hear from their teams to improve their own performance but are struggling to receive genuine input. The leadership team is considering whether to implement anonymous feedback tools or hold regular face-to-face sessions to improve transparency, build trust and encourage honest, constructive feedback.

Perspectives: When discussing this case study, the panelists agreed that feedback should not be tied to performance reviews or bonuses, as this creates pressure and fear of consequence. Instead, they suggested asking for feedback regularly to normalize it as part of growth. They believed psychological safety was essential, encouraging leaders to facilitate openness by sharing and discussing their own feedback publicly. This approach helps to build trust and ease concerns about retaliation. Language was another focus; recommending leaders to carefully use constructive language to prevent misunderstandings and ensure feedback is taken positively. They emphasized that a culture of trust and safety must be in place for a feedback system to truly succeed (one panelist suggested creating a "bubble of trust" where team members can feel safe expressing constructive criticism).

Case Study 3: Remote and Hybrid Work Equality

In the wake of the shift to hybrid work, a company has noticed a disparity between employees who work from home and those who work on-site. On-site employees

feel they are taking on more responsibilities, while remote workers feel isolated and disconnected from the team. Tensions are rising as both groups perceive the situation as unfair, leading to a drop in morale and productivity.

◎ **Perspectives**: The panelists emphasized that while hybrid work offers flexibility, it requires clear expectations and communication to build and maintain a sense of connection with onsite workers. They recognized the need to equip managers with tools and practices that build a cohesive culture where all employees feel connected. One panelist shared that, to prevent exclusion, their organization implemented guidelines for hybrid engagement, such as ensuring every meeting includes a virtual link. Panelists highlighted how technology played a role in promoting inclusivity, sharing an example where a blurred background feature was developed for accessibility but benefited all users. Lastly, they agreed that regular in-person interactions are vital for trust-building, and leaders should actively promote a balanced culture where both remote and onsite contributions are valued.

Case Study 4: Resilience in Teams

A product development team at a tech company is facing ongoing pressure to innovate quickly in a highly competitive market. They've successfully launched several products recently, but the pace has led to burnout and a decline in creative problem-solving. The team is starting to take fewer risks, sticking to what they know works, and avoiding new challenges. Leadership recognizes the need to maintain innovation but also wants to build a sustainable work environment where the team feels supported and resilient over the long term.

◎ **Perspectives**: Building on the case study, the panelists talked about how important resiliency is in a fast-paced environment where things change rapidly and challenges arise. Resiliency means being able to respond to stress and recovering effectively. They stressed the need for inclusion, belonging, and creating strong team connections so members know whom to rely on for support. Compassion and empathy are essential, recognizing when a colleague is struggling and offering help. Leaders need to set an example by managing stress and showing it is okay to take breaks. The example of Google's "global reset day" during COVID highlighted the importance of taking time to recover, showing that senior leadership values well-being and recognizes the need for balance to maintain long-term innovation and productivity.

Can DEIB Go Too Far? Inclusion at the Intersection of Uncomfortable Truths

Session Format: Case studies

Panelists:

Chi Lee (They/Them), DEIB Advocate

Dr. Poornima Luthra (She/Her), Associate Professor at Copenhagen Business School, Author of books such as "*The Art of Active Allyship*" and *"Diversifying Diversity: Your Guide to Being an Active Ally of Inclusion in the Workplace"*, Founder and CEO at TalentED

Safir Boukhalfa (They/Them), Founder & DEI Consultant at Safir Boukhalfa Consulting

Fadzi Whande (She/Her), Chief of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Section at the United Nations Refugee Agency

Discussion Facilitator: Chisom Udeze (She/Her), Economist, Strategist and Founder of Diversify, Diversify Consult and HerSpace

Case Study 1: Transphobia and Racism

This case study explored the intersection of racism and transphobia, focusing on the mixed reactions a Black trans woman received when coming out at work. While mostly positive, some employees expressed discomfort about sharing the women's restroom, sparking a heated debate. One group views the discomfort as transphobic and exclusionary, pointing to systemic gender and racial bias, while others feel silenced, claiming their boundaries are disregarded in favor of inclusivity. This has intensified workplace polarization.

> 🌀 **Perspectives**: In analyzing this case study, the panelists highlighted the complexities of addressing both transphobia and racism in the workplace, emphasizing the need for inclusive spaces that acknowledge both gender and racial identities. Key points included the challenge of designing

physical environments that accommodate all genders, especially in multicultural workplaces where individuals come from diverse backgrounds with varying levels of understanding and comfort regarding gender and race. The conversation also underscored the importance of addressing fear—both from those resistant to change and those marginalized—by creating spaces where everyone feels safe and heard. Additionally, the need for organizational leaders to be intentional in promoting diversity and inclusion, even at the cost of discomfort, is emphasized, alongside recognizing that fear, rooted in cultural norms or personal biases, must be acknowledged and addressed in order to foster understanding and positive change.

Case Study 2: But we are all women!

This case explored the situation where a tech company's gender equality initiative sparked tension when women of color noted that the initiative mostly benefited white women and neglected the challenges they themselves face. Calls for inclusivity were met with defensiveness, deepening workplace polarization.

- **Perspectives**: The discussion surrounding this case study critiqued the myth of meritocracy, arguing that traditional definitions of "merit" often exclude diverse candidates, especially women of color, due to biases that favor white, cisgender individuals and maintain privilege structures. The panelists questioned the standards used to judge merit, noting how white women are often assessed on potential while women of color are judged on performance, creating unequal advancement opportunities. They suggested that diversity itself should be viewed as a form of merit, as it brings valuable perspectives and experiences to the workplace. The conversation also emphasized the need for an intersectional approach to gender equity, noting that while diversity quotas can be beneficial, they often primarily benefit white women, leaving behind women of color and other marginalized identities. To create truly inclusive environments, companies must question their assumptions about competence and ground diversity efforts in data that reflects the unique challenges faced by women from various backgrounds, particularly women of color.

Actionable Takeaways

◎ DEIB initiatives require flexibility to fit diverse environments, ensuring they do not become rigid or exclusionary. Balancing inclusion with openness to dissenting views fosters a space where true diversity is respected.

◎ Overemphasis on certain DEIB principles can inadvertently suppress cultural diversity. Thus, inclusion must welcome diverse and even conflicting realities. True inclusivity avoids excluding anyone based on perceived privilege, ensuring no group is sidelined under DEIB practices.

◎ Encourage DEIB practitioners to recognize and celebrate differences openly, fostering a workplace that values each unique identity.

◎ Hold space for alternative perspectives. DEIB practitioners should approach differing perspectives with openness, promoting dialogue that reduces "us versus them" dynamics and builds mutual understanding.

Diversify x Salzburg Global Seminar (SGS) presents: Misinformation in Modern Democracies: Should Governments Regulate Free Speech in the Media?

Session Format: Panel discussion

Panelists:
Faye Hobson (She/Her), Director, Culture at Salzburg Global Seminar
André Gorba Ferreira Biveti (He/Him), Legal Advisor
Mark Ivan Serunjogi (He/They), Strategy Director at TheTruthWorks
Tania Nathan (She/They), Community Organizer, Artist, Producer, DEI & Anti Racism Activist

Discussion Facilitator: Melanie Coffee (She/Her), VP of PR and Communications at Crayon

Summary

This panel discussion focused on the challenges of misinformation in modern democracies, emphasizing the complexity of managing misinformation while balancing freedom of speech. The panelists cautioned against imposing rigid and universal frameworks, arguing for inclusivity and the need to adapt strategies to various cultural contexts. They suggested that media literacy and critical thinking are vital to tackle misinformation, with a focus on understanding sources and questioning biases inherent in information platforms, especially as artificial intelligence and algorithms increasingly shape content exposure.

The panelists discussed the need for clear guardrails in workplaces and governments that enhance accountability and support marginalized voices. Finally, the panel underscored the importance of bridging divides by fostering empathy, supporting diverse perspectives, and encouraging individuals to verify information critically, highlighting the role of both personal and institutional responsibility in combating misinformation.

Actionable Takeaways

- Encourage multilateral collaboration between civil society, governments, and organizations to create inclusive policies that enhance media literacy and combat misinformation.

- Develop cultural sensitivity in communication and guidelines for engagement that consider cultural contexts and promote accountability, ensuring respectful and constructive dialogue.

- Institutions, especially workplaces, should actively set and live by inclusive values, providing examples of ethical engagement and reinforcing social responsibility across digital platforms.

- Promote media literacy and encourage critical thinking by asking questions about sources and information validity while creating discussions that help individuals analyze and verify the content they encounter.

- Balancing free speech with preventing harmful misinformation requires clear guidelines and a process for appeal, allowing individuals, including minorities, to contest undue censorship.

Multiculturalism vs. Assimilation: Which Path to Social Cohesion?

Session Format: Panel discussion

Panelists:
Amy Baker (She/Her), Ambassador of Canada to Norway
Monica Ifejilika (She/Her), Senior Advisor at Kulturdirektoratet
Marcus Jarl (He/Him), Client Executive Organization & People, EY Markets & Business Development at EY

Discussion Facilitator: Lola Akinmade Åkerström (She/Her), Visual Storyteller, Author and CEO of Geotraveler Media

Definition of Terms

Multiculturalism: an approach that values and preserves diverse cultural identities within a society, rather than requiring individuals to assimilate fully into a dominant culture. It involves acknowledging and respecting different cultural backgrounds, fostering a society where various identities coexist and contribute uniquely.

Assimilation: the process through which individuals are expected to conform to the dominant culture, often at the expense of their own unique cultural identities.

Summary

This panel discussion centered on the balance between multiculturalism and assimilation as methods for achieving social cohesion. The conversation highlighted different approaches taken in Norway and Canada, as well as within the business sector. The panelists highlighted Norway's limited history with multiculturalism, which contrasts with a longstanding, although complex, Canadian discourse shaped by its Indigenous populations and immigrant identity. In Canada, political commitment, representation and data collection have been essential for advancing inclusion and addressing disparities.

In the business context, multiculturalism enriches collective intelligence, yet alignment on organizational goals remains necessary to a certain extent. The panel discussed how individuals can maintain cultural identity while contributing to

cohesive teams, suggesting that empathy, curiosity, and dialogue are essential in navigating personal and cultural differences. Closing remarks emphasized that fostering a culture which integrates strengths from diverse identities, creates richer, more innovative societies while respecting and evolving cultural heritage.

Actionable Takeaways

- Research historical impacts of assimilation. Understanding how a country's history of assimilation and racism have impacted society and individuals should provide the foundation for future discussions and actions.

- Political will and representation drives change. Canada's decision to aim for 50% women ambassadors and its Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) analytical tool show how policy commitment can address diversity and identify systemic barriers and discrimination.

- Balance common goals with diversity. While aligning toward a shared objective is important, it should not come at the cost of erasing diverse identities and multicultural perspectives.

- Collect inclusive data that provides critical insights into specific barriers people face to help shape policies that effectively address their needs.

- Value multiculturalism as an asset, not simply as another identity. Embrace multicultural perspectives as vital to creativity and adaptability, not just as another box to tick.

Workplace and Societal Integration: Redefining Talent, Policies and Cultural Expectations

Session Format: Panel discussion

Panelists:

Karolina Sveiby (She/Her), Country Manager of Instruction & Intercultural Trainer at Berlitz Language Services
Greg Fernando (He/Him), Founder of New to Sweden
Daniel Brämhagen (He/Him), Partner at EY
Siw Andersen (She/Her), CEO at Oslo Business Region AS

Discussion Facilitator: Emma Jackson (She/Her), People and Culture Specialist

Definition of Terms

Cultural Humility: awareness of one's own biases and cultural framework, paired with a commitment to understanding and valuing others' perspectives without immediate judgment.

Culture Fit vs. Culture Add: the shift from hiring individuals who align with existing cultural norms (fit) to those who bring diverse perspectives that enhance and expand the workplace culture (add).

Summary

This panel discussion delved into the critical role of workplaces as drivers of social integration. The discussion centered around key elements of holistic integration such as preparing immigrants for the job market, supporting inclusive workplace policies, and fostering behavioral change within communities. These interdependent elements are essential for addressing challenges like high unemployment among immigrants, workplace discrimination, and societal segregation. The panelists also highlighted the pressing need for businesses to invest in initiatives that extend beyond the workplace to support employees facing societal bias and how recognizing the challenges of inclusion is essential to building inclusive processes.

Moreover, the panel discussed the importance of cultural humility, urging leaders to confront their biases and create environments that support open dialogue and awareness. They emphasize discomfort as a catalyst for growth, advocating for a blend of data-driven and anecdotal insights to foster empathy and engagement. Recommendations include redefining hiring practices to focus on "culture add" rather than "culture fit," implementing intercultural training, and promoting language inclusivity.

Actionable Takeaways

◎ Redefine hiring practices by shifting the focus from hiring for "culture fit" to "culture add" to embrace diverse perspectives that enrich workplace culture.

◎ Support inclusive language learning initiatives within teams to reduce insider-outsider dynamics and foster genuine communication.

◎ Acknowledge the role of vulnerability, including risk, uncertainty, and emotional exposure, in the workplace and address these factors to build more inclusive environments.

◎ Leverage the workplace as a driver for societal integration by combating discrimination and segregation. Businesses must go beyond basic policies to position themselves as catalysts for broader social progress.

◎ Promote cultural humility and bias awareness through self-awareness and ongoing conversations. This approach is crucial for fostering long-lasting organizational change.

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Technology for Justice: Enhancing Livelihoods through Social Equity

Session Format: Panel discussion

Panelists:

Neil Chatterjee (He/Him), Director, Travel Partners & Media, Nordics at Expedia Group

Aslaug Eva Björnsdóttir (She/Her), Leadership and Team Development Consultant, Digital Transformation Advisor, Strategic Workshop Facilitator, Culture Impact Consultant and UN Women Iceland Board Member

Lawrence Akpore (He/Him), Business Excellence Lead (Director), Global Engineering at Takeda

Anna Conneryd Lundgren (She/Her), Chief People Officer at Elekta

Discussion Facilitator: Justin Hester (They/Them), Founder and Managing Partner at Centric Advisory

Definition of Terms

Digital Divide: the gap in equitable access to essential technology, leaving underserved communities behind as society becomes increasingly reliant on digital solutions.

Algorithmic Bias: the unfair influence within AI systems when programs, shaped by specific perspectives, produce results that disproportionately favor or exclude certain groups.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): CSR is a company's commitment to balance profit with positive societal impact, enhancing lives and supporting communities while upholding core values like trust and reputation.

Summary

This panel discussion focused on exploring how technology can drive equity, inclusion, and justice, despite common concerns about its potential for harm. Panelists opened by acknowledging issues like AI bias and restrictive laws using technology that disproportionately affect marginalized communities. However,

they emphasized a shift in perspective, focusing on the positive impact technology can have when used ethically. The panelists shared personal insights from their companies—such as Expedia's work to make travel safer and more accessible for LGBTQIA travelers and Elekta's cervical cancer treatment initiatives in underserved regions like Rwanda. These efforts illustrated how technology can enhance accessibility and democratize essential services.

Panelists also discussed the balance between corporate profits and social responsibility, arguing that corporations can align shareholder interests with broader social goals. Companies like Takeda use their profits to invest in healthcare initiatives in developing countries, demonstrating that profitability and social good can coexist. However, the digital divide remains a major barrier, with marginalized communities lacking access to technology and infrastructure. In closing, each panelist noted major challenges to address within the next few years, including the digital divide, AI bias, and access to education and infrastructure. They concluded by affirming that thoughtful application of technology, backed by ethical commitment, could support social justice.

Actionable Takeaways

- Companies should prioritize designing technology that is accessible and inclusive for marginalized and underserved communities.

- Organizations need to actively address AI bias by scrutinizing how programs are developed and who they impact.

- Invest in CSR and reinvest profits in social good projects like healthcare and education for underserved markets.

- Bridge the digital divide by focusing on democratizing technology for equitable access across all communities.

AI for Good, AI Bias and AI Ethics

Session Format: Lightning talks followed by moderated discussion

Panelists:

Lars Rinnan (He/Him), Angel Investor, Board Director, Advisor, Public Speaker on AI & the future

Katja Vahl (She/Her), Marketing Manager at Air Greenland

Flemming Kehr (He/Him), Partner at KEHR+NIELSEN and Founder & CEO at cphdialogue

Ida Faldbakken (She/Her), CEO of KatapultX and Co-founder of Katapult Future Fest (KFF)

Discussion Facilitator: Winta Negassi (She/Her), Head of HR, Northern Europe LCS at Google

Definition of Terms

AI Literacy: the ability to understand, use, and critically evaluate AI technologies, recognizing their benefits, limitations, and societal impact to make informed decisions. It involves not just technical skills but also a critical awareness of how AI shapes our world.

Summary of Lightning Talks

Lars Rinnan shared his decade-long experience in AI, emphasizing its positive potential. He discussed AI-driven startups addressing global issues: reforestation with drones by Lord of the Trees, hydroponic farming for food security, and wildfire prediction using satellite data. Lars envisions a future where AI may help eliminate poverty, hunger, and disease by 2029, reflecting his dedication to AI's beneficial impacts on humanity and the planet.

Katja Vahl addressed the concern that smaller languages and cultures—like Greenlandic, Faroese, and Icelandic—risk being sidelined as AI language models advance. Katja stressed safeguarding Greenlandic cultural identities in AI, highlighting "authentic intelligence" and preserving traditions like Arctic survival skills and social customs within the evolving digital landscape.

Fleming Kehr discussed the ethical implications of AI in leadership, strategy, and decision-making. It highlights AI's potential to revolutionize society but warns against its risks, such as reinforcing inequalities. Fleming emphasized transparency, ethical scrutiny, and accountability to ensure AI's positive impact. He sees ensuring accurate, bias-free data and democratizing access as essential to shape a socially responsible and inclusive future.

Ida Faldbakken highlighted the urgent need for AI literacy as its societal impact grows. Ida stressed responsible use, quality input, and accountability, advocating for frameworks that prioritize diversity and inclusion. She urged individuals to actively shape AI's role, emphasizing human agency and thoughtful reflection on its broader implications.

Winta Negassi highlighted the transformative potential of AI in areas like medical research and diversity, with a focus on ethical considerations. Norway, though digitally advanced, lags in AI adoption, which may limit its GDP growth to 2% instead of 9%. Winta stressed the importance of understanding AI's implications and called for regulations to maximize its economic and societal benefits responsibly.

Summary of Post-Lightning Talks Discussion

The panel discussion explored AI's influence on cultural preservation, ethics, and accountability, emphasizing the need for smaller countries and cultures, such as Greenland, to collaborate with larger tech entities to protect their cultural outputs and narratives, while countries like Iceland develop their own AI models to safeguard cultural and linguistic diversity. Concerns about U.S. and English-centric data dominance were discussed, with the UAE-developed Arabic-focused AI, "Jais 70B," highlighted as an attempt to address this imbalance. On accountability, transparency and bias were key themes. Denmark's AI-based property tax system underscores the need for open and fair implementation, as complaints can only be filed for errors over 20%, while access to the data, models, and algorithms is denied. While AI's accessibility offers opportunities, challenges in education and network resources persist. The panel called for AI literacy, frameworks for responsible use, and transparent practices to ensure human agency and rights are preserved as AI advances.

Actionable Takeaways

- Boost AI literacy. Provide AI training for all employees to build awareness of AI's impact, ethical use, and potential biases.

- Create ethical AI guidelines. Develop and share a transparent, ethical framework for responsible AI use within your organization.

- Preserve cultural diversity in AI. Partner with others to ensure AI models include diverse languages and cultural perspectives, safeguarding smaller cultures.

- Demand AI transparency. Use transparent data sources and clarify AI models' limitations to build user trust and reduce biases.

- Plan for AI's long-term impact. Continuously align AI strategies with long-term goals for a sustainable, inclusive, and transparent future.

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COME AS YOU ARE

Ignorance Is Not Bliss: Harnessing Data to Enhance Workplace Productivity and Drive Evidence-Based Decision Making

Session Format: Panel discussion

Panelists:

Thorey V. Proppe (She/Her), Founder & CEO at Alda

Martin Devor (He/Him), VP Diversity & Inclusion at Aker Solutions

Mette Buhl Christoffersen (She/Her), Strategy Director and D&I Lead at Danske Bank

Adamu Haruna (He/Him), Senior Solutions Architect at Amazon Web Services

Discussion Facilitator: Plamena Cherneva (She/Her), Founder of Nordic Women in Tech Awards and WonderCoders

Summary

In this panel, speakers emphasized the importance of collecting purposeful, high-quality data guided by clear objectives. Transparency, strong governance, and stakeholder engagement were seen as crucial to building trust and ensuring effective use, particularly in sensitive areas like DEI. Data was highlighted as a tool for identifying systemic barriers and understanding employee experiences, but panelists cautioned against over-reliance on demographic metrics or using data to validate marginalized groups. Instead, they advocated measuring inclusion and belonging for actionable insights while avoiding oversimplification or excessive categorization. The discussion stressed combining technological tools with human interaction. Panelists emphasized fostering trust by listening to employees, co-creating solutions, and offering platforms for connection. Leadership accountability was deemed vital, with leaders expected to actively drive inclusion rather than burdening marginalized employees.

Panelists noted GDPR is not a barrier to collecting meaningful DEI data when anonymity and clear purposes are prioritized. While data supports inclusion efforts, initiatives should not be delayed for perfect metrics, as many actions stem from

lived experiences rather than quantitative measures. The panel concluded by calling for transparency and accountability in data use, urging organizations to share results accessibly to build trust. A thoughtful approach to data collection was encouraged, focusing on uniting people and centering human experiences in decision-making.

Actionable Takeaways

- Define objectives for data collection. Establish clear, measurable goals for data collection to ensure it informs decision-making and is purposeful.

- Foster trust with transparent governance. Clearly communicate how data will be used, who has access, and its purpose, in order to build stakeholder engagement.

- Use data to bridge empathy gaps. Leverage data to understand and highlight diverse workplace experiences, fostering a more inclusive environment while being careful not to reduce individuals to static data points.

- Ensure leadership accountability. Leaders should take responsibility for driving and measuring DEI initiatives to create lasting organizational change.

- Create inclusive engagement spaces. Beyond data, prioritize listening and providing spaces for employees to share their experiences and needs authentically.

Confronting the Unspoken: 'Isms, Phobias, and Increasing Fragmentation in Today's Society

Session Format: Panel discussion

Panelists:

John Michael Shert (He/Him), Founding Principal at JMS & Company
Sarah Reynolds (They/Them), Chief Marketing Officer at HiBob
Nivi Katrine Christensen (She/Her), Museum Director at Nuuk Art Museum
Jessica Petersen (She/Her), Project Manager, DEIB & Climate Justice at In Futurum

Discussion Facilitator: Alex Jørgenson (He/Him), Journalist & Communication Advisor

Definition of Terms

Cultural Competence: one's ability to fully understand, converse with, and efficiently interact with different people with all sorts of cultural backgrounds.

Summary

This panel discussion firstly explored how language shapes inclusion and exclusion. Specificity in naming discrimination (e.g., racism, homophobia) was highlighted for its important role in targeted interventions and training, whilst also allowing for more collective power once commonality across terms and groups is recognised. Real-world examples of targeted attacks against marginalized groups illustrated the risks and challenges of advocacy, underscoring the need for solidarity, allyship, and strategic partnerships with authorities, whilst balancing constructive critique with collaboration.

Intersectional oppression was examined, highlighting how colonialism and patriarchy continue to reinforce marginalization, requiring comprehensive, holistic, and nuanced approaches to dismantle these entrenched structures. Discussion on power dynamics and capacity building revealed Greenland's high percentage of Danish leadership in private companies, stressing intentional strategies to

empower Inuit leadership. Marginalized individuals placed in leadership roles must then be supported to authentically transform their roles, rather than conforming to existing norms.

Lastly, panelists emphasized finding commonalities across identities to build broad alliances, redistributing power and resources to uplift marginalized voices, and persistently addressing discomfort in equity work by confronting harmful behaviors. They called for honest self-reflection, especially in regions assuming progressiveness while ignoring shortcomings, advocating for humility and systemic change.

Actionable Takeaways

- Be specific in addressing discrimination. Naming and identifying specific identities and forms of discrimination allows for targeted interventions and meaningful action.

- Build solidarity and intersectional alliances. Effective change requires building coalitions across different identities and experiences, amplifying collective impact and providing a stronger platform for advocacy and accountability.

- Empower marginalized leadership through capacity building. Focus on building skills and capacities for marginalized leaders, creating pathways for authentic leadership rather than conforming to existing norms.

- Challenge language use. Be mindful of how language shapes inclusion and exclusion. Consider who sets the terms and definitions in social justice discussions and work to include diverse perspectives.

- Consider how English can unintentionally exclude marginalized groups, particularly when key concepts in DEIB are untranslatable into Indigenous languages. This creates an exclusionary dynamic where discussions, despite aiming to include, can alienate marginalized groups from the start.

- Hold systems and authorities accountable. Engage with institutions to push for meaningful change while holding them accountable to higher standards of inclusion and cultural competency. Strategic partnerships must be paired with consistent demands for progress and accountability.

Prevention is Better than Cure: Ending Sexual Harassment and GBV in the Workplace

Session Format: Panel discussion

Panelists:

Antony Hutchings (He/Him), Director of Organizational Development, Global Regions at NOV

Helin Herlbauer (She/Her), Human Rights Lawyer and GEEW Specialist at United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

Chi Lee (They/Them), DEIB Advocate

Discussion Facilitator: Astrid Sundberg (She/Her), Executive Director at Operation Smile Norway

Definition of Terms

Toxic Masculinity: describes a set of damaging beliefs, tendencies, and actions that stem from traditional male roles but are pushed to harmful extremes.

Summary

This panel addressed sexual harassment and gender-based violence in workplaces, linking the issues to cultural norms around masculinity. The speakers advocated for redefining masculinity to include empathy and emotional intelligence, with male allyship requiring active involvement. They emphasized that systemic discrimination stems from power imbalances, not individual actions and that organizations must adopt trauma-informed, comprehensive approaches, ensuring safe reporting processes for victims, particularly those with intersecting identities. Training should go beyond compliance, incorporating real victim experiences to address the issues and reduce retaliation fears.

The panelists noted that subtle sexist behaviors, such as casual jokes, contribute to a culture where more severe harassment becomes normalized. They called for proactive measures to challenge these norms, emphasizing that all employees, not just leaders, contribute to workplace culture through everyday actions. Finally, the

panelists urged people to engage in difficult conversations and take a stand against toxic masculinity to create lasting change and a safer, more inclusive work environment.

Actionable Takeaways

- Redefine masculinity. Encourage the incorporation of empathy and emotional intelligence into the understanding of masculinity to foster a healthier workplace culture.

- Promote active engagement from men as allies, ensuring they speak up and participate in challenging harmful behaviors and supporting gender equality.

- Adopt trauma-informed reporting. Implement trauma-informed approaches in workplace reporting systems to support victims effectively and reduce the fear of retaliation, especially for those with intersecting identities.

- Implement comprehensive training. Go beyond basic compliance with training programs that include the lived experiences of victims to create deeper understanding and impactful change.

- Encourage continuous dialogue. Promote ongoing discussions about gender equality and safe environments, involving employees at all levels and extending these conversations into homes and communities for broader cultural change.
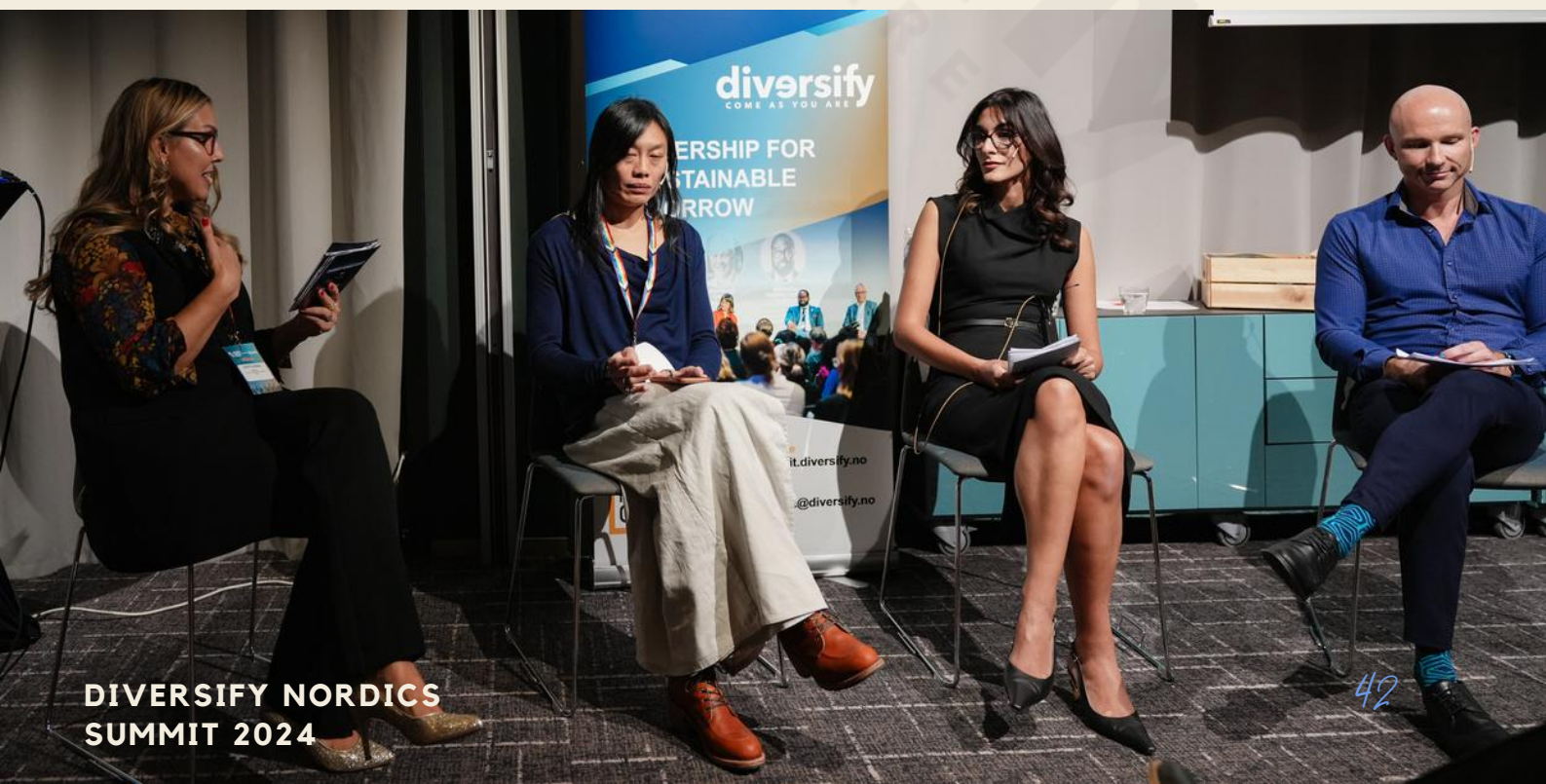
What Do Freedom and Democracy Truly Mean for Marginalized Communities?

Session Format: Panel discussion

Panelists:
Louna Sbou (She/They), CEO & Artistic Director at Oyoun
Salamatu Kamara (She/Her), Special Adviser and Activist | Kamara's Utopia
Dan Bjorke (He/Him), Executive Director at Oslo Pride
Raja Skogland (She/Her), Founder & Chair at The Visionary Company, Board & VC

Discussion Facilitator: Stine Rebekka Aksnes (She/Her), CEO at cCHANGE

Summary

This panel explored the gap between democracy's ideals of equality and the realities faced by marginalized communities, underscoring how systemic barriers often prevent full participation for people marginalized by race, disability, sexual orientation, and other factors. Panelists argued that while anti-discrimination laws are essential, they fall short of addressing ingrained societal biases and structural obstacles that persist despite legal protections.

Key issues included the digital divide, the urgent need for accessible environments for disabled individuals, and the alarming rise in hate crimes, particularly targeting LGBTQ+ communities. Panelists emphasized the importance of intersectionality, noting that individuals with multiple marginalized identities face compounded discrimination and heightened challenges, often making inclusion even more difficult. Legal reforms alone can't ensure belonging or equality; a cultural shift valuing diverse voices is essential. Inclusive democracy requires dismantling oppression, expanding accessibility, and fostering community-driven networks to empower marginalized groups, ensuring underrepresented voices shape a future that fulfills democracy's promise of freedom and equality for all.

Actionable Takeaways

- Laws alone are insufficient. Societal attitudes, not just legal frameworks, need to shift to ensure genuine inclusion and freedom.

- Representation matters. Increased visibility of marginalized groups in leadership, politics, and other public arenas is crucial for changing attitudes.

- Programs must address the compounded marginalization faced by individuals belonging to multiple minority groups (e.g. disabled LGBTQ+ individuals).

- Promote inclusive spaces. Public spaces and events should be designed to accommodate diverse needs, ensuring access for all community members.

- Challenge the system. Current democratic systems often maintain oppression; reimagining and restructuring is necessary for real change.

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Do Investments Exacerbate Inequality?: A Catalyst for Inclusive Innovation or Lip Service Upholding the Status Quo?

Session Format: Panel discussion

Panelists:
Phaedria Marie St.Hilaire (She/Her), Ada Angel Investor at Ada Ventures
Regine Larsen Lindtvedt (She/Her), CEO, If Services and Nordic Head of Market Strategy at If P&C Insurance
Tom Miskin (He/Him), Oslo Innovation Week & Nordics Lead at Oslo Business Region
Kogulan Kugathasan (He/Him), DEI & Wellbeing Lead, Global People & Culture at SimCorp

Discussion Facilitator: Charlotte Biering (She/Her), Global Diversity and Inclusion Lead at Marel

Summary

This panel explored whether investments drive social impact or perpetuate the status quo, emphasizing redesigned frameworks to support diverse founders. Particularly, Ada Ventures' 5-step strategy, focusing on inclusivity, diverse teams, scouting, unbiased selection, and founder support, was highlighted. With 50% female-led and 45% ethnically diverse companies, they proved impact investing can be profitable and inclusive.

Challenges faced by female and minority founders in the Nordics were also discussed, in particular that they must advocate for themselves in ways that their white counterparts do not, risking more criticism. Efforts like Oslo Innovation Week were highlighted as ways in which diverse communities are connected, inclusive conversations are sparked, and networks are expanded beyond the Nordic startup scene. It was also mentioned how SimCorp's work to reduce bias in financial software highlights the fact that software and algorithms are created by people, who inherently have biases, making it likely that these biases are reflected in the tools we use.

The panel stressed that Norway's dependency on familiar networks in investing, limits diversity. The speakers proposed broadening these networks, promoting inclusive investment groups, enforcing regulations, and using consumer influence to hold companies accountable for inclusive practices.

Actionable Takeaways

- Advocate for investment frameworks that are designed to support diverse founders.

- Push for a perspective shift from investors to see inclusive investments not as charity, but rather as a profitable opportunity.

- Support and facilitate initiatives like Oslo Innovation Week that help expand networks and connect diverse communities beyond familiar circles, thus supporting more inclusive growth in the Nordic startup ecosystem.

- Understand and work to rectify biases present in software and algorithms that reflect human bias.

The Power of Knowing What We Don't Know: Intellectual Humility in Leadership and People Management

Session Format: Case studies

Panelists:
Michael Watson (He/Him), People Business Partner at Nordea
Wenche Fredriksen (She/Her), SVP Head of Inclusion & Diversity at DNB
Lynn Roseberry Ph.D. (She/Her), Founder and Director at On the Agenda
Abu Bundu-Kamara (He/Him), Senior Director, Global Inclusion & IBGs/Communities at Expedia Group

Discussion Facilitator: Iva Ogrizovic (She/Her), Director at Diversify and People & Culture Partner at Diversify Consult

Case 1: Current Events and Leadership

Lopez, a mid-level tech manager, faces a crossroads as global events shift the DEI landscape. After substantial DEI investments post-Black Lives Matter and COVID, rising anti-woke sentiments have polarized workplace opinions, leading senior leaders to consider cutting DEI funding in 2024. With DEI initiatives at risk, Lopez must advocate for authentic inclusion amid growing skepticism.

🌀 **Perspectives**: The panelists discussed the challenges of maintaining DEI initiatives amid shifting global and political trends. Despite heavy investments in DEI since 2020, rising "anti-woke" sentiments in 2024 threaten its progress. The speakers warned of potential reversals by 2025, urging leaders to defend DEI, emphasize its value, and counter skepticism. They recommended reframing DEI around equal opportunity principles and support for marginalized talent, while balancing ethical and business arguments to ensure DEI remains essential for inclusive and equitable workplaces.

Case 2: Narcissism and Leadership

John, a charismatic CEO, prioritized personal recognition over team success, often taking credit for others' work and ignoring feedback. His ego-driven decisions created a toxic work environment, leading to low morale and high employee turnover. Despite short-term gains, John's narcissism ultimately undermined trust and long-term success.

Perspectives: The panelists discussed how a narcissistic CEO could address their negative impact on team dynamics and morale. As a first step, it was recommended to recognize the need for change by involving a trusted advisor outside the organization to help accept constructive feedback. The speakers also proposed implementing regular feedback sessions, during which the CEO would listen without reacting immediately, allowing time for reflection. An exercise was suggested to help leaders practice active listening and intellectual humility, where a facilitator uses a set of four cards, giving each person permission to speak only once per card. This approach encourages leaders to listen without responding, fostering curiosity and providing a real-time experience of the discomfort that comes with listening and reflecting.

Case 3: Leadership and Feedback

Emma, a group director focused on building a high-performance team with attention to mental health, set what she thought were achievable goals. However, she noticed her team becoming strained and morale declining. Peer feedback revealed that her leadership often reflected her own preferences, which some perceived as judgmental, especially when others approached tasks differently. Her perfectionism also conflicted with team members' views. Now, feeling frustrated and disappointed, Emma struggled to understand why her well-intentioned efforts weren't resonating with her team.

Perspectives: The panelists discussed how Emma could respond constructively to peer feedback about her leadership. They suggested that she first accept feedback with curiosity and view it as a learning opportunity. She should then acknowledge personal biases and create a psychologically safe environment for the team to openly discuss the feedback. The panelists emphasized that humility, vulnerability, and a willingness to be uncomfortable are crucial for genuine inclusion and growth within a team.

Case 4: Cultivating Trust and Leadership

Mia, the new CEO of a nonprofit serving marginalized communities, faced challenges leading a diverse team as a white leader from a privileged background. Concerns grew over her ability to connect meaningfully, especially after she shared well-intentioned but problematic views that hurt trust within the leadership team. In response, over 70% of employees signed a letter asking Mia to acknowledge the harm caused. Annoyed by what she saw as unfair judgment, Mia replied with a letter emphasizing her good intentions and past support for marginalized communities.

◎ **Perspectives**: The panelists stressed the importance of self-education for leaders, urging Mia to learn about marginalized communities' challenges and reflect on her privileges. They advised acknowledging mistakes, apologizing, and seeking feedback through creating safe spaces for diverse voices, fostering trust and inclusion. Mistakes should be seen as opportunities to strengthen relationships, with humility and openness key to growth within the workspace. Mia was encouraged to ask, "How can I be a good ally?" and engage with diverse perspectives to build psychological safety and trust within the team.

Actionable Takeaways

◎ Leaders should actively seek and genuinely consider feedback from their teams, even if it challenges their views or exposes gaps in their knowledge, to cultivate trust and improve team morale.

◎ Promoting intellectual humility among leaders can help sustain DEI initiatives during periods of skepticism, encouraging leaders to champion inclusive practices that benefit both ethical and business outcomes.

◎ Practice open-hearted curiosity by asking team members to share their needs and preferences.

◎ Engage a "bias buddy" to reflect on feedback openly and constructively and to approach critical input as an opportunity for growth and to build trust within the team.

Balancing the Scales: Power Sharing as a Catalyst for Trust in Communities and Institutions

Session Format: Panel discussion

Panelists:

[Dr. Ferdinand Mirbach](#) (He/Him), Senior Expert, Immigration Society, Global Issues and Diversity Officer at Robert Bosch Stiftung
[Loubna Messaoudi](#) (She/Her), CEO & Founder of BIWOC* Rising
[Qivioq Løvstrøm](#) (She/Her), Chair of the Human Rights Council of Greenland

Discussion Facilitator: [Sarah M Przedpelska](#) (She/Her), Educator & Collaborator | Founder

Definition of Terms

Trust-Based Philanthropy: this approach shifts power dynamics to funders by sharing authority with local organizations, trusting their expertise, providing multi-year funding, and fostering collaboration for systemic, lasting change beyond financial support.

Summary

This panel discussion focused on the complex dynamics of sharing power within communities, organizations, and society, emphasizing practical strategies for empowering marginalized groups. The participants examined power sharing at multiple levels—individual, organizational, and systemic—highlighting the intersection of privilege and justice. They discussed the distinction between empowerment and power sharing, whereby empowerment mostly addresses the population who are to be made stronger, while power sharing involves the active redistribution of power by those who already hold it. While complementary, power sharing is often more challenging, as it requires confronting and relinquishing privilege.

The conversation also touched on the challenges of dismantling entrenched power structures (i.e. capitalism, patriarchy, and colonialism) with an emphasis on community-led, collective decision-making. Examples of practical strategies for enacting power sharing include leveraging networks, redistributing decision-making, and sharing financial resources through trust-based philanthropy. The discussion also highlighted the importance of mindset shifts (in terms of what individuals themselves can gain from power redistribution), coalition building, and direct confrontation of historical injustices (particularly Greenland's colonial experiences with Denmark, where it was highlighted how Indigenous communities are using global advocacy and human rights frameworks to challenge systemic oppression). Overall, the discussion stressed that real power sharing is uncomfortable but necessary for creating more equitable, just systems.

Actionable Takeaways

- Shift mindsets to view power sharing as an expansion, not a loss. Sharing power increases collective benefits without diminishing your own influence, especially through shared networks.

- Create alternative systems alongside existing structures. Gradually weaken oppressive systems by building inclusive, community-based alternatives outside current frameworks.

- Embrace discomfort as a path to real change. Accept discomfort as necessary for equitable power sharing, with long-term benefits outweighing short-term unease.

- Build coalitions with marginalized voices at the center. Collaborate across groups to ensure those most impacted lead decision-making and create systems with true representation.

Rethinking Psychological Safety: Beyond Buzzwords to Real Change

Session Format: Discussion circle

Panelists:

Tendai Angela Jambga-Rokkones (She/Her), Yoga Teacher, Wellness Curator & International Speaker

Tor Andreas Bremnes (He/Him), Managing Director at InClue As

Stephen Burrell (He/Him), DE&I Advocate, Consultant and Coach at SB Consultancy

Ingibjörg Lilja Þórmundsdóttir (She/Her), Chairperson of the Board at Rafal

Circle and Discussion Facilitator: Selena Støback (She/Her), Capacity Development Specialist at NRC

Summary

This discussion circle reexamined psychological safety, proposing "psychological bravery" as a more inclusive alternative. The panelists argued that traditional psychological safety often caters to majority groups, sidelining marginalized voices. Bravery was defined as the courage to speak honestly, even when it may feel uncomfortable or unsafe, fostering inclusivity in a way that conventional safety practices may not. The panelists explored various perspectives, such as the importance of managing defensiveness, the role of leadership in cultivating trust, and the nuances of creating a safe space that respects identity and individual triggers. Leadership emerged as a pivotal factor, requiring vulnerability, consciousness, and proactive efforts to embed psychological safety into workplace cultures.

The panel also highlighted the intersection of psychological safety with marginalized identities, emphasizing empathy, inclusivity, and addressing systemic barriers. A psychosomatic approach was recommended, focusing on physical stress signals to promote well-being in the workspace. By focusing on bravery, self-awareness, and open dialogue, organizations can foster inclusive environments that better support knowledge-sharing and belonging. Ultimately, the dialogue underscored psychological safety as a shared responsibility, achieved through listening, inclusivity, and valuing diverse lived experiences.

Actionable Takeaways

- Promote psychological bravery. Encourage speaking truthfully, even in discomfort, to foster inclusion beyond safety.

- Address assumptions and defensiveness. Leaders should train teams to recognize and control defensiveness to prevent barriers to honest communication.

- Foster self-awareness. Encourage employees to recognize personal triggers, aiding respectful and productive dialogue.

- Ensure leadership sets the tone. Leaders must prioritize psychological safety as an agenda item to create cultural change.

- Support with structural change. Provide systemic support for inclusion rather than relying on individuals to adapt company culture.

- Implement body-based awareness. Recognize the physical manifestations of stress, promoting a psychosomatic approach to psychological safety.
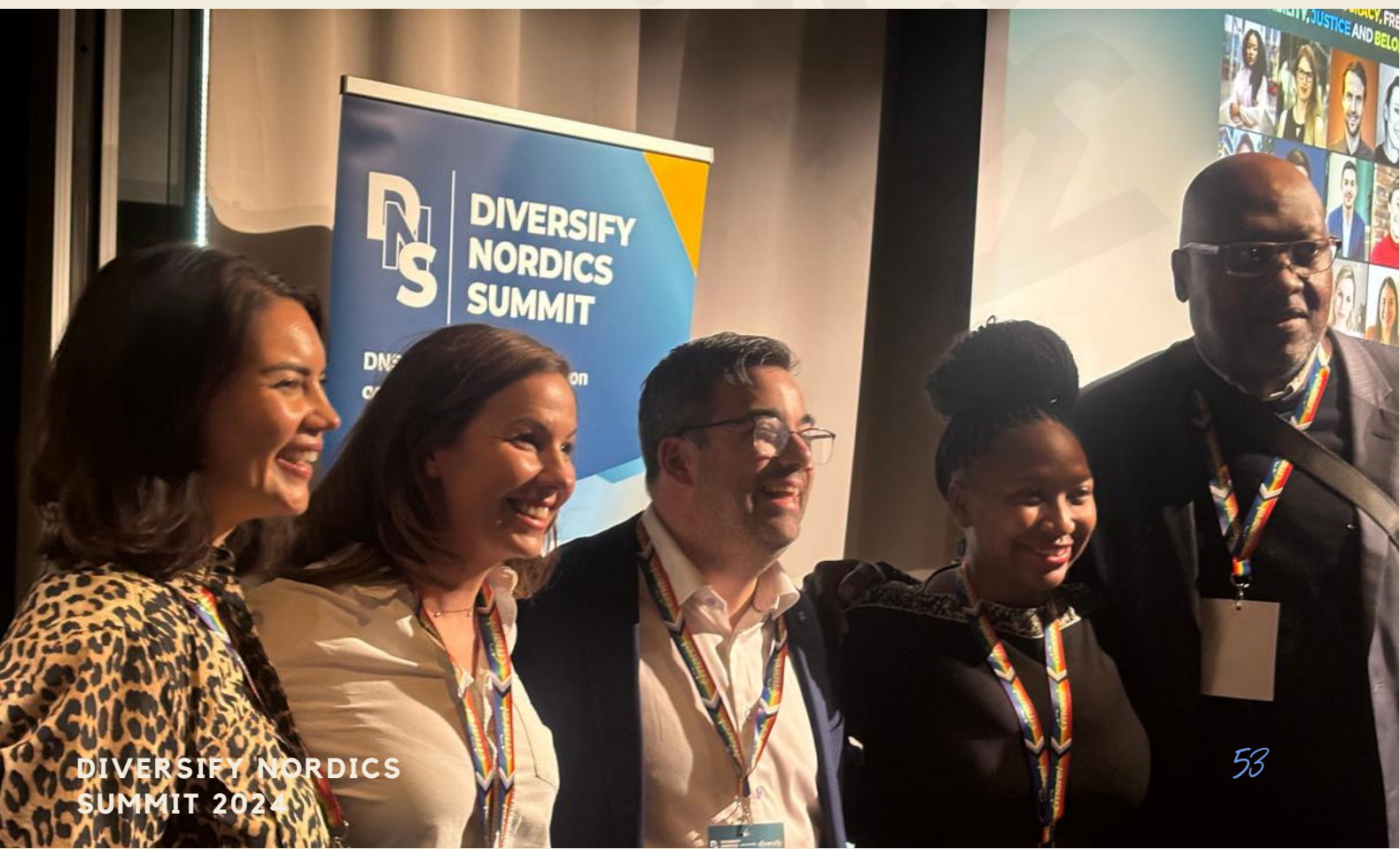
Whose Story is it Anyway? Reclaiming Mainstream Narratives

Session Format: Panel discussion

Panelists:
Anne Lajla Utsi (She/Her), Managing Director at International Sámi Film Institute
Ritika Wadhwa (She/Her), CEO & Founder at Prabhaav Global
Henri Terho (He/Him), Head of Arts Support at Arts Promotion Centre Finland (Taike)
Jason Ryle (He/Him), International Programmer for Australia, New Zealand, and Global Indigenous Cinema at Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF)

Discussion Facilitator: Julie Forchhammer (She/Her), Co-founder at Klimakultur

Definition of Terms

Narrative Sovereignty: the right of communities, particularly Indigenous groups, to control the creation and dissemination of their own stories, perspectives, and representations across media, literature, and cultural expressions.

Cultural Intelligence: the ability to engage effectively with people from diverse cultural backgrounds by understanding, valuing, and acting on different perspectives.

Summary

This panel discussion focused on the power of storytelling and the importance of narrative sovereignty for marginalized communities. It addressed the long-standing issue of dominant groups controlling the stories told in mainstream media, often leading to the erasure or misrepresentation of Indigenous and marginalized voices. The panelists highlighted how initiatives such as the International Sámi Film Institute and Canada's Indigenous Screen Office have created platforms to empower these communities, allowing them to tell their stories authentically and challenge existing power structures. These initiatives ensure that marginalized groups have access to resources and support systems that help them reclaim their narratives.

The discussion also emphasized the need for ethical storytelling, with guidelines like the "On-Screen Protocols and Pathways" providing frameworks for responsible storytelling. Cultural intelligence was highlighted as a crucial skill for working across different communities, ensuring that collaborations are inclusive, respectful, and equitable. The panelists stressed that storytelling must be approached with a deep understanding of reciprocity, ensuring that the benefits of telling a community's story are shared with that community. Finally, the conversation called for self-education, encouraging individuals to actively seek knowledge and understanding about marginalized groups, rather than relying on those groups to provide it.

Actionable Takeaways

- Establish and fund independent platforms. Support independent initiatives like the International Sámi Film Institute to empower marginalized groups to tell their stories without relying on mainstream funding.

- Adopt ethical storytelling guidelines. Implement frameworks such as "On-Screen Protocols and Pathways" to ensure content creators tell marginalized communities' stories with consent, collaboration, and cultural respect.

- Promote Cultural Intelligence. Train teams to navigate diverse environments, improving inclusivity and understanding in storytelling through cultural awareness.

- Prioritize reciprocity in collaborations. Ensure marginalized communities actively shape their own narratives, with benefits flowing back into their communities.

- Engage in self-education. Proactively learn about the struggles of marginalized communities rather than relying on them for education.

Us versus Them. Us and Them. What Conditions Need to Be in Place for "Us and We"?

Session Format: Panel discussion

Panelists:

Kerin Ayyalaraju (She/Her), Australian Ambassador to Denmark, Norway and Iceland

Momodou Malcolm Jallow (He/Him), Member of the Swedish Parliament and Chair of the Committee on Civil Affairs

Jeff Kwasi Klein (He/Him), Political Innovator

Justin Hester (They/Them), Founder and Managing Partner at Centric Advisory

Discussion Facilitator: Thandi Dyani (She/Her), Regional Network Organizer, Africa and The Nordics at BMW Foundation

Summary

This panel explored societal division, linking the "Us versus Them" mindset to early socialization, media influence, and scarcity fears. Structural and economic inequalities, particularly regarding access to resources and opportunities, were identified as sustaining these divisions. Overcoming these requires individual self-reflection and systemic reforms to foster equitable conditions and unity.

The shift to an abundance mindset was discussed as a key condition for overcoming the "us versus them" divide. This transition involves rethinking how resources are distributed, promoting collaboration over competition, and creating strategic systems that support equitable growth. However, panelists acknowledged that promoting such a mindset goes beyond rhetoric; it demands tangible actions, such as fair policy initiatives and communal resource sharing.

The complexity of identity was another focus, with it being stressed that fostering unity involves recognizing existing mixed identities and reconciling them, rather than seeking uniformity. In addition, trust in government and institutions was highlighted as crucial for creating cohesion, supported by transparent governance and culturally aware policies that bridge diverse communities. Finally, the panelists

emphasized balancing dialogue with firm boundaries against dehumanizing views, while advocating systemic evolution to shift the burden from individuals conforming to exclusionary systems, creating inclusive frameworks that adapt to and accommodate everyone's needs.

Actionable Takeaways

- Advocate for media outlets to slow down the news cycle. Support and promote media practices that prioritize thoughtful, balanced reporting over constant, high-speed coverage that reinforces the "Us versus Them" mindset.

- Develop persuasive arguments for power redistribution. Create compelling, practical arguments that go beyond moral reasoning that demonstrate how power-sharing and inclusivity (in relation to material benefits) can lead to shared prosperity and stability. Highlight the tangible advantages for those currently holding privilege, ensuring they see value in supporting systemic change.

- Adapt systems to be inclusive. Shift the focus from individuals needing to conform to exclusionary norms to evolving systems that are adaptable and inclusive, reinforcing solidarity as a practice.

- Encourage and facilitate open dialogue whilst working to address the main issues that cause societal tensions. Maintain ongoing, constructive conversations to bridge misunderstandings and build trust between polarized communities.

- Establish clear boundaries. Draw red lines against behaviors, beliefs or dialogue that deny others' humanity, ensuring basic human rights are not compromised.

Jeff Kwasi Klein (He/Him) Political Innovator

Justin Hester (They/Them) Managing Partner at Centric Advisory

Kerin Ayyalaraju (She/Her) Australian Ambassador to Denmark, Norway and Iceland

Momo Malcolm (He/H) Member of t Parlian Chair of the on Civil

A Master Class in Evidence-Based Brand Building and Inclusive Marketing Principles

Speaker: Julius Einan Støback (He/Him), Strategy Director & Partner at NSB Marketing Best Practice

Definition of Terms

Mental Availability: the capacity of a brand to remain memorable and come readily to mind when consumers are in a buying mode, achieved by broad and inclusive marketing that targets potential future buyers across diverse audiences.

Summary

This workshop focused on brand building and inclusive marketing strategies that prioritize broad reach over narrow targeting. Julius discussed the standard practice of segmentation and targeting and argued that brands should aim to reach as widely as possible. Through analysis of consumer behaviors, like music preferences, he illustrated how segmentation often misses opportunities by narrowing focus, potentially alienating broader audiences who may still be interested in the marketed product.

Building on this, the workshop introduced "mental availability" as a key growth mechanism. This concept emphasized the importance of a brand being memorable and accessible in the minds of potential buyers, so when they are ready to make a purchase, the brand readily comes to mind. Mental availability is achieved by promoting broad, inclusive messaging that resonates with diverse audiences and by maintaining visibility across multiple channels. This strategy is complemented by physical and digital availability ensuring the brand is easily

found when a need arises. Together, mental and physical availability drive growth by maximizing exposure and making the brand "top-of-mind", rather than focusing solely on customer loyalty or narrowly defined segments. Finally, the workshop addressed how sustainability is important for brand identity and long-term viability but may not be a core competitive advantage in immediate purchasing decisions.

Actionable Takeaways

- Focus on creating marketing strategies that aim to reach as wide an audience as possible, rather than concentrating solely on narrowly defined segments. Expanding reach increases brand visibility and helps build a larger customer base.

- Make your brand easy to remember by staying present in the minds of potential future buyers. Prioritize clear, simple messaging that resonates with a wide group, making it more likely your brand will come to mind when consumers are ready to purchase.

- To encourage repeat purchases, ensure the balance between product quality and pricing is favorable, offering value that justifies the cost. This way, new customers are more likely to return, enhancing profitable growth.

- Sustainability choices strengthen the brand identity but may not be a primary driver of consumer choice so it would be better to link them to other aspects of the brand that are attractive to consumers.

Technology as a Driver for Workplace Productivity and Transformative HR by HiBob

Speakers:

Alyx Gilham (She/Her), People & Culture Partner at HiBob
Alex Coburn Davis (He/Him), CX Team Leader & HiPride BRG Lead at HiBob

Summary

This workshop centered around leveraging technology to foster productivity and connection in the workplace, particularly through HiBob's human resources platform, "Bob." The speakers highlighted how the platform is tailored to manage the entire employee lifecycle—from hiring to departures—by prioritizing connection and inclusivity in diverse, remote, and hybrid work environments. They discussed shifts in workplace dynamics since the pandemic, like the importance of flexibility, psychological safety, and well-being in boosting employee engagement. Emphasis was placed on how employees increasingly seek alignment with company values and cultural authenticity, which has become essential for organizational success.

HiBob's team shared insights into evolving expectations, especially among Gen Z individuals, who value transparency, accountability, and a sense of purpose. Authentic organizational culture is shaped by supporting employees' need for empowerment, flexible growth paths, and tools for meaningful engagement. HiBob embeds values directly into its platform, allowing employees to connect and recognize each other's contributions. By incorporating tools like pronouns and value-based feedback, HiBob aims to create a culture where employees feel seen, supported, and aligned with the organization's mission. This approach encourages a collaborative, resilient workforce that drives productivity through connectedness and transparency.

Actionable Takeaways

- Leveraging technology to enhance connection and capture meaningful data on employee needs and engagement is essential for driving innovation and sustaining a resilient workforce.

- Implement agile, flexible HR practices to quickly adapt to changes and incorporate technology to enhance employee connections and transparency.

- Establish a psychologically safe work environment to boost innovation and to foster a culture aligned with diversity, inclusion, and authenticity values.

- Use technology to reinforce values through recognition and interactive platforms by ensuring open communication channels.

Speaker: [Tendai Angela Jambga-Rokkones](#) (She/Her), Yoga Teacher, Wellness Curator & International Speaker

Grounding in Place

Practical Meditation Exercises

ABC Method: Awareness, Breath, Choice

Awareness: begin by pressing your body into the ground. Tune into what's accessible in your body and surroundings.

Breath: inhale as you lift your arms overhead, and exhale to bring them down. Continue this motion, closing your eyes, visualizing yourself alone, and breathing deeply.

Choice: on each inhale, think of qualities you wish to invite into your life. Exhale and consciously release any tension or negativity, letting go with each down motion.

Releasing Negativity Visualization

Visualize yourself "picking up" positive energy, then "smashing down" any negative thoughts or feelings. Repeat this in a playful way, imagining shattering obstacles or burdens. This movement promotes emotional release and a sense of freedom.

Planting a Promise

After practicing the ABC method, place your hands on your heart. Reflect on a personal promise such as becoming the best version of yourself and breathe deeply to "bury" this promise within. Visualize this commitment being absorbed by your body as you exhale seven times.

Connecting with Your True Self

Take a moment to reflect on who you were before external influences shaped you. Acknowledge that your core self is rooted in love, joy, and authenticity.

Actionable Takeaways

- Physical movements combined with visualization (such as "smashing" away negativity) help release tension and allow for emotional cleansing, making space for positivity.

- Reflecting on the self beyond societal labels or judgments empowers individuals to bring authenticity to every interaction and experiences.

- Ground yourself by feeling your feet firmly planted, breathing deeply, and allowing stillness to nourish your nervous system.

- Make a promise to yourself to bring your true authentic self into every connection, knowing that you are enough.

Reflecting in Space

Practical Meditation Exercises

S-E-A Method: Scatter, Embrace, Awareness

Scatter: scatter your energy and express the highest and best versions of your souls to create an environment where you can flourish.

Embrace: ground the energy that you have just cultivated inside you by taking deep breaths and releasing tension in your body.

Awareness: feel aware of the energy within and around yourself.

Grounding and Breath Awareness

Close your eyes and take a deep breath in through your nose, allowing your chest to expand, and exhale slowly through your mouth.

Focus on the sensation of your breath entering and leaving your body. With each exhale, visualize releasing any tension or stress.

Energy Scattering

After some dynamic movement (like shaking out your arms and legs), settle into stillness.

As you sit quietly, visualize the energy you have stirred within you. Imagine it scattering like light in all directions, illuminating your surroundings and filling you with warmth.

Embracing Your Inner Light

With your eyes closed, visualize a warm, golden light in your belly.

As you inhale, imagine this light rising up through your heart, throat, and face, bringing warmth and positivity with it.

With each exhale, allow any negativity or self-doubt to melt away.

Clarity of Intention

Place your palms together at your heart and set an intention for what you wish to cultivate in your life.

As you breathe, visualize this intention growing stronger with each inhale, filling your body and spirit.
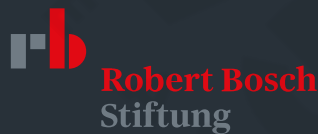
Actionable Takeaways

- Explore your feelings and create practices that allow for self-expression, healing and emotional release.

- Acknowledge and cultivate the positive energy within you, nurture your inner power to influence your reality.

- Embrace the idea that personal growth is a journey, not a destination. Celebrate your progress, no matter how small.

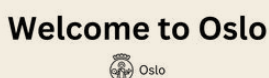- Invest time in activities and practices that bring you joy and peace; your well-being is a priority.

GROUNDING IN PLACE

Tendai Angela Jambga-Rokkones (she/her)

Inclusive Yoga Teacher, Wellbeing Curator and International Speaker

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to all our *amazing volunteers*

Chisom Udeze
(She/Her)

Economist | Founder of
Diversify, Diversify
Consult and HerSpace

We look forward to seeing you on October 24, 2025!

If you would like to collaborate, partner with us, or have any inquiries, please contact us!

✉ contact@diversify.no

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