

INCLUSION REVERSE MENTORING

Company name : Banque européenne d'investissement

Activity sector : Activités financières et d'assurance

Company category : Secteur Public

Description of the action

During 2022, the EIB launched two Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) Reverse Mentoring programmes; one focusing on LGBTIQ inclusion and the other on disability/neurodiversity inclusion.

Context

In the context of our work to drive best managerial inclusion practices and to raise awareness on the importance and benefits of inclusion in our workplace, we established DEIB reverse mentoring programmes.

Objectives

The programme inverts the traditional model of mentoring to enable senior leaders to learn from the lived experience of colleagues. The Programmes were designed to create a safe space in which the mentees (the leaders) could learn from and discover about the experience of the mentors and could implement change in their daily practices to become increasingly inclusive.

Approach

The programmes brought members of the EIB's disability and LGBTIQ Employee Resource Groups (enAble and EIB Proud) together as mentors with EIB senior managers. Over a series of four meetings, the mentors shared their lived experiences in the workplace and in society at large with the EIB managers.

Impact

The impact has been wide-reaching. The participating managers have gone through an important learning experience and are actively implementing changes in their daily practices to become ever more inclusive. The mentors also felt that they benefitted from the safe space that was created, enabling them to speak openly and honestly about their experience in the knowledge that they were interacting with an engaged counterpart who could implement positive change within the organisation. Both parties felt engaged and benefitted from the safe space created to exchange in a non-judgemental manner and to learn together, finding commonalities and breaking down systemic barriers in the workplace. Within the managerial population there has been extensive interest in availing of this initiative across a wide range of diversity dimensions. The programme will be continued and potentially expanded in the future.

« To do »

Do empower mentors to share openly and to lead the conversation
Do set guidelines for the creation of a safe and non-judgemental space
Do provide direction for the content/format of the discussions
Do record expectations of the mentors/mentees prior to the programme kick-off
Do record experience of programme after it comes to an end and ask for suggestions for improvements
Do ask the participants to pledge to implement at least one meaningful change in their business areas further to the experience

« Not to do »

Do not over-formalise the process. Enable the partnerships to create human connections Do not set an inflexible content schedule for the meetings - allow the partnership to develop naturally and discuss the topics that interest them most.