



Intellectual Output 4 - Pilot Reports

PERSONNEL ACQUISITION FOR DIVERSE STAFF IN ADULT EDUCATION | VHS CHANCE

Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership Project “Diversity Capacities - Improving the Capacities of Adult Education Institutions to Successful Dealing with Diversity”

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CONTENT

Pilot Report: VHS Chance

1 From Basic Education to Professional Education Qualification for everybody

2 VHS Chance wants adult education for all

2.1 The self-perception of the Organisation

2.2 Human resources

2.3 The networks

2.4 Education

2.5 Conclusion

3 The change and learning process

3.1 Aims and approaches

3.2 Activities

3.2.1 Commitment with management

3.2.2 Just come up with a plan!

3.2.3 Restart with new Priorities

3.2.4 Implementation

3.3 What to be considered developing the role-play

3.4 Lessons learned

3.5 Good practice Examples

4 Diverse staff - a real benefit for adult education

4.1 Summary

4.2 Lessons learned

4.3 What worked well - what could be done better

5 ANNEX - Good Practice Examples

5.1 Text of job-announcement in English

5.2 Interview guide with explanations

5.3 Role play example

6 Bibliography



A diverse staff keep the diversity of people in mind and can deal with it!

Illustration 1: © Geralt on pixabay

The Organisation

VHS Chance is partly situated in the “Lindener Rathaus” in the centre of the former industrial city, nowadays the very multi-cultural, very diverse city district “Linden”!



Illustration 2: © Ada-und-Theodor-Lessing-Volkshochschule Hannover

1. From Basic Education to Professional Education

Qualification for everybody

VHS Chance is part of the “Fachbereich Volkshochschule”, a department of the municipality of Hannover. Thus, for VHS Chance the legal frameworks of “Fachbereich Volkshochschule” and the municipality of Hannover are compulsory. An advisory board facilitates the communication between city council and institution. The institution is financed by public subsidies from the municipality, the Ministry for Science and Culture of Lower Saxony, third party funds (e.g. employment agency, social assurance, European Social Fund, European Commission) and the fees of participants.

The institution is located in the City Centre of Hannover, the capital of Lower Saxony with 556.695 inhabitants (1). 38,6% of the total population has a migration background, what means that they have a foreign nationality including those who have both: the German and the foreign one. 59,7% of these people are in the working age between 18 and 60 years.

VHS Chance carries out its program mainly in three different buildings and a couple of rented rooms in many parts of the city.

There exist two mission statements, one general and one specific for the educational counselling service. Both contain formulations showing openness. In the one of the counselling service “Sie ist kostenfrei und offen zugänglich für alle Menschen ...” (2) (It is accessible for all people and does not cost any fees). In the general one: “Damit nehmen wir die Bedürfnisse aller Bürgerinnen und Bürger der Landeshauptstadt Hannover auf und berücksichtigen dabei auch die Interessen und Lebensbedingungen von sozial benachteiligten und lernungsgewohnten Menschen”(3). (We are orientated on the needs of all inhabitants of Hannover and take especially into account the needs of deprived people and ones who have become unused for learning.)

Resources

1. All numbers from <https://www.hannover.de/Leben-in-der-Region-Hannover/Politik/Wahlen-Statistik/Statistikstellen-von-Stadt-und-Region/Statistikstelle-der-Landeshauptstadt-Hannover/Hannover-kompakt/Bev%C3%B6lkerung>, 06.01.2021
2. Printed Program VHS Hannover 2019/2020
3. <https://www.vhs-hannover.de/ueber-uns/leitbild.html>; 06.01.2021



VHS Chance works under the leadership of a headmaster (Dr. Susanne Kannenberg) and is divided in three sectors, each under a head of department:

1. Integration: Centre for Basic education, Program for migrants (German as foreign language, integration courses, courses for special target groups, integration guides) educational counselling.
2. School of second chance: Courses for people without school-leaving certificate.
3. Job and Career: Courses in IT, soft skills and accountancy for everybody, certification on system (IT and accountancy), training for employees in enterprises and of the municipality of Hannover, retraining for unemployed people, European projects.

A huge part of the provided training is a kind of formal education: school-leaving certificates, integration certificates, languages certificates “German as foreign language, accountancy certificates and last but not least the formal exams for completed apprenticeships are aims of the course. Only a couple of further education in the area of IT and partly German as foreign language are non-formal ones. The aim of VHS Chance is to provide education especially for marginalized people and to foster their integration and their welfare in a holistic approach.



VHS Chance is great! Its work is very important for the society. The VHS Chance gets on very responsible with the people and overtakes its social responsibility.

(Trainer for German as a foreign language)

That means in an idealized model:

Imagine, there is someone who is not able to write and read and his German is basic. So he starts in the Centre for basic education and learns reading, writing and improves his German. Then he continues in special language courses. In the next step he enters the school of second chance, gets his school leaving certificate and starts a retraining in Job and Career (“Chain of education”). The whole process is accompanied and supported by one of the counsellors.

In European projects, new methods were experienced and innovative approaches may be implemented.

2. VHS Chance wants adult education for all- 20% of Hannover's inhabitants have a foreign citizenship

2.1 The self-perception of VHS Chance

"We are committed to respect for human dignity, openness, dialogue and equal opportunities" is the central statement of the mission statement, which was developed in 2003 and revised in 2010. It is an important statement that illustrates VHS Chance's claim to provide education to all people in Hannover. But is that enough and what effect does this mission statement achieve? In the last 10 years a lot of things in adult education have been changing, but the mission statement not. In addition, an explicit diversity statement is missing. And fatally, most employees do not even know this mission statement.

According to the mission statement, VHS Chance presents itself as an open institution in the public, which invites all people to come. For example, the leaflet for retraining shows people with different cultural background, on the general printed program the cover shows pictures from people in different combinations (e.g. man and man, one dark, one pale). But on the other hand the institution publishes everything only in German.

2.2 Human resources

Partly, some staff, some teachers are speaking other languages because of their individual history. For reaching less mobile people courses are offered in certain parts of the town. At the moment, some projects are going on reaching those groups using their networks, their clubs. Exhibitions and events have been set up under topics related strongly to those target groups, involving network partners. Nevertheless, communication channels should be improved.

VHS Chance employ 69 contracted employees and more or less than 55 free-lancers. Furthermore, there is an administration for the whole Fachbereich (accountancy, IT, service and organisation, technical support, caretaker) employing 21 people.

The contracted employees are diverse in terms of age, gender, sexual orientation, cultural background. 10 of the 69 have migration background, but they are mostly teacher. In the management and the administrative staff, you will rarely find a migrant. For the free-lancer exact figures are not available. They are diverse in terms of age and gender, but there are only very few migrant trainers.

In the job-advertisement "male, female and diverse" are invited and people with migration background and disabled ones are asked specially to apply. It is pointed out that a photo is not wanted attached to the application documents. But nevertheless nor the ability to work in a diverse institution and to develop the diversity of the institution neither the intercultural competence is not asked or tested in the job-advertisement.



The only step taken is checking the CV, to see, if the person has professional experience with intercultural challenges and/or appropriate further training is compulsory. Indicators for this professional experience could be e.g. working with intercultural groups, in an intercultural organisation, with refugees. The indicators are not clearly defined.

A general barrier for migrants to applying for a job is that the legal frameworks of collective wage agreement (Tarifvertrag) and those of municipality of Hannover do not allow employing somebody without recognized qualification. So comparable abilities, qualifications and professional experience could not be acknowledged, the formal recognition, the expected professional degree are compulsory.

The institution offers flexible working conditions in the meaning, that the start and end of daily work is flexible. In addition, someone can apply for a mobile working place for enabling someone to work partly at home. However, halal food or a prayer room are not provided (but for instance vegetarian food is provided every day and that meets the requirements of most religions). The VHS Chance is a secular institution and any kind of religion has to be kept outside.

2.3 The networks

VHS Chance is networking with a wide range of organizations and bodies, busy in different areas. Under them are migrant organizations. VHS Chance is responsible for the “Hannover Diversity Network” (5) in cooperation with another institution. This network includes NGOs, adult education centres, public bodies and a few enterprises. Concretely VHS Chance cooperates with a refugee organisation (“Unter einem Dach”) (6) for organizing common events, and it is part of the network “ALBuM” (7), which has aimed to foster the entrepreneurship and the employability of migrants in origin and follows and cultural approach nowadays ALBuM includes Adult Education Centers and Turkish and Iranian organizations. In addition, cooperation with a Bulgarian association works very productive.

Especially for the training and education of migrants, VHS Chance cooperates with other adult education institutions in the way that participants will be forwarded to them if VHS Chance does not provide the right offer at right time. In this way they avoid that participants have to wait for their (language-) training.

However, the migrant organizations are not involved in recruitment campaigns. Nowadays, there is a high demand for courses and so VHS Chance does not organize any recruitment except publishing the program in printed and online version.

Resources

5. <https://www.vhs-hannover.de/aus-den-programmbereichen/projekte/hannoversches-diversity-netzwerk-hadi.html>; 07.01.2021
6. <https://unter-einem-dach.org>; 07.01.2021
7. <https://album-hannover.org/home>; 07.01.2021



2.4 Education

Teachers and trainers face usually very heterogeneous groups in their daily work. What is VHS Chance doing to support them and the students?

Special support for participants with difficulties in some specific subject is provided: additional lessons are provided; migrants are allowed to use a dictionary, peer-to-peer learning, tailor-made courses for different stages of knowledge and learning ability. VHS Chance provides support to teachers for handling intercultural conflicts. Training sessions for intercultural competences are organized for all the staff including the teachers. Furthermore, teachers are educated for carrying out intercultural social training with their students. But what is true for contracted teachers is not equally true for freelance trainers. They do not have the same opportunity to participate in those trainings.

The methodologies in the courses promote integration, for example in the long-term trainings the welcoming sessions are orientated on getting to know each other and coming together for establishing a collaborative learning environment. Learning sessions are organized in small heterogeneous groups; the participants are obliged to speak German in school for avoiding separated mother tongue related groups.



That we do not only teach them the subject matters. We are aware for the participants in a holistic way, included all the challenges of their integration!

(Trainer for accountancy)

2.5 Conclusion

The institution has a self-perception of openness for everybody. But it is only partly realised, e.g. no information in other language than German are provided, second language is not compulsory for staff in a higher position (e.g. department heads) and the job-advertisement could be improved for finding staff, who is able to foster the diversity of the institution and last but not least an explicit diversity statement is missing. And fatally, most employees do not even know the mission statement.



3.The Change and Learning Process - from an institution “well on the way” to an open institution with diverse staff

3.1 Aims and Approaches

"The requirements here are not only a change in the composition of the participants. At least as important is a (re)orientation of continuing education organizations with the social mandate to maintain democratic structures in society and to take a stand against discrimination and social inequality“ (8) - this is how Alisha M.B. Heinemann describes the demand on a continuing education institution committed to diversity and democracy.

VHS Chance is already well on the way to being such an open adult education institution committed to diversity. However, there is also a clear need for improvement and a process must be set in motion so that all employees deal with the topic in depth and are not satisfied with what has been achieved. In recent years, there has been a strong focus on "gender", "sexual identity" and "sexual orientation" in terms of diversity. It was therefore a good time to look again at cultural background, ethnicity and religion as important diversity criteria and to identify where changes and improvements are needed in order to live up to the propagated claim of being an open institution.

Based on the case study on VHS Chance, 4 important areas of change were identified: Revise the mission statement to include a diversity statement and communicate the mission statement throughout the facility. The mission statement is outdated, a diversity statement is missing, and most employees are not aware of it.

- Better support for freelance faculty as well, such as training in culturally sensitive teaching that is free and flexible for them.
- More efforts to acquire diverse staff and ensure that staff are cross-culturally competent and committed to the diversity of the institution.
- Improve multilingualism in the workforce.
- Multilingual information and outreach to better engage target audiences.

"The focus of current debates about institutional opening processes is on the key organizational areas of continuing education, such as personnel, program, and audience policies. The goal is to enable organizations to respond to the challenges of a migration society both at the structural and personnel level and in terms of content orientation and the composition of participants." (9)

Resources

8. Heinemann, Stoffels, Wachter; Erwachsenenbildung für die Migrationsgesellschaft, Bielefeld 2018, S. 13 translated in English

9. ibid, translated in english



The recommendations for VHS Chance are aimed precisely at this structural and personnel level in the long term. However, the goal of the change process in the medium term had to be that VHS Chance with its employees becomes aware again of its claim to be an institution also for foreigners and migrants and initiates the appropriate steps for improvement. This process should involve employees from all levels (administration and service, management, teaching staff) in order to find a broad consensus and achieve a deep identification with the goal of the diverse institution. This required not only raising awareness of diversity issues at the personal and organizational level in the adult education organization, but also concrete actions to promote inclusion and diversity at the organizational level and strengthening the personal competencies of adult education organization staff in dealing with diversity.

3.2 Activities:

3.2.1 Commitment with management

Even though this change process must not be organized "top-down", as this would not ensure that everyone identifies with the goal of the process, the first thing that must be done is to get management involved with the issue and get behind the goal. A change process requires activities, guidance and, above all, resources, which can only be provided by management.

In an initial meeting, the results of the case study and the resulting recommendations for change were presented to the head of VHS Chance. There was great willingness to implement the change process, and all concerns were considered equally important. Since the multilingualism of the website was tied to planned technical changes, this topic was postponed until later; the revision of the mission statement, the improvement of staff acquisition, and the support of freelance trainers were considered priorities.



Great importance was attached to the development of the mission statement in particular, as this entails a more in-depth examination by all employees of the topic of diversity and the question of what goals are being pursued with the educational work. As job advertisements and application procedures are due in the near future due to the retirement of several employees, this point was also considered to be dealt with immediately.

The next step was to present and discuss the results of the case study and the change processes in the three teams "Job and Career", "School for Adults" and "Integration" before developing a project plan. The human resources department should also be involved.

In addition, since VHS Chance is part of the Adult Education Department, the concerns had to be coordinated with the department's management.

3.2.2 Just Come up with a Plan!

And then everything changed, the Corona virus reached Germany, VHS Chance had to close down in the lockdown and work at least for the most part in the home office until further notice. Priorities shifted from one moment to the next.

Adult education had to be completely reorganized in this time of pandemic, online offerings had to be developed, technically implemented and administratively planned, teaching locations that were not hygiene-compliant had to be abandoned and new ones found. Conferences to discuss the mission statement were definitely out of the question. The agreed continuation of the project was put on hold for the time being.

Plans are good! But they must always be adapted to new realities, even if changes are not as drastic as required by the Corona pandemic.



In any case, I hope your plan takes shape, because the topic remains relevant.

Stakeholders motivate us in Corona-Times



Management commitment is an indispensable prerequisite for change processes

3.2.3 Restart with new priorities

Under the question of what is feasible under the changed conditions, new priorities for the first steps of the change process were agreed with the management of VHS Chance: Revising the mission statement remains important and unavoidable, but it will not be possible to implement it in the longer term until operations have returned to normal through and through. Improving job postings and application procedures are still on the agenda, as is offering freelance teachers intercultural training. The offer is to be an online course, as no face-to-face events are possible at the time and, moreover, in the long term this is a more flexible solution for freelance trainers. The management assures full support.

3.2.4 Implementation

Job-advertisement with regard to staff committed to diversity.

During the project period, three positions were filled in VHS Chance (1 Head of Department, 1 Teacher, 1 Clerk). While all job postings referenced the need for intercultural competency, this requirement was one of several. The importance of diversity for the institution had to be emphasized much more, so that it was clear to applicants that diverse people should apply and that diversity competence was an absolute necessity for the position.

As a first step, we looked at comparable job postings from other institutions only to find that we could not find any that matched our vision. So we would be breaking new ground. A draft text was created in collaboration with HR and submitted to various staff familiar with diversity and the project coach for feedback. The final version was submitted to the Adult Education Department and the higher-level Human Resources Department. In November 2020, the first position with this addition could be posted. Other departments at the state capital have adopted the wording.

Assessing intercultural competence in the job interview

As a matter of principle, job interviews at VHS Chance are based on a previously agreed, binding interview guideline that gives all applicants equal opportunities and ensures comparability. A formulated "horizon of expectations" is prepared by the relevant specialist and made available to the selection committee so that everyone knows what answers, what solutions to problems are to be expected. The interview is recorded, the protocol is later the basis for the selection. In addition to the relevant supervisors, a specialist, the staff council, and, if necessary, the disability representative and someone from the personnel office are also present at the selection. This means that there are also different perspectives on an applicant. Although this procedure limits flexibility in the application situation, it largely prevents discrimination.

Die Landeshauptstadt Hannover hat das Ziel, die Vielfalt der Bevölkerung auch in der Stadtverwaltung abzubilden. Sie erkennt damit Vielfalt als wichtigen Teil ihrer Unternehmenskultur an und ist bestrebt, ein offenes Arbeitsumfeld zu schaffen, das Menschen unabhängig von ihrer ethnischen, kulturellen und sozialen Herkunft, ihres Alters, ihrer Behinderung, ihrer Religion sowie ihrer sexuellen oder geschlechtlichen Identität gleiche Chancen bietet.

Wir bestärken Menschen mit einer Migrationsbiografie sich zu bewerben, da wir ihren Anteil in allen Bereichen und Ebenen erhöhen möchten.



In the three application procedures mentioned above, different strategies were used to assess intercultural or diversity competence. In all cases, the first step was to look for clues in the resume before the applicant was even selected for the interview.

Then, in the interview itself, there were different actions:

- In the interview guide, the applicant is asked how diversity and gender competencies relate to the position being sought.
- In each application process, the applicant is given a task to complete and present. This task tests, for example, the applicant's competence in communicating administrative procedures in a way that is appropriate to the target group, or the applicant's ability to communicate with the target group.
- The applicant is asked to consider how to resolve a conflict to the satisfaction of all parties involved, which addresses language barriers and different cultural customs in communication.

If required for the position, part of the interview will be conducted in a second language.

In the reflection with the DivCap coach, it was determined that questions alone are not sufficient to assess attitudes and competencies, but that it is necessary to see someone in action. In the future, tasks should be set in such a way that the result is presented in a role play between the applicant and an employee.



When creating the task, make sure that it has a strong diversity component but does not serve common stereotypes

3.3 What to be considered when developing the role-play

Cultures are systems of meaning and orientation, which consist of rules, values and norms and represent the basis of every community. Common definitions of culture include that it can refer not only to origin, but also to a society, organization or group. However, it can be seen that the term is predominantly equated with culture of origin. Thus, when people speak of "culture," they predominantly mean culture of origin, ethnicity or nationality.

The standardization of and focus on culture of origin is problematic, since it means that individuals are reduced to their nationality. Other important experiences, characteristics and imprints are left out. This one-sided view has the identity is strongly linked to a culture of origin.

The dynamic concept of culture, on the other hand, assumes that cultures are not closed containers, but are interrelated and changeable. People share many things in common, but belonging to a particular culture does not determine who we are as people. We belong to several cultural groups and are influenced by them.

Each person is part of numerous collectives that are, in principle, distinct social groups. Some groups are more important, some are more insignificant. All groups, however, shape an individual and provide social orientation. The groups need not be independent of each other, however. One can be part of different collectives that overlap. Collectives can therefore have different bases. This can be religion, gender, political orientation, origin of parents, language, hobbies, professions, place of residence, appearance and much more (11).

3.4 Lessons Learned

When formulating a diversity-oriented job advertisement, great care must be taken to choose the right words. Feedback from qualified employees should be sought. Beforehand, it is necessary to agree on what is meant by "diversity" and which aspects are important for the institution!

In large public institutions, these additions to the job advertisement must be confirmed by all relevant levels. This is tedious, but also creates a broad impact. The task and the corresponding role play must be planned very carefully.

On the one hand, diversity competencies should become visible; on the other hand, we must not serve clichés in the task! This balancing act is important.

There will always be internal discussions about whether this is really important.

Time must be taken here every time to point out the importance of diversity for an adult education institution and the personnel suitable in this context.

3.5 Good Practice Examples

In the Annex you can find three good practice examples:



Text for a job-advert to address diversity orientated staff and to present the institution in a diversity-open way



Interview guide for the assessment with focus on the diversity-skills of the interviewed person



Instructions for a roleplay for assessing the intercultural and communication competences in the assessment procedure.

Resources

11. DVV International | Bildungsbrücken bauen II. Lehr- und Lernmaterialien
119 Modul 2 - Dossiers



4. Diverse staff - a real benefit for adult education

4.1 Summary

At the beginning of the interviews for the case studies, the question was asked why the institution wanted to address the issue of diversity and what it hoped to gain from doing so.

Several interviewees gave their views on the topic.

Important motives are therefore on the one hand the social responsibility as an adult education institution to address all people and also migrants, on the other hand the direct benefit for the institution itself to better address new target groups and new participants and to strengthen the productive work in the teams.

It is a duty of VHS Chance with its social responsibility to support migrants in their process of integration. We have to empower them to step into the job-market.



(Teacher)

The question now arises at this point whether the measures implemented have served these goals and to what extent this can be determined.

Benefit for the institution from the advantages of diversity:
-Diverse teams means different experiences
-Different identification targets for participants or possible participants

(Manager)



"Different teams means different experiences". Addressing migrants more strongly in job advertisements, or even more broadly, addressing all diverse groups, and more closely examining attitudes toward diversity and experience in dealing with it, will certainly contribute to making the teams more diverse in the long term. The first results are visible: Three positions have been filled in recent weeks: 2 teachers and a team leader. All three selected applicants have a migration background (1 African, 1 Turkish, 1 Arab) and have proven to be competent in the application process also regarding the topic of diversity and interculturality. This leads to a workforce and also especially to teachers with whom participants from different backgrounds can identify and whom they can also regard as role models. If it leads to more diverse participants cannot be verified at this time, but the measure is clearly working toward this goal, but additional measures are compulsory.

Addressing new target groups: A new website with different language functions and a mission statement clearly formulated with diversity in mind are essential for this goal - both are being planned, but their impact cannot be evaluated at the moment.

Other measures, such as strengthening language skills and making it clear which language is spoken by whom, intercultural training for trainers, will also certainly contribute in the future to migrants feeling more addressed, for example, when they enter the facility and find someone who speaks their language or feel understood and well taken care of in the course and communicate this to their community. However, all of these effects cannot be evaluated at the moment; the facility has been closed for many months due to the Corona pandemic and is just beginning to cautiously reopen to visitors and participants.

What is obvious as a success of the project in the facility, however, is that actually already since the first discussion about the results of the case studies and the recommendations for change and improvement, the topic of "diversity" has become more focused and measures have been initiated that go beyond the recommendations. For example, at the department level, with the participation of VHS Chance, an Erasmus+ mobility project was successfully applied for to improve the language skills of staff and trainers. Unfortunately, due to Corona-related travel restrictions, the project could not start yet, results are not available. Another idea is being pursued, namely how to make employees' language skills visible while maintaining data protection. This shows that despite the immense challenges posed by the Corona pandemic, the importance of the diversity issue has been recognized and worked on as best as possible.

4.2 Lessons Learned

Initiating change processes in an adult education institution must be done with a high degree of flexibility in planning. Fluctuations in staff, management and especially freelancers constantly create new situations. In addition, the facility is highly dependent on its environment - only if the environment makes it possible for people to come to the facility can it work and function. If this is not possible for some reason, such as a pandemic and a corresponding lock-down, priorities are changed from one moment to the next, work processes are redefined, and staff are assigned other tasks. Project planning must therefore be flexible and able to react to such influences.

Regardless of which measure is used to start the change process, a certain momentum starts and the topic of "diversity" inevitably comes into focus and is increasingly widely discussed and dealt with. The importance is recognized by many and new approaches and ideas emerge beyond the planned measures. It is important that project planning incorporates and supports these.



The commitment of the management is indispensable for every change process. Only if the management is fully committed can resources be used for the change and the topic gains the necessary importance. It is not enough to make sure of this commitment at the beginning of the project; it must be constantly renewed in the process. This is an important task for a coach who accompanies the change.

The recruiting of diverse staff is essential for adult education with the aim of diversity and openness. Only if the institution has diverse staff can it address diverse participants and respond sensitively to the different requirements, attitudes and expectations. In addition, visible, diverse staff enables identification with the institution; participants feel that they are being addressed in a very different way.

Different perspectives on our work and in addition, sublime Discrimination would be identified and eliminated! People with really different background in the human resources foster a cooperative and balanced team-work!

Management about the benefit of DivCap



Enabling the experience: Moving forward instead of remaining at the same point is possible and satisfactory.

Trainer about the benefit of DivCap



An earlier way to diversify the workforce was so-called positive discrimination, which culminated in a statement made at the time as follows: "It doesn't matter what education she has or what she studied, the important thing is that it's a woman who has a migration background."

However, this approach not only fails to maintain the quality of the workforce, it is also incompatible with the requirements for filling positions, especially in the public sector.

The way forward, then, must be to increasingly invite people from immigrant backgrounds, for example, to apply for jobs and to present themselves convincingly as an employer committed to diversity. In addition to presenting itself to the public, e.g., through an appropriate mission statement and a corresponding visual presentation, this also includes appropriate practice in job advertisements and application procedures.

This process must go hand in hand with procedures for selecting personnel who have intercultural or diversity competencies.

These must be ascertained in the application process and validly determined in the interview. These two processes are therefore interlinked, since a diverse workforce is better able to critically examine application procedures than a homogeneous one, and secondly, appropriate calls for applications and selection processes can only be initiated and carried out if managers and HR managers have the appropriate competencies.

Another important factor for framework conditions in which diverse personnel can be acquired and work is the continuous training of employees and teachers/trainers in intercultural competence. Communication between people from different cultural backgrounds has many pitfalls that can lead to misunderstandings and ultimately impede

Here is an example from class, as it could have happened in the cooperation in the institution:

Ms. K. fled Syria and now lives in Germany. She is usually late for German class. The teacher says nothing about this, but is of course annoyed, but he wants to be culturally open and he thinks that punctuality is not taken so seriously in the Arab world. He thus avoids talking to Mrs. K. about why she is always late and whether this can be changed. Otherwise, he would have learned from her that she lives alone with two small children, whom she first has to take to kindergarten in the morning, but which does not open until 07:30. Since she does not have a car, she then has to take the underground to class and it is not possible to arrive in time for class to start. As in this case, the automatism of "cultural background" often prevents actual engagement with people and thus possible approaches to solutions.

4.3 What worked Well?

What could be done Better?

One strength of the change process at VHS Chance was, on the one hand, the great willingness of the staff to deal with the topic of "diversity" despite the more difficult conditions due to the Corona pandemic and, on the other hand, the existing experience with the topic.

Since a few employees have a migration background and courses are also offered for people with a migration background and, in recent years, increasingly for refugees, the topic is not new. In addition, across departments, Goal 5 for sustainable development of the 2030 Agenda "Gender Equality" was the focus of the work in 2019. This meant that experience in dealing with diversity was available and could be built on.

Change takes patience and time - we know that, but in reality it is difficult to endure and brings with it many problems. On the one hand, the change process took place within the framework of a scheduled project, so that results should also be available at a certain point in time. On the other hand, an adult education institution must constantly face current challenges and, if necessary, postpone activities that cannot be accomplished at the moment.

The external coach has only a weak position in this structure, he can only move as much as the management allows him to. Another problem with the "time" factor is that it also involves personnel changes during the process, and new personnel often set new priorities. One must be aware of these hurdles in the change process in an adult education institution and include them in the project planning.

At this point, it is once again important to secure the support of the management from the very beginning. The management, in turn, has the task of selecting a coach for this change process whom it trusts and trusts to be competent, because the coach gains many insights into the organization that must be treated confidentially and must under no circumstances be made accessible to the public or even to competing educational institutions. Without these detailed insights, however, change is not possible. In the case at hand, this was a given; the DivCap coach was accepted and enjoyed a high level of trust. It was assured that publications such as in the project results would only be made anonymously.

Assuring this from the beginning is an important prerequisite for confidential cooperation in change processes.

5. ANNEX - Good Practice Examples

5.1 Text of job-announcement in English

The Municipality of Hannover aims to reflect the diversity of the population in the city administration as well. It thus recognizes diversity as an important part of its corporate culture and strives to create an open working environment that offers equal opportunities to people regardless of their ethnic, cultural and social background, age, disability, religion and sexual or gender identity.

We encourage people with a migration biography to apply, as we want to increase their share in all areas and levels.



5.2 Interview Guide with Explanations

This guideline has been developed to assess someone who has applied for a leadership position in the adult education in Germany. It should be customized to the kind of institution, the country and the needs of the aspired function. It is an example for a guideline and should not be taken as a blueprint for an assessment procedure. Take out what you need!

Guideline Interview Assessment

Department: _____

Function: _____

Interviewer: _____

Name of Applicant: _____

Requirements, Tasks and Questions	Interview notes Situation / Behavior / Result Distribution of points based on this rating scale from 1 - 5
<p>Introduction Phase</p> <p>We have read your application documents carefully. Nevertheless, we would like to ask you to name and describe one main task that you have performed in your current job or, if applicable, in a previous job.</p> <p>What do you like most, most about your current job?</p> <p>Once you think about your current job - what would you like to do without in the context of the position you are seeking?</p> <p>If necessary, you can ask to map the current tasks on a scale of 1 -10. 1 means I don't like to do very much, 10 means I like to do very much.</p> <p>Through these questions, we can gain an impression of whether the applicant is able to name focal points from current work that are relevant to the desired position, whether there is a reflected attitude towards preferences, and how openly answers are given.</p>	<p>1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/></p>

5.2 Interview Guide with Explanations

Requirements, Tasks and Questions	Interview notes Situation / Behavior / Result Distribution of points based on this rating scale from 1 - 5
<p>Main Phase</p> <p>Please recall a situation in your professional life that was particularly challenging for you.</p> <p>If you have a situation present, we would first like to ask you to briefly and concisely describe this situation to us. Then I will ask you a few questions about it:</p> <p>How did you notice that you were facing a particular challenge? Please describe what you perceived, what clues did you recognize? Once you identified the challenge as such, what goal was associated with dealing with it? Who did you need, or who or what could you fall back on to achieve the desired goal?</p> <p>What was the result / outcome? Were you satisfied with the result? What did you learn for yourself from the situation? Would you act differently from today's perspective?</p> <p>This set of questions can be used to gain an impression of how the applicant reacts to challenges, but above all whether and how quickly he or she recognizes challenges as such. You learn something about the ability to proceed in a structured manner, possibly something about the ability to perceive conflict and the resources available to the applicant for conflict resolution. One also learns whether the applicant is able to present a challenge and how to overcome it in a structured way. One learns something about his/her conflict resolution strategies and about his/her ability to reflect.</p>	<p>1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/></p>

5.2 Interview Guide with Explanations

Requirements, Tasks and Questions	Interview notes Situation / Behavior / Result Distribution of points based on this rating scale from 1 - 5
<p>Imagine that you have started a project. Please describe very briefly what the project is about. We do not want to talk to you about the project as such, but would like to ask you to do the following: Describe for us what framework conditions you need in order to carry out the project successfully?</p> <p>Who would be responsible for creating what you see as the necessary framework?</p> <p>How would you put together the project group, or what would you look for in personnel acquisition?</p> <p>What could prevent the successful implementation of the project?</p> <p>What do you think: once a project has been started, does it have to be carried out?</p> <p><i>This can be used to find out whether the applicant is aware of his or her role and responsibility, whether he or she has a realistic and reflective attitude toward problems that arise in the context of a project, and whether he or she keeps diversity in mind when making personnel decisions.</i></p>	<p>1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Why do you think diversity competency is relevant to this position?</p> <p><i>Response Expectations: Knowledge of diversity; relevance in leadership role; relevance to the institution's PR.</i></p>	<p>1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/></p>

5.2 Interview Guide with Explanations

Requirements, Tasks and Questions	Interview notes Situation / Behavior / Result Distribution of points based on this rating scale from 1 - 5
<p>Presentation of prepared Task</p> <p>Please present the solution of the task, which we have given to you before this interview. If possible, present it in English, please.</p> <p><i>The task should be set in such a way that we learn something about the applicant's ability to comprehensively weigh up different aspects, to place them in context with one another and to present them in a way that is easy to follow. This also tells us whether the applicant has dealt with the complexity of the task or is aware of it. We also test the foreign language competence and the willingness to communicate in another language.</i></p>	<p>1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Ability to deal with a conflict</p> <p>Please imagine the following situation: As a leader in a meeting, you represent a point of view that you believe is very balanced and appropriate. A member of the discussion group represents an opposing point of view. How do you deal with the situation, what would be a possible solution from your point of view?</p> <p><i>This question allows us to find out whether there is an awareness of conflict in the context of the management function and whether the applicant has strategies for resolving conflicts.</i></p>	<p>1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/></p>

5.2 Interview Guide with Explanations

Requirements, Tasks and Questions	Interview notes Situation / Behavior / Result Distribution of points based on this rating scale from 1 - 5
<p>Role-play for assessing communication skills and intercultural competences</p> <p>Please imagine the following situation: "A married couple, who obviously have a migration background, demand an immediate interview with you. The husband insists on the immediate enrollment of his wife in a German course. He is highly agitated and complains that this is the third time he has gone to the facility to ask for a place in a course for his wife and that he cannot always take time off from work to finally bring this cumbersome registration procedure to a successful conclusion. He threatens to complain to the Mayor“.</p> <p>Please show us how you conduct the conversation as the responsible leader and with what result / with what feedback the couple leaves the conversation. What considerations led to your behavior?</p> <p><i>By observing the behavior and actions during the role play, we can learn something about the empathy and intercultural competence of the applicant. The partner in the role-play should be prepared by information about his role and the background.</i></p>	<p>1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Final Phase</p> <p>Suppose your current colleagues were here in the room right now. How would they respond to the question of what they value most about you?</p> <p>If your current colleagues or employees had the chance to change something about you. What would they want to change?</p> <p><i>Through these questions, we find out whether the applicant can see himself/herself from the perspective of his/her colleagues and co-workers. Does she/he find it difficult to answer them? How reflective / confident is she/he in dealing with her/his strengths and weaknesses?</i></p>	<p>1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/></p>

5.2 Interview Guide with Explanations

Requirements, Tasks and Questions	Interview notes Situation / Behavior / Result Distribution of points based on this rating scale from 1 - 5
Impressions from Interview Demonstrates a confident demeanour, appears calm and poised. Formulates in an open, approachable and addressee-orientated manner. Can convince communication partners. Engaged, identifies with the topics.	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
General Quality of application documents Previous employment reconciled with the diversity of the work area?	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>

5.2 Interview Guide with Explanations

Role-play for assessing Communication Skills and intercultural Competences

Description for the applicant:

You have to do a role-play now. Please imagine the following situation:

"A married couple, who obviously have a migration background, demand an immediate interview with you. The husband insists on the immediate enrollment of his wife in a German course. He is highly agitated and complains that this is the third time he has gone to the facility to ask for a place in a course for his wife and that he cannot always take time off from work to finally bring this cumbersome registration procedure to a successful conclusion. He threatens to complain to the Mayor".

Now you have to talk to the husband for solving the problem. The husband is coming in.

Role-play guide for the applicant's partner:

You play the husband in this role-play!

You have lived in Germany for 11 years, but have only ever spoken Turkish with your colleagues and neighbours, but you find your German language skills sufficient. Your wife finally came to Germany last year and is now supposed to take this German course. But she is usually at home with the children. Besides, I don't know who she is with in such a course. But it has to be done, so I went there in the evening after work to enrol her. It was closed. A few days later, I left work and went back and a woman said something like "no office hours" and something about documents. That's it, I said, that I wanted to see the boss. I can't keep leaving work and my wife can't do the enrolment alone. They only treat us like this because we are foreigners. I want the course for my wife immediately and they should apologize. I am really upset. Think yourself into this situation and react accordingly, but do not overreact in the conversation with the boss. You don't want too much trouble; you just want to get the course sorted out so that it's done.

Now you enter the room and talk with the applicant, who plays the boss.

Questions for Evaluation (Internal):

1. Did the applicant speak in appropriate language?
2. Did the applicant give the "husband" the opportunity to talk about himself and describe what happened?
3. Did the applicant respond to the "husband"?
4. Was the applicant able to de-escalate the situation?
5. Was the applicant able to develop a solution?

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