

TOPIC: HUMAN RIGHTS, INCLUSIVITY & ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES – MEMORANDUM

1. **Diversity** refers to the variety of people employed based on race, gender, age and disability.

All employees should be developed to improve personal performance, which will ultimately improve the performance of the whole business.

Diversity will lead to creative ideas which support problem solving.

Diversity can lead to conflict situations if not properly managed.

2. **Diversity issues and possible strategies**

Poverty

- Offer training to improve skills for better positions in the business
- Supply free working clothes
- Provide low priced meals at the canteen
- Employing people from different income levels
- Paying fair wages and salaries to all employees

Inequality

- Implement equal opportunity policies when appointing new staff.
- Equal opportunities should be considered when promoting staff.
- Implement an Employment Equity Plan.
- Treating employees equally and fairly.
- There should be no unfairness and discrimination.

Race

- Implement affirmative action policies as required by law.
- Employees must represent the country's demographics.
- This means that the businesses must employ people from different racial groups.
- No discrimination should be made based on skin colour.

Gender

- Male and female workers should be paid the same salary for equal work performed.
- All posts should be accessible to male and female workers.
- Targets may be set for gender employment.
- Males and females are entitled to equal treatment in the workplace.

Language

- A business may specify that all communication must be in one specific language only and the business would expect employees to have a certain level of fluency in that language.
- All business contracts should be in easy to understand language and should be available in the language of choice for the parties signing.
- It may sometimes be necessary to employ an interpreter so that everyone can fully understand what is being said in a meeting.
- to ensure that no one feels left out a common language for meetings and general communication should be used in the workplace

Age

- Promotions should not be linked to age, but rather to specific skills required.
- A business must not employ children aged 15 or younger.
- The age of permanent workers should vary from 18 – 65 to include all age groups.
- A business may employ a person who is older than the normal retirement age, provided that person is the most suitable candidate.
- Businesses must encourage older employees to help young employees to develop their potential.
- Young employees must be advised to respect and learn from older employees.
- Older employees may feel that younger employees lack experience to do certain tasks
- Businesses can use a mentorship system where a more experienced employee acts as a coach or mentor for an inexperienced employee.

Disability

- Provide employment opportunities for people with disabilities.
- Accommodate people with disabilities by providing facilities, e.g. ramps for wheelchairs.
- Ensure that workers with special needs do not feel excluded from workplace activities.
- Businesses should be well informed with how to deal with disabled employees.
- Policies and programmes should accommodate the needs of people with disabilities.
- Focus on the work performance of the disabled and not on the possible problems they may pose in the future.
- The Employment Equity Act encourages businesses to employ disabled people.
- Employers and employees must guard against showing prejudice towards disabled employees.
- Disabled people must receive equal treatment and equal access to opportunities.

Culture

- Be sensitive to special requirements for different cultural group, e.g. allow days off for cultural holidays.
- Cater for special food for specific cultural groups.

3. Benefits of a diverse workforce

Workplace diversity improves the ability of a business to solve problems.

Employees value each other diversity and learn to connect and communicate across lines of difference.

Diversity in the workforce improves moral and motivation.

Employees show more loyalty to the business because they feel respected.

Employees from different backgrounds can bring different perspectives to the business.

Businesses with a diverse workforce are more likely to have a good public image and attract more customers.

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5. Human rights

Privacy

The business should not provide personal information about employees to anyone.

Information on employees who have disclosed their HIV / Aids status or any other chronic illness must be kept confidential.

Respect / dignity

All employees must be treated with respect / dignity regardless of their socio – economic status.

Equity

Equal opportunities should be given to employees and there should be no discrimination on the basis of race, gender or disability.

Equal pay for work of equal value

Managers should ensure that no employee suffers because of discrimination.

Freedom of speech and expression

There should be open communication channels between management and employees.

Employees should not be punished for voicing their opinion.

Freedom of association

An employer may not refuse employees to join the trade union of their choice.

Employees have free choice of a trade, occupation or profession.

Every employee has the right to receive suitable training for positions at their workplace.

The right to protest

An employer may not discriminate against an employee who follows the correct procedure to strike.

Employers should respect an employee's right to take part in a legal strike as long as the industrial action is within the law.

Freedom of thought and religion

Employers cannot prevent an employee from practising his religion.

Employees should be allowed to observe their religious holidays.

Employees should be allowed to practise their religion without any fear.

6. ECONOMIC RIGHTS

- Employees are free from forced labour
- Employees are free to accept or choose work
- Employees have the right to fair wages or equal pay
- Employees have the right to reasonable limitations of working hours
- Employees have the right to safe and healthy working conditions
- Employees have the right to join or form a trade union
- Employees have the right to participate in a legal strike

7. SOCIAL RIGHTS

- Businesses should ensure that employees have access to health care or social security
- Businesses should provide opportunities for skills training or basic education
- Businesses should register their employees for UIF to provide for adequate protection in the event of unemployment or illness
- Businesses should encourage employees to participate in special events e.g. World Aids day
- Businesses should establish site clinics to give employees access to basic medical care

8. Ways to promote cultural rights in the workplace

- Provide the environment in which employees are free to use their own language when interacting with others during their free time.
- Encourage employees to participate in cultural activities.
- Allow employees to provide solutions to challenges from their own cultural perspective.
- Regular cultural information sessions will help employees to respect each other's culture in the workplace.
- Make provision for different cultures, such as food served in the canteen/entertainment at staff functions.
- Employ people from various cultural backgrounds.
- Employees should be trained on cultural tolerance.

Implications of equality, respect and dignity for businesses

- Businesses should treat all their employees equally, regardless of their race, colour, age, gender, disability.
- All workers should have access to equal opportunities/positions/ resources.
- Employers and employees need to comply with legislation with regard to equal opportunities/human rights in the workplace.
- Businesses should develop equity programmes / promote strategies to ensure that all employees are treated equally regardless of status/rank/power.
- Mission statement should include values of equality/respect.
- Business policies should include issues such as diversity/ discrimination/harassment.
- Employers should respond swiftly and fairly to reported incidents of discrimination in the workplace.
- Ensure that employees work in an environment that is conducive to fairness / free from embarrassment.
- Tasks should be given respectfully and allow the recipient/employee to have a say in the manner in which the task should be performed.
- Treat workers with respect/dignity by recognising work well done.