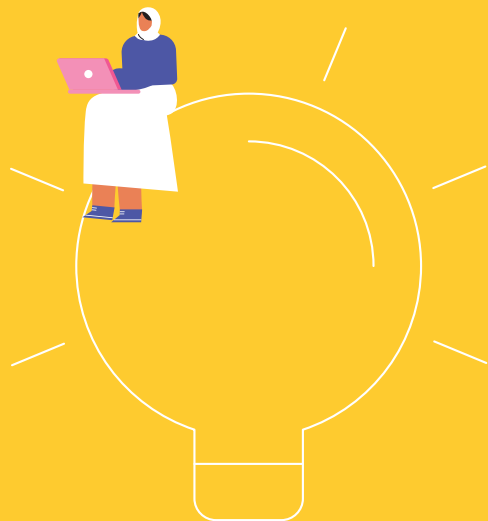


A Practical Guide for Cultivating Ethnic Inclusion in Talent Development



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Editor's Note

In this diverse Hong Kong society, we are daily witnesses to the collaborative spirit that brings together people from various ethnicities and backgrounds. As a city with a diverse population, we believe that ethnic inclusion is not just an idea but a practice, a collective effort, and a co-creation.

The birth of "**A Practical Guide for Cultivating Ethnic Inclusion in Talent Development**" is a milestone in our pursuit of an inclusive society. This Guide signifies the impactful outcomes from different perspectives united in a co-creation journey.

Throughout this co-creation journey, we have been privileged to garner support and participation from various stakeholders, including ethnically inclusive employers and ethnically diverse employees from organisations who shared real-life case studies in focus groups, as well as the validation working group that helped review the Guide. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Mr. Lo Kai Chung, Assistant Lecturer in the Department of Social Work and Social Administration at the University of Hong Kong, and the Good Lab team for their partnership with us, The Hong Kong Council of Social Service. Their dedication and insights were instrumental in shaping this Guide, providing pragmatic tools and knowledge for everyone.

We recognize the multitude of challenges faced by individuals of ethnically diverse backgrounds, such as language barriers, cultural differences, and limited employment opportunities. Yet, our vision is unwavering: we advocate for a society where equality of opportunity and mutual respect are afforded to all, irrespective of ethnicity or heritage.

This Guide is designed as a practical reference to empower individuals from varied ethnic backgrounds to navigate hurdles, assimilate proactively into the fabric of Hong Kong society, and advance their professional skills and aspirations. Embracing the ethos of co-creation, we are committed to fostering a more inclusive and fair community.

Finally, we hope that this Guide can serve as an inspiring and empowering tool to assist all friends from diverse ethnic backgrounds who strive to live and work in Hong Kong. Through concerted efforts and shared understanding, we endeavor to co-create an inclusive Hong Kong society where every dream and potential is within reach.

Foreword

Mr. Chua Hoi Wai

Chief Executive

The Hong Kong Council of Social Service

The 2021 Census revealed that approximately 620,000 ethnic minorities made their home in Hong Kong, with over 70% of them aged between 25 and 54. This demographic represents a valuable asset of the Hong Kong workforce. However, cultural differences and various other factors can deter employers from hiring ethnic minorities.

To address this challenge, the Hong Kong Council of Social Service initiated the Professional Traineeship Programme for Ethnic Minorities, which was funded by the Anti-Epidemic Fund of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. The primary aim of this programme was to nurture a new generation of ethnic minority professionals within the social service and business sectors.

Between September 2022 and August 2023, the programme successfully integrated 36 Ethnic Minority trainees into key sectors, including social service, social enterprise, IT, banking, and public transportation. Following a year-long programme, 26 of our trainees chose to remain, reflecting an impressive retention rate of 72%. Furthermore, more than 90% of employers committed to employing ethnic minority after the programme. This commitment will substantially boost diversity in their workplaces, leading to overwhelmingly positive results.

This achievement is a testament to the determination and resilience of our young professionals. To build on this momentum, the HKCSS commissioned “Good Lab” to conduct focus groups with traineeship supervisors and trainees. The aim was to draw insights from their year-long collaborative experience and harness this collective wisdom to produce “A Practical Guide for Cultivating Ethnic Inclusion in Talent Development”. We anticipate that this Guide will serve as a practical tool for both ethnic minority employees and mainstream inclusive employers to foster effective collaboration.

In terms of policy development, we are glad that, after 2 years' continuous efforts, the Government announced in the 2023 Policy Address the extension of the “Ethnic Minority District Ambassador Scheme” for 3 years, coupled with enhanced recruitment and outreach efforts to encourage job applications from Ethnic Minorities. These government initiatives lead by example, inspiring other industries to emulate these practices and creating a ripple effect in the society.

Taking this Practical Guide as the starting point, we aspire to a future where equal opportunities and workplace inclusivity will be the norm, enabling all residents to flourish in Hong Kong. Hong Kong will continue to shine as a beacon of ethnic diversity and cultural integration. This is the Hong Kong we envision – a city where everyone, regardless of their ethnic background, can call home and live their dreams.



Evidence-based DEEPA model analysis in workplace inclusivity for EM talent development

Mr. Lo Kai Chung

Assistant Lecturer (Practice Consultant)
Department of Social Work and Social Administration
The University of Hong Kong

In many developed cities worldwide, promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in the workplace has become crucial for creating a more diverse workforce and fostering a fair work environment. Hong Kong, a multicultural city that values cross-cultural assets, has a workforce comprising individuals from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. In light of this, the “Professional Traineeship Programme for Ethnic Minorities” project, organized by The Hong Kong Council of Social Service, aims to address the importance of instigating a paradigm shift for both non-governmental organisations and commercial sectors in cultivating a model of localized practice for workplace inclusivity and ethnically diverse talent development. As the project consultant, I have adopted the **DEEPA** model, which leverages local experience during the project’s preparation, implementation, and evaluation stages.



The **DEEPA** model encompasses key elements essential for cultivating an inclusive work environment suitable for the Hong Kong situation. It aligns with the recommendations outlined in the Practical Guide of the four stages of the Journey: Preparation, Nurturing, Enhancement, and Sustainability. The following diagram illustrates this model:

Preparation (Setting the Foundation)

Diversity-enhancing conditions

- Multicultural norms
- Multicultural practices
- Mainstream tolerance

Nurturing (Building Effective Relationships)

Ethnic integration norms at work

- Ethnic vitality
- Integration norms at work
- Integration

Enhancement (Deepening the Collaboration)

Employee-Mentor-Organisation attitudes and Performance

- Subjective work success
- Organisational commitment
- Job satisfaction

Sustainability (Establishing the Norm)

An ecosystems approach

- Networks across multicultural employees and organisations
- Organisation-community relations
- Inclusive Welfare-to-work policies

Under the **DEEPA** model, four building blocks serve as the foundation for cultivating an ecosystem of inclusivity in the workplace and society. These building blocks aim to support multicultural employees, inclusive employers, and various stakeholders in addressing the concerns of ethnically diverse multicultural employees and local Chinese inclusive employers throughout different stages of fostering inclusive workplaces. The details of each domain are as follows:

Diversity-enhancing conditions

Multicultural norms refer here to rules and codes of conduct that emphasize acknowledgement, respect and appreciation of cultural differences in the workplace (e.g. the majority of members in the organisation believe that people from different ethnic backgrounds should be respected).

Multicultural practices refer to the actual co-employee behaviours vis-à-vis diversity in the workplace (e.g. the majority of members in the organisation respect people from different ethnic backgrounds).

Mainstream tolerance refers to the condition of not being uncomfortable with others' existences about different languages, gender, religions, beliefs and attitudes.

Ethnic integration norms at work

Ethnic vitality refers to ethnic institutions supporting the diversity process, such as the availability of places of worship, shops, recreational opportunities and educational resources for specific ethnic groups.

Integration norms at work refer to the pressure or expectation from ethnic members to retain one's culture but also to participate in and adopt the workplace culture.

Integration orientation refers to an immigrant's preference to maintain his own culture and participate in the mainstream culture.

Employee-Mentor-Organisation Attitudes and Performance

Subjective work success refers to the multicultural employees' perception that they meet and exceed standards and perform well at work.

Organisational commitment refers to its impact on the inclusiveness of the organisational culture.

Job satisfaction refers to perceived organisational support signals to multicultural employees that the organisation meets their needs.

An ecosystems approach

Networks across multicultural employees and organisations: formally and informally build communication channels for promoting workplace integration.

Organisation-community relations identify community needs for inclusion, connect with community leaders and action groups, plan appropriate programs and monitor the organisation's implementation.

Inclusive welfare-to-work policy advocates for workplace inclusion in views of the change of governmental policy and resource implications.

The term "**DEEPA**" in India carries a profound meaning as it symbolizes "light and lamp," representing enlightenment and illumination. We firmly assert that the application of the **DEEPA** model and Practical Guide has the potential to foster a bright future that embraces multicultural capital within society. In addition, we would like to acknowledge and express our gratitude to Dr Leon T.B. Jackson from the North West University of South Africa for his invaluable contributions in proposing the conceptual framework and designing the assessment for the questionnaire survey. We deeply appreciate his significant input.

More details of DEEPA



*Findings of DEEPA
model analysis*



*DEEPA Questionnaire in workplace
inclusivity for EM talent development*

Mr. Warren Luk

Chief Executive Officer
Good Lab

In the heart of every vibrant city lies a tapestry of cultures, each contributing its unique threads to the societal fabric. Hong Kong, a bustling cosmopolitan city, is no exception. Yet, despite our ethnic diversity, there remains room for growth in fostering cultural inclusivity in our workplaces. To address this, we present a “**Practical Guide**” – the fruit of co-creation between employers, multicultural employees, and Diversity & Inclusion experts, facilitated by Good Lab in partnership with the Hong Kong Council of Social Service.

This Practical Guide isn't a rulebook to be rigidly adhered to, but a guideline to assist you in navigating the multifaceted landscape of diversity. More than just a manual, it's a practical resource, rich with real-world examples and actionable tips designed to help you foster a culturally inclusive workplace.

Building an inclusive workplace is a journey, not merely a destination. It's an ongoing process of **co-creation** where every stakeholder plays a vital role, including employers, employees, colleagues, and even the sector at large. True commitment to workplace inclusivity covers every aspect of the employment lifecycle—from the moment of hiring and welcoming new staff, to ongoing engagement and development opportunities for multicultural team members.

The journey begins with the **Preparation** stage, where an inclusive recruitment process lays the foundation for cultivating an inclusive work environment. This process engenders awareness of cultural nuances and fosters mutual understanding between the employer and prospective employees. Clear expectations and proactive communication are key to mitigating any potential misunderstandings that could emerge later in the journey. Subsequently, the **Nurturing** stage places an emphasis on fostering an atmosphere of warmth and mutual respect during onboarding. This stage initiates the development of trusted relationships among the employer, multicultural employees, and their co-workers. It's a time to sow the seeds of empowerment and start nurturing multicultural talents with empathy and care.

The **Enhancement** stage focuses on boosting co-workers' cultural competence and establishing robust internal systems. This, in turn, strengthens the organisation's culture of inclusion and paves the way to unleash the full potential of multicultural employees. Building communities that transcend individuals, teams, and ethnicities is crucial at this stage in overcoming cultural barriers and encouraging enduring support and collaboration.

Beyond these stages, we recognise the importance of movement building. The **Sustainability** stage involves connecting diverse ethnic groups, varied organisations, and distinct professions to collectively learn best practices and co-create a sustainable ecosystem that promotes cultural inclusivity in the workplace beyond the boundaries of organisations and sectors.

We acknowledge that our starting points on the path to workplace inclusivity may differ. Nonetheless, the journey towards a more inclusive society needs your participation. Start small by co-creating tailored practices involving the employer, multicultural employees, and their colleagues, then progressively establish communities and systems within your organisation. From there, engage in co-learning with other organisations and professions, breaking the sectoral confines along the way.

As we embark on this journey, let's remember that inclusivity is a continuous endeavour, not a one-off project. It requires ongoing effort, iterative improvement, and the collective will of everyone. So, let's step forward together, each of us playing our part in transforming our workplaces into dynamic arenas of cultural inclusivity, further enriching the vibrant tapestry that is Hong Kong.

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About This Practical Guide

1 This Practical Guide serves as a toolkit for creating an inclusive workplace in Hong Kong. It presents consolidated insights as well as real-life examples from a co-creative research process between The Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS)'s Professional Traineeship Programme for the Ethnic Minorities and Good Lab. This Practical Guide aims to promote cultural sensitivity as well as appreciation in a multicultural workplace, and encourage inclusive employers to practise as well as celebrate diversity and inclusion on all fronts. It is also hoped that this Practical Guide would boost the confidence of multicultural employees and allow them to thrive in the workplace.

Ethnically Inclusive Employers (as referenced in this Practical Guide)

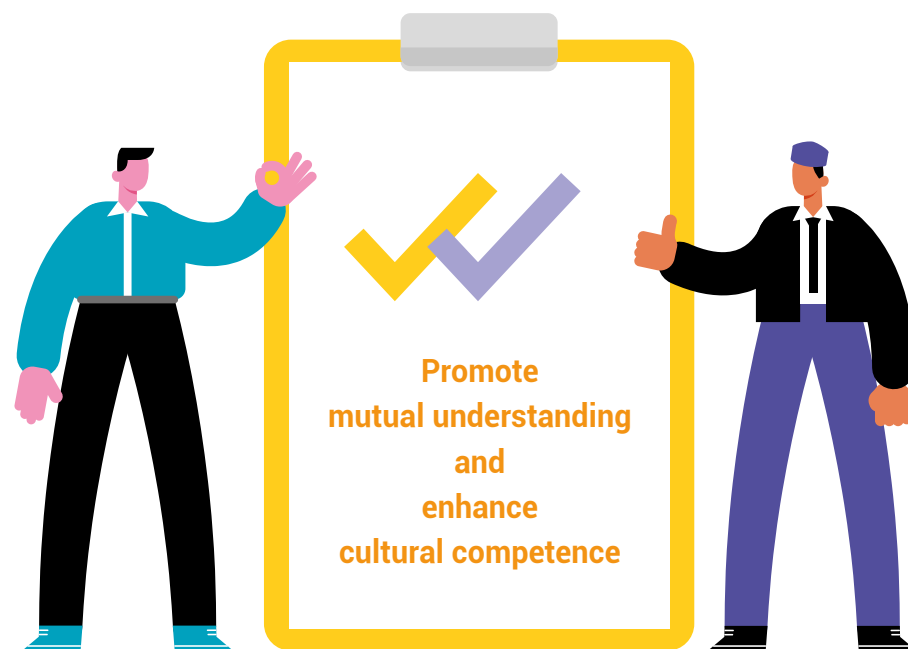
- Anyone who is new to this journey of hiring and building a team with members of ethnic minorities
- Person working in middle and senior management at an organisation, or professional working in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), Human Resources (HR), Talent Acquisition, Training & Development, Recruitment, and related fields
- Anyone who is keen to learn more about building a multicultural workplace

Non-Chinese Speaking / Multicultural Employees (as referenced in this Practical Guide)

- Members of ethnic minorities who are seeking mainstream jobs in Hong Kong
- Multicultural graduates from local schools or with overseas education
- Any new joiner in a multicultural workplace

2 The content has been organized according to the four stages for cultivating multicultural employees, including 1. Preparation, 2. Nurturing, 3. Enhancement, 4. Sustainability. Each stage discusses the same or similar topics from the perspectives of **ethnically inclusive employers** and **multicultural employees** in parallel. Such an approach allows readers to easily navigate through some key concerns across the four multicultural employment stages, while understanding the similarities or gaps in between.

3 The primary focus of this Practical Guide is to promote mutual understanding between and enhance cultural competence of inclusive employers and multicultural employees. It covers day-to-day interactions in the workplace, but also extends to personal and career development, community engagement and empowerment, and beyond. Mindset and behaviour change cannot happen overnight – but it is hoped that this Practical Guide would serve as a conversation starter and foundation for multi-pronged efforts in cultivating a thriving multicultural workplace.



Introduction

Think of cultivating ethnic inclusion in talent development as a block building process with four phases. The journey begins with resource mapping as well as alignment at an individual and organisational level; it would then gradually extend into reshaping the ecosystem and hopefully, culminate a paradigm shift in Hong Kong. Such a complex transformation would take time and collaborative efforts to materialise – therefore, the four-phase process should be thought of as an iterative one, rather than a linear one.

1

- ⚙️ Hardware
- 💻 Software

At the start, both ethnically inclusive employers and prospective multicultural employees would gather and examine the resources they have in hand and identify the missing or extra pieces. Some groundwork needs to be undertaken to develop constructive communication channels as well as understanding. This toolkit will dive deeper into the “hardware” and the “software” necessary for creating a positive environment.

First Stage



2

- 🌟 Best Practices
- 📋 Aligning Expectations


The second phase begins at the start of employment, just like in a block-building process when both sides get to work. This Practical Guide showcases some of the best practices that can be adopted during the recruitment stage and through the on-boarding and probation period. This stage involves a much deeper level of cross-cultural understanding and communication, both internally within the organisation and externally with multicultural job seekers. The first encounter, which is normally a job interview, serves as a critical point for establishing mutual respect and laying a healthy foundation for trust.

Just as adjustments take place in the building process, both ethnically inclusive employers and multicultural employees also need time and conscious efforts to adapt to a new environment. Aligning expectations right from the beginning and continuously throughout the process helps iron out surprises and misunderstandings. Trial and error is inevitable at this stage and beyond – what matters most is how all stakeholders learn mistakes and grow together.

Second Stage



3

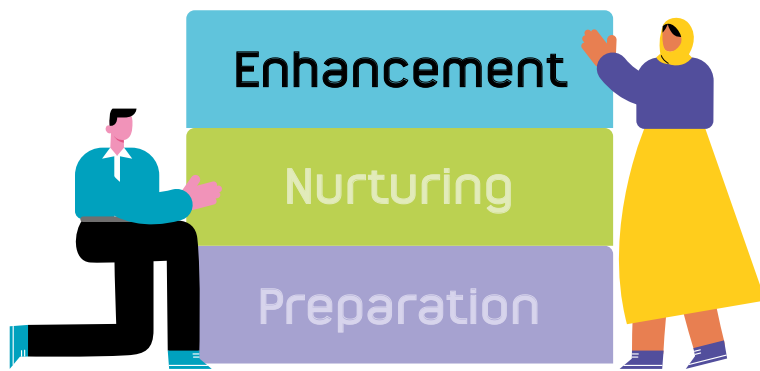
 Cultural Iceberg

 Growth Mindset

Entering the third stage, both ethnically inclusive employers and multicultural employees work to build upon the foundation from earlier stages. The need for adjustment would persist and friction might still arise, but all parties would already have some basic tools to address such challenges and be equipped with new lens to understand differences. Here the concept of the Cultural Iceberg is introduced to guide all parties to delve deeper into the "why" behind differences as they navigate to reconcile them.

It is important for both inclusive employer and multicultural employees to stay open-minded and practise a growth mindset as this journey continues. Exchanging productive feedback and celebrating milestones would help cheer each other along. On the contrary, it also makes sense to remove some blocks and build it in an alternative way, sometimes with the support of peers and external organisations.

Third Stage



4

 Changemakers

 Co-creating Solutions

The final stage of the process is to achieve sustainability. Good practices should be shared with the wider community and replicated at a larger scale. While both ethnically inclusive employers and multicultural employees have the know-how and confidence to continue this journey, they have also become changemakers in sowing the seeds for diversity and inclusion in the local workplace. As champions, they bring in actors and leverage resources across sectors in co-creating solutions in driving systemic change. This marks the end of the block-building process, but also the beginning of a much longer journey.

Fourth Stage



Preparation

(Setting the Foundation)



Establishing a common ground is crucial as ethnically inclusive employers and multicultural employees embark on this journey together. This involves understanding the value of cultivating ethnic inclusion in talent development as well as identifying the people aboard the process. Alignment of such will serve as a healthy foundation for interpersonal and professional relationships.

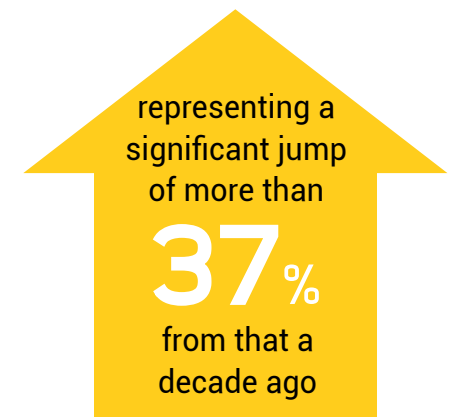
1.1 WHO are Ethnic Minorities?

Hong Kong is a largely homogenous society with ethnic Chinese making up almost 92% of the population.

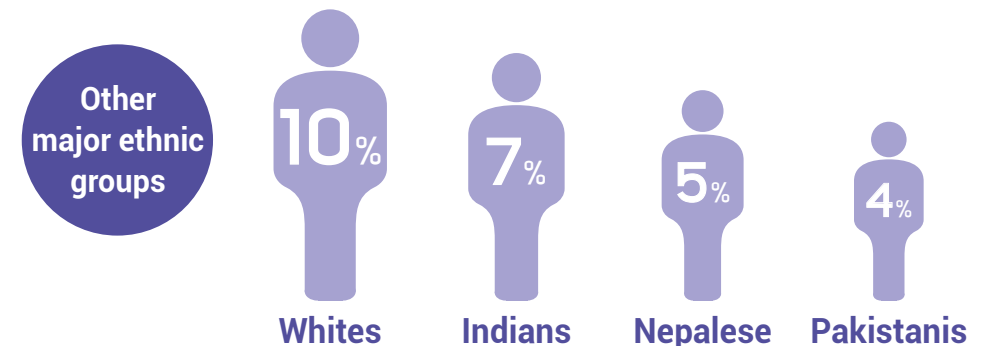
According to the 2021 Population Census, there was about

620,000

non-Chinese (including foreign domestic helpers resided in Hong Kong)

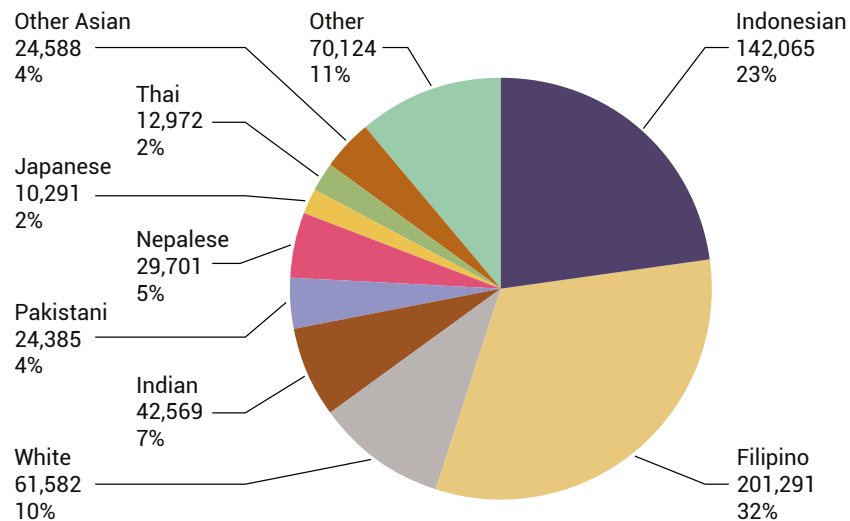


Excluding **Filipinos** and **Indonesians**, the two largest ethnic groups with the majority of them being foreign domestic helpers working in the city.



The Demographics of Ethnic Groups in Hong Kong 2021 Population Census

Source: Race Relations Unit, Home Affairs Department of HKSAR



Members of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong refer to people of non-Chinese ethnicity in broader terms. However, for the purpose and context of this Practical Guide, ethnic minorities refer to non-Chinese especially of South and Southeast Asian descent; White/Caucasian people and foreign domestic helpers are not covered here. In Hong Kong, ethnic minorities groups remain marginalised in society and underrepresented in the workplace. The appropriate way to address them would be multicultural employees, non-Chinese groups, or communities of colours.

These communities also present an untapped talent pool. The non-Chinese population is growing rapidly in Hong Kong, especially with the young generation. The number of non-Chinese youths increased by over 30% (from 55,371 in 2011 to 75,483 in 2021) in the past 10 years; a total of 20,023 aged 15 and over were enrolled in full-time courses in higher educational institutions in Hong Kong, constituting 5% of the whole population.



1.2 WHY Hire Multicultural Employees?

A majority of non-Chinese consider Hong Kong their home. In fact, many of them were born and raised in the city, some of which have lived here for generations already. They are highly motivated to develop a career here and deserve equal opportunities to thrive personally as well as professionally.

Diversity is the way forward. Studies have shown that cultural diversity in the workplace promotes creativity and drives innovation by bringing together different talents and viewpoints. Organisations that embrace diversity and inclusion are also valued more by multicultural employees, and have seen lower staff turnover rates.

1.3 HOW might We Cultivate a Workplace with Diversity & Inclusion?

While the importance of a culturally diverse and inclusive workplace is evident, having the right mentality and know-how would be crucial to creating one.

In this Practical Guide, the four phases of constructing a diverse work environment are annotated with the perspectives from three multicultural employees who are beginning their inclusive employment journeys at local organisations.

Hi everyone, my name is Sarika. I'm locally born in Hong Kong. I am excited to join a local company as a Programme Officer this coming year!

I have a strong sense of belonging to the city. I don't have much working experience yet, but I believe with hard work and determination, I can achieve anything!

Programme Officer



Hi, my name is Zoya and I'm 25 years old. I've been living in Hong Kong since I was 10. I'm married and have two wonderful children who are 5 and 2 now. I'm excited to be the Communication Officer in an NGO providing social services to local youth.

As a mother, family is always my top commitment. I will try my best to balance my responsibilities both at home and work, and to make sure I can take care of my children after work. I am excited to start my job and getting to know my colleagues more!



Hey, my name is Khaan and I'm 24 years old. As the eldest son in my family, I feel a strong sense of responsibility to take care of my family and loved ones. I enjoy meeting people from all walks of life and ready to dive into some new experiences!

I was in food delivery before, and I'm still figuring out what I want to do long term as my career. Through this internship program, I have the opportunity to work in a food trading company. Excited to begin soon!

Creating a **multicultural workplace** where everyone can thrive requires efforts from both sides, inclusive employers and multicultural employees. The way to approach it is broken down into two layers: the more tangible “**hardware**”, and more importantly, the intangible “**software**”.

For inclusive employers, “hardware” refers to the removal of known diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). It could include putting measures in place to bridge the language gap as well as to raise DEI awareness and facilitate conversations within the organisation.

From multicultural employees, “hardware” refers to avenues taken to integrate into the workplace and develop professionally, such as building capacities in resume writing, interview skills, and networking.

Above all, for both inclusive employers and multicultural employees, “software” is about developing cultural competence within oneself and cultural sensitivity towards others, both of which would contribute to a positive and inclusive workplace.

Table 1 (p.28) shows a summary of hardware and software measures which both inclusive employers and multicultural employees should be aware of, especially during the pre-employment stage.

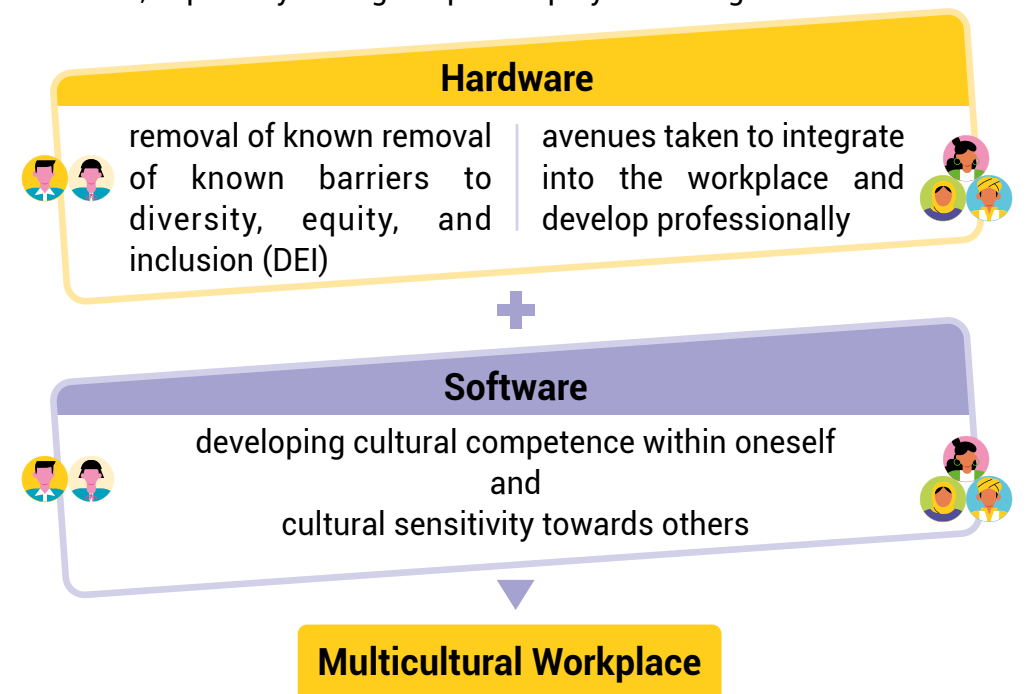


Table 1



Ethnically Inclusive Employers

Hardware Measures

Removing Language Barriers

- For local organisations that use Cantonese and written Chinese as the main medium of communication, the first step to **remove language barriers is to introduce the necessary hardware in place**. Examples of such are making company materials bilingual such as HR policies, staff manuals, job application kits, and introducing accessibility features such as the option of English settings in computers.
- Staff across levels should be **prepared to speak English** in some day-to-day communication and help with simple translation where needed, though some multicultural employees can actually speak fluent to native level Cantonese.
- The languages multicultural employees speak vary not just depending on ethnicity, but also their education and backgrounds. The majority of them can communicate fluently in English while some of them may also speak fluent to native-level Cantonese. Some of them are also able to read and write Traditional Chinese if they have studied in local schools.



Organisation Brand Building

- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)** is a lot more than just a company statement on the website. Organisations, especially its leadership and senior management, should consistently advocate for it across all levels and more importantly introduce concrete measures that promote it.
- Putting words into actions is one of the best ways to demonstrate company values and create a positive image for the brand.



Multicultural Employees

Hardware Measures

Building Language Capabilities



Courses for Ethnic Minorities provided by Employees Retraining Board

- **“Opportunities present themselves to those who are prepared.”** Multicultural employees, whether before or after joining an organisation, should always seek opportunities to acquire capabilities and practise them. Language and cultural differences are not insurmountable challenges – successful job-seeking is also about suitability in terms of skill sets and personality, possession of a growth mindset as well as positive attitudes.



- **Technology offers great resources for career development.** From YouTube to ChatGPT, one can make use of these platforms and tools to brush up language abilities, gain understanding of different jobs and industries, and prepare oneself for work in general.
- **Friendly gestures in communication and integration are highly valued.** That could include learning basic Cantonese and being proactive in using it in the workplace. There is no need for perfection – the key is to show sincerity and eagerness to learn and progress.

Personal Brand Building



CV 360 User Guidelines



Clap CV 360

- **Personal branding** is a crucial part of career development nowadays. The “hardware” refers to materials usually needed in job applications and employment. They help make a positive impression, especially to one’s initial point of contact with an organisation such as the recruiter.
- **A resume is essential to job-seeking.** It should be well formatted in English. A Chinese name is optional. The resume shall reflect all relevant work experience – be it a part-time job, school project, or voluntary work. The key message is to demonstrate the soft skills, or competencies, valuable for the inclusive employer.
- **A LinkedIn profile** is helpful for job search and networking, especially for office-based positions.



Ethnically Inclusive Employers

Software Measures

Building Cultural Competence



Ethnic Minorities
Service Providers in
Hong Kong
(Source: HKCSS
website)

- **Cultural competence refers to having the right mentality, attitudes, and expectations for working together in a multicultural environment.**
- Organisational leaders should take the initiative to demonstrate cultural sensitivity towards any differences there might be. They can do so by encouraging mutual understanding, open communication, and reasonable adjustments within the organisation. For example, Table 2 (p.32) below highlights the three more prevalent religions among the South Asian communities in Hong Kong, as well as what inclusive employers could do to show respect for cultural traditions and accommodate multicultural employees' needs that might arise.



- **Withholding presumptions is imperative.** It is important to communicate with and seek clarification from one another, including multicultural employees, as needs and preferences are often personal. Multicultural employees appreciate inclusive employers for being empathetic and considerate under special circumstances, but without being labelled or stigmatised. This is how a trusting relationship begins to form.
- It is helpful for existing members of an organisation to **interact with multicultural groups outside of work to gain at least a basic level of cultural competence.** Partnering with NGOs in community outreach would be best for an organisation new to activities of such nature. There are also plenty of resources such as training offered online or by institutions to build awareness within the organisation, pre- and post- employment.



Multicultural Employees

Software Measures

Building Cultural Competence



LinkedIn

- It is equally important for multicultural employees to bring with them a **growth mindset** already in the job-seeking stage, demonstrating a sincere willingness to become an engaged member of a multicultural workplace.
- **Research on the industry as well as the prospective organisation** is highly appreciated by inclusive employers.
- Integration into the job market in Hong Kong is easier with active participation in career workshops, recruitment fairs, as well as networking with industry peers and experts.
- **Online career resources** such as JobsDB, LinkedIn, Glassdoor, social media, and podcasts could come handy for job search. Many local community organisations also provide career & employment support.
- **Widening one's social circle** is helpful for starting a career in Hong Kong, but also other aspects of everyday life. Get active by participating in activities organised by NGOs, or interest groups like sports, arts, music, and volunteering.



Table 2

Religions among South Asian Communities in Hong Kong

Hinduism

Hinduism is one of the oldest religions in the world. Today, Hinduism has become the third-largest religion worldwide with more than 1 billion followers. Most Hindus, roughly 94 percent, live in India.

Encompassing a range of beliefs and practices, Hinduism is unique in the large number of gods and scriptures followers worship. Hindus practise a wide variety of traditions and celebrate various holidays throughout the year; however, it is important to note that traditions and customs can vary from one Hindu community to another.

★ Festival

Diwali – The festival of lights

Diwali, or Dipawali, is one of the biggest and most important holidays celebrated in India. It usually falls in October or November, and the celebrations last for 5 days. The festival gets its name from the row (avali) of clay lamps (deepa) that Indians light outside their homes to symbolise the inner light that protects from spiritual darkness. More details about Diwali in Appendix 1 (p.98).



Holi – Festival of colours, love and spring

Holi is a festival to celebrate the arrival of spring and the end of winter. It symbolises the triumph of good over evil. It is celebrated in March, corresponding to the Hindu calendar month of Phalgun. People throw coloured powder and water balloons at one another to mark such a joyous occasion.



📁 Workplace Implications

Concerns around leave applications

It is a common practice for multicultural employees to take multiple vacation days, or an extended leave of absence, for important festivals like Diwali. Some of them choose to return home for family reunions, just like how Chinese celebrate Lunar New Year.

Inclusive employers should consider offering greater flexibility for leave requests and work arrangements. At the same time, both inclusive employers and multicultural employees should have an open dialogue about it. This discussion is best initiated during the pre-employment stage for mutual understanding and expectations alignment.

In addition to offering flexible arrangement around leave and mode of working, inclusive employers and other members of the organisation are also encouraged to celebrate together with their multicultural employees. This would show respect and demonstrate the organisation's sincere commitment to cultural inclusivity.

Dietary concerns

It is worth noting that Hindus may not eat beef, as cows are considered sacred in the religion. Inclusive employers and other members of the organisation should always check with multicultural employees in terms of dietary restrictions when arranging a welcome lunch or other team/company-wide gatherings.



The art of Henna

Henna are not tattoos. It is a temporary dye which sits on the skin's surface. It is a common art form being practised in celebration of special occasions such as weddings and birthdays.



Apart from India, Henna art is also practised by other cultures in Pakistan, some African countries, the Middle East, and some other parts of the world. More details about Henna in Appendix 1 (p.101).

Islam

Islam is the second-largest religion in the world after Christianity with about 1.8 billion followers (commonly referred to as Muslims) worldwide. It is a monotheistic faith that worships only one god, Allah. It is widely practised in the Middle East, North Africa as well as many South and Southeast Asian countries.

★ Festival

Ramadan – Month of fasting, prayer, reflection, and community

Ramadan is one of the holiest months in the Islamic calendar. Ramadan falls in a different period every year, due to cycles of the moon. Symbolising dedication, reflection and discipline, Ramadan is a spiritual time during which Muslims get together with family and the wider community. Muslims practise fasting and restrain to plead for forgiveness of sins as well as to express solidarity with the poor and needy. More details about Ramadan in Appendix 1 (p.98).

📁 Workplace Implications

Concerns about religious practices

During Ramadan, Muslims devote significant time to praying and acts of charity, striving to improve their self-discipline, motivated by hadith.

Inclusive employers should seek to provide relevant accommodations for Muslim employees, for instance, by designating a prayer room and being open to flexible work schedules. Muslim employees may not eat during the regular lunch hour and might have to pray at different times of the day, so these accommodations would be highly appreciated.

Halal food

In Muslim culture, Halal is an Arabic term meaning “lawful or permissible”. It does not only cover food and drink, but also many other aspects of daily life.

All vegetables and fruits are naturally Halal. Certain meats and dairy products, if slaughtered in the manner of dhabihah (specific method of slaughtering animals in Islamic dietary laws) and processed in a certain way, can be made Halal. In general, pork and alcohol are strictly not permitted under religious laws, regardless of the way they are prepared. More details about Halal Food in Appendix 1 (p.100).

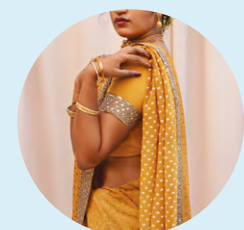


Concerns over apparel

Hijab is a type of garment worn by some Muslim women to cover their hair. Whether a woman wears hijab depends on interpretations of Islamic law, geographic location and civil law of different cultures as well as personal choice. More details about Hijab in Appendix 1 (p.101).



Note: Hijab is not to be confused with Sari/Saree, which is the main outer garment worn by many women in South Asia. It is a piece of clothing usually brightly coloured and embroidered, made of silk, cotton, or synthetic materials. Five to seven yards in length, it is worn wrapped around the body with the end left hanging, or donned over the head as a hood.



Inclusive employers should respect the apparel choice of multicultural employees as it is an important part of their culture. If there are any occasions where a certain kind of dress code or uniform is preferred, inclusive employers should communicate expectations and initiate discussions with multicultural employees as early as possible.

Sikhism

Sikhism is both a monotheistic and panentheistic religion, advocating the belief in one universal god, commonly represented by the symbol Ik Onkar. It is the world's fifth-largest religion with more than 25 million followers around the world.

The Sikh tradition is a relatively young tradition, dating back to around 500 years ago in the Punjab region of the Indian subcontinent.

★ Festival

Gurpurbs

Gurpurbs is a celebration of the anniversary of births or deaths of Gurus, spiritual masters of the religion. While the exact dates vary depending on the religious calendar, each celebration usually lasts for three days. More details about Gurpurbs in Appendix 1 (p.99).

📁 Workplace Implications

Dietary concerns

Sikhs do not consume alcohol or smoke. Some of them also choose not to consume meat and animal products such as eggs.

Concerns over apparel

Turban, a long piece of cloth that is wrapped round the head, is worn by Sikh men as well as some men practising Islam or Hinduism.

There are certain jobs where a Turban might not be allowed due to safety reasons, or because a uniform is required, such as the Hong Kong Disciplined Services.

It is important for both multicultural employees and inclusive employers to communicate expectations for all relevant requirements of the job during the pre-employment period.



Stage 1 - Preparation - Checklist



Nurturing

(Building Effective Relationships)



2.1 Workplace Etiquette – Cultural Do's and Don'ts

For a new joiner of the local workforce, there are unspoken rules and prevalent corporate cultures in the workplace which might come across unexpected or difficult to comprehend. It could be tricky to adapt to such a new environment, along with other potential cultural differences, especially if one is new to the job market. While the integration does not happen overnight, the process will get easier over time as one learns through experience and the daily interaction with others in the workplace.

Table 3 (p.40) is a **Starter Guide of Cultural Do's & Don'ts** to highlight some of the potential differences in terms of cultural and business values, time management, and communication between multicultural communities and the local ethnic Chinese community. This guide is aimed at narrowing the potential divide in understanding, expectations, and practices between ethnically inclusive employers and multicultural employees, particularly in the early stages of employment; there is no intention to generalise or put labels on any multicultural groups. We believe everyone is unique with different needs and expectations, therefore inclusive employers should always ask and in some cases provide personalised support.



Table 3

Learn more about Multicultural Communities



Cultural & Business Values

- In general, religious and family values are deeply embedded in many aspects of daily life.
- Out of respect for family and religion, these would be important considerations in people's major decision-making and problem-solving approach in personal life and at work.



✓ DO's

- Respect multicultural employees' individual sense of priorities and the importance they attach to family as well as religion.
- Demonstrate sincerity and willingness to learn about multicultural employees' cultural and religious practices. Being considerate is always appreciated.
- Understand that multicultural employees would consider family in decisions around work arrangements, such as meetings that might overrun after working hours.

Respect Consideration Understanding

✗ DON'Ts

- Denounce or criticise religions and religious practices; offer appreciation instead.
- Joke about cultures causally. Sarcasm can sometimes be misinterpreted as insults.
- Put labels on accents and appearances. In general, do not presume or make comments about multicultural employees' ethnicities and the related personal characteristics.
- Initiate uninformed discussions about political events and diplomatic tensions. This could be a sensitive topic for some and evoke strong emotions.

Denounce or Criticise Sarcasm Put Labels Sensitive Topic

Learn more about Local Ethnic Chinese



Cultural & Business Values

- Hong Kong's work culture has always been characterised by efficiency. Many, especially of the older generation, still believe that hard work is the only way to move up the socio-economic ladder.
- Working long hours and overtime to maximise productivity might appear to be the norm in certain organisations or teams.
- While people attach greater importance to work-life balance, especially the younger generation, it is not unusual for some to choose to check their work emails even during their leave.



✓ DO's

- Actively seek opportunities for and participate in internship programmes to prepare oneself for the workplace.
- Be vocal about your career aspirations, as well as short-term and long-term goals with current or prospective inclusive employers.
- If there is a family or religion priority which might clash with work commitment, communicate with current or prospective inclusive employers.

Participate Programmes Career Aspirations

Communicate with Inclusive Employer



Ethnically Inclusive Employers

Time Management

- Time is a cultural concept. Depending on the social and cultural context, people perceive it in different ways that are shaped by traditions, beliefs, and other factors such as socio-economic status. The difference in attitude towards time may add a layer of complexity in multicultural work teams. (Refer to Appendix 2 (p.102) for M-Time vs P-Time Culture Differences)

DO's

- Be mindful that each organisation has its own culture, and allow time for multicultural employees to adapt to a new environment.
- Be patient when making decisions or communicating with multicultural employees. Allow time for consideration, as urgent and as important as the decision might be.


Allow Time for Adaptation and Consideration

DON'Ts

- Assume all multicultural employees of a different ethnicity have a laid-back work ethic. It does not necessarily have a connection with their abilities and performance.
- Employ high-pressure tactics when managing or negotiating on their work schedules.


Deny Different Work Ethic High-pressure Tactics


Multicultural Employees

Time Management

- Hong Kong is one of the fastest-paced cities in the world and to a certain extent, some local Chinese take pride in that.
- People choose to use their time in different ways. In the local workplace, squeezing in a 15-minute lunch during a busy day, having jam-packed schedules and back-to-back meetings, and rushing in and out are all very common practices.

DO's

- Be punctual, especially for important work meetings or special events. Arriving 10-15 minutes earlier is a way to show respect for the occasion and would allow time for settling down, especially attending a job interview during the summer.
- Try to complete tasks in the most direct and efficient way. If there are doubts, however, do not hesitate to initiate discussions with colleagues or supervisors.
- Be prepared to roll up your sleeves and get things done. It is also important to be flexible and responsive to changes.
- Be mindful that timing is just as important as saying and doing the right thing.


Be Punctual Be Direct and Efficient Be Flexible

DON'Ts

- Run late to work, unless under special circumstances. Tardiness could be understood by some people as not taking things seriously.
- Be out of reach during work hours without advanced notice. If lateness or absence is inevitable, let supervisors and teammates know in advance.


Lateness Without Advanced Notice



Ethnically Inclusive Employers

Cross-Cultural Communications

DO's

- Be courteous and respectful in communication. Patience and willingness to listen go a long way.
- Welcome multicultural employees with warm greetings and show genuine interest in learning more about them.
- Have a sense of humour and enjoy light-hearted chatter. People with multicultural backgrounds can enjoy friendly banter and light teasing.

Patience to Listen Show Genuine Interest to Learning

Humour Chatter

DON'Ts

- Make judgments in absolute terms of right or wrong until there is a clear understanding of the circumstances, especially in situations related to religion, customs or traditions.

Make Judgments in Unclear Understanding

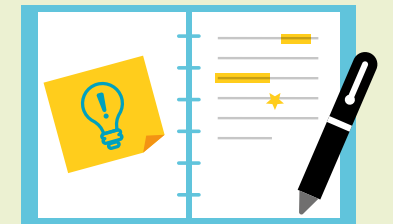


Multicultural Employees

Cross-Cultural Communications

DO's

- Ask questions or seek clarification politely if there are doubts.
- Find a way to navigate colleagues' different working styles and busy schedules. Sometimes a quick email or even a WhatsApp message to ask for a minute can be a lot more effective than waiting around.
- Bring along a pen and notebook to meetings with supervisors and colleagues. It could help gather thoughts and ideas.
- Talk to someone you trust and look for an outlet for emotions when things get rocky.

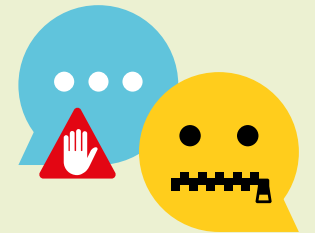


Seek Clarification Message to Ask

Look for an Outlet for Emotions

DON'Ts

- Interrupt or over-eagerly fill the silence during a conversation.
- Take things personally when things go wrong. What matters is learning from mistakes.
- Bottle up emotions or feelings.



Interrupt during a Conversation Take Things Personally

Bottle up Emotions or Feelings

2.2 Best Practices and Case Scenarios

Table 4 below shows some best practices and tips for both inclusive employer representatives and multicultural employees at four different checkpoints, #1 to #4, in the early stages of employment.

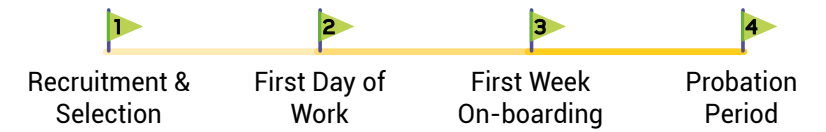


Table 4

Best Practices during Recruitment and Selection Process



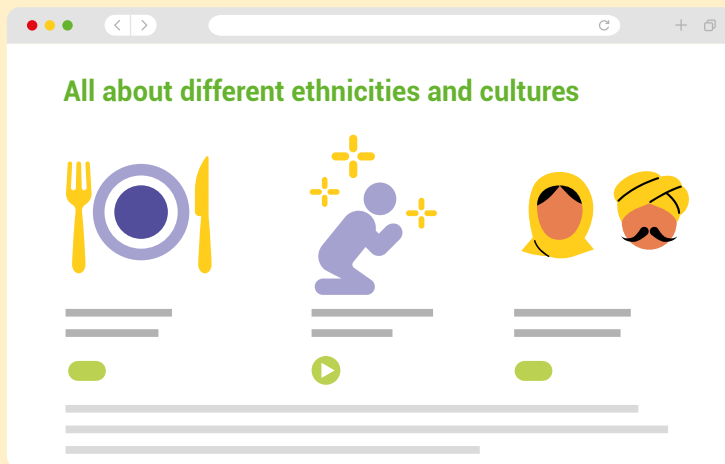
Ethnically Inclusive Employers

Checkpoint 1 Recruitment & Selection

Senior Management:

- Cultural sensitivity is incredibly important in this day and age, and it is never too late to start developing it. Learning about different ethnicities and cultures, and being aware of potential biases, are good first steps in creating a multicultural workplace.

Learning about Different Ethnicities and Cultures



Practical Tips during Recruitment and Selection Process



Multicultural Employees

Checkpoint 1 Recruitment & Selection

- Showing good preparation for the interview by sharing ideas and asking meaningful questions is appreciated by all inclusive employers.
- Open communication about expectations and potential support required on the job would help put inclusive employers and multicultural employees on a common ground for a smooth journey ahead. It is also best to communicate needs as early as possible.

Showing Good Preparation for the Interview

Communicate Needs as Early as Possible





Ethnically Inclusive Employers

Checkpoint 1 Recruitment & Selection

HR, Recruitment, and DEI Team:

- Knowledge- and awareness-building with the recruitment team is crucial to promoting real cultural change and managing expectations.
- Setting up Multicultural employee Resource Groups (ERGs)², diversity, or affinity groups within the organisation would contribute to improving the work environment for everyone. The team across all levels should be engaged in efforts promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI).
- Flexible work arrangements, where feasible, can be introduced upon consultation with the staff.

DEI Diversity Equity Inclusion

Middle Management and Team Members:

- Hiring should be based solely on candidates' skills, competencies, and suitability for the job—race and religion should not play a role.

Candidates' Skills Competencies Suitability

- It is important to understand that culture has an influence in the way people communicate and approach work. Adopting a variety of interview techniques and assessment methods, such as asking more open-ended questions and assigning job-shadowing, could provide a more comprehensive picture on prospective multicultural employees' competence.

Asking Open-ended Questions Assigning Job-shadowing

² An Multicultural employee Resource Groups (ERG) is an multicultural employee-led group that fosters inclusivity and builds community. This multicultural employee group also provides personal and professional support to its members. Multicultural employees who lead and take part in ERGs share certain things in common. Shared characteristics may reflect ethnicity, religious affiliation, shared interests, gender identity, age or other demographic characteristics.



Multicultural Employees

Checkpoint 1 Recruitment & Selection

- Seeking clarification is nothing to be ashamed of — multicultural employees have the right and responsibility to make sure all necessary information is well received.
- Remuneration package is a big part of the job. Depending on organisational culture, some companies may be more open or transparent in discussing salaries and benefits during the initial interview, while others may leave the discussion until later such as final interview or confirmation of the job offer.
- Browsing through the organisation's website and speaking with recruiters will offer multicultural employees a better idea of corporate culture, and help identify a workplace that is aligned with one's values.

Seeking Clarification Discussing Salaries and Benefits

Explore the Corporate Culture



Case Scenario 1



Khaan
Multicultural Employee



As a devout Muslim, Khaan received a job offer from a food trading company. The owner explained that Khaan's job duties would include stock-taking for all food and beverages. During the interview, there was no mention that the company sells food items with pork and wine, and Khaan also did not voice any concerns about his responsibilities. When Khaan later came on board, he refused to handle any food involving pork or alcohol because physical contact with these items is considered a breach of his religion.

As a result, the owner reassigned him tasks that did not involve direct contact with pork or alcohol, such as social media copywriting on the said products. Out of the owner's expectation, Khaan once again refused to perform these duties, as he believed that promotion of these products would still be a violation of his religion.

What could the ethnically inclusive employer have done?

Preventive Measures

- When Khaan did not voice any concerns over food inventory check, the inclusive employer should have gone over with him the type of food products involved. The inclusive employer could also have considered arranging a job-shadowing session for Khaan to experience first-hand his day-to-day responsibilities.

Adaptative Measures

- The inclusive employer could be flexible in reassigning job duties within the team.



Ethnically Inclusive Employers

Checkpoint 2 First Day of Work

Team Managers / Immediate Supervisors:

- Beyond the hiring stage, there should be continuous efforts in promoting cultural awareness within the team.

A supportive peer network, such as a **buddy programme**

Ease multicultural employees' transition
into a new organisation

- Buddy support is often necessary and impactful when multicultural employees feel a great sense of belonging to the working team. Small gestures such as seat arrangement closer to buddy or matching a buddy who is passionate and helpful could mean a lot.
- A warm welcome is more than just a dimsum lunch on the first day. It is reflected in the smallest details during day-to-day interaction. Consultation with team members, including multicultural employees, on preferences for food and activities is highly appreciated (Refer to Table 2 (p.32) for dietary accommodations).
- A proper onboarding includes opportunities for new joiners to meet and greet with other members of the organisation at all levels.

Checkpoint 3 First Week On-boarding

Senior Management / HR / DEI Team / Team Managers:

- Team building activities and social events such as cultural day are excellent in building rapport. They are also valuable opportunities for multicultural employees to be seen and heard.
- Regular check-in makes multicultural employees feel valued and cared for. It is an opportunity for inclusive employers to seek room for improvement on diversity and inclusion practices.

Cultural Day Regular Check-in



Multicultural Employees

Checkpoint 2 First Day of Work

Checkpoint 3 First Week On-boarding

- People have busy schedules but there is always time for important conversations. Initiating discussions about tasks and priorities, as well as inviting colleagues for a coffee chat, are gestures of a collaborative and devoted team player. Keeping supervisors and teammates posted is just as important as completing the tasks.
- Colleagues may look stressed or indifferent but refrain from judging based on first impressions. Being proactive in getting to know others in the organisation, such as having coffee together, contributes to a positive working experience.

Initiating Discussions about Tasks and Priorities

Being Proactive in Getting to Know Colleagues



Case Scenario 2



Sarika
Multicultural Employee



Sarika was amongst the first multicultural employees recruited for positions across different business units in the organisation. First day coming into the office, she greeted her colleagues "good morning" but no one responded. This experience left her feeling isolated and frustrated, and for the first three months she just felt that she could not fit in at all.

At one point, she wanted to quit. But another multicultural trainee Ali, who works in a different unit, comforted her and asked her to hang in there a bit longer. Eventually, at a team building event, Sarika finally had the chance to share food with her teammates and made friends at work. She started feeling much more accepted as it boosted her experience in the workplace.

What could the ethnically inclusive employer have done?

Preventive Measures

- Multicultural training and awareness building should have been done across units to ensure new joiners, including multicultural employees like Sarika and Ali, feel welcomed and receive proper onboarding.
- Other staff members at similar level could have been assigned as peer buddies to support Sarika through the transition, such as by checking in with her from time to time.

Adaptative Measures

- Team building and social events, especially ones that involve food sharing, are an excellent form of orientation and can promote multicultural understanding. They can be arranged during the first or second week, if possible, to allow teammates to get to know each other at an early stage.



Ethnically Inclusive Employers

Checkpoint 4 Probation Period

HR / DEI Recruitment / Team Managers:

- Role of Buddies / Mentors / Coaches is important as they serve as a pillar of support during the transition. They can also act as a neutral mediator in case issues arise. More details will be discussed in Stage 3.



- A safe and trusting environment would encourage multicultural employees to share ideas and thoughts. There should also be alternative feedback mechanisms apart from the regular reporting hierarchy.
- Flexibility is key – there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Focus on intentions and communicate rationales behind rules and regulations. Avoid assumptions or jumping to conclusions easily.

Role of Buddies / Mentors / Coaches

Safe and Trusting Environment would Encourage

Flexibility is Key



Multicultural Employees

Checkpoint 4 Probation Period

- **Self-awareness** is the ability to recognise and understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and behaviours, as well as how they impact others. The workplace requires actively exercising self-awareness, as it contributes to effective and empathetic communication. Exercising self-awareness also helps prevent conflicts. Being aware of one's own strengths, weaknesses, as well as goals, and being proactive in seeking feedback, will enable inclusive employers and peers to offer the necessary support.
- **Personality tests** have become a popular instrument for inclusive employers to assess candidates' suitability for job roles. Most tests are available online for free such as the MBTI, DISC, Enneagram, VIA etc.
- **Teamwork** is an important quality in the workplace, and is valued by all inclusive employers across industries. Being a team player contributes to effective communication and collaboration with other members in the organisation.



Top 10 Communication Skills

- 1 Active listening
- 2 Approachable body language
- 3 Being concise
- 4 Firm but friendly tone of speech
- 5 Being polite
- 6 Expressing empathy
- 7 Keeping an open mind
- 8 Showing respect
- 9 Giving and receiving feedback
- 10 Picking the right form (medium) of communication

Case Scenario 3



Zoya
Multicultural Employee



Zoya is married with two young children. She usually leaves work at 6pm as she must care for her family. Now a full-day company retreat is planned on a Friday and is compulsory for all staff members to take part in. As the event does not end until late in the evening, it is a clash with her family responsibilities so Zoya decides to apply for leave on that day to excuse herself from it. Her supervisor, however, thinks that it is just an excuse. Later, her supervisor found out that there is indeed no one else in her family who can take care of her children in the evening. The two of them proceed to have a conversation about it, and agree that the retreat would be shortened to a day-trip instead so that Zoya can still be part of it.

What could the ethnically inclusive employer have done?

Preventive Measures

- Family is a priority for many, including multicultural communities (Refer to Table 3 (p.40) for Starter Guide of Cultural Do's & Don'ts). While some local Chinese choose to work during lunch, or even overtime into the evening and over the weekend, members of multicultural communities find it hard to embrace such a lifestyle. It is important to understand that everyone prioritises work and family differently, and that all preferences should be respected.
- Inclusive employers should minimise work and related engagements outside of office hours. For activities that take place during office hours, there should be more flexibility, in case multicultural employees have overriding responsibilities and priorities.
- Inclusive employers should create an environment that allows for open communication about multicultural employees' schedules and priorities.



Stage 2 - Nurturing - Checklist



Enhancement

(Deepening the Collaboration)



The phase of enhancement generally refers to the post-probation period, during which multicultural employees have already settled in and familiarised themselves with the environment as well as responsibilities. At the same time, multicultural employees might face increasing responsibilities and stress that comes along with it. Once again, the process of moving on from the second to third stage might very likely to be non-linear and involve a lot trial-and-error. Context matters—different people and organisations might have varying starting points and thus choosing to dedicate more time as well as resources on specific stages.

Building on the cultural awareness and sensitivity developed in previous stages, both ethnically inclusive employers and multicultural employees should seek to strengthen their relationships and continue to build trust with one another. This would involve a much deeper level of understanding and honest communication.



3.1 The Cultural Iceberg

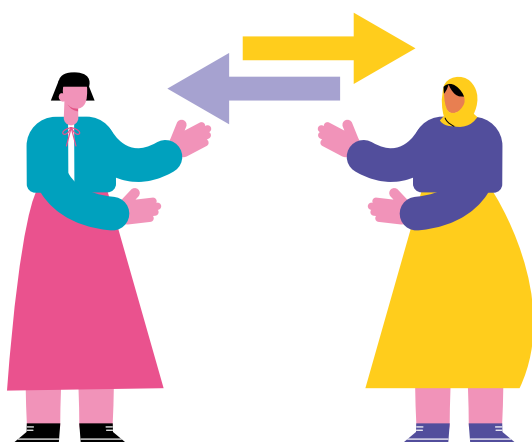
English anthropologist Sir Edward Tylor has defined culture as

the complex whole which includes **knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom**, and any other capabilities acquired by man as a **member of society**

In other words, **culture is multi-faceted** and **goes beyond traditions and customs**

In the context of cross-cultural communication, it is important to be aware that

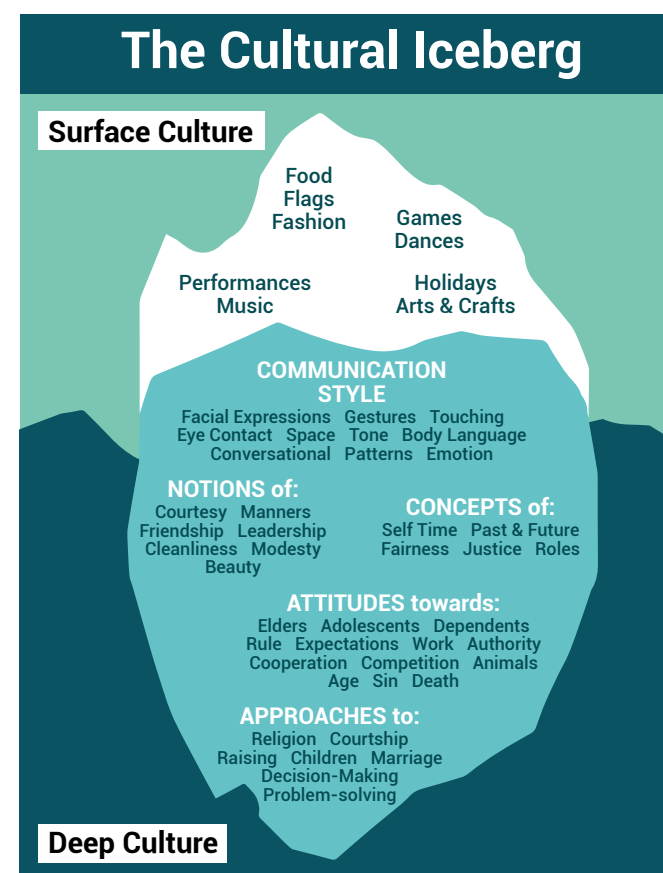
Culture is Indeed Two-folded



Edward Hall's iceberg analogy

In 1976, the American anthropologist Edward T. Hall developed the iceberg analogy of culture. He argued that there are aspects of culture more visible like the iceberg tip above the water. Meanwhile, there are also many other dimensions that are invisible under the water.

👁️ **Visible culture**, or explicit culture, refers to cultural elements that can be easily observed even by those who have only limited exposure to a new culture. They include practices, behaviours, and some forms of beliefs. Refer below graphic for Surface Culture illustrations.



Source: <https://shorturl.at/frEI4>

👁️ **Invisible culture** is what lies beneath the surface, or is sometimes called implicit culture. This extends to more forms of beliefs, assumptions, values, attitudes towards authority, risk appetite, sense of punctuality, communication patterns, how status is defined, how power is distributed in society, and much more.

The assumptions, at the deepest level, are the most important levels of culture and the most difficult to understand. It is important to understand that cultural context impacts behaviours and communication, and the awareness of such differences helps develop sensitivity that is key in cross-cultural interaction.

3.2 Different Perspectives from Ethnically Inclusive Employers and Multicultural Employees

Along the way in this journey, differences are likely to surface especially in terms of the more invisible cultural elements. This section dives into some of the potential gaps that might emerge between inclusive employers and multicultural employees, illustrated with real-life examples.



Communication Style – Tone

Ethnically Inclusive Employers

Multicultural employees share a perception that verbal communication in Cantonese can sometimes come across as rude and harsh.

Examples:

- An employer once told Khaan, “we don’t prioritise religion, we prioritise profit here.”
- Khaan was once told to “hurry up” by his colleagues on the first day of work, without anyone walking him through the proper procedures to complete a task.
- He sometimes also detected sarcasm that is masked by kind words in some of his day-to-day communication with colleagues.



Communication Style – Emotion

Multicultural employees also share the observation that local Chinese tend to be more reserved about their feelings.

Examples:

Multicultural communities tend to be more expressive and sensitive, which can make them feel vulnerable especially under pressure. Sarika said she felt stressed at work sometimes, when she was given tasks to finish under a tight deadline.



Communication Style – Pattern

Multicultural Employees

Inclusive employers feel that multicultural employees do not communicate their thoughts directly and honestly enough. Meanwhile, multicultural employees share a fear that they would “say the wrong thing” and have to suffer from consequences.



Notions of Courtesy / Manner (Cultural Norms)

Inclusive employers have observed that some multicultural employees might not be aware of the cultural norms around discussing salaries in the workplace. In some cases, multicultural employees would openly discuss their salaries with one another, which could be something their local Chinese counterparts are not comfortable with.





Ethnically Inclusive Employers

Communication Style – Space

Multicultural employees felt the need for personal space to resolve problems more independently at work, and the need for space (to pause and process) during discussions.



Multicultural Employees

Approaches to Decision-Making

Inclusive employers have observed that multicultural employees tend to seek guidance from their families and friends in decision-making. For example, multicultural employees would consult with their families or spouses before taking on work commitment during non-office hours.



Concepts of Self Time (Importance of Work-Life Balance)

Most multicultural employees do not like the overtime culture in the local workplace. They generally prefer to maintain their work-life balance, with some willing to work overtime under special circumstances or in the event of workplace emergencies.



Approaches to Problem-Solving

Multicultural employees being a minority in the local workplace, inclusive employers find that they are less confident in taking up new tasks or suggesting alternative approaches to problem-solving. Inclusive employers also feel that they tend to be more risk-averse.



Attitudes towards Work

Multicultural employees perceive their local Chinese counterparts as detail-oriented and straightforward in pointing out mistakes. Cultural difference also lies in the interpretation of "efficiency". For instance, Zoya defined it as finishing tasks perfectly and on time, while her supervisor prioritised employees' sense of urgency over the quality of work.



Attitudes towards Work

Inclusive employers have observed that multicultural employees could sometimes attach more importance to harmony and collaboration during the work process than getting things done or the outcome. Inclusive employers may need to aware the working style differences between empathy-driven or process-driven or result-driven.



3.3 How might We Bridge the Gaps in Invisible Culture in the Workplace?

There is no quick fix to address differences in invisible culture given its complex nature and how they are intertwined with environmental factors. Previous stages have covered practical ways for inclusive employers to enhance awareness and remove barriers within the organisation, as well as for multicultural employees to build capabilities and adapt to some of the local workplace etiquette. As the journey continues, there are more tools that both inclusive employers and multicultural employees can make use of to bridge the gaps.

Intermediaries

The presence of intermediaries can be powerful. Multicultural mentors and career coaches bring in their own experience from the local workplace and interaction with multicultural communities. Having been exposed to such environment, they are well positioned to support new joiners in navigating challenges at work. Here are three multicultural mentors who have some words of advice for new multicultural employees:

RAI

I am Rai, the mentor of Sarika. A tip for inclusive employers who are new to hiring multicultural employees: it is important to **build trust and foster an inclusive environment**. It takes time to understand and appreciate different cultures, backgrounds, and perspectives.



MARYAM

Hi everyone! I am Maryam, the work buddy of Zoya. Members of ethnic minorities are not all the same; everyone is unique and different in terms of their cultures, religions, and backgrounds. Inclusive employers should focus more on **talent, abilities, and other workplace-relevant characteristics!**



Maryam, how can I develop a trusting relationship with my supervisor and colleagues?

Demonstrating a positive attitude towards work is really important. Always try to **learn and improve**, and be supportive of your teammates.



ZAREF

I am Zaref, the mentor of Khaan. I can totally understand how difficult it is for multicultural employees to adapt to the local workplace. One thing that could help is to **learn basic Cantonese** for day-to-day communication with colleagues. It shows your willingness to integrate.



Zaref, how can I improve my relationship with my local Chinese colleagues?

First of all, do **keep an open mind**. Try to find common ground with them even though there might be cultural differences. Of course, doing your best in completing the tasks assigned and sharing constructive ideas are also important. Remember, a growth mindset can go a long way!



Growth Mindset

Growth mindset, proposed by Professor Carol Dweck from Stanford in her book *Mindset*, refers to the belief that qualities can be cultivated through effort over time. With a tendency to persist even in face of challenges, people with a growth mindset are willing to learn from mistakes and would seek inspiration in others' success.

Joining a new workplace, it is inevitable to run into challenges, whether in terms of responsibilities or interpersonal relationships. It is important to develop a growth mindset and actively practise it – this is the only avenue to convert failures and setbacks into future successes.

The three multicultural trainees, Zoya, Sarika and Khaan, have now sailed through the first three stages of the inclusive employment journey. The experience so far has given them some fresh ideas about their career.

ZOYA

I am a believer of Cantonese expression 「活到老學到老」. I am keen to acquire new skills, for instance, I would like to learn new languages as they would benefit my work. I also strive to be more resilient. As a young mother, I want to confront the difficulties and create a better future for my children!



Zoya plans to pursue further studies in social work as she realises that she needs academic qualifications to advance her career in the social service sector. For now she plans to prioritise her personal development and put working on hold to study full-time.

SARIKA

I have been featured in the company newsletter and branding video as a role model and multicultural employee story. I was unsure about it at first because I prefer to be recognised for my **abilities**, instead of my ethnicity. But I still took part in the publicity, because I do want people to know that **ethnic minorities can also be great assets to organisations**.



Sarika has received a return offer to work full-time in the current company. Her supervisor is very pleased with Sarika's work ethics and performance. She is happy and satisfied with this job. More importantly, Sarika feels a strong sense of belonging to the team, and that she is making a positive impact in society.

KHAAN

Self-awareness is important in learning from mistakes and improving. I want to be able to **embrace and grow through new experiences**. I am looking forward to practising what I have learnt from this job in my next chapter!



Khaan has resigned from his current role as he feels that he is not able to put his strengths to use at this job. However, he does appreciate all the support his supervisor and teammates have offered to make him feel welcomed and integrated. He now realises that there are many other factors contributing to a fruitful career. Khaan has learnt a lot from this experience, which boosted his confidence in exploring next steps.

As their stories show, equal opportunities and career development are essential to multicultural employees' personal and professional growth. Everyone, them being no exception, is motivated when they consider themselves an integral part of the organisation and impact makers in the local community.

It is important to note that growth mindset does not only apply to multicultural employees, but also inclusive employers. Navigating and managing a changing work environment is no easy feat, but organisational leaders and teams can put themselves on this learning curve to gain cultural competence. Tools such as the Cultural Iceberg model or Growth Mindset Worksheet (Refer to Appendix 3 (p.103)) can help uncover the root causes behind cultural and behavioural misalignment.



Stage 3 - Enhancement - Checklist



Ethnically
Inclusive
Employers

Multicultural
Employees

Understand invisible culture

Actively seek feedback
and share ideas

Leverage support from
intermediaries

Taking the initiative at work

Practise growth mindset
in multicultural teams

Practise growth mindset

4

Fourth Stage

Sustainability

(Establishing the Norm)

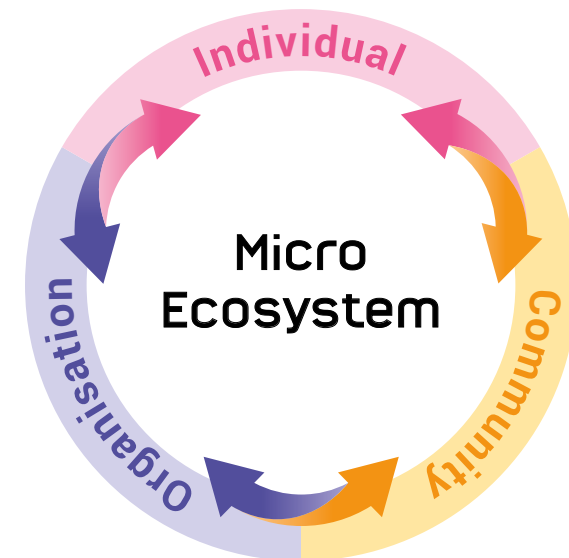


Previous stages have laid a solid foundation in this block-building process. As both ethnically inclusive employers and multicultural employees have grasped the fundamentals in creating a multicultural workplace, how might these efforts be sustained and expanded in the wider ecosystem?

To create a truly diverse and inclusive workplace but also job market at large, cross-cultural communication and trial-and-error are equally important. The shared vision of this journey is to build an ecosystem in which multicultural and inclusive employment becomes the norm.

4.1 The Micro Ecosystem

This diagram illustrates how individuals, organisations, and communities at large can empower one another in catalysing change. Creating a diverse and inclusive job market in Hong Kong requires collaborative efforts at all levels in the ecosystem. Whether it is a growth mindset at an individual level, or the provision of the right conditions by organisations and the community, a paradigm shift in the local workplace can only happen when everyone proactively works towards change.





Ethnically Inclusive Employers

Tips in Engaging Multicultural Individuals on Organisation Levels



A tip for inclusive employers new to multicultural employment is to start small. Practise with a small number of multicultural employees through internship, traineeship, or job shadowing programme to accumulate experience and seek feedback for future hiring initiatives.



When a cultural readiness begins to take shape in the organisation, other business units and teams can replicate good practices and develop their own competence in multicultural employment too.



Proper documentation of relevant employment data and impact stories would facilitate the revision of related HR policies and long-term planning on multicultural employment.



While there will be a lot of trial-and-error, multicultural employment should not be a one-time experiment. Inclusive employers and organisations should aim for a cultural change, not short-term accommodations.



Multicultural Employees

Tips in Engaging Inclusive Organisations on Individual Levels



Take ownership of career

Be proactive in exploring opportunities for academic training, upskilling, and progression, and seek advice from supervisors as well as mentors.



Be an ambassador

Invite family and friends to social events within and outside the organisation to promote multicultural communication and celebrate diversity.



Promote mutual learning among peers

Team up with colleagues and friends to share skills and knowledge (an example is regular Cantonese exchange sessions between local Chinese and multicultural colleagues).



Support one another

Assume the role of “work buddies” or volunteer in activities that promote cultural diversity and inclusion.



Pass the torch

Sign up as mentors or trainers to inspire and transfer knowledge.



Communicate with sincerity

Initiate conversations about personal as well as organisational needs, concerns and aspirations.



Ethnically Inclusive Employers

Practical Examples in Engaging Multicultural Individuals on Organisation Levels

Here are some practical examples from inclusive employers to promote individual empowerment on both personal and professional levels.



I would encourage multicultural employees or anyone interested in becoming a social worker to **seek learning opportunities and gain** a better understanding of the sector. For instance, one can volunteer with a local NGO outside of work!

Both formal and informal structures give inclusive employers a better picture of how multicultural employees are coping with the job and what their aspirations are. Intermediaries like mentors and work buddies would serve as another **communication channel** and **layer of support** for multicultural employees!



Regular internal sharing sessions are helpful in **promoting knowledge exchange and cultural understanding of different ethnic groups**. Staff will take turns to organise and lead the sessions on a variety of topics such as health or food.



I trust my multicultural employees, and I would give them **space and flexibility to complete tasks and tackle challenges in their own way**. Co-creation is more effective than top-down directions. I would also **invite multicultural employees to internal sharing sessions**, and encourage them to initiate their own projects. For instance, my trainee is now working on a public health publication for multicultural parents.



I suggest **providing multicultural trainee(s) with a variety of job roles/types** and allow them to try different tasks if possible so they could identify their area of passion and interests. Meanwhile keeping a high flexibility for **job rotations and opt-out**.



Multicultural Employees



Successful Story of Engaging Inclusive Organisations on Individual Levels

Minhas Mohammad Osama was born and raised in Hong Kong. A few years ago, Osama actively prepared himself for the fireman recruitment process.

When Osama first joined the fireman initial training, he said learning the use of different firefighting equipment, mastering drill exercises, and studying the Fire Services Ordinance were not easy tasks. With inclusive acceptance and encouragement from his colleagues along with patient guidance from the instructors, he was able to overcome various obstacles in training and appointed as a Fireman.



His colleagues recall that on the first day of Osama training, they were concerned about his adaptation being the only multicultural fireman in the squad. However, they have witnessed him developing a strong sense of teamwork along training and admire Osama for his hard work. As a force serving the public, being able to collaborate with people of different cultural backgrounds is a valuable quality.

More about Osama's story





Ethnically Inclusive Employers



Multicultural Employers

Tips in Engaging Multicultural Individuals on Community Levels



Spread the word

Share with family and friends your day-to-day experience working in a multicultural workplace to enhance understanding.



Be an ambassador of cultural diversity

Explore ways to bring multicultural communities and local Chinese closer to one another.



Make good use of social media

When used responsibly, they can be great platforms to showcase how multiculturalism thrives in different facets of Hong Kong life.



Work with community partners

Seize opportunities to collaborate with stakeholders in engaging with multicultural communities.



Participate in the community

Look for ways to get involved in relevant organisations and committees in the community (e.g. The Committee on the Promotion of Racial Harmony) to advocate for better cultural awareness and influence decision-making in ethnic minorities-related policies.



Expand the network

People with experience in multicultural employment are a valuable resource for prospective new joiners of the local job market. A peer network can be a platform to advocate for more multicultural-friendly policies and connect communities with resources to support personal as well as career development.

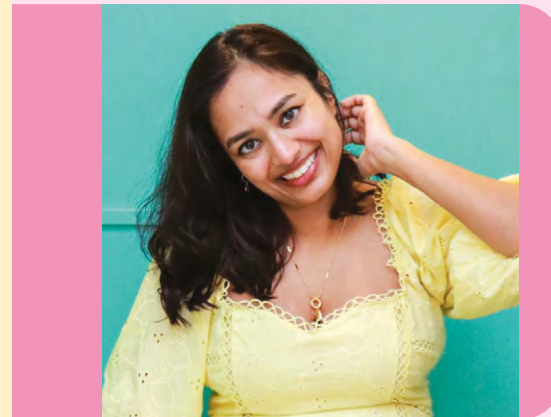
Successful Story of Engaging Community on Individual Levels

Pranali (新德莉莉) is a native Hong Konger of Indian descent. When she was a child, Pranali already felt that people around her had a lot of biases and misunderstanding about Indian culture. In 2020, she became a YouTuber and started producing content that showcase different facets of her culture.

Pranali creates explainer videos about Indian values, aesthetics, and perspectives. She also teaches viewers how to make curry from scratch and say certain expressions in various Indian languages. There is also a series of interviews with people who have equally faced stereotypes.

Using her channel, Pranali wants to debunk myths and help viewers to better understand her culture.

"Being a YouTuber is a unique profession, and I believe that it's not just me; many ethnic minorities can speak Cantonese, and their cultures are different from Indian culture. They also have stories to share, and I hope to amplify their voices and empower them to share their stories as well."



More about Pranali's story (Chinese version only)





Ethnically Inclusive Employers



Multicultural Employees

Tips in Engaging Inclusive Organisations on Community Levels



Promote knowledge exchange

A talent exchange platform can serve as a gateway to connect local inclusive employers with multicultural communities, and at the same time facilitate sharing of good practices in multicultural employment.



Start early

Interaction and communication between inclusive employers and prospective multicultural employees can begin before the hiring process. Such engagement would facilitate the job-matching process and align expectations about the workplace. At the same time, it would be a good opportunity for inclusive employers to obtain a more comprehensive picture of prospective multicultural employees' competencies, and for job seekers to also learn more about types of jobs and respective requirements.



Successful Story of Engaging Community on Inclusive Organisation Levels



Dr. Rizwan Ullah is of Pakistani descent and comes from a humble family. "From childhood to adulthood, I have always felt that Hong Kong is my home."

Dr. Riz initially taught English to non-Chinese speaking students. He later obtained a master's degree in education and a doctoral degree both from HKU. Currently, he serves

as the Vice Principal of Law Ting Pong Secondary School.

Apart from his expertise in Chinese language education for non-Chinese speaking students, he also dedicates his time to policy advocacy such as by sitting in the Board of Equal Opportunities Commission as well as Youth Development Commission. Dr. Riz plays an important role in shaking up how society views ethnic minorities. His story has inspired many to pursue their dreams, making significant contributions to the empowerment of multicultural communities in Hong Kong.

More about Dr. Riz's story
(Chinese version only)



Jeffrey Andrews holds multiple identities: he is a native Hong Konger, a third-generation Christian, an ethnic minority, and the first registered Indian social worker in Hong Kong. His advocacy for ethnic minorities and active involvement in social services naturally stem from these multiple identities. In 2009, Jeffrey's mother introduced him to

Christian Action, an organisation serving marginalized groups and ethnic minorities in Hong Kong. Encouraged by the social workers there, Jeffrey went on to study social work, hoping to become a social worker himself serving in ethnic minority communities.

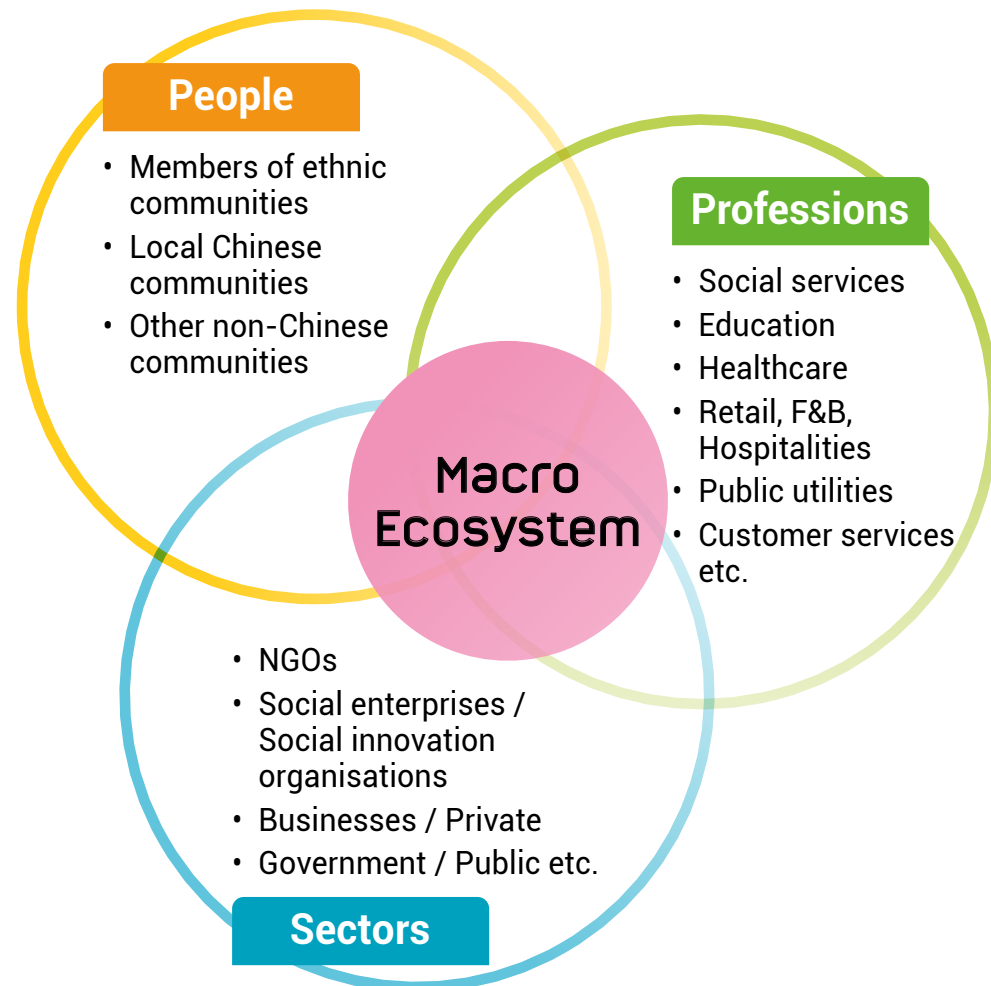
He is also a staunch advocate for refugees, giving a voice to those who are not heard. Jeffrey has devoted years to improving the lives of ethnic minorities as well as refugees in Hong Kong, and he currently serves at the Chungking Mansion Refugee Center.

More about Jeffrey's story



4.2 The Macro Ecosystem

Driving systemic change, however, does not only rest upon inclusive employers as well as multicultural communities. Professional Traineeship Programme for the Ethnic Minorities organized by HKCSS is an experimental intervention among many alike. Scaling these interventions through collaboration with other stakeholders would gradually shift mindsets and behaviours, and ultimately lead to a true paradigm shift in Hong Kong's talent acquisition world. Below are some of the strategies where people, sectors, professions can adopt together.



People refers to the different stakeholders and essentially everyone in our multicultural society, and is not limited to members of ethnic communities.

Members of Ethnic Communities

Local Chinese Communities

Other non-Chinese Communities



Case in focus: Cultural Sensitivity Training provided by **WEDO GLOBAL**, a Social Enterprise promoting cultural diversity and inclusion. It aims at enhancing participants' understanding of cultural intelligence and equipping them with the know-how in facilitating cross-cultural communication.

More details of the programme





Professions refer to career professionals working in the same industry sector.

Social Services	Education	Healthcare
Retail, F&B, Hospitalities	Public Utilities	Customer Services etc.



Case in Focus: The Hong Kong Social Workers Association Chapter on Ethnically Diverse Social Work works to establish a community network that promotes mutual understanding between the Chinese and non-Chinese communities in Hong Kong. Specifically, it creates mentoring opportunities within the network for multicultural youth, especially those pursuing a career in social work. The Chapter also focuses on supporting the large and growing ethnic minority community in Hong Kong, who often remain under the radar in terms of policy advocacy and social assistance schemes.

Facebook page of the Chapter



Industry professionals should also organise job shadowing and internship programmes together with secondary and tertiary education institutions to prepare multicultural students for the job market. These initiatives support multicultural students' professional development and provide a gateway educated and qualified talents to be part of the local job market.



Mohammad Hussain used to work as a driver for a food delivery platform on an unstable income. With the recommendation of his friends, he signed up for the "Ethnic Minority Professional Training Program" organised by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS) and has now joined the KMB as a bus driver trainee.

Read more about Mohammad
(Chinese version only)





Sectors refer to the different economic sectors that can collaborate for synergy.

NGOs

Social Enterprises / Social Innovation Organisations

Businesses / Private

Government / Public etc.

Cross-sector collaborations can connect resources and expertise in promoting multicultural employment in Hong Kong. Together, there will be more co-creative solutions in closing the employment gap.



Case in focus: The Professional Traineeship Programme for the Ethnic Minorities organised by **HKCSS**. The Programme brings companies and organisations from different industries together to support multicultural youth in kick starting their career. By matching young talents with a variety of opportunities, the programme aims at:

1. Nurturing young multicultural talents to become champions in their respective communities;
2. Building sectoral and organisational awareness in multicultural talent acquisition; and
3. Cultivating a truly diverse and inclusive working environment for both ethnic Chinese and non-Chinese members of society.

NGO and the private sector can also partner in workshops and trainings promoting multicultural understanding.



Case in focus: The "Institute of Racial Equality" established by **The Zubin Foundation** organises panel discussions, conferences, and training for various sectors including businesses, education institutions, and the government to enhance the understanding of racial equality and address racism in Hong Kong.

More details of The Institute



- The government and the public sector should also play a leading role in normalising multicultural employment. Recruiting multicultural talents into the administration, allocating more resources to public education, and active promotion of multicultural employment help promote the right message in society at large.
- Intermediaries such as HKCSS and Hong Kong Social Workers Association (HKSWA) would continue to explore ways to facilitate co-creation and collaboration across multicultural communities.



Stage 4 - Sustainability - Checklist



Conclusion

Cultural diversity is one of the many qualities that characterise Hong Kong as a city, and should be celebrated. However, it takes time and concerted efforts to embrace and realise it at all levels, especially in the local job market where there is still a long way to go. The block-building process in practice is a never-ending and iterative process – but every small step and effort counts towards making the ecosystem a truly diverse and inclusive one.

Share this protocol with organisations and friends who are passionate about and committed to promoting diversity in the workplace. Once again, it is only through co-creating solutions that transcend boundaries that a paradigm shift can take place.

“ Thank you for being an integral part of this changemaking community. Let's embark on this rewarding journey of multicultural employment and make a difference together. ”



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Appendix 1 – Further details on multicultural festivals, customs, food and appearance

Festivals

Dashain

What is Dashain?

- Dashain is one of the main festivals in Nepal.
- Dashain usually falls on September or October, and is traditionally celebrated for 10 days. People dedicate their prayers and offerings to the Universal Mother Goddess.

Diwali

What is Diwali?

- Diwali is a time to celebrate the triumph of light over darkness, knowledge over ignorance, and good over evil. The five days of Diwali are marked by prayers, feasts, fireworks, family gatherings, and charitable giving.
- Food is a major part of the celebration of Diwali. During the festival, friends and relatives exchange Indian sweets. These sweets can be homemade or store-bought.
- Some of the most popular Diwali sweets include laddoos (a round pastry made with flour, butter, and sugar), barfi (white creamy bars made with condensed milk, sugar, and nuts), and kheer (sweet rice pudding).

Ramadan and Fasting

Fasting in the month of Ramadan is a key pillar of the Islamic religion. The act of restraint allows the individual to empathise with the pain and suffering experienced by millions around the world in poverty and hunger. It is meant to help one feel more grounded and grateful for all that Allah (SWT) has bestowed upon believers. At the close of the month, followers make donations, known as Zakat, and celebrate Eid al-Fitr together with loved ones. Eid is a great time of feasting and celebration, often with blessings and gifts exchanged with family and close friends.

Why do the dates of Ramadan change every year?

- Ramadan comes at a different time every year because it is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, a date-keeping system based on lunar cycles, unlike the Gregorian calendar (the one used by most of the world), which is based on the solar year. A new month begins with the appearance of the new moon, or the crescent moon, and ends with the next appearance of a new moon.

Why do Muslims Fast?

- Practising self-discipline and conveying gratitude are two of the most important purposes of Ramadan. Fasting helps make conscience of blessings such as food and water which are often taken for granted.
- In essence, Ramadan is a time of reflection, building spirituality, and strengthening the relationship with God.

How does fasting work?

- Muslims have an early morning meal before dawn, known as suhoor or sehri. They do not eat or drink anything - including water - until they break their fast after sunset for the evening meal, called iftar or fitoor.
- Fasting should only be done by people who are in good health.

Eid Al-Fitr:

- Eid takes place at the end of Ramadan. The name "Eid al-Fitr" translates as "the festival of the breaking of the fast".
- Like the beginning of Ramadan, Eid begins with the first sighting of the new moon.

What happens at Eid?

- Many Muslims will attend Eid prayers at their mosque early in the morning.
- It is a tradition to wear new clothes to the mosque. On the way there, many would also eat something sweet, such as a date, and recite a short prayer called a takbeer.

Eid-ul-Adha:

- The celebration of Eid-ul-Adha is to honour Prophet Ibrahim's act of obedience to Allah. This command from Allah was a test of Prophet Ibrahim's willingness and commitment to obey God's command without question. Therefore, Eid-ul-Adha also means the Feast of Sacrifice.

Gurpurbs

There are many Gurburb festivals throughout the year. The following are four that are most widely celebrated:

- The birthday of Guru Nanak (November)
- The birthday of Guru Gobind Singh (December/January)
- The martyrdom of Guru Arjan (June)
- The martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur (November/December)

The Nepali New Year

When is the Nepali New Year?

- The Nepali New Year (Naya Barsa / Navavarsha) is celebrated in the second week of April based on the official lunar calendar of Nepal.
- The Nepali people use more than one calendar. Generally, Nepalis celebrate all three New Years in the Gregorian, Tibetan, and Navavarsha calendars.
- The Nepali calendar of Bikram Sambat (or Bikram Era) has 12 months per cycle. However, its first month is Baisakh, which falls around mid-April in the commonly adopted Gregorian calendar.
- The first day of Baisakh is usually in the second week of April on the Bikram Sambat calendar.

What happens during the Nepali New Year?

- Traditionally, a large wooden chariot representative of a victorious battle would be carried around town. With wrathful images of deities standing upon the chariot, people worship gods and goddesses by offering coins, flowers, and blood.

Food

Halal Food

The meaning of Halal Food:

- Halal is an Arabic term meaning "lawful or permissible". It does not only cover food and drink, but also many other aspects of daily life.
- All vegetables and fruits are naturally Halal. Certain meats and dairy products, if slaughtered in the manner of dhabiha and processed in a certain way, can be made Halal. In general, pork and alcohol are strictly not permitted under religious laws, regardless of the way they are prepared.

Examples of Halal Food:

- Halal food ranges from fruit to meat to desserts. Any food, as long as they are made, processed, cleaned, or slaughtered in accordance with Islamic law can be Halal. Halal food is also supposed to be free of alcohol, intoxicants, pork, and other food items forbidden in Islamic law.

Customs / Appearance

Henna

What is Henna:

- Henna is a natural dye prepared from grinding dried leaves of henna tree and combining the powder with other liquids such as water and lemon juice.
- When applied as a body art, it symbolises good health, prosperity in marriage, or wishes for luck in general. In some cultures, when practised as a celebration of marriage, darker henna stain symbolises the more love there is between two individuals.
- Henna was originally used for its natural cooling properties for people living in hot desert climates. It was also used for medicinal purposes by applying it on the skin to treat ailments such as stomachaches, burns, headaches, and open wounds.

Hijab

What is Hijab:

- Hijab is an Arabic term meaning barrier, partition, or used to refer to Islam rules of modesty.
- Today, it usually refers to clothing and head coverings worn by many Muslim women.
- The most visible form of hijab is the head scarf that many Muslim women wear. In one popular school of Islamic thought, however, hijab refers to the complete covering of the full body with long, loose, and non see-through garment except for the hands.

Appendix 2 – M-Time VS P-Time Culture Differences

M-Time (Monochronic)

1. Schedules and deadlines are very important as time commitments are taken seriously.
2. It is important to have things set in stone and adhere strictly to the plan.
3. Efficiency and punctuality are very important.
4. Mainly practised in low-context cultures, in which the spoken or written word is usually used to convey messages, and that direct and explicit communication is preferred.
5. Great importance is attached to completing the job.

P-Time (Polychronic)

1. Schedules are a goal, but are subject to interruptions or distractions.
2. Plans are perceived as guidelines and subject to change.
3. Efficiency is a goal, but commitments related to relationships could take priority, except in emergencies.
4. Dominant in high-context cultures, in which a lot is left unsaid, and that communication relies also on non-verbal and situational cues.
5. Commitment to relationships is more important than the job.

Source: Hall, E., & Hall, M. (1987), *Hidden differences: Doing business with the Japanese*. New York: Doubleday

Appendix 3 - Worksheet of Growth Mindset

In a workplace context, both inclusive employer representatives and multicultural employees have the potential to actively stay in the "growth zone". This means believing that abilities and qualities at an organisational and individual level can be acquired with effort, as well as being able to learn from mistakes and seek improvement.

Here is a summary of actions that characterise the "growth zone" for both inclusive employers and multicultural employees.



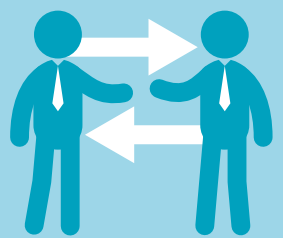

Multicultural Employees

- Be inquisitive and demonstrate willingness to share ideas with teammates
- Actively seek learning and training opportunities to expand skill sets and capabilities
- Set personal career goals and be proactive in taking on new challenges to pursue them
- Focus on efforts over innate talents or abilities
- Actively explore areas of interests and passion; chart plans for personal and professional development
- View obstacles and challenges as learning opportunities for personal and career growth

Inclusive Employers

- Review HR policies and make reasonable adjustments based on multicultural employees' needs
- Partner with NGOs and work closely with mentors/coaches to facilitate career growth of multicultural employees
- Facilitate sharing on best practices in DEI within the organisation and across sectors
- Actively promote inclusive culture within the organisation and team with visible culture elements
- Navigate common ground for invisible culture differences and maintain high flexibility
- Give room for multicultural employees to showcase their talents and share their personal journeys
- Set up Multicultural employee Resource Groups (ERGs), DEI committee, or other institutional structures to provide better support to multicultural employees
- Promote an inclusive workplace culture where multicultural employees are not defined by their ethnicities and cultural backgrounds
- Create a sustainable ecosystem in which everyone regardless of backgrounds can reach their full potential

Here are some guiding questions for individuals and organisations to reflect upon cultivating ethnic inclusion in talent development journey:

<p>1</p>  <p>Am I/ is our organisation in the growth zone currently? How far away am I/ are we?</p>	<p>2</p>  <p>What kind of support and resources might I/ we need to enter the growth zone?</p>
<p>What are some of the cultural and environmental conditions I/we need to shift to enable progress towards the growth zone?</p>  <p>3</p>	<p>What are some of the potential obstacles or challenges along the way? How might I/we confront them in a positive way?</p>  <p>4</p>

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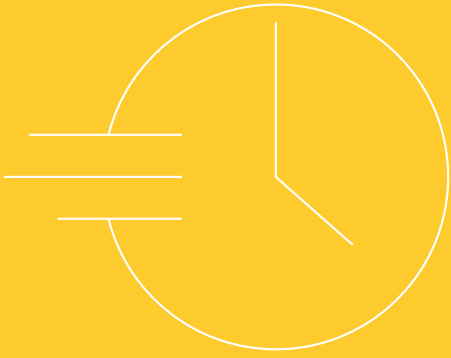
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