



# Diversity and Inclusion in times of global crisis

MANUAL COVID 19 FOR ORGANISATIONS



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**Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) has gradually become one of the most present terms in organisational managing.** Pressed by growing globalization, human mobility and intercultural interaction, the raise of awareness on human rights and the need for constant innovation and creativity to address current challenges, many organisations have developed their cultures, tested new solutions, recruited from more diverse pools, found new suppliers and engaged in internal policy changes to ensure equity.

However, during the current crisis provoked by COVID-19, the matter became somewhat endangered. Not only because of the economic consequences for many businesses and families, but also given that many inequalities became more evident and deepen the fragile situation of groups already in disadvantage. Limitations to individual

freedoms enhanced the effect of the rising of extremist political views. What we have considered to be protected basic human and democratic rights are now suffering a backlash in many countries.

LinkedIn estimates that *“more than 80% of the global workforce have had their workplace fully or partly closed as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, leaving more than a billion workers around the world at risk of financial hardship, according to research. The International Labour Organisation suggests the outbreak will wipe out almost 7% of working hours in the second quarter of this year, the equivalent of 195 million full-time workers losing their jobs. While many companies have implemented a hiring freeze, transportation, hardware and healthcare sectors have bucked the trend with an uptick in hiring growth, according to LinkedIn data.”*



At the same time, the way we work has been going through several changes due to the digital revolution, and more is yet to come.

According to McKinsey<sup>1</sup>, during crisis, organisations tend to recede in their D&I policies, mostly because their attention is devoted to other pressing matters, such as adjusting to new ways of work, consolidating workforce capacity, maintaining productivity, sense of connection and the emotional wellbeing of employees.

However, the psychological and economical effects of the pandemic have been disproportionately higher among groups of people that already suffer from various forms of exclusion. As an example, to evaluate the impact of COVID-19 on work-related quality of life (WRQoL) a study was conducted with a Portuguese-speaking sample, focusing on sexual orientation<sup>2</sup>. Participants responded to the “Work-Related Quality of Life” scale, the “Fear of COVID-19” scale and the “Negative Impact of COVID-19” scale (stress at work/career satisfaction, working conditions). It concluded that LGBT+ participants had scored significantly lower than heterosexual participants in all components. Inevitably, the pandemic brought higher consequences in terms of mental health and overall quality of life for sexual minorities, thus reinforcing the need to adopt inclusive policies in organizations and companies to improve their WRQoL.

With this short manual, we hope to contribute to highlight the importance of the continuous investment in D&I, now more important than ever.

Current times have showed us that:

- ▼ We are never fully prepared for a crisis
- ▼ Boundaries we have established between groups of people are not as important as we made them (virus do not discriminate)
- ▼ Different groups are affected in different ways by global crisis, and thus need different solutions to ensure equality of rights and opportunities

Although we are never fully prepared, many organisations are now testing new solutions, adjusting and learning at an impressive speed. We aim to collect these practices and share them, to promote further impact on more organisations and to gather the learnings from these difficult times for future global crisis situations.

**Also, we wish to make clear that D&I has been, and will continue to be, a key factor for resilience of business, enhancing innovation and profits. Now, more than ever, it is important to ensure equal access to rights, services and resources in order to promote social justice and continue benefiting from a diverse workforce.**

<sup>1</sup> McKinsey (2020): Diversity still matters. <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-still-matters>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.mdpi.com/1083410>

# Why D&I in times of crisis?



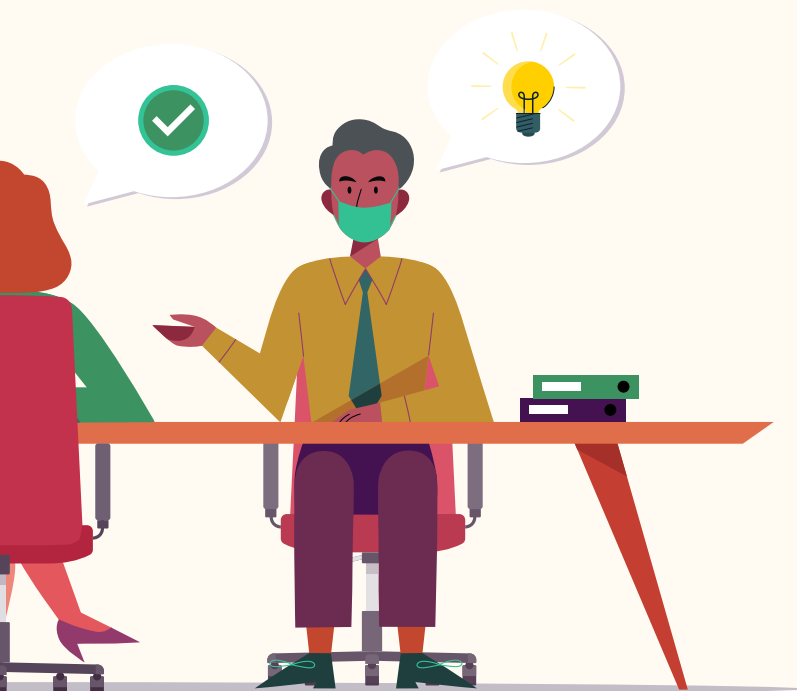
**The way we work and relate to each other is changing. Crisis situations tend to speed the change processes, and this is certainly the case in the current pandemic.** Most organisations have changed their work scenarios, learned new ways of taking advantage of technology and speeded up the transformation in order to ensure the continuity and prosperity of their business. The way each organisation uses this learning opportunity to make the shift permanent and step into the future will be decisive. How we position ourselves and deal with this sort of stressful situation is crucial. Investing into D&I is not only an ethical thing to do, but it also helps to build the organisation's image, reinforces the trust and engagement of staff and promotes the loyalty of clients.<sup>3</sup>

**Forbes** quoted Maureen Frank (Founder and Chief Disruption Officer of the diversity and inclusion library) as saying, "(There has) never been a time when it is more urgent for organizations



to leverage the voices of all their people – across genders, generations, cultures, ethnicities, and backgrounds”.<sup>4</sup> According to Frank, everything we have achieved so far at D&I has been under normal working conditions. The double challenge is whether these measures are effective despite the virtual and remote work. Is D&I still one of the leader's priorities? According to **McKinsey** reports published in Forbes, D&I will fail wherever it is considered as an organization model, instead of the priority and ideology of the leaders.<sup>5</sup>

**Organisations that continue investing in D&I will be more capable to deal with hardship and recover from the crisis, making the best out of their capacity for innovation and creativity, being able to grow and renew themselves by continuing attracting new and diverse talents.** It is also a well-known fact that resilience is higher in inclusive organisations, and that these tend to contribute significantly to overall societal cohesion.<sup>6</sup>



<sup>3</sup> <https://www.achievers.com/blog/diversity-and-inclusion/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kirstinfernugson/2020/12/08/covid-19-is-impacting-progress-on-diversity-and-inclusion-initiatives-when-urgent-focus-is-required-new-report-finds/?sh=69968a9b6bc4>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kirstinfernugson/2020/12/08/covid-19-is-impacting-progress-on-diversity-and-inclusion-initiatives-when-urgent-focus-is-required-new-report-finds/?sh=69968a9b6bc4>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.thegreatindoors.eu/>

Many managers and other experts have been stating that the future of work will be:



## REMOTE

Precipitated by the pandemic situation, **the trend to become more and more remote is here to stay**. The smart combination of remote work and office work, unique to each organisation, will be key to foster flexible work environments in the future.

Recent studies highlight, for example, that more than half the Portuguese companies are now thinking of continuing with remote work after the mandatory period. Many employees (around 60%) are also keen on working from home at least 2 to 3 times per week.<sup>7</sup>

Many companies realised that, by allowing for more remote solutions, they can:

- ▼ Save money, by reducing rental and fixed spaces costs.
- ▼ Allow for a flexible work that is more work-life balance friendly. Many companies struggle with creating this kind of environment in a fair way and have realised that remote work might be part of creating a solution, since it can be adjusted to each person's unique scenario and needs instead of creating fixed rules that everyone must adjust to.
- ▼ Have easier access to a more diverse pool of talents: Workers can be working from literally anywhere in the world, no longer having to choose leaving their current address to start a new job.
- ▼ Create opportunities for several groups like single parents, working women with unbalanced household work and caregivers.

- ▼ Allow employees to save money and time formerly used to commute to work, and thus make better use of their time and resources.
- ▼ Foster healthier behaviours from employees, like eating healthier, having time for sports walks and more breaks.
- ▼ Allow people to still stay productive, even if they are not sick but in mandatory quarantine at home.
- ▼ Increase motivation: some people look at remote work as a motivation and reward for their outstanding performance and this is itself a stimulus for better achievement of work goals.
- ▼ Allow to meet the organisation environmental goals, by reducing the impact of commuting, printings and energy consumption.



<sup>7</sup> <https://www.economist.com/special-report/2021/04/08/the-rise-of-working-from-home>



## BALANCED

The future of work might also improve work-life balance. The traditional and rigid division that settled strong boundaries between work and private life is disappearing, to be replaced by a flexible way of life. Our self is engaged into several activities each day, as part of our multiple identities and interests deriving from them. New generations are more and more requiring their employees to allow them to choose different work hours, take

long leaves or have part-time jobs in order to get the chance to work for several organisations at the same time, take courses or devote time to sports or a hobby.

This might also mean that **we need new policies to ensure privacy and a well-balanced work time, avoiding the risk of diluting too much the boundaries or overloading employees.**



## LESS HIERARCHICAL

Current times have also changed the way employees relate, and this is also true for hierarchies. More horizontal work relationships have been fostered for a long time and are a trend for many sectors. Employees need to feel they are listened to and can participate in decision making, and for many

organisations this was key to survive the crisis and find solutions in such a short term. Shared purpose means also shared accountability, symmetry and more engagement that foster commitment and retention. **This empowerment not only increases productivity, but also boosts staff motivation.**





## GLOCAL

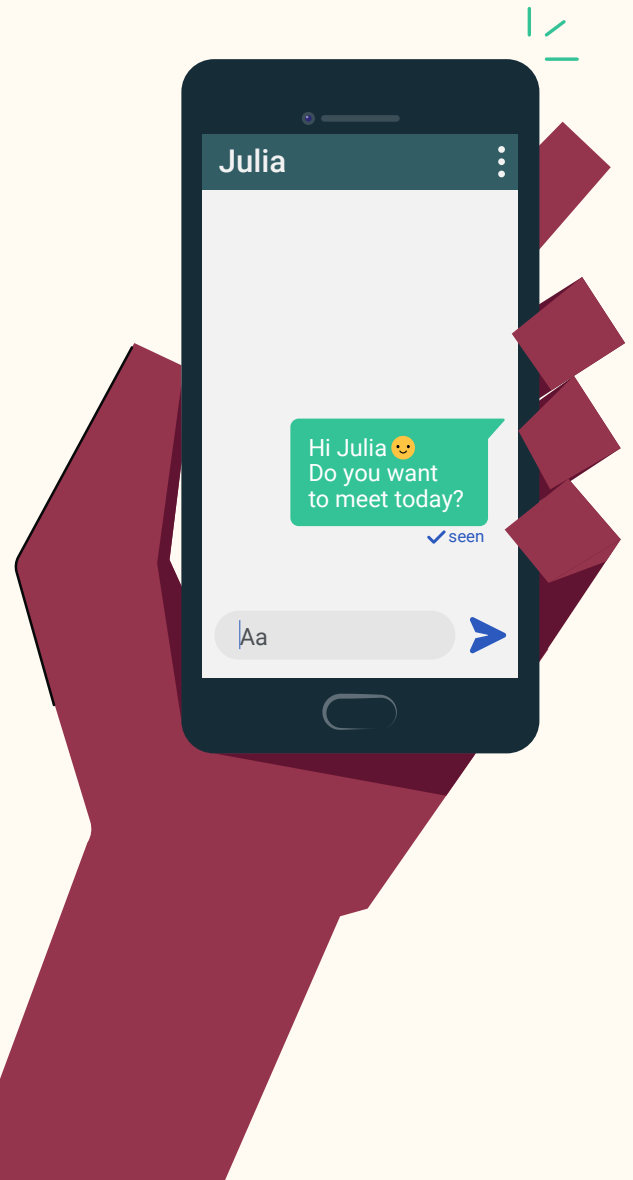
In contrast with the tendency to bring the world together through technology, the current situation is affecting the way we perceive and make use of globalization. New trends were already rising to consume more locally and reduce consumption, creating shorter circuits and thus favouring not only the quality of our products, but also the environment. At the same time, some commercial relations will become more robust than others, based on shared values, human rights and other non-financial criteria that will gain more and more importance. This trend was accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic and will mark our future and the future of the way we do business. The “Glocal” concept (*adapted locally with a globally cooperative ethic*) is one of the practical solutions to reduce the effects of pandemic crisis and slow down the environmental crisis.<sup>8</sup>



## DIGITAL

Digital tools have become essential in most fields and will make many of our tasks more and more easy and quick. They can even replace some existing jobs. Digitalisation is also one of the key factors to allow for more flexible work policies. Many organisations are now working to ensure access and digital inclusion to all their employees, by offering courses and equipment, and preparing employees to transition to new digital positions.

The jobs most likely to be replaced are those with less intellectual demands, meaning that the most fragile groups within the population will be the most at risk of losing their jobs, so ensuring everyone is equally placed to access new digital jobs is essential to ensure inclusion.



At the same time, increasing digitalization presents a risk, when not well managed. Many workers have felt an increase of meetings and overall work. Sight problems might be accelerated, and stress might increase.

<sup>8</sup> COVID-19 as a Catalyst for a Sustainability Transition. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15487733.2020.1765678>

Flexible work policies are still a target of stigma, and are many times associated only with new parents. However, other situations are increasing the demand for this type of solutions:

- ▼ caregiving to children with disabilities or to other family members with health needs
- ▼ need for conciliation with several jobs

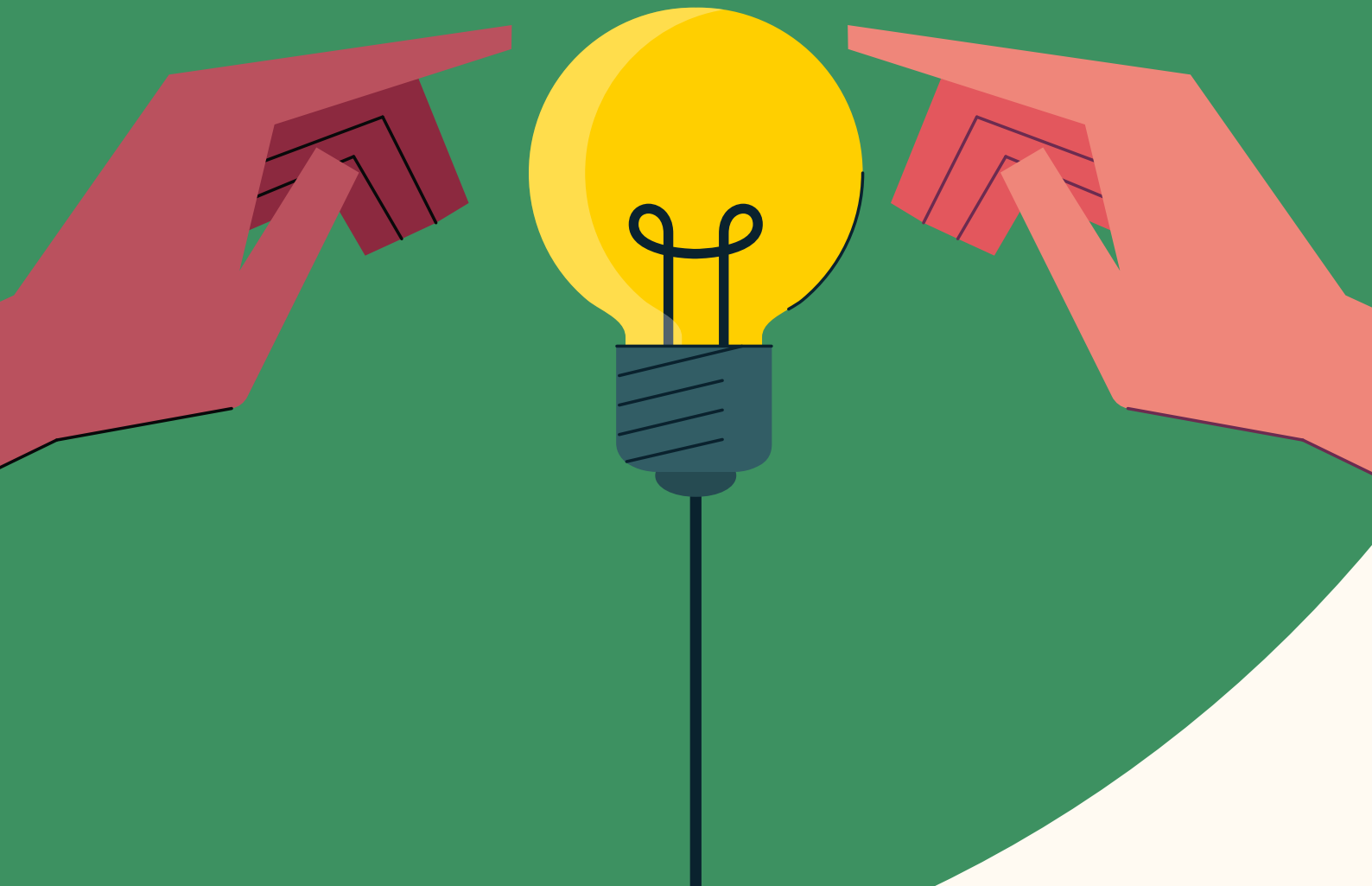
- ▼ need to change current location or address and/or residing further away from office

- ▼ increasing costs of living and transports in large cities and/or gentrification

Organisations that better adjust to this new reality will be better equipped to respond to the challenges and demands of the future.



# How can Diversity and Inclusion become an opportunity?



Research has shown that female leaders, for example, show more of the traits that are related to better organisational performance and apply types of behaviour that most effectively address the global challenges of the future: intellectual stimulation, inspiration, and participative decision making.<sup>9</sup> In the 2008–09 global financial crisis, banks with a higher share of women on their boards were more stable than their peers.<sup>10</sup> And we are seeing, right now, that cities and countries with women leaders are thought to be facing the COVID-19 pandemic more successfully.<sup>11</sup> According to reports in the *Times* magazine, **organizations that have been more advanced in terms of Diversity and Inclusion have performed significantly more successfully in the pandemic situation and have adapted better to it.** Individuals from different backgrounds bring a wide range of skills and talents. It enables the business to benefit from different perspectives, approaches, and ideas as well as influence creativity, flexibility and innovation. This leads to a more supportive, tolerant and inclusive workplace culture for all employees.<sup>12</sup>



## PROBLEM SOLVING AND INNOVATION



According to McKinsey, in the face of major dislocations, enhanced problem-solving skills and vision will be needed to reappraise business models, competitive dynamics, and the external environment. **Inclusive organizations are strongly positioned because diverse teams allow for multiple perspectives, reaching more creative solutions.** These organisations are also more likely to have employees who feel they can be themselves at work and are empowered to participate and contribute. Research also shows that diverse teams focus more intently on facts and process them more carefully.

It has been made evident along the past years that diverse teams are more innovative and stronger at anticipating customer needs and patterns, making new products and services possible, and thus generating a competitive edge. As an example, one study found that companies with more women were more likely to introduce radical new innovations into the market.<sup>13</sup> Another study found that businesses run by culturally diverse leadership teams were more likely to develop new products.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, McKinsey research on Latin America has found that employees in companies committed to diversity are about 150 percent more likely to report feeling they can propose new ideas and try new ways of doing things and report a pro-teamwork leadership culture.

<sup>9</sup> McKinsey & Company (2019): Achieving Gender Balance in Leadership. Why and How. [https://leadingtogether.org/media/1272/20190220\\_achieving-gender-balance-in-leadership\\_final.pdf](https://leadingtogether.org/media/1272/20190220_achieving-gender-balance-in-leadership_final.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> McKinsey & Company (2020): Diversity Still Matters. <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-still-matters>

<sup>11</sup> Forbes (2020): What Do Countries With The Best Coronavirus Responses Have In Common? Women Leaders. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/avivahwittenbergcox/2020/04/13/what-do-countries-with-the-best-coronavirus-reponses-have-in-common-women-leaders/?sh=722baa6b3dec>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.achievers.com/blog/diversity-and-inclusion/>  
<https://www.ihasco.co.uk/blog/entry/3007/the-positive-effects-on-inclusion-and-diversity-as-a-result-of-covid-19>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-still-matters>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-still-matters>



## ACCESS NEW TALENT AND RETAIN TALENT

The current situation has forced many organisations into remote working practices. That was not a possibility before. In fact, most are now realising the opportunities such practices entail. More flexible workplaces are an opportunity to attract new people and retain talents. As we have seen above, flexibility will allow the organisation to become better adjusted to everyone's needs and life circumstances, thus enhancing fair performance appraisals and staff development policies and attracting new people.

**The current feeling of solidarity is also a great opportunity to build agile, inclusive work cultures going forward.**

To ensure that all employees feel valued and motivated at a time of increased vulnerability, organisations might consider offering hazard pay or to extend health insurance and other benefits to help compensate for socioeconomic inequalities associated with, for example, the fact that minorities are disproportionately represented in essential work categories, which involve lower pay, more risk of lay-off during a crisis and more exposure to infection for them and their families.<sup>15</sup>



## MAINTAIN IMAGE AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY



Now is not the time to let the values you build upon behind, when they are needed the most. People are more aware than ever and will remember the actions your organisation took during the crisis. Not only is caring your ethical obligation, as not caring might mean risk losing customers, struggling to attract talent, and losing government support and partnership.

Your organisation can stand out by continuing to advocate for human rights and inclusion and making clear that no one is being left behind. If lay-off measures are inevitable, the way they are implemented makes all the difference.

Additionally, the way your organisation engages with local communities and contributes to local needs of hard-hit areas is crucial. For more ideas on what concretely your organisation can do, please see the next section.

## FOSTER RESILIENCE THROUGH INCLUSIVENESS



In the past, most business systems were designed for optimization and efficiency. However, in the light of a global crisis, resilience becomes a crucial factor for business success and survival. As pointed out by Martin Reeves, chairman of the Boston Consulting Group Henderson Institute, resilience beats efficiency.<sup>16</sup> One of the main characteristics to increase resilience is to create, maintain and promote diverse perspectives and approaches. **An inclusive working environment that embraces diverse perspectives and encourages perspective-taking, builds a solid basis for a resilient organisation that outperforms in fast changing crisis situations.**

<sup>15</sup> Florant, Noel, Stewart & Wright (2020): COVID-19: Investing in black lives and livelihoods, <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-and-social-sector/our-insights/covid-19-investing-in-black-lives-and-livelihoods>

<sup>16</sup> BCG (2020): Leading Out Of Adversity: <https://www.bcg.com/publications/2020/business-resilience-lessons-covid-19>

# What can organisations do?



## 1 PREVENT DISCRIMINATION, BIAS AND HATE SPEECH

We should also remember that, in times of crises, groups in most fragile situations are at risk to become even more exposed to several risks, mainly poverty, sickness, exclusion from education and access to basic services.

Remote-working conditions, if not well managed, can be harmful for inclusion. It can reinforce existing exclusion and biases that do not fit an inclusive culture. Communication becomes more challenging and confusing, those that are less knowledgeable of technology, less fluent or extroverts might feel even more left aside,

*Isolation leads to uncertainty about whom to talk with on specific issues and how and when to approach colleagues, leading to hold-ups and delays. In such a climate, there is a risk of amplifying non inclusive dynamics (...) Videoconferencing could make it difficult for some personnel, such as LGBTQ+ employees, to avoid publicly sharing aspects of their home lives they might not be comfortable revealing to all of their colleagues. Working from home also may put women and minorities at a disadvantage, given challenges such as broadband access, the availability (or lack) of home-office space, and childcare and home-schooling duties.*

McKinsey, 2020

These situations tend to increase solidarity, but also the risk of awakening underlying social tensions, racism, prejudice and xenophobia. This means that **organisations must ensure to have in place mechanisms to prevent hate speech and discrimination among workers, clients and the overall community.**



### This can be done by:

▼ **Communicating** to all workers the behaviour standards and how they apply to remote work as well. Make sure everyone knows nothing will be changing in the organisational culture, and that it stands for the same values as before. Also, make it clear that sanctions will be applied as before.

▼ **Providing training** on how to conduct webinars and online meetings in diversity sensitive ways, taking into account that some questions arise very often during these kind of contexts: introvert people might not be able to take part in meetings, extrovert might have a need to talk and express their feelings, people with disabilities can have hard time accessing all information, people speaking different languages might not be able to grasp all the information, internet failures might prevent everyone from taking part or listening to all the contents, PowerPoint shared with screen sharing will not be accessible to blind people, etc. Ensure that notes are compiled and that everyone has access to them.

▼ **Issuing statements** about what will be your actions for different scenarios: people from different nationalities might be facing inappropriate comments and jokes, people with health problems

might be facing discrimination or feel scared to go to the office, and so do not disclose their fragilities for fear of losing their jobs. They will need reassuring that the organisation will protect them.

▼ **Promoting social media campaigns** with positive messages that promote union and inclusion, publish leaflets with positive ideas, examples, and stories. Be careful, however, that your message is sincere and coherent with your D&I policies already in place.

▼ Ensuring mediation of comments and posts in social media.

▼ **Promoting and communicating about CSR campaigns** that encourage staff to engage with local NGOs, this will help them be more aware of different realities and how certain groups are being affected by the crisis.

▼ Publishing newsletters, promoting challenges and quizzes, **advertise the best places to gather information**, to keep people informed about the real data and information, and away from fake news and conspiracy theories.





## 2 INVEST IN INCLUSIVE REMOTE WORK PRACTICES

The first thing we should remember, is that this is not a regular remote working context.

People are simultaneously taking care of family members and friends, concerned by their future and that of others, managing the household, teaching their kids, managing conflicts, meditating, exercising and keeping healthy and, at the same time, learning how to use new tools and resources. Some people might even be in delicate situations, with family latent conflict coming to the surface, social and family pressure and even domestic violence.

Organisations are adjusting to remote work: they might have never done it before. Some had to place thousands working from home in 3 days. Some of the tools needed might be missing, workers might not be used to use them, or they can fail or be hacked. Security of data is at risk and client confidentiality can be an issue.

Some organisations have less work and need now to think out of the box to keep going and serve customers in different ways. In many cases, they are striving to save their business and, with it, thousands of jobs.

Others have extra work and demands and are trying to cope and keep delivering with less workers, making the best of existing available resources.

The psychological pressure is overwhelming and can have mental health consequences if not well managed. After all, we wish to keep going and be able to recover some of the losses after this is all over, right? We will need people to be well and to have enough internal resources to be able to recover from the trauma by then.

Many workers, a recent study reveals, are working extra hours and refer that working from home is more demanding and that they are spending more money on internet services and electricity. Conciliation has been a challenge, given the current situation, and being able to “turn off” is very hard. However, having the possibility to choose freely and autonomously when and how they complete their work is seen as the major advantage of remote work.

Unfortunately, most employees do not feel they are receiving enough support from their employers, and do not have the necessary conditions to be able to work from home. Many reveal needs like access to more office supplies and equipment (chairs, desks, computers), and more training to be able to master digital tools and deliver properly in a remote context.

At the same time, physical health is at stake, as many employees are using their home equipment, like inadequate chairs, desks and laptops, that used for long periods can have severe consequences. The lack of physical movement can also contribute to health problems.

With this in mind, we tried to gather a set of general recommendation for people and organisations using this type of solution:



▼ **Make sure everyone has the needed basic conditions to work from home**, given their work: working computer, good internet connection, desk and comfortable place to seat, phone, etc.

▼ Do not forget other conditions, like access to food, safe transports if needed, masks, disinfectant, etc.

▼ Also, try to understand each person's real availability to work, without intention to reduce salary or other benefits. Some organisations are even attributing extra fees to help people cope with the situation. Remember that each person is now using their personal resources to deliver (electricity, internet, etc.) which can incur in extra costs.

▼ Be sure everyone masters the needed tools: deliver webinars and tutorials, give extra support to people that might feel less comfortable using them. Some people might not feel comfortable assuming to the leadership that they do not master these tools, so keep the webinars open to everyone.

▼ **Establish regular contact:** each team leader should be responsible for checking in with all its staff (delegating some of the contacts if the team is too big) on a regular basis. This means not only about work, but also ensuring the general wellbeing and being able to detect if the person is overwhelmed, anxious, facing sensitive personal issues, in need of rest and/or reducing the workload.

**Be aware that the amount of contacts needed might not be the same for everyone:** some people might appreciate a daily call, others might find it more stressful to have the manager call constantly. Ensure these contacts are made at the best possible hours not to interfere with other activities.

▼ **Establish flexible working hours:** establish free days whenever possible, or negotiate working only 3 to 4 days a week, less hours per day, etc.

▼ **Re-analyse the KPI's and personal goals of everyone:** keep anxiety low, by rewriting each person's annual goals and reducing pressure for

compliance. Adjust them to the current situation and reduce pressure on long term projects.

▼ **Create online think-thanks** to reflect on how projects can be re-adjusted and/or delivered in different ways, analysing alternative scenarios and establish succession plans for when someone needs to take a sick leave.

▼ Negotiate with clients or donors the deadlines and the deliverables.

▼ **Create chat spaces** for the staff to share their concerns, but also ideas and tips, and keep engaged.

▼ **Regularly communicate to all staff** the initiatives being conducted in the several departments, the CSR initiatives, and other opportunities for people to get engaged with colleagues.

▼ **Promote partnerships with health professionals and practitioners**, like doctors and nurses, sports teachers, work health specialists and psychologists to deliver regular sessions to workers, with Q&A and tips to keep healthy and active during remote work.

▼ **Encouraging employees to provide feedback**, feedback makes employees feel heard, also helps to better identify the problem if it occurs in the system.

▼ **Focus on output**, set weekly or monthly productivity goals for performance measurement based on hours worked. It enables employees to perform their duties in more ideal conditions.

▼ **Provide emotional support**, the pandemic period has led to the isolation of people, only employees that are mentally healthy can use their full capacity to perform tasks.

▼ **Clarification of roles and responsibilities** leads to a higher level of accountability in employees and setting a standard process while working remotely eliminates the possibility of employee distraction.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.insperity.com/blog/managing-remote-employees7>

3

### INVEST IN THE PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH OF YOUR EMPLOYEES

Not only preventing employees from discrimination and hate speech but rather an active investment into their physical and mental health is crucial to keep team performance high and sustainable in the long-term. Social isolation can cause major damage to the psychological well-being of your employees. By offering psychological support, debates and awareness sessions, employees might get more equipped to face the psychological impacts related to working from home, facing the adverse circumstances imposed by the ongoing crisis. Free online sessions, including sports activities such as yoga and/or meditation exercises can further strengthen the mental and physical health of all team members.

While offering extra activities to increase employee well-being is important, employees should not be obliged to participate in those activities. **It is important to keep them optional and tailored to the individual needs and schedules of each person.** In a diverse team, life circumstances may



vary (e.g., need for childcare or taking care of elderly family members) which means that each person should have the right and feel free to decide which offers fit best their individual needs.

Furthermore, to decrease stress levels, it is crucial to assess the workload and current ability for each team member carefully. Mutual support among colleagues and collaboration among departments may not only strengthen the team feeling but also helps to distribute tasks efficiently based on current resources and availability. **To protect mental and physical health, it is vital in a crisis situation, for leaders and team members, to recognize and accept their own as well as other people's limits.** Praising colleagues and employees for achievements (even if these seem basic in comparison to things achieved previously) may help to keep the team motivation high and strengthen feelings of self-worth, which might have suffered from psychological hardship.

4

## INVEST IN INCLUSIVE AND SAFE MEASURES WHEN REMOTE WORKING IS NOT POSSIBLE

There are several concerns to be taken into account if your staff is currently going to work in your facilities.

Those have to do with:



### SAFETY

**Safety must be ensured not only within the facilities, but also during traveling and lunch breaks.** You might need to issue recommendations and ensure everyone has a safe alternative to get to work and have lunch, as many restaurants might be closed or with restrictions, and many organisations had to close their common spaces where people used to eat their lunches.

Also, some people can be part of risk groups, which means the organisation must take this into account in the safety measures. It can mean that these people will need alternatives and keep the remote work for example, or work in more reserved spaces.



### MENTAL HEALTH

Many people might feel anxious to have to go to work, use transports and have to be in the same space as other people. **A partnership with local health services or health workers to promote “how to keep safe” webinars can help reduce the anxiety and ensure employees have all the correct information before starting to move.** A list of recommendations for each specific job/task can also be distributed, and all employees must be

made aware that they must respect these rules, and be sensitive to the different levels of anxiety among colleagues: some might feel the need for more physical distancing, to avoid touching common equipment, etc.

Establishing a partnership with a psychologist that is available to make remote consultation with employees might also be a good investment.





## WORK LIFE BALANCE

Do not forget that many schools, elderly centres and other institutions might be closed, or people might not feel them safe enough, and thus might not be able to ensure that their loved ones are being properly taken care of. Some might have to incur into additional expenses or extra risks to ensure they are able to go to work every day. Supporting

(even if partly) babysitting or elderly sitting services might be a good solution.

Trying to grasp these different needs and concerns can help your organisation to take on initiatives to help ensure everyone has the proper conditions to start working.



## 5 ENSURE EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Above all, to ensure equity, **communication** is key.

Be sure you are not taking decisions assuming everyone has the conditions to work remotely, or to arrive safely to work every day. We must remember that every person is unique and has different needs and circumstances.

To be better informed, you can conduct a **small survey** using free platforms like google forms, mentimeter, slido, etc. that can be filled in using a smartphone. Make sure alternatives are in place for those without smartphones or internet connection.

The first question you should ask everyone is if they are able to work or prefer to take some time out, enjoy a small or prolonged leave or if they are available to deliver work from home (when applicable) or keep going to work every day. Make very clear if their jobs are at risk or not and make them part of the solution if they are.

Be careful that questions do not invade people's privacy and be sure they are written in a way that is easy to understand for everyone, and that does not conduct to potential feelings of shame or to potential situations of discrimination.

If workers are in remote work, you can ask questions like:



- ▼ Do you have at home the following conditions to develop your work: (list the tools people need)
- ▼ Have you experienced difficulties accessing these tools? Describe these difficulties and how we can help.
- ▼ Are there other tools you might consider to be necessary? Please list them.
- ▼ How many hours per day are you able to work? At what time?
- ▼ Are you concerned with some aspect of your life that might interfere with your work? If yes, how can we help?
- ▼ Are there any privacy concerns you might have? If yes, how can we ensure your privacy during this situation?
- ▼ Are you a part of a risk group and/or feel the need for extra health and safety measures?
- ▼ In what schedule is it best to contact you/ have online meetings with you?
- ▼ Do you appreciate/find useful to have regular contacts with your manager? If yes, how many times per week? How do you prefer to be reached?
- ▼ Regarding your projects, what are your main concerns at this moment? Are we able to meet the deadlines? If not, why? What do you suggest for mitigating the situation?
- ▼ Leave your concerns and suggestions to make the best out of your current work situation and conditions.

If they are coming to work every day, you can ask things like:



- ▼ Do you have transportation for work every day?
- ▼ If yes, how do you arrive to work every day: public transportation? Car? Walking? Bicycle? How much time does it take to get there? Do you feel safe during this commuting?
- ▼ Are you concerned with some aspect of your life that might interfere with your work? If yes, how can we help?
- ▼ Are you a part of a risk group and/or feel the need for extra health and safety measures? Please explain what these might be.
- ▼ Have you experienced difficulties accessing the tools you need for work? Describe these difficulties and how we can help.
- ▼ How many hours per day are you able to work?
- ▼ Do you have affordable and safe solutions to take care of family members and/or other people in your care while you are at work? If not, how could we help?
- ▼ Do you appreciate/find useful to have regular contacts with your manager? If yes, how many times per week? How do you prefer to be reached?
- ▼ Regarding your tasks, what are your main concerns at this moment? Are we able to meet the demands? If not, why? What do you suggest for mitigating the situation?
- ▼ Leave your concerns and suggestions to make the best out of your current work situation and conditions.

With regular personal contacts, try to understand if there are people **facing economic hardship**: they might have companions facing unemployment or closing their business, they might have family in need for financial support.

Try not to make radical decisions on reducing posts, salaries, and benefits, since they might be now more important than ever. Most countries have found temporary lay-off solutions that might be useful. If reducing posts is inevitable, try to make the fairer decisions possible, considering aspects like avoiding firing two or more members of a couple or household, or hitting the posts where more fragile groups work. Knowing how everyone stands from an economic, family, and mental health point of view can help make fair decisions. For example, some people might be interested in an early retirement but others with the same age might not. Some might be eligible for existing state unemployment support

or grants, others are not. Some might benefit from taking some time off but others not. Be careful when making decisions, not to be based on assumptions about people's lives. Try to engage the staff as much as possible in these decisions and make them within a context of dialogue.

**If your organisation is actually profiting or having more work during the crisis, it is an important moment to show your commitment to Diversity.**

If you are hiring you have an opportunity to employ people from the more fragile local communities and groups that are suffering the most and will be facing even more exclusion with the pandemic. Try to use this opportunity to make your workforce look more like the surrounding community and increase representation of diverse groups. You also have the responsibility to spend some of these profits in improving work conditions so that everyone feels safe and well.





Another important issue is that, if you do not offer full **health coverage** to staff, ensure they have access to free or low-cost health services nearby. You can also establish agreements with local clinics and doctors to ensure total access to all workers, thus ensuring protection also to groups in a more social and economically fragile situation within the staff. Remember that although medication and vaccines might be available, they may not be available soon for everyone.

Another important issue is **transportation**. Many people are now preferring to use bikes to commute, in order to avoid the use of public transports. Public transportation is mostly used by less privileged groups, thus subjecting them to more risks. This makes local hiring even more relevant: the closer people live, the less transports, time and resources they have to use. Does your organisation have places to park the bikes? And showers to make it possible for people to have a shower before starting to work? Are you thinking about giving support to the buying or renting of bikes? Or investing in your own bikes? Many cities now have shared bikes services (public and private), and some states are approving financial support

for their acquisition. A partnership with these organisations can be a good idea to make them more accessible for all the staff.

Keep staff informed about the **local norms and recommendations** for population protection against COVID-19. You might need to develop your own communication materials to make sure everyone has full access to the information. Ask yourself:

- ▼ Is there information available in all languages of workers?
- ▼ Is there information available in accessible formats for all workers with disabilities or that might not be able to read?
- ▼ Is there information arranged in a simple and graphic way for people that might not be able to read or have low literacy levels?
- ▼ Is the information reaching all workers?
- ▼ How can the organisation help all workers comply with these norms and keep safe?



## 6 INVEST IN SOLIDARITY AND COMMUNITY ACCOUNTABILITY



### SMALL LOCAL BUSINESS

**Many small local businesses are now in a very fragile situation, risking bankruptcy.**

As we well know, Europe's vibrant economy is mostly made of small and medium enterprises. If these companies close, many people will face unemployment, debts and this might mean facing a situation of economic setback for the entire family, as many of them are family-owned businesses. Also, many are migrant-owned businesses and other communities around the world depend on their income to survive. Migrants can be at special risk, given that their access to services and state support might not be so easy, depending on the country.

If unemployment rises too much, all our companies are at risk – clients will lose their ability to buy our services and products. And our community health is also at risk – people with less resources will eat less and less healthy food, exercise less, and be less able to take care of their health if sickness arises.

Organisations can start a deep reflection on how they can contribute to saving some of these businesses and lives.

Some contributions can help ensure these small companies keep selling and reduce costs. These might be:

- ▼ **List local companies:** start a list of local businesses and the services and products they provide. Try to contact the management and understand their capacity to operate and deliver under the current circumstances. If you can, share some resources you might have that can make

a difference (computers, internet connection, facilities, online training, etc.)

- ▼ **Contract new suppliers:** can some of these local companies be your suppliers? Maybe one alone cannot meet the demand, but if you combine 2 or 3? Local based companies will have the proximity advantage and can for eg. deliver more easily all the products you need to workers doorsteps.

- ▼ Gather some of your staff and **offer advice to these companies** on how to restructure their work to meet current demands: can they change their products or the way they make them? Can they deliver new services or adjust the existing ones? If so, what do they need in order to do that?

- ▼ **Help advertise local business and their services and products to other larger companies.** Do not forget that many of these smaller businesses might not have a big contact network and this is something we can help with.

- ▼ **Making online tools available and accessible:** some companies do not have in place a system to sell remotely (orders, secure payment, delivery). Are there tools your company owns or already uses that can be shared with these companies? Or maybe they exist, and there are cheap or free options, but the company needs to learn how to use it and take advantage of it. Some of your staff can maybe be of use here.

- ▼ **Exchanging services and products:** maybe some of your own products and services can be exchanged or shared and both organisations win. For example, delivery suppliers or internet services can be shared and thus costs reduced.

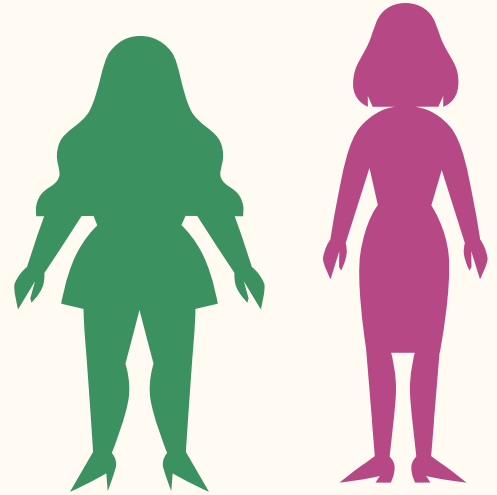


## SUPPLIERS

Do your suppliers face difficulties? Have you engaged with them to understand their difficulties and challenges? And to know how you can help?

Sometimes simple solutions can help save some of the organisations to whom you buy services and products, for example:

- ▼ **Pay earlier:** the payment plan can be revised to better help the supplier cope with financial difficulties. Sometimes an advance might be needed to be able to buy supplies or materials to respond to orders.
- ▼ **Ensure they can deliver remotely:** help your supplier reflect on how they can keep the demand using online tools, delivering part of the services and sell products online.
- ▼ **Identify new needs from your organisation and communicate them to all suppliers.** If now, given the situation, your needs have shifted, be sure to communicate them to your suppliers before cancelling contracts. Give them a chance to adapt and offer new solutions.





## LOCAL NEEDS FROM COMMUNITIES

**Engaging with local communities during crises is crucial.** Organisations need to be aware of real needs and local fragilities, and work side by side with local NGOs and grassroots to find solutions and decide how can they best make their contribution.

Most of the times, decision making regarding these contributions does not consider the views and opinions of local people. Be sure to engage directly to get to know their needs first-hand. Local NGOs can help achieve that and ensure that your support does not overlap with others.

If you need to hire, these organisations can also help reach and prepare more fragile groups, like people with irregular documentation status, people with lower literacy levels or single parents. Hiring people more at risk of social exclusion helps everyone – these people are then able to access more services and support, to improve their health and economic status, their children will have access to better education and the community evolves and thrives.

Corporate volunteering can also be a solution to engage with local communities and support NGOs to deliver basic supplies like food, to deliver legal or fiscal advice, to support isolated and elderly people, etc.

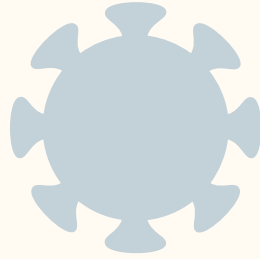
Delivering free training and webinars, establishing open door days, sharing your spaces and resources for local activities are all good ways to engage with local communities. For example, some companies are leading upskilling and reskilling efforts, such as instruction in coding for local communities. Others are investing in the extension of free internet at a local level or helping to deliver vaccines in most deprived countries.

Sharing some of your services and products, offering internet or computers to the local community to ensure they have full access to education and can work remotely can also be good investments.

There are already many examples of small and employee-driven initiatives to support neighbourhoods, towns, and cities, of companies encouraging employees to give back to them in nonfinancial ways (such as volunteering), and of larger corporations coming together to find innovative ways to minimize the pandemic's impact on public health and to limit disruptions to economies and supply chains.

**Remember that we must look out for our neighbours firstly and always, and the place where you are established makes you part of the community. How well do you know your community?**





## CONTRIBUTIONS TO HOSPITALS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS



Facing reduction of orders, many companies have transformed their production to make masks or medical supplies. Much like in other crises or conflict situations, the market adjusts to the needs. In these cases, the survival of the company was at stake.

Many other companies, being in a not so fragile situation, bought and donated supplies, allocated their staff to find technical solutions or offered their resources and spaces to support the COVID-19 prevention and treatment (for example, hotels nearby hospitals offered their rooms to accommodate hospital staff, or beer companies producing and offering disinfectants).

In any case, awareness to surrounding needs and the capacity to make quick changes and adjustments was key. This means the organisation needs to be flexible and allow for fast decision-making in order to be able to contribute actively and survive crises.

Most of these contributions mean more than nice words on billboards, and people are getting more demanding regarding their evaluation of CSR practices.

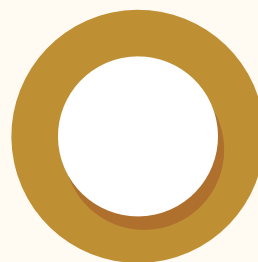
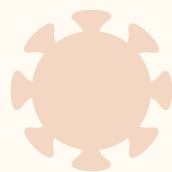
**Organisations must try to engage with local NGOs and health organisations before deciding how to contribute, to ensure that their contributions correspond to what is indeed needed and does not overlap with other contributions.**



## LOBBYING AND LEADING BY EXAMPLE

With the changes we are facing to the way we work. New laws and norms will have to be in place to ensure equality and inclusion. The risks are that, for example, as remote work and other new practices arise, organisations save money, but by transferring more responsibility and costs to employees and thus creating unbalance and injustice.

New ways of working will imply new laws and norms, and organisations of all sizes are very well positioned and can set the example, by promoting fair practices, sharing and advertising them, but also lobbying with policy makers to ensure a serious and thought-provoking discussion around consequences of measures.





## NEWLY HIRED STAFF

Normally, people start their first day at work by getting to know the office as well as socializing with new co-workers, which helps them to become more aware of the work environment, how the work is processed in the organization and understanding details of their work content. But with the current crisis and the shifting to home office and a digital environment, many newly hired employees are deprived of this advantage. **Adecco Portugal**, a talent consulting and HR solutions company, identifies the challenges facing organisations in this regard and offers solutions to reduce its negative effects;

**1-** Creation of a more structured and specific orientation on digital onboarding, which can be done through a document for new employees with the characterization of the company, values, strategies, leadership teams among others. It helps new employees to feel that they belong, even when working virtually.

**2-** Be clear about goals and results: a 30, 60, and 90-day plan is a good way to set expectations. Start the first few weeks with clear tasks.

**3-** Individual meetings: especially when working remotely, create frequent one-on-one and team contact points. This helps ensure communication flows, flagging challenges and assessing team well-being.

**4-** Buddies: Create a system where you can connect a new employee to a colleague who can support with all the issues around navigation in a new environment.

**5-** FREQUENTLY Asked Questions (FAQ) documents, tutorials and training can help new team members understand how to use the virtual tools that surround them. Links to computer security guidance and other resources also serve as support.<sup>18</sup>



<sup>18</sup> 5 Suggestions for integrating new professionals in the company in digital environment - Líder Magazine (sapo.pt)

# Case studies and inspiring practice



**EVERIS** in Portugal has set up working groups within staff to address all the issues related to remote work and returning to work facilities. Each group had specific tasks, as for example, ensuring the safety of working spaces, or setting up people's schedules. These groups issued recommendations that leaders used to make decisions and build a contingency plan for returning to work. This plan, besides basic hygiene and safety measures common to many organisations, included:

- ▼ Minimizing the number of people using the office
- ▼ Creating separate and reduced shifts for different people, to reduce the number of people at the same time within the office (accordingly to their preference/ possibilities)
- ▼ Ensuring all those belonging to risk groups remained in remote work.

**Switzerland's government** has found a way to give small businesses quick and easy access to funds. As many governments struggle to process the high volume of loan applications, the Swiss government managed to distribute SFr15bn (€14bn) to 76,034 companies within a week of launching an emergency package. Close co-operation between the government and banks, limiting paperwork, and using robots to process applications have proved key in making Swiss bureaucracy efficient. UBS from Switzerland, for example, has hired 300 extra employees and uses 100 robots to process requests as quickly as possible.



**AKF Portugal**, a NGO, has partnered with a mental health organisation to conduct a survey and deliver wellbeing webinars to all the staff, with tips on how to maintain a good work-life balance, work on reducing stress and increasing relaxation through mindfulness. For those that did not have the conditions to work from home, equipment was bought (e.g. internet connection, computers, etc.). A weekly "virtual coffee-time" was established, for all of those who wished to join, an informal space for gathering with colleagues and connecting directly to the CEO. Although returning to work became a possibility, AKF has issued a recommendation for all staff to stay in remote work as much as possible. Alternate shifts were established to ensure enough social distance in the office for those in need to use it.

Additionally, since AKF works with several communities in the greater Lisbon area, it has been developing other projects and initiatives to ensure equal access to information, as:

- ▼ Translation and publishing informational materials in the most representative foreign languages (also in video for those that cannot read).
- ▼ Distribution of information materials in most excluded areas.
- ▼ Creation of an online platform with reliable information and practical ideas, recommendation and advice by AKF/AKDN experts
- ▼ Support to local grassroots to support isolated people, deliver food and other essential goods.
- ▼ Development of prototype, hiring of local seamstress for production and distribution of homemade masks in most excluded areas.

**CTT**, the Portuguese post offices, created a committee to study the impact of the pandemic for workers and organisations and to create solutions to address the situation, even before the emergency status was established. Facing new and increasing demands, the organisation decided to invest even more in internal communication, using a more easy, direct, attractive and simple language. Within 24 hours, a phone line was created and in 3 weeks a direct communication line was created with all employees to deliver on time pertinent information.

**L'OREAL** developed a colour system to identify workers by their needs, considering their health situation, family needs, risk level and other psychological factors. The colours were then used to re-arrange teams in order to ensure that all teams had enough staff and that all needs were met. This meant also attributing tasks to people from different departments when needed. This measure also contributed to the company's overall corporate culture, since it boosted solidarity and empathy. People were thus also invited to better understand other departments and their work, facilitating communication and collaboration between departments in the future

**CALM**, a mindfulness app, donates part of their income to an association providing legal advice to the Black Community.

**EDP**, an energy company, had to place around 73% of their workforce under remote work in a very short period of time. A survey was conducted, and employees referred to have been able to manage their workload as well as in the office, and also referred to have felt extra benefits derived from working from home, as being able to eat healthier food or make more breaks.

**Facebook** is investing in internet cables that can bring better internet to the African continent.

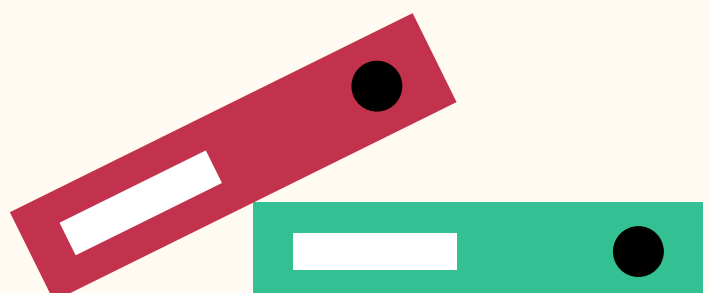
**Casa da Moeda** (Portugal): Introduced a “digital break” into their working strategy. To prevent burnouts people can only have digital conversations (chat, emails) between 8h in the morning and 20h at night. In addition, people can get free dinner at the organization's cantina. This applies also to retired employees who might be in need of extra support. Also, Casa de Moeda pays the Covid-19 test for employees at risk before they return to work even if it is not indicated by the local authorities.

**Google:** Employees were offered extra financial support to buy equipment that might be needed to ensure a safe and efficient working environment at home (e.g. to buy office chairs or technical equipment such as printers, etc.).

**Liberty** has adopted remote work for the future, attributing a yearly grant for all workers working from home of 660 eur.

#### **Governmental/ institutional practices:**

At the tax level, several measures were adopted, such as postponement of payments and compliance deadlines for tax and other reporting obligations. In terms of VAT, for example, some states approved measures to purchase protection material at a reduced rate. The Portuguese government gave automatic approval to all pending citizenship requests.





**Provident Poland** implemented a care program with the aim of promoting mental and physical health of employees. A mental health week, psychotherapy webinars and a special telephone line were implemented. Online sports and yoga classes and online coffee sessions with non-work topics such as parent online sessions were promoted.

**CEMEX Poland** has carried out various activities with the aim of supporting diversity; 52 COVID protocols and rules ensuring safe working conditions as well as free PCR and antigen test for CEMEX employees. Workshops, webinars, podcasts, e-learning courses and the CEMEX university were established to foster continuous learning.

Complex health strategies tailored to the needs of different groups of employees were promoted.

An inclusive leader's academy, including various groups of employees, established joint care measures in the areas of health, safety, welfare, development and respect. CEMEX Women Forum and Business Boutique counseling programs supported and promoted the personal and professional development of women. Also, a Virtual School project that taught virtual learning methods with Microsoft Teams was provided to schools at the outskirts of the CEMEX factories, covering 5,000 students in 22 schools.

**CCC Poland** supported the health care of their staff with measures such as: donating a percentage of the profits from the sale of Lasocki shoes as a campaign to support the Wrocław Specialist Hospital; Producing and delivering more than 32 thousand medical protective pieces to Boleslawiec, Zielona Gora and Legnica Hospitals; Supporting paramedics in local ambulance services by donating 4,500 T-shirts and 497 pairs of shoes for use under their protective clothing; Donating 20,000 disposable shoe protectors for medical staff.

**Orange Poland** presented teaching activities to support teachers in distance classrooms: 9,739 teachers participated in webinars. The company offered additional online classes for students on creative use of technology (3,105 students). The Foundation delivered a series of webinars for parents on limiting screen time, responsible screen usage and safe internet (803 participants). Computer equipment with software was donated to public education and care centers to provide access to education. The company prepared a series of educational workshops for seniors on the use of new technologies. Additionally, it provided free data transfer from educational websites, e.g. Librus, Vulcan, Eduelo, Ninatka and prepared a special offer for teachers, pupils and students called eduFlex.

**Siemens Poland** enabled employees to work continuously remotely, tailored to their abilities and needs. A new project was created with the aim of adapting the organization to the new form of work. Also, as a kind of continuous conversation, a space was created to express the opinions and needs of employees through regular surveys.

The company also created several working groups with the different topics of leadership, organizational culture, workplace technology and employee well-being in the form of a new project in an inclusive spirit. Regular surveys as a tool for employees to talk and express their opinions were conducted and ongoing communications of the board were ensured to communicate government and corporate decisions about COVID 19.

A pro-health/well-being activists' program was implemented, psychological support was provided and one-time pandemic payments were insured.

The employees' home office was equipped and antigen and CPR cyclical tests were provided freely. A "safe workplace" program was promoted.





**NatWest Poland** supported its community with weekly Covid-19 updates shared with everyone in the company. Weekly Zoom meetings were promoted to ensure time for sharing any questions and keeping everyone up to date. Office equipment rental was provided (chairs, desks, computers, monitors, etc.) for those who did not have the equipment at home.

A wellbeing program was initiated through the promotion of physical, mental and financial health activities. A 24/7 Employee Assistance Programme for all employees and immediate family was implemented as well as a financial support program. A hybrid way of working was promoted - employees were able to choose between working in the office or at home. Besides that, the company gave weekly donations of staff fruit to MSWIA Hospital.

**Santander Bank Poland** has taken significant steps to empower women and improve their skills at the beginning of the pandemic. An internal communication platform #SantanderWomen was used to organize development workshops to strengthen leadership skills of women and encourage them to take on new challenges in their professional lives. "Santander Women" podcasts about diversity, inclusion and leadership were regularly promoted. As a partner of the Women Update campaign, the Bank encourages women to take on roles in the technology sectors. In partnership with the Santander Group, the bank runs scholarship projects which focus on leadership skills and support for women in the labour market.

**The Thyssen-Bornemisza National Museum (Spain)** works to manage the changes led by covid-19 through the management of remote working, employee's mental health management, attention to motivational components, interactive management and continuous information during the months of confinement. Training adapted to the new needs, the updating of labor regulations, drafting of COVID protocols for staff, monitoring and compliance with protocols, stock control of the necessary PPE, etc. were created.

Actions after the museum reopens to ensure the safety of workers were taken, ensuring the return to work gradually and a blended system, reconciling face to face work and remote working with alternate shifts and hours of entry to work to avoid gathering in the common area.

The HR department, as part of the Health and Safety Committee, and the COVID-19 Committee monitored compliance and implementation of the protocols with the museum environment through measures such as obtaining the Bureau Veritas certification and the Safe Tourism Certificate from the Institute for Tourism Quality.

**Vodafone Portugal**, Facingtors, Sport Tv, Btv and Eleven Sport, made the decision not to charge consumers a monthly fee. Additionally, the operators announced the offer of 10 GB of data for mobile use. Also, €200,000 were donated to enable the DreamLab app to support research on antiviral programees as well as funding to UNICEF for scientific research to identify the most vulnerable in the crisis.<sup>19</sup>



<sup>19</sup> <https://www.vodafone.pt/covid-19-informacao.html>

# Tools for remote work



### Slido

Slido is an easy to use Q&A and polling platform. It helps organizations to have some interactive elements in their online sessions, e.g. people answering to multiple choice questions etc. The result can be seen directly and serve as a good basis for further discussions. It is a free tool that is available in several languages.

<https://www.sli.do/>

### Mentimeter

Mentimeter allows to create interactive presentations and meetings by offering live polls, quizzes, word clouds, Q&As to get real-time input. It can be used in remote, hybrid or face-to-face sessions. For up to 2 question slides and up to 5 quiz slides it is a free tool and there are more advanced versions available that are paid.

<https://www.mentimeter.com/>

### Kahoot

Kahoot is a learning platform that makes it easy to create, share and play learning games or trivia quizzes. The format and number of questions is variable and one can add videos, images and diagrams to the questions to amplify engagement.

<https://kahoot.com/>

### Klaxoon

Klaxoon offers collaborative tools to make presentations more interactive. Everyone with a phone, tablet, or computer can participate, vote, react and brainstorm in real time. There is a free version for up to 10 participants.

<https://klaxoon.com/>

### Google Meet

Google Meet is a video call platform designed primarily for business and office use. To set up and host a Google Meet session, you need to have a paid G Suite account, which costs approximately 5 Euros a month at its “basic” level. A Google Meet Basic account will let you hold a call with up to 25 people at once, while higher membership tiers will raise the limit up to 100 at once.

<https://meet.google.com/>

### Teams

Microsoft Teams is a collaborative workspace within Microsoft 365/Office 365 that acts as a central hub for workplace conversations, collaborative teamwork, video chats and document sharing. Microsoft Teams is for free with a capacity of 200 participants and a maximum duration of 60 minutes per meeting. More paid options are available.

<https://teams.microsoft.com/uswe-01/downloads>

### Zoom

Zoom is a cloud-based video communications platform that allows to set up virtual video and audio conferencing, webinars, live chats, screen-sharing, and other collaborative capabilities. There is no need for an account to attend a Zoom meeting, and the platform is compatible with most systems (Mac, Windows, Linux, iOS, and Android).

<https://zoom.us/>

### Skype

Skype is a programme to make free video and voice one-to-one and group calls, send instant messages and share files with other people. It is free of use and if paying a little extra, people can make phone calls and send SMS.

<https://www.skype.com>

### Trello

Trello is a project management tool that allows to manage projects or tasks through boards, cards and checklists to improve collaboration among colleagues and team members. There is a free version and more sophisticated versions with advanced options can be bought additionally.

<https://trello.com/>

### Asana

Asana is a project management tool that enables people to Organize and assign tasks. With lists, teams see immediately what they need to do, which tasks are a priority, and when work is due. There is a free version and a more advance paid one.

<https://asana.com/>

### DocuSign

The DocuSign electronic signature app provides consumers and professionals with a simple way to electronically sign and return documents from almost anywhere in the world, using any device. You can purchase a monthly plan that costs around 10EUR/ month.

<https://www.docusign.com/>



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# Final Notes



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