

I&D, diversity in practice

Diversity is the unexpected present and the undoubted future of Polish organisations. Companies that want to emerge from this ordeal should consider the area of DEI (diversity, equity, inclusion) as a key business issue. We discuss how to make inclusivity an integral part of the working environment with members of the I&D Council at Aon, a firm that supports better decision-making.



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Rokšana: The origins of the Inclusion & Diversity Council or rather the two councils, one in Krakow and one in Warsaw, seem rather interesting.

Magda: And inspiring. The I&D strategy at Aon is a global matter since it affects the whole firm. In the beginning, employee initiatives related to specific projects and events were created in our three Polish offices separately, ad-hoc and 'on demand'. In time, those teams started to look after these matters closely, adapting the organisation's activities to local conditions and needs. The approach has changed since. What does the council's work look like today?

Rokšana: We currently operate as one combined team, reporting to the I&D Sponsors in Poland, and planning local strategies and frameworks. Our main goal remains to support and celebrate diversity within the organisation, so that employees with different backgrounds and needs can feel fully themselves, can unleash their full potential and in turn drive innovation, both internally within the company as well as externally, with our clients.

Magda: Definitely! This also goes hand in hand with the idea of Aon United. Through teamwork of both offices, we can use the skills and competencies of many different people, incorporate their best ideas, and keep growing. As an integrated team.

Rokšana: "One, big, happy family"! 😊 Thanks to this approach, we have been able to implement many projects already. Among the most important initiatives I would mention inclusive language training and initiatives that support people with disabilities, panel discussions on topics such as men's mental health or challenges of working parents, as well as interactive events like Book Club and I&D Games.



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Magda: And let's not forget the wide range of training courses, those face to face as well as online: Aon makes sure they are accessible to all employees regardless of their learning or accessibility needs. We can choose the appropriate language, use subtitles or audiodescription if and as necessary. On this occasion, it is worth mentioning the overall global structure of our firm – what is the current structure of the I&D teams across the organisation?

Roksana: We are part of a much larger organisational grid. There are as many I&D councils as there are individual companies in the countries where we operate (over 120). Everything is overseen by a global Diversity and Inclusion committee in cooperation with regional and local employee associations known as BRGs (Business Resource Group). They enable continuous improvements related to the needs of our employees and thus continue to educate and spread empathy among our colleagues at the firm.

And with that, there's still one key question to be answered – what's next?

Magda: Well, we have just finished working on the local strategy for 2023. We have analysed the activities of previous years and lessons learnt. We continue to evaluate and use the feedback and ideas coming directly from our Aon colleagues. We want all our initiatives to be an integral part of the company's culture and therefore involve all colleagues. In the next 2 years, we will be focusing our work on expanding I&D initiatives and promoting inclusivity not only internally, but also externally – on any social media platforms, whether it is a digital article or a form of a podcast.

Roksana: There is still a lot of work ahead of us.

Magda: Definitely. It's important that we continue the dialogue internally and externally and that we continue to inspire and motivate.

Roksana: So... Until next time!

