



**IUL School of Social Sciences**

Department of Social and Organizational Psychology

Workplace diversity in Portugal: a qualitative analysis of initiatives  
implemented by diversity charter signatory organisations

Maria Clara Cavalcanti Bezerra

Applied Project submitted as a partial requirement for the conferral of

*Master in Psychology and Intercultural Relations*

Supervisor:

Joana Alexandre, PhD, Assistant Professor,

ISCTE - University Institute of Lisbon

Co-supervisor:

Miriam Rosa, PhD, Integrated Researcher and invited Assistant Professor,

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## **Abstract**

Diversity, as one of the most representative aspects in contemporary societies, has been a topic of research of many disciplines since the 1950s (Crisp, 2010; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). Nevertheless, it remains a great challenge to society, and, by extension, to its organisations. The Diversity Charters' initiative represents a collective effort that seeks to foster diversity and inclusion in organisations. In 2017, the Portuguese Charter promoted the first edition of an award to acknowledge inspiring practices in diversity management. The present study sought to analyse the applications submitted for the inaugural edition of the Diversity Stamp, seeking to gain knowledge on how diversity was framed by the organisations in their submission, as well as to identify and present the dimensions of diversity explored, and types of initiatives that were enacted. A sample of 13 applications, drafted by six of the participating organisations, was analysed within the framework of thematic analysis. It was found that diversity was described as an asset by the participants, who mostly covered age, gender, disabilities, cultural background, and socioeconomic status as dimensions of diversity in their practices. Additionally, three broad approaches to diversity were identified: employee welfare (including work-life balance); tackling biases; and social responsibility. The results are discussed in light of the literature on diversity management, according to the relevant identified themes. Recommendations for future applicants and for future research are presented.

**Keywords:** workplace diversity, diversity management, diversity charter, thematic analysis

### **PsycINFO Classification Categories and Codes:**

(3600) Industrial & Organisational Psychology

(2900) Social Processes & Social Issues

## Resumo

A diversidade, um dos aspectos mais representativos das sociedades contemporâneas, tem sido tema de pesquisa desde a década de 1950 (Crisp, 2010; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). No entanto, continua a ser um grande desafio para a sociedade e, por extensão, para as organizações. A iniciativa das Cartas para a Diversidade representa um esforço coletivo que busca promover a diversidade e a inclusão nas organizações. Em 2017, a Carta Portuguesa promoveu a primeira edição de um prémio de reconhecimento de práticas inspiradoras na gestão da diversidade. O presente estudo pretendeu analisar as candidaturas apresentadas para a edição inaugural do Selo da Diversidade, procurando conhecer como a diversidade foi enquadrada pelas organizações, bem como identificar e apresentar as dimensões da diversidade exploradas e os tipos de iniciativas implementadas. Uma amostra de 13 candidaturas, elaboradas por seis organizações, foi analisada no quadro de uma análise temática. Verificou-se que a diversidade foi descrita como uma mais-valia pelos participantes, que, maioritariamente, cobriram a idade, o género, as deficiências, o contexto cultural e o status socio-económico como dimensões da diversidade nas suas práticas. Além disso, foram identificadas três abordagens gerais à diversidade: bem-estar dos trabalhadores (incluindo o equilíbrio entre vida profissional e familiar); combate aos preconceitos; e responsabilidade social. Os resultados são discutidos à luz da literatura sobre gestão da diversidade, de acordo com os temas identificados. São apresentadas recomendações para futuros/as candidatos/as e para futuras pesquisas.

**Palavras-chave:** diversidade no trabalho, gestão da diversidade, carta para a diversidade, análise temática

### **PsycINFO Classification Categories and Codes:**

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## Introduction

In a 2015 report focusing on the European population, Eurostat found that demographic changes are among the continent's greatest challenges, as mobility and migrations increased, together with other developments regarding modifications in gender roles and family composition (Eurostat, 2015). Such changes in the population have an impact in the general society, in the workplace, in the households. Based solely in such a finding, it is already perfectly understandable the necessity to promote initiatives in order to ensure the inclusion of all those that compose European societies.

Charles Darwin, in his 1859 seminal work *On the evolution of species by the means of natural selection, or the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life*, explained that through evolution species with greater chances of survival were those that were able to adapt. Expanding on his conclusion, it becomes increasingly clear that the societies and organisations most likely to expand and thrive are precisely those that are willing and open to change, that can manage change effectively in order to take the best of the mixture of cultures; in sum, those that learn how to profit from the value associated with diversity.

There are indeed studies that link diversity to positive outcomes for organisations. It has been found that when organisations' leaders foster management in such way, their companies are more likely to engage with innovative ideas and strengthen their competitive capacity (DeGraff & Mueller, 2016; European Commission, 2003; Hewlett, Marshall, & Sherbin, 2013), and when the work environment stimulates innovation and creativity, diverse teams have better performance (Jehn & Bezroukova, 2004).

The Diversity Charters initiative is a part of the European Commission's efforts to explore and profit from the benefits of diversity and inclusion. By uniting forces, exchanging practices, it becomes easier to face the many challenges presented and the many more that will certainly appear. The European Platform for Diversity Charters fosters the sharing of good practices and lessons learned also at the European level.

Recent data shows relevant figures regarding several diversity dimensions for the Portuguese population: the net migration in Portugal is positive for the first time since 2010; citizens aged 65 and above place Portugal as the fourth European country in terms of

advanced age; women of other nationalities were responsible for 10% of all births in 2017, even though only 4.1% of the population is foreign (Oliveira & Gomes, 2018). A more in-depth analysis of demographic trends certainly points us to the need to better integrate in society the diverse groups that are a part of the Portuguese population; it is understandable that in 2016 Portugal rose up to the challenge and joined the European Commission initiative, creating its Diversity Charter.

As it was formalised, the Portuguese Charter set up different working groups, and one of those was dedicated to the design of an endowment to acknowledge inspiring diversity practices. As a result, the Charter held the first edition of the award, dubbed Diversity Stamp, one year later. The applications for the 2017 Diversity Stamp (*Selo da Diversidade 2017*) were the object of the present paper.

The present study aims to gain knowledge on how diversity was framed by the applicant organisations in their submissions. Furthermore, it seeks to present which dimensions of diversity were explored by the participants, as well as to provide an overview of the types of initiatives submitted to the 2017 Diversity Stamp.

This project work is divided in five sections. Chapter I includes a review of relevant literature concerning diversity and inclusion, then moves on to explain its relevance to organisations worldwide. It also includes information regarding diversity initiatives, and provides an overview of the European Diversity Charters. Chapter II describes the methodological steps put in place. Chapter III explains the results found, and contains insights on the content of the sample of applications to the 2017 Portuguese Charter Diversity Stamp regarding how diversity dimensions were approached by the candidate organisations and the kinds of initiatives they consider exemplary. Finally, chapter IV discusses general aspects of the findings and its limitations.

## Chapter I. Literature Review

### 1.1. Exploring the Definitions of Diversity and Inclusion

According to the findings of a systematic review conducted by Williams and O'Reilly (1998), since the 1950s diversity has been a target of research under different disciplines, such as Psychology, Sociology, Communication, Anthropology, Education, Economy, and Communication. Nevertheless, conceptualising diversity has been a difficult task for academics; it has been captioned as “a poly-functional term used to describe and analyze the complex dynamics in today’s society” (Braedel-Kühner & Müller, 2016, p. 7).

The elaboration of the term provides many possible approaches, so scholars have coined a number of definitions throughout the years trying to grasp this challenging theme (Goodwin & Longoria, 2010). Van Knippenberg and Schippers (2007, p. 516) define diversity as “a characteristic of social grouping that reflects the degree to which objective or subjective differences exist between group members”. Goodwin and Longoria (2010) describe it as the variability in characteristics that can be perceived and treated as differences. The concept may also be construed with a focus on the power imbalances, unequal access to resources, and uneven societal influence that is associated to those with different social identities (Bond & Haynes, 2014; Cox, 1994, as cited in Hays-Thomas, 2004).

Diversity studies vary greatly not only in the way the topic is defined. They might be centred on specific groups according to, for example, race, gender, or age (Gordon, 2015); others remind that the combination of multiple diverse characteristics creates faultlines, which might cause different, additional effects on intergroup relations (Rink & Jehn, 2010); and some researchers will dedicate themselves to figure out which factors are associated with outcomes regarding group processes (van Knippenberg, De Dreu, & Homan, 2004).

To add another layer of complexity, it is necessary to reflect on the possible dimensions that could be considered when defining diversity. However, the variability of characteristics in humankind is countless. Dreachslin (2007) explains:

Although every human being is unique, with a distinct and individual temperament, each person is also a member of a wide array of identity groups. Some identities are chosen by the individual, such as membership in a professional association or a

religious affiliation, while some identities are assigned by society based on the individual's outward characteristics, such as gender, race, and physical ability. (p. 81)

Studies might also focus on the many possible diversity dimensions that range from easily noticeable or visible aspects (e.g., age), to others that are more subjective, difficult to identify such as psychological characteristics (attitudes, beliefs, personality, cognitive skills, etc.) or personal background features, such as educational level (Bond & Haynes, 2014; Brewer, 2010). Mannix and Neale (2005, p. 36) synthesised in a table previously studied diversity variables (Table 1):

Table 1

*Categories and types of diversity*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Types of diversity</b>
Social-category differences	Race Ethnicity Gender Age Religion Sexual orientation Physical abilities
Differences in knowledge or skills	Education Functional knowledge Information or expertise Training Experience Abilities
Differences in values or beliefs	Cultural background Ideological beliefs
Personality differences	Cognitive style Affective disposition Motivational factors
Organizational- or community status differences	Tenure or length of service Title
Differences in social and network ties	Work-related ties Friendship ties Community ties In-group memberships

Qin, Muenjohn, and Chhetri (2014) reviewed different definitions of diversity and found that, while there are several academic conceptualisations, their divergence usually fall in one of three aspects: the aspects used to distinguish people; in which level is the diverse dimension in consideration (if individual or collective, for example); and the ways a person's characteristics can be construed as being diverse.

But studying diversity, its positive and negative effects on human relations, the ways it might affect behaviours and attitudes, or exploring its conceptualisations, surely is not just a matter of theoretical models. Comprehending the topic holds an overall relevance, related to the acknowledgement of the many changes that have taken place, and the challenges posed by the composition of contemporary societies.

Nevertheless, the concept of diversity is itself neutral; it is an attribute, which simply describes the state of being diverse without explaining how the integration of diverse groups works, for example. Social Psychologists, among scholars from other scientific backgrounds, in their research on diversity, are certainly contributing to a broader goal: effective inclusion.

Inclusion, as described by DeWall (2010, p. 439), “refers to being accepted as part of a group, organization, or two-person relationship”, in opposition to the concept of exclusion. The need for acceptance is considered one of the most basic human motivations, according to Baumeister and Leary (1995), who explain that such drive for belonging is likely one the most relevant constructs to the overall understanding of the human psyche.

This far-reaching conceptualisation of inclusion can be narrowed down to describe the intent to operationalise diversity (Woods, 2002). In this sense, inclusion overarches the idea of deliberately dedicating efforts so that those traditionally excluded or underrepresented can feel as a part of the group, and is the most likely result of good practices in managing diversity (Hays-Thomas, 2017). Diversity studies, therefore, are crucial to assist with the formulation of inclusion approaches.

## **1.2. Relevance of Diversity and Inclusion for Organisations**

The topic of diversity and inclusion has continuously increased in relevance and will likely keep following such track. As explained by Crisp (2010), diversity has turned into the

most representative aspect as well as one of the most discussed features in contemporary societies.

Contact between different cultures is expanding as the technological development creates bridges across the world, and the trends point to a growing migratory flow, with migrants becoming an esteemed 3.3% of the global population (Goodwin & Longoria, 2010; International Organization for Migration, 2018). Benet-Martínez and Hong (2014) state that the present day society is characterised by cultural diversity, and they further explain that because of migrations, globalisation, history of colonisation, among other factors, contribute to the fact that intercultural (and, therefore, diverse) interactions and experiences are increasingly common.

When taking into account demographic changes, scholars have long ago predicted the fundamental importance of integrating different groups into the workforce (Cox & Blake, 1991; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). Hays-Thomas (2004), nonetheless, emphasises that not all differences create inequality, and directs her focus on the ones that “are likely to affect their acceptance, work performance, satisfaction, or progress in an organization” (p. 12).

A recent comprehensive report by McKinsey & Company presented as key findings, among others, that: there is a positive correlation between diversity and better financial performance; the companies that had lower metrics on gender and ethnic/cultural diversity had lower profits; and that the presence of multiple diverse characteristics on executive teams outperform (Hunt, Prince, Dixon-Fyle, & Yee, 2018). Their overall conclusion was that the business case for inclusion and diversity is increasingly compelling, and its relevance is globally spread. Other studies were able to associate diverse teams with efficiency (Altiner & Ayhan, 2018); with competitiveness (Cox & Blake, 1991); and in some cases diversity was found to be linked with companies' performance and return on investments (Herring, 2009).

Kulik and Roberson (2008) pointed out the irony between the general acknowledgment of the business case for diversity and the academic findings of negative outcomes related to a diverse workforce. Nevertheless, many commonly used arguments against diversity, such as that a diverse workforce diminishes the organisation's effectiveness, that women are not as committed to their jobs as men are, or that hiring persons with

disabilities involves excessive costs, are not always empirically sustained (Thomas, Mack, & Montagliani, 2004).

But the understanding of diversity as a positive, added value is absolutely not a new approach. Since the 1990s, it has been pointed out that the anticipated disadvantages of heterogeneous work environments can be mitigated and changed into an invaluable organisational asset (Hays-Thomas, 2004). A literature review conducted by Urwin, Parry, Dodds, Karuk, and David (2013) showed that companies experienced benefits in diversity, but it wasn't a homogenous finding for all kinds of organisations at all contexts; nonetheless, their research points that the management of diversity plays an important role on the business outcomes.

Indeed it is a common conclusion to many studies that the effective management of diversity is required for the organisations to truly profit from it (Kulik & Roberson, 2008), otherwise it may even turn into a financial burden (Urwin et al., 2013; Cox & Blake, 1991) and negatively impact team dynamics (Dreachslin, 2007). Groutsis, Ng, and Ozturk (2014, p. 27) summarise such idea when they define diversity management as “the strategic alignment of workforce heterogeneity to include and value each employee equally on the basis of their diverse characteristics, and to leverage organisational diversity to enhance organisational justice and achieve better business outcomes”.

In this line of thought, it becomes clear that simply hiring a diverse workforce is not sufficient; increasing the representational diversity but without engaging with practices to include them is linked to a variety of poor organisational outcomes, such as work-related stress, underperformance, or premature turnover (Hays-Thomas, 2017). To be able to reap the benefits of its plural workforce, many organisations carry out projects or operations to accomplish their best potential.

### **1.3. Diversity Initiatives**

Managerial mindset towards inclusion is important, as it requires the deliberate decision to see and to treat the diverse workforce into an organisational advantage (Hays-Thomas, 2004). Urwin et al. (2013) found that companies which have already been involved

with approaches to diversity and inclusion are less likely to consider the possible costs of such as a burden, for they are prone to see such costs as a way of reaching business benefits.

The way diversity is framed, if positively or negatively, can also have an impact. As Shore, Chung-Herrera, Dean, Ehrhart, Jung, Randel, and Singh (2009) put it, it is most common to study or to gauge diversity from a reactive point of view, as an aspect that must be dealt with. The authors indicate that changing the way diversity and inclusion are looked upon is a good way to start, suggesting a shift in mindset “from management and control to opportunity and possibility” (p. 127).

There is a large number of possibilities when it comes to implementing diversity practices. Accordingly, organisations of any size or type can surely find one that fits its purposes, as initiatives can come in the form of social events, recruitment procedures, staff benefits, trainings, employee mentoring, or career development plans (Kulik & Roberson, 2008).

However, depending on how the practice is developed, it may have ironic effects; there is evidence that prejudice-reduction initiatives, as well as diversity actions, can reinforce prejudice and stereotyping, trigger polarisation among participants, or even expose the promoting organisations to legal liability (Legault, Gutsell, & Inzlicht, 2011; Von Bergen, Soper, & Foster, 2002). But other studies point to more positive outcomes, especially when diversity is integrated, which means it is part of the organisation’s development strategy (Bezrukova, Jehn, & Spell, 2012). Considering this, exemplary practices are important to fulfil the intended purposes.

In a nutshell, Hunt et al. (2018) have identified four general guidelines to ensure inclusion and diversity can generate positive business impacts. Institutional leaders should take initiative and communicate their vision to the whole of the company; the approach to inclusion must be based on the organisation’s overall strategy for growing; designing a portfolio of potential initiatives is helpful, so that the priorities can be pursued through different paths; and making sure that the practices are adaptable or able to accommodate the local context, target groups, or area of business might increase its potential benefits. Such conclusions are almost identical to the ones drafted by Urwin et al. (2013) in their review.



## 1.4. Diversity Charters

Developing strategies to promote diversity and inclusion might certainly be a challenge. In order to tackle the initial constraints some organisations may have, it can be very useful to rely on advice and inspiration either from groups that are going through similar issues or from more experienced crowds. Networks of like-minded institutions can profit in gathering with such focus.

In this spirit, one of the strategies to promote diversity in organisations that is currently taking place around Europe is the Diversity Charters initiative. A Diversity Charter is a voluntary commitment that institutions can sign and that contains several guidelines, measures and/or recommendations that signatories should take in order to assure equal opportunities and diversity in the workplace (European Commission, 2015; Charte de la Diversité en Entreprise, 2018). They were created to promote inclusion and diversity policies organisations, and grants the signatories support, access to tools, as well as to a network of peers (European Commission, 2019).

The first European Diversity Charter was the French one, created in 2004 (European Commission, 2015). But each national or local context has a role in the way organisations strategise their approach to diversity. So, over the course of the years, 23 other countries followed the example: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden. In 2010, the European Platform of Diversity Charters was formalised, establishing an ongoing exchange between charters (European Commission, 2019).

The Portuguese Diversity Charter was the 16th European Charter, formalised in a public ceremony in 2016. In its document, diversity is described as the acknowledgement, respect, and appreciation of people's differences, such as sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, belief, place of origin, culture, language, nationality, citizenship, ancestry, age, political, ideological or social orientation, marital status, family situation, economic status, health condition, disability, personal style, and education/training (Carta Portuguesa para a Diversidade, 2016).

Ever since it was created, the Portuguese Charter has been gathering a growing number of institutions (see Figure 1). A number of working groups were created in order to explore different areas, such as education, monitoring and reporting indicators of diversity, Charter sustainability, communication, employability, and also a diversity practices laboratory. Organisations of various typologies (e.g., multinational companies, government institutions, universities, foundations, nonprofits) are part of the Charter and regularly engage with its activities.

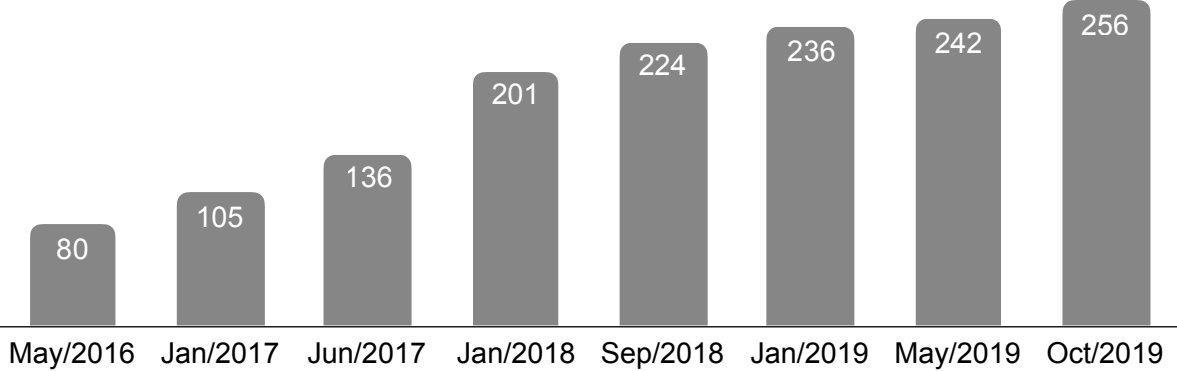


Figure 1. Evolution of the number of Portuguese Diversity Charter signatory organisations

Initially, the Charter followed a governance structure composed of Executive Commission, Consultative Council, Secretariat, and the working groups. As of November 2018, the structure changed; the Portuguese Association for Diversity and Inclusion (*Associação Portuguesa para a Diversidade e Inclusão - APPDI*) was formalised and is currently responsible for running the Portuguese Charter’s activities nationally and internationally. The APPDI was created in order to ensure the further development and the sustainability of the Portuguese Charter, and its mission is to promote diversity and inclusion in different organisations and in the Portuguese society, liaising with the relevant national and European institutions to follow its activities (Carta Portuguesa para a Diversidade, 2019).

The Portuguese Charter is greatly engaged with the Platform of Diversity Charters, having promoted small-scale actions together with the Czech Charter, and having hosted one of the EU Platform of Diversity Charters Meetings in January 2018.

### 1.5. Portuguese Charter's Diversity Stamps 2017

The idea of creating an award to distinguish good practices in diversity management was born together with the Portuguese Charter itself. From the Charter's onset, a working group was set up to develop its framework. Fifteen organisations participated in this group's activities, and contributed to the definition of the award's name and image, categories to be considered, application procedures, evaluation criteria, writing the regulation (Carta Portuguesa para a Diversidade, 2017b), and electing the jury. It is also important to acknowledge that the Diversity Charters from Luxembourg and Spain were partners throughout this process, as they were direct sources of inspiration, and provided relevant insights according to their experiences with similar initiatives.

Diversity stamps applications were submitted according to six categories, as explained in its celebratory report (Carta Portuguesa para a Diversidade, 2017a):

1. *Top and senior management commitment*, by fostering conditions towards understanding, respecting, and promoting diversity as a strategy of the organisations' leaders;
2. *Organisational culture*, meaning the mutual respect, acknowledgement, and consideration of the individual talents and differences that are part of the organisation;
3. *Recruitment, selection, and human resources management*, when equal treatment and opportunities are considered throughout the processes of hiring, onboarding, training, appraisals, career development, and salaries;
4. *Professional and career development*, by promoting diversity as a source of improvement and learning, taking into account not only the economic advantages, but also its positive impact towards meaningful experiences;
5. *Charter communication*, as the dissemination of the Diversity Charter and its principles to employees, clients, suppliers, partners, and to the general public;
6. *Work conditions and accessibilities*, by promoting and respecting diversity through the consideration of people's needs and characteristics to the workplace.

Also, according to the Portuguese Charter (Carta Portuguesa para a Diversidade, 2017a), six criteria were considered by the jury when evaluating the applications. They took into account the *impact* (results achieved towards more diversity); *innovation* (new practices

or that previous ones that were adapted to new contexts); *replicability* (possibility of serving as an example to other organisations or different areas of the company); *extent/range* (to which point it has been implemented or has reached different groups, such as employees or stakeholders); *management* (matters related to the project's management, monitoring, and evaluation); and *sustainability* (if the practice is framed in the organisation's commitment to continuous improvement as part of its strategy).

## Chapter II. Methodology

### 2.1. Participants

All organisations involved with the Portuguese Diversity Charter were invited to apply for the Diversity Stamps award. As determined by the Stamps regulation (Carta Portuguesa para a Diversidade, 2017b), only signatory institutions could apply. For this study, the participants were signatory organisations which applied to participate in the Portuguese Charter 2017 edition of the Diversity Stamps and agreed to share their application. There were 16 institutions which submitted practices to the 2017 Diversity Stamp; six of them agreed to contribute to the present study by sharing their applications. Table 2 displays the number of participants by organisational typologies.

Table 2

*Participants by organisational type*

Organisational types	Frequency
Small company	2 (33.3%)
Medium company	1 (16.7%)
Large company	2 (33.3%)
Non-governmental / Non-profit	1 (16.7%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>6 (100%)</b>

The analysed applications were submitted by organisations of different sizes / typology, as seen on Figure 2. No public sector (central or local administration), or public companies applications are represented within the current sample. Table 3 summarises the sample and the total number of applications per category.

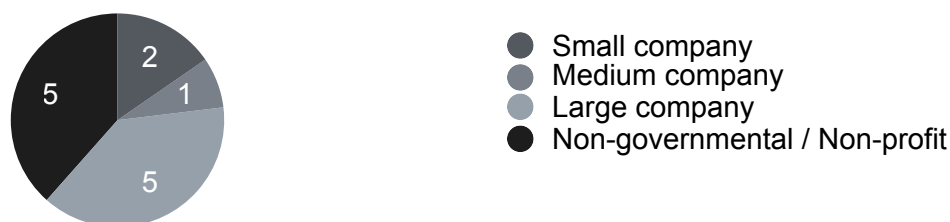


Figure 2. Diversity Stamp 2017 applications sample according to organisational type

Table 3

*Applications according to the Diversity Stamp's categories*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Sample</b>	<b>Sample %</b>
Top and senior management commitment	3	1	33.3%
Organisational culture	6	4	66.7%
Recruitment, selection, and human resources management	4	2	50.0%
Professional and career development	3	2	66.7%
Charter communication	4	1	25.0%
Work conditions and accessibility	9	3	33.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>44.8%</b>

## 2.2. Procedure

### 2.2.1. Data collection

The call for applications for the first edition of the Portuguese Charter Diversity Stamps took place between 22 May and 31 July 2017. The application procedure required the submission of:

- One application form (Appendix 1);
- One sworn statement, declaring that: the application describes faithfully institutional working practices; the organisation is not being investigated or convicted of wilful or gross labour law violations; and the organisation is compliant with its obligations toward social security, tax authorities, and the European Social Fund;
- Attachments (optional, additional information to support the submission; images, organisational reports, manuals, etc., up to a maximum of three documents).

The application form was submitted online, via the Google Forms platform. The sworn statement and the attachments were sent to an e-mail address created by the Portuguese Charter exclusively for the purpose. The ensemble of those files represents the data corpus.

It was necessary to obtain the consent of the participant organisations to use the data for the present paper. All the organisations that applied for the Diversity Stamp were contacted via e-mail by a representative of the Portuguese Charter Executive Committee, and asked to grant authorisation for their submissions to be accessed. Once the organisations gave

their consent, their application files were downloaded: the forms, the sworn statements, and the attachments (when applicable).

Access to 13 applications was authorised out of a total of 29; these application forms represent the data set of this study. Such data set is relevant to this project, as it represents the types of practice seen by organisations as potentially worthy of recognition/award, as well as the different dimensions of diversity they wish to explore.

### **2.2.2. Data analysis**

In order to explore the dimensions of diversity presented in the 2017 Diversity Stamps, this study resorted to qualitative methodology, namely thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Burnard, Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008), to examine the application forms submitted. This method was chosen as it is flexible enough to allow for the data to be approached in a focused way, as it was sought to elicit which dimensions of diversity were mentioned in the applications, as well as the types of practices that were presented before the Diversity Stamps jury.

Initially, the submissions were read multiple times. Each submission was assigned an identification number for reference in the paper, and a summary with annotations about the applications was drafted to assist with the process of familiarisation with the data. After the familiarisation phase, a first version of codes was created.

The process of coding did not follow a strict data-driven, inductive approach; instead, as the research had a clear target, the choice was made to pursue a top-down approach to the specific topics related to the intended goals, such as identifying dimensions of diversity. However, as pointed by Braun and Clarke (2012), it is simply not possible to conduct an analysis that abides exclusively to one of these approaches; so, despite being mostly a deductive analysis, there was an induction exercise in this work, especially when reviewing the types of initiatives.

The subsequent step involved identifying and reviewing the different themes that were common across the sample of applications. It was sought, then, to delimit the themes, working on how they would be framed in the context of the analysis. Finally, once the themes were properly defined, it was possible to report the findings along with examples. It is worth

noting that, where relevant, principles found in content analysis such as quantifications (Vala, 1986) were also used to present the findings.

The sworn statements were not used for analysis, as they did not contain relevant information regarding the research subject. As for the attachments, they were checked for reference but not analysed, as they were not a core part of the submission.

Measures were adopted regarding ethical considerations. First of all, the participant's express consent was requested. Moreover, to ensure the confidentiality of those who granted access to their applications, the necessary omissions/redactions were done whenever excerpts were presented.



## Chapter III. Results

### 3.1. General findings

The most frequently used words in the data set are presented in Table 4; “diversity” was the second most used word used in the ensemble of applications, having been written 271 times, while the most frequent word was “employees” (*colaboradores*), cited 329 times.

Table 4

*10 most used words by rank, count, and frequency in applications*

<b>Word</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Frequency in applications</b>
employees ( <i>colaboradores</i> )	1	329	13 (100.00%)
diversity ( <i>diversidade</i> )	2	271	12 (92.31%)
clients ( <i>clientes</i> )	3	135	8 (61.54%)
training ( <i>formação</i> )	3	135	10 (76.92%)
organisation ( <i>organização</i> )	5	133	13 (100.00%)
project ( <i>projeto</i> )	6	128	12 (92.31%)
management ( <i>gestão</i> )	7	113	13 (100.00%)
practice ( <i>prática</i> )	8	106	13 (100.00%)
people ( <i>pessoas</i> )	9	105	10 (76.92%)
resources ( <i>recursos</i> )	10	100	13 (100.00%)

“Employees” and “clients” were frequently used words, as these two groups were the main targets of the submitted practices. “Diversity” was, as one could have certainly anticipated, referred to repeatedly by the participant organisations. Nevertheless, one application form made no reference to the concept.

To illustrate the connections between the themes and sub-themes which emerged as a result of the data analysis, a thematic map was drafted (Figure 3). Of pivotal relevance, diversity is represented on the map surrounded by the identified dimensions (age, gender, disabilities, cultural background, socioeconomic status). Diversity is what motivated the

implementation of initiatives, that were categorised in three frameworks (social responsibility, employee welfare, and tackling biases).

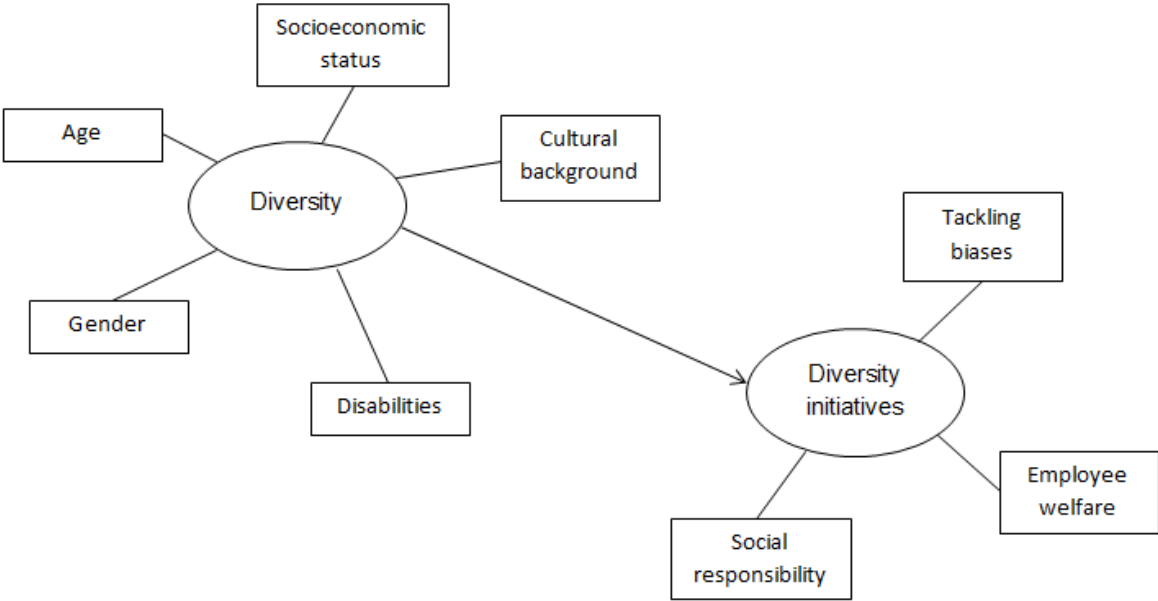


Figure 3. Thematic analysis map

The applications addressed diversity as an asset to the organisations, as exemplified below. It was phrased in relation to positive outcomes, such as innovation, increased level of quality in services, and productivity.

- *“Diversity is the driver of a positive transformation in the quality of our services, which enables us to respond more appropriately to the diversity of the customers we serve”* – Application 01
- *“[we are] aware that it is through the diversity of a team that we can achieve professional success. [...] appreciation of diversity and heterogeneity of [employee] profiles, in order to create innovative synergies within the working group”* – Application 02
- *“overall diversity – acknowledgement that difference will make it easier for us to relate and interact, which will lead to a more productive workplace”* – Application 05

- *“to draw attention to the potential of diversity and inclusion for the efficiency and effectiveness of teams. [...] address diversity as a driver of innovative solutions and creation of internal and external opportunities” – Application 11*

The idea of diversity as a moral / ethic standard was mentioned as well. Furthermore, there was reference to the need to shift the standpoint and to see diversity in a positive light, and to the fact that it conveys a favourable image regarding the organisations.

- *“[the organisation] believes that respect for the human being, which translates into their individual diversity and the representativeness found in the communities in which they live, is a moral imperative and an ethical duty in its activities as a socially responsible company” – Application 03*
- *“[...] raise awareness of this very same difference as Diversity, and not as an obstacle to full community integration” – Application 04*
- *“It also demonstrates [the organisation’s] concern for diversity and inclusion practices, having a positive impact on the company’s image and brand both internally and externally” – Application 09*

As presented in the thematic map (Figure 3), with regard to more specific aspects, it was possible to identify multiple categories of diversity within the sample. Additionally, different ways to frame the submitted initiatives were recognised.

### **3.2. Dimensions of diversity**

The participant organisations, in their submitted practices, pointed to several dimensions of diversity in which they focused their initiatives. Meaningful approaches identified in the sample covered the following categories: age; gender; disabilities; cultural background; socioeconomic status.

Other dimensions were cited in some of the submissions but did not constitute a pattern across the sample of applications analysed, such as religion, race / ethnicity, sexual orientation, geographic location within Portugal, and level of education. Furthermore, there were instances in which reference was made to dimensions of diversity but the application did

not provide more information on the way they were being approached in the practice. In these cases, the references were excluded in the process of reviewing coded segments.

### 3.2.1. Age

Organisations of all different typologies represented in the sample (small, medium, large companies and non-profits) included the topic of age diversity. While it was present in nine applications (69.23% of the sample), there were different ways to approach the subject. For instance, some institutions sought to engage with young professionals or to reach out to high school students in their practices:

- *“support and guidance to young groups (university, secondary or technical students), whether as internship (annually we have many interns), support with execution of works, or counselling and contact with the labour market”* – Application 02
- *“This project arises from the need to inspire young people to choose their profession free from prejudices, towards a more tolerant and inclusive society. [...] initiatives/measures to overcome the limitations identified by students with regard to their professional goals”* – Application 03

Others give more weight to the particularities regarding the presence of different generations in the workplace, considering such dimension one of the priorities in their intervention:

- *“a professor/researcher presented the Portuguese and European realities in relation to age in the workplace, the challenges and stereotypes associated with it and how what we value changes with age”* – Application 05
- *“The implemented measures are part of a 3-year action plan focused on 4 dimensions: Gender, Generations, Disability and Nationalities, and 5 basic principles: prepare the organisation, where this training in Diversity and Inclusion is inserted with a focus on Unconscious Bias; raise awareness; know the numbers; highlight, promote and define governance”* – Application 11

More than one application raised the issue specifically when discussing children and the need for better work-life balance. The following excerpt exemplifies this topic:

- “[The practice arose from] *a demand raised by many caregivers during vacation period – occupation of children's free time, and not having a place in which to leave their young relatives*” – Application 10

Additionally, different age groups, both young and old, were cited as being customers/clients of the participant organisations, as illustrated by this excerpt:

- “*The diversity of our intervention (children, the elderly, people with disabilities) has facilitated the assumption of issues of diversity and rights of all those who interact in the institution (clients, employees, families and partners)*” – Application 01

### **3.2.2. Gender**

Gender diversity was a category cited in seven different submissions (53.85% of the sample). This dimension was covered in the initiatives promoted by large, small, and non-profit organisations. Submissions in general provided information on gender representation in the target audience and/or in the organisations, while others indeed gave more weight to the topic, considering it as a part of the institutional strategy on diversity.

Some of the participant organisations mentioned gender balance as part of the specific goals to be achieved. Both women and men were referred as being a target of initiatives’ objectives; women were cited by a technology company, while men were underrepresented in a non-profit organisation:

- “*Long-term objectives include the positive impact on recruitment, which may ultimately enhance the proportion of the underrepresented gender [female] in the organisation* – Application 07
- “*To increase by 20% the number of male employees with the aim of creating greater parity in the future, over the next 10 years*” – Application 01

In other applications, gender or gender-related aspects were less pronounced as a specific goal, but were still referred among the achieved results:

- *“With this project, a greater diversity in the team of employees was promoted, namely in terms of gender, ethnicity, age, religion, culture, area of origin, language, nationality”* – Application 06
- *“Other groups that were not initially contemplated are also benefiting from the changes identified and made to the space, such as pregnant women, people with baby strollers, with temporary injuries needing the use of crutches, etc.”* – Application 09

### **3.2.3. Disabilities**

With regard to people with disabilities, six of the submitted practices (46.15% of the sample) took this dimension into consideration. Applications that covered this topic were written by non-profit, large, and medium organisations.

The necessity to implement adaptations to improve accessibility was the most raised concern:

- *“This diversity of ethnicities, religions, nationalities, conditions of health and well-being required, on the part of those involved, an adaptation effort in order to respond to the particularities of each person. This adaptation occurs in contexts, for example, related to [...] accessibility (children and young people who need other types of care in order to guarantee their safety and well-being)”* – Application 10
- *“This initiative aims to promote a comfortable and safe physical, sensory and social environment in the company for all its employees and visitors. It also promotes accessibility and mobility in the organisation's premises, contributing to a culture of diversity and inclusion”* – Application 09

Accessibility with regard to communication, not only to physical space, was also mentioned in the applications as clearly illustrated by this excerpt:

- *“Respect for the diversity of people who participate in these sessions (people with intellectual disabilities with different cognitive skills, people with low education, with compulsory education or with higher education) is evidenced by the diversity of presentation methodologies that is also a differentiating factor of this practice. Expository, demonstrative and active methods are used so that the perception of the same*

*reality is understood by all target audiences. We also use augmentative communication for clients who have oral or written language impairments” – Application 04*

### **3.2.4. Cultural background**

Issues around cultural background and national origin were referred to by non-profit organisations, medium, and large companies. It was a part of the initiatives in seven submissions (53.85% of the sample).

Raising awareness on the concerns associated with cultural diversity was seen as a part of the goals aimed to be achieved through the practices in this sample and as a part of organisations’ strategy for inclusion.

- *“a professor/researcher came to share some of the dimensions that make up culture, spoke about the advantages of multicultural environments, how we build identities and belong to groups, what are stereotypes and how we communicate them in such different ways. At the end of this session, we had 3 employees who shared their international experiences, stereotypes and cultural shocks” – Application 05*

In some applications, it was made explicit that fostering cultural diversity in the workplace is an important topic for the institutions.

- *“Increase by 10% the diversification of the cultural origin of the institution's employees over the next 10 years” – Application 01*
- *“[...] mainly in the area in which we operate – social area –, there is a permanent appeal to the foreign workforce, through migrations, for the execution of social support activities” – Application 04*
- *“Of the people integrated in the new facility [as an outcome of the practice] 20 are women, 6 men; 7 different nationalities are present: Portuguese, Cape Verdean, Brazilian, Angolan, Sao Tomean, Romanian and Ukrainian” – Application 06*

### **3.2.5. Socioeconomic status**

In six applications (46.15% of the sample) submitted by small, medium, large and non-profit organisations, the topic of socioeconomic status was raised. Some of the initiatives

were designed to reach out to people in a vulnerable socioeconomic situation, for instance, unemployed groups registered in a low-income area, workers who are experiencing financial difficulties, or providing opportunities in association with partner non-profit organisations.

- *“The selection process was developed in partnership with [a public] employment centre based on the unemployed people enrolled there, ensuring greater coverage and diversity of functional profiles. [...] This group [of newly hired workers] is characterised by gender, age and social background diversity”* – Application 06
- *“Intervention of support, help, guidance and referral of employees in situations of social vulnerability. Support for employees in situations of social and economic need, who are not already covered by other social support measures in the community”* – Application 08
- *“[The organisation] continues to distinguish itself by being open to the external community and by opening doors, completely free of charge, to children and young people from other institutions to have the possibility of having a different summer, also contributing to the construction of a space of conviviality and relationship between people from different realities, each one with its own specificities”* – Application 10

It has also been mentioned how this category of diversity may constitute a hindrance to the lives of those that come from a less privileged social background, as this excerpt demonstrates:

- *“Taking into account the scope in which this project arises, we are constantly faced with the segregation of the labour market and the tendency to associate the choice of future profession with limiting barriers, such as gender, socioeconomic group, among others. Because we know that young people make choices in most cases limited by barriers or prejudices imposed on them by their context, origin or personal characteristics, we want to help change this way of thinking”* – Application 03

### **3.3. Initiatives**

The diversity initiatives presented by the six participating organisations were briefly summarised in Table 5, having been grouped according to their typology.



Table 5

*Types of initiatives submitted to the 2017 Diversity Stamp (sample) and their frequencies*

<b>Type of initiative</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Organisational methodologies and processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redrafting managerial systems documents</li> <li>• Promoting staff retention</li> <li>• Recruitment and training through partner institution</li> <li>• Performance appraisal system combined with staff development plan</li> <li>• Staff welfare and assistance practices</li> </ul>	5 (38.46%)
Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop and activities for secondary and high school students</li> <li>• Bootcamp for high school students</li> <li>• Summer camp for children</li> <li>• Artistic events</li> </ul>	4 (30.77%)
Training on diversity-related topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity and inclusion awareness week</li> <li>• Unconscious bias training</li> <li>• Weekly thematic meetings</li> </ul>	3 (23.08%)
Structural change/adaptation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving accessibility</li> </ul>	1 (7.69%)
<b>Total</b>		<b>13 (100%)</b>

Within the sample, it was possible to identify three broad categories of approaches to diversity in organisations. The initiatives covered employee welfare (including work-life balance); ways to tackle biases; and social responsibility as a driver of the practice. It is worth noting that there were cases in which a same practice was placed in more than one category, as they were non-exclusive.

### **3.3.1. Employee welfare**

Practices that aimed to promote staff welfare were present in four of the submitted initiatives (30.77% of the sample). A part of those were enacted in order to improve work-life balance, as exemplified both in topic 3.2.1 (age diversity) and below:

- *“at the beginning of the school year, the company allows parents who wish to accompany their children's integration into school to arrive later”* – Application 02

- *“Parenthood support: Possibility of integrating employees' children in the summer camp, to be implemented in July, with a trip to the beach and leisure activities, with payments adjusted to the socio-economic context of their households; Work-life balance: through the implementation of a take-away meal system by the institution (dinner)” – Application 08*

Additionally, it was pointed that increasing employee welfare had broader positive effects for diversity; in this case, by improving accessibility:

- *“This is an initiative that goes beyond the company's concern for the welfare of its employees, also benefiting our customers, external partners, suppliers and visitors. It is an evaluation that allows the continuous improvement of the company's spaces and is not limited to a type of disability such as motor disability, but covers a wide range of physical, sensory and cognitive limitations, favouring universal accessibility” – Application 09*

### **3.3.2. Tackling biases**

As for nine initiatives (69.23% of the sample), efforts were implemented in order to reduce bias and prejudice. Most of them focused on increasing awareness to unconscious biases and stereotypes towards different aspects of diversity, as demonstrated by these excerpts:

- *“We had the presence of [...] a consultant specialised in cultural change and unconscious stereotyping, who came to address the 10 inclusive behaviours that are a reference for all [our] employees. After explaining what these behaviours consist of and how we can be more aware of and practice them, we had a more practical part in which role-plays on stereotypes were done in groups” – Application 05*
- *“[The project] is aimed at in-house staff, with the aim of preparing the organisation for the theme of diversity and inclusion with a focus on unconscious bias, making the organisation aware of the company's position on these issues, drawing attention to the impact of bias in the decision-making process, and alerting to the potential of diversity and inclusion for the efficiency and effectiveness of teams” – Application 11*

- “[The] *project allows [female] students to get closer to the labour market, contributing to an informed and conscious decision at this stage of their academic career, by debunking barriers associated with some professions*” – Application 07

There was also reference to the promotion of intergroup contact as a way to raise awareness about different dimensions of diversity:

- “*The [organisation's summer] camp allowed children and young people with different backgrounds to be placed in the same space for socialising and interacting. On the one hand, the family members of our employees have a homogeneous standard in terms of cultural and identity traits; on the other hand, the [partner third sector] institutions that participate [...] have different areas and audiences of intervention. [...] We believe that this sharing of experiences has contributed to raising awareness among both audiences to the multiplicity of diversity contexts that may exist in the same space and of how we all have the role of contributing to the common well-being, collaborating in facilitating the needs of all*” – Application 10

Another practice sought to use inclusive means, such as art forms, as a possible way to concretely express diversity and inclusion:

- “*Communicating respect and the promotion of rights and diversity through art is innovative, as it is a different and diverse way of approaching this concept especially when we are talking about people with disabilities, the elderly and children. [...] At the same time it is a form of inclusion for all, as it is carried out by different people, without singling out any individuals. With this project it is possible to illustrate and materialise the issues of diversity and difference*” – Application 13

### **3.3.3. Social responsibility**

Seven submissions (53.85% of the sample) demonstrated, in their application forms, that corporate social responsibility was one of the drivers of their initiatives. In some instances, they were mostly targeting external audiences:

- *“Employees value [the company's] participation in this type of initiative with an impact on the community and of a social nature/character, feeling a greater pride, sense of belonging and identification with the company's values” – Application 03*
- *“[The team is] motivated and involved in the various initiatives that the company carries out [...] social responsibility initiatives. Regarding the latter, more than a sponsor, [the company] intends to be a proponent of the involvement of all employees, customers and partners” – Application 02*
- *“This project also arises from the social responsibility of the company as one of the largest national employers. In this sense, it is intended to increase the number of people recruited with disabilities [...] it is necessary first of all to ensure the physical conditions of the spaces” – Application 09*

As for a part of the applications, internal social responsibility was one of the driving forces behind their approaches:

- *“The practice consists of a series of activities within the framework of the institution's social responsibility towards its employees, with a view to improving their personal, social and professional development and increasing their motivation and sense of belonging” – Application 08*

## **Chapter IV. Discussion**

### **4.1. General Discussion**

This study sought to delve into practices submitted to the 2017 Diversity Stamp, presenting the ways in which diversity was described by the participant organisations, the types of practices, and which dimensions were explored. In the very first edition of this initiative promoted by the Portuguese Diversity Charter, four Stamps were distributed, alongside eight honourable mentions. The jury decided not to grant Stamps on two categories (Organisational culture, and Recruitment, selection, and human resources management), as they believed that the applications did not fulfil all of the requirements; instead, only honourable mentions were granted for these.

The categories for application, defined by the Charter's working group for the Diversity Stamp, appear in line with what researchers have identified as key characteristics of practices, such as the commitment of top and senior management in reframing the organisation's approach to diversity and inclusion (Hays-Thomas, 2004). Also, the application form includes items that target some of the key aspects pointed by Hunt et al. (2018); for instance, the importance of addressing diversity and inclusion as an organisational strategy, as well as the relevance of adaptability to different contexts and groups. This suggests that the application form questions are relevant in exploring the approaches to diversity.

It was noticeable that the applications focused on portraying a positive message about diversity. The potential challenges associated with diversity in the workplace were not explored in the submitted documents; only passing-by references to likely difficulties were cited. Considering that such applications were drafted to obtain an acknowledgement of exemplary practices, it may be the case that the responding participants conveyed socially desirable (Edwards, 1953) responses to the Diversity Stamp application form. Nevertheless, as indicated by Garib (2013), framing diversity under a positive light and perceiving it likewise may indeed play an important role in the pursuit of diversity-related positive organisational outcomes, as the same aspect of diversity can be considered an asset or a liability – and such perspective is relevant in this equation. But it could have been interesting

to better understand the challenges faced, so to be able to follow the train of thought that led to the enactment of the submitted practices.

The themes related to dimensions of diversity identified in the sample encompassed social category differences, as well as differences in values and in status; also, both observable and unobservable diversity variables were explored. These topics (age, gender, disabilities, cultural background, socioeconomic status) have been consistently part of researches on diversity and inclusion (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998; Mannix & Neale, 2005).

In line with national and international policies which aim at equality and non-discrimination between women and men in the workplace (Rêgo, 2012), gender was one of the dimensions of diversity present in the sample. Initiatives that sought to improve gender balance demonstrated a connection between the experience of the participant organisations and societal gender stereotypes, such as the prevalent explicit and implicit association between men and science (Miller, Eagly, & Linn, 2015), and women with care professions and other so-called “pink-collar jobs” (Lips-Wiersma, Wright, & Dik, 2016). Within the sample, a technology company focused on increasing the representativity of women in its interventions, while a social care/work participant organisation reported that men are the least represented gender in their staff.

Age diversity was referred to by some of the participant organisations as a priority. Considering recent statistics and data on the population in Portugal (Oliveira & Gomes, 2018), this can be put in context; as the population grows old, challenges will arise from the changes in the workforce, which will require adaptations to its needs (Sousa & Ramos, 2019). Furthermore, the recurring negative or low migratory rates, partly due to the departure/migration of young professionals, might be a trigger to the participant's organisations initiatives targeting younger audiences (students, junior professionals) in an attempt to minimise levels of turnover and/or to increase their engagement with the organisations.

National origin and cultural background were described in the data set as being of main importance for the organisations. Ever increasing cultural diversity is a characteristic of current societies, and Portugal is no exception. The relevance of integrating and supporting a culturally diverse clientele, staff, and society was depicted in the sample of applications; and promoting awareness on values differences can facilitate such intercultural interactions

(Zellmer-Bruhn & Gibson, 2013).

As for the disability dimension, the focus on accessibility is a sensible way to improve the welfare of clients and workers. The awareness and acknowledgement of their specific needs may certainly be a path to better engagement, which tends to produce good outcomes for the organisation (Nafukho, Roessler, & Kacirek, 2010). It was also found, in one of the submitted practices, that better accessibility had beneficial effects not only for those with reduced mobility but also for other audiences.

The same logic applies to the socioeconomic status dimension; it was seen that the practices which sought to work with socially vulnerable groups were related to migrants and women, for example. Bullock (2004) indeed pointed out that how women and ethnic minorities are particularly influenced by social inequality, and noted that further studying and working with underprivileged groups may be a meaningful path in the pursuit of overall diversity and inclusion.

As envisaged by Kulik and Roberson (2008), an array of initiatives were submitted, that involved different approaches, varying degrees of adopted resources, in accordance with the organisation's size or type, and with its objectives. The initiatives were seldom focused in just one dimension of diversity; frequently they overlapped. Intersectionality is present not only in the target audiences, but also in the practices, as they typically served different purposes even when they were defined with a specific group in mind.

Additionally, there were practices enacted without a specific category of diversity as a target, but sought to raise awareness on the effect of biases and biased behaviours. These initiatives seek to reduce overall discriminatory practices, and have become undoubtedly prevalent as a workplace diversity practice. It is worth noting that there are criticisms to the approach of unconscious bias trainings, as some scholars question if the awareness of widespread biases is sufficient to change behaviour, or worse, if knowing this may provide grounds for normalising biased behaviours (Noon, 2018; Williamson & Foley, 2018). Despite the suggestions that such initiatives indeed do not eliminate biases, still they have been linked to their reduction (Atewologun, Cornish, & Tresh, 2018).

Attention has also been devoted to measures to promote staff welfare; as an aspect of that, actions to improve work-life balance were considered in the submissions. The approach

to employee welfare / work-life balance as an integrated aspect of diversity practices has been identified as a conscious effort to address workplace issues (Bardoel, 2016). In the analysed sample, social responsibility emerged as an important drive for organisations to implement diversity initiatives, and both internal and external practices were presented. Although internal corporate social responsibility actions can be close to those of employee welfare, within the examined sample they were sufficiently different and therefore were considered as separate sub-themes.

Organisations wishing to apply to further editions of the Diversity Stamp may benefit from this paper, as it gives a detailed account of what has been presented in the inaugural edition of the award. Furthermore, it is advised that intervention and project designs should be in line with the literature on the subject; expectations should be adjusted, as there are no simple solutions to the complex, meaningful changes that are ultimately envisaged by the practices.

Moreover, attention should be paid on how diversity initiatives are framed and conducted, as the literature exposes that ironic effects of interventions are, unfortunately, a possible outcome of practices that meant well, as they can increase and reinforce stereotyping and prejudice instead reducing them. Of utmost importance is to ensure that practices are not only increasing diversity indicators, but effectively promoting inclusion in the workplace. Finally, projects aimed for other relevant audiences in the Portuguese context, such as ethnic minorities or LGBT community, can increase the variability in enacted target groups among submitted initiatives.

The present study contributes to a growing array of researches on diversity management, and provides insights on types of initiatives being implemented in the Portuguese context and within the diversity charter framework. Within the available sample, it was possible to identify a diverse set of practices, which covered several aspects of diversity, and were reportedly motivated by related concepts such as social responsibility, welfare, and reduction of biases. Future research on the topic can expand on how such concepts are drivers of diversity management practices.



## **4.2. Limitations**

For this study, not all the organisations which submitted practices for the 2017 Diversity Stamp replied to the call for granting access to the application documents (application form and annexes). Therefore, the findings and recommendations were drafted taking into account a reduced number of submissions, which did not include applications by public sector organisations. This represents an important downside, as the ensemble of applications would have certainly allowed for more varied findings and broader analyses, such as dimensions of diversity and categories of initiatives explored by category of submission, or initiatives implemented according to institutional types.

In qualitative research, validity and reliability may be an important drawback, as the meaning of such concepts might hold a different weigh and purpose (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002). As the data analysis and interpretation were performed by one person, there was no additional coder. It was also not possible to conduct a blind reading of the applications (i.e., not knowing which institution had submitted), as there were frequent references to the organisations. Therefore, steps in line with Braun and Clark's (2006) checklist were adopted, where relevant, to ensure quality in the process of analysis.

## **4.3. Conclusion**

The present study, after analysing a sample of submitted practices, was able to provide a qualitative overview of themes prompted in the applications, covering references to diversity in general, to its targeted dimensions, and to how initiatives actively approached diversity. This study will be made available to the Portuguese Diversity Charter, as it provides insight on actions promoted by some of its signatories. It may serve as a baseline for future applicant organisations, who may find inspiration, and/or may seek a baseline for innovative practices and for adapting an initiative to difference target audiences. It is expected that this paper will contribute to the strengthening of the Diversity Charter, and ultimately to facilitate the communication and sharing of diversity and inclusion practices deemed exemplary in Portugal.

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## Appendix 1 - Portuguese Charter 2017 Diversity Stamp Application Form



### SELO DA DIVERSIDADE – FORMULÁRIO DE CANDIDATURA

#### Secção 1 – Informação sobre a organização

- 1.1. Designação da Organização
- 1.2. Organização-sede (quando aplicável)
- 1.3. Endereço postal
- 1.4. Número de trabalhadores/as / Colaboradoras/es
- 1.5. Tipo de organização
  - Pequena empresa (< 50 trab./colab.)
  - Média empresa (≥ 50 e < 250 trab./colab.)
  - Grande empresa (≥ 250 trab./colab.)
  - Serviço Público (administração central, regional e local)
  - Sector Empresarial do Estado e Empresas Públicas
  - Não-governamental/sem fins lucrativos
  - Outro (por favor, explicitar):
- 1.6. Breve descrição da organização (máx. 600 caracteres)
- 1.7. Responsável pela candidatura
  - Nome
  - Cargo
  - E-mail
  - Telefone

#### Secção 2 – Resumo da candidatura | 15% da pontuação total

Categoria (seleccionar apenas uma):

- Compromisso da gestão de topo e dos outros níveis hierárquicos
- Cultura organizacional
- Recrutamento, seleção e práticas de gestão de pessoas
- Desenvolvimento profissional e progressão na carreira
- Comunicação da Carta e dos seus princípios
- Condições de trabalho e acessibilidades

2.1. Título do projeto

2.2. Descreva de forma clara e concisa a prática e os seus resultados (máx. 600 caracteres)

2.3. Liste todos os stakeholders envolvidos (trabalhadores/as, colaboradoras/es, fornecedores, etc.) e, de forma sucinta descreva as suas atividades (tipo de organização, área de intervenção, etc.).

### **Secção 3 – Caracterização da prática e dos seus objetivos | 20% da pontuação total**

Nesta secção deverá apresentar a sua prática, detalhar o público-alvo e como alcançar os objetivos propostos.

- 3.1. Apresentação, detalhada, da prática candidata ao Prémio (máx. 2000 caracteres, 3% da pontuação total)
- 3.2. Grupo(s)-alvo (máx. 1200 caracteres, 2% da pontuação total)
- 3.3. Objetivos (máx. 1500 caracteres, 5% da pontuação total)
- 3.4. Sustentabilidade (máx. 1500 caracteres, 10% da pontuação total)

### **Secção 4 – Implementação da prática | 45% da pontuação total**

Nesta Secção deve ser apresentada a forma como a prática surgiu, foi implementada e gerida.

- 4.1. Gestão da prática (máx. 2000 caracteres, 8% da pontuação total)
- 4.2. Recursos (máx. 1200 caracteres, 7% da pontuação total)
- 4.3. Alcance e abrangência (máx. 1500 caracteres, 10% da pontuação total)
- 4.4. Cariz exemplar e replicável (máx. 1500 caracteres, 10% da pontuação total)
- 4.5. Abordagem inovadora (máx. 1500 caracteres, 10% da pontuação total)

### **Secção 5 – Resultados alcançados | 40% da pontuação total**

Nesta secção é pedida a avaliação do impacto da prática. Para se medir impactos é necessário avaliar a prática antes e depois da sua implementação, com a definição dos indicadores mais pertinentes para a prática em causa.

- 5.1. Impacto no(s) grupo(s)-alvo (máx. 2000 caracteres, 15% da pontuação total)
- 5.2. Impacto na organização (máx. 2000 caracteres, 10% da pontuação total)
- 5.3. Perspetiva do futuro da prática (máx. 1500 caracteres, 15% da pontuação total)