

EMBRACING DIVERSITY

Document based on experiences made during the international training
course for youth workers, hosted in Oslo, Norway, 24-28. April 2017

An introduction to diversity management in youth work



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og familiedirektoratet

SALTO-YOUTH
INCLUSION
RESOURCE CENTRE



Erasmus+

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INTRODUCTION

This document contains tips and suggestions for working with diverse groups in youth work, based on experiences gathered during the international training course “Embracing Diversity”, focusing on diversity management, implemented in Oslo, Norway on 24-28. April 2017. The training was organised and hosted by the Norwegian National Agency for Erasmus +: Youth in Action (The Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs) in cooperation with SALTO Inclusion Resource Centre. The training was funded by the Erasmus +: Youth in Action programme.

The training course involved 32 participants from 16 different countries, as well as a team of 2 trainers, 1 representative of SALTO Inclusion, and a shifting representative of the Norwegian National Agency. The team and participants alike assessed the activity as a successful learning event, with a number of competences improved over the course of the three days.

The main aim of the training course was to train youth workers in managing diversity in their daily work and in youth activities. The participants were trained to help young people make sense of increasingly diverse societies, and how to manoeuvre around them successfully. They learned how to cooperate smoothly despite differences of all kinds.

The aim and objectives of the training course were:

- To explore concepts and different forms of diversity and inclusion;
- To strengthen and develop youth workers' 'diversity management' skills;
- To learn from approaches and methods used in youth work, but also in other sectors, and see how these can be applied and adapted to the needs of the youth field;
- To gain knowledge on different tools, methods and techniques for managing diversity and interacting successfully despite differences.

The reason we have drawn on experiences from the aforementioned training course to write this document, is that it was a fresh approach in terms of offering the participants an insight into diversity management from the business sector. Diversity management can mainly be explained on three different levels: organisational, interpersonal and personal. During these three days the programme focused mainly on the last two - interpersonal and personal - mainly due to the target group of participants. This document, thus, also focuses primarily on diversity management on a personal level.

CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

When working with diversity management, there are a few concepts that must be observed. Key among these are the terms diversity, inclusion, young people with fewer opportunities, and diversity management with its 3 levels, namely organisational, interpersonal, and personal. A useful analogy to explain the concepts is that of a shape sorter (the toy for children with blocks of different shapes, each going through a hole of the same size). The idea is that the blocks represent diversity, and the motion of fitting them into the box is inclusion, whereas diversity management is the process of managing what takes place once inside.

"Diversity in all its forms is referred to throughout, alongside inclusion. This ensures there is a dual focus – not only on including young people but also on strengthening the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to fully accept, support and promote the differences in society." (Erasmus+ Inclusion and Diversity Strategy, p. 3)

An additional point to make, with regards to diversity management, is that blocks cannot be forced through holes into which they do not fit. It may be that the casing needs to be modified (see the [fable of the giraffe and the elephant](#)).

Diversity

There are many definitions of diversity, even in the field of youth work. One useful and concise definition, among many, comes from the *ID Booklet: Ideas for inclusion & diversity*, which holds that diversity can be defined as "...the range of human difference. It consists of



numerous factors including visible and non-visible differences, e.g. gender, age, background, race, disability, religion, sexual orientation and personality" (p. 78).

Inclusion

Diversity and inclusion are often described as being two sides of the same coin. "Where inclusion of everyone ensures that all young people can take part, the focus on diversity ensures that everybody can take part on their own terms, recognising the value of differences in norms, beliefs, attitudes and life experience." (Erasmus+ Inclusion and Diversity Strategy, p. 4)

When focusing on being inclusive, we also enhance diversity. Or when we focus on achieving diversity, we have an opportunity to be inclusive (Inclusion A-Z, p. 29-30,). Again, we emphasise that there are many definitions of the term inclusion. However, as a working definition of inclusion, we can say that "...inclusion enshrines the belief that all young people are the SAME in their right to participate in the opportunity and benefits society can offer. Inclusion refers to the process by which this participation is achieved. During this process, all young people have the right to retain their difference, what makes them unique, what gives them their own individual identity" (ID Booklet: Ideas for inclusion & diversity, p. 78). In the same source, it is highlighted that there are two main elements that come up when approaching the concepts of diversity and inclusion: the condition of those who are "outside" and the extent to which they are excluded; and the process of trying to change that condition for the target group (ID Booklet, p. 9).

Young people with fewer opportunities

The Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme focuses significantly on young people with fewer opportunities, providing incentives for the inclusion of such target groups. The term young people with fewer opportunities can be understood as "young people who are at a disadvantage compared to their peers because they face one or more of the exclusion actors below. These often prevent young people from taking part in formal and non-formal education, trans-national mobility, employment, democracy and society at large" (Inclusion A-Z: A compass to international inclusion projects, p. 18).

Examples of such disadvantages include social obstacles, cultural differences, educational difficulties, disability, health problems, economic- or geographic obstacles.

Diversity management

A search on Google yields 263.000.000 hits for 'diversity management'. A useful working definition for youth work is the following:

- Diversity Management is the active and conscious development of a future oriented, value driven strategic, communicative and managerial process of accepting and using certain differences and similarities as a potential in an organisation, a process which creates added value to the company.

Diversity management must be understood as a historically situated concept. The concept first appeared and gained momentum in the United States in the mid-1980s. It was a time when equality- and affirmative action laws were under threat, which led to US firms engaging consultants to establish arguments in favour of seeing a diverse workforce as a competitive

advantage rather than a legal constraint. In a nutshell, their message was that diversity is good for business (Kelly and Dobbin, 1998). Since those days, diversity and diversity management have been well established as beneficial for a number of businesses.

In this training course, we focused on diversity management on an organisational level, interpersonal level, and personal level, with emphasis on the latter of the three.

Organisational level

Diversity management on an organisational level should be a top-down process and it is an ongoing process in which people are managed towards accepting and appreciating the difference. The more diverse a workforce the company has, the more ideas and innovations the company can benefit from. A diverse workforce is beneficial and in the end it brings in more customers and a bigger turnover. Its management is the core activity. Some companies hire a CDO (Chief Diversity Officer) to keep all the departments focused on diversity. Each manager needs to have strong competences developed to manage diverse teams.

On the organisational level, diversity brings many changes that need to be well managed: structure of the organisation, organisation policies, activities, products, customers as target group, processes, marketing activities, training strategies, HR process and even people.

For the case of a business company, the drive for profit is the main incentive. A more diverse workforce could mean increased competitiveness, and also attract new groups of customers. For an organisation - although increased funding may be a consequence of a more diverse staff - a more typical driver of increased diversity is the motivation to morally or ethically help others.

Interpersonal level

Interpersonal relations means relation between two or more people working towards a common goal in a common process.

Personal level

Diversity management on a personal level is in large part about personal awareness of oneself. To be inclusive also means the ability to accept one's own ignorance, but not to let that stifle you. The ability to put on many "glasses", and learning how to see diversity as enrichment. Furthermore, youth work is, by the facilitating team, viewed as a field that is there to stimulate minds, provide settings to explore difference, and learn from it.

For the purposes of this training course, the team decided to focus mainly on diversity management on a personal level.

Youth work and diversity management

Regardless the fact that diversity management as a process has its roots in the business sector, it also has very important place in the youth field and work with young people.

The Erasmus+ Inclusion and Diversity Strategy sets out to embrace and celebrate diversity so that difference becomes a positive source for learning rather than the cause for negative competition and prejudice. Young people and youth workers should be equipped with the necessary competences to manage and work with diversity. This will encourage positive interactions between people of all walks of life and ultimately improve the situation of young people with fewer opportunities. (p. 8)

The principle of diversity management on three levels - organisational, interpersonal and personal - is also very much applicable in youth work. Here, we also have a statutory body and decision makers (ideally with diverse backgrounds/characteristics) about the organisation, small or big project teams with many interpersonal-related issues and managers or leaders with their personal competences to manage diversity in their organisations, teams and projects.

Youth organisations, like business companies, face challenges when it comes to a diverse workforce, which needs to be very well managed. The advantages of investing in diversity management are very similar for organisations and companies. These include bringing more creativity and innovation into projects for a specific or new target group (whereas for a company it is rather a product to sell to a new or larger group of customers); it is more competitive than other organisations which results in being sustainable. Nevertheless, there are also disadvantages, such as slowing down the process of reaching a common agreement, increasing conflict on interpersonal level, loss of time and investment if diversity is not well managed.

Diversity management for both business and youth work is an ongoing process that needs to be managed top-down, as well as micro-managed, and it needs to have competent managers who understand and believe in diversity and inclusion.

The difference between business and youth work in diversity management is the driving force. In most cases the drive for diversity management in business is profit, whereas for a youth organisation it is usually to help vulnerable groups and people in need. We need to highlight the fact that there are many youth organisations for which the main drive is same as for the business.

COMPETENCES FOR THE DIVERSITY MANAGER

Competences (that composes of knowledge, skills and attitudes) beneficial for diversity manager to manage diverse groups can be a large list, and these are four competencies for which methods for different activities are explained below:

- Communication skills - written and spoken
- Conflict resolution skills
- Leadership skills
- Coaching technique skills

Among other competences that are beneficial for a diversity manager are: knowledge on diversity as a concept; knowledge about different target groups; a commitment to promoting equality and diversity; cultural sensitivity; being a lifelong learner; experience of building relationships with key stakeholders; negotiation and persuasion skills; ability to work in a team; sense of responsibility and initiative; organisational skills; facilitation skills; flexibility; adaptability; planning and implementation skills; emotional intelligence; empathy; intervention skills; cross-cultural competence.

The above list is exhaustive, but indicates with some clarity what is required to be the best possible diversity manager.

METHODS FOR DEVELOPING COMPETENCES

In this part we introduce and elaborate a selection of tools and methods that may be useful for working with diversity management in the youth work field. We point out that the methods

focus on learning about diversity management on a personal level, with a particular emphasis on the 4 competences highlighted in the section above.

Face value

The aim of this non-verbal exercise using a pack of playing cards is to experience to be different from others and from your real identity, to feel what it is like to have a label or stigma, to experience how others judge you as well as how you tend to judge others, include or exclude from the majority.

1. Give out one card to each participant, while explaining that they are not to look at their own card, but stick them to their forehead with a strip of tape.
2. Explain that they will be mingling, approaching or even treating each other based on the value of the card on their forehead, without giving any verbal cues.
3. After mingling for a few minutes, ask the participants to form groups based on what they think the value of their own card is. After groups are formed, they can all look at their cards.
4. Debrief the exercise highlighting diversity, inclusion, our perception and prejudices.

Aquarium

The aim of this method is to open a discussion on a topic you choose (basis are the statements) that 2 people start (in the circle of a big circle, being 'fishes in the aquarium') and providing the group the freedom to leave the discussion or join in.

1. Choose 2 volunteers who will be in the middle of the circle sitting on chairs to discuss a statement you provide
2. Explain rules that anybody can join in or leave the discussion.
3. Read out loud the first statement and invite the volunteers in the aquarium to discuss

Statements:

- Anybody can be a diversity manager
- I have prejudice against someone, but I can still be a youth leader managing diversity
- Diversity management is not relevant for the youth work field

Chairs exercise

The aim of the exercise is to bring the group to a quick action where their verbal and non-verbal communication can lead to a conflicting situation.

- Split the group into 3
- Each group gets instructions what will follow on a piece of paper. Nobody can look into the paper until trainer says it is the time now.
- Exercise stops after 1 minute and trainer debriefs

Instructions:

Group 1 – in 1 minute make a circle from all the chairs in the room

Group 2 – in 1 minute bring all the chairs in the room by the door

Group 3 – in 1 minute put all the chairs in the room upside down

Telephone message

The aim of the exercise is to realise how easy we can lose important parts of a message in conversation and how misunderstandings and even conflicts can start.

- Trainer asks 5 volunteers. The rest of the group are observers who will contribute to the feedback.
- Trainer asks 4 volunteers to leave the room, 1 volunteer gets a text - a message (e.g.): *In the late afternoon around 5:15pm in the nearby park there was a group of people sitting in the circle, trees kind of falling down, some children playing cards and some played hide and seek. It was strange because they were all wearing white and nobody out of these 20 people spoke.*
- Volunteer 2 comes to the room, a telephone rings and volunteer 1 reads the message for volunteer 2 who needs to remember what the message is about. Volunteer 2 goes to sit down.
- Volunteer 3 comes to the room, a telephone rings and volunteer 2 tells the message how (s)he remembers...
- the circles continue until volunteer 5
- Trainer reads the original text

Coaching

What coaching is and what it is not?

'Coaching is unlocking a person's potential to maximise their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them.' (John Whitmore, Coaching for Performance).

Coaching is a process that aims to improve performance and focuses on the 'here and now' rather than on the distant past or future. In coaching, fundamentally, the coach is helping the individual to improve their own performance: in other words, helping them to learn (www.skillsyouneed.com)

It is a tool for personal or professional development, setting personal targets to achieve them with a support of a coach. Coaching is not any of these other tools for development such as consultancy, mentoring, supervision, psychotherapy.

Types of coaching questions should be open starting with why, when, what makes you think, who, what would be / you do if, etc.

Coaching is a useful tool in the youth work. It can be used as a group coaching or personal coaching. When working with a diverse group or a project team coaching can help to come to common agreement; gives space for expression of interests, needs; it can steer groups motivation; a coach can help the group to identify goals and set actions to reach the goal; a coach can support the group in solving interpersonal conflicts. In diversity management the group coaching is focusing on organisational and interpersonal level. Whereas personal coaching is focusing on professional development and growth, in case of diversity management, the focus is on how to develop professional competences to be a good diversity manager.

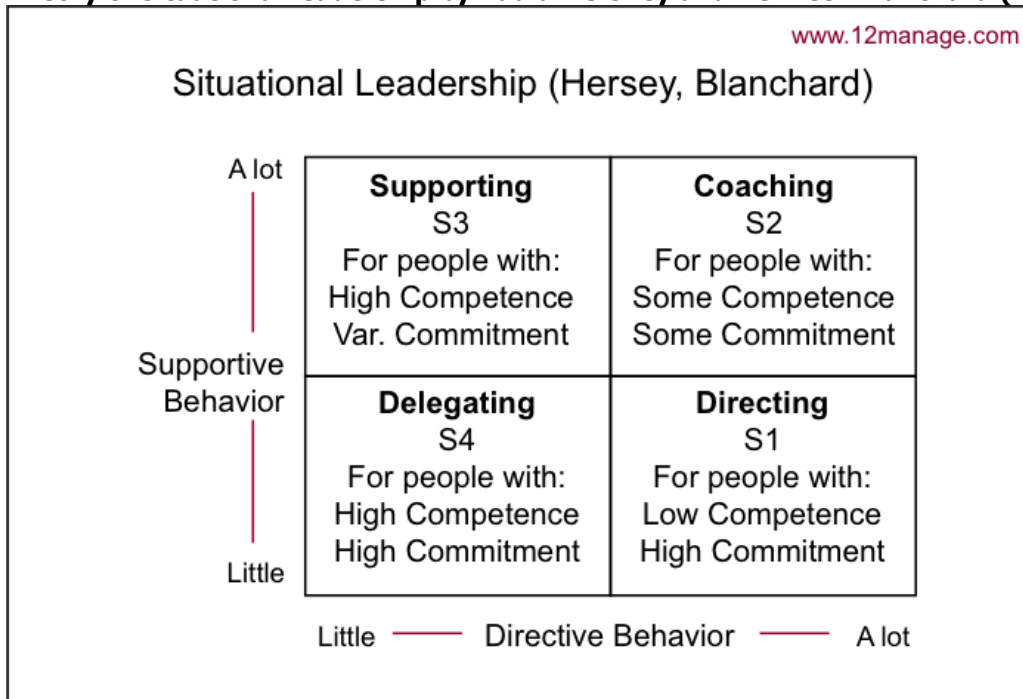
Examples of situations to choose coaching as a tool:

- reduction of interpersonal conflict - could be two people or groups you work with
- solving problematic situations
- making a group decision
- finding needs of the group
- finding reasons for not collaboration and bad teamwork
- planning activities, projects
- self-development

Leadership styles

There is no single best style of leadership. Effective leadership is task and person-relevant, and the most successful leaders are those who adapt their leadership style to the Performance Readiness (competence / ability and willingness) of the individual or group they are attempting to lead or influence. Effective leadership varies, not only with the person or group that is being influenced, but it also depends on the task, job or function that needs to be accomplished.

Theory of situational leadership by Paula Hershey and Kenneth Blanchard (1969)



Four main leadership styles

Directing – is characterized by one-way communication in which the leader defines the roles of the individual or group and provides the what, how, why, when and where to do the task.

They lack the specific skills required for the job in hand and are unable and unwilling to take responsibility for this job or task.

Coaching – while the leader is still providing the direction, he or she is now using two-way communication and providing the socio-emotional support that will allow the individual or group being influenced to buy into the process.

They are unable to take on responsibility for the task being done; however, they are willing to work at the task. They are novice but enthusiastic.

Supporting – this is how shared decision-making about aspects of how the task is accomplished and the leader is providing fewer task behaviours while maintaining high relationship behaviour.

They are experienced and able to do the task but lack the confidence or the willingness to take on responsibility.

Delegating – the leader is still involved in decisions; however, the process and responsibility has been passed to the individual or group. The leader stays involved to monitor progress.

They are experienced at the task, and comfortable with their own ability to do it well. They are able and willing to not only do the task, but to take responsibility for the task

Maturity levels are also task-specific. A person might be generally skilled, confident and motivated in their job, but would still have a low competence when asked to perform a task requiring skills they don't possess.

Types of conflict

One given conflict can fit into more than one category of conflicts. However, when trying to manage a conflict, it is important to remember that all conflicts are about some interest. It's never about what it's really about, as the professional mediator would say. The interest of the parties of a conflict can be found behind the positions they take.

For the sake of simplicity, conflicts can be divided into four categories:

- **Resources/substantive issues** - e.g. competition over perceived incompatible needs. To achieve what you want, someone else will have to give up something.
- **Relationship** - e.g. presence of negative emotions, misperceptions, stereotypes, poor communication, etc.
- **Identity/role** - e.g. about my perception of myself (if someone doesn't recognise my position or distinctiveness)
- **Values** - e.g. caused by perceived or actual incompatible belief systems (what is good, what is bad, right and wrong, my god's words are law, etc)

A little bit more description of types of conflict from a mediator's viewpoint can be found here: <http://www.mediate.com/divorce/pg17.cfm>

SMART Method

SMART is an abbreviation of 5 words. It is a tool to set a goal that is:

S (Specific): exactly what it is

M (Measurable): exactly what you will reach in the end breaking it into measurable elements

A (Achievable, Attainable): is the goal really acceptable for you taking into consideration other obligations, resources, time

R (Realistic, Relevant): is the goal in hand with your reality and do you really want to achieve it?

T (timed): exact deadlines with degree of flexibility need to be set when you start and when you want to accomplish the goal.

Questions you may ask yourself when setting your goals and objectives are:

- What exactly do I want to achieve?
- Where?
- How?
- When?
- With whom?
- What are the conditions and limitations?
- Why exactly do I want to reach this goal? What are possible alternative ways of achieving the same?

Personal Development Plan

An identified goal needs a clear plan. Writing down the plan can be done in a simple form with 3 questions that should help you to make the plan realistic. By following the SMART-method, you can have a tangible and concrete plan for your personal development goals in a straightforward and easy matrix, like the one below.

What would you like to improve?	How / when will you measure your progress?	What steps will you take? What support will you get?
E.g. My ability to speak Maltese language.	I will measure my progress by how well and uninhibited I can discuss topics of human rights education in said language in one year's time. I would like to be able to deliver a full workshop in this language.	I will set aside 30 minutes per day for studying, find a language tandem for a weekly meeting, read one book per month. I will rely on the support of my friend who is a native speaker, an online forum for language learning, etc.

What is really diversity?

This is an approach that aims to deepen the knowledge of the participants about the topics of diversity and inclusion, and raise the awareness about what it entails. It is a set of methods building on each other, taking between 4 and 6 hours to go through.

The approach begins with a browsing of pre-printed definitions spread out in the room. For the rest of the methods, the group is split into smaller groups of 6-7 people. The various group works include a brainstorming of which groups they would like to include, how they would like to include these groups, and why to include them. Methods used are, among others, silent discussion, and preparing a TV-show and simulating it.

For a filling step-by-step description, handouts, as well as tips for facilitators, see: https://drive.google.com/open?id=0ByazEu3iiw_nV21vUkNoeUcyM0k

Dimensions of diversity

The aim of this exercise is to help identify and reflect on our own, and others', unique diversity, and explore various dimensions of diversity.

1. Facilitator presents the A, B, and C dimensions of diversity, according to the model of Patricia Arredondo (1992 - see link to handout below), followed by a brief plenary discussion.
2. Put up flipcharts, one each for A, B, and C dimensions of diversity, as work stations. Participants are asked, as individuals, to think about their dimensions of diversity for each of the stations. Use one post-it for each characteristic.
3. Participants are split into groups of 4-5. Each group is sent to visit each of the 3 stations to explore the diversity of their own group by discussion, and sharing their own contributions to the various flipcharts.
4. The groups are gathered in the plenary again for a group debrief. Points to focus on include: a general feedback on the activity; which - if any - points of connection did they discover; comments on Arredondo's model; and an inquiry about the law

framework of the participants' countries regarding discrimination in relation to the different dimensions.

For a more detailed step-by-step description and facilitator's tips, see: https://drive.google.com/open?id=0ByazEu3iiw_nVkx0T29Zb3RNYk0

For the handout, with more detailed description of the model of Patricia Arredondo, see: https://drive.google.com/open?id=0ByazEu3iiw_nU3JJUHIxOFQ1T3M

Integration through sports

There is a lot of potential in sports-based exercises for integration. Such methods provide a range of benefits, but also some challenges, which must be considered. Through participation in sports, young people can learn directly or indirectly. Coaches can play an important role, particularly for value-based learning, to which the participants become sensitised in the activities.

Sport is a global phenomenon, and can be said to be a kind of universal language that reaches out to all ethnicities, religions and socioeconomic classes. Examples of the learning value of sports include: development of empathy towards the outsiders in a society, stemming from observation of exclusion on the playing field; development of leadership skills through having to make decisions on the field. Through sports, the facilitator or coach can create a number of learning moments, depending on the target group and topical content that is desired.

For a more in-depth description of the potential, benefits, and challenges of sport as a method in integrative work, see: https://drive.google.com/open?id=0ByazEu3iiw_nSmduODRFTTh2MnM See also the list of resources in section 6.

Living library

The main objective of living library (also known as human library) is to create constructive personal dialogues between people who would normally not have the opportunity to speak to each other and thus challenge common prejudices and stereotypes they may have for each other.

The concept works quite like a regular library. Visitors ('readers') can browse the catalogue of available titles, and select the living book they would like to read, and borrow it for a limited period of time. After reading, which means having a conversation with the borrowed living book, the living book is returned, and the visitor can move on to another living book.

The method requires one or more librarians, visitors ('readers'), and a selection of living books. The idea of the living books is that they represent groups that are at risk of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination. It is important that the living books have a stable and mature personality and are able to communicate with the variety of 'readers' who might come.

For an apt presentation of living library, see: https://drive.google.com/open?id=0ByazEu3iiw_nOFFWOUczX3dQUVk

RESOURCES

Diversity Charters across Europe

<http://www.diversity-charter.com/diversity-charter-belgian-charters.php>

Implementation Checklist for Diversity Management

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/checklist_diversitymanagement_en.pdf

ID Booklet – Ideas for inclusion and diversity

<https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-1050/IDbooklet.pdf>

Managing Diversity at Work

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/managing_diversity_atwork_en.pdf

Inclusion AtoZ

<https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-3141/InclusionAtoZ.pdf>

Inclusion by design

<https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-1674/InclusionByDesign.pdf>

Erasmus+ Inclusion and Diversity Strategy

<https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-3103/InclusionAndDiversityStrategy.pdf>

Integration durch Sport (booklet in German):

https://drive.google.com/open?id=0ByazEu3iiw_nbXV0eEZQUXozblk

Fortbildungskonzept zur kulturellen Vielfalt im sportlichen Alltag (booklet in German):

https://drive.google.com/open?id=0ByazEu3iiw_nSmlVUU1jM2I4Y00

The Living library Organiser's Guide:

<https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/eycb/Source/EYCB%20Living%20Library.pdf>

Dynamics of managing diversity

<http://goo.gl/eEp0iE>

Managing diversity

<http://goo.gl/jeHSFU>

A world class diversity management: strategic approach

<http://goo.gl/lujbyd>