ICMM Mining with Principles

Regional & Local Nuances Tool

ICMM Tools for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

DEI in the Global Context

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) has been recognised as pivotal for organisational success and societal progress. The evolving workforce presents both opportunities and challenges for organisations. Through the adoption of DEI principles and the cultivation of inclusive workplace cultures, companies can harness the vast potential of its workforce.

A workforce enriched with multicultural perspectives fosters innovation, adaptability, and nurtures a deeper sense of camaraderie and belonging among teams.[1] In today's rapidly evolving global landscape, companies that actively embrace and leverage the diversity within their workforce are poised to achieve sustained success.[2]

In the global context, the perception and progression of DEI varies significantly across geographies. Some regions have progressed more than others due to their prevailing cultural, economic, and political contexts, policy landscapes, and circumstances of its Indigenous Peoples and other minority groups.

Awareness and understanding of cultural nuances and sensitivities in different regions is crucial to the success of a company's DEI objectives, especially when operating in multiple geographies.[3] What works in one location may not work, or even be appropriate, in another. In the development of DEI strategies, context specific initiatives must be considered to prevent the imposition of westernised perspectives since it undermines the autonomy of local cultures and can cause social disruption in communities. To ensure that actions are relevant and appropriate for each operating context, some key questions to consider are:

— Is having a diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) strategy and programme a legal requirement in the region?

— What are the specific legislations that apply to DEI programmes in the region?

— Are there gaps between the legislative landscape on DEI in the region, and international frameworks, or guidelines?

— Will the organisation face any social, environmental, political, or economic risks when implementing any aspects of the DEI strategy?

1. Beach and Segars (2022), *How a Values-Based Approach Advances DEI*, [Online]. Available at: https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/how-a-values-based-approach-advances-dei/
2. King (2024), *Three reasons why diversity, equity and inclusion efforts fail*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.forbes.com/sites/michelleking/2023/01/18/three-reasons-why-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-efforts-fail/
3. Scott, Chen and Naito (n.d.), *Implementing a long-term DEI approach: Lessons from the Asia-pacific region*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.bsr.org/en/blog/implementing-a-long-term-dei-approach-lessons-from-the-asia-pacific-region

— What characteristics – such as sexual orientation, gender, race, and ethnicity – are protected by the region's DEI laws?

This tool explores regions by continent, deep diving into their respective political, cultural, and economic contexts as well as some context on Indigenous Peoples within these regions. It also offers opportunities for companies to optimise their DEI strategies and programmes to suit the context.

It is essential to recognise that cultures and identities within a continent are not homogeneous. The range of people across regions mean that local and regional nuances can significantly vary. Understanding and respecting these differences is crucial when utilising this toolkit to ensure it is applied appropriately and effectively.

The opportunities presented in this document are suggestive and based on current global realities. While all efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of the information at the time of writing, data may change. Obtaining consistent data across different regions can be challenging, due to disparities in data availability and representation in global research, a key DEI issue. As societal norms, legislation, and cultural dynamics evolve, this toolkit may require updates and revisions.

Users are encouraged to interpret the information within the context of their specific organisational needs and to remain informed to changes in the broader social, political, and cultural contexts. While significant progress has been made in addressing gender equity in most jurisdictions, there are still opportunities for improvement. Companies should also start to consider aspects of DEI beyond gender.

Deep Dives by Continent

Africa

Sub-Saharan Africa is endowed with vast mineral resources, with active large-scale mining projects and an artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) sector. Home to a population of 1.4 billion people, the continent has approximately 30 per cent of the known global mineral reserves. South Africa, Nigeria, Angola, Egypt and Ghana are the continent's top mineral producers. Sustainable management of the region's mineral wealth to drive economic growth and reduce social inequalities is a key opportunity for the region.

Factor	Description	Opportunities for Impact
Cultural Context	Africans are diverse in terms of physical appearance, cultures, languages, and dialects. There are approximately 1,500 different languages and dialects spoken in Africa.[4] Many African cultures emphasise collectivism, where the group or team's well-being is prioritised over individual interests.[5] Social norms vary widely across ethnic groups and sub regions. While some communities have matrilineal systems where women hold significant social and economic power, the majority adhere strictly to patriarchal structures, in which social gender roles are distinct.[6] Religious diversity is prevalent with traditional and Indigenous religions, Christianity, Islam, and other faiths coexisting in many countries.	Companies should recognise and celebrate the diverse cultural identities within their workforce and respective teams, through DEI programmes and activities that foster a sense of community. Corporate values should incorporate collective ideals such as teamwork, collaboration, mentorship, and community building to strengthen bonds in, and beyond the workplace. Companies should prioritise equal opportunities and equality in outcomes for all genders. DEI programmes can include initiatives such as gender sensitivity training, mentorship programmes for women, and policies that support work-life balance. Workplace policies should recognise the diversity of beliefs amongst employees and provide appropriate accommodations for religious practices.
Political & Economic Context	Africa has 54 officially recognised countries, two independent states, and 11 non-sovereign territories, mainly islands, under the governance of non-African nations.[7] There is a wide range of economic disparities amongst countries, from rapidly growing economies to sub-regions facing poverty and underdevelopment. The richest 10 per cent in Africa hold over 71 per cent of the continent's wealth, while the poorest 50 per cent held only around 1.2 per cent.[8] Political instability, conflicts, and human rights abuses in certain countries have led to significant migrant populations seeking refuge in more stable and economically prosperous nations.[9]	Companies should consider the political landscape, governance, and human rights record of each country to inform strategies for navigating regulatory environments and supporting DEI improvements in the communities they operate in. DEI strategies must acknowledge disparities and work to address systemic barriers to economic inclusion within and outside the workforce by promoting equitable access to employment opportunities and resources. Companies should recognise the diverse perspectives that migrant employees bring to the workforce, and address challenges such as cultural, language barriers, and discrimination.

4. Parker and Rathbone (2007), *Africans: Diversity and unity*, [Online]. Available at: https://academic.oup.com/book/871/chapter/135469910
5. Oladipupo (2022), *Rethinking the African Spirit of Collectivism as a Tool for African Empowerment*, [Online]. Available at: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3976894
6. Tidwell (n.d.), *Hofstede masculinity / femininity*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.andrews.edu/~tidwell/bsad560/HofstedeMasculinity.html
7. World Population Review (2024), *Countries in Africa 2024*, [Online]. Available at: https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/countries-in-africa
8. Galal (2024), *Poverty, inequality and wealth in Africa – statistics and facts*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.statista.com/topics/11486/poverty-inequality-and-wealth-in-africa/#topicOverview
9. United Nations (n.d.), *Migration Dynamics, refugees and internally displaced persons in Africa*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.un.org/en/academic-impact/migration-dynamics-refugees-and-internally-displaced-persons-africa

Policy Landscape	In line with the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa, steady improvements in gender equality have been achieved through national legal and institutional reforms aimed at promoting equal participation and access to opportunities.[10] At a high level, there are still gaps in policy and actions to support improved DEI within the region's workplaces. The Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Charter (BBEE) set a regional benchmark for correcting historic inequalities and improving representation in Africa.	Companies operating in Africa, can align their DEI programmes with the principles of the protocols and the BBEE to implement targeted measures to increase the participation of historically disadvantaged groups and communities. In countries and sub-regions where policy is lacking, companies can play a leadership role in driving systemic change by collaborating with stakeholders, underrepresented groups, and investing in initiatives that can accelerate progress.
Indigenous Perspectives	Indigenous Peoples are not formally recognised or legally protected as a unique group in many African countries.[11] Most of Africa's Indigenous Peoples are highly dependent on natural resources, living in sensitive ecosystems, using natural resources either for pastoralism, hunting and foraging wild foods.[12]	Companies can support advocacy for the recognition and protection of Indigenous rights in the countries and sub-regions they operate in. Companies can also engage with governments, civil society organisations, and Indigenous leaders, to support efforts to establish legal frameworks that recognise Indigenous land and resource rights. Companies can take action to understand the Indigenous context at each of their operations.

10. Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2023), *Spotlight – towards gender equality in Africa: Data, challenges, and opportunities*, [Online]. Available at: https://mo.ibrahim.foundation/news/2023/spotlight-towards-gender-equality-africa-data-challenges-and-opportunities
11. Werner (2023), *Who is indigenous in Africa? The concept of indigeneity, its impacts, and progression*, [Online]. Available here: https://doi.org/10.1177/03058298221135666
12. Indigenous Peoples of Africa Co-ordinating Committee (2020), *Environmental and climate justice*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.ipacc.org.za/environmental-and-climate-justice/

Asia

Asia is the largest continent in the world both by land size and population, covering 30% of the earth's land size with over 4.6 billion people. The continent has 49 countries, each with a varying number of administrative regions and dependent territories. Asia is one of the most ethnically and linguistically diverse regions in the world and has a strong emphasis on respecting its traditional values, which makes DEI in the Asian context relative and very nuanced.[13] Much of Asia's mining is concentrated in South Asia, India, Indonesia, and Mongolia.

Factor	Description	Opportunities for Impact
Cultural Context	Most Asian cultures are predominantly collectivist in nature. Individuals are seen as embedded within their group identity, and the notion of a separate, autonomous self is deemphasised.[14] Asia is home to a wide array of religions including Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, and various Indigenous faiths. Religious diversity has also been increased by external religious movements and fundamentalists.[15] The concept of maintaining one's dignity and reputation, preventing any form of embarrassment, and upholding the respect of others is influential in many Asian cultures.[16] At a high level, many Asian cultures emphasise order through a cooperation, respect, and rule-abiding culture.[17]	Companies can emphasise shared values to foster teamwork, collaboration, and collective problem-solving to promote a sense of community within the workplace. DEI strategies should include policies that respect various religious practices, promote interfaith understanding and dialogue, and accommodations for diverse religious needs. Feedback systems should avoid public criticism or humiliation, providing constructive feedback in private, and recognising employees' contributions publicly to promote psychological safety in the workplace.
Political and Economic Context	Asia has a mix of constitutional monarchies, absolute monarchies, one-party states, federal states, dependent territories, and democracies. Some countries in the continent have authoritarian political systems, which may limit freedom of expression and civil liberties.[18] Political, ethnic, and religious tensions are prevalent in some parts of Asia. Central Asian states for example may be characterised as high risk in terms of political stability.[19] Asia has experienced rapid economic growth in the recent decades, which has lifted hundreds of millions out of extreme poverty. However, the richest 1 per cent of Asia's population holds almost 25 per cent of its wealth. COVID-19 has driven the number of Asians living in poverty to 1.4 billion, and increased inequality (as measured by the Gini coefficient) by 8 per cent.[20] This has also trickled down to access and equity in opportunity. School-age children from households in the poorest income quintile are up to five times more likely to not attend primary and secondary school than their peers in the richest quintile.[21]	Companies operating in restrictive contexts, should carefully consider the restrictions on activism and dissent and appropriately support advocacy for inclusive policies. Tailored training on cultural competency and conflict resolution is needed to mitigate the impact of cultural and ethnic tensions in the workplace. DEI initiatives in this context should prioritise equitable access to opportunities and fair pay policies. For external impact, and to motivate the talent pipeline, companies can invest in education and skills training programmes for underprivileged communities. Companies can also provide career pathways that support advancement and economic empowerment, and foster partnerships with national governments and NGOs to address the root causes of inequality and social exclusion.

13. Li (2024), *Time to 'talk the walk' on DEI in Asia*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.alliancemagazine.org/blog/time-to-talk-the-walk-on-dei-in-asia/#:~:text=DEI%20Practices%20in%20 Asia%3A%20A,on%20respecting%20its%20traditional%20values
14. Kumaran (2012), *Leadership as defined by culture, profession and gender*, [Online]. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-1-84334-658-6.50001-2
15. Evers (2015), S*outheast Asia: Sociocultural aspects*, [Online]. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-097086-8.12020-3
16. Lim and Basnyat (2016), *Face and online social networking*, [Online]. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.4324/9781315731650-2
17. Cheng and Groysberg (2020), *How corporate cultures differ around the world*, [Online]. Available at: https://hbr.org/2020/01/how-corporate-cultures-differ-around-the-world
18. International IDEA (2023), *The State of Democracy in Asia & the Pacific*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.idea.int/gsod/2023/chapters/asia-pacific/
19. Kirsanov et al., (2022), *The Central Asian States' role in the World Mining Industry*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/359667800_The_Central_Asian_ states'_role_in_the_world_mining_industry
20. Oxfam (2022), *Asia's extreme inequality crisis: Building back fairer after Covid-19*, [Online]. Available at: https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/621442/ bp-asias-extreme-inequality-crisis-260922-en.pdf?sequence=1
21. Ibid.

Policy Landscape	The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Declaration on Culture of Prevention for a Peaceful, Inclusive, Resilient, Healthy and Harmonious Society provides a framework for member countries to promote greater understanding and a sense of tolerance within each sub-region.[22]	Companies can reference the ASEAN framework and other applicable guidelines to guide the adaptation of their global DEI strategies in the local contexts.
	Countries like Japan revised and added a clause of promoting diversity within its Corporate Governance Code in 2021, requiring companies to establish and disclose policies and goals on diversity.[23]	Companies operating in Asia can also reference leading practice in other countries within the region to establish, disclose, and regularly update clear diversity policies and goals to ensure transparency and accountability.
	The Hong Kong Stock Exchange and Singapore Stock Exchange have also updated board diversity disclosure requirements for listed companies.[24]	DEI strategies should also prioritise inclusive workplace for persons with disabilities, offering reasonable accommodations, ensuring accessible facilities, and supporting disability awareness programmes in the communities they operate in.
	The region has made notable progress on disability inclusion laws. Countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia and Laos for example have introduced anti-discrimination, reasonable accommodation, employment quotas and accessibility laws to improve disability inclusion.[25]	
Indigenous Perspectives	Indigenous communities in Asia are as varied as the region's landscapes. Two thirds of the world's Indigenous Peoples are estimated to live in Asia, and approximately 260 million people represent 2,000 distinct civilisations and languages.[26]	Companies should recognise and respect the diversity Indigenous employees and communities bring to their workforces and tailor DEI programmes to foster inclusion and respect within the workplace.
	In countries like Cambodia, the traditional institutions of Indigenous Peoples are recognised by law and given specific roles or responsibilities within the state structure. While in Indonesia for example, Indigenous villages as such are recognised as local government units. India, Malaysia and Nepal also have quotas for Indigenous members in elective bodies, at provincial or local levels.[27]	DEI strategies should prioritise respectful engagement with Indigenous communities, prioritising representation, consistency, and transparency not only for resource exploration but also to attract Indigenous employees.
	The policy landscape on mineral exploration differs from country to country. In the Philippines, the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act provides that the Government may not issue licences or permits for the exploitation of natural resources unless a consultation process in line with the Act has taken place, and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples issues a certification in this regard.	Companies can actively recruit and promote Indigenous individuals into leadership positions, this can involve targeted recruitment efforts, mentorship programmes for Indigenous employees, and creating pathways for career advancement within the organisation.

22. Association of Southeast Asian Nations Secretariat (2021), *Strategic Policy Framework on Promoting an Adaptive ASEAN Community*, [PDF].
Available at: https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/9.-Strategic-Policy-Framework-on-Promoting-an-Adaptive-ASEAN-Community.pdf
23. Chen, Scott and Naito (2023), *How diversity, equity, & inclusion is gaining momentum in Asia-Pacific*, [Online].
Available at: https://www.bsr.org/en/blog/how-diversity-equity-inclusion-is-gaining-momentum-in-asia-pacific
24. Ibid.
25. United Nations Development Programme (2023), *Fostering disability Inclusion and Business Integrity in ASEAN*, [PDF].
Available at: https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-07/undp-rbap-dsbility-inclusion-and-business_-integrity_.pdf
26. International Labour Organization (2017), *Gender in Employment Policies and Programmes: What works for Women?*, [PDF].
Available at: https://www.ilo.org/media/421051/download
27. Ibid.

Europe

Europe is an important producer of chromium, copper, lead, silver, and zinc, which are concentrated in Austria, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Poland, Portugal, and Sweden.[28] The sector employs approximately 400,000 people and generates close to 44 billion euros in revenue.

As a community of nations that collaborate in mutual and shared interests, Europe has a large and diverse population of ethnocultural minorities, which includes Indigenous Peoples and migrants. Gender equity, anti-racism and accessibility have seen consistent growth in interest over the past few years, due to global movements which have improved understanding on the importance of representation, access, and equity within European communities and workforces.[29]

As of 2021, women made up 46 per cent of the continent's workforce and 10 per cent in its mining industry, with countries like Sweden having 25 per cent participation.

Factor	Description	Opportunities for Impact
Cultural Context	European countries have diverse cultural norms, but there is a common emphasis on freedom, protection of fundamental rights and general social welfare.[30] Some sub-regions, such as Southern and Eastern Europe, exhibit more collectivist tendencies whilst the north and west can be predominantly individualistic cultures that prioritise personal autonomy and self-expression.[31] Europe has experienced significant migration flows in recent decades, leading to increased cultural diversity and demographic changes, as most countries are experiencing ageing populations and low birth rates.[32] Most European countries have progressed significantly in gender equality, but challenges persist in achieving full gender parity in the workplace and society.	Due to the diversity of European communities, companies must regularly review and update organisational policies and benefits to ensure they are inclusive and equitable for all employees, as population demographics change. DEI efforts in companies should also support integration and inclusion of migrant communities, recognising their contributions to European societies and economies while addressing challenges related to discrimination, xenophobia, and social exclusion.

28. European Commission (n.d.), *Metallic Minerals*, [Online]. Available at: https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/sectors/raw-materials/related-industries/minerals-and-non-energy-extractive-industries/metallic-minerals_en
29. Ernst & Young (2024), *EY European DEI Index: Companies in Europe are Still Behind*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.ey.com/en_ro/news/2024/04/-ey-european-dei-index-companies-in-europe-are-still-behind
30. European e-Justice Portal (n.d.), P*rotecting Fundamental Rights within the European Union European*, [Online]. Available at: https://e-justice.europa.eu/563/EN/part_i__protecting_fundamental_rights_within_the_european_union
31. Kawamura (2012), *'Body image among Asian Americans'*, [Online]. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-384925-0.00039-0
32. Bade (2016), *Demographic Change and Migration in Europe*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.bpb.de/themen/migration-integration/kurzdossiers/176223/demographic-change-and-migration-in-europe/

Political and Economic Context	Europe comprises of a diverse range of political systems, from parliamentary democracies to constitutional monarchies and republics. 27 European countries are part of the European Union (EU). The EU is the most economically and politically integrated block in the world, with three main institutions involved in EU decision-making. 1. The European Parliament, representing EU citizens. 2. The Council of the European Union, representing EU governments. 3. The European Commission, representing the EU's overall interests.[33] EU policies are binding across the union and are typically decided through the ordinary legislative procedure (formerly known as the 'co-decision' procedure).[34] The wealthiest 10 per cent of the continent owns 67 per cent of its wealth, while the bottom half of adults possess only 1.2 per cent of it.[35] In the Nordic Countries for example, wealth inequality is high across Finland, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden.	Companies can support policies to address systemic inequalities by participating in public consultations, providing input on legislative proposals, and collaborating with EU agencies and stakeholders. Companies can also invest in community development initiatives, social entrepreneurship and other initiatives that address wealth inequality and promote economic inclusion.
Policy Landscape	The Treaty of Lisbon places great importance on culture, and the preamble to the Treaty on European Union (TEU) explicitly refers to 'drawing inspiration from the cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe', with one of the keys aims to 'respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity and ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced.[36] Legal experts note that strict data privacy laws in the European Union and the United Kingdom, such as the EU's General Data Protection Regulation, may limit the ability to collect and process demographic data for diversity efforts.[37] The EU gender equality laws mandate pay equity, non-discrimination, work life balance, and gender representation. The region's flexibility laws set a global benchmark, providing options for flexible working and scheduling.	Companies can incorporate the principles of cultural diversity and heritage preservation in the design of DEI programmes. For demographic data collection, companies should operate within the limits of the GDPR and consider compliant strategies to collect diversity data for strategy development and or reporting purposes.
Indigenous Perspectives	Most of Europe's Indigenous People can be found in the Arctic region. They include the Saami people who live in Sweden, Norway, Finland and Russia, and the Greenlandic Inuits. In recent years, the EU has moved from a relatively passive position regarding recognition of Indigenous Peoples' rights to much more active involvement in ensuring the effectiveness of these rights in its policies.[38] The EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy provides strong references to Indigenous Peoples' rights and notably foresees: 'Supporting Indigenous peoples by advocating for their participation in relevant human rights and development processes and by upholding the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) in all decisions affecting them'.[39]	Companies operating in Europe can align their DEI strategies with the EU Action plan, and leverage partnerships to support advocacy for the rights of Indigenous communities. Companies should meaningfully engage with Indigenous communities and employees, to understand their unique cultural perspectives, needs, and challenges and ensure that company policies are inclusive, and accommodating to the needs of Indigenous employees.

33. European Union (n.d.), *How EU Policy is Decided*, [Online]. Available at: https://european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/law/how-eu-policy-decided_en
34. Ibid.
35. Euronews (2024), *Mind the Gap! The unfair distribution of wealth in Europe*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.euronews.com/business/2024/04/01/wealth-inequality-where-in-europe-is-wealth-most-unfairly-distributed
36. European Parliament (n.d.), *Culture*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/137/kultur
37. Wisenberg Brin (2022), *DE&I Looks Different Around the Globe*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.shrm.org/topics-tools/news/dei-looks-different-around-globe
38. The International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (2023), *The Indigenous World 2023: European Union Engagement with Indigenous Issues*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.iwgia.org/en/european-union-engagement-with-indigenous-issues/5149-iw-2023-eu.html
39. Ibid.

North America

Extractive activities, such as mining and drilling, dominate the North American economy. The continent is a leading producer of coal, used in energy production; bauxite, used to create aluminium; iron and copper, both used in construction; and nickel, used to create steel. In the United States, the industry supports over 600,000 direct jobs and contributes to over 1.2 million indirect jobs across various sectors, including equipment manufacturing and environmental services. Canada is one of the largest employers in mining, with over 400,000 jobs both directly and indirectly. These jobs are often located in remote and rural areas, providing vital economic stability and growth to local communities.

Factor	Description	Opportunities for Impact
Cultural Context	North America is often referred to as a 'melting pot' due to its multicultural history, shaped by centuries of immigrants who have sought opportunities, particularly in the United States and Canada. Immigrants from Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America have contributed to the diverse make-up of the continent.[40] In countries such as the United States and Mexico with predominantly masculine cultures, there tends to be a stronger adherence to traditional gender roles, leading to disparities in leadership positions and pay between men and women.[41] There is also a general cultural acceptance of hierarchical social structures, where inequalities between different socioeconomic classes are accepted, with those in positions of power enjoying greater advantages over those lower in the social hierarchy.[42]	DEI programmes should acknowledge and celebrate the cultural diversity of individuals and strive to create inclusive workplaces where employees feel valued and respected regardless of their cultural identity. Companies should frequently review recruitment practices to ensure their workforces reflect the multicultural makeup of North America. DEI strategies should prioritise cultural competency and sensitivity training to promote multicultural awareness. DEI strategies should aim to create a healthy balance between individualism and hierarchy, recognising individual achievements and offering flexible work arrangements to accommodate the needs of all employees. Senior leadership must demonstrate a genuine commitment to creating an inclusive workplace by holding themselves accountable for DEI outcomes through performance metrics and goals.

40. Higgins (n.d.), *The Rise and Fall of the American 'Melting Pot'*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.wilsonquarterly.com/quarterly/_/the-rise-and-fall-of-the-american-melting-pot
41. Garza, McGregor and Nguyen (2018), *A Cross-Cultural Examination of the United States, Argentina, and Mexico Using Hofstede's Dimensions and the World Values Survey*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327548344_A_Cross-Cultural_Examination_of_the_United_States_Argentina_and_Mexico_Using_Hofstede's_Dimensions_and_the_World_Values_Survey
42. Ibid.

Political and Economic Context	The United States, Canada and Mexico operate under federal systems of government, where power is divided between a central national government and subnational entities (states, provinces, territories).[43] Political ideologies vary across the region, with the US for example falling between the liberal to conservative spectrum,[44] while Canada has a blend of conservative, socialist, and liberal policies.[45] Although the US and Canada have large economies, income inequality persists in most North American countries. According to Federal Reserve statistics, the richest 1 per cent of US households for example hold more than 20 per cent of the national household wealth, which makes social mobility difficult.[46]	Companies can tailor their DEI strategies to align with specific regulations, cultural norms, and demographic needs of different states, provinces, and territories they operate in. DEI strategies must be sensitive to and inclusive of the diverse political beliefs but work towards ensuring broader acceptance of all employees within the workforce. Companies can implement equitable compensation structures, and targeted support programmes to enhance social mobility and promote equality of opportunity.
Policy Landscape	On a high level most countries in North America have anti-discrimination laws at federal and provincial state levels. These laws prohibit discrimination based on protected characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, and age. Canada has the Human Rights Act, Employment Equity act, and the Canadian charter rights[47] while the US has the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), the American Disabilities Act, and Executive Order 11246. Mexico officially ratified the International Labour Organization Convention on Violence and Harassment (C190) in July 2022.[48] The US Supreme Court struck down affirmative action in college admissions, which has set off a wave of similar lawsuits and legal challenges against company diversity programmes, particularly around representation.[49] Federal and state anti-discrimination laws in the US prohibit racially motivated employment decisions, even if the employer's goal is to promote diversity. In rare cases where neutral measures fail, the Supreme Court and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) allow race and gender-conscious hiring programmes.[50]	Companies can support advocacy for policy reform and amendments to anti-discrimination laws to strengthen protections for marginalised groups and address gaps in existing legislation. DEI strategies should make provisions for awareness programmes that emphasise the importance of diverse and inclusive workplaces, and the benefits of representation in achieving business success and social progress. DEI strategies should make provisions for awareness programmes that emphasise the importance of diverse and inclusive workplaces, and the legal landscape on anti-discrimination laws and affirmative action to foster a culture of understanding within and beyond the workplace. Where appropriate, companies can continue to advance diversity programmes and initiatives, with a focus on creating equitable opportunities and outcomes for minority groups within their workforces and communities.

43. Abu-Laban, Jhappan and Rocher (2008), *Politics in North America: Redefining Continental Relations*, [Online]. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3138/j.ctt2tv3fp.16
44. Campbell and Quam (2023), *The Western World: Daily Readings on Geography*, [Online]. Available at: https://cod.pressbooks.pub/westernworlddailyreadingsgeography/chapter/north-america-political-geography-i/
45. Johnson and Lawrence (2016), *Thinking Government: Public Administration and Politics in Canada*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.thinkinggovernment.com/chapter-02.html
46. USAFacts (2023), *How this chart explains American's wealth across income levels*, [Online]. Available at: https://usafacts.org/articles/how-this-chart-explains-americans-wealth-across-income-levels/#:~:text=The%20top%201%25%20of%20households%20in,America%20represent%2026%25%20of%20total%20US%20wealth.
47. Canada Department of Justice (1985), *Canada Health Act (R.S.C., 1985, c. H-6)*, [Online]. Available at: https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/h-6/
48. Human Rights Watch (2023) *World Report 2023: Rights trends in Mexico*. [Online], Available at: https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/mexico#49dda6
49. Kessler (2024), *DEI goes quiet*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/13/business/dealbook/dei-goes-quiet.html
50. L&E Global (2023), *04. Anti-Discrimination Laws*, [Online]. Available at: https://leglobal.law/countries/usa/employment-law/employment-law-overview-usa/04-anti-discrimination-laws/

Indigenous Perspectives	The Indigenous Peoples of North America and believed to have migrated into the region between 40,000-14,000 years ago.[51]	DEI strategies should prioritise creating employment and economic opportunities for Indigenous communities they operate in, by implementing inclusive hiring practices, providing mentorship and career development programmes, and supporting Indigenous-owned businesses and enterprises to enhance economic mobility and financial stability.
	The Canadian Constitution recognises 3 groups of Indigenous Peoples,[52] while the US recognises 574 Native American tribal entities as American Indian or Alaska Native tribes most of which have recognised national homelands. [53]	
	Generally, Indigenous Peoples live in rural parts of North America, which results in barriers to accessing healthcare, quality education, credit and financial services, and employment.[54]	Companies can also support advocacy and government programmes, which provide equitable access to essential and social services for Indigenous Peoples, particularly those living in rural areas.
		DEI programmes can also be tailored to foster a culture that values and respects Indigenous cultures, traditions, and perspectives. These include cultural sensitivity training for employees and team leaders, contractors, and others.

51. Mark (2023), *Native Peoples of North America*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.worldhistory.org/Native_Peoples_of_North_America/#:~:text=The%20Native%20Peoples%20of%20North%20America%20%28also%20known,into%20separate%20nations%20with%20distinct%20and%20sophisticated%20cultures.
52. Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (2024), *Indigenous peoples and communities*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1100100013785/1529102490303
53. The International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (2023), *Indigenous World 2023: United States of America*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.iwgia.org/en/usa/5188-iw-2023-usa.html
54. Joint Economic Committee (2022), *Native Americans Communities Continue to Face Barriers to Opportunity that Stifle Economic Mobility*, [PDF]. Available at: https://www.jec.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/9a6bd201-d9ed-4615-bc32-9b899faf5627/nativeamericanscontinuetofacepervasiveeconomicdisparaties-final.pdf

South America

South America is the fourth largest continent in the world, covering 17.84 million km² with approximately 421 million people. Brazil and Venezuela make up the continents' largest and smallest countries, respectively. South America is culturally diverse, with traditions stemming from the pre-Columbian civilisations and Indigenous groups, which have mixed with those of Enslaved Africans as well as Asian and European immigrants.

Awareness of the importance of DEI within communities and workplaces in South America is rising as employees and companies are witnessing significant social change movements such as #NiUnaMenos (NUM), which highlights femicide and violence against women.

Factor	Description	Opportunities for Impact
Cultural Context	South America is culturally diverse with a mixture of heritage and origins from Indigenous groups, colonial influences, and those of enslaved Africans as well as Asian and European immigrants.[55] Most South American cultures are collectivist, with a strong emphasis on social and family ties. An individual's ethnic background can be a factor in determining social status, educational attainment, and economic opportunities.[56] The continent is religiously diverse, although Catholicism dominates the region, Indigenous creeds and rituals are still practiced in several countries.[57]	Companies can provide localised cultural competency training for employees to understand the diverse origins and traditions of South American cultures, to promote understanding and respect for the diverse perspectives within the workforce. DEI strategies should prioritise equity and equal outcome for all employees, creating programmes aimed at supporting talent from underprivileged socio-economic backgrounds to participate fairly in employment.

55. Dorst et al., (2024), T*he people of South America*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.britannica.com/place/South-America/The-people
56. Avila et al., (2024), *Population and ecological distribution*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.britannica.com/place/South-America/Population-and-ecological-distribution
57. Encyclopedia of Religion (2024), S*outh American Indian religions: An Overview*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.encyclopedia.com/environment/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/south-american-indian-religions-overview

Political and Economic Context	Although all countries in South America operate under democratic rule and are constitutional republics, political stability and strong democratic institutions are lacking in the region.[58] Economic inequality levels are varied in South America. Argentina and Paraguay for example have high levels of inequality while Brazil and Chile have experienced gradual improvements, and Uruguay has consistently reduced its inequality.[59] Inequality in access between urban and rural areas is apparent, with urban regions receiving better infrastructure and social services and income levels while the rural areas experience poverty and a lack of infrastructure.[60] Unemployment rates on the continent are generally high, due to systemic economic issues and relative instability. In Chile, for example, the unemployment rate is approximately 8.3 per cent, while in Colombia and Brazil it sits at 10.6 per cent and 9 per cent, respectively.[61]	Companies can implement workforce development programmes that provide skills training and employment opportunities for individuals from underprivileged socio-economic backgrounds. This can include apprenticeships, and job placements to bridge the gap between urban and rural unemployment rates. Companies can also collaborate with governments and support initiatives that provide access to education, healthcare, and social services for disadvantaged organisations to address infrastructure inequalities and promote economic development in marginalised communities. Companies can also support advocacy for policy reforms that address economic inequality and promote equal economic opportunities across urban and rural regions.
Policy Landscape	Across many countries in South America, age, gender, nationality, ethnicity, religion, mental health, marital status, pregnancy and disability are protected from discrimination in the workplace.[62] Argentina, Chile, and Brazil have implemented quota laws for representation of women in politics and persons with disabilities in the workplace.[63] The region has made significant progress on marriage equality. Same-sex marriage is legal in Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, and Colombia. In a few countries within the region, LGBTQIA+ activists face backlash from social and religious conservatives, and some leaders who are openly hostile to LGBTQIA+ rights.[64] The risks of non-compliance with worker-related discrimination regulations includes financial penalties or other sanctions as well as media attention and/or stakeholder and consumer scrutiny.[65]	Companies should model their DEI strategies to comply and adopt leading practise in legislations across the continent. Where legislation on LGBTQIA+ rights is favourable, companies can establish LGBTQIA+ employee resource groups, to foster a sense of community, and offer diversity training on LGBTQIA+ issues across the region. Companies can also engage with stakeholders, including employees, and the communities they operate in, to demonstrate progress on their DEI commitments and invite input to ensure that the strategy remains relevant to their needs.

58. Newman (2023), *South America: A hard road to unity*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/6/3/south-america-a-hard-road-to-unity
59. United Nations Development Programme (2021), *Trapped? Inequality and Economic Growth in Latin America and the Caribbean*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.undp.org/latin-america/publications/trapped-inequality-and-economic-growth-latin-america-and-caribbean
60. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2020), *Enhancing social inclusion in Latin America and the Caribbean*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.oecd.org/en/about/programmes/oecd-latin-america-and-the-caribbean-regional-programme/social-inclusion.html
61. The Global Economy (n.d.), *Unemployment rate – Country Ranking*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/rankings/unemployment_rate/South-America/
62. Encarnación (2023), *Latin America's gay rights revolution: Revisiting out in the Periphery*, [Online]. Available at: https://revista.drclas.harvard.edu/latin-americas-gay-rights-revolution-revisiting-out-in-the-periphery/
63. DisabilityIN (n.d.), *Brazil: Employer legal requirements*, [Online]. Available at: https://disabilityin.org/country/brazil/#:~:text=Employer%20Legal%20Requirements,201%20to%20500%20employees%20%E2%80%93%203%25
64. Farrell (2021), *The State of LGBTQ+ Rights in Latin America*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/state-lgbtq-rights-latin-america-0
65. Baker McKenzie (2022), *Inclusion and Diversity in Latin America*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.bakermckenzie.com/-/media/files/insight/publications/2022/06/id-latam-report-2022-eng.pdf?sc_lang=en&hash=B193DB54987879A8EDEE02852F7D4DD6

| Indigenous Perspectives | Indigenous tribes and civilisations have been long established in South America. Millions of people still speak languages considered as Indigenous. The Peruvian State for example recognises 47 Indigenous languages spoken by 55 different groups.[66]

In a number of countries, Indigenous Peoples have been recognised by the state, while in some others, like Chile, they are not recognised in the constitution, which causes challenges to territorial rights.[67] Bolivia also passed legislations that guaranteed political representation of Indigenous groups, recognising their communal forms of property, and granting them the right to use Indigenous justice systems.

Although Indigenous Peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions, providing education in their languages, and in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning, many Indigenous communities in this region lack access to quality education at all levels and have low completion rates. | Companies can support initiatives that promote the preservation of Indigenous languages and cultures, and partner with local organisations to fund educational programmes for employees to enhance cultural diversity awareness and foster a more inclusive environment.

Companies can also support advocacy for the recognition of Indigenous rights and support initiatives that push for constitutional recognition and protection of Indigenous peoples' rights to ensure more stable and inclusive operating environments.

External DEI strategies should consider establishing long-term partnerships with Indigenous communities and organisations, and support community-led projects that address local needs and priorities to strengthen community relations. |

66. The International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (n.d.), *Indigenous peoples in Chile*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.iwgia.org/en/chile.html
67. Cultural Survival (2023), *Colla Community of Copiapó and Cultural Survival Submit Report on the State of Indigenous Rights in Chile for the UN Universal Periodic Review*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.culturalsurvival.org/news/colla-community-copiapo-and-cultural-survival-submit-report-state-indigenous-rights-chile-un

Australia

Australia is the world's smallest continent[68] but is endowed with vast natural resources, and is the world's largest exporter of coal, producer of opal and holds the largest uranium reserves in the world.[69]

The ethical and business cases for DEI is well known across Australia. A survey by the Australian HR Institute indicates that 84 per cent of human resources professionals say that DEI is critical to the future success of their company. However, only half (50 per cent) of human resources professionals say that their leaders see DEI as a priority for their company.[70]

Furthermore, talent shortage is one of the most significant challenges facing Australian companies in recent times and has emerged as another compelling reason for companies to ensure their workplaces can attract, support, and retain a diverse workforce.[71]

Factor	Description	Opportunities for Impact
Cultural Context	Australia is dominantly an Anglo-Celtic culture, derived from British colonisation, but with influence from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and its significant immigrant population.[72] Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, represent 3.8% of the total Australian population.[73] Over 29 per cent of Australia's population was born oversees, and 48 per cent of Australians have a parent born oversees.[74] Individuals in Australia, value equality and over hierarchy in Australia. There is also a preference for achievement, flexibility and quick adaptation to changes, similar to Canada, the USA and New Zealand but substantially different from Western Europe and developing countries.[75]	DEI programmes should include initiatives that recognise and celebrate the diverse cultural backgrounds of employees and encourage the inclusion of various cultural perspectives in business practices and decision-making. This will enhance cultural competence within the workforce. Ensure that policies are aligned with social values, by providing equal opportunities for all employees, regardless of their background to foster a workplace where all employees have equal opportunities to progress and succeed. DEI strategies should encourage collaborative and inclusive team dynamics, leveraging the low power distance culture to promote open communication and collaboration across all levels of the organisation.

68. Australia is considered a continent in this context, distinct from Oceania, which encompasses a broader region including numerous Pacific islands.
69. Central Intelligence Agency (2024), *The World Factbook: Australia – Geography*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/australia/#geography
70. Australian Human Resources Institute (2023), *The State of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Australian Workplaces*, [PDF]. Available at: https://www.ahri.com.au/wp-content/uploads/DEI-Report-2023.pdf
71. Veevers et al., (2024), *Cultural life,* [Online]. Available at: https://www.britannica.com/place/Australia/Cultural-life
72. Twidale et al., (2024), *Cultural life,* [Online]. Available at: https://www.britannica.com/place/Australia/Cultural-life
73. Australian Bureau of Statistics, (2023), *Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples/estimates-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-australians/latest-release
74. Australian Human Rights Commission (n.d.), *Statistics about Cultural and Racial Diversity*, [Online]. Available at: https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/education/statistics-about-cultural-and-racial-diversity
75. Padley et al., (2022), *Contemporary Australian socio-cultural factors and their influence on medical student rural career intent*, [Online]. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1111%2Fajr.12866

Political & Economic Context	Australia is a constitutional monarchy with a federation of six states which, together with two self-governing territories, have their own constitutions, parliaments, governments, and laws.[76] Australia is the 12th largest economy in the world. An achievement that is supported by democracy and strong institutions, low corruption, relatively fair legal systems and a low risk of social unrest.[77] Over the past two decades, income inequality in Australia has increased. Wealth is unequally distributed, with the wealthiest 20 per cent holding up to six times the wealth of the middle 20 per cent.[78]	Companies can implement initiatives such as financial literacy workshops, career advancement training, and targeted hiring initiatives that support economic mobility for underrepresented and economically disadvantaged groups companies should uphold and within their workforces and communities, to reduce income inequality. DEI strategies should promote strong ethical standards, transparency, and accountability with DEI commitment, to build trust with employees, customers, and the wider community, DEI strategies should provide equitable compensation and benefits packages and policies that promote pay equity to reduce disparities within the organisation and promote a more equitable and motivated workforce.
Policy Landscape	The Australian Federal Government has passed numerous laws which aim to protect people from discrimination within the workplace. These include the: — Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth). — Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth). — Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth). — Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth). — Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth). These laws, alongside other state-based anti-discrimination legislation, are the primary source of equal employment opportunity obligations.	Companies should align their policies with leading practise in the legislations, and consistently review DEI policies to align with any future changes.
Indigenous Perspectives	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People are known to have occupied mainland Australia for at least 65,000 years before European settlers.[79] They may have one of the oldest continuous cultures on the planet. Although they make up 3.8 per cent of Australia's population, Indigenous Peoples are culturally distinct, and speak more than 250 distinct language groups spread throughout Australia.[80] Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples are not mentioned in the Australian Constitution. In 1967, an amendment was made to allow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to be counted as part of the national population, and for the laws to be made for them. In 2023, a referendum was conducted to recognise the First Peoples of Australia in the Constitution by establishing an Indigenous Voice to Parliament, but it failed to gain adequate support from the Australian public.[81] The median income of Indigenous Peoples in Australia is 60 per cent less than non-Indigenous Peoples, and 85 per cent less in remote parts of Australia.[82]	Companies should integrate cultural awareness and competency training programmes to educate employees about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and perspectives, to foster a respectful and inclusive workplace that values and acknowledges the contributions of Indigenous cultures. Companies can implement targeted recruitment and career development programmes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, to enhance economic opportunities and mobility for Indigenous communities, helping to reduce income disparities. Companies can also support advocacy for the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in the Australian Constitution, partnering with Indigenous organisations to amplify their voices and contribute to policy discussions.

76. Parliament of Australia (2024), *Infosheet 20 – The Australian system of government*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/House_of_Representatives/Powers_practice_and_procedure/00_-_Infosheets/Infosheet_20_-_The_Australian_system_of_government

77. Australian Trade and Investment Commission (2023), *Economic and business fundamentals*, [Online]. Available at: https://international.austrade.gov.au/en/why-australia/economic-landscape#:~:text=Australia%20is%20a%20strong%20and,Outlook%2C%20April%202023%20database

78. University of New South Wales Sydney Newsroom (2023), *Sharp jump in wealth inequality over last 20 years: report*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.unsw.edu.au/newsroom/news/2023/09/sharp-jump-in-wealth-inequality-over-last-20-years--report-

79. National Museum of Australia (2024), *Evidence of First Peoples*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/evidence-of-first-peoples#:~:text=Aboriginal%20people%20are%20known%20to,came%20to%20be%20in%20Australia

80. National Geographic (2024), *Why Aboriginal Australians are still fighting for recognition*, [Online]. Available at: https://www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/article/aboriginal-australians

81. Australian Human Rights Commission (2024), *About constitutional recognition*, [Online]. Available at: https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-social-justice/about-constitutional-recognition#:~:text=Aboriginal%20and%20Torres%20Strait%20Islander%20peoples%20are%20not%20mentioned%20in,and%20remove%20section%20127%20entirely

82. Australian Human Rights Commission (2024), *Statistics about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People*, [Online]. Available at: https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/education/face-facts-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-people

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ICMM
53-64 Chancery Lane
London, WC2A 1QS
United Kingdom

+44 [0]20 7467 5070
info@icmm.com
icmm.com

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