



Society for Inclusion and Development
in Communities and care for All
جمعية العناية الصحية للتنمية المجتمعية الشاملة

EMPLOYER SELF-AUDIT ””



Funded by
International Foundation
for Electoral Systems

01.

Background

Soins Infirmiers et Développement Communautaire (SIDC), Lebanese Down syndrome

Association (LDSA), and Justice Without Frontiers (JWF) implemented a project funded by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) for Inclusive Employment entitled “Identify, Interpret, and Respond”. The overall objectives of the action are 1) promoting a non-discriminatory inclusive work environment in the private sector and 2) advocating for an amendment of the Lebanese labor law towards better inclusion and protection of marginalized groups in the labor market.

A self-audit checklist for private sector employers regarding abiding by equal opportunity employment was created. The checklist was part of non-discrimination and inclusivity audit mechanisms in the public and private sectors to ensure equal opportunity employment regardless of gender, disability status, sexual orientation, and HIV status.

02.

Methodology

The self-audit checklist was based on



A mapping of existing audit tools including checklists and indicators;



A literature review of existing research regarding discrimination and inclusion including International Labor Organization's research.

Participants who expressed willingness to participate in this project were invited to provide background information regarding their work and then fill out the self-audit checklist 87 questions. Questions were available in both English and Arabic.



03.

Results

1 Participating Employers Profile

Ten employers have agreed to collaborate with SIDC and filled out the self-audit checklist. These employers are:

- *CST Lebanon SAL*
- *Omani Group for GAM & Partners LLC*
- *Ets. Antoine Massoud*
- *L'Union Pour La Protection De L'Enfance Au Liban (UPEL)*
- *Agonist Coffee Shop*
- *Learn & Play for Child Care Center*
- *Medco SAL*
- *RITZ LLC*
- *Verdun Hoteliere for the Four Points by Sheraton*
- *Crossover Holding.*

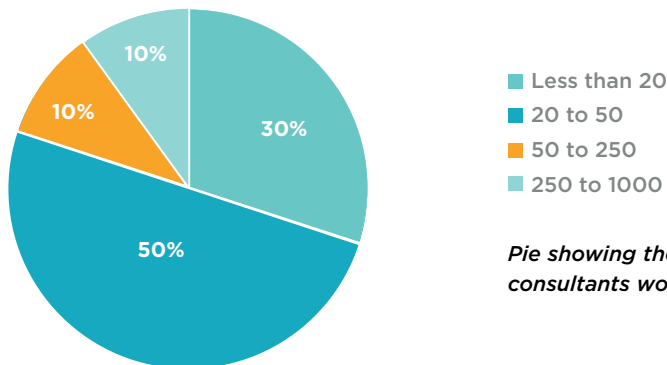
Various Industries

Participating employers are part of the following industries:

- *Insurance*
- *Engineering*
- *Hospitality*
- *Food and Beverage*
- *Distribution*
- *Child Care Services.*

Various Sizes

Number of Employees, Daily Workers & Consultants



Pie showing the number of employees, daily workers and consultants working for the participating employers.

Eight of the participating employers employed less than 50 employees, while only two employed hundreds of workers (one company had 220 employees and the other had 800 employees).

03.

Personal Data

Various registration status

The registration status varies per employer

- Four are Joint Stock Companies
- Two are registered as a Society with Limited Responsibility
- One is registered as none-governmental organization
- Nine out of ten employers are registered with the National Social Security Fund.

2 Right to Work

Fair Hiring Procedures

Only Half of Employers Had a Written Recruitment Process

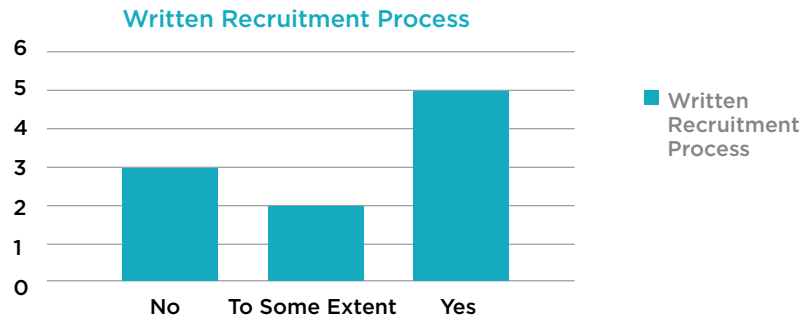


Chart showing the number of participating employers who have a written recruitment process and those do not have it or who have it to some extent.

Only half of the participating employers had a written recruitment process. The other five followed a recruitment process but did not have it written down. Despite the lack of a documented process, nine out of ten employers reported having a written job description.

Most of these employers confirmed administrating a verbal exam and requiring a panel of more than one person as part of the recruitment. However, only six employers document the recruitment process and less than half had a previously set criteria for grading during recruitment.

Employers should document their recruitment process before proceeding with hiring. This includes developing (1) internal recruitment polices and (2) standard operating procedures that will ensure the use of documentation, accessible exams and panels of three individuals or more. Employers are also encouraged to keep existing job descriptions updated on a regular basis and to build on this document to create a set of criteria to grade potential candidates. These steps will increase accountability and transparency during recruitment.

03.

Results

Inclusive Hiring Procedures

Employers v. Medical Conditions & Disabilities

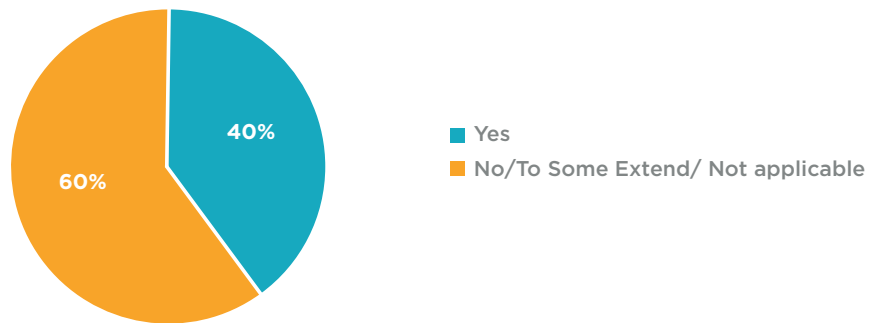
Despite the fact that seven out of ten employers reported that they have an inclusive job posting, only half of employers were willing to hire someone living with previous or chronic medical condition or a person living with a physical disability or a person living with HIV. These numbers decreased when employers were asked whether they had previously hired a person living with physical disability with only four answering yes. Only one person reported hiring a person living with HIV.

These numbers were also low when the question was related to intellectual and psychosocial disability, with only four employers expressing their willingness to hire a person living with this disability and only two reporting having hired a person with intellectual disability. Half of the employers did not know if they hired a person with psychosocial disability and only one person reported having done so.

When it came to pregnancy, most employers were willing to hire pregnant women but only four reported having done so in the past.

Employers v. Gender & Sexual Identities

Willingness to Hire LGBTIQ+ Employees



Pie showing the percentage of participating employees who expressed willingness to hire LGBTIQ+ employees.

When it came to sexual and gender identities, only four employers expressed willingness to hire a member of the LGBTIQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer) and only three confirmed having done so previously.

These numbers decreased when the question was related to trans individuals with only three employers expressing willingness to hire a trans person and without anyone reporting having done so previously. Two employers clarified that they do not know if they did hire a trans person.

03.

Results



Willingness v. Actual Hires

The difference between the willingness of employers to hire individuals and their previous hires indicate that the work environment is not inclusive.

Additionally, three employers had clarified that their answers depend on which position is advertised and on the job requirements without clarifying the relation between job requirements and gender and sexual identities. Furthermore, the decrease in willingness to hire people with intellectual disability, psychosocial disability, members of the LGBTIQ+, and specially trans individuals show a lack of awareness of what inclusion means.

It is recommended to (1) build the capacity of employers to help them understand what inclusion means, what and who it includes and how it is important to maintain a healthy and productive work environment and (2) develop the required tools to create an inclusive and safe work culture. To avoid unintentionally harming members of the LGBTIQ+ community and people living with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities, it is recommended to only support employers who want to explore and challenge their perceptions and to only do so after a thorough risk assessment.

3 Right to a Safe & Healthy Workplace

A Workplace That Is Free from Discrimination & Harassment

Employers Have Some Policies in Place but Do Not Have Tools to Implement Them



Chart showing what policies the participating employers had adopted.

All employers have a code of conduct and only one employer did not report having additional policies for employment and employees. Six employers reported having a sexual harassment policy and a personal record policy with at least five confirming asking for a criminal record and at least two indicating that they ask for a health certificate or medical exams. All employers reported storing the documents confidentially and only sharing them on a need-to-know basis. Only four employers reported having a gender equality policy while seven reported having an anti-bullying policy. Half of employers reported having an equity, diversity and inclusion policy.

Despite the fact that most employers reported the existence of internal policies, only three reported allocating a budget for the implementation of these policies and only half reported having trained their staff on these policies. Additionally, only half of the employers reported having put sanctions against discriminatory actions while six reported having put sanctions against bullying.

It is recommended that employers (1) further develop their internal policies to accommodate all potential employees and (2) translate that commitment through budgeting, regular training and tailored sanctions in their codes of conduct to prevent harassment, bullying and all types of discrimination.

03.

Results



Willingness v. Actual Hires

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A Workplace That Is Accessible

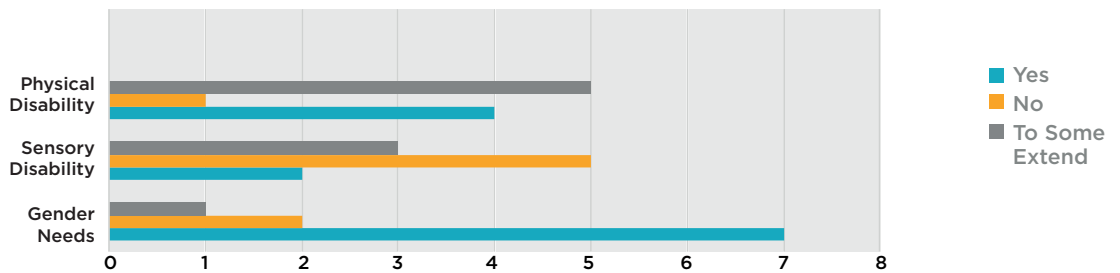


Chart showing the answers of participating employers as to whether the workplace is accessible for people living with physical disability, sensory disability or for different gender needs.

Seven employers reported taking into consideration gender needs but only four employers reported that their workplace is accessible for people living with physical disability. This number decreased to two when it came to accessibility for people living with sensory disability.

Employers are encouraged to accommodate people with physical and sensory disability by making the workplace accessible. This includes, among other things, adding ramps, accessible elevators and accessible bathrooms. People living with disability should be able to access the workplace independently without requiring ad hoc assistance.

03.

Results



A Workplace That Provides Protection

Only one employer reported that their employees benefit from mental health insurance coverage. Four employers reported giving sick leave for mental health reasons. Half of employers reported being willing to be flexible with people living with disability while three considered this to be inapplicable and two were willing to provide some extent of flexibility.

It is recommended that employers revise their internal policies to accommodate people living with disability. It is also recommended that employers complement the National Social Security Fund coverage with a private insurance that covers all employees without discrimination and that has a mental health coverage.

Additionally, or alternatively if the private insurance option was not financially possible, employers should consider the less costly option of supporting employees to create a mutual aid fund.

3 Right to Rest & Leisure

A Workplace with Reasonable Working Hours & Periodic Paid Holidays

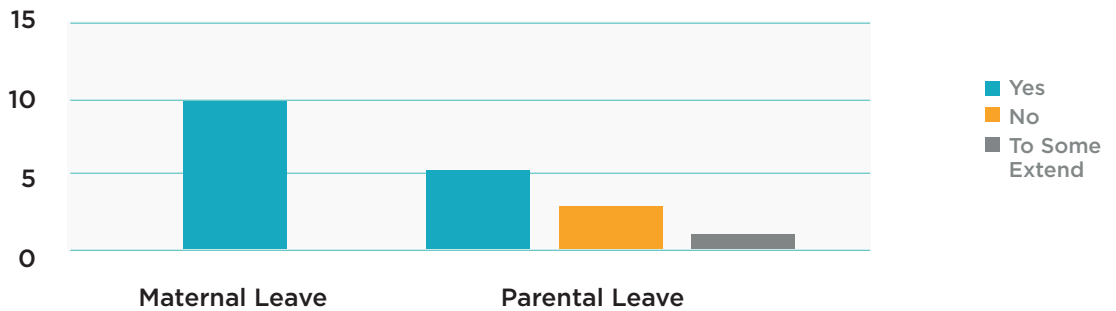


Chart showing the number of participating employers who provide maternal and parental leave.

All employers reported abiding by law by giving new mothers ten weeks of maternity leave but only six reported giving a parental leave and only one reported giving it to some extent. The parental leave was reported to be one week long by four employers and one reported giving it for 72 days.

All employers reported having written rules that indicate the working hours and the paid and unpaid leave days. All employers also reported giving the same number of leave days for all employees. They also reported expecting employees in the same position and rank to work an equal amount time.

It is recommended that employers expand their parental leaves to include all new parents and for that leave to be equal to the maternity leave duration.

03.

Results



A workplace with Fair Remuneration

Only two employers did not have different salary scales for different positions but not a single employer publicized the salary scale. Employers should keep a written salary scale for all different positions and to review it on a regular basis. It is recommended to make those salary scales publicly available to increase transparency.

4

Right to Equal Opportunity & Treatment

Right to Equal Personal Development

Eight out of ten employers reported that all employees have access to equal capacity building while one answered that this is inapplicable and another one answered that this is true to some extent. When asked if everyone had a personal capacity building plan, the numbers decreased to only four who answered yes and three who answered to some extent.

The results do not show discrimination in building the capacity building of employees but they show the absence of a standard operating procedure for capacity building. This has the potential of leaving space for unintentional discrimination. It is recommended that this process becomes standardized through the development of relevant standard operating procedures and policies.

Fair Evaluation

When asked if employers hold regular and documented performance evaluation according to a set of written criteria only one employer said no.

That number decreased to eight who had some sort of written procedures for promotions and bonuses. All employers considered that there is no discrimination when it comes to employees' right to receive bonuses and promotions but some of them explained that the process can be informal sometimes and that the financial situation, like the current economic collapse in Lebanon, can prevent this procedure sometimes.

All employers reported having written terms and conditions for termination of employment but only four reported having policies that prevent termination for reasons of gender. Additionally, only two had policies preventing terminations for reasons of sexual orientation or for reasons related to living with HIV or for living with a disability.

It is recommended to support employers to develop their termination terms and conditions to protect their staff against discrimination. There should be written policies that are made known to every employer and employee and that are revised regularly.

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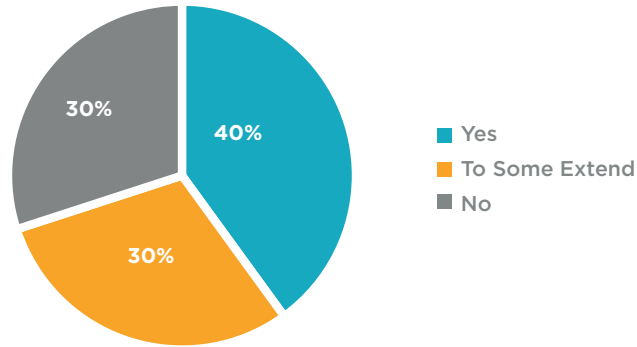
Results

5

Whistleblower Rights

Pre-existing Anonymous & Safe Complaint Mechanism in Place

Safe Complaint Mechanism



Pie showing the percentage of participating employers who had a safe complaint mechanism.

Employees do not have sufficient protection to help voice their concerns confidentially. Only four employers had a clear and written complaint mechanism. Half of employers reported having anonymous reporting mechanisms but only four reported that the complaint mechanism is safe to be used by employees.

These employers clarified that they either have a box of complaint or receive anonymous emails or simply re-affirmed their commitment not to disclose the identity of employees who file a complaint.

The process should be formalized through (1) the development of relevant policies, (2) training of relevant staff including the focal point for collecting complaints and (3) making the tools known and accessible by all employees.

Transparent Investigation & Decision-Making Procedures

Despite half of employers reporting that there is a transparent decision-making procedure for handling complaints, only four employers had written procedure for investigation complaints and only three had a dedicated focal point trained to investigate those complaints. Six employers reported that employees can challenge the outcome of the decisions.

Employers need to (1) formalize through written policies the way they handle complaints and, whenever possible, (2) assign focal points and train them on how to handle those complaints. This will lead to a transparent investigation and a transparent decision-making process that will prevent injustice and discrimination.

04.

Conclusion

- Participating employers do not have institutional safeguards that ensure fair and transparent decision-making and hold both employers and employees accountable.

Most participating employers neither have safe whistleblowing mechanisms nor written recruitment processes that follow a previously set grading criteria. These safeguards are essential to protect employees which will lead to equity, diversity and inclusion.

Additionally, participating employers lack awareness regarding what inclusion means and who it includes. There is discrepancy between what employers reported being willing to do and between their actual hiring practices.

Participating employers also lack the infrastructure that allows them to be inclusive. This is mostly shown by the fact that most workplaces are not accessible for people living with physical and sensory disabilities.



05.

Summary of Recommendations



1 Recruitment

- a. It is recommended that employers develop (1) internal recruitment policies and (2) standard operating procedures that will ensure the use of documentation, accessible exams, previously set grading criteria and panels of three individuals or more.
- b. It is recommended that employers keep existing job descriptions updated on a regular basis.
- c. It is recommended that employers build on this existing job description to create a set of criteria to grade potential candidates.
- d. It is recommended to build the capacity of employers regarding what inclusion means, what and who it includes and how it is important to maintain a healthy and productive work environment.
- e. It is recommended to conduct a risk assessment before working with employers on inclusion.

2 Workplace

- a. It is recommended that employers further develop their internal policies to ensure inclusion.
- b. It is recommended that employers budget for the implementation of their internal policies.
- c. It is recommended that employers hold regular training regarding what policies they have in place.
- d. It is recommended that employers put in place tailored sanctions in their codes of conduct to prevent harassment, bullying and all types of discrimination.
- e. It is recommended that employers build the workplace infrastructure to accommodate people living with physical and sensory disability.
- f. It is recommended that employers complement the National Social Security Fund coverage with a private insurance that covers all employees without discrimination and that has a mental health coverage. Additionally, or alternatively if the private insurance was not financially possible, employers should consider the less costly option of supporting employees to create a mutual aid fund.

05.

Summary of Recommendations

3 Parental Leave

- a. It is recommended that employers expand their parental leaves to include all new parents.
- b. It is recommended that employers make the parental leave equal to the maternity leave in terms of conditions and duration.

4 Salary

- a. It is recommended that employers keep a written salary scale for all different positions and to review it on a regular basis.
- b. It is recommended to make the salary scales publicly accessible.
- c. Capacity building
- d. It is recommended that employers make capacity building a standardized process through the development of standard operating procedures and policies.

5 Evaluation

- a. It is recommended that employers develop their termination terms and conditions to prevent termination that is related to gender, sexual orientation or for living with HIV or with a disability.
- b. It is recommended that employers make the termination policies documented and known to every employer and employee and to revise them regularly.

6 Whistleblowing

- a. It is recommended that employers formalize the complaint process through written policies.
- b. It is recommended that employers assign focal points for collecting and investigating complaints.
- c. It is recommended that employers regularly train those focal points on how to handle complaints and investigations in a safe, fair and transparent way.
- d. It is recommended that employers make the complaint and whistleblowing tools known and accessible to both employees and potential employees.