

You are listening to the Shaping Inclusion and Diversity Podcast - Episode 2 - on the difference having a vision and a team can make

Consider this:

We can be lost for three different reasons: because we don't know where we are at or because we don't know where we're going, or because we don't know how to get there.

In chapter 2 of the Shaping Inclusion and Diversity Publication we dive deeper into these three core elements of strategy. And here we will add another big question: What does success look like?

And just like that, we have a basic understanding of the 4 phases of strategic planning:

- **Analyzing** (where we are at),
- **Planning** (where we are going),
- **Implementing** (how we are getting there),
- and **Evaluating** (what success looks like).

For me, strategy brings clarity. If you know what you want and you have a time frame, you know how to take every step.

That's Miruna Covaci from the National Agency in Romania speaking. In our conversation with her, Miruna stressed that the strategy helps her National Agency to focus on what is most important.

Strategy is important even if we believe we know what we need to do. Here's how [Marjolein Vandenbroucke](#) from the National Agency in Belgium Flanders puts it:

Now we are starting the process of writing our strategy, but we now know what we need to do. Even though we will also, still, ask questions at several people and have peer review, not peer review, but users review of the strategy that we are writing. We have already been asking them what they think that we should do during the evaluation process. So, it was a win win

Similarly, Barbara Eglitis, from the Austrian National Agency shares:

We included organisations who are, what is it called in English, self-advocacy organisations to read the strategy and give us feedback. So, and we also translated it then into easy-to-read because we thought it is really important and that was very enlightening for us because while translating we noticed that we have a lot of bla bla in the strategy, you know. Filling, having a lot of nice and beautiful words, there with no meaning. So, this whole translation process also are

sharpen a bit our understanding of what it means to be inclusive and also of what we want to reach.

We know this very beginning is probably the hardest part of the strategy project. If you only just landed on the strategy planet and don't quite know where to start, we're here to help. How about starting with some action?

For the following exercise grab some paper and pen (or a digital alternative). It is even better if you can also grab some coffee or tea and do this together with some of your colleagues.

Before even starting your strategy process, picture where you want your National Agency to be in the long term. This process is called visioning and it can be a simple brainstorm. Visioning answers basic questions, such as what the organization wants to achieve in the future, what it will look like, what image it shall build in the minds of its beneficiaries, etc.. Overall, visioning gives a futuristic revelation to the organization's present image and position.

In more concrete terms, you can do a visioning exercise with your team guided by the following questions:

- Where do we see the organization in 5 years time?
- Who are our beneficiaries?
- How do we want others to see us?
- Why do we want to do/ address a particular thing?
- How will we achieve our goal?

Such visioning conversation should not be a one-time thing. Why not make it a habit beyond the strategy process to discuss inclusion and diversity with your colleagues?

Speaking of which... it's quite important to spread the task of creating your inclusion and diversity strategy broadly. Here's [Marko Banković](#) from the Serbian National Agency when asked about who was part of the process of creating their inclusion and diversity strategy:

We established a working group that was composed by people from different sectors within our organisation. So, from youth sector, from higher education, from school education also from our info center, because we have a special team for information and talking about mobility, so, those guys. And also the unit dealing with educational policy, career guidance and counselling.

Chapter 5 of the Shaping Inclusion and Diversity publication explores in more depth how to set up a strategy team. These teams can really be a great space to expand our horizon on inclusion and diversity topics.

Here's a discussion that came up in an inclusion and diversity working group in the National Agency in Ireland. Anne Molloy speaking:

When we had our cluster meeting about what we see as inclusion we had really interesting discussions because actually the meetings came up around the time of Black Live Matters. So it was a really interesting time to kind of discuss this issue about that idea of sort of passive activism vs, you know, the anti racism. There was a big phrase at the time about I'm not racist but I'm not actively anti racist. You know, the difference between those two things. So, we were kind of having those discussions, we kind of had a look at, we did an analysis to see what is the evidence for what are the biggest disadvantages groups in Ireland essentially. And there is a government publication and the three, top three most disadvantaged groups were people who were in families with long-term unemployment, people of single parent families and disability.

Diving really deep into our national reality is crucial for the process of creating a meaningful national inclusion and diversity strategy. We'll explore this more in Episode 4 of the Podcast.

Are you worried that you're not prepared for the strategy process? Here's what Miruna Covaci told us:

We might feel as newcomers, but I am sure many NAs, if not all of them, already do different things. And do have action plans regarding inclusion, so we don't start from scratch. We do have some experience and I think it is just a matter of doing a little bit more strategically. Gathering things more clear. Working a little bit more with objectives, measuring how we work and what we reach.

When talking about the experience of the National Agency in Romania in creating their strategy, Miruna told us that, when you invest so much time and resources into this topic, creating an inclusion and diversity strategy is a step that comes very naturally.

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