

# DIVERSITY AND TALENT MANAGEMENT IN TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATIONS – THE ROAD TO SUCCESS?

*A PIARC LITERATURE REVIEW*

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE 1.1 *PERFORMANCE OF TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATIONS*



# STATEMENTS

*The World Road Association (PIARC) is a nonprofit organisation established in 1909 to improve international co-operation and to foster progress in the field of roads and road transport.*

*The study that is the subject of this report was defined in the PIARC Strategic Plan 2020– 2023 and approved by the Council of the World Road Association, whose members are representatives of the member national governments. The members of the Technical Committee responsible for this report were nominated by the member national governments for their special competences.*

*Any opinions, findings, conclusions and recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of their parent organisations or agencies.*

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*World Road Association (PIARC)  
Arche Sud 5° niveau  
92055 La Défense cedex, France*

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## **AUTHORS/ ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This literature review is written within the frame of Technical Committee 1.1 Performance of Transport Administrations and the work of Working Group 3 - Organisation of Staff and Human Resources. The working group consists of: Anna WILDT-PERSSON (Sweden), Alexander WALCHER (Austria), Nadia LAPPA (Canada), Ariane DUPONT-KIEFFER (France), Hamideh DEGHANI SAMANI (Iran), Mohammad TEIMOORI (Iran), Aboubakar BAMASSA OUATTARA (Ivory Coast), Mohamed SALIHA MAIGA (Mali), Marit DUE (Norway), Mohamed LAYE (Senegal), Sisanda DYUBHELE (South Africa), José-Manuel BLANCO SEGARRA (Spain), Karen BOBO (USA), and Christos S. XENOPHONTOS (USA).

The Swedish Transport Administration is responsible for the main part of the work. The literature review was written by student worker Martina PETTERSSON, Mälardalen University, with support and supervision from Anna WILDT-PERSSON, of the Swedish Transport Administration. The following individuals have contributed during the writing process with their feedback and recommendations: Nadia LAPPA (Canada), Ariane DUPONT-KIEFFER (France), Marit DUE (Norway), Sisanda DYUBHELE (South Africa), José-Manuel BLANCO SEGARRA (Spain), Karen BOBO (USA), and Christos S. XENOPHONTOS (USA).

The Technical Committee is chaired by Mr. Christos S. XENOPHONTOS (USA). Mr. Alan COLEGATE (Australia), Mr. Joseph AHISSOU (Benin) and Mr. José Manuel BLANCO SEGARRA (Spain) are respectively the English, French and Spanish-speaking Secretaries.

## **DIVERSITY AND TALENT MANAGEMENT IN TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATIONS – THE ROAD TO SUCCESS?**

The World Road Association (PIARC) tasked the Technical Committee 1.1 (Performance of Transport Administrations) to analyze effective approaches for defining and promoting Diversity in opportunity across the roads and transportation sectors, and for attracting new talents into the transport industry and in particular Transport Administrations and Road Owners and Operators. Within the frame of this task, Working Group 3 (Organisation of Staff and Human Resources) is working with the objective to identify, investigate, and document organizational issues of staff, for defining and promoting diversity and equity, and for recruiting and retaining new talent in Transport Administrations.

This literature review was written during the summer of 2020 and revised during 2021 with the aim to formulate a knowledge base for the upcoming work of the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan of Working Group 3. Peer-reviewed research articles and policy documents were compiled with the aim to identify evidence-based ways of working with diversity, equity, and talent recruitment and retention. The literature review uses the framework of contingency theory, which claims that there is no best way to organize a corporation, to lead a company, or to make decisions but rather that the optimal course of action is contingent (dependent) upon the internal and external situation, and its notion to contextual factors to address the two theories of *Diversity Management* and *Talent Management*. The research within the scope of these two theories is further categorized into a number of recommendations and implications for practice, ranging from the attraction and recruitment of new key competence to the retention and development of a talented and diverse workforce.

Even though the Working Group conducted an extensive literature review on the topic, the majority was general in nature rather than specifically addressing issues faced by Low and Middle-Income countries.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

During the last two decades, globalization and technological progress have transformed both society and the labour market. In addition to these societal and technological transformations, emerging and disruptive technology has created a need for a new set of skills. Furthermore, changes in demographics and the territorial distribution of populations reflected in the accelerated process of urbanization have resulted in new challenges. Organizations across the world are increasingly concerned with matters of Diversity, whether it be focused on gender, ethnicity, culture, disability, age, religion, political ideas or ideology, income, LGBTQI identity, or other factors perceived to represent disadvantage in achieving personal, professional and community opportunities. Given these new realities, it is becoming increasingly important to identify how organizations can hire, retain, and develop a diverse and talented workforce, and the Road and Transportation sector is no exception. Organizations which anticipate, plan, implement, and communicate change in a comprehensive and strategic manner understand better what success looks like and how to achieve it.

To meet these new demands, two theories have been researched as part of this literature review. The first one is Diversity Management, which is a set of organizational strategies that target the recruitment, retention, and development of a diverse workforce to achieve equity. The second theory is Talent Management, which is the systematic attraction, identification, development, engagement, retention, and deployment of talents. These two theories provide organizations with different tools to face the new conditions of the labour market.

There is a significant amount of overlap in the practices of Diversity Management and Talent Management. Both approaches target the recruitment process, succession planning, appraisal, work-life balance initiatives, and the importance of management commitment. In addition to this, Diversity Management addresses the need of a Strategic Diversity Plan and Diversity Policies, as well as Diversity training programs and manager accountability to Diversity Initiatives. Talent Management on the other hand emphasizes the importance of the public sector brand, job design and the use of graduate development programmes. In both approaches, contextual factors needs to be acknowledged and contingency theory can be used to provide a theoretical framework for researchers as well as practitioners.

### 1.1 METHODOLOGY

A systematic literature review was carried out with the aim to identify, investigate, and document organizational issues of Staff for effective approaches for defining and promoting diversity and equity in opportunity of Human Resources within Transport Administrations, and identify effective approaches for recruiting and retaining new talent in Transport Administrations.

The literature review includes peer-reviewed references and policy documents covering different regions of the world including Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, and South America. The purpose was to look for common approaches and frameworks for working with Diversity and Talent Management.

*Key words:* Diversity Management, Public Sector, Talent Management, Human Resources

## 2. BACKGROUND

During the last two decades, globalization and technological progress have transformed both society and the labour market. In addition to these societal and technological transformations, emerging and disruptive technology has created a need for a new set of skills. This, in combination with increasing retirement age and competition between different sectors over the same personnel, has put a light on the importance of identifying how organizations can hire, retain, and develop a talented and diverse workforce [1]. Organizations which anticipate, plan, implement, and communicate change in a comprehensive and strategic manner better understand what success looks like and how to achieve it.

Organizations across the world are increasingly concerned with matters of Diversity, whether it be focused on gender, ethnicity, culture, disability, age, religion, political ideas or ideology, income, academic background, sexual orientation, or other factors perceived to represent disadvantage in achieving personal, professional, and community opportunities and the Road and Transportation sector is no exception.

There is a need for Transport Administrations to focus and reflect upon issues related to diversity. By analyzing the community that forms their customer base and making a valiant effort to mirror this base within their management structures and workforces, public sector organizations can accurately reflect the sociodemographic reality of the community they serve and thereby become more responsive to their clients [1, 2]. A diverse workforce can be described as constituting of multiple understandings, values, beliefs and outlooks [3].

Successful Diversity Management is based on the acknowledgement of diversity and differences as positive attributes and competitive advantages of an organization, rather than as problematic [3, 6]. A diverse workforce has been shown to contribute to more creative and innovative ways of working and better solutions to brainstorming activities, as well as improve cooperative behavior in comparison to homogenous groups [3]. Thus, a more diverse workforce can improve organizational efficiency, effectiveness, and performance [3, 4, 5]. Furthermore, studies have shown that organizations that value diversity and equity tend to attract and retain a more qualified workforce, while at the same time reducing turnover [3, 6]. By broadening the candidate pool, organizations also can make more efficient use of talent and skills [7, 8]. Moreover, when gender equity in the workplace is honestly and transparently maintained, it has been found to support inclusive growth and other broad development outcomes, while at the same time enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of development initiatives [9].

Today, many Transport Administrations face challenges in identifying effective approaches for promoting diversity and equity, and for recruiting and retaining new talent. To meet these demands, Diversity Management and Talent Management can be integrated in the organizational strategies. Diversity Management target the recruitment, retention, and development of a diverse workforce [4]. When combining Diversity Management with the practices of Talent Management, which is the systematic attraction, identification, development, engagement, retention, and deployment of talents, organizations are provided with a set of tools to face the new conditions of the labour market. Furthermore, contingency theory can be useful in acknowledging the contextual factors that might affect the success of the implementation. In the following section, the practical implications of contingency theory will be presented. Thereafter, the two theories of Diversity Management and Talent Management will be presented.

### 3. ACKNOWLEDGING CONTEXTUAL FACTORS - CONTINGENCY THEORY

In Human Resource Management (HRM) literature, it is often recognized that there is no such thing as a universal theory or practice that can be applied to all organizations without adjustments [4]. On the contrary, the acknowledgement of contextual factors is often seen as crucial for the success or failure in the implementation of new practices, including Diversity Management and Talent Management initiatives [4, 10].

The acknowledgement of contextual factors is particularly relevant in public sector organizations, where the external context is complex due to the significant impact of institutional and political mechanisms [11]. These institutional mechanisms in turn affect the internal context. When it comes to which contextual factors that should be brought to attention, the implications given by contingency theory can be of guidance.

Contingency theory emphasizes the impact of contextual factors on organizational practices, with special attention given to HRM approaches [12]. The aim is to understand the ways in which the external and internal context affects the organization, and to understand how the organizational practices are affected by these contextual factors [13]. Contingency theory has been argued to provide the best framework for Diversity Management practices in the public sector, where specific characteristics of the practices and policies and their efficacy depend on various factors in the external and internal environment [4]. Contingency theory has additionally been applied when studying learning and development practices, which in turn are important factors for retaining a diverse workforce [12].

#### 3.1 CONTINGENCY THEORY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

For the implementation of Diversity Management and Talent Management practices to be successful, they must be tailored to the population and organizational structure that they are designed to serve. Thus, there are a number of internal and external factors that needs to be considered [4].

##### 3.1.1. External factors

The **cultural history of the organizations geographic location** (e.g. country, region, state, etc.) plays an important part in the planning of Diversity Management and Talent Management practices since the matters of diversity and talent differ depending on the country's history [3].

In this context, the 'location' is the country, region, state, etc. where the organization is located. The term 'history' refers to past practices, historical record, and events related to different aspects of diversity and equity. Furthermore, the 'culture' entails the economic, legal, cultural, and socio-demographic context in which the organization operates. Thus, the cultural history of the location affects the need for new talent, as well as which aspects of diversity that are most prominent: gender, ethnicity, culture, disability, age, religion, political ideas, academic background, or ideology.

**Political influence** is another important external factor since it shapes the strategies and policies of the public organization. The political influence, both present and past, affect the priorities in terms of diversity, talent, and new competence that have been identified as important and with them the design and development of organizational policies and practices [4].

##### 3.1.2. Internal factors

Even though **the size of the organization** is externally determined in the public sector, it is still considered as an internal feature. When planning Diversity Management and/or Talent Management initiatives, the size of the organization influences which practices that can be applied [4]. When reading recommendations and/or best practices provided by other organizations, it is fruitful to pay attention to the size of the organizations where the data has been collected and reflect upon whether or not the practices are transferrable or if they need to be adjusted.

Secondly, **the population demographic** must be considered. Much like the size of the organization, this factor too is externally determined. However, it becomes an important internal feature as it affects the ways in which the workforce is, and should be, reflecting the society in which the organization operates in [4].

Thirdly, it is important to assess **employee behaviour** in the organization. Employee behaviour can be defined as a product of the beliefs, norms, and values of all employees that contribute to the organizational culture. The organizational culture in turn has been shown to highly affect the success rate when implementing new practises. Employee behaviour can be measured in terms of the voluntary participation in diversity or talent initiatives, or by assessing attitudes and beliefs in an employee survey [4]. Furthermore, positive employee behaviour can be facilitated through effective leadership.

**Effective leadership** can influence an agency's success in fully utilizing women and minorities. Leadership needs to communicate in a clear, constant, consistent, and convincent manner the importance of Diversity in the organization. This communication can be in the form of formal written statements, as well as through regular company-wide correspondence meetings, and other communication tools [14]. As described in the work of TC A.1 in the previous cycle [25], communicating through appropriate channels, consistent messaging, painting a picture and telling a story are all critical to ensure effective communication of the importance of diversity in the organization.

#### 4. DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

**Diversity Management** can be described as a set of organizational strategies to recruit, retain, and develop individuals from a variety of different backgrounds and facilitate good relationships among them at every level of the organisation and between different levels [1, 2].

**Diversity** refers to multiple factors that might represent disadvantages in achieving personal, professional, and community opportunities. These factors include, but are not limited to, gender, ethnicity, culture, disability, age, religion, political ideas, LGBTQI identity, and ideology. Diversity Management programs are often designed to increase cultural sensitivity, improve communication among groups, develop awareness and recognition of issues relevant to diversity, reduce inequalities, and revise leadership practices and organizational culture [2].

Diversity Management practices have been found to facilitate positive effects on employee' motivation and organizational commitment [15]. Increased motivation as a result of Diversity Management has furthermore been found to significantly affect employee turnover intentions in a variety of countries ranging from Korea and Japan [15], to the US [16], Australia [17], The Netherlands [18], and India [19].

However, it is important to acknowledge that the said benefits of Diversity Management do not appear automatically when workplace diversity increases [19]. On the contrary, Diversity Management practices must be consciously designed, implemented, and assessed properly to create an organizational culture and atmosphere that is committed to truly valuing diversity and not merely seeing it as an exercise to tip the box [3]. Organizations who aim to work with Diversity Management must include diversity as an organizational value [5], and emphasize it in the organizations vision, mission, and business strategy, as well as the HRM strategies [3]. The HRM strategies for increased diversity should target multiple levels within the organization, see Figure 1 for examples.

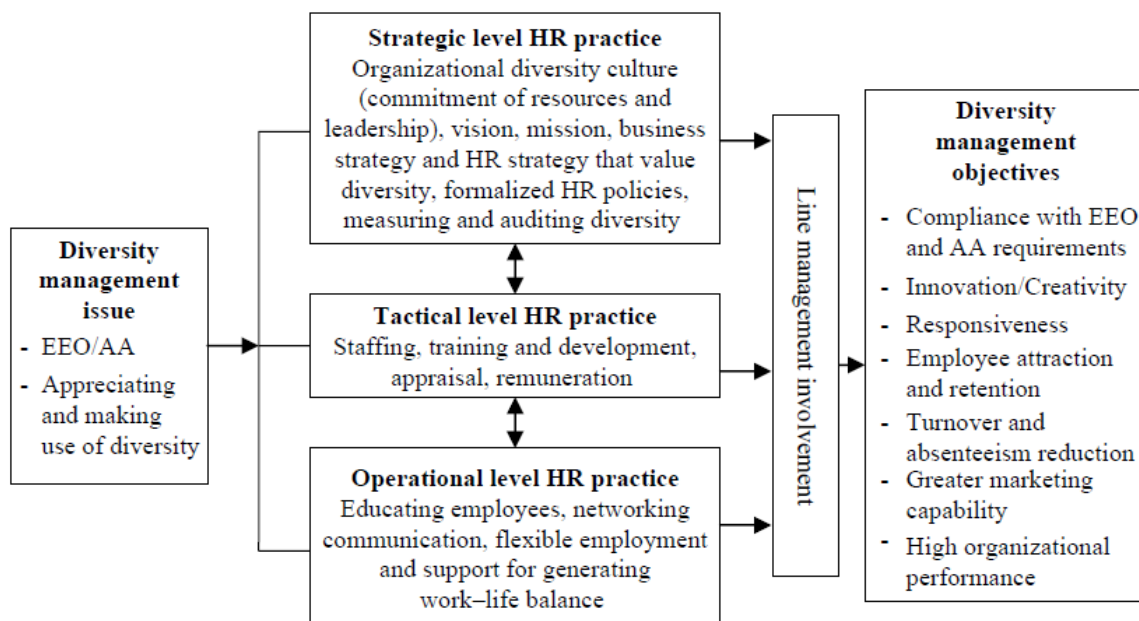


Figure 1. A framework of HR Diversity Management [3]

#### 4.1 DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Diversity Management and Human Resource Management (HRM) are two approaches with considerable overlap. Both HRM and Diversity Management concern the HR function, since they relate to the overall organizational strategy and the development and well-being of the individuals within the organization [3]. Previous research has shown that effective Diversity Management can be achieved through the use of appropriate HRM strategies in terms of recruitment, appraisal, advancement, and reward [3]. Thus, Diversity Management is an integral part of HRM and should be at the heart of HR practices and policies, guaranteeing an alignment between the strategies of HR and Diversity Management goals [3, 5]. Accordingly, studies have shown that the HR department need to have the necessary knowledge and resources to deal with Diversity Management practices for the activities to have the desired effect [5].

According to the HR managers in a study carried out in a public sector organization in Brazil [5], the organizations most prepared to adopt Diversity Management approaches had the following characteristics:

- Employees and managers who were prepared to understand and support a Diversity Management strategy;
- A readiness to select and hire employees from diverse backgrounds, and to retain and develop those employees; and,
- A commitment to Diversity Management policies, founded in the firm belief of the social and organizational benefits of such policies (and not only due to the legal obligations).

When implementing Diversity Management practices, it is important that the organization carries out a critical analysis of the current HR diversity practices early on (such as recruitment and selection procedures, criteria for entry into jobs, selection tools, diversity training programs, performance appraisal, and compensation). Periodic audits of diversity within an organization are needed to identify the areas that require improvement to manage diversity effectively. Organizations can compare this data against an established organization which serves as the benchmark for an industry (or a region) to rate and increase diversity in the workforce or management [3].

## 5. TALENT MANAGEMENT

Retention is a vital part of both a successful Diversity Management practice and a successful HRM practice. Retention is in turn often part of a broader Talent Management strategy, which is a core responsibility of the HR function and is interdependent with all other HR activities [20]. Thus, Diversity Management and Talent Management are two approaches that overlap both in scope and purpose and must be key components of any HRM organizational approach.

Talent Management is the systematic attraction, identification, development, engagement, retention, and deployment of talents [10]. Talent Management in the public sector can further be described as [21]:

The implementation of key procedures to ensure public sector employees possess the competencies, knowledge, and core values to address complex contemporary challenges and fulfill public sector strategic objectives for the common good.

When initiating Talent Management within the public sector, the first step is to define talent [9, 20]. Ambiguity about the interpretation of talent and the outcomes of Talent Management can result in friction and tension, which can hinder effective Talent Management implementation [9]. It is important to clarify if the Talent Management strategy is to be applied only to senior positions within the organization, or if the strategy can be applied to personnel at various levels. The conceptualization of public sector talent is however in its infancy, possibly because most publications examine Talent Management in the private sector [10]. Drawing on the limited research output, Kravariti & Johnston [21] define public sector talent as:

An individual who possesses those competencies, knowledge, and values that reflect the public sector's core principles, which enable him/her to use their exceptional abilities to serve the public for the common good (p.80).

Public sector talent highlights employees as humans with different values. This could be attributed to the context-specific characteristics that the public sector workforce should ideally possess, such as a desire to contribute to public service and the community they serve [22, 23]. Public sector talent differs from private sector talent in that it is more influenced by the context's fundamental principles or philosophy of public service for the common good [21].

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1 DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

#### 6.1.1 Strategic Diversity Plan

The integration of Diversity Management practices in a diversity plan is often described as critical both in research, such as the article *Diversity Management Practices and Understanding Their Adoption: Examining Local Governments in North Carolina* [1] and policy documents, such as the *Resource Guide for Improving Diversity and Inclusion Programs for the Public Transportation Industry* [24]. An organizational change can take as long as five to seven years before its implementation generates the desired results [e.g. 25]. To ensure the long-term survival of the Diversity Management practices, it is therefore important to integrate them into the strategic plan of the organization [1, 2]. The National Academy of Sciences (US) found that the inclusion of diversity initiatives in the strategic plan demonstrated the high value leadership place on diversity [8].

When it comes to ways of linking diversity to the Strategic Plan of the organization, several examples are presented in research, it can be achieved by tracking workforce characteristics and establishing annual targets and 10 year goals [2]. This makes it easy to follow up and evaluate the diversity work. Strategic goals for diversity can include creating opportunities for participation and promotion of diversity at all levels. Diversity plans should include policy initiatives and actions targeting all levels of responsibility in the workplace [26]. In doing so, an organization wide cultural change is enabled.

To measure the effects of strategic goals linked to diversity, it is important to start by evaluating the current situation before implementing the diversity initiatives [2]. For example, such measures can target workforce demographic in areas of recruitment, selection, and promotion. Measures of success may also include employee and/or citizen satisfaction surveys, perceptions of organizational support, diversity training attendance, and number of complaints within a specific timeframe [2]. For more information on what makes a good Strategic Plan and which Key Performance Indicators/measures can be used to achieve desired goals, see PIARC 2019R22EN report [27].

For a Strategic Diversity Plan to succeed, it is important to engage employees and leaders at all levels and make sure that the change is presented with a compelling narrative that is motivating and creates a common understanding of why the change is needed [27]. Organizational culture can make or break the even the best strategy [20]. Successful change management and strategy development therefore needs to focus strongly on organisational culture and address the ideas of “the way we do things around here” or “that’s how we always did it”, which often are rooted in social norms, values, and beliefs.

In the report *Guidance for Diversity in Airport Business Contracting and Workforce Programs* by the US National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, it was concluded that strategic diversity plans may include components such as [28]:

- Building a pipeline of qualified candidates through community services and mentorship programs

- Reconstructing compensation, benefits, and advancement opportunities to make the organization a competitive employer
- Making diversity a strategic objective for the financial and operational viability of the organization

### 6.1.2 Diversity Policies and Work-life balance initiatives

Diversity policies targeting work-life balance initiatives can be an important means to attract and retain individuals that, for different reasons, aren't able to conform to a 9-to-5 work schedule. Employment flexibility provides individuals with the freedom to choose their working schedule based on their capacity [3]. The degree of flexibility that the organization can offer varies depending on the internal and external context. An individual's age, gender, family situation, and/or other factors can be adjusted for by including flexible work hours, generous family leave, or other arrangements in that facilitates a more flexible employment in the diversity policy [3]. Thereby, diversity policies permit the organization to recruit from a larger pool of potential employees. Furthermore, providing an environment in which employee needs are valued can lead to increased retention and preservation of organizational knowledge.

Two examples of work-life balance initiatives are given in the report *Attracting, retaining, and Advancing Women in Transport* [29]:

- Offering flexible work hours, including telework, a compressed workweek (i.e., working four 10-hour days), and varied start and end times for the workday.
- Offering work hour flexibility so that administrative professionals could flex their time as needed to take care of family needs.

Due to worldwide lockdowns and universal health preventive measures, COVID-19 robustly changed the workforce by normalizing flexible work arrangements and teleworking (smart-working, working from home). While this way of working already existed, it was not accepted universally by all companies and organizations. Since the onset of the pandemic, organizations have acknowledged that productivity levels didn't necessarily decrease when employees shifted completely to teleworking. This change has provoked an increase in corporate flexibility in regards to how and when their employees chose to do their work. It is generally understood that once employees will be have the option to return to their work headquarters, flexibility will continue to be the new norm — where people will be given more freedom to choose work from home if they choose to.

The outbreak of COVID-19 will continue to be a major challenge for an unknown amount of time. Varying levels of Government around the world continue to work with their partners, both at the domestic and international level, in order to ensure that the health, economic and social impacts within their respective countries are minimal for their citizens and industries.

Organizations continue to increase their commitment to ensuring that flexibility and adaptation are at the forefront when dealing with all the various situations that have and will continue to occur with their recipients, clients and participants.

### 6.1.3 Recruitment

As stated in the *Resource Guide For Improving Diversity and Inclusion Programs for the Public Transportation Industry*, published by the US National Academies, the development of a diverse and inclusive workforce begins with recruitment and hiring [24]. Accordingly, recruitment is an essential part of Diversity Management [30]. An organization attempting to manage diversity as an overarching process must include recruitment. Recruitment is the main means to achieve diversity and representation, as it is linked directly to the heterogeneity of the organization [31].

Research has provided several ways of promoting diversity in the recruitment process:

- Having a Diversity Management review committee examine recruitment, selection, and hiring policies to ensure that diversity will receive sustained attention within these areas [1].
- Formulating a diversity mission statement to be used in advertising of vacant positions. This can send a signal to possible recruitment candidates that the organization values differences and inclusiveness [1]. In addition, it might have a symbolic effect on organizational behavior, acting as a reminder for employees of the organizations underlying goals and philosophy.
- Using more aggressive advertising than what often is the case to ensure that all qualified applicants are informed of job opportunities, including sourcing passive candidates [30]. Reaching out to potential candidates in various sources and developing partnerships and alliances with minority associations [1].
- Reaching out to diverse schools, colleges and universities, both when promoting transport administration and the organization, as well as advertising for vacant positions and looking for future trainees [2, 33]
- Using neutral/unbiased language in job advertisements (postings) [33]. For an example, using gender neutral language in advertisement and organizational promotion to include both men and women in the target group [1]. The importance of using an inclusive language was emphasized in a panel discussion on Advancing Women in Transportation, and blind screening was mentioned as a way of minimizing gender bias in recruitment [32].
- Using minority internship programs for recruitment purposes [1].
- Comparing workforce data and demographics with group representation in the community to ensure fair representation [1].
- Making HR professionals and line managers who recruit and interview job seekers aware of how the interviewers' beliefs, attitudes, and stereotypes influence interview behavior [3] and provide the necessary Implicit Bias training to combat these..
- Attending speaking engagements and advertising at events sponsored by multicultural professional organizations to facilitate recruitment of mid-career professionals, which is becoming more important with the increased retirement turnover [2].

Although the above stated recommendations mainly focus external recruitment, internal recruitment is just as important as both internal and external recruitment affect the arrival of new employees [30].

In addition to the advice given by research on diversity in the recruitment process, The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine [34] adds to the list in the report *Promising Practices for Addressing the Underrepresentation of Women in Science, Engineering, and Medicine: Opening Doors* by expanding the efforts presented by Stewart & Valian [35] :

- Attending conferences to establish relationships with promising scholars and students from underrepresented groups and their mentors
- Requesting referrals from identified mentors of appropriate candidates from underrepresented groups
- Limiting referral hiring of current employee networks and friends, which will likely replicate a lack of diversity

The National Academies provide further strategies to improve recruitment and hiring practices in the *Resource Guide for Improving Diversity and Inclusion Programs for the Public Transportation Industry* [24]:

- Assessing minimum qualifications of job postings for institutional barriers, including exams
- Using diverse interview panels
- Using targeted recruitment for underrepresented groups

In the US, the Virginia DOT has several programs in place designed to assist the agency in recruiting minority talent [36]:

- Engineer Development Program—This 24-month development program provides valuable experience and hands-on training in engineering. Graduates play a vital role in roadway design and construction, while enabling participants to choose a career path that focuses on a specific goal. Upon completion of the program, participants are eligible for a highly responsible position in field management at a VDOT residency or district office, where they will be involved in construction, project, or maintenance administration of a multi-county area.
- Engineering Scholarship Program—A scholarship stipend of \$7,000 per year (\$3,500 each semester) is available to rising sophomores, juniors, and seniors. Summer employment under the supervision of a designated mentor at VDOT begins the summer before the first scholarship award. If qualified, participants may gain full-time employment as an associate engineer at a VDOT location upon graduation.
- Summer Transportation Institute Program—VDOT continues its participation in the Summer Transportation Institute Program hosted by Virginia State University and Hampton University. During this intensive four-week residential program, high school students were introduced to a variety of interdisciplinary careers that contribute to the building and management of highways and bridges.

The agency also has a very good monitoring and evaluation system in place.

#### 6.1.4 Succession Planning

Organizations should ensure equal opportunities for promotion and personal development for all employees in terms of gender, ethnicity, culture, disability, age, religion, political ideas, ideology, and/or income. It is important to ensure that diversity is represented at every level within the organization [5]. In a study carried out in Brazil [5], the results showed that generally, diversity was only visible in lower-level positions, such as operations and maintenance. Internal and external recruitment with carefully designed diversity policies can help even out such unbalance. Difficulties of assessing candidates for promotion who represent different aspects of diversity can further be reduced if some of the decision-makers are non-traditional managers [3]. Ideally, diversity should be reflected in all panels that evaluate, select, and promote managers.

Professional development and career planning are areas in which discrimination often becomes visible. Managers might subconsciously apply inconsistent or biased criteria in performance assessment, evaluation and calibration, leading to negative consequences on pay and progression equity [37]. Research has shown that HR practices concerning career progression that do not effectively reflect diversity issues can result in negative perceptions of the process amongst employees. Thus, these HR practices require careful consideration when developing Diversity Management policies [3]. By using systems that allow individuals and the organization to assess employee skills, knowledge and abilities, and track development to ensure that training and experience meet workforce demands, organizations can ensure a qualified and diverse pool of executive candidates [2]. This is becoming more important as retirement turnover is increasing.

#### 6.1.5 Appraisal

Effective performance appraisal practices in the area of Diversity Management should be objective, relevant to the job and the company, fair to all employees, and offer no special treatment. When conducting appraisals, the language of appraisal should focus on the individual's performance, not personality. Hence, the aim should be to make the appraisal as neutral as possible [3].

#### 6.1.6 KPIs

Gender equity and the associated benefits have received increased attention in organizational research [38]. Previous research has shown that members of an organization are more interested in, and find it easier to justify, gender equity change efforts that can be linked not only to equity outcomes (which can be difficult to measure), but also to quantifiable outcomes [38]. One way of measuring quantifiable outcomes is by using gender indicators in the form of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Gender indicators can refer to both quantitative and qualitative indicators. Measurements of gender might address changes in the relations between men and women, the outcomes of a particular policy, program or activity for women and men, or changes in the status or situation of men and women, for example levels of participation [39].

KPIs can be used to measure gender balance in various areas, including but not limited to: gender distribution in the organizations professions at various levels, management career paths, and succession planning processes, as well as number on women in comparison to men on long-term sick leave and employees with a permanent job/work contract of unlimited duration pay [40].

Another way to assess gender equity is through the Gender Equality Index: a tool provided by The European Institute for Gender Equality to measure the progress of gender equity in the EU, which gives more visibility to areas that need improvement and ultimately supports policy makers to design more effective gender equity measures [41]. For the countries included, the index can provide guidelines for KPIs. It is important to acknowledge that if the technology used to collect the data contain biases it can become a source of inequity. The technology must therefore be chosen and used consciously. The KPIs must be fed with reliable and continuous numbers for them to work as intended.

Although KPIs and Gender Equality Index are powerful tools when highlighting and addressing the differences between women and men, it is equally important to recognize within-group differences among women or men [e.g. 39].

### 6.1.7 Diversity Training

Diversity training is necessary to raise awareness within the organization and ensure the development of skills necessary to work with diverse employees internally and improve service delivery externally [2]. Diversity training should target all levels within the organization, and focus not only on understanding diversity but to value it [1]. Training that emphasizes diversity as part of the organization's strategic plan to improve organizational performance is more likely to receive a positive response from employees than training that emphasizes legal compliance [2]. Additionally, it is important that diversity training is seen as a continuous process, and not as a one-time event [2].

The content of the training session should be based on the needs of the organization's division, level, team, or individuals [30]. It may include a variety of topics, for example ways of reaching out to and communicating with diverse groups, leadership training, or ways of addressing multicultural issues in the workplace [1]. It is important to acknowledge that if the context of the training is too different from the ongoing work context, it will be difficult for trainees to put the behavior learned in training into practice [3].

Organizations must clarify training objectives and systematically conduct a training needs assessment. Participants should know whether the training program seeks to raise diversity awareness or develop multicultural skills. Social psychological research on stereotyping and linkages to prejudice reduction must also be tightly incorporated into training design. A top-down training strategy may be valuable – providing awareness training to senior managers first and team-building training last [42].

### 6.1.8 Leadership, Manager Accountability, and Commitment to Diversity Initiatives

In line with previous research, The National Academies of Sciences found in their report *Guidance for Diversity in Airport Business Contracting and Workforce Programs* that manager commitment is key in ensuring that the organization will be able to fully benefit from bringing underrepresented groups into the organization [8]:

*When leadership emphasizes and influences the importance of diversity, embracing diversity seems to be a priority for everyone*

The role of managers is particularly important since they interact with employees on a daily basis and are responsible for the implementation of diversity strategies. Furthermore, diversity among leaders is also critical for setting the tone for the rest of the organization [8]. The importance of role models in managerial levels was highlighted in a panel discussion on leadership Insights to grow a career in transportation [32]. Thus, ensuring representation in management, as well as management commitment and accountability, is of great importance when implementing diversity initiatives [2, 37].

Managers at all levels should play a more important role in Diversity Management, participating in the decision-making process to fully understand and effectively implement Diversity Management practices [3]. There is a strong consensus that upper management needs to be committed to the implementation of diversity initiatives for them to be successful [1, 2, 37].

Manager commitment needs to be expressed by managers, making it a priority, and communicating it in their work by showing support through policy statements, meetings, speeches, and web sites

[1, 2]. These expressions of support must be specific, personal, persistent, and visible [2]. One way of securing commitment is through accountability: managers' performance evaluations can be linked to achieving diversity within their workgroup [1, 2]. One way of doing this is to link gender targets and successful diversity recruitment and promotion to managers' performance criteria [1, 3, 39].

#### 6.1.9 Organizational culture

The development and maintaining of an inclusive culture is an important step in the work with diversity. The Department of Transportation in Pennsylvania lists five efforts that can facilitate a more inclusive workplace environment [43]:

- Developing definitions and goals for equity and equitable transportation
- Creating awareness by educating the organization with real world examples
- Creating a diversity council with dedicated staff to work towards implementing the identified recommendations and moving other diversity initiatives forward
- Understanding the impact of previous diversity training and ways to improve culture moving forward by evaluating and updating the questions used in post-training surveys
- Allowing opportunities for employee engagement groups to form organically.

### 6.2 TALENT MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

#### 6.2.1 The public sector brand

In a study comparing Talent Management strategies in the UK and Australia [44], the public sector brand as perceived by young talents affected the recruitment process. In both countries, the main pull factors of the public sector for young graduates were described in the following way:

(That) it incorporates a generic element (this is a strong and reliable sector in which to be employed); a service element (this is a place where I can make a difference); and a graduate program element (this is a good opportunity to kick-start my career) (p.193)

The attractiveness and perceived status of the brand influence the decision to apply to a public sector organization [44]. Thus, actively working with and promoting the public sector brand is important to attract new talent.

#### 6.2.2 Recruitment

Based on the definition of talent as presented by Kravariti & Johnston [21], public sector organizations need to search for and recruit individuals that possess the aforementioned competencies, knowledges, and values that reflect the public sector's core principles [e.g. 10]. It is more likely that an individual who experiences that his/her values align with the organization's values will remain within the organization for a longer amount of time. Additionally, it is more likely that the recruitment of individuals with values that align with the public sector's core principles will contribute to a positive organizational culture.

Successful Talent Management practices in the recruitment process can further address the issue of the increasing retirement turnover. According to Clarke and Scurry [44], Talent Management can be used as a mean to recruit Generation Y's talents by appealing to their intrinsic social consciousness, to satisfy their expectations and increase their commitment, and support their career aspirations by developing talents who are committed to the public service ethos.

A good example of attracting new talent can be found at the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA). The MWAA have developed a new apprenticeship program with a wide focus, aiming to attract younger workers and workers from across the region [8]. The program includes jobs in various areas, including facilities and maintenance.

### 6.2.3 Graduate development programs

Graduate development programs are well established sources of talent pools [45]. To attract talents, organizations can either explicitly or implicitly promise developmental opportunities and accelerated career progression. Graduates are selected for their readymade skills acquired through tertiary study as well as their potential to be developed for key positions in the organization. In both the private and public sector, graduate programs are characterized by job rotations, special assignments, mentoring, and skills training.

For a graduate development program to be successful, direct supervisions and support from managers are critical for the effectiveness of the program. When implemented and carried out successfully, graduate development programs have the potential to help manage the transition to the next generation of leaders [45].

### 6.2.4 Performance measurement, appraisal and succession planning

In the private sector, it is common to evaluate employee performance based on quantified criteria (e.g. time of response to clients) by using a quantified scale (e.g. five-point Likert scale). These performances are thereafter appraised with quantified means (e.g. increase in pay). However, in the public sector research, it is important to incorporate ways of measuring qualified criteria (e.g. team skills) by providing particular on-the-job examples that justify the possession of those qualitative competencies that public sector talents ideally possess [45]. According to Kravariti & Johnston [21], this could lead to increased dialogues among employees, top management, and HR professionals resulting in better employee morale, relationships, and staff deployment. Talent Management could further enhance public sector staff to move into new positions, which can facilitate succession planning and career development [46].

The National Academies of Sciences advises organization to create a succession pipeline of workers who can grow professionally and be promoted into positions that have greater responsibility [8].

### 6.2.5 Manager commitment

Manager commitment is key in assuring both successful Diversity Management and Talent Management practices [20, 26, 37].

Furthermore, the involvement of managers at all levels in the planning and development process is emphasized in both approaches. In Talent Management, this can be accomplished by including representatives of middle and line managers in the dominant coalition so their beliefs and concerns regarding Talent Management can be considered from the beginning. This will support a better fit between the intended and actual practices, and subsequently, have a positive effect on the effectiveness of the Talent Management approach [20].

### 6.2.6 Job design and training

Careful design of jobs that provide challenging tasks that allow talented employees to realize their potential and utilize their full range of skills have been linked to better organizational outcomes and talent retention. Through job rotations and cross-departmental projects employees can contribute to the organization as they are multi-skilled, adaptable, and have a whole-of-business knowledge [20].

Another important aspect of job design is the opportunity for training and development on the job. In the report *The Transportation Workforce Challenge*, The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine describes training as an essential part of providing employees with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform their jobs and in supporting recruitment, retention, and succession management efforts [47].

Engaging, meaningful, and satisfying jobs along with a clear career path act as a motivator for talented employees to remain with their employers. As turnover is expensive for organizations, retention saves the outlay of avoidable recruitment, selection, and onboarding costs. High employee organizational commitment is also an important contributor to talent retention. To achieve high commitment, organizations need to establish an employment relationship with their talented employees based on mutual benefits in terms of job design and development [20]. In addition, as previously stated, successful Diversity Management practices have been found to increase employee commitment, and thus increasing retention from a Talent Management perspective.

### 6.2.7 Work-life balance initiatives

Work-life balance initiatives have been proven to have a positive effect not only on Diversity Management practices but on talent retention as well. In terms of Talent Management, work-life balance initiatives brings with it similar benefits to those of successful job design, namely increased employee motivation and commitment [20]. Flexibility has additionally been found to attract millennials and newly graduates, enlarging the candidate pool and increasing organizations opportunity to attract and recruit new talent.

The previously mentioned discussion regarding the reality of Covid-19 and its effects on flexible work arrangements and teleworking is also relevant in relation to Talent Management and Work-life balance initiatives [e.g. section 3.2 Diversity policies and Work-life balance initiatives].

## 7. GLOSSARY

| Term              | Definition                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AA                | Affirmative Action                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| EEO               | Equal Employment Opportunity                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Diversity         | Refers to multiple factors that might represent disadvantages in achieving personal, professional, and community opportunities. These factors include, but are not limited to, gender, ethnicity, culture, disability, age, religion, political ideas, LGBTQI identity, and ideology. |
| HR                | Human Resources                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| HRM               | Human Resources Management                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| KPI               | Key Performance Indicator                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Talent Management | The systematic attraction, identification, development, engagement, retention, and deployment of talents.                                                                                                                                                                             |

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*World Road Association (PIARC)*

*La Grande Arche, Paroi Sud, 5e étage, F-92055 La Défense cedex*