A closer look at Diversity and Inclusion

Cecilie Heuch, EVP and Chief People Officer, reflects on Telenor Group's Diversity and Inclusion journey.

On my way to work one day, I was listening to a podcast featuring Michelle Obama. Her definition of *Becoming* (the title of her recent autobiography) is “being on a journey that is continuously evolving”. It was at that moment in time I had to put the podcast on pause. I had a strong reaction – this term, ‘becoming’, is how I would describe our diversity and inclusion journey at Telenor. Similar to most corporations’ code of conduct and HR policies, Telenor’s reads “Discrimination is against our Code of Conduct and implies that no direct or indirect negative discrimination shall take place based on race, colour, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, language, religion, employee representation, political or other opinions, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”. For some companies, a statement like this is what I call a hygiene statement – especially when touted externally with fanfare during global observance days such as International Women’s Day and Zero Discrimination Day. There is nothing wrong with this. What is wrong is when nothing happens in between these milestones and there is no strategy, management commitment, development, far less awareness initiatives or supporting policies to encourage diversity and inclusion. In my opinion, the following are three key enablers to help ensure diversity, inclusion and parity in the workplace.

Measurement

How do you know how to go, if you don’t know where you are? Well, it starts with being brave, open and curious. Brave in looking at your reality, open in wanting to change and curious in learning how to change. This is an ongoing process for us at Telenor.

- From 2015-2018 the percentage of women in senior leadership positions went from 20% to 28%. We see this increasing to 30% by 2020.
- By 2020 having two non-nationals in all 8 of our global units’ management teams is our aim.
- By 2020 we plan to have completed a gender pay gap analysis group-wide, with relevant actions identified to address the report.
- It is imperative to be analyzed by an independent company with respect to how you are performing in comparison to counterparts locally and globally.
- In 2018 Telenor ranked fifteenth amongst 79 Norwegian companies according to the SHE Index powered by EY.

Equalizer initiatives

‘Equalizer initiatives’ help to level the playing field and contribute to equal treatment. Programmes, agreements and courses all reinforce and enable inclusion. At Telenor we:

- Run Open Mind, a job training programme that provides people with disabilities and mental illness, as well as immigrants an opportunity to gain employment. Since 2015, the programme has been established in three of our Business Units Norway, Pakistan and Sweden. By 2020, our goal is to explore this similar approach in all our markets.
• Support, along with 241 global companies, the UN Global LGBTI Standards for Business in light of our non-discrimination policy.
• Make available diversity and inclusion courses on Telenor Campus – our eLearning platform – for all employees and leaders. The courses’ content pertains to understanding biases and differences of individuals in order to help foster engagement and innovation at work.

Lasting actions speak louder than words

• What better way to welcome women back into the workforce than through an encouraging minimum 6-month maternity leave policy? The policy has particularly impacted five of Telenor’s Asian Markets, where the local standard is less than six months. This entitlement was launched worldwide in 2016.

At Telenor we are still ‘Becoming’. Becoming the company we would like to be, becoming better at representing our diverse customer mix and, most importantly, daring to become part of the change. Read more about diversity & inclusion