POLICY OPTIONS FOR MANAGING DIVERSITY NONPROFIT VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

Problem

Research in two multicultural cities, Amsterdam and Utrecht, showed that the majority of the organisations do not have specific documents or defined strategies for the enhancement of diversity and inclusion. The lack of policies regarding these matters raises the question of how nonprofit voluntary organisations deal with differences such as race, ethnicity, language, gender and age, in a multicultural context. Despite mentioning these ideas in their missions and objectives, they could not always incorporate these into their programme and workforce management. While the representation of 'diversity' may provide opportunities in terms of increased funds, subsidies and partnerships for the organisations, how diverse really functioning is obscure.

Research

The research mainly considered the management of cultural diversity in programme and workforce of the organisations. The ethnographic tools employed in two nonprofit voluntary organisations identify the business or social justice approaches prevailing. As well as the review of the organisations' written sources, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with eight informants involving managers and volunteers from both organisations.

Recommendations

Business and social justice perspectives, as also suggested by the diversity management literature, are visible in the practices of the organisations. While the business approach is mainly related to issues of an organisation's sustainability and presentation, the social justice approach is more aligned with organisational objectives to create social change within the society. Nevertheless, the research found that these perspectives may coexist and are even complementary in particular cases, which led to the following policy recommendations: Below, elements relevant to the business approach are highlighted in red and those relevant to the social justice approach in purple.

1. Accessibility: Organisations should be easily accessible through professional and up-to-date management of online platforms, such as having official accounts on social media, regularly updating their websites and using alternative languages on these platforms, and through tailoring their services for different groups, such as adapting the activity hours, locations and languages to cater for people from diverse backgrounds.

2. Participation : Diverse groups should participate in the decision-making processes of organisations. This will also result in extending the organisations' audiences. Board diversity is essential because boards are the main decision-making platforms in nonprofit organisations. The leadership roles should be offered more to individuals from underrepresented groups within organisations.

3. Targeting: Minority and/or underrepresented group should be targeted; their playing an active role in the organisation is needed. Organisations' having more volunteers from those groups will increase the number and diversity of their clients. For this goal, organisations should partner with other organisations' targeting those groups. Including people from those groups would let organisations better identify their needs and thus better guide programming. Ambassadors from target groups might be appointed for this objective.