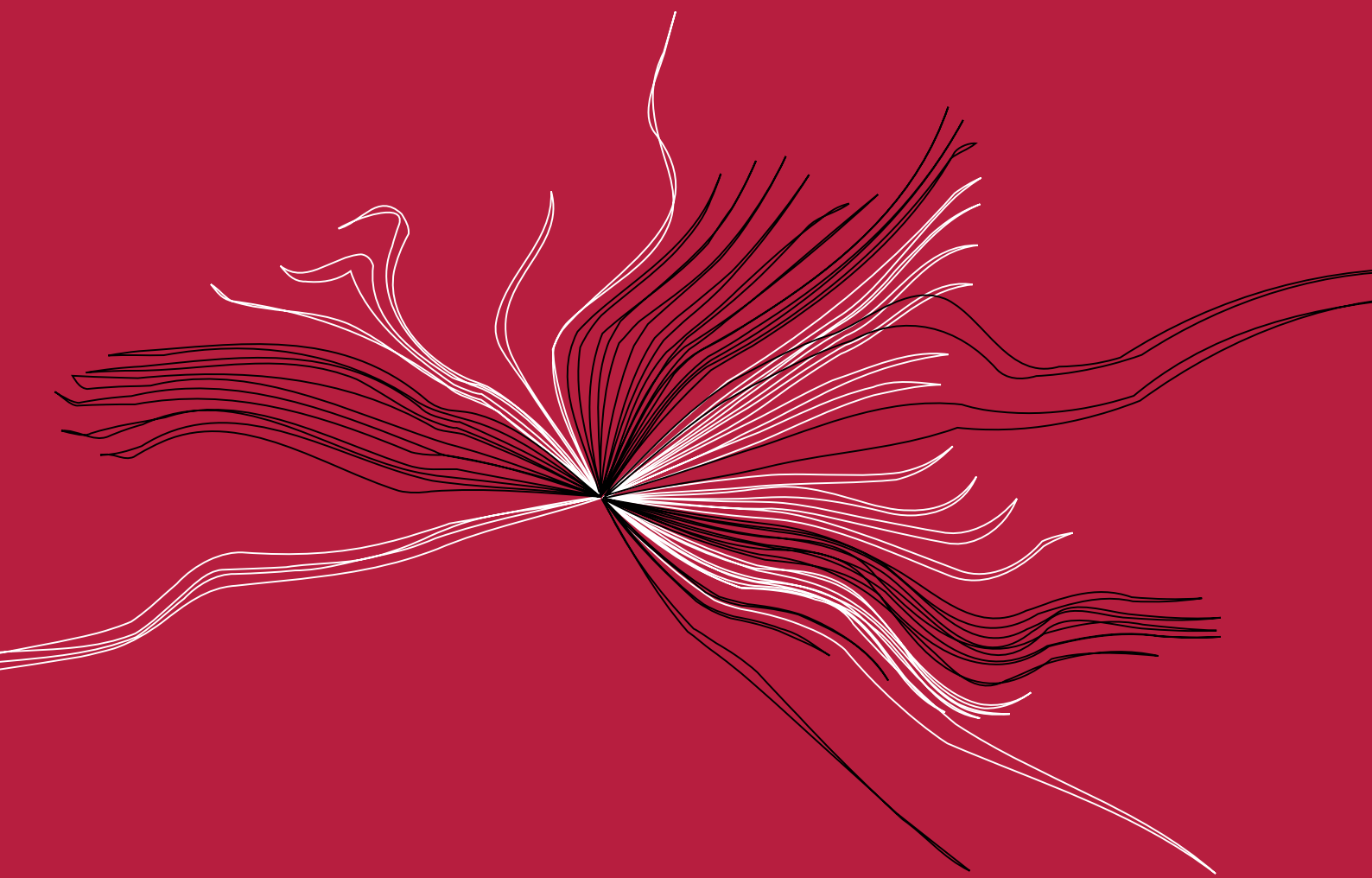
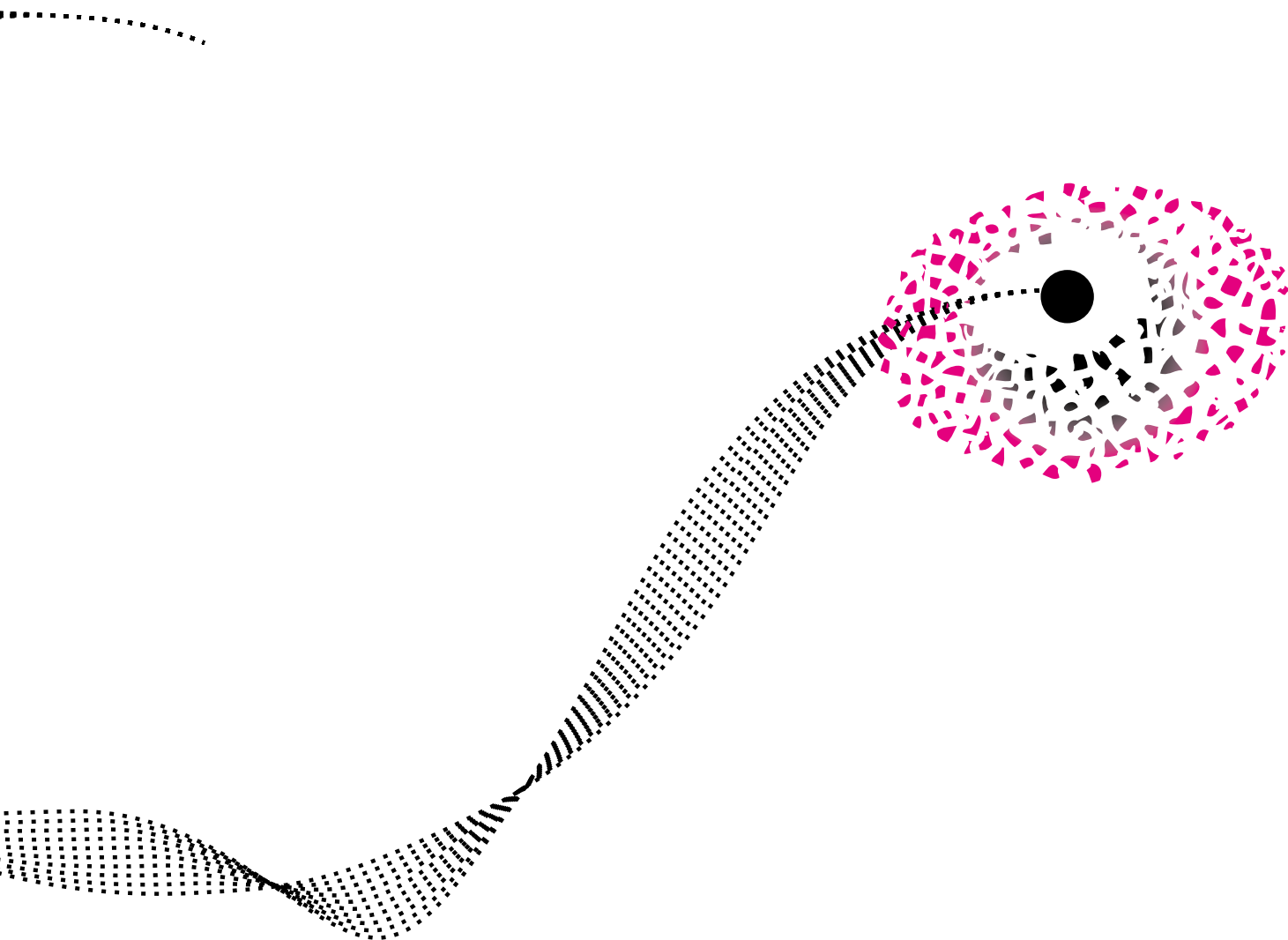


UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE SHAPING INCLUSION @ UT

LEARNING TOGETHER TO BECOME MORE INCLUSIVE

FINAL REPORT OF THE SHAPING EXPERT GROUP (SEG) INCLUSION
OCTOBER 2020-OCTOBER 2022





Colophon

University of Twente – Inclusion @ UT

SEG Inclusion

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November 2022

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“The SEG Inclusion kicked off focusing on the individual pieces of the puzzle, only to discover that it’s not the single pieces, but the whole puzzle that defines who we are. After two years of listening to our community, the advice from the SEG Inclusion is to develop a long-term, integral approach that enhances inclusion practices and confronts discrimination, ensuring that people working on inclusion are supported, enabled, recognised and rewarded.”

Laura Vargas Llona, SEG Inclusion lead

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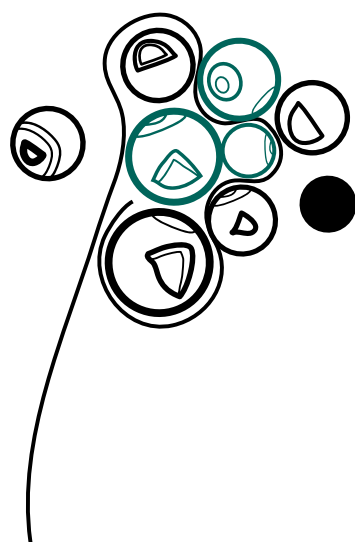
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PREFACE

This report presents the results and conclusions of the Shaping Expert Group (SEG) Inclusion at the University of Twente in the period September 2020 - September 2022. During these two years, marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, we have actively sought dialogue across the organization about inclusion, in person or online, to help raise awareness about the topic and facilitate discourse.

More than 45 people have contributed actively to distinct roles as members of the SEG Inclusion and more than 100 students and employees across the whole organization have participated in round table meetings and individual interviews. The SEG Inclusion also gave numerous presentations for groups and individuals. Altogether we have managed to reach more than 400 employees and students. In all these conversations, experiences and knowledge regarding inclusion, with an eye for diversity and discrimination, have been shared. Thanks to these collaborative efforts, we have been able to gain insight into key obstacles encountered by staff and students seeking possibilities for creating a more inclusive organization.

While (gender) diversity has been on the agenda for many years, in society and the UT, the dialogue about inclusion has just begun. The focus on inclusion and the establishment of a dedicated DE&I team, originated at the same time as the start of the SEG Inclusion. In the past two years that the SEG Inclusion has been operational, the DE&I team has developed simultaneously in many ways and the UT has made progress together with shareholders and stakeholders based on supported DE&I action plans.

We have learned a lot in these two years. The realization of inclusion strategies can be a balancing act where the inclusion of some can result in exclusion of others. The use of English language for example, can be a divisive issue causing disagreement within a group: speaking your native language in informal settings can create a sense of belonging, but at the same time it can inadvertently create an ingroup from which people that cannot understand feel excluded. While rules and protocols have their place and function, the achievement of an inclusive organization depends as much on everyday

actions, dialogue and a culture of accountability and ownership. Rather than imposing rules on, for example, what language should be spoken in informal settings (while maintaining English as a formal language at the UT), we should foster awareness on inclusion issues and actively encourage inclusive practices at the personal, group and organizational level. Only when inclusion and diversity become more than ticking a box, can the UT be authentically and credibly experienced as inclusive. Self-reflection and cultural change are needed to turn a diversity, equity, and inclusion strategy into an authentic and sustainable long-term commitment.

We also learned that strategies for inclusion, diversity and equity can be contradictory. Building diverse teams is not enough, we must constantly strive for equity and inclusion too. For example, we found that some people protested, resisted, or even resented positive discrimination to foster equity of women, because it contradicts inclusion practices. In this case it is important to understand that positive discrimination is a necessary tool to realize the equity strategy. Therefore, raising awareness about structural barriers and historically grown systemic inequalities known to impede advancement and talent development in certain groups, is needed to increase understanding and support for our strategies. We hope that the stories in this report about experiences of inclusion and exclusion can contribute to this aim. While the focus of the report is on individuals and groups at risk of exclusion, the recounted experiences may be more widely recognizable, particularly those on the hierarchy in academia. Making similarities and differences visible and open for dialogue is a crucial step in fueling the discussion about the kind of university we want to be. Recognizing and tackling paradoxes and ambivalences leads to better broader support for solutions for a more diverse, equitable and inclusive environment.

We have experienced how sensitive the topics of inclusion, diversity and equity are, and how conversations can be difficult and uncomfortable for people from both more and less privileged groups, evoking emotions such as anger, embarrassment, or sadness. However, this does not necessarily mean that we must avoid them. In a constructive dialogue, we can learn from each other's experiences and hold multiple perspectives together. The readers we want

to reach with this report are those who want to reflect on their own and others' life experiences with empathy and curiosity and are open, receptive, non-judgmental and willing to learn. We do not have to agree with or share the same experience to understand and learn from each other.

After two years, the mandate of the SEG Inclusion has come to an end. Two years of holding space and of listening to students, support- and scientific staff about what belonging means to them and what they need to develop to their full potential. Of helping people to feel seen, understood and cared for. The SEG has initiated a broad discussion about inclusion at all levels, on the work/study floor and at management level. We have developed a method based on personal stories and we have succeeded in bridging polarizing conversations. We have connected people, projects, planted the seeds for new initiatives and increased awareness on the theme. Maybe the impact of our work cannot be quantified, but it is visible in the current flow of additional reflection by staff and students and in the voices raised in UToday [1, 2, 3].

The SEG Inclusion has helped to reflect on the meaning and consequences of being an inclusive university and on how to help the UT move forward. The cases, findings and points for attention presented in this SEG Inclusion report underline the need to continue working on awareness, ownership and accountability, from a sense of shared responsibility. We hope our report can form a basis for the ongoing work on inclusion, create a sense of urgency, and inspire concrete actions, big and small, thus making the UT an even better place to work and study!

Enschede, November 2022

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[2] <https://www.utoday.nl/spotlight/71972/they-talk-of-an-inclusive-and-international-university-but-that-is-not-the-reality-i-have-experienced>

[3] <https://www.utoday.nl/news/71978/workshop-on-diversity-and-inclusion-surprised-by-the-shocking-stories>

Disclaimer:

1. The members of the SEG Inclusion have agreed to abide the Privacy Agreement.
2. All the methods used for the interviews and round tables have been approved by the Ethics Committee of the UT.
3. All the participants in the interviews and round tables have given their informed consent to the use of the information and stories in this report.
4. The stories in the report have been treated as confidential and have been anonymized.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Authors: Laura Vargas and Anneke Sools



In this chapter we describe the societal and organizational background of the report, define key terms and outline the report.

1.1 SOCIETAL BACKGROUND

Social movements and societal developments such as #MeToo, Black Lives Matter, disability empowerment movements, Pride, and media attention to hierarchical academic culture (abuse of power, misconduct, intimidation) impact workplace attitudes and behaviors. The pandemic and its ensuing measures made visible and exacerbated existing socioeconomic inequalities [1] and created precarious conditions for existing and new groups (see national report on covid-19 related discrimination for various groups such as parents, informal caregivers, chronically ill people, flex workers and small business owners, unvaccinated people) [2]. These trends are also accelerated by the fact that the new generations entering the labor market and taking on management roles are engaged, aware and actively support diversity-related social movements. They show high affinity with allyship, equity and inclusion. These developments have profoundly impacted the way leaders are perceived, increasing the pressure on organizations to act.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DE&I) are also increasingly high on the agenda in higher education and research. Arguments for giving attention to DE&I are the acknowledgement that research and education need to be representative in terms of societal diversity to increase quality and impact, and present diversity in perspectives, and a diverse and inclusive work and learning environment to ensure that talent is attracted, retained and optimally utilized [3, 4]. Commitment in all layers of the organization and inclusive leadership is important, to ensure everyone can fully participate in the organization and decision-making on an equal basis. That the Dutch government supports and follows these directions can be seen in the “National Action Plan for more diversity and inclusion in scientific education and research” [5]. With this action plan, signed on September 1, 2020, by all Dutch universities, the Dutch government together with nine independent parties of the Dutch scientific education and research field, are giving directions and setting goals to create an inclusive, diverse, and safe learning and working environment in the Dutch higher education.

1.2. ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

The UT wants to give high priority to DE&I and is committed to becoming a more inclusive, diverse, and equal organization by 2030. Regarding diversity, the UT is characterized by a marked contrast between the international character of the student population (with large differences between the different studies) [6], scientific staff and PhD candidates and the national character of the support staff, from both service departments and in the faculties [7]. Moreover, the management boards are still quite homogeneous, and unfortunately, at the UT, like in other technical universities in The Netherlands, women are still heavily underrepresented in all levels, especially in the high management [8].

The commitment of UT to become a more inclusive organization can already be seen in the good initiatives taking place and in the infrastructures that emerge. A big step in creating the infrastructure necessary to achieve and support a more inclusive organization was the start of a Diversity Officer in October 2020 [9], a HR (Human Resources) Policy Advisor specially appointed for Inclusion in July 2021 [10], and additional support by a policy and communication advisor and 3 student assistants (end 2022). Together with share- and stakeholders, the DE&I office has worked to create shared responsibility, ownership and a culture of accountability. This can be also clearly seen in the participation of the UT in the Ombuds pilot since October 2019, aiming to create a safe learning and working environment [11] and in 2020 the realization of the House of Integrity, an integral integrity program concerning academic, social, and business integrity [12].

In addition to these structural efforts, the Shaping Expert Group (SEG) Inclusion was formed in October 2020 to further contribute to the implementation of the Inclusion goals for 2030 [13]. In 2019 the Ambassadors’ Network and UT Incentive Fund shifted from focusing on women empowerment to a broader and more diverse scope [14] and, the Executive Boards of the UT, Saxion and ROC signed a declaration stating that the institutes promise to create an inclusive, safe, healthy and inspirational environment for LGBTI+ students and staff [15].

Important initiatives in 2021 were the UT joining Workplace Pride [16] and the release of a white paper on internationalization with the overarching vision of what should be done to achieve our Shaping2030 ambitions in this domain [17]. In October 2021, the UT signed the UN Declaration of Intent for inclusive education [18] committing in this way to create an inclusive educational institution, where every student can participate in education and feel welcome. Finally, in December 2021 the first Gender Equality Plan was published [19].

The SEG inclusion needed to operate at the interface between global movements (#Metoo and Black Lives Matter) and local debates and local actions. Historically the UT is a 60-year-old organization situated in Twente. Considering that English became the official working language as recent as January 2020 for example, is important in understanding UT people, UT local struggles and local solutions and their realization. In the first years of its existence, the UT was a small, local university, which mainly consisted of a male population. In that context, attention to diversity meant attention to gender (women) diversity. With an increasingly diverse population of students and staff now coming from countries around the world, a new phase has begun in the UT that requires more inclusive practices and awareness beyond discrimination against women.

1.3 GOALS AND OUTLINE OF THE REPORT

This report aims to give insight into the perceptions, practices and experiences of inclusion by UT employees and students. For this purpose, we made an overview of initiatives on inclusion (chapter 3) and conducted individual and group interviews over a period of a year and a half (chapters 4-9). Based on the overview and conversations, the report offers concrete conclusions and advice to make our organization more inclusive with attention to diversity and discrimination.

We aim with this report to guide the transition to a more fully inclusive UT, while empowering and enabling people to do so without creating new forms of exclusion. This is not an easy task, and we tried to improve ourselves along the way as new insights

emerged. We are learning ourselves how to do this, every step of the way, for example by developing inclusive language (for example we initially used 'their stories' in a short SEG Inclusion movie [13], which we now replaced with 'our stories' in this report). Inclusive language does not avoid difficult topics or refrain from uneasy conversations but aims to be mindful of differences and refrains from polarizing statements. In the report, we follow the way our conversation partners presented themselves (for example in choice of pronouns, and in case of doubt or to guarantee complete anonymity we use s/he or the plural). We hope that this report can inspire people across the UT to join us in becoming an inclusive university that truly recognizes and awards talents from people of all backgrounds. In Appendix 1 the terminology as used in this report is explained.

Chapter 2 provides information about the SEG Inclusion team, its objectives, the project strategy, methodology and realization.

Chapter 3 focusses on the activities and discussions in the different units throughout the UT to create awareness and to find out what inclusion and diversity means for them, the barriers they experience and what they would need to become more inclusive and diverse.

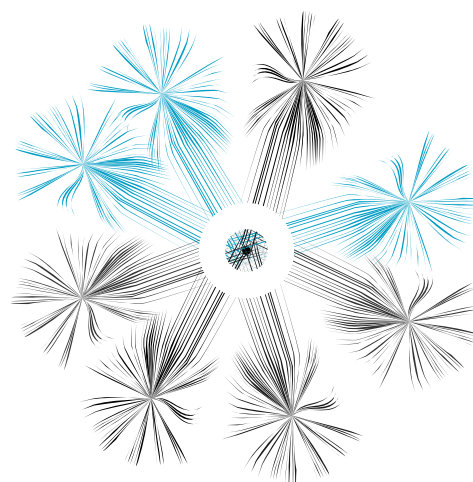
The SEG has focused on improving inclusion practices, especially addressing the barriers and problems faced by certain groups at UT. Diversity has many dimensions and we have chosen specific dimensions because it was already known in the UT context that some individuals and groups are more at risk of exclusion than others. We hope that insights on what inclusion and exclusion mean for at risk groups in concrete situations can contribute to an inclusive organization for all¹. Chapters 4-9 are devoted to the results of the research conducted among these groups (see chapter 2 for more details).

Finally, Chapter 10 provides the overarching conclusions and recommendations to embed our work and advice in the line organization.

¹ in the same way that the measure of reducing the maximum load for bricks to carry in construction work, taken when more women entered the workforce in that domain, also helped to improve the health condition of men.

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CHAPTER 2

SEG INCLUSION

Authors: Laura Vargas and Anneke Sools



TEAM

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Bernard Veldkamp	Staff	BMS-CODE	Member
Bregje Walraven	Student	SU	Member
Laura Vargas	Staff	S&T-MCS	Lead
Nico Verdonschot	Staff	S&T	Sponsoring Dean
Sterre Mkatini	Staff	GA	Member
Tessa Dekkers	Staff	BMS-PGT	Member

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Inclusion is an important theme of the mission, vision, and strategy of the UT for 2030 [1] and the topic requires an integral approach and commitment. The Shaping Expert Group (SEG) Inclusion was created to support the organization in achieving our Shaping2030 inclusion goals making use of the expertise, energy, and intrinsic motivation within the UT.

Based on the Shaping2030 document, six goals have been formulated for the SEG Inclusion to achieve in the two years of its existence:

- (1) broaden the focus on diversity at the UT beyond women's equality
- (2) create insight into what is going on at the UT: an overview of initiatives
- (3) connect, initiate and support initiatives on diversity and inclusion
- (4) make the theme inclusion live among the people, let everybody know it is an important theme at the UT
- (5) find out what the obstacles are that certain individuals and groups face preventing them to feel at home at the UT, find a trend and propose some advice how to become a truly inclusive organization
- (6) make sure there is awareness among the senior management and that they facilitate realizing the cultural and organizational changes needed to become a more inclusive organization

The SEG Inclusion operates as the antenna, as the feeler of the organization, sent out to find out the attitude, feelings and experiences of employees and students towards inclusion, a kind of thermometer for the organization on the topic of inclusion. The SEG is not attached to any unit but responds formally to the SB (Strategic Board) via the so-called Sponsoring Dean and informally via the Liaison to the Shaping Coordination Team. Due to its position in the governance of the UT (Fig. 1), the SEG provides the connection between the staff/students and the upper management.

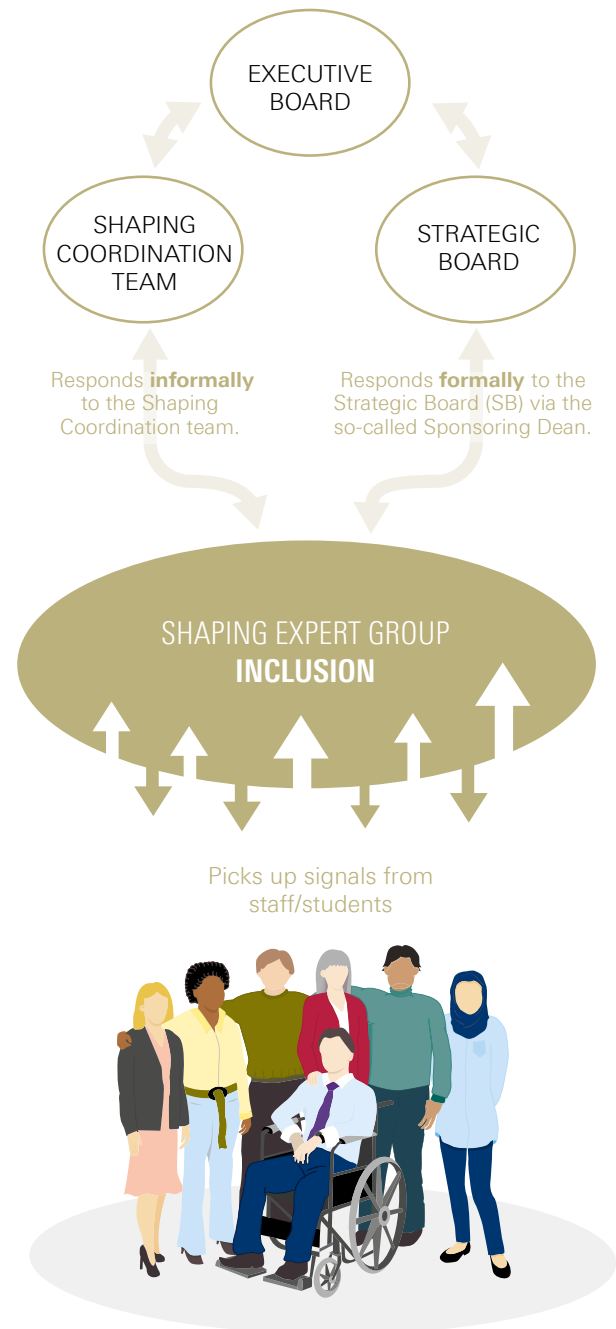


Fig. 1 Governance of the Shaping Expert Group (SEG) Inclusion

2.2 PROJECT STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

To achieve the goals depicted in 2.1, the SEG has developed a strategy where the following steps are taken:

1. Make an inventory about the current situation and the initiatives at this moment
2. Create awareness about the fact that Inclusion is an important theme at the UT + Create awareness about the existence of the SEG Inclusion itself.
3. Identify and analyse the problems and barriers that people encounter. What are the underlying processes and structures?
4. Propose possible solutions; Advice on how to solve the problems or how to prevent or avoid them.

These strategic steps are translated into the following activities to realize the project strategy:

Interaction with the organization: communication and dissemination

By **presenting to groups** (in service departments & faculties, study, and student associations) or to individuals we want to inform them about the importance of Inclusion for the UT and to find out what are their views and opinions on the theme, what is going well, current initiatives and what barriers and problems preventing inclusion they encounter in their daily work. In this way we can identify what inclusion means for the different units and what they would need to become more inclusive, to feel at home themselves and to help others feel at home. We also create awareness about the work of the SEG Inclusion so that students and employees know how to find us if they would like to, but also for us to meet people that would like to collaborate with the SEG. We achieve in this way points 1,2,3 from our strategy.

Reflection and discussions in the SEG and with stakeholders on the meaning of inclusion and its relationship with the slogan "people-first." With this we contribute to the achievement of goals 4 and 6 and to point 2 of the strategy.

We also organized specific **dissemination activities** like the SEG Inclusion teaser, an Instagram takeover, several Shaping Stories and personal interviews in

UToday to reach out to the UT community and realize point 2.

Qualitative research

We conducted qualitative research in the form of **personal interviews and roundtables** (focus groups). This research contributed to the SEG objectives 2, 3 and 4.

2.3 METHODOLOGY OF THE ACTION RESEARCH

The data collection of the qualitative research took place in two phases. The **first phase** consisted of thematically oriented personal interviews and semi-structured round tables with participants who self-identified with the first three target groups: Internationals, Disability & Neurodiversity and First-Generation students. The focus was on how to avoid discrimination and exclusion. The **second phase** consisted of storytelling roundtables (group interviews) with participants who self-identified with the latter three target groups: ethnicity, race, religion; gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation (SOGIGE); women equity. Additional details and supporting information can be found in the Appendix 2. The focus was on how to promote belonging and inclusion, which had an action research component. Action research focuses not only on acquiring knowledge from the participant's point of view (which was the primary focus of phase 1), but also has an action component: raising awareness, sharing experiences, and empowering the participants involved in the research. Participatory action research is a suitable method for research that aims to contribute to organizational change processes [2]. Moreover, because bias operates often implicitly, action research can help to make explicit and open for reflection practical knowledge from members of the organization.

The UT is a diverse environment with many diversity dimensions: gender (identity & expression), ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, nationality, age, physical abilities/qualities, educational background, marital status, parental status, work experience, socio-economic status, etc. Out of all these aspects we decided to give priority and focus on following identity-based groups: Internationals; Disability & Neurodiversity;



Fig. 2 The data collection of the qualitative research took place in two phases and focused on the topics mentioned in the figure.

First Generation students; Ethnicity, Race and Religion; Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Gender Expression (SOGIGE); Women's equity. This means that other important issues of inclusion (for example ageism) are not addressed in this report. Because of practical reasons (lack of capacity), we clustered in the action research some of the initial diversity dimensions (Fig.2) into groups (One for Disability and Neurodiversity; one for Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Gender Expression; one for Ethnicity, Race

and Religion to which the role of Academic Rank was later added). Over the course of the action research, we came across new potential diversity dimensions. In the end, only one of those was included in the report (academic rank) as this stood out to be a pivotal form of hierarchical power dynamics across roundtables. Groups that did not end up in the final report, because we failed to recruit participants willing to come forward were covid-19 related kinds of exclusion that appeared to be especially taboo topics at the time (we received

reports from Asian people who were discriminated because they were perceived as bringers of the covid-19 virus and from unvaccinated people who feared of speaking up and making themselves known).

With the round tables and interviews we wanted to know how the current situation was experienced by these individuals and groups, what the challenges were that they face to feel a sense of belonging, to understand the obstacles that need to be removed to create an inclusive university with a truly inclusive culture.

The presentations, round tables and interviews helped identify problems/obstacles encountered and they also suggested some ideas on how to tackle them. The problems, their root and scale have been analyzed and discussed within the SEG Inclusion and common themes have been grouped. Based on our analysis of patterns, commonalities, and differences in meaning-making of participants, we propose solutions and recommendations. Based on our expertise and experiences in our various roles in the organization, our conclusions and recommendations are expert advice that goes beyond reporting what participants told us. We also critically review their perspectives, put these in wider perspective/context and think through the implications of what they told us.

2.4 SEG INCLUSION TEAM

The SEG Inclusion is a diverse and passionate interdisciplinary group formed by staff and students from across the whole UT, of diverse backgrounds, job level, age, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, ability, ethnicity and religion. It has also been an exceptionally large and dynamic group (45 members in two years), which was partially due to the required expertise in various subjects and fields. However, almost half of the group was formed by students who left after finishing their bachelor or master: they were part of the team, gave input and others took over. We had highly motivated staff members who participated voluntarily alongside other tasks and duties, hence providing input from a broad range of perspectives. However, the discontinuity in the team also made us acutely aware of the importance of a stable team for DE&I policies and activities to be implemented effectively in the future.

There are several distinct roles within the SEG: a sponsoring dean, a SEG leader, scientific experts, organization experts, SEG students, MC support, moderators, and transcribers. The task of the sponsoring dean (a faculty dean or a scientific director) was to sponsor the theme line, to enthuse people about the subject. This person would contribute to the development of topics within the theme and, importantly, introduced new topics and priorities to be developed in strategic and decision-making bodies. The SEG lead brought together the available knowledge, ensured that ongoing initiatives gained visibility and stimulated collaboration and coordination within the team and outside. The scientific experts brought in-depth knowledge about the content, not only in a practical way but also the theory behind the SEG. Finally, the organization experts' task was to know about the organization and support people to bring results to the table in the right way.

Nico Verdonshot (Scientific Director TechMed) was Inclusion's sponsoring dean until April 2022, when he was succeeded by Jennifer Herek (Dean S&T faculty). Laura Vargas (S&T) has been the lead since the beginning in October 2020.

The following people have participated and collaborated actively in the SEG Inclusion:

Alex Bakhuis (S&T-EMI), Ana Kirchhoff (M-PSY), Anne van Dongen (BMS-PGT), Anneke Sools (BMS-PGT), Annemarie Arets (ITC), Arda Satici (B-CS), Arnold Enklaar (BMS-IEBIS), Arya Arjomand (M-PSY), Bas Koelewijn Student (M-BA), Bernard Veldkamp (BMS-CODE), Bregje Walraven (Student Union), Cindy van Goor (HR), Devanshi Kacholia (M-GEO_WO), Estefania Villalobos (M-PSY), Godelieve Brasz (Student Union), Greta Seuling (M-PSY), Hatice Kizgin (BMS-ETM), Hemo Oumenad (CES-SACC), Jamie Janbroers (M-EE), Jody Geerts (PhD candidate BMS-PGT), José Franken (HR-DIR), Julia Klinkert (M-ITECH), Katja Hunfeld (CES-UTLC), Kihndé Ait El Kadi El Morabti (B-ATLAS), Kathi Lemmens-Krug (SP), Kim Strohmeier (M-PSY), Kira Lanze (M-PSY), Laulinda Massunda (B-COM), Le Ahn Nguyen Long (BMS-PA), Leo Materne (B-PSY), Linda Pasqual-van der Landen (GA), Lotte Sträter (MC-CO), Luigi Etienne Richards (MC-ITC), Lukas van Remmerden (M-COM), Lusi Neubert (M-PSY), Maren Behrensen



First live get-together of the SEG Inclusion members (July 2021, UPark Hotel).

From right to left: Bernard Veldkamp, José Franken, Anneke Sools, Arnold Enklaar, Willeke Stukker-Jansen, Laura Vargas, Sterre Mkatini, Jody Geerts, Laulinda Massunda, Lukas van Remmerden, Kihndé Ait El Kadie El Morabti, Michael Neys, Annemarie Arets, Kim Strohmeier, Leo Materne, Tessa Dekkers, Hemo Oumenad and Marijke Stehouwer



Summer drinks (second live get-together) (June 2022, Vrijhof)

From left to right: Willeke Stukker-Jansen, Alex Bakhuis, Arnold Enklaar, Linda Pasqual, Michael Neys, Arya Arjomand and Anneke Sools



From left to right: Kihndé Ait El Kadi El Morabti, Nimisha Verma, Anne van Dongen, Sterre Mkatini, Teun Hammer and Godelieve Brasz

(BMS-WIJSB), Marie-Chantal Metz-Bekkers (ITC-BOOZ), Marie-José Verkroost (CES-CELT), Marijke Stehouwer (ET-ES), Merle Kogel (M-COM), Monique Duyvestijn (ET-ES), Nimisha Verma (M-GEO_WO), Noortje van der Knaap (SBD-GS), Roman Hartlieb (M-PSY B-IBA), Ryan Sebastian Kurniawan (B-EE, World Officer SU), Sikke Jansma (BMS-CS), Sofija Pantić (B-ATLAS), Sterre Mkatini (GA), Tessa Dekkers (BMS-PGT), Teun Hamer (M-AP), Tom Boogerd (HR-YP BMS), Veronica Junjan (BMS-PA), Willeke Stukker-Jansen (CES-SACC), Yannik Neises Student (M-COM) and Yaz Armagan Student (B-PSY).

We have been privileged to have such a large group of enthusiasts collaborating in the SEG. Formally, the capacity of the team was no more than 1 fte plus student assistants, the rest was done on a voluntary basis outside working hours.

2.5 FACTS & FIGURES

The SEG Inclusion has presented about the SEG and about Inclusion to more than 275 employees and students. There have been a total of 21 round table conversations, which means more than 100 participants and 34 individual interviews.

- 5 round tables Internationals: international students, international staff, support for students, support for staff, Dutch students and Dutch staff. Information about doctoral candidates was obtained from P-Nut based on their three research reports.
- 15 interviews Disability and Neurodiversity topic: students, employees, support for students, support for employees.
- 19 interviews First generation students
- 10 round table discussions on Ethnicity, Race and Religion, 4 of which specifically focused on religion (3 for students on Islam, Hinduism and Christianity

and 1 for staff on Islam).

- 3 round tables Sexual orientation, Gender Identity and Gender Expression (students and staff)
- 3 round tables Women's equity: students, PhD candidates and staff

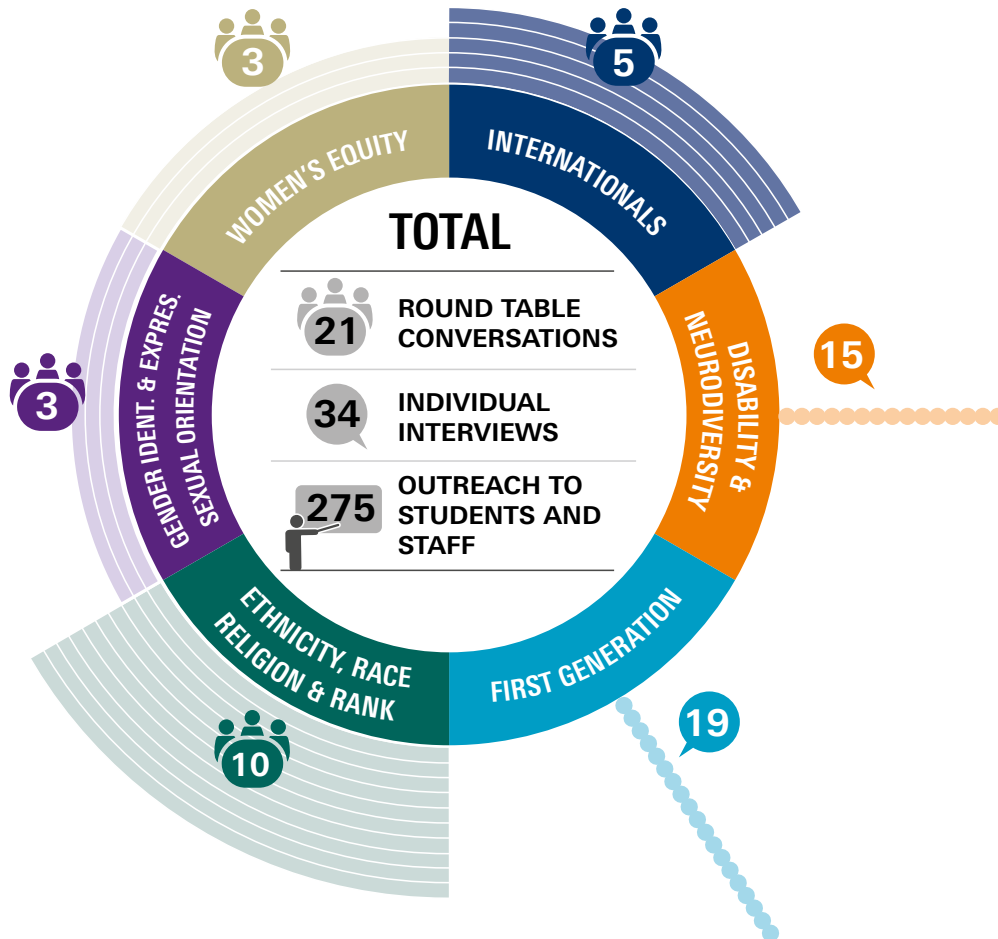
References

[1] <https://www.utwente.nl/en/organisation/about/shaping2030/organisation/seg-inclusion/>

[2] Vivona, B. D., & Wolfram, M. S. (2021). Conducting Community Based Participatory Action Research. *Human Resource Development Review*, 20(4), 512-521.

A new round table method was developed (Anneke Sools en Tessa Dekkers) on Sense of Belonging, which helped to better facilitate the round tables. Eighteen students and academic and support staff

were trained as moderators for the round table discussions. In two years the SEG has had an outreach of more than 400 people.



Presented about SEG and inclusion to more than

100
INDIVIDUALS

...and more than 20 groups and associations (together more than 275 people)



45
MEMBERS

25 staff, 20 student, over a period of two years



18
MODERATORS FOR ROUND TABLES

Students, academic and support staff have been trained

Fig. 3 SEG Inclusion Facts & Figures

CHAPTER 3

INTERACTION WITH VARIOUS UT STAKEHOLDERS

Authors: Laura Vargas, Anneke Sools and Hatice Kizgin



TEAM

Laura Vargas	Staff	S&T-MCS	Lead
Linda Pasqual	Staff	MC	Member
Lotte Sträter	Staff	MC	Member
Merle Kogel	Student	M-COM	Member
Sterre Mkatini	Staff	GA	Member
Yannik Neises	Student	M-COM	Member

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The stakeholders of the SEG Inclusion are all employees and students at the university, as we all have responsibilities towards making the UT a more inclusive place. The SEG Inclusion has presented and sought the dialogue about diversity and inclusion in many units across the whole organization. A total of more than 150 presentations and conversations with individuals and groups have been held during these two years.

This chapter has four sections:

- Section 3.2 explains our collaboration with the DE&I team and Ambassadors Network, their plans and activities and how the SEG complements and supports them.
- The SEG has operated as the thermometer of the organization. Section 3.3.1 highlights how UT members and units support, enhance and improve inclusion practices. It provides an **overview** of projects, plans of action and views and importance of inclusion in daily work or study, current state in terms of inclusion as well as other aspects related to inclusion to be considered in the future. The SEG has been actively involved in various events related to inclusion and inclusivity efforts of units.
- We have summarized the **commonalities** between the conversations and in 3.3.2 we reflect on the most important observations and advice that we have heard in our conversations with employees and students from different units, study programs and associations.
- In section 3.4 specific **dissemination activities** organized and held by the SEG to create awareness about inclusion are given.

Disclaimer:

1. The members of the SEG Inclusion have agreed to abide the Privacy Agreement.
2. All the methods used for the interviews and round tables have been approved by the Ethics Committee of the UT.
3. All the participants in the interviews and round tables have given their informed consent to the use of the information and stories in this report.
4. The stories in the report have been treated as confidential and have been anonymized.

3.2 COLLABORATION WITH DE&I TEAM AND CONNECTION WITH AMBASSADORS NETWORK

The university has a dedicated DE&I team [\[1\]](#) to coordinate and connect all efforts at the UT to promote diversity, increase equity and stimulate inclusion. The DE&I team and the Ambassadors network are the two groups at the UT that deal exclusively with DE&I and they have been two important sparring partners of the SEG Inclusion.

Collaboration with DE&I Team: two track approach

In October 2020, the UT hired its first DE&I officer, Sterre Mkatini. The SEG Inclusion supported Sterre by introducing her to relevant stakeholders to understand the structure of the organization and the way of working at the different departments and faculties. To guarantee complete and two-way communication Sterre has been a member of the SEG Inclusion during the first months, participating in different themes; also, at the beginning a number of presentations have been done jointly with her. Since her appointment, Sterre has played a crucial role in increasing the visibility of the theme of diversity and inclusion. She has participated in many interviews, podcasts, webinars, and discussions inside and outside the university and taken the lead in connecting with other institutions to exchange ideas, learning from each other. She is the visible face and represents the UT in several meetings and organizations.

The university's efforts to support DE&I with more structural capacity did not stop with the installing of the DE&I officer, as evidenced by the appointment of Michael Neys as policy advisor HR Inclusion in July 2021 and of Linda Pasqual (SEG Inclusion Communications advisor), as Communications DE&I policy advisor in March 2022. Today (end 2022), the team is strengthened by three student assistants who are actively engaged on a paid basis in various aspects amongst others of operational activities and communication.

While the SEG operated as an independent entity within the organization, due to our common goal of making the UT a more inclusive place, we have been actively working with the DE&I team to support their plans. Together, the DE&I Team and the SEG Inclusion

are engaged in a two-track approach where they complement each other and pursue the same goals but with different approaches: DE&I is more focused on tactical-operational level and on actions; the SEG inclusion more on research and reflection. This SEG report is not an extension of the current policy or of the DE&I Plan of Action. These are two different documents, each serving its specific purpose. The report of the SEG Inclusion offers grounds and support for future work on inclusion as a shared responsibility of many stake- and shareholders, with a key role for the DE&I Team.

The work of the DE&I Team is done on the basis of an approved and supported DE&I action plan [\[2\]](#) 2022-2024 founded on shared responsibility and cooperation. In this way, embedding, enhancement and safeguarding DE&I and (social) safety matters are ensured within the organisation.

The first DE&I plan was presented in May 2021, and since then important steps have been taken by the DE&I team:

- Creating a dedicated and comprehensive website about DE&I and enhancing UT's topic page (Service Portal) about DE&I.
- Creating the Instagram account UTwente DEI (@utwentedei)
- Drawing up the Gender Equality Plan (GEP) [\[3\]](#) of the UT in accordance with the requirement of the European Commission under Horizon Europe (European funding program for scientific research and innovation).
- Started drawing up a policy in which gender-inclusive forms of address have been partly implemented in UT's HR registration system.
- Setting up a pilot workshop on inclusive communication and representational power for the Communication Department of the UT.
- Introductory DE&I training of all first-year bachelor students of ET organized by the Coordinator International Affairs.
- A data report that provides insight into the degree of male-female-related diversity among employees has been written and made readily available.
- The DE&I team's important role creating awareness can also be seen from the organization in 2021 and 2022 of a Diversity week in October and the realization of an all-gender toilet in the Horst building. All gender toilets are facilities for all, which

do not have gendered signage, and which do not require the person using them to define into a gender.

- Menstruating is a basic fact of human existence and menstrual hygiene products are necessities, not luxuries, and should be treated as such. Tackling period poverty as a way to promote social inclusion is one of the motives to have a free period products pilot initiated in several restrooms at UT by the UReka student fraction and in collaboration with the Student Union, EQUITY Group of P-Nut, CFM and DE&I team. [\[4\]](#)
- The DE&I team plays together with the Ambassadors Network an important role creating not only awareness but also action in all Faculty Boards: DE&I action plans within every faculty are being defined under their guidance and support.

The SEG inclusion and the DE&I Team have collaborated in various activities to create awareness:

- The DE&I team and the SEG have worked closely together in the organization of several topics of the SEG (Internationals, Disability and Neurodiversity and First Generation Students). The DE&I team cooperated actively by conducting individual interviews with employees and students, participated in the round tables and helped to analyse the discussions and draw conclusions and advice.
- Podcast in the series "Dialogical spaces for a diverse university": Searching for an inclusive learning and working environment [\[5\]](#)
- We have also organized and carried out jointly an Instagram takeover @utwente about DE&I to activate employees and students on this topics.
- In addition, we also collaborated closely in a UT Incentive Fund awarded project for making a UToday special on Diversity & Inclusion. [\[6\]](#)
- Mirjam Bult's funding to offer first-generation students more support contributing to equal opportunity for everyone, was also an action supported by both the DE&I team and the SEG Inclusion. [\[7\]](#)

Creating awareness is only one part of the work of the DE&I Team, as the fundamentals of DE&I must be integrated into all practices. As explained in the DE&I Action Plan 2022-2024, this will be done through research, education programs and employership through three focus areas: (1) Cultural cohesion and

social safety (2) Access and equity and (3) Gender, gender identity and gender expression. The DE&I plan of action opts for an integral inclusion approach where all UT community members can experience the benefits of diversity, equity and inclusion. By undertaking various actions, measures and activities within each focus area, the DE&I Team contributes to the overarching objective of social safety which is closely related to well-being, respect, integrity, honesty, and consideration for others in order to ensure our university is a safe place. The DE&I team is currently working together with the Integral Safety Manager of the UT on the realization of the UT's mission in the field of integral safety.

Michael Neys, member of the HR Policy team of the UT, is also HR Policy advisor Inclusion in the DE&I team to ensure that social developments related to inclusion such as social safety and recognition and rewarding, are being incorporated, anchored, and further developed within the HR policy team. In the past year and for 2023 the annual plans of HR focuses on the three spearheads (Talent, Well-being and HR-Basics) where the topic of inclusion (DE&I) is integrated (see Appendix 4 for more information).

Connection with Ambassadors Network

The SEG Inclusion has had regular contact with the Ambassadors Network and with Marieke Huisman, chair of the Ambassadors Network until September 2022. This network, which has existed for more than 15 years, advises the Executive Board on diversity policies. It was originally focused on gender diversity and supporting women at the UT to grow into top positions, but since 2019, it moved in a new direction broadening its scope to other dimensions of diversity. The appointment of a diversity officer and of a HR employee with focus on inclusion have been triggered and achieved thanks to the efforts of the Ambassadors Network and the UT Incentive Fund aiming to fund bottom-up DE&I initiatives is also brought by this network. Because of their knowledge and advisory role on creating an inclusive working environment, they have been an important sparring partner for the SEG Inclusion.

3.3 THERMOMETER OF THE ORGANIZATION

The SEG Inclusion has operated as the thermometer of the organization looking for information, feeling, and interpreting how the organization is doing on inclusion and what the needs are. In the last two years the SEG Inclusion has held presentations about inclusion and about SEG across the UT and has collaborated with different parties and supported several ongoing and new initiatives and groups.

3.3.1 INVOLVEMENT WITH UT STAKEHOLDERS

The SEG has reached out to many individuals and groups across the organization to find out how 'inclusion' is felt and lived in the organization (see Table 5 in Appendix 4). The format of the SEG's presentations and talks was usually as follows:

- Inclusion is an important topic at UT. How does it relate to your unit as a whole and to the people/work/activities of the unit?
- What ideas do you have for making the activities of your unit more accessible and inclusive for every student/staff member? (Here we usually pointed out the dimensions we had: Internationals, Religion, Gender...)
- What (often frustrating) obstacles do you encounter in doing your work/offering the activities?
- What could your unit do to become more inclusive?

The aim of the conversations was receiving information, to listen, where does inclusion play a role, what are the obstacles, to think along while we also wanted to plant a seed by inviting people to reflect on certain aspects of inclusion. The SEG took part in many activities and meetings, to know what is going on, but also to support ongoing projects and initiatives at UT. The conversations outlining each topic can be found in the Appendix 4, which is not a comprehensive narrative but rather broadly showcases key efforts and initiatives that engage areas of diversity and inclusion within the University of Twente. During our talks, nine overarching topics depicted in Figure 4 emerged.

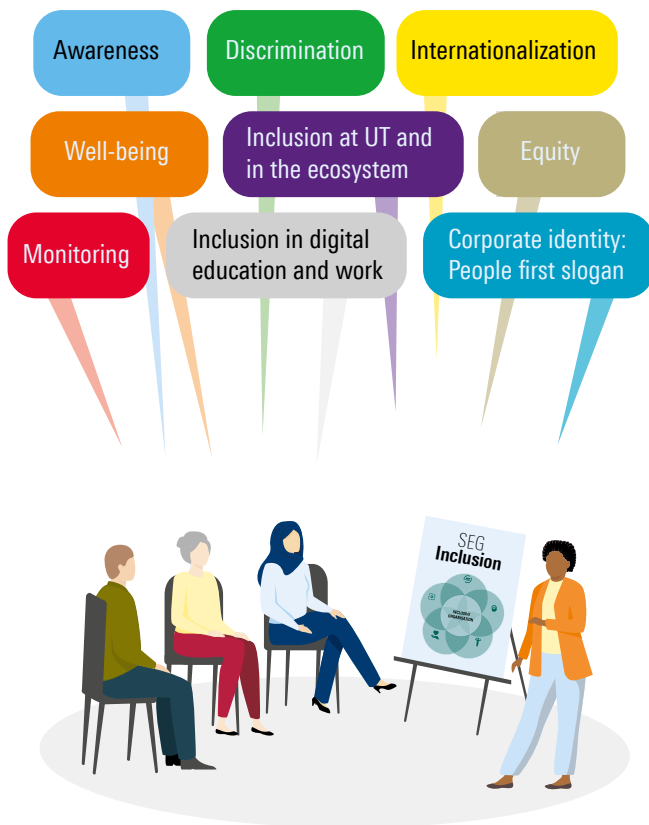


Fig. 4 Overarching topics during the interaction with the stakeholders

All units indicate some form of inclusion and strive to intensify it in the future. The commitment of the various stakeholders to add or strengthen the dimensions of diversity and inclusion to their projects was perceived as high. The SEG felt always welcomed to present and to discuss. People were always open, participative and transparent during the presentations or individual conversations. Everybody was interested and involved in the discussion, willing to contribute ideas.

We can conclude that inclusion is considered and embedded in some of the plans and activities of all these units, although inclusion may be perceived differently or the emphasis on inclusion may be varied. Appendix 4 includes information on how various units put activities into practice and how members of the university community are responsible and supportive for their goals. It also outlines UT policy and commitment to diversity and inclusion for everyone within our community including employees, students and collaborative partners.

3.3.2 GENERAL OBSERVATIONS AND ADVICE

Our presentations and discussions were meant to find out about different experiences and insights throughout UT and to brainstorm with the stakeholders about possible solutions. These are some of our observations and advice.

Awareness

- The openness and willingness to collaborate with the SEG Inclusion among different stakeholders was enormous. Whether working on a voluntary basis, outside office hours, continuously or for a specific activity, many staff and students showed their support and commitment to the subject.
- We found out that many people want to tell their story, they want to be heard. By discussing and sharing stories, people realize that they are not alone with their feelings and they create a bond and draw strength from each other. We also found out that there are many staff and students aware of the need to share stories and are willing to listen. By listening, we affirm the narrators' natural right to speak as well as to be heard.
- Service departments (S&P, HR, MC, CFM...) are much less culturally diverse than the faculties or the student population. The UT currently focuses on the international market for both students and researchers, and we have identified several problems that we believe are due to the lack of diversity in the service departments. For example, supporting the partner in a dual career does not always work optimally in practice. We received signals from women who were actively discouraged from getting a job or working full-time because they were told they needed time to care for the family when moving from abroad. This is not only gender stereotyped behaviour, but also insensitivity to internationals and the need to attract and retain talent at the UT. Another example is that the vacancies for support staff are often only published in Dutch with the idea of attracting local people, which may explain why some service departments remain as homogeneous as they are. We believe that Shaping2030 can only be successful with support staff that is representative of the organization, with staff that reflects the researcher and student population so that multiple perspectives are integrated. Only when we agree that we can be more innovative, and better served by **becoming more diverse and inclusive** can we

see how we can make that happen.

- As it can be seen in Appendix 4, there are many great initiatives in the organization: the UT Incentive Fund projects, different initiatives from P-Nut, or from the study and student associations and from lecturers. However, we have not found a clear, coordinated overview of activities and projects related to DE&I at the UT. Many of these great initiatives arise on an individual or organizational basis without support and isolated from each other. This concerns both new projects and DE&I activities as well as existing projects that want to incorporate DE&I aspects. In order to succeed in the goals in 2030, it is important to fight the fragmentation and **align all activities**.
- The UT has an extensive support structure to create a safer learning and working environment, including confidential counsellors, study counsellors and psychologists and, since two years ago, an ombuds officer, integrated safety manager and a DE&I team. As became apparent during the round table discussions and other discussions, many students and staff are not aware of the existence of (some) of these people and their **visibility** appears to be quite limited. If they do know, the **threshold** to get in touch with them is experienced by some staff and students as very high. We have followed-up some (extreme) cases from the round tables and interviews but even when we advise to report an issue, and support the student or employee in doing so, they often choose not to do so.
- Doctoral Candidates do not approach HR, TGS and PNUT with their problems, the connection between doctoral candidates between working groups and faculties does not seem too strong [8].

Discrimination

- We see that there seems to be an **increase in the number of people speaking out**, but speaking out is just the beginning of a process: someone is needed to listen and follow up. By measuring, analysing and assessing (anonymized) speaking behaviour, those speaking out are openly reassured that they have been heard and that their input has been considered. Our advice would be to establish a transparent, structured and timebound process that facilitates, recognizes and rewards speak up, listen and follow up behaviours.
- Leaders and teaching staff are in a unique position to be role models in how to actively listen and

respond when colleagues/students speak up. They should be aware of the possible consequences if someone speaks out in the group or the media. Leaders should be empowered to confidently initiate (difficult) conversations and embed active listening skills in the group. Creating and facilitating **environments free of blame** and shame and avoiding a culture of silence are fundamental to support the individual that spoke up and to facilitate the dialogue for those who may know less or feel uncomfortable with diversity and inclusion topics.

- The voices of non-employed Doctoral Candidates are easily overlooked/not heard [8].
- People who work (formally/informally) on DE&I within the UT have insufficient resources (physical and financial) to carry out their work. There are not many financial resources available at the UT (except for the UT Incentive Fund) for DE&I related activities. We have not found a general DE&I project number that can be used for example in Unit4 to declare the hours spent in DE&I.
- PhD candidates are in a vulnerable position because they are dependent on factors outside their immediate control to finish their doctoral degree on time, think for example of the hierarchical relation between supervisors and candidates. The role of the supervisor is crucial and supervision-related issues, like control and power abuse, can be exacerbated by an environment which discourages doctoral candidates from addressing these issues.

Internationalization

- International PhD candidates, students and staff in particular need more support to settle in a new country. More legal support is needed for external/international PhD students (e.g., with VISA) (Well-being report Equity group) [8].
- Best practice: Writing a white paper on International Dimensions was a first step of SP's International Dimensions Cluster, which was immediately followed by action. Representatives from all units and associations involved in internationalization were brought together in a series of workshops to share initiatives, create mutual synergies, identify overarching objectives and develop selected themes into concrete roadmaps to guide the organization towards realizing our goals, ambitions for 2030. Career, well-being, mobility, international relations, global citizenship and onboarding are the overarching relevant themes in the field of

internationalization.

- PhD candidates would like to have a system where internationals have a voice in policy making (IncludeU report P-Nut). [\[9\]](#)
- Some PhD candidates, students and staff would like the UT to express more often their view on global issues and relevant discussions that characterize an international environment. [\[9\]](#)
- Best practice: there are more than 400 Computer Science Bachelor's students. These students are organized into 6 groups called "houses" (e.g. the "yellow house") and each house has a "housekeeper", someone to talk to in an accessible way, which contributes to the well-being of the students.

Inclusion


- In the current state, inclusion is not yet sufficiently embedded in the organization. Organizational practices are being visibly included in some annual plans of various units and that is a huge step towards a more inclusive organization, but the awareness that inclusion requires a culture and organizational change to be UT-wide compliant is not there yet
- A joint effort with other partners to solve current housing problems, more support for our staff and students to access relevant information to settle down, and structurally arranged buddy systems are just a few examples that would help to live up to our slogan as the "most welcoming university".
- We notice that there is sometimes **insufficient exchange of (valuable) information and tools** across groups, between faculties and service units. This may reduce the efficiency of the organization. We would like (managers?) to cultivate a culture that promotes collaboration and a mindset that encourages not only teamwork but also inclusion, cooperation, and communication between units at the UT.
- **From Reactive to Proactive:** The UT relies on ad hoc and tailor-made solutions, and this means arbitrariness. As an organization, we do not want to be reactive; we want to be proactive. Inclusive leadership plays a crucial role to achieve this. What we offer now at the UT are very often **tailor-made solutions** when problems arise: we react to problems and try to solve them. This personal approach has always been one of the strengths of our university, but it should be embedded in a structured systematic approach at the tactical/organizational level to make it sustainable. Being proactive means that we anticipate the future, and this requires a systemic approach, aided, where relevant, by standardization and protocols at the organizational level. So, for example, when a student comes to a lecturer or study advisor with a question about gender identity a standard operating procedure is in place to help the lecturer guide the student to the right place. The lecturer does not need to solve the problem, only needs to know where the student can find help. When a student using a wheelchair registers, another automatic well-established procedure should be in place so that, for example, the schedule makers are alerted that the lectures should take place in a suitable classroom.
- Especially study advisors, confidential advisors, the DE&I team, Integral Security Manager and ombudsman have an important role psychosocial safety i.e both social (respect, integrity, honesty and consideration for others) and psychological safety (the feeling that you can share your thoughts, opinions, and ideas freely without fear of being degraded or shamed).
- It is important that, especially people from HR, the ombudsperson and the DE&I team, are aware of the **"myth of neutrality"**: if you are neutral in situations of conflict where there is a hierarchical relation between two parties (for example a supervisor and a PhD student) then you have by default and implicitly chosen the side of the most powerful. In a conflict, being neutral and not taking sides can be seen as choosing for the most powerful (in some cases the organization). An example of being neutral can be seen in the ombuds officer's response to a recently reported experience of exclusion and discrimination [\[10\]](#). This consequence of being neutral could explain why employees do not always approach HR [\[11\]](#) or other support structures.
- Diversity and inclusion topics can evoke strong opinions and feelings. It is our experience and that of several people working on DE&I that the combination of activism and polarization can create a heightened threat of conflict. In these cases, it is of the utmost importance to act quickly and support each other to prevent a rapid escalation of a conflict. Unfortunately, despite all efforts, it is not always possible to **prevent escalation**. It is important to think about how to act as a manager and as an

organization when someone is threatening or blackmailing to go to the media or make a scandal. It is our advice to raise awareness about this so that staff and students working on DE&I get the support and support they need in case of problems. Being inclusive does not mean that everyone can be a member of the UT or of a team.

- There is a need for Doctoral candidates to be more in contact with industry and scientific partners to be able to decide about their future (Well-being report, Equity group)
- The university could improve the connection with Doctoral Candidates after they graduate, which would allow networking (Well-being report, Equity group)
- Encourage all PhD candidates, and their supervisors, to attend the “build your intercultural muscle” workshop (developed by CELT)
- In order to build a sense of ingroup solidarity, among DE&I supporters, internationals, LGBTQ+ people etc, people tend to inadvertently resort to framing in terms of “**us vs. them.**” This framing is effective in increasing support from the in group but excludes people and it may become a path for polarization. We need to make everyone feel like they have a place in the inclusion movement, no matter how familiar they are with the diversity and inclusion topic.

Wellbeing

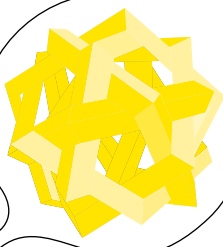
- In the past two years it happened a few times that UT scientists who participated in the public debate were confronted with aggression and intimidation. Such an incident happened also to a diversity and inclusion employee after an article in De Twentsche Courant Tubantia about the use of sanitary napkins at the UT. There were fierce, personal reactions on social media after the article. Since November 2022, the university has joined an initiative of the Universiteiten van Nederland, NWO and KNAW, a hotline for scientists where employees are helped and advised, for example on how to prevent private data from becoming known via their social media accounts, or about how they can de-escalate their situation. [\[12\]](#).
- We’ve picked up on some signs that people who handle issues and fall organically into staff or student support become emotionally and mentally overworked when dealing with sensitive or potentially traumatic issues from others without proper training.

 **Recommendation:** Provide coaching and training in trauma management and nonviolent communication to all employees who wish to participate. Encourage active participation among students, scientists and support staff, who formally and informally act as a point of support for other members of the UT community.

- There is not enough visible easy to find information about the proper channels and procedures at the UT to recommend to the person or groups affected by issues related to discrimination. Recommendation: a) Create analogue and digital material UT-wide with the various contact points present at the UT. b) Organize special information meetings for the UT community about these contact points and their roles and discussion areas. Organize round tables like the ones organized by the SEG more often embed them structurally within the UT). c) Provide open training sessions to learn to hold space and facilitate sensitive discussions d) provide trainings and guidelines on how to handle information.
- Ensure a healthy ratio of supervisory staff and (PhD) students.
- Establish conditions (of safety and trust) for dialogue between staff and PhD candidates to jointly find workable and equitable solutions.
- Doctoral Candidates are still impacted by loneliness as a result of the pandemic COVID-19. [\[8\]](#)

Equity

- Integral policy to ensure internal UT equality for all categories of doctoral candidates
- Clear communication about the rights, status and consequences for the different categories of PhD’s that is consistent across faculties
- Finance and facilitate an onboarding system for all doctoral candidates, regardless of employment status and faculty
- Facilitate FA and HR to enable PhD’s not paid by the UT to get paid work alongside their PhD projects.
- Doctoral Candidates should be treated equally independent of their employment status
- Several employees and staff have expressed their wish to see more commitment of the UT with societal themes like support to refugees or sustainability. They also notice positive winds of change in the way the organization gets involved and speaks out more often on societal issues.



Monitoring

- Students feel overwhelmed and don't always see what's in it for them when they participate in surveys. Only the indirect benefit of contributing to improvement for future students is insufficient motivation for some of them to participate in research. The turnout is therefore often low. Reaching certain target groups in particular is difficult, and surveys have limited generalizability due to a bias in the sample. Participation in surveys is mainly done by the usual suspects, i.e. students who experience problems or have complaints or are not feeling well.

😊 **Recommendation:** more targeted recruitment and other research methods (closer to students, more qualitative, smaller-scale, more interactive).

- A group that often falls between two stools are PhD students, and in particular scholarship PhDs from abroad. They see themselves as students, while in the NL system PhD students are regarded as employees. They are also sometimes not reached for practical reasons, because they have a PNU appointment (and therefore do not appear in certain communication channels?).

😊 **Recommendation:** focus first on employee monitoring, because it is easier/faster to take steps there and there is more freedom to design a monitor. When it comes to student monitoring, do not create a new monitor, but deepen existing monitors, for example by setting up limited surveys for certain groups or by holding panel discussions (qualitative research in addition to questionnaires).

- There is great administrative support for giving more attention to DE&I at universities (also at the UT), but there is a governance issue in order to be able to properly implement the implementation (of monitoring).

😊 **Recommendation:** design suitable, workable solutions for the governance issue and call in the help of experts in the field of governance in the UT organization (for example CHEPS and the Public Administration department).

- A description and analysis of the UT-context of student well-being and input from students and members of the chain of student guidance reveal some actions that can help improving the well-being of our students: 1) the need for professionalization of members involved in student guidance; 2) the need to increase student involvement within their own guidance (student to student guidance) 3) improvement of provision of information on existing facilities (information, if existing, is difficult to find, and the information in Dutch is much more extensive than in English) and 4) the need to incorporate student well-being and student guidance within quality assurance at all levels (there is no structural evaluation, no regular PDCA, Plan Do Check Act cycle, at this moment for FAINCOs or study advisors for example). Also important is have a clear common well supported definition of the duty of care to students.

Digitalisation

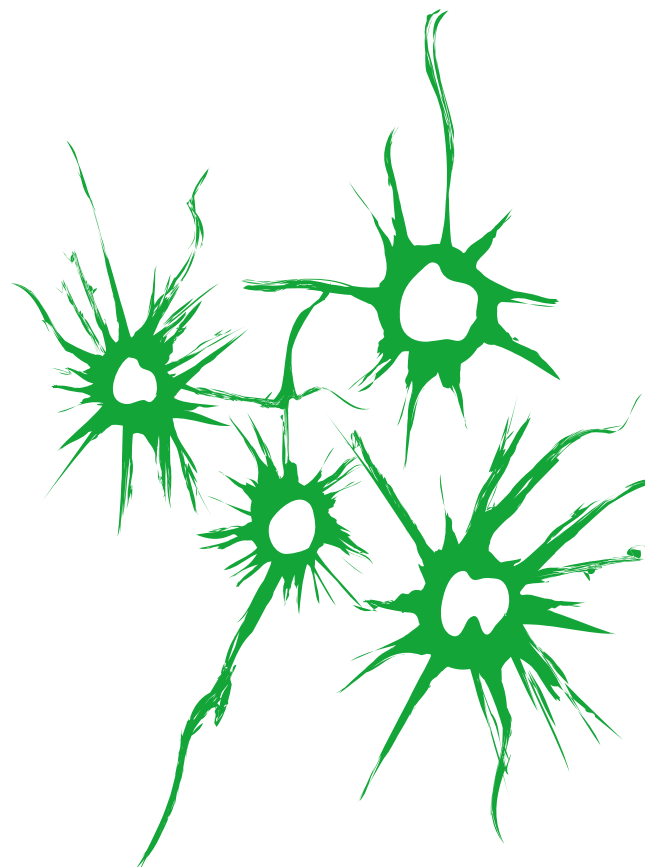
- Establishing a personal connection even in a digital environment is highly valued by students and contributes to their sense of belonging.
- The program Digitalisation will work together in the upcoming years with LISA and other parties within the UT to increase the support of digitalisation where it helps inclusion and equity and to signal, and tackle risks wherever necessary.
- Meeting the 180 requirements of Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) is a complex challenge, partly because the requirements for the content level have to be taken up by the individual website administrators in the various UT departments and research groups (it is not managed by the business information managers of the UT systems).

Corporate identity

- International doctoral candidates see and appreciate the efforts of the UT to diversify and to be inclusive, but they think it is not enough and, they are unsure if the diversity and inclusion objectives were initiated only as marketing, branding or image-building gimmicks targeted at the outside world or genuine movements for ideological and practical systemic changes at par with prevalent needs and realities [9].
- PhD students feel connected to their research groups and other external networks but have a high

sense of detachment from the UT as organization [9].

- Some employees and students share the feeling that diversity and inclusion are mainly **buzzwords** for the UT. They find there is no real commitment from the UT to change, or that the change happens so slow that it is hardly noticeable. They would like to see structural changes, more resources and better accessibility to them. This feeling is very well expressed in this recent article by Maren Behrensen in the UToday article Diversity days at UT: more than rainbows? [13].
- Some people have difficulties feeling connected to the UT. This may relate to lack of clarity of a culture and identity at the UT. The corporate identity by the slogan “ultimate people first” does not support the connection as it does not represent the current situation for many.

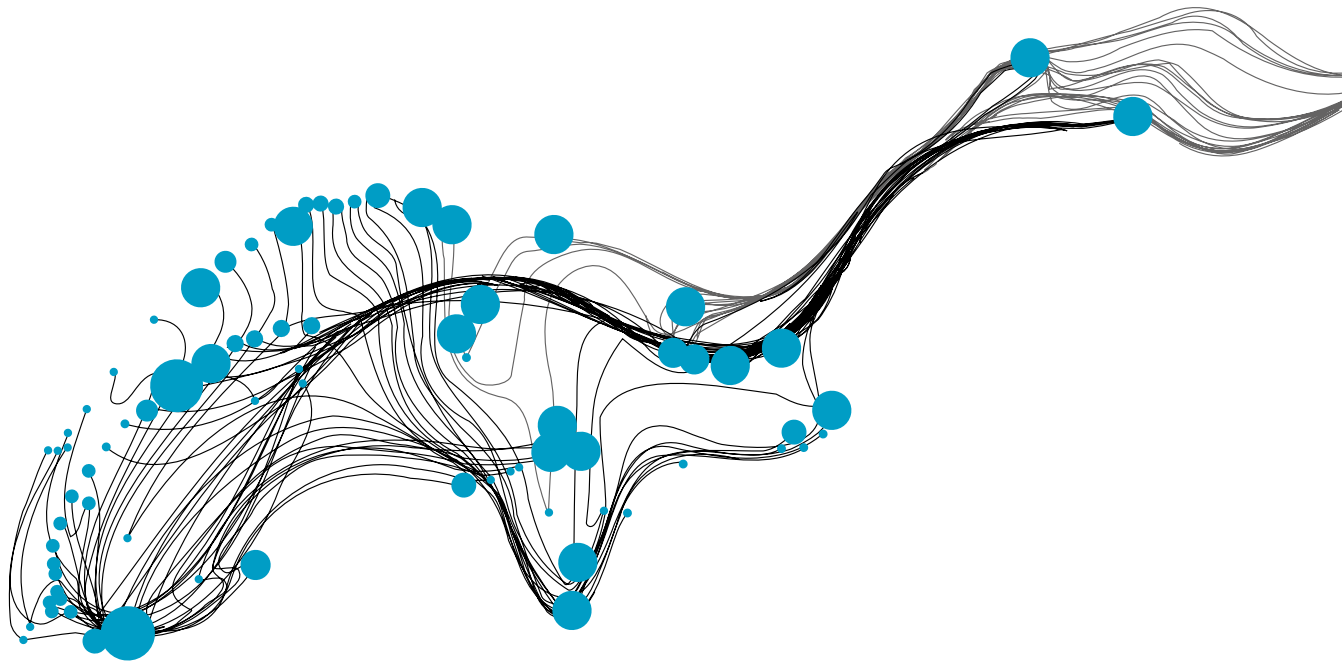


3.4 DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES

Several dissemination activities have been undertaken by the SEG Inclusion to create awareness about the fact that Inclusion is an important theme at UT. They are depicted below in Table 1.

ACTIVITY	
Communication plan containing strategy and actions	In this communication strategy (see Appendix 5), we have defined how and with whom the SEG Inclusion communicates and what we aim to achieve with these actions: raise awareness on diversity and inclusion issues and contribute to an open mind, so that all students and employees feel welcome and at home at UT.
SEG Inclusion website	Similarly to the other SEGs, we have set up a basic website to inform website [14] visitors about the activities of the SEG and what the SEG intends to achieve. Here one can also learn about the reasons why the SEG is established and the way in which the SEG operates. Of course, everyone will also be able to contact the SEG here. Because that is what we really want: to be there for everybody.
Introducing the SEG in a short video and news item	To introduce the SEG, we have made a short video [14] . It shows the people involved in the SEG Inclusion, the themes the SEG is working on and the SEG's goals: an open and a safe UT, where everyone has the opportunity to grow, learn and participate. In a news item on the employee and student portal, we explained - with the video as a starting point - why the SEG is here and what the SEG is trying to accomplish. And of course: we called on UT employees and students to share their experiences and stories.
Instagram takeover on diversity and inclusion	We organized and carried out a one-day Instagram takeover with quizzes, polls, (fun) facts and information about diversity and inclusion at UT. This takeover was visible for 24 hours and it was viewed by approximately 4,500 people, mostly students and PhD candidates. There were some questions that people could answer but we cannot draw conclusions from there. These polls are important because they are a way to activate people, also from the majority groups. The Instagram takeover is also important for the creation of a positive image of the university: inclusion is an important theme at UT.
Providing advice on media content and individual initiatives	In the past year, we have occasionally advised on how to deal with media expressions and other initiatives that touch on diversity and inclusion issues, to inform UT employees and student about the need to critically reflect on how to communicate their message.
U-Today Special on diversity and inclusion	The SEG is directly involved in the development of a UToday Special on diversity and inclusion [6] , containing interviews, information, stories, columns and (fun) facts. By doing so, the SEG strives to raise awareness among UT employees and students on diversity and inclusion, and to really put a face to it and personal stories. The U-Today special on D&I is an awarded project of the UT Incentive Fund 2020, led by Anouk Geenen, PhD candidate at the ET faculty. The special will be published in October during Diversity Week.
Inclusive artwork	The SEG has had an advisory role in the realization of a work of art on diversity and inclusion uncovered during the Opening of the Academic Year (September 5, 2022) and displayed in the Waaier building. The artwork is done with funding from the Campus Art Advisory Committee and the project is led by Anouk Geenen.
Shaping stories	Several people from the SEG have shared their stories in the Shaping stories, telling about what inspires them and how their daily work and life can be a source of inspiration for others: Sterre Mkatini [15] , Bas Koelewijn [16] , Linda Pasqual [17] , Marijke Stehouwer [18] .
UToday articles	Interview with Arnold Enklaar: "The struggle of first generation students" [19]
UToday Special: Every connection has a story: Shaping2030 on the move	Interview with Laura Vargas: "Inclusion is all-embracing" and Facts & Figures SEG Inclusion [20]

TABLE 1 DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES BY SEG INCLUSION



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CHAPTER 4

INTERNATIONALS

Authors: Arnold Enklaar, Willeke Stukker-Jansen and Laura Vargas



TEAM INTERNATIONALS

Annemarie Arets	Staff	ITC	Lead
Arnold Enklaar	Staff	BMS	Member
Bernard Veldkamp	Staff	BMS	Member
Bregje Walraven	Student	SU	Member
Laura Vargas	Staff	S&T	Member
Sterre Mkatini	Staff	GA	Member
Willeke Stukker-Jansen	Staff	CES-SACC	Lead

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The UT attracts a large volume of international staff, PhD candidates and students from different parts of the world. It is a very diverse group. A large effort has been put into place by the UT to support this stream of international newcomers. We know by (personal) experience and data from surveys and research that international staff and students have different experiences from their Dutch peers [\[1\]](#).

There are many groups supporting international students and teachers (almost all CES departments, Cluster International Dimensions (Strategy & Policy department), Platform International Affairs (PIA), FAINCOs (Faculty Internationalization Coordinators), SU, UNITE (umbrella world student associations) ... Support for international employees comes from HR and from the research group or unit the employee works for.

We have held six **round table meetings**: with international students, Dutch students, international staff, Dutch staff, the staff that supports international students, and with the staff that supports the international staff. The round table conversations were meant to assess how the internationalisation of the university was going and what obstacles the various actors saw for feeling at home and included at UT, for themselves or for others. The discussions were held based on an agenda with several prepared topics, which were supplemented by other spontaneously emerging topics during the conversation, such as:

- Social integration
 - In class
 - Student – student relation
 - Absorbing culture
 - Interaction student teacher
 - Language (access to Dutch courses)
- Information provision: bureaucracy, medical services
- Housing
- Student well-being
 - Loneliness
 - Sleeping problems
 - Self confidence
 - Family situation
- Relation with manager and colleagues
- Chances for promotion or finding a job: do you have

the same opportunities as the Dutch students/ colleagues; what about rewards, do you get the same? (How to monitor this; have numbers about this)

- What would make you want to stay longer (5 years) in Twente?

All round table meetings were recorded, and one person took notes. Based on the notes and the recordings a summary of the topics and the issues regarding inclusion was made. We have analysed the barriers that were mentioned and assessed to what extent these barriers could be lifted. Our conclusions and possible short- and long-term solutions involving the different faculties and UT departments are given in the next section.

4.2 INCLUSION OF INTERNATIONAL EMPLOYEES: FINDINGS AND ADVICE

4.2.1 SOCIAL WELLBEING

Issue: Social isolation of international teachers.

😊 **Advice 1:** Buddy or mentoring system: Those who had it were very enthusiastic. The buddy/ mentor should be another foreign staff member, who works already for several years at UT: this person has gone through the same process and knows what information you need at first arriving in The Netherlands. (Dutch people take many things for granted and do not know what people from other countries need).

😊 **Advice 2:** Apart from mobilising official UT support, the need is felt for creating an international staff community at UT by means of an internet platform or forum with useful information for new staff (input from Handbook available at ITC).


😊 **Advice 3:** Organize events to meet colleagues in an informal way to be able to connect and share experiences. This bonding of international staff (creating a sense of belonging among persons in a similar expat situation) is meant as a firm basis for putting efforts into bridging the gap with Dutch staff and integration in the university staff as a whole.

4.2.2 PRACTICAL MATTERS

a. Housing


Issue 1: Finding adequate housing. UT guarantees international employees a place to live when they first come to work at UT, but in reality, this is not always the case.

Question: To what extent should this be supplied or facilitated by UT? The UT does offer a number of facilities, such as the possibility to get a hotel room for a short period (one or two months, by ITC). The Expat Center operates in this field as well. Employees from non-EU countries, who have not previously worked in the EU, are allowed to register at Roomspot, to find a place to stay. Experiences gained by ITC show that most new employees find a new place to stay within one or two months.

 **Advice:** Realise a number of furnished homes on campus for temporary residence (like ITC)

Issue 2: Information about facilities related to housing is often insufficient. Employees who wish to live off campus, lack support in all kinds of practical matters, like obtaining furniture, getting supplied with gas and electricity. Identified problems newcomers might face:


- trash collection, internet providing companies, water/electricity/gas etc.
- how close is the house to the bus, what kind of a route is there for bicycles?
- is it a good neighborhood, can I buy groceries nearby, are there schools around if you have kids?
- is the house furnished, does it have flooring or would you need to put that in yourself?

 **Advice:** Provide information on the practical topics in a digital handbook for newcomers on the **internet platform** (see above). Arrange a **central International Staff Office** that can give support and advice on housing, should other resources be experienced as insufficient.

b. Family


Issue: Adequate jobs for partners and schools for children. UT Staff members that move to the Netherlands with their family, may experience a lack of support for their partners to find a job or their children to attend an international school, which are often expensive. Some staff members choose instead

for leaving their families behind in their home country, but they may feel less committed to the UT and leave after a short period.

 **Advice:** Organize additional support to make international staff members and their families feel welcome and embedded in Dutch society in order to create more bonding and longer lasting commitments.

c. Language

Issue 1: The importance of knowing Dutch for life outside work context (and even within work context) is underestimated. For international employees wishing to settle in the Netherlands for a longer period of time, mastering the Dutch language may improve and enrich their professional and personal lives, enabling them to arrange affairs in Dutch society, or to participate in small talk and all kinds of social activities. Some staff members state that the Dutch language courses – provided by UT – are generally fully booked in no time. But inquiry at the CES revealed that if courses are fully booked, interested persons are requested to register on the waiting list, so that soon after a new course can be launched. There are no problems in scaling up when demand rises.

 **Advice:** strongly recommend learning Dutch. Better communication on the use of waiting list. Investigate if other lesson times (lunch time?) might better fit

d. Differences in support HR departments

Issue: HR departments tend to put more effort in taking care for international staff than for Dutch staff and ask themselves how far their responsibility goes. They are approached for a high variety of problems. Bottlenecks can be found in non-work-related matters, such as finding a GP or choosing health insurance, but in case of personal issues in which trust plays an important role (e.g. in the situation of a divorce), there is no framework or guideline stating to what extent HR is responsible and equipped for the help needed. A second bottleneck is time and the existing workload. Occasionally, International employees have to rely on department's secretariats to get support, which is sometimes provided in supportive app groups.

😊 **Advice:** For all practical information international staff members can be referred to the internet platform which contains a wealth of information. For more complicated problems arrange a central International Staff Office(r). Explore what other universities may already have developed on the subject. For psychological problems refer to campus psychologists.

4.2.3 ACADEMIC INTEGRATION

Problem: New international staff who joined UT during the lockdown felt difficulties to integrate into the academic organisation and culture. They think they could be more of “use”, feeling rather inactive and helpless now, remaining with many questions such as: How to proceed with the research? How should you give feedback to students or do the grading? One participant mentioned that in Denmark there was an extensive programme to integrate new members in the department. Another participant mentioned that only incidentally, when you asked people, you suddenly discovered how things are being done. Both expected UT to put more effort into integrating foreign staff in whom they invest so much money.

Remarks: This issue is related to the pandemic, but also to Dutch mentality. One international staff member who was already four years working at UT told that one has to shape their own career and to take the initiative. You can start whatever project you want, but you are supposed to continue and finalise it. There is no one telling you, go in this or that direction. You may even get the idea that there is no structure at all. Another international staff member who has been working at UT for 25 years explains that people help you if you ask for it. If you don't ask, they do not offer support or information. In her native country, everybody would be telling you what you have to do, even if you don't ask for it.

😊 **Advice:** During normal times without a pandemic, much of the academic integration will take place on the work floor, e.g. with small talk in the corridor or at the coffee corner. Still, international staff will arrive in many cases with expectations and habits that are different from the

Dutch academic environment. It could be useful to have international staff attend a course or workshop on Dutch culture, making them acquainted with Dutch mentality and reflect on the expectations they have that are guided by their own culture.

4.3 INCLUSION OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS: FINDINGS & ADVICE

4.3.1 EDUCATION-CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE

a. Dutch educational system

Issue: The educational system at UT is typically Dutch, foreign students have to adapt to that, often coming from a completely different educational system. The differences concern e.g. grading, (non-) hierarchical relationships with teachers, and the practice of ‘challenge-based learning’. Style differences due to a different educational background may be wrongfully perceived as the foreign student lacking certain skills, or not putting in enough effort.

Action: Find out what we know about this gap and what measures can be taken to bridge this gap during first semester of study (in bachelor and master stage).

b. Use of English and Dutch

Issue: Use of Dutch in class creates exclusion. Some Dutch students do not understand everything in English, teachers then go on in Dutch, which international students do not understand and as a consequence they feel excluded. The origin lies in the limited proficiency in English of Dutch students. Sometimes proficiency of Dutch teachers is also too low.


😊 **Advice:** Mandatory upgrading proficiency of English for those students (and teachers) who do not have the sufficient level.

c. Cultural differences during students' project work

Issue: Both foreign and Dutch students experience difficulties in collaboration due to cultural differences. When both Dutch and international students collaborate, internationals might feel not heard, marginalised and struggle with their role in the team. Dutch students might experience the international students as a liability, slowing down the work process

or not being really involved in it. Solving this problem is crucial, otherwise the educational system will not work and the quality of the education is at stake.

 **Advice:** Not all Dutch students are prepared for an international study environment (and its benefits), so it should be clearly communicated: “By studying in an international environment you will gain additional skills that will be useful when working with people from different backgrounds either in The Netherlands or abroad.” Dutch students who have been studying abroad are seen as being more open to collaborating with internationals.

 **Advice:** Find out how students can learn to collaborate with others who cherish different cultural values, behaviours and problem-solving methods


d. The teacher as a responsible for inclusion in classroom

Issue: Most teachers are not aware of students from different countries having different needs and of their own role in creating inclusion. Few of them attend courses on teaching international classrooms. Teachers are mainly focused on teaching their subject and already have an immense workload.

Question: How can teachers be helpful in bridging the educational gap (a), stimulate intercultural collaboration of students (c) and adapt to the different needs of foreign students?

Remark: Several times it was suggested that an intercultural communication training for a course on intercultural teamwork for Dutch students and teachers would be useful. Such a course might help raising awareness, but awareness in itself not always leads to action and courses in most cases do not give ready-for-use clues for the classroom.

ITC has the longest experience with international students and has developed a number of helpful practices that could be shared and used with other faculties.

 **Advice:** Further research into the educational gap and the adjustment of foreign students in order to be able to offer effective solutions, using among other things the knowledge of ITC.

4.3.2 SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF DUTCH AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Observation: Most students (both Dutch and international) stay in their own bubble and tend to seek the company of their alike. **Action:** Find out to what extent this is a problem

Issue: Social isolation. Foreign students might feel lost so far from home (this goes for some Dutch students as well). They often come from countries where social networks can be very tight, so they have a strong need for being embedded in a social group. On their own they are less able to cope with study setbacks and personal problems, or to find relevant information. With group support they are better capable of overcoming the stress due to adapting to the Dutch educational system and society. Having Dutch friends makes adapting to the Dutch environment easier.

 **Advice:** Some students make lasting friends among Dutch students during the Kick-in. The BUDDY programme seems successful in connecting foreign to Dutch students. The study associations, where you share the same study interest, seem to offer great opportunities for socializing (both for foreign and Dutch students). Finally, there are a lot of other student associations targeted at various groups of Dutch and international students [2]. Summarising, there are sufficient ways to find a fitting support network, but connecting to Dutch students demands more efforts from both sides.

Remark: Different focus of foreign and Dutch students. International students are more focused on their study than on other aspects of student life, because of financial and other kinds of pressure, such as demands from their financiers and scholarships and the monitoring of credits for immigration visas. Dutch students tend to be more relaxed with their study duration and their grades. Foreign students are not acquainted with Dutch student activism and student association culture. Often their intrinsic motivation is higher, being more competitive than the Dutch. This

different focus can be a barrier to further acquaintance between these two groups of students.

4.3.3 HOUSING

Student houses for the UT students differ among other things in their home culture. Housemates often form a close group of friends, but in other houses people live more apart and therefore the sitting residents of each student house always choose who will live with them. This is called co-option. The university does not handle the procedure itself, the residents of the student houses do. A discussion arose at UT in 2020 about the right of students to choose their own housemates on campus, because this can lead to exclusion and discrimination. In practice Dutch students tend to opt for other Dutch students and to reject applications from internationals. But many Dutch students appreciate the right of co-option and its possible abolition is sensitive at the UT.


Issue: Difficulty to find affordable housing for international students.


There are several perspectives and questions in the housing problem:

- is there just a structural shortage of student housing?
- Is choosing home mates who are similar to you an act of discrimination?
- All students need to feel 'at home', which sometimes implies being surrounded by people who share the same language or background. Can you impose speaking English at students' homes?
- Is selecting on the basis of mastery of Dutch reducing the chances for international students compared to Dutch students?
- Is there really a shortage or do most international students find an accommodation in time? Or is this indignation (?) about the fact that they receive a no on their application e-mails because of their not speaking Dutch (but nonetheless find accommodation in time)?

Joining a Dutch house gives international students a unique opportunity for socialisation in a Dutch environment, learning values and language, but do international students have the intention to be deeply involved in the Netherlands and do they want to stay? Or is the study at UT just a temporary stop and do they plan to move on to another country or return to

their home country? To what extent are they willing to invest in integration in Dutch society? To what extent is the UT willing to invest in binding these students to Twente.

 **Advice:** Structural enlargement of student housing, especially aiming at first year foreign students(?) Abolishing or explaining the Dutch co-optation system? Reserving a number of houses for international students?

 **Advice:** Sorting out the real problem.

4.3.4 SUPPORT FROM UT

a. Discrimination

Issue: Adequate reaction to discrimination incidents

Action: More research needed about incidents and how they are dealt with by a discrimination subgroup of SEG Inclusion.

b. Wellbeing

c. Financial and administrative matters

Issue: The UT only incidentally (Kick-In and during corona) shows interest and care for wellbeing of students. International students easily turn to student advisors with all kinds of problems, even heavy psychological ones, and the demands are sometimes so high, that study advisors ask themselves how far their responsibility of care should go. Existing psychological care systems and other central facilities at the UT might be too distant to students.

Remarks: There are quite a number of instances at UT where students can get help, ranging from study problems and psychological problems to financial problems. There is (sufficient) supply, but apparently for international students the information about support beyond their study is difficult to find or reach out to. International students might expect the UT and its people to behave like a parent, to bring to students what they need. But in a Dutch cultural environment you have to take action yourself and ask for help. Important to teach students this Dutch cultural perspective, maybe by an onboarding introduction for all international students (and teachers) in Dutch society, Dutch culture and the UT (support) systems.

😊 **Advice:** Enhance the findability of the helping instances, e.g., by providing information about wellbeing support on a more regular basis, reach out to students through social media channels or publications in newsletters

4.3.5 WORK

Issue 1: Internationals often think that they can easily find work in the Netherlands, which is not the case, because they speak no Dutch or because of their residence permit and the rules and regulations. Need for adequate information about employability of foreign students in the Netherlands after graduation. Support with finding traineeships and eventually jobs in the region.

Issue 2: It is difficult to retain talents after graduation because of the gap between international students and the regional labour market. In many companies the main language is Dutch. There are facilities to learn Dutch and to get job orientation advice, but apparently few make use of it.

😊 **Advice 1:** Expectation management: Do not expect to find work easily if you cannot speak Dutch.

😊 **Advice 2:** Ask about the intentions of international students already at registration: Do they intend to stay in The Netherlands after graduation or move on? For those who intend to build a career in the Netherlands, the socialisation process and learning Dutch should start as soon as possible and not shortly before they graduate. UT should actively reach out to this target group and stimulate them to prepare for the Dutch labour market and society.

4.3.6 MONITORING

It seems useful to monitor from time to time on the above points of attention by means of a survey among all first-year international students.

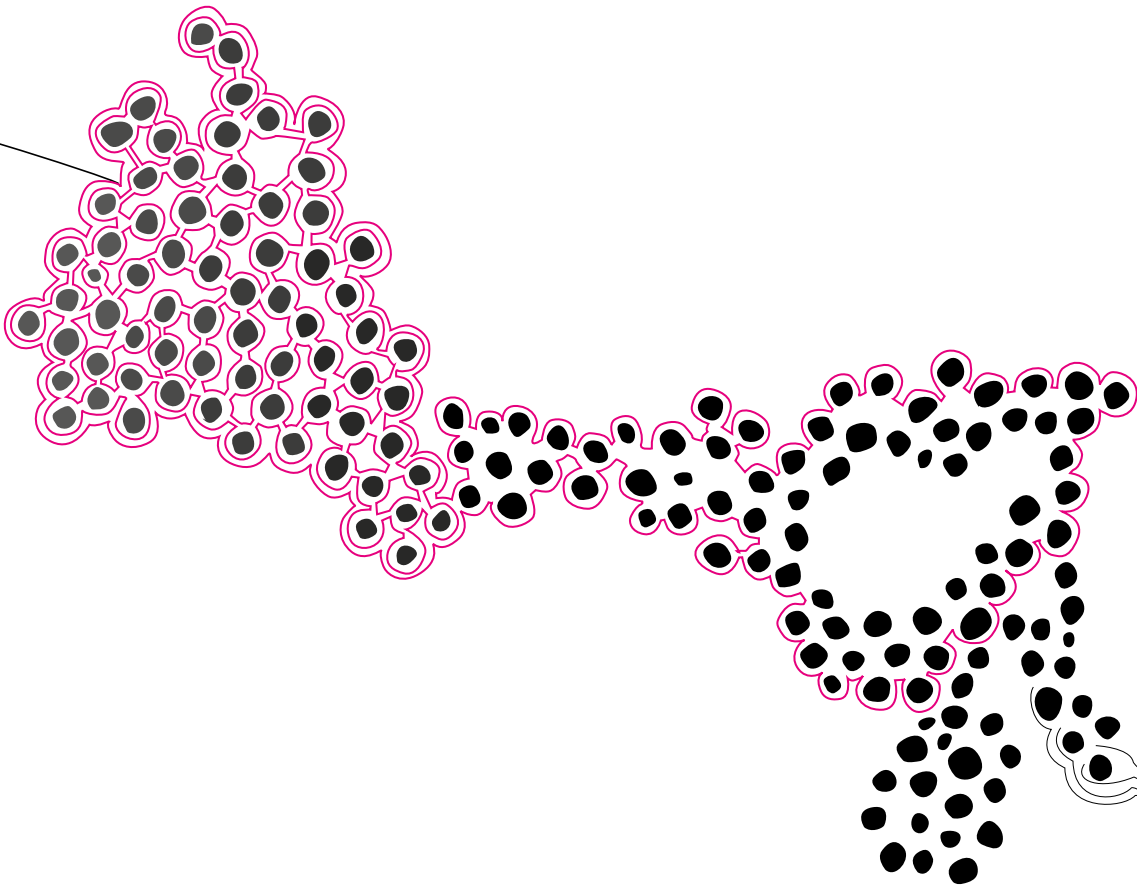
4.4 GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND REMAINING CHALLENGES

Our findings may contribute to formulating more effective university wide policy measures and lead to a better inclusion of international students and staff at the University of Twente. Most of the recommendations here concern the macro and meso

levels. However, we should also pay attention to how inclusion works out on a micro level in individual faculties and departments and for individual students. Especially the 'international classroom', the situation that students from all over the world coming from different educational backgrounds have to cooperate in project groups and are involved in a typically Dutch education system, presents many challenges to both teachers and students. We think that several case studies on problems and best practices in the international classroom are needed, so that other teachers in other departments can benefit and learn from them.

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CHAPTER 5

DISABILITY AND NEURODIVERSITY

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TEAM DISABILITY AND NEURODIVERSITY

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5.1 INTRODUCTION

This topic focused on students and employees with a physical or sensory impairment (mobility, hearing problems, vision impairment, chronic fatigue, etc) and neurodivergent students and employees (autism spectrum disorder and other developmental conditions such as ADHD, dyslexia, or learning disabilities...).

Because of the sensitivity of the theme, we conducted individual interviews with both students and employees. Since at the time of the interviews we were still in lockdown, interviews were conducted via MS Teams. For all interviews we used an interview guideline (see Appendix 3) covering five main categories: choice of university/course, assistive provisions/practice, assistive technology, college experiences and other. The interview guideline was originally used for a BSc graduation assignment [1]. A report was made of every interview, subsequently input was filtered by topic so that it could not be traced back to individual participants.

On the topic of employees, we interviewed several stakeholders: Health and Safety coordinators, HR, occupational health physician (arbo arts) and an experienced team leader of a large team, as well as 5 UT employees with different disabilities or types of neurodiversity and different types of experiences within the UT. We would like to point out here that we talk about people with a disability referring to people for whom the environment is not optimal for the person's competences. It does not refer to the person.

To find out the problems and barriers students encounter at the UT we have had meetings with several colleagues involved in student wellbeing: the Diversity Coordinator-Disability Advisory Services, the project manager Student Wellbeing and a policy advisor student wellbeing and student talent development, as well as 5 students/recent alumni with different disabilities/types of neurodiversity and different professional functions and types of experiences within the UT. As an illustration of the issues students run into, we want to share the stories of Anouk Noordeloos [2] and of Abigail Groenenboom [3] published in UToday.


5.2 INCLUSION OF EMPLOYEES: FINDINGS & ADVICE

5.2.1 CULTURE

The UT (and academia in general) is an organization where people expect a lot from themselves (and from each other). The academic climate is very individualistic and competitive, very focused on achievement and aspirations. If you want to make a career for yourself, you have to be the best. Employees are reluctant to give themselves space, let alone to ask for space. From a practical point of view, management also find it difficult if someone is not able to function at full capacity.

The COVID pandemic created a work environment which was ideal for some, and a lot more difficult for others, it has made us realize that working remotely is technically feasible and on the other hand there is the push to return to 'normal'.

 **Advice:** Changing academic culture is a challenge. We could start by being more open with each other, sharing experiences, making information available. If we start to focus on team-performance instead of individual performance we would promote an inclusive climate and encourage managers and teams to look after each other.

 **Advice:** We should give employees the option to keep working remotely (for part of their time) if they indicate this is beneficial to their well-being without too much of an administrative burden. This topic is already part of the project on employee well-being.

5.2.2 ACCESSIBILITY

Physical accessibility

The UT's campus is a veritable obstacle course for people who are in a wheelchair or who have trouble walking. Colleagues often have to move between buildings to go to meetings, which takes a lot of time and organization. On a very basic level of accessibility: the toilets for people with a disability are often hard to find and far away from colleagues' offices. Also, they are sometimes locked or used as a storage cupboard. The kitchen sinks are not as accessible for people in a wheelchair, they are too high and there is no space for the legs underneath, making it almost impossible to reach the faucet.

Advice: Involve employees (and students) with a disability when (re)designing buildings and outdoor areas on campus. To raise awareness: ask an employee or student to create a vlog about a day on campus and the obstacles they encounter. Approve requests for modifications by default. To make more toilets suitable for colleagues who have difficulty with balance, install wall handles in most/all toilets by default.

Digital accessibility

Improve accessibility of web pages and digital products for people with eg. vision impairments. Offer assistive technologies, such as screen readers in the official UT websites to read aloud the content on web pages. Follow the guidelines developed for people with disabilities. There is no framework for including inclusiveness as a criterion in tenders for digital products.

😊 **Advice:** When selecting/building new digital products inclusion should be considered. All UT websites should be made accessible for people e.g. with vision impairments.

5.2.3 LINE OF RESPONSIBILITY/SUPPORT

In principle the first point of contact for any employee is their direct supervisor. They are the ones the employee talks to from the moment they are hired. Supervisors are not given information about the kind of facilities available for employees with a disability. However, they can contact an HR advisor with questions. This results in different levels of pro-activity. Some employees feel their disability is given too much attention by their supervisors or by HR, others feel it is not enough.

In general employees with a disability have to take the initiative themselves to explain and emphasize they have difficulties with the chosen work methods. A culture change where supervisor and teammates think along with the person with a disability in advance about their possibilities concerning the accessibility of the workplace or the tools and systems people need to use, the ways of working, for example flexible or hybrid working, is needed. An hybrid working method for example could be a solution for some but a problem for others.

Maybe HR or the occupational health physician (arbo arts) could play a bigger role at faculty level in achieving this culture change and in informing about the facilities and giving directions and advice.

😊 **Advice:** More information should be made available for supervisors on the types of facilities available for employees with a disability. These should be offered pro-actively. In collaboration with HR, training/intervision could be organized for supervisors which should be aimed at preventing absenteeism.

Also, information should become easier to find for employees themselves. The topic could even be presented during the introduction for new employees - the message should be that the UT is an inclusive employer, where employees should not be afraid to share their needs.

5.2.4 POLICY

In general, a clear structure is lacking. Introducing a framework would benefit all parties involved; the employees with a disability themselves, their supervisors and the HR department. Moreover, it would prevent absenteeism.

The UT has committed to the Dutch 'Participatiewet', meaning we agreed to hire a certain number of employees with a disability by 2025. However, so far we haven't actively 'enforced' this commitment in the UT's departments, nor reserved budget for it.

Advice: There should be one point of contact for questions about disabilities and facilities within the UT (that employees can also contact directly) and within every unit. This could be part of the HR department's team on (prevention of) absenteeism.

Advice: The responsibility to fulfill the commitment to the 'Participatiewet' should be given to UT departments, and budget should be reserved so that supervision is guaranteed.

5.2.5 OTHER TOPICS

Several employees with a disability indicated they would value the opportunity to get to know other colleagues with a similar disability to share experiences and support each other.

😊 **Advice:** The UT could consider setting up a (digital) platform, participation would be on a voluntary basis of course.

😊 **Advice:** In advertising vacancies, the UT could explicitly mention the fact that they are an inclusive employer who actively encourages (among others) people with a disability to apply.

For students there is an open office hour at the student psychologists specifically for students with autism and a career counselling office hour will follow very soon.

😊 **Advice:** There should be a similar open office hour at the psychologists and career counsellors for employees (especially PhD's) with autism, where questions can be answered and colleagues can be referred to other sources of support where needed.

5.3 INCLUSION OF STUDENTS: FINDINGS & ADVICE

After speaking to students and (support?) employees about the facilities the UT offers for students with a disability or neurodivergent, we can conclude that in general the UT does well, people involved really make an effort and there is a lot of positive feedback. However, there are issues that keep coming up, some of which are more systemic and therefore challenging to solve. The underlying issue seems to be that the UT relies on tailor-made solutions which has many advantages, but it also puts the burden of responsibility on the student. We listed the issues by category, and for some offer possible solutions.

5.3.1 EDUCATION

Hybrid education: instead of aiming to return to 'normal' at the fastest possible pace UT should aim to keep offering the things that make life easier for students (and employees) with a disability.

😊 **Advice:** Special attention: alternatives to on-campus exams, extra exam opportunities, recorded lectures. Involve the SACC diversity coordinator and/or a student with a disability in the advice of the 'Reconnect' group.

5.3.2 SUPERVISION/SUPPORT

Information about help/facilities is scattered and not easy to find. Also – a lot of the information is not available in English. Even for employees who support students the knowledge is not always readily available.

😊 **Advice:** It would be good to employ a student assistant to make recommendations on reorganizing the website and have the newly structured website translated into English (not one-on-one, since information sometimes refers to Dutch systems or websites). This website (as well as other websites that contain relevant information) should also be made accessible for people with a visual impairment.

The UT is a relatively small-scale university which offers tailor-made solutions. The strength of this system is that it's personalized, its weakness is that it makes students responsible, and that the outcome depends highly on who you are dealing with, on who your teacher/supervisor is. The current reactive nature of student support puts an additional (heavy) **administrative/research burden** on the student with a disability.

😊 **Advice:** This issue is a strength as well as a weakness. Creating a clear (and easy to find) overview of the support options available for students would help solve the weakness, without losing the personal character.


😊 **Advice:** The UT could use the support of the ECIO (who also have a wonderful website that we can use as an example) in this process.


Student support is not included in the quality assurance cycle at this moment. Also, there are no exit interviews with students who drop out.

😊 **Advice:** As recommended in the report of 'SWIP' student support should be included in the quality assurance cycle.

Study advisors (but also coordinators and program directors) play a key role for students with disabilities or neurodiversity. In general students are very positive about their study advisors and it is important that program staff is available for students with a disability

(without long waiting times). It is important that (both new and experienced) study advisors professionalize and keep up to date with developments and available support options for students, within and outside the UT. We could also consider offering courses on supervising different types of students to lecturers interested in the topic.

 **Advice:** As an example, the contents of the 'mentor training' previously offered by SACC to lecturers who also supervised students could be looked at and maybe reinstated (and offered not just to mentors, but to all staff involved in supervising students). It could be included in the course finder for employees.


 **Advice:** The UT should ensure that the staff/student ratio remains stable even with growing student numbers, since it is very important that students can approach a study advisor (or other staff member) without long waiting times.

5.3.3 POLICY

Since "many things are going well", there is no sense of urgency, and there is not a real 'go to person' for this topic specifically (on a decision-making level) – someone who is responsible and accountable at faculty level as well as on university-level.


Personal circumstances and disability are seen as an individual challenge rather than an organizational responsibility and that is a problem.

On central level at SACC there is a diversity coordinator and the psychologist have a consultation hour for students with autism.

 **Advice:** There should be a similar consultation hour about career counseling for students with autism and also for students with a disability. Students would appreciate this.


5.3.4 CULTURE

Student representatives in university bodies and associations are often not really 'representative' of the entire UT body of students. It is often a specific type of student. One of the causes for this is that these positions are often fulltime.

 **Advice:** There should be more part-time positions in university bodies and associations, and they should be promoted widely.

'Nominaal = normaal' mentality. Study delay is seen as a way to manage stress, but this is not an option for everyone. There should be more awareness about this.

Student and study associations should pay explicit attention in their plans to inclusion (in the broadest sense).

 **Advice:** SU (involved in checking/approving these plans) should list inclusion (and specifically disability) in the set of requirements for association's plans and give constructive feedback.


5.3.5 CAMPUS


The campus still isn't completely accessible for students who have difficulty walking or who are in a wheelchair.

Advice: Students with a disability should be involved in plans for new buildings/renovations, requests for adjustments on campus should be granted by default. When a student with reduced mobility enrolls, a 'protocol' should pro-actively be activated which means that their classes are scheduled in accessible buildings, they don't have to cross campus in the 15 minutes between two lectures etc.

5.3.6 OTHER TOPICS

Students mentioned they would appreciate the opportunity to meet with other students in the same situation.

 **Advice:** Can the UT create a meeting spot (on campus and/or online)? Is it possible to set up a (student-student) mentor system specifically for students with a disability? An important element is that participation is voluntary.

 **Advice:** The UT should create a manual on accessible education for lecturers. At this moment the responsibility lies completely with the individual lecturer – we should make it easier for them to create accessible education (e.g. adding subtitles to recorded lectures, offering alternatives to written exams).

The UT joined on October, 7 2021 the UN charter – this declaration/charter calls for educational institutions to progressively cultivate an environment where general accessibility for persons with disabilities or chronic illnesses is ensured. Clear structures on how students with a disability are given opportunities to partake in education and take their exams are expected and clear objectives and achievable activities with other knowledge institutions that result in creating policy with which we make education more inclusive are created.

😊 **Advice:** For the UT this means actively working on creating an overview of existing structures and how we can change the more reactive practices into embedded UT structures. By signing this declaration and using this SEG Inclusion document we can show the urgency of this matter and that we need to actively work on it as an institution.

5.4 GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND REMAINING CHALLENGES

After speaking to students and employees about the facilities the UT offers for people with a disability, we can conclude that in general the UT does well, the people involved really make an effort and there is a lot of positive feedback. However, there are issues that keep coming up, some of which are more systemic and therefore challenging to solve. The underlying issue seems to be that the UT relies on tailor-made solutions which has many advantages, but it also puts the burden of responsibility on the student/employee, and it can lead to randomness in outcomes.

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CHAPTER 6

FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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TEAM FIRST-GENERATION

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6.1 INTRODUCTION

As part of the activities of the Shaping Expert Group Inclusion, numerous group discussions and interviews have taken place to gain insight into the degree of inclusion of various groups of students and to gain an understanding of the barriers they may be facing. One of these exploratory studies focused on 'first generation' students. These are students who were the first in their family to go to university. It therefore concerns a group of students with a certain social origin, namely coming from a working-class background¹. We make a distinction between students with a migration background and students without a migration background.²

It was not easy to find students from this target group because the term 'first generation students' is not generally known. A call was made to the study advisors and some of them contacted students they suspected to be first generation students. The students who were willing to be interviewed were then approached by me by email and interviewed online. The interviews were transcribed, and thematic analysis was applied.

The most difficult part was finding participants with a migration background. First of all, it turned out to be complicated to make a good distinction between Dutch students with a migration background and foreign students. Secondly, the willingness to be interviewed was not great; some students who had come forward decided not to participate after all.

In total, 19 students were interviewed, 5 of them with a migration background². Approximately half of them identified as female and half as male students, both bachelor and master students of philosophy, industrial design, mechanical engineering, civil engineering, educational sciences, international business administration and public administration. For a number of important issues, I will indicate what the recurring theme is and which bottlenecks were mentioned. To ensure that the stories cannot be traced back to a specific person, only 'student' and 's/he' are mentioned, and no names are used. Verbatim quotes are written in italics.

This study is not intended to find out how the average first generation student is doing in general, or how

often bottlenecks occur, but to understand the typical background factors and in particular the problems that first generation students may face. The first part of this report deals exclusively with first generation students without a migration background. In part two, separate attention is paid to the experiences of students with a migration background.

6.2 FIRST GENERATION STUDENTS (WITHOUT MIGRATION BACKGROUND)

6.2.1 ORIGIN

There is one point which all the interviewees surprisingly have in common: they come from and grew up in a village in the countryside. Most of them come from villages in Overijssel, Gelderland, Drenthe or Friesland, but there were also two students from Noord-Holland. Although first generation students could potentially also come from cities, this was not the case with the interviewed students and this does not seem to be a coincidence. For a number of them, the small-scale character of UT and the presence of other students from rural areas played an important role in their choice of university.

Most of the students' fathers have a lower technical education and a technical blue-collar profession in, for example, metalworking, installation technology or asphalt repair. One father is a construction worker and another is a teacher at a secondary horticultural school. Some of them did not finish school and started working at an early age. In some cases, they have proven themselves in their jobs and have moved on to become team leaders, project leaders, department heads or floor managers. The mothers also have a lower education and work for example in health care, administration, a laboratory, a pharmacy, a supermarket, with the fire brigade or as an educational assistant. All mothers work or have worked, except for one mother who stopped working when she had children.

¹ Students whose fathers have a low level of education but own their own business and who grew up in a prosperous middle-class family are not included here.

² One interviewed student did have a migration background, but it turned out later that his father had studied abroad and thus that he was not a first generation student. That interview has not been used here.

Although a number of students have relatives (a cousin, an uncle or an aunt) who have started or completed higher education or even university studies, they have asked and received little support from them in their own choice of study. We do see, however, that some interviewees have set an example for brothers or sisters to also go to university or HBO (Hoog Beroep Onderwijs, bachelor degree in applied science). However, there are also a number of students who are the only ones in their family to follow a higher (academic) study programme and who therefore occupy an exceptional position. The others in their environment have all completed a practical education and have a blue-collar profession. It is precisely these students who run the greatest risk of being misunderstood by their families and surroundings.

What is striking is that the parents are not very demanding and do not have high expectations of their children as to education. But most of them did support their children if they wanted to continue studying, both financially and practically. One student's parents were afraid a university course would be too tough and persuaded their child to do a higher vocational education course first, and then the student would be able to continue after that. Another student says that s/he was not encouraged at all by his parents, but rather the opposite: *Don't go to the vwo, take it easy. It's all right, you don't have to set the bar so high.* That may have been well-intentioned, but s/he found it demotivating. We encountered this kind of story more often and it is also mentioned in other research [1]. Another student had read in the newspaper *Volkscrant* about parents who push their children very hard: you absolutely must go to university, you must get everything out of it. According to her/him, this was typical of the Randstad; here in the province, parents are more like: *Well, just do what you think is right and then, see what happens, but you can always do this and that.*

6.2.2 SCHOOL CAREER AND CHOICE OF STUDY

Various studies have shown that children with lower-educated parents or from the Eastern Netherlands more often receive a low school recommendation. This was clearly not the case with the interviewees in this study. They were usually good pupils at primary school, scored high in the CITO test or their teacher had so much confidence in them that they could go

straight to a havo-vwo bridging class. Most of them completed vwo, a few completed havo. Only one student was advised to go to TL by his primary school. But his parents thought s/he was smart and stubbornly sent her/him to a secondary school 20 km away to do havo. In the end, due to his good grades, s/he was able to transfer from havo 3 to vwo 4 and complete vwo. A few of the students did not pass the havo exam in one go because of a surgical operation or because they did not do their best and had to repeat classes.

One interviewee had failed in havo 2 and his parents gave her/him a hard time about it. *My father also said (...) you're stupid if you don't go to school, then you have to get up at five o'clock every morning, just like me, and ever since then I've always been like: yes, those days you make, that's not what I want either. (...) So that's what flipped the switch for me, so to speak.*

For the first generation of students, it was often difficult to choose the right study, because they did not know what the studies entailed. One of them said that s/he actually had no idea, except that s/he wanted to do something with technology. Her/his parents didn't know what to expect either. S/he knew one thing: *If you graduate from secondary school, you can go to university. So yes, I actually only looked at university programmes.* Some of the students found it very difficult to choose, because they liked many subjects. One person even had a list of 13 very different studies. In many cases, the choice of study came about through a test or a study counsellor at secondary school. The technical students went to open days in Delft, Eindhoven and Twente to compare, sometimes driven there by their father or mother. One student mainly searched for information on the internet. S/he did not orient her/himself at secondary school by going to open days. You could get leave from school for that, but all universities were far away and you had to pay for the train fare yourself. S/he didn't have the money for that.

Two students chose the University of Twente because of a specific field of study that does not exist anywhere else in the Netherlands. All the others consciously chose Twente after a comparison with Delft and Eindhoven. From their stories, no clear profile of Eindhoven emerges, but they describe Delft as *larger, more pretentious, a bit more upbeat, situated*

in the city, the atmosphere in Delft was different than I was used to, maximum prestige, we are the university, a bit distant. That contrasts with the way Twente is described: less of that city feel, approachable, just normal, it's also a bit of the whole Twente mentality here, just a lot cosier than Delft and Eindhoven, just a bit more rural, easy-going, a bit more personal, just nice and village-like, a lot warmer and more human than for instance TU Delft.

In Delft, the professors were really seated far away, but in Twente it was just possible to walk up to them, just to ask how and what.

Everyone is friendly with each other, everyone knows each other. Just very relaxed. And Twente is generally very down-to-earth, and the Frisians are like that too.

I have the feeling that they in Twente are down-to-earth, not making big statements, but just tackling things head-on.

Besides the small scale, the approachable contact with lecturers and the down-to-earthiness experienced at the University of Twente, the location also played an important role in the choice. Interviewees are very positive about the green and spacious campus. Almost all students are enthusiastic about it and for some it was the deciding factor. As one student stated: During the orientation day, s/he walked around the campus, got the feel of the atmosphere and he really liked it. Just like a village. *And I myself come from a village.*

Another reason why the students who were interviewed immediately felt at home at the UT is that they came across many other students from villages. One student says it was familiar territory for her/him: He came there a few times a year for parties of friends. But even those who did not know anyone when they arrived, encountered many peers: *Well, then you find out at the Kick-in that actually my whole do-group consisted of boys who also came from small villages, Drenthe, Gelderland. So, it clicked.*

At the University of Twente, there are quite a few boys from the Achterhoek, and also from Twente itself, Salland, Drenthe, so there are quite a few people who are already familiar with rural culture.

6.2.3 INTRODUCTION WEEK

Some of the students had already completed their higher vocational education or had finished their bachelor's at another university and therefore usually did not participate in the regular introduction period.

The Kick-in and especially the do-groups prove to be very effective: in many cases, they result in friendships that continue to this day. A somewhat shy student says that s/he normally finds it difficult to approach people, but that the threshold was much lower thanks to the do-group. The Kick-in is described as *super fun, successful, super good initiative*. It is the moment to get to know many people and associations and to build a social network. One student said that s/he had not experienced a Kick-in because of the lock-down.

Another student got to know the university through the UT summer camp, to which s/he was sent because of insufficient maths grades in high school. Later on, at the open day, s/he met acquaintances from that summer camp again.

6.2.4 DOMICILE

Two older students who took up their Master's studies a little later do not live in a student home but have their own house. There are also some students who first studied at a university of applied sciences and still live with their parents in their home village. All other interviewed students live in a student home on the campus. They apparently have no desire to live in the city of Enschede. That is only convenient if you are a member of Audentis, for example, said one interviewee, because all the get-togethers take place there. But the first generation of students feel no affinity with student associations such as Audentis. Some of them had a hard time finding a room. One student had to apply eight times and another student ten times to get in, but in the end they all found a room in time before their studies started. The first room is not always ideal, but later they manage to find a better room or studio. Often the network of the study association is helpful here.

6.2.5 SOCIAL NETWORK

As already mentioned, a part of the students still lives with their parents and their social life is concentrated in the village of origin, such as the football club and the part-time job. Even among the students who do live in rooms, there are some who go to their parents

every weekend and have kameraden (mates) in their place of origin. The others go to their parents much less frequently and have the centre of gravity of their social network in Enschede. In a few cases, the student and his parents have grown so far apart and the tensions are so great that they only see each other a few times a year: *Yes, I do notice that I go home less and less, also because I have more of my own things to do here. And also because I always have problems with my parents.*

After the do-group, most students started building their social network through their student home and study association. Some students also became members of a sports association or a fraternity. Especially the clubrooms of the study associations in the basement of the Horst offer an accessible contact point where students can drink a cup of coffee and easily chat with fellow students because of their common background. Many of the interviewed students have been involved in a committee or a board function. *That way, you do get to know faces and you are not alone.*

Student associations like Audentis and Taste are not popular with the first generation of students: *Yes, it didn't appeal to me. The associations didn't really suit me and the people I hung out with never joined them either.*

Many of the interviewed students mainly associate with students who match their social profile, for instance originating from the countryside, and they are well represented in most fields of study. A few students also encountered students from other social strata during their studies. One student explains how s/he quickly recognises students whose parents have studied: You can tell by their general development, that they know certain thinkers or music. Another student says about students with academic parents: *They behave differently, more self-assured, less doubtful than I and the people I know.* At least they don't doubt whether they are in the right place, as he sometimes does. S/he does feel that this is a more natural environment for her/his fellow students than for her/him: *When I express my self-doubts to them, they say, yes, I have that too. Yes, no, very much so! Yes well, you don't notice it...*

6.2.6 MONEY

The two students who picked up their Master's degree later are now self-supporting with a paid job. They enjoy the fact that they are completely independent financially, so that they do not have to justify why they are still studying or feel guilty about the sacrifices their parents make for them.

The parents of most students are very concerned about the study debt, the students themselves have accepted it. Some feel pressure, others less so. There are students who are supported by their parents and others who have all kinds of jobs and can thus make a reasonable living. But that does not apply to everyone.

One student says: *My parents indicated from the start that they were not going to support me financially. So, I started working when I was fifteen and put all my money aside to pay for my studies. But I have been very ill, and didn't have good health insurance at the time, and that has cost me a lot of money. I had to borrow a lot of money to pay the rent, the hospital and food. Fortunately, I now have a job.*

My parents had saved up quite a bit of money for my tuition fees, so I just managed the first three years. And now I'm in trouble with my last payment. And my flatmate was just like, why don't you apply for a tuition fee credit? And me: what is that? This student says that s/he is often unaware of all kinds of possibilities. S/he also had to answer to her/his parents because of his lack of money. And at the time I got into quite a lot of fuss about money and how I behaved, and I was really like, I'm not doing anything, nothing strange. That was one of the hardest things, I think.

Money has always been an issue with me, because I come from a relatively poor family, says a student. S/he started his studies in debt, because s/he suddenly had to pay rent and tuition fees, and s/he had to buy materials and a special laptop for his studies. For example, I couldn't buy a bed for the first three months, so I just slept on a mattress on the floor and I didn't have a desk for the first few weeks either. So that was difficult with the homework. Then the student grant slowly started to come in and eventually s/he found jobs to help her/him make ends meet. S/he experienced financial problems until his third year. For example, you might be in overdraft and then you might not be able to eat properly for a week, because you just

can't pay anything. In principle s/he can learn well, but sometimes s/he drowns in all the exercises and has to do a resit. And then s/he can't work, because then s/he won't pass his exam. *Yes, I didn't get a penny for my studies [from my parents]. Not a penny at all! I'll probably have the maximum amount of study debt.*

I often encounter a lack of understanding. I wanted to go to Japan [for a minor] and had (...) financial problems. I asked the study advisor if there was a fund for that and she said: Can't your parents pay for it? I would like them to be aware that not everyone has that support. The university should be more aware of that.

6.2.7 LACK OF UNDERSTANDING

Despite the fact that most students have received support from their parents to continue studying, they relatively often encounter a lack of understanding from their families. They lack the support, the warm interest and the opportunity to talk about their study with their parents that other students have. The lack of interest in open days and in seeing what their children are up to can sometimes also be traced back to the frustrated ambitions of the parents themselves: *I think my mother doesn't like to see what she has missed out on, because very often when I tell her something, she says, oh, I could have done that too.*

First generation students are often asked by family members when they will be finished with their studies and start working. They also often have to justify changes in their studies to their parents.

For example, parents do not always understand why their child is delayed in studying. They have no idea that in his field of study only 30% of students are still on track. They judge their child by secondary school, where failing is rare and automatically presume that their son or daughter must not have done their best. The fact that studying is very different from going to school, with much greater responsibilities, a heavier study load and more complex choices, is not always understood by the home front. One student says that his stories about how things went at university were sometimes questioned, until his sister went to Groningen and experienced exactly the same thing. That's when his parents started to take his stories seriously.

Especially if you're delayed and maybe you're not fully

focusing on your studies, people are very sceptical and see it as if you're throwing money away. I think personal development is very important. I think: you can work all your life, but now I'm studying and I get a lot of opportunities to do other things, so I'd better make use of them now.

Another student always gets into a fight with his parents when s/he tries to explain that studying at university is really hard compared to his sister's cooking school. *My parents always get angry when I say that my sister is not studying, but it's not the same. But going to school one day a week and doing an internship four days a week is very different from me going to college five days a week. (...) It's very frustrating, because now they're always angry at home because I don't tell them much about what I'm doing, but when I do tell them, they just don't understand.*

Many disagreements between students and their parents also arise when they deliberately delay their studies because of a function in an association. Several interviewed students have served on boards. One student says that his parents simply see his year on the board as a lost year. *I see it as an investment in myself, learning how to manage, plan and be responsible for things, which is what I wanted to improve myself on, because you don't get that in your studies.* Another student says that his family members say: *I don't understand why you are studying for so long, why you don't just go to work?* S/he doesn't enter into that discussion because it leads nowhere anyway. Despite the lack of support or even disagreement about such a board year, the students still went through with it.

As also described in the study by Matthys (2010) [2], doing an academic study can mean that you become part of a new world, but at the same time estranged from your parental environment. One of the students describes it as moving into another social layer. People who have studied have different topics of conversation, labels, hobbies, s/he says. It is sometimes a bit of a search to level with his parents when s/he is back home. Her/his Master thesis is not understood or read. On birthdays, s/he finds it difficult to explain what s/he does. You shouldn't expect too much recognition, s/he says. You're smart and you're congratulated on going to university. *But you can never really have a conversation about what you're doing. I don't know, sometimes I think that's a pity too.*

6.3 CONCLUSIONS FIRST GENERATION STUDENTS (WITHOUT MIGRATION BACKGROUND)

A problem that all first-generation students experience, one that is repeatedly described in the literature and that also came clearly to the fore in the interviews conducted, is that entering the academic world simultaneously means a removal from the social environment of origin. First generation students not only often experience a lack of understanding from their parents or other family members about what they are doing at all during their studies, what the point of studying is and why you shouldn't just go and work and earn money; they also hardly have any conversation left with their family members because they have started functioning at a different intellectual level.

What the literature also describes that first-generation students also feel out of place in the academic environment and often suffer from an 'imposter syndrome', was not found in this study at all, except for one specific study discipline. It can be deduced from the stories of the students interviewed that they did not encounter any significant problems with the inclusion at the UT. They were able to quickly build a social network. At the UT, they were able to find enough peers with a similar social background. On the small-scale and spacious green campus, where most of the interviewed students live, they immediately felt at home. The Kick-in with the activity groups appears to be very effective in integrating students socially. The study associations and the sports clubs have increased their network, especially if they have held board positions there. Through their networks, they often get the necessary information that they did not get at home.

Another important explanation for the fact that these students do not regard themselves as social outsiders may be that the UT is, in the first place, a technical university and that socio-cultural codes play a minor role in the technical subjects. It cannot be a coincidence that the two students who sometimes had doubts about whether they belonged in the group are the very students who are studying philosophy. The problem that first generation students at many other universities can face, that they feel lost and lonely in a world with which they have no connection,

does not seem to occur much at the University of Twente.

Of course, being away from one's own family and the lack of support and understanding can be problematic and take its psychological toll. The only thing UT can do in this area is to ask the student advisors and the student psychologists to pay attention to this.

Another important bottleneck that played a role for a number of students was lack of money. This was often directly related to their social background. Some parents support their children financially as much as they can, but in other cases there is a lot of discussion with the parents about the length of study and the costs, and some students have to manage on their own. Not everyone is able to supplement their income with a job on the side, while studying intensively, and thus avoid increasing their already large student debt. This can lead to savings on food or extra expenses that can be important for deepening one's studies or personal development. That is why it is good that Miriam Bult founded a fund for first generation students when she retired from the Executive Board. It would be good if this fund were to be structurally expanded and made available to all students. Contributions from this fund can be used to offer customised support to students who cannot be helped within the current regulations and study financing.

6.4 FIRST GENERATION STUDENTS WITH A MIGRATION BACKGROUND

Here will be discussed the themes that emerged in the interviews with four first generation students with a migration background. Two of them identified as female and two as male, two of them were Muslim and two others Syrian Orthodox. For ensuring anonymity, all students are described as 's/he'.

6.4.1 ORIGIN

Three of the interviewees originate from Enschede, Hengelo (O) and Borne, and one from a village in Gelderland.

Their parents attended primary school and none of them completed secondary school. Two fathers work in production, one mother is a housewife and another works in cleaning, while another parent couple jointly own a cafeteria. One of the interviewees grew up in a single-parent family with a mother who lived on welfare.

The parents could not help them with homework and school assignments, such as presentations and reports. Some of them did call on a family member who had had more education, but at a later stage of their studies, they were no longer able to help them either. They feel that they actually had to do everything themselves. However, they were supported by their parents in other ways, primarily financially. The parents paid all kinds of expenses for them. One student did not have to pay anything to his family out of his self-earned income, so that this money could be used to pay study costs. Some of them did not have to do anything in the household; their food and clothes were taken care of so that they could fully concentrate on their studies.

6.4.2 SCHOOL CAREER AND CHOICE OF STUDY

The interviewees had a high enough Cito score to go directly to havo or vwo except for one: S/he had a low Cito score due to problems with reading comprehension, but the headmaster of the primary school ensured that s/he could still go to the vwo/havo bridging class.

One of the interviewees went, together with school friends, to taster days in Delft, Eindhoven and Twente. S/he did not want to do just a technical study but also

something related to management, and as this was only possible in Twente, the choice was easily made. The other three struggled for a long time with the fact that they did not have a clear picture of potential academic professions besides the standard trite of lawyer, doctor and engineer. For them, an academic study was primarily the way to reach a certain (higher) profession and less a way to train in a subject that appealed to them in terms of content and aptitude. Many studies offer broad professional perspectives and are merely intended as a basis for further professional development in one's career. In the end, two of the three have figured out where their hearts lie and what they are good at. The last one of the three is still in doubt about what s/he wants to do later on. S/he had hoped that a Master's degree at the UT would bring her/him more clarity, but that did not happen.

6.4.3 INTRODUCTION PERIOD

One of the most important similarities between the four students with an immigrant background is that, unlike the other first-generation students, they deliberately did not participate in the university introduction week or Kick-in.

So, during the Kick-in, they had indicated that it was mainly something to form bonds with different students, but also things, activities like exploring, uhm, Enschede itself and the cafés and so on. And like I said, because I didn't go to rooms ("op kamers wonen", that was something that was less appealing to me.

[Not participating in the Kick-in:] That was also very deliberately, because it was very much promoted as 'well, we're going to do fun things', and in my head that meant partying and drinking. And that was just not for me. So, it was just the whole set-up, it just wasn't for me, so I missed the Kick-in. I was going away on holiday anyway, but anyway, I could have come back earlier, but it just wasn't for me. So, I thought, that's not an environment I want to be in. I didn't go there, so you didn't know any people as soon as you started.

Even if those [the introduction week and Kick-in] were there and they were not obligatory, I would not have gone either. Like I say, that's more of a distraction than adding something, I feel.

I didn't go to introductory time, no, no, because in that respect I have not been a good student. I haven't

participated in any Kick-In, any introductory weeks, nor have I signed up for a study association or anything else.

Two students did go to activities for their field of study, because it seemed useful to them. One participated in a boot camp for his field of study and got to know a lot of people, which was useful for her/him later on. Another student did go to the introduction day of his field of study. There s/he heard more about the programme and got to know a number of other students in his year group.

Looking back, one of the students regrets having chosen the path of least resistance. *Because if you haven't had the kick-in, you really fall into a deep hole.* You walk around the whole campus to find the building you need to be in and you don't know anyone. It also has to do with my age at the time, s/he says. *It's just much easier to avoid things like that than to go there and be the exception.* As a Muslim, s/he doesn't drink alcohol. Nowadays s/he's much relaxed about that. S/hHe now goes to meetings where s/he knows there is alcohol and just says s/he'll drink something else.

The programme of the Kick-in and the images that circulate about it are far removed from what students with an immigrant background envisage for a university study programme. For most Dutch students without a migration background, studying means more than just taking courses: it also means enjoying student life, making new friends and having a good time. In addition, they seize opportunities outside their studies to further develop themselves personally, for instance by fulfilling board positions in associations. The students who were interviewed regarded all these extracurricular activities as mere distractions and of little value. They concentrated entirely on their studies and on passing them within the set time frame.

One of the interviewees can explain this attitude: *the immigrant Dutch students, yes, I think they really have the idea: Yes, a study association like that, all fun and games, and all of us drinking until I don't know how late and parties, I don't think they're waiting for that either. I think they all get some kind of idea from home: You know, go and study, make sure you get good grades, that you get a diploma and maybe get a job*

besides. But then it's all fine and dandy, and I think that's what's going on.

Still, the interviewees do recognise that it is important to make new friends quickly, because otherwise you quickly end up in social isolation. One possibility is to make the Kick-in more inclusive, i.e., more appealing to the target group of students with a migration background. This can be done by including the stories of students with a migration background more explicitly in the communication around the Kick-in, so that people can identify with them. And it could be done by better demonstrating that it is not just about *all fun and games*, but that there are also programme components that are serious and useful for all students.

A boot camp organised by one department proved to be extremely successful in terms of inclusion, and the interviewee immediately felt included in the group. Another student benefited greatly from the open day organised by her/his discipline during the Kick-in.

6.4.4 DOMICILE

None of the interviewed students live in a student home or in an independent room. One of them goes as often as necessary by train to Enschede from the village where her/his family lives. The others live closer by and can get to the UT by public transport in a short time. All four students still live with their parents and maintain an old circle of friends in that place.

One of the students studied in Groningen for a short time, but was very unhappy there. In the first place, the study did not suit her/him at all. But s/he also missed her/his family and old friends very much. *I couldn't wait until it was Friday and I could take the train back to (my hometown), and in the beginning, on those Sunday evenings, I had trouble going back to Groningen.* In the end, s/he broke off his study in Groningen and started a new study at the UT. Secretly, I was glad to be back.

Staying with one's parents is partly motivated by financial considerations, but also has to do with the very strong ties with one's own family and friends. This is in contrast to the strong need for independence which can be seen among students without a migration background.

6.4.5 SOCIAL NETWORK

One of the students is an active member of the study association. S/he attends lectures and outings that are organised. S/he says that in the clubroom in the basement it is easy to approach fellow students and ask them about their studies. S/he has made nine friends through the project groups at UT and is in regular contact with them.

Another student says that the acquaintances s/he has made through the project groups are not real friends. S/he has very little need of them. *That may sound strange to say, but I'm at the UT to get my marks and to get my diploma.* During the week s/he is busy with her/his studies and fitness, and in the weekend when there is time to meet up, s/he has family commitments. Another student can explain this: *I think they all have some idea of. I have my own group of friends, I have people around me, I just go to study, I'm there to study. If I need summaries or help, I knock on their door, but it's not really necessary to build up a new network.*

One of the students says that the first six months at UT were a great struggle. *The transition was just too big, you just fell into a deep hole.* At the hbo, s/he had always asked friends for advice when s/he did not understand something and the teachers were much less distant. But here, s/he had not yet made any friends s/he could ask, because s/he was so focused on her/his studies. In the end, it was other students who came up to her/him, because they recognised her/him from college. Also, many other students thought s/he was an international student, because s/he only spoke English in class, which also created distance until they discovered that s/he could speak Dutch. Gradually s/he made new friends during the modules.

Only one of the students participated extensively in the activities of the study association. The others may have been members, but only to get discounts on books or to get summaries.

One of the students says: *I felt very uncomfortable there, but I think that was more because of myself, because I am also quite.... I am introvert by nature but I developed my social skills much later. So, for me it was just safer not to walk into such an unfamiliar space and start conversations with strangers, which I found very scary.*

Incidentally, two students later committed themselves as senior students to the familiarisation days of their study programme to show prospective students the way.

To sum up, the students with an immigrant background mainly have their social network outside the University of Twente, and on the other hand they see an enormous gap between themselves and the mainstream of students, with whom they often have no more than a relatively superficial contact.

But that was also really because we were very different in life. I think I was just very serious. I just didn't have room for other things. I had two priorities, and that was my studies and financing my studies. In my head, I just had very little room for other things and they were like yes, we want to enjoy being a student and I want to experience it, I want to go abroad and I want to do this, I want to do that and for me it was just like yes, that sounds nice, but....

6.4.6 EXPECTATIONS OF FAMILY

Three of the four interviewees say that they were not pressured by their parents to perform well. Perhaps there was no explicit pressure, but the parents did have high expectations of them. The students themselves did feel strong pressure to meet the expectations of their parents and not to disappoint them.

Especially in the beginning, you noticed that very strongly, and then my parents were breathing down my neck, saying: have you done your homework, shouldn't you be doing your homework, if you don't do your homework you won't make it. That was during havo. Until there came a point when I said: now you have to stop, if I hear one more word out of you: homework, then I'm going to stop doing the havo. And since then they haven't said a word, and that was actually much better, because it came naturally from me that I was going to do my homework. So that's better than when you're forced to do things. And since then, I feel that pressure much less. Of course, you feel that pressure to perform, to get your diploma, but that's a lot less since they interfere less with what I do.

I think that may have been the biggest pressure during university itself, because I'm a person who doesn't really care about myself, but rather about others, so to

speak, and my parents are naturally on top of that. And because they have put so much time and energy into it, yes, it feels like a kind of obligation to, so to speak, perform and not to let them down. So, there was a lot of pressure, yes.

No, on the contrary... I pushed myself very hard and my mother was concerned about that, because she said: I do want you to do your best, but you don't have to break your head about it.

They have always worked hard, they have also said to us that we should try to get the best out of ourselves. So go and study. They have not done that [i.e., follow higher studies]. That is what they really insist on. (...) Of course you don't want to disappoint people (i.e., parents). So, then you think, well, I'll just do it, because disappointing them, I think, is the worst thing that can happen to you.

The last student quoted says that s/he put more pressure on her/himself. S/he had set her/himself the target of completing havo in five years and hbo in four, *because I thought that they would probably expect me to go through everything easily and to make it through everything, which meant that I sometimes made things difficult for myself. And well, I come from a culture where talking to your parents is not really a thing. So yes, you kind of bottle it up [when you run into problems] and then you try to figure it out yourself. And to them it seems like it's all going well and everything is fine.* But in the meantime, s/he has had to sort out a lot of bumps her/himself that her/his parents had no idea about.

The parents of these students are very proud of their studying child. They do not say this openly to their child, but they boast about it to their family and acquaintances. That is why the student who had to abandon his studies in Groningen considered it a very painful loss of face for her/his parents. *I don't want to disappoint them either, they did tell the whole family, oh X. is going to be a lawyer!* It was only when s/he had found a new promising study at the UT that s/he dared to tell her/his parents that s/he would be leaving Groningen for good.

6.4.7 DISCRIMINATION AND FEELING AT HOME

None of the four students says they have experienced or witnessed discrimination at the UT. If I would

experience something like that, I would immediately take action, one of them says. *I think I have never noticed that a teacher behaved differently towards a Dutch person, for example, than towards me or the other nationalities.*

They do know cases of discrimination from hearsay. One student has heard brutal stories from foreign PhD students. Another student thinks miscommunication sometimes occurs in project groups because of the different cultures. *Especially international students suffer from the fact that they say, yes, I am being discriminated against here by, for instance, a Dutch student who calls me names for all sorts of things and does not realise how that actually affects me.*

One of the students has heard stories at Saxion that a teacher did not want someone to pass because he was an immigrant. *Maybe you should have worked a little harder and then you would have passed. I don't really believe in drawing the discrimination card. I don't do that easily.*

All four students now feel completely at home at the UT and at their place in their studies. The two Islamic students remarked that they were particularly happy to discover (after a while) that there was also a prayer room on the campus.

6.4.8 MONEY

Because the students who were interviewed all live at home, they have fewer expenses than students who live in rooms far away from their parents. Three out of four families seem to have sufficient means to contribute to some extent to the study costs of their children. This is probably why money worries were hardly mentioned in the interviews. One of the students has clearly experienced financial hardship. S/he comes from a family which lives entirely on an allowance, which was also used to support other family members abroad. When s/he failed her/his final exams in vwo and redid the year in vavo, s/he worked for a year alongside her/his school in order to be able to pay the school fees. During his studies, s/he also picked up various tasks that brought in money.

6.4.9 SUGGESTION

A suggestion made by one of the students is worth mentioning here. S/he thought the study counsellors could be much better trained in intercultural

communication. *When I went to my study supervisor, it just became very... she didn't pick up on signals, you know, it's also quite taboo in different cultures to talk about something. It's also a question of picking up on signals sometimes and asking yourself: 'Are you telling me everything now and is my advice appropriate for your life situation? But of course, that's very difficult [for someone like that].* The student said that a friend of her/his with a completely different background, who wasn't Dutch either, also had trouble communicating with the study advisor. *So, there is something that makes you say, yes, you don't quite grasp it.* This may have something to do with the fact that a Dutch student advisor is not able to read between the lines and only takes into account what is explicitly said by the student. According to the student, the counsellor's advice was mainly thought up from a very Dutch perspective. S/he just couldn't use it.

6.5 CONCLUSIONS FIRST GENERATION STUDENTS WITH A MIGRATION BACKGROUND

The most important bottleneck in the inclusion of this target group at the UT is not discrimination but social integration, building a social network at the UT. The students interviewed do not identify with the mainstream of students and their lifestyle. Although the main part of their circle of friends is outside the UT and they do not feel a strong need to make new friendships, building a social network at the UT is very important. Firstly, to avoid ending up in social isolation and feeling excluded. And secondly, to be able to fall back on other students when you need help or practical advice.

The students interviewed certainly felt at home at the UT, but they are now well advanced in their studies. Some of them found it far from easy in the beginning of their studies and only after some time have they got to know a number of people they can call on.

Although the Kick-in is considered very valuable by the first generation of students without a migration background, the programme hardly appeals to students with a migration background. Because they think the Kick-in is mainly about partying and they are very seriously focused on their studies, they

deliberately do not participate. As a result, they miss an opportunity to quickly get to know a large number of fellow students.

A possibility to change this is to include in the communication about the Kick-in the experiences of Dutch students with a migration background and to pay more attention to the serious parts of the Kick-in. Most promising is enhancing social integration through activities organised by the study disciplines themselves. A camp or an introductory day with a substantive character, but also offering the opportunity for socialising, will more easily attract students with a migration background.

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CHAPTER 7 ETHNICITY, RACE, RELIGION AND THE ROLE OF ACADEMIC RANK

Authors: Anneke Sools, Jody Geerts and Hatice Kizgin



7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is based on 10 storytelling roundtables¹ with participants who had responded to a call for employees and students interested in sharing their story, experiences and thoughts on what it means to feel at home in their study or at work. Specific attention in the call was paid to ethnicity, race and religion. Four roundtables were explicitly about religion (Hindu students, Christian students, Islam students, Islam staff), one was about the general topic 'belonging@UT' (in the context of ethnicity, race and religion), and four were about topics that were (in-)directly targeting belonging related to ethnicity and race (ethnic profiling, hierarchy and job prejudices). These latter topics were

determined on the basis of an inventory of relevant topics among the SEG team members, after learning of the objections by POC (people of color) employees and students that labelling them based on ethnicity or race would risk reinforcing stereotypes and neglecting other important parts of their identities. The backbone for this chapter is research on racial discrimination in which four categories of discrimination are distinguished, that is, stereotypes and racial profiling, exclusion or denigration, insults regarding physical appearance and language, and finally institutional and structural racism [1]. Discrimination can take the form of interpersonal acts of racism (both overt and covert), but can also be internalized and thus operate consciously or unconsciously within individuals [2].

TEAM ETHNICITY, RACE & RELIGION:

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¹ Two roundtable recordings were of poor quality and could only partially be used (the Islam and Hindu students). With help from moderators and participants in those roundtables, we managed to salvage the most important points. The Christian student roundtable consisted mainly of debate rather than storytelling about their own experiences, thereby rendering this transcript less useful.

7.2 SYMBOLS: MEANING OF A SENSE OF BELONGING

In the first part of the roundtables, participants shared objects or photographs that symbolize what belonging means in their own lives. The working definition of belonging, provided to participants in preparation of the roundtable, was that a sense of belonging encompasses both feeling at home and being a part of something.

Type of objects: Participants brought photographs (friends, family and nature/holidays), cultural artifacts (art works, including religious and ethnic arts and crafts), identity markers (national flag, student association T-shirt, object with UT logo), and everyday objects (tea pot, sewing kit, key chain, UT textbook).

Three domains: people, place/space and activities. *People* providing a sense of belonging typically were specific people such as family members (parents and/or siblings, partner and children) or friends who showed support, appreciation, or contributed to a feeling of home, familiarity and connection. However, there were also more abstract references to social ties, connectedness, feeling proud of belonging to people sharing similar values. *Place or space* could refer to nature (trees, garden) where one felt at peace and one with a larger whole, to a region that provides a sense of home or roots (in the home country or newly found roots in Twente), to a physical space called home (their house, room or an office that was made homelike with pictures and objects – or alternatively a UT coffee mug used at home during the lockdown period to maintain a sense of belonging to the workplace). *Activities* associated with a sense of belonging encompassed leisure activities (sport, cultural activities, cycling, hiking) as well as ritual or routine activities (drinking tea together, sharing a common textbook). Leisure activities could foster belonging via having responsibility for others in organizing activities on campus, in the fun one could have during activities, or

in sharing activities with others and making friends. Routine activities could help create a sense of calm and tranquility, and participating in seemingly ordinary activities in the same time-space, like reading or working together, could provide a sense of belonging to the same group.

Feelings and impact on daily life. For participants, a sense of belonging was experienced via positive emotions such as feeling secure and safe, feeling grateful and accepted, feeling motivated, comfortable and appreciated. A sense of non-belonging could be experienced through a range of negative emotions, such as feeling fearful, anxious, awkward, frustrated, helpless, shocked, demotivated, anger, shame, alienated, surprised, uncomfortable, degraded, sad, hurt, pressured, confused and fear of retaliation. Also, negative consequences in everyday life were experienced such as pushback from speaking up, sleeplessness, stress, low self-esteem, lower grades, exit or dropout, difficulty concentrating, difficulty in interacting with peers and (mental) health problems.

Temporality. For some participants, belonging was mainly related to the past: their origins, roots, and history. For many it was related to the *present*: everything that helps feeling calm, relaxed, connected, content in the moment, or via connection to a timeless reality or experience. And in some cases, it was related to the *future*: who they are becoming or would like to become individually or as a society. Symbols of belonging also created continuity between past, present and future, especially for internationals or people who moved often in their lives, by reminding them of how they were able to belong in new environments already in the past.

A **commonality** between the symbols is that they represented an experience of being accepted and welcomed for who you are. Hence, feeling at home and belonging goes beyond being treated in a friendly or polite manner. It also includes being defended when needed, as in the example of a student who suffered from racism by fellow students. Her (international) friends stood up for her, and she appreciated much that the friends did not express pity for her but actually supported her, clearly signaling that the racist behavior was wrong and not to be tolerated.

7.3 STORIES OF (NON)BELONGING@UT

The experiences of belonging could be captured under three central story themes: (1) bonding and bridging (specifically in the onboarding process, in student life and during team events), (2) dealing with (implicit and explicit) bias and disrespectful behavior in formal settings (job interviews) and informal conversations,

and (3) hierarchical power dynamics that form the backdrop for practices of, diversity, inclusion and inequity. After describing these three story themes in paragraph 3 on the basis of key stories (see Table 2 for an overview of key stories per theme), a model of the possible (inter)personal and organizational response to the (non)belonging stories mentioned under themes 1-3 will be described in paragraph 4.

THEME	SUBTHEME	NR	STORY TITLE	
BONDING AND BRIDGING	Student life: onboarding, housing, festivals	1	"They are super surprised when they hear I speak Dutch"	
		2	"sharing the story of my country with people who are curious and sharing the joy is a very wholesome feeling"	
	Employee work life	3	"I'm going to feel so uncomfortable while you're drinking [alcohol] there."	
		4	"There are bacon bits through the potatoes, well, you can fish them out"	
		5	"They value everyone who is there, respect each other"	
DEALING WITH BIAS AND DISRESPECTFUL BEHAVIOUR	Offensive jokes, language issues and 'othering'	6	"Did your wife cook your lunch?"	
		7	"This is not the Dutch way"	
		8	"they can't comprehend the fact that I speak Dutch with them"	
		9	"as if you were like kind of exotic"	
		10	"We don't have many like you"	
	Double standard	11	"you always need to defend yourself"	
		12	"Why don't you do the same for other groups in society?"	
		Job interviews and recruitment	13	"We're not able to take you as non-EU student in here [UT-flex]"
			14	"I had to mention that my mother belonged here"
			HIERARCHICAL POWER DYNAMICS	Academic status
16	"Without a PhD degree you don't matter"			
17	"It's about what we recognize as knowledge"			
Student-teacher interaction	18	"The professor is well aware that people from my culture are not very confrontational"		
	19	"Now we have to talk English because you are there"		
20	"If I got into the UT, I deserve it"			
21	"Your diploma has no social value"			
MODEL: PERSONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSE		22	"Everybody wants to be a good person, but I know that i'm racist"	
		23	"Together we managed to get along"	
		24	"She gives you the feeling that everybody has a purpose"	
		25.	"Freedom to be yourself and set your own targets"	

TABLE 2. OVERVIEW OF (NON-)BELONGING STORIES PER (SUB)THEME

7.3.1 BONDING AND BRIDGING

The onboarding process was mentioned frequently as an important phase for creating a sense of belonging, for what the participants referred to as 'locals' and 'internationals'. In this onboarding process, we can recognize two, sometimes conflicting, processes which are described in Putnam's theory on social capital [3]. According to this theory, social capital (the social network at one's disposal), can be built in two ways: bonding (ingroup membership) and bridging (inter-group connection). Bonding refers to building connections with the in-group to which one belongs (e.g., family, sport club, student association). Bridging refers to the forging of connections with people outside the in-group (e.g., newcomers and locals). Both ways of forming social capital can contribute to social support and to a sense of belonging. However, to be rooted well in social networks ideally both forms of social capital need to be present. When out of balance, strong bonding can result in poor bridging (alienation from the group or organization) and strong bridging can result in poor bonding (alienation from the – perceived - ingroup). Applied to the UT context this means that staff and students need opportunities to build social capital via both processes: bonding with like-minded spirits and bridging with others. An important site for bonding and bridging is the onboarding process of new staff and students. As Kizgin et al. [4] argue, based on social capital theory, daily social interactions (e.g. socializing with friends and co-workers) are seen as investments in social networks [5] that contribute to mutual future actions [6]. In the roundtables, the storied experiences with onboarding varied a lot. In this paragraph, we will first describe experiences in student life (onboarding and housing) followed by employee (informal) work experiences.

Student life: onboarding. A faculty with a relatively long history of internationalization worth mentioning in this regard is ITC. As with other faculties, this faculty has its flaws, but one aspect that stands out as a good practice is the ITC introduction program for new students. We heard many stories about how students and alumni highly value how this introduction program succeeds in creating an ITC "family" atmosphere that lasts well beyond their study years into their alumni period. In contrast, the kick-in program for new students was perceived much less favorable, although of course we may have

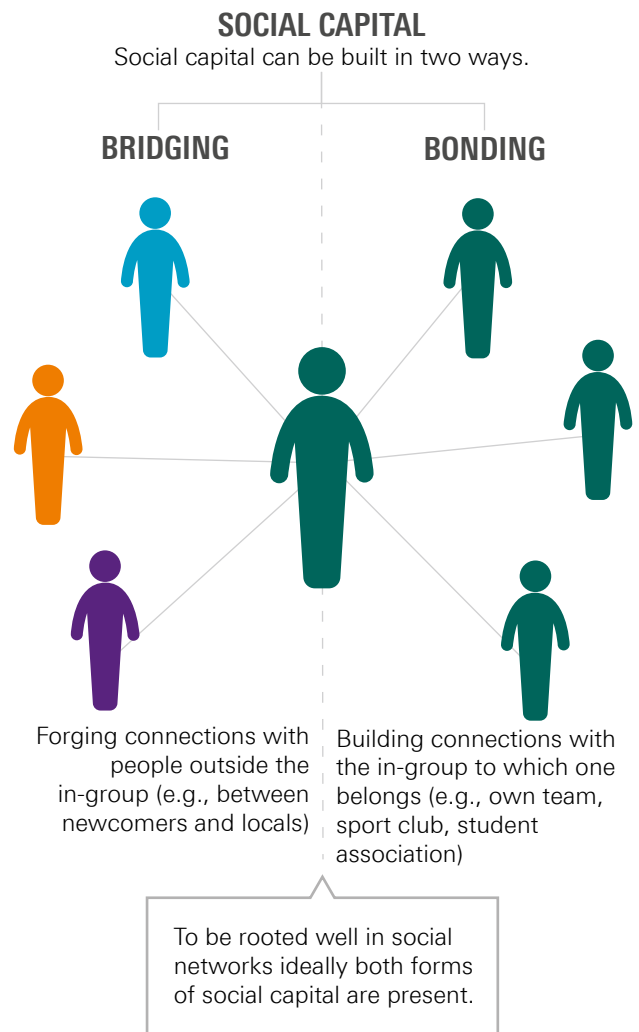


Fig.5 Putnam's theory about bonding and bridging

only heard the negative experiences (see also the chapter on internationals and on first generation students with a migration background). Also, positive experiences come from departments with appropriate buddy systems for new employees that support bonding in the sense of becoming part of the department or team. Such positive experiences seem to depend largely on local initiatives and individual efforts, rather than on UT-wide policy and practice. However, more generally, we also heard critique on the UT onboarding process in terms of difficulty to find your way around, know what to find where, who to turn to, which services are available (both physically and virtually) etc. We learned that the lockdown periods, with its extended remote working practices, have exacerbated difficulties in creating a

sense of belonging during the onboarding process, because of a lack of opportunities for getting to know colleagues in a more informal way. However, even when informal exchanges are possible, this does not automatically result in inclusion, as for example a support staff member who tells that she *had to fight to kind of build up a certain trust with them [the new team she was joining] to get into their inner circle*. We did not encounter any examples in which it was especially difficult for minority staff to get accepted into the inner circle.

Student life: housing. Another site relevant for bonding and bridging as ways to create a sense of belonging, is housing. According to the OECD [7], the major concern is discrimination in the socioeconomic domain, such as job recruitment and rental housing. For students the scarce housing market in the region, was also reported to be a major obstacle to belonging. In the context of this precarious housing market, the problem of the closed nature of some student houses was brought to our attention. Self-selection bias, whether deliberately or unconsciously, is reported in particular by internationals trying to become accepted as residents of Dutch-dominated student houses. According to in-group and out-group categorization theory [8], perceptions of self and identity are often dependent on social comparisons that they make with out-groups, resulting in a favorable assessment and evaluation of the in-group. The presence of a positive affect toward the in-group, combined with the absence of positive feelings toward out-groups often leads to bias and prejudices [8, 9, 10]. We observed in the events that were recounted in the roundtables, how ingroup-processes foster a sense of belonging for a closed group, yet lead to exclusion of the perceived out-group. Even visiting student houses not with the purpose of living there, can turn out to be an experience of exclusion due to implicit or explicit bias based on outer (Chinese) appearance:

- **Story 1. “They are super surprised when they hear I speak Dutch”**
- In Dutch it is basically like “f*ck you”. And then she names us like “f*cking Chinese”. Call me that in my face. This is I don’t know why this would be a thing. But the worst part is that I do speak Dutch which means I can get integrated into Dutch houses. And yet again, [...] when I come in everyone goes “ha” and then I see in the room [...] I see mostly Dutch white ethnic looking people and I just, I just

- know this is not going to go well [...] Because [...]
- everyone already like looks at me a certain way and then they start drinking alcohol [...] Like where from China do you come from? And it’s like, what, I’m not Chinese. Like, I don’t know where you get that from, you know, they go super surprised when they hear I speak Dutch, even though I’ve spoken to them the entire time [...] I have many international friends who also have trouble communicating with the Dutch people and then they realize [...] never mind then I go back to my internationals.

As described in the previous story, Dutch students who do not look Dutch experience forms of racism by peers and teachers, particularly negative stereotyping as described by Henkel et al. [1]. They define a stereotype as a generalization of beliefs about a group or its members that is unjustified because it reflects faulty thought processes or overgeneralization, factual incorrectness, inordinate rigidity, an inappropriate pattern of attribution, or a rationalization for a prejudiced attitude or discriminatory behavior. What came to the fore the roundtables was the pervasiveness of such experiences that are reported as “very basic” and occurring “on a daily basis”.

Student life: festivals. A clear positive example of a cultural activity that brought back a much-welcomed sense of community to Indian students after a long period of isolation and lockdowns, was the celebration of a Hindu festival called *Holi*.

- But last year, some of my friends from specialization, they came to my room and we started playing Holi. Afterwards, we went to each and every person’s room from our specialization and put colors on them, and we all celebrated Holi together. It was one of the first things we did together and it surely was really special. One because it finally brought everyone from our specialization together and second because it is a festival which you celebrate with your family and when I celebrated it here with my friends, I missed home a little less.

Two main Hindu festivals (Holi and Diwali) were sometimes celebrated only with Indian students, but in the following story, student friends from other countries joined the festivities too. In this case, tradition and innovation went hand in hand in a celebration that helped bringing together people from various backgrounds and bringing a sense of pride about one’s background:

• **Story 2. “sharing the story of my country with people who are curious and sharing the joy is a very wholesome feeling”**

• I went to dinners at two different houses and I really enjoyed it. Both of these houses had a lot of international students. So in the first house [...] the main activity was to make lamps, clay lamps. So, everybody in the house make lamps out of clay, baked in the oven, painted it because that is one of the symbols of Diwali. We light lamps and while we did this, me and her, we were sharing the stories of Diwali, so I felt very happy with this experience because the previous year, I did not celebrate much at all. There was dinner with some friends but that’s about it but this year felt much more fun and happy because we did something related to Diwali. We told stories and Diwali is also celebrated in my home every year and it’s a big family affair, so I tend to feel a bit homesick [...] but in this case, I was really happy that I was celebrating it in my own way. I was able to do a new kind of celebration, I was able to celebrate among internationals. Yeah! I think the fun part was I really appreciate the enthusiasm of international students because you get a nice feeling that ‘I come from India and I am sharing the story of my country and the people of all these countries are happy and curious and interested in knowing it and sharing the joy, I think that is a very wholesome feeling.

Employee work life: team experience. For Muslim staff members, team events are a site for both negative and positive experiences that foster belonging. Some recount repeated occasions in which colleagues consequently forget their religious practices (Ramadan, not drinking alcohol) when organizing team events:

• **Story 3: “I’m going to feel so uncomfortable while you’re drinking [alcohol] there.”**

• In this case they went to a wine tasting in [city] and then it was: oh, yes, that wine again. I think yes, I, “Can’t you have a little bit?” I say no, but it’s a matter of principle. Oh... and then you really are looked at like, oh how piteous, so piteous. I think it’s a shame the organizers insisted that I go along, now I went and I feel good in my skin and then there is such a moment when all these eyes look my way... I have it on the picture too, that I’m going to feel so uncomfortable and that’s so unnecessary, while you’re drinking there.

What is perceived as most disturbing is the repeated forgetfulness, of having to remind colleagues even

after many years of working together:

• why do I keep on having to say, yes, that, that’s the example: when I go to my mother, and she pours tea every time, every time she would ask me: “Do you want sugar in it?” I say: no, I don’t do sugar. You know, exactly the same idea, you already know me right, don’t you?

• **Story 4. there are bacon bits through the potatoes, well, you can fish them out**

• Oh yes, there are bacon bits through the potatoes, well, you can fish them out. Hello, you know? Again, you make me small, that’s how it feels to me and they have to have that, that feeling that they’re putting us out of the group. So, you think, well, we’re all going to have a good time, but when something like that happens, you don’t feel all together anymore, you feel like: oh, next year I’m not going. But it’s just a snapshot and you don’t want to give it too much weight. But you don’t have to. I don’t have to feel that way. That’s not necessary. It’s 2022.

However, good examples are also cited of departments and study programs that naturally show an interest and concern for cultural customs and personal preferences:

• Yes, look, you also have [...] then a barbecue is organized and then it is like oh yes, [...] [Name] what shall we do with the barbecue, we are going to do a team barbecue and what are you allowed, what are you not allowed, what shall we do? What... So that’s interest [...] they’re thinking of you, up front. You belong. [...] Look, I really don’t care about the food, but it is about the idea, thinking along.

• When I’m in another department and they ask: do you want a drink, I say, no, first days, no, no, then later: yes, I’m fasting, “oh oh oh, sorry!” I say no, that’s fine. I am fasting. And then they also show an interest in where I am now, on the [...]. “Oh yes, this, I’ve also grown up with, erm, multicultural and I know a little bit about it” and then they keep asking and that’s quite fun.

• A very good example was, if you go somewhere, take a course and you say well I’m a Muslim, [...] They do try to comply. [...] an acquaintance of mine said: yes, I went there and he says: I want to eat kosher, what, then you will be treated very differently. You are treated like uh a king

• **Story 5. “They value everyone who is there, respect each other”**

- So it's a very, you know, multicultural environment in
- [name faculty] and I haven't experienced anything
- [discriminatory] since I've been here. I can say that I'm not
- being treated because of my religion, because I believe it's
- because they try to see you. [...] So they value, everyone
- who is there, respect each other. [...] So at the end of our
- summit and everything is on with the accomplishment of
- the project and everything. So and in this in this batch we
- have world students. One is another [country name] girl.
- She's also Muslim. So they bring separate drinks for us. So
- welcome. So they really do a consideration thing here. We
- have some friends, so to see the respect everyone and are
- supplied and I have a mentor as well. She's very nice to me.
- Whenever I talk to her, she motivates me and helps me.

Taken together, these stories show that repeated and daily occurrences of minor forms of discrimination can grow into a widespread form of exclusion, while remembered and self-evident attention to inclusion in the organization of team events, for example, can contribute to a real sense of belonging.

A final issue related to bridging/bonding that we as SEG encountered in many different forms over the course of the last two years, is that the inclusion of one group could lead to the exclusion of another. For example, participants with a Muslim or Christian background did not feel represented at the diversity week and other diversity activities organized by the universities. Christian students perceived a double standard in the attention devoted to the LGBTQ+ community (pride week for example, rainbow flag). They questioned why one group deserves so much attention as if other groups were less important. They emphasised that it was not about being anti queer people (one of the Christian students identified as gay himself), but about valuing everyone. This concern points toward the need to explain better why the UT focuses on underprivileged minorities, and to make clear the historical inequalities, discrimination and power abuse to which these minorities have been (and still are) subjected. We explicitly asked whether the Christian students experienced any form of discrimination or exclusion based on their religion, and the students we spoke to did not. Their main concern, i.e. the perceived inequality in attention to pride in comparison with other identity-related topics, aligns with responses from (conservative) Christian groups in the Netherlands who have critiqued DE&I policy at various universities.

Preferred religious invisibility and "marked" role models

Both Christian and Hindu students said during the roundtable that they do not publicly practice their religion as compared to Muslims (although there is a silence room used by Christian students for prayer which is also used for other activities such as meditation). One of the meditation teachers removed the Christian symbols present in that room on the UT campus, a cross and doves, because some participants of the meditation group took offence in these symbols. This shows that also visible signs of the Christian religion are at least by some experienced as controversial. This is in line with research on rooms of silence at universities in Scandinavia, in which the authors conclude that "plans and policies for the rooms emphasize stress-reduction and spiritual or secular reflection [...] and a shift from collective to more individual use of the rooms [...] the restricted materiality of the rooms shapes practices in ways that either hinder collective Muslim prayer or force students to perform prayer as an individual "silent" action" [11].

A similar trend was noticeable among UT students with a religious background, who clearly stated that they see their religion as something personal and the importance of adhering to the norms of a secular society. They also did not necessarily wish for teachers or others in the organization to make publicly known their religious beliefs. This was different for (some) people from the LGBTQ+ community for whom visibility and role models were considered important for their own coming out (as was expressed in one of the pilot roundtables), and for women who valued having role models to validate positive career prospects for example. Religion appears to be 'marked' in a way that other identity categories are not. In the Netherlands more broadly, it is known that Muslim individuals and communities are the most prone to suffer from racism [12]. This is different for example for people with an invisible disability, for whom invisibility results in lack of understanding and support.

This said, students from the three religious backgrounds present at the roundtables (Christian, Hindu, Islam) expressed that they are proud of their religion and would appreciate very much if others would respectfully and with an open mind ask them

about their religion. Religion is an important part of their lives, and when recognized and valued by others, this adds to their sense of belonging]. However, at present, the impression we get is that students (and possibly also staff) tend to prefer practicing their religion invisibly, in individual, silent practice similar to the trend noticed at the Scandinavian universities. Only when actively invited in an open and welcoming manner will they volunteer to talk about their religious practices, rituals and experiences. However, their reluctance to even answer questions about this topic, raises the question whether their silence is more about *preventing* prejudice and discrimination, while experiencing limited options (only upon invitation from the non-religious other) for a way to positively promote a sense of belonging based on their religion.

7.3.2. DEALING WITH BIAS AND DISRESPECTFUL BEHAVIOR

Bias in the form of stereotypes and prejudice were reported in three domains, e.g., in offensive jokes and language, in a double standard for dealing with (im-) migrants, and in job interviews and recruitment. First, regarding offensive jokes and language, we noted that discriminatory behaviour may thrive especially in teams or departments characterised by a culture of bullying or other forms of social unsafety, as in this story that presented it common to make offensive jokes at the expense of others:

- I have also experienced that [...] fellow colleagues are
- treated disrespectfully, I found that so ridiculous, so
- irritating. That there is a call and then the mobile rings that
- ringtone or ringtone, he says: Achtung, Achtung,
- Arschloch, Arschloch. I think you can't use that as a
- ringtone for a colleague, can you? And then everyone
- laughs along, then I think [...] then you're not really from a
- good [inaudible]. That's not how you treat colleagues. [...]
- I will say a lot of colleagues, if they laugh about it, while I
- don't laugh, they ask me: why don't you laugh? I say yes...
- do I have to laugh about this then? Why don't you laugh?
- Why are you so quiet? I say yes. I don't have to go with
- you. I also have my own standards and values.

Jokes may appear as harmless and benign, but even implicitly racist jokes can function to make people inferior based on ethnic background [13]. Reports of more overt racist bias showed up in the form of stereotypical jokes and in racist language expressing

prejudices about people that becomes more pronounced when involving people with a Muslim background and those with a non-EU background. Several stories reported offensive jokes of a discriminatory nature (racial, religious or sexist, or several of these types of discrimination combined) during informal conversations. The following example is about such denigratory jokes in which apparently pornographic imagery related to women dressed in burkas are shared among 'boys' in a way that the participant clearly experiences as crossing boundaries of respectful behaviour. The example shows how the practice of belonging is an intricate one, in the sense that the participant reported how he speaks up to his colleagues of the 'boys group' he used to belong to while not snitching on them to his manager (hence still showing loyalty to this group).

- Yes, what you also see in the workplace [...] yes, those
- signs of prophet Mohammed and... and then they come
- up with stories, yes, if you go to heaven, then you come,
- what was it. .. so many virgins. And then they make
- ridiculous things too, I thought, guys! Act normal. [...] And
- then that is a lot... also jokes about burkas and [...] and
- films, photos sent [...] with yes, roughly the breasts you see
- and then I think like boys...[..] I think what are you
- doing[...] as colleagues. [...] And I... We had a group and I
- just got out of it. I thought, well, that's not fun anymore, I
- didn't tell the manager that, but yes, in the meantime it is
- escalating.

While making jokes can be an important part of bonding practices (hence contribute to belonging), this example also is about a need for boundary-setting and being aware how one's language can negatively affect others. As is known from research on discrimination based on race, sex or religion, it is the pervasiveness of being exposed to offensive jokes on a daily basis that makes it particularly burdensome for those affected. In line with the benign violations theory of humor [14], disparagement humor generally elicits two simultaneous perceptions – “one, that the disparaging content constitutes a social and moral violation in which a target group is denigrated, and the other, an interpretation that the disparaging content is benign, devoid of any deliberate prejudice, and intended purely for amusement” [15,16]. However, “the line between disparagement humor and outright disparagement is murky” [17].

The **risk of escalation** is tangible in the following story, teachers make racist jokes during lunch time directed at international students who were present at the lunch table.

• **Story 6: “Did your wife cook your lunch?”**

• To an [nationality] guy, for example, they would ask “Did your wife cook your lunch? If so, she could cook it to all of us”. When talking to the next one, a [nationality], they would take an “[nationality] accent” in English trying to tell her that she did the same as the wife of the [nationality] guy, like an Italian Nonna. All of this happened in three minutes. At this moment, I already knew what they would comment if they would try to engage with me on this conversation. It would be about whether I deal drugs or whatever. But I was not in their department, so they didn’t do it. I know I could have been an active bystander and do something, but I didn’t feel like it because I was really shocked.

What becomes clear from this story is the pending anxiety looming large over an everyday lunch conversation. In a blink of an eye, a seemingly neutral situation can turn into a disturbing experience with the people seemingly oblivious of the effect their “jokes” have. A similar turn from an apparent friendly situation to a hostile one is told in the following story about a party in a student house. The student comes from what she describes as a super welcoming (South American) culture, expecting a similar welcome in Dutch culture:

• **Story 7: “This is not the Dutch way”**

• So I start drinking my beer and this guy also he is very, very blonde guy just comes out and start asking me things about my life. Like, “how are you doing about that?” Fine. Fine. Fine. And I was so pleased and I was like, and he was like, “Yeah, but I’m sorry, but you have to leave because we’re not comfortable because of Corona”. and I like sure no problem, I understand. I understand if you have rules in the house of corona, that’s okay. I’m going to go, but let me finish my cigarette and my beer. and he was like, “Yeah. Why don’t you just go?” And I was like, dude, first of all, I’m in the balcony. I’m not like anything inside and I was like doing the beer and then, yeah, let me finish my beer [...] It is just me and that guy alone in a balcony when he starts getting really mad and he starts telling me like, “That’s not the Dutch way to do things because, you know, we want you here and we want you to stay, but because of Corona you cannot. But, you know,

• this is not the Dutch way”[...] , and then like, yeah. Yeah. Yeah. So that guy suddenly cracks, and he started like screaming to me like “you need to, you need to integrate and you need to learn the Dutch way” and he was like just screaming to me and I was like at that moment I was like “what the f*ck... This is not real, this cannot be happening.” [...] horrible, horrible. And I don’t know why. The thing is, like, every time I’m there, every time, I don’t know I’m with Dutch people I always feel very, very nicely put aside.

What we can learn from this story, is how a situation that on the surface may appear to be of no discriminatory nature (at first it appears a very reasonable request to uphold corona regulations, that fit in what the student observes as a pattern of being “nicely put aside”), escalates into more overt prejudice towards non-Dutch people. To make this clearer, let’s take a closer look at the two different concepts of ‘integration’ used in this example.

Following the well-established model of acculturation orientations [18,19], four orientations can be distinguished based on the value placed on (a) maintenance of the heritage culture and one’s own identity and (b) the relations sought with others (from the dominant culture). The Dutch student in the example values an Assimilation orientation which requires migrants to conform to what he perceives to be Dutch culture “learning the Dutch way”. The South-American student on the other hand values an Integration orientation, which combines maintenance of one’s own cultural heritage while establishing relations with the Dutch but in an equal way (the other two orientations are separation in which no relations between groups are sought but the heritage culture is maintained, and marginalisation in which no relation are sought, and the heritage culture is suppressed). More explicit pressure to assimilate (as in this example story) can easily be perceived as discrimination against one’s ethnic group, eventually leading to separation [20].

Muslim staff and students appear to be particularly prone to meet prejudice, even when they are born and

“And I’m not sure if they would be as surprised as if I would not have a headscarf and would blend in more easily in the group.”

raised in the Netherlands [1,21]. In the following story the persistent discrimination (making a distinction based on presumed inability to speak Dutch) on a daily basis from both fellow students and staff such as the study advisor is attributed to the visibility of the headscarf which marks the student as “other”.

• **Story 8. “they can’t comprehend the fact that I speak Dutch with them”**

• I mean, I do have some examples, but a very basic one, which I have on a daily basis, [...] So the first point is you’re constantly being underestimated in some sort of sense. A very simple one is when I’m on campus or even in my study, sometimes people are surprised that I can speak Dutch, which is the very basic, you would say. And then they speak in English, which is, you know, I don’t take it personally because you can’t know for sure. But then when I reply in Dutch, it’s like they can’t comprehend the fact that I speak Dutch with them. So they just continue in English all the time. And I’ve had this a couple of times and it’s not like, I’m very offended by it. But then if you think about it, being able to speak a language of a country where you were born. And it’s not that interesting or good to be able to speak it, you know, it should be the bare minimum. But somehow people are always surprised that I do speak it. [...] I have a headscarf, so you can very easily see that I am a Muslim. And I’m not sure if they would be as surprised as if I would not have a headscarf and would blend in more easily in the group.

The point here is not so much that the student is mistaken for an international, but that she is (repeatedly even after counterevidence) treated differently on the basis of “perceived physical and behavioral characteristics, associating differential power and privilege with these characteristics, and then justifying the resulting inequalities” [22]. As these authors make clear, “Race is not something that people have or are, but rather a set of actions that people do”. Language, as a powerful and influential social agent in constructing social relationship [23-26], is exactly one of the actions whereby people do race, among other things. Language therefore is “an act of symbolic power play, whereby people subjectively position and calibrate us vs. others by questioning their entitlement, authenticity and legitimacy – all central notions to identity and identification”. One of the ways in which symbolic power play operates is by treating internationals as ‘others’ based on their supposed ‘exotic’ appearance:

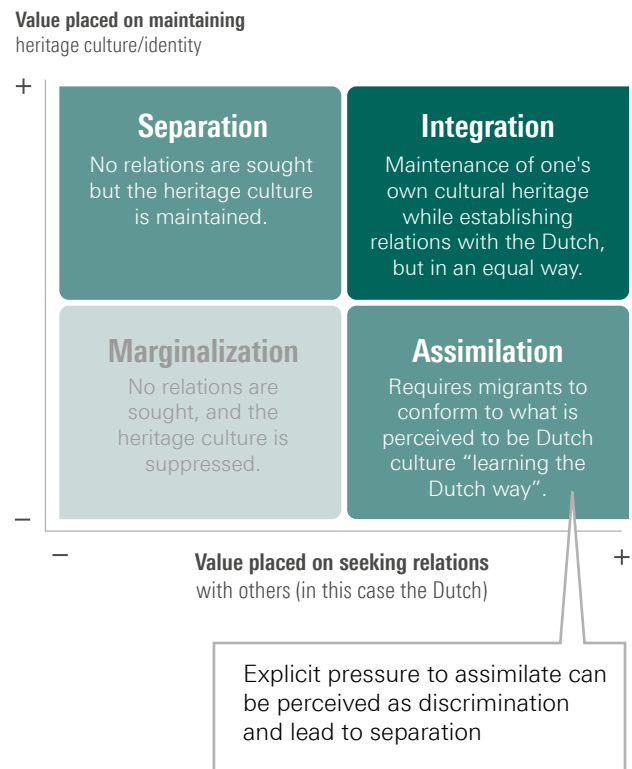


Fig. 6 Berry's acculturation orientations

• **Story 9. “As if you were like kind of exotic”**

• You know, you do notice that you’re kind of different as in and especially, you know, I came from Rotterdam where you have a lot of diversity to here, where it’s less like a lot less common. And so a lot of people don’t really have Muslim friends or haven’t even spoken to them. And then they come up to me and they’re like. I don’t know. They kind of talk to you as if you’re very different always. So they’re like, Oh, what language they speak? What do you eat? That as if you were like kind of exotic. And so I always had like an every project group where you’re randomly being assigned with some study mates. I always had THE talk, you know, at some point they become comfortable and then they ask all their questions related to my background, my religion. And usually I don’t mind answering questions, definitely, you know, it’s to get to know each other and but at that point, you do feel as if you’re different because of their questions. [...] usually don’t feel as if I don’t belong until the questions come. So it’s usually quite innocent, you’d say. But sometimes they ask it in such a way that it does make you feel different or, you know.

The process of ‘othering’ can also be observed in the following story, in which a student is marked as an exception:

“you do feel as if you’re different because of their questions.”

• **Story 10: “We don’t have many like you”**

- I mean, even when I met with my study advisor for the
- first time, it was mandatory so that they could get to know
- you. I remember she said, We don’t have many of you. [...]
- I think it has to do with the way I look or my background
- or my religion, because both as were as in I’m both the
- only Turkish and the Muslim girl. [...] and then she said,
- like, you know, six years ago, we had another girl like you.
- I was like. Am I supposed to know her? How am I related
- to her?

The following story is about the negative effects of unwarranted generalizations, which are especially felt due to their repeated nature.

• **Story 11. “you always need to defend yourself”**

- Yes, yes, yes, that is also here at the UT. I mean if I were to
- give my opinion... I mean, [...] in those times of those very
- many ISIS attacks. I say: yes, I... hey, don’t talk about
- Muslims, Muslim is a big word, millions, billions of people
- are attached to it. Talk about that specific group, those [...],
- you know, who did it. But don’t go talk about a whole,
- “yes, I think you are, are you also for the-”, I say I am not,
- I am not saying that, but I just think it is ridiculous that an
- entire Muslim community or an entire, almost the half of
- the world, if, say, viewed as a terrorist. I think that’s such a
- shame. And that you have to defend yourself that way too.
- Always. You always have to defend yourself.

Second, a double standard was experienced, for example related to differential treatment of refugees or migrants from Ukraine and those from the middle East or from Turkey. While the following example is about a situation outside of the UT, the point made in this roundtable was that also the UT can be more mindful of differential treatment depending on country of origin. The many aid actions organized within the UT, and the public support from the UT for Ukrainian refugees stand in contrast with the absence of similar action for refugees from other countries.

• **Story 12. “Why don’t you do the same for other groups in society?”**

- In our neighborhood, there is an empty school building, so
- it would be demolished and then new construction would
- come. But they have postponed it slightly because 60
- Ukrainian refugees are now coming in. Well, I’m really into
- humanitarian aid, absolutely, everyone here of course, so
- helping people out of the war? Of course. I would of
- course also donate, but everyone indeed now that they are
- Ukrainians, well, I live in a street in the Netherlands and
- really with a lot of older people, when we came to live
- there as a Turkish couple it was already, we had to proof
- ourselves a little. [...] Well, now they know all of us and
- everyone ahh, you know, very nice and sweet. [...] I have a
- very old neighbor, but... Normally they would never do
- anything, if the Syrian refugees came to us in that
- neighborhood, that would really... well that would really be
- the topic of conversation then, of ah this, ah resistance.
- And now? I just really saw them with... with a bucket of,
- with cleaning supplies, they helped to furnish that
- building. Everyone very proud, ah I also have some
- clothes... I say indeed: why don’t you do that for others?
- Because it’s not accepted, that’s the problem, I guess. It
- just doesn’t get accepted by the population, if one group
- is accepted, then they do everything, and the other group
- is not accepted.



A third form of stereotyping became visible in stories describing recruitment and hiring processes. Especially the UT-flex system was mentioned several examples in the roundtables, but we also experienced this practice first-hand when trying to hire students to help with the SEG inclusion:

“I had to mention that I was educated in Europe and that my mother belonged here and not from my country, because that way they can « relate better to me ».”

• Story 13: “We’re not able to take you as non-EU student in here [UT-flex]”

• I look very like I look Asian and very aware of that. But I speak fully Dutch [...] So, what I often see [...], they see my name, first of all, they already expect someone to look a certain way, seeing my name because it’s at the UT it’s also spelled wrong, which I couldn’t somehow, I cannot change that, but they see my name and then they already go “Oh. [in Dutch] Do you speak Dutch?” [...] at the UT, actually, a couple of times I’ve had that in UTFlex, where I’m officially an [Asian country] nationality, I have an [nationality] passport, but I have my Dutch citizenship and my European citizenship, which allows me to work live, do anything, everything in Europe, basically with no limitations, like an actual native European, because I’ve lived here for so long. So, I based almost half double nationality, but because I am still officially on my passport an [Asian nationality], at the UT I am enrolled as an [nationality] student. This also shows in my Osiris, which means if I do enrol to a UT job at UT Flex, they send a notification with, “Oh, the student is a non-EU which can have some of its effects”, stuff like that. It’s happened to me and several of my friends before where they see my name and then they see that notification and they go, “We don’t, we’re not able to take you in here because it’s going to take a long process” [...] Without asking at all. And that’s happened several times where I’m so confused. Why? Like why? What, what process will it take? What it why is it like that?

Finally, the recruitment of new employees is known to be a process in which implicit and explicit bias can result in exclusion and discrimination [7] (OECD, 2016). In the following example, prejudiced remarks were made during a job interview by apparently well-intending committee members who imply that

the “European way” is better, thus reinforcing assimilation rather than acculturation:

• Story 14. “I had to mention that my mother belonged here”

• For example, someone talking about the Latin American applying for a job and saying that the cover letter was too bubbly and informal and too whatever, and then looking at me and thinking that it was a compliment telling me «No, but you don’t have that problem. Don’t worry. » So being more casual or more engaging, a little bit less ‘European structure’, whatever that means, is not me having a problem. After that, in my new job, I was being told that I should present myself or introduce myself to my colleagues in my new position from mentioning that I have been a Post-doc at [UT faculty], which I understand because of the community. But after I had to mention that I was educated in Europe and that my mother belonged here and not from my country, because that way they can « relate better to me ».

7.3.3. HIERARCHICAL POWER DYNAMICS

Under the theme of hierarchical power dynamics are two sets of stories that critique inequalities and power (ab)use that is considered undesirable and negatively impacting a sense of belonging. The first set of stories is about bias originating from hierarchical power dynamics experienced within academic ranks (professor-PhD) and between support staff and academic staff. The second set of stories is about bias in student-teacher interaction, specifically bias towards students from international, non-EU backgrounds or those perceived to have non-native EU backgrounds (also when they were born and raised in the Netherlands).

Importantly, this theme is not a general critique of functioning in a hierarchical organization but of its undesired consequences. While power dynamics can also work out positively in terms of promoting and supporting inclusion, most stories showed negative experiences with power dynamics resulting in exclusion based on academic rank. The examples range from implicit to explicit cases of rank-based bias, and while individual cases are described, these are perceived as part of a historically evolved broader academic culture. As the example stories show, staff and students from a non-EU background, especially those in a precarious economic position, are at higher risk of becoming the target of hierarchical power used

to exclude them and put them down.

Academic status

There are multiple stories about support staff being treated as less in status and importance than academic staff. More generally, also within academic ranks the UT is experienced as a strongly hierarchical organisation in which position matters in who gets a voice, who gets to participate, and whose work gets recognized and rewarded. In these stories often a comparison is made with previous jobs in organisations with a flatter hierarchy. In the following story, the head of a service department reports back to her team of support staff how they were portrayed by a member of the (then) executive board in a degrading way as “glorified secretaries”. While recognition of differences in expertise, professional and academic, is part and parcel of normal organizational functioning, it becomes problematic for participants when this goes together with a lack of reward or with underappreciation. The practice of downgrading support staff is recognized by other participants, who experience this practice as insulting:

• **Story 14: “We’re basically just glorified secretaries”**

• **Speaker 1.** I remember sitting in a meeting with my boss and her saying that she had a meeting with the executive board, who said that because we’re basically just glorified secretaries, we don’t have the expertise to tell academic staff what to do in any context. I remember sitting there and thinking: Everybody in this room has a master’s degree. Many of us have years, decades of experience as [domain of expertise] and professional academic skills, and they’re stating that we do not have any expertise or knowledge that can be used by academic staff?

• **Speaker 2.** I confirm this. In my faculty, we have the same biased view on support staff. Many colleagues believe that, because you are an expert in education, you do not know anything about science and research. Unfortunately, most agree with the comments or prefer not to take action.

• **Speaker 3.** It seems like this has to do with sort of a misunderstanding of expertise. I think that having expertise in one area does not necessarily confer expertise in other areas, and there is also this sense that the faculties are better than everyone else. So, there’s this sense that, if you’re higher on the hierarchy, your knowledge has more value.

• **Speaker 1.** I also really felt badly for the secretaries on her team because there was this moment where we were being degraded by being called what they were doing. The secretary is on our team keeps our team going. We could not function without them. And so, there was this double insult of you’ve somehow degraded our expertise while also insulting the people that keep us together and keep us moving and keep us working.

• **Speaker 4.** I worked in a lot of different companies. And when I was at the UT and I started working here and I had to convince certain professors to work along in joining forces and helping out each other without having a big bag of money or without having to give them something. So, I had to do it on full commitment and a reaction of a individual professor was « who the fuck are you and who are you to tell me what I’m to do? You don’t even have a Ph.D., so fuck off ».

“there was this double insult of you’ve somehow degraded our expertise while also insulting the people that keep us together and keep us moving and keep us working.”

Devaluation of support staff is experienced the most by support staff operating within the faculties and less by those in central service departments. The point of these participants is not a general disapproval of hierarchical ways of organizing per se, but forms of hierarchy that work to devalue those lower in rank. It may also work the other way around in that research expertise does not automatically make one a good manager; or when academic staff is excluded from support-lead UT projects that could benefit from academic expertise instead of reinventing the wheel.

In the following example two types of undesired hierarchical difference are mentioned, one between those with and without PhD degrees and the other between soft skills and hard science. This state of affairs is presented as “the way it is” and a usual feature of higher education in general:

• **Story 15: “Without a PhD degree you don’t matter”**

• When I started at the UT I started [...] not at a central department, but a faculty. And there I noticed in the academic hierarchy plays a really big role still in the way

people are treated. So, from the beginning, I noticed that, especially in the educational level, there's a big difference. I would work as a coordinator of one of the masters of the UT. The way you would deal with a professor or with an assistant professor or with program director or with a coordinator would be really different. I heard a lot of stories from people saying that, if you haven't done a Ph.D., then you don't matter. Whatever you say will be taken less seriously, you will not be listened to. If you would have a meeting with someone ranked higher than you, they would ask « why do you want to meet me? ». I don't know how that can actually be judged, but that's the way it is. And I still think in it's not just the UT, but higher education universities in general. There is still a culture that I noticed as well when I started here that climbing the hierarchy is really difficult. I must admit that right now I'm [...] at this central department, I feel much, much less, actually. Not at all. So that's a good thing that it's not present everywhere..

“if you haven't done a Ph.D., then you don't matter.”

And it also it makes me feel very othered within academia. Just because my department isn't considered academic, I don't belong. And I don't fit within the academic culture.

Over and over again, people assuming that my knowledge is somehow inferior or sometimes it's dismissed as being a soft skill since it's not a hard science. I feel like I'm fighting against these, these norms in this hierarchy instead of being able to just show up and say: «Hi, I have this knowledge that I'd like to share with you because my goal is to help the students and to help the staff to make their jobs easier and to help them be the best version of themselves ». I can't do that if I have to start every conversation by defending my credentials and defending my knowledge.

The pressure of needing to defend one's credentials and demonstrate one's expertise to people with higher (academic) rank also finds a parallel in social scientists from the BMS faculty who feel they have to prove themselves in the company of engineers.

Regarding power imbalance due to academic rank, in the roundtables both support staff and lecturers without a PhD degree acknowledged the “pressure to

get a PhD”. Participants situated the push to get a PhD degree historically and re-evaluated its relevance as part of the broader discussion on recognition and rewarding:

• **Story 16. “It's about what we recognize as knowledge”**

It's about what we recognize as knowledge. The official confirmation that you've gained knowledge is that you get a degree in return. And since the Ph.D. is the highest degree that exists, it sort of automatically becomes the standard. But maybe we're asking too much. A degree means that you've gained a high expert knowledge. This is a real victory and a lot of hard work, but it's also a very specific area, a very specific set of skills. It doesn't automatically mean that you have expertise in all potential areas. If you put two PhDs together in one room, they're going to have different knowledge. But they're both PhDs.

Some of my colleagues who have been lecturer [...] are encouraged to get a PhD because the policy is going to change in the near future. They expect that the lecturers have PhDs, and all of a sudden, these people who are really amazing in what they are doing are pushed to get the PhDs that doesn't have any effect in their capability and quality of teaching. I think that, for some reason, some of these people think that you have a PhD, you can teach better, which is not true. [...] there are some colleagues that have a master's degree and are more reliable and they are doing an amazing job in terms of lecturing compared to some of the colleagues that have a higher ranking.

Participants also mentioned that having a PhD degree is in itself not a guarantee for equal or respectful treatment. In the following citation, a staff member in a central service department, commented about her direct colleagues with a PhD degree (who are working in a position as scientific staff) who observed that they were not treated equally as compared to their peers. The observed bad treatment was attributed to academic rank as “perhaps a combination of function type and academic degree”.

Participants also noticed that in some parts of the organisation, despite changes for the better over time, the practice of not being given credit as first author on articles or research proposals still occurred.

Among certain professors, I won't say all of them, you see this culture that I'm a professor, even if you are assistant

professor or associate professor and I'm the main contact person. The hierarchy doesn't, doesn't go away and is still there. And sometimes I had to confront the issue and I said that, am the head researcher. This is my idea. I should be the first author. I should be the corresponding author because I've done the job. Sometimes, even if it's your project you struggle a lot because you are in the lower ranking of this academia hierarchy."

Recently, however, we submitted an abstract to a high reputation conference. The analysis was done by me, the idea was from a colleague and me. The professor did not have any contribution, but he contacted my colleague, who is first writing, to ask to be second writer. But besides the first writer, the other writers do not really matter in the academic world. So, I was thinking « Why, being at the peak of your career, would you still insist to be the second one, despite not having contributed? »

Especially people from (non-EU) cultures that are portrayed (by others but also by self-identification) as less "confrontational", "humbler" or from an economically precarious background, were perceived as being at risk to be taken advantage of, and this may concern especially those from older generations:

Story 17. "The professor is well aware that people from my culture are not very confrontational"

We are both also from a different culture, and the professor is well aware that people from my culture are not very confrontational and that we don't easily demand our rights. As an observer, I see that, particularly for certain nationalities, the supervisor, who all come from the same culture and nationalities, tend to push them as corresponding author. There is an internal discussion between a student that certain professors or associated professor requests such things and that if you don't follow, you would be in trouble. They don't fire but they can make your life hard. [...] After I graduated, I never faced many issues that my daily supervisor faced because she's 10 years older than me and from a different generation. For me is much easier to say no to people compared to her. And this is the difference between our generation in my country. Nonetheless, I consider myself a little bit shy to confront as people and say: « Hey, respect my rights! ».

Some, like myself, also don't have the same rights because they come with a scholarship. He knows these differences. He never has this behavior toward the European students or Ph.D. candidates. He knows that in

certain countries, people are humble. I can say that this is the misuse of power and because you're aware of the certain situation and you push people. He never has this behavior with Dutch or European students because they also know the right better than the others. They will complain loudly and publicly.

Yes, we're writing a proposal for it for a project, and during a conversation, he told me several times that PhD candidate with the scholarship are better. But PhD students are smart. They have coffee breaks with other students where they talk about their rights, the obligations and duty of the faculty toward them. But you always see the differences, and it is clear to me and he's really smart. He doesn't document anything [...] And he said the last time, he said « I prefer a candidate that you can control better ».

I got pushed back several times because of my nationality. Many times I wanted to write a national proposal, but the comments said that this proposal mostly most Dutch people get these grants and I shouldn't waste my time. When I discussed this issue with some of the academic staff or research officer at the UT, it was a question mark for them. They claimed it was not true by giving examples of non-Dutch people that received such a grant. I felt a lot of pushback at that stage.

Student-Teacher interaction

Student participants in the roundtables gave examples of student-teacher interactions they experienced as uncomfortable, harmful or abusive. While some of these examples depict behaviour unfit for a teacher at a university more generally, it is important to notice how specific groups of students (women, internationals especially non-EU) come to the fore as more vulnerable to be affected. The following story, involving first and second year bachelor students, is about a notorious teacher making students feel uncomfortable or pressured. While the portrayed intimidating teacher behaviour affects all students, the story also alludes to potential discrimination based on nationalities (we have to talk English because you are there), and to sexual harassment implied in the intimidating remark of a male teacher to a female student to visit her in private.

Story 17: "now we have to talk English because you are there"

He always said when I was there "OK, now we have to talk

English because you are there” and that made me feel really uncomfortable. And [...] yeah, I talked to some students as well, and everyone then said, “OK, yeah, you have to be careful because that person is very strange and acts sometimes really aggressive and abuses their power”. [...] the docent only talked about themselves. So that was the first experience. He only said what he did and what he is working on, and then he presented a book of himself and said, “That’s the best book ever written”. [...] And if we ever get so far that we could do something like this, we couldn’t have done it better. [...] and in the same lecture, he said he expects everybody to be in all of his lectures. And if someone is missing, they have to have a good reason either that they are threatened by death because they’re so sick themselves [etc.] and everyone else is not an excuse. And nobody should look on their phones and nobody should look at their laptops, although we should use our laptops. [...] he wanted to say that he’s the person in power. [...] so when it escalated, it was one lecture, then I was probably late because I had to go to the toilet before and then there was two minutes late and he said to me, I’m always late, I’m disrespecting him. I’m not only disrespecting him, I’m disrespecting the whole university [...] and the student next to me was a very young, a young female student [who didn’t] know when she can finish [the assignment] And then he said, yeah, “OK, maybe I should just come visit you” and I’m not sure if we thought it was a joke or if she understood it as a joke, but it was really strange and I guess she felt really pressured at the same time. And the next time I came to the class, he said he wouldn’t teach me anymore and he wouldn’t look at my assignments at all because I’m disrespecting him [...] And I think the most negative thing was [when he] was preventing us to work together. [...] But the fact remains that this person still is in position and still is enabled to behave like this. So for me, it doesn’t have any consequences, but for other it, it will still have. And that’s sometimes a little bit frustrating.

While some forms of exclusion involve forms of implicit (ethnicity- or religion related) bias, in some cases the discriminatory aspect is more pronounced. The next story, involving a student in a master program, centres around a teacher treating a student differently because she is from South America. While there are other international students in the class, the EU students from neighbouring countries do not get this different treatment.

“but that’s not an excuse for him to think about whether I deserve to be in that class. If I got into the UT, I deserve it.”

• **Story 18: “If I got into the UT, I deserve it”**

• At the beginning, the teacher asked a lot of questions regarding my degree. « How did I get into the UT? What steps did I take to get into the university? » At the start I thought he was just interested. Maybe it was his first-time meeting someone from South America. But then he started to make comments about, for example, my accent. He told me it is hard to understand. But when I asked it to my classmates, they told me that they could understand what I was saying. They didn’t understand why the teacher was telling me that either. After this, I started to be more aware of the interaction between this professor and me. And then I realized that he was treating me differently from anybody else. And that was quite difficult. [...] They had to take a look into my grades, my degree, the courses I’ve taken, my English level. Everything was questioned. I questioned why he was like that on only to me, even though I wasn’t the only international student. [lists names of EU countries fellow students are from] I know Latin America may not be the best reference that you have in education, but that’s not an excuse for him to think about whether I deserve to be in that class. If I got into the UT, I deserve it. [...]

• To give another example with this teacher, I met another girl who was also from Latin America, who had trouble with this professor, and she did her bachelors in the UT. They told her that they couldn’t fire the teacher because he was such a big thing entirely inside the [name of program], the school. He can’t get fired. And in that case, with my friend, the teacher was even more straightforward. The teacher told her « You are not smart enough to be here ». [...] At this point, there was a point when I wasn’t even thinking about the grade, I was just thinking about my well-being and how bad I needed for him to say: « Well, I’m sorry I didn’t know that I was being mean, or racist or whatever to you. » But, I don’t know, something like that. Yeah. Look, it’s been two months and I still cry when I talk about it. So it was a big deal.

The citation below also provides an example of a diminishing remark from a staff member of the study program towards a Muslim student during a graduation ceremony

- **Story 19. “Your diploma has no social value”**
- “Congrats, you made it. But your diploma has no social value. But it’s a nice piece of paper. You can hang it around in your house and look at it”. And then I was suddenly, like my parents are looking at me shocked. I’m looking at them. And then I was like, Oh, that’s not very nice for me to say when. I’m finally receiving the piece of paper. You worked for so many years and then you’re telling me it has no social value [...] And so then I was a bit surprised. And then I asked around if [staff member] had repeated the same to any other study mates and [the staff member] hadn’t said anything to any of my friends like that. It was just me. And then I. First of all, it’s not even a nice thing to say to someone. And then, second of all, I only to me. And then you suddenly start to think like. What? Well.

The point here is that the remark was perceived to be discriminatory because the devaluation of the diploma only occurred in response to this particular student and not others.

The examples presented here, provide insight into what inclusion and discrimination concretely looks like in overt and covert forms in daily interactions. In the following section, we will take a closer look at what not only individuals, (in)formal interactions but also structural and cultural organizational responses to avoid exclusion and promote inclusion can look like.

7.4 PERSONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSE

Based on the stories and the discussion in the roundtable about the stories, a pattern emerged in terms of five aspects characteristic of personal, group and organizational response (Figure 7) following the initial experience of (non)-belonging in a situation as described in the stories in part 7.3..

These aspects are dependant on each other and an integral approach is needed.

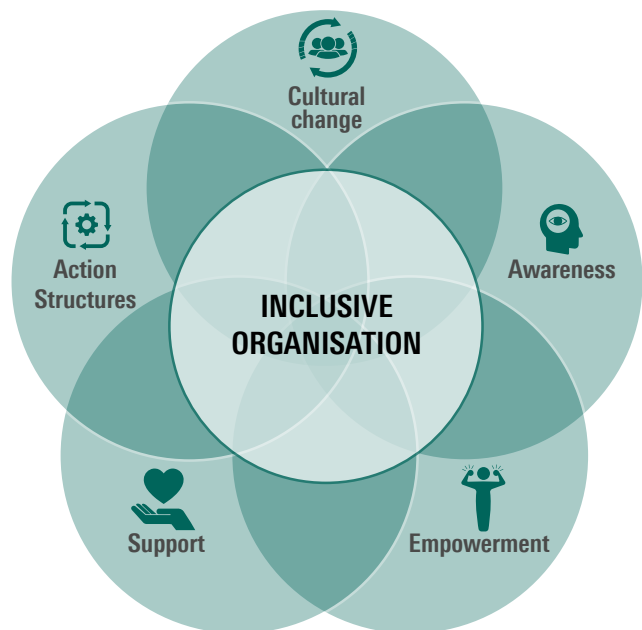


Fig. 7 Five aspects of the personal, group and organizational response to in/exclusion

7.4.1 AWARENESS: IS THIS REALLY HAPPENING?

Awareness concerns stories about how conscious people are about forms of bias in the behaviour, attitude and language of themselves or others. Under this theme also fall stories about how in actual situations it can be difficult to ascertain that in fact bias is occurring. These stories centre on the question “Is this really happening?”. A **first** awareness issue concerns the awareness that there are hierarchical power differences and that they can result in bias:

- It would be interesting to not only have these
- conversations with us people who experience these
- hierarchical differences, but also with the professors and
- the people who are in higher positions to see how they
- experience it. Do they also have the feeling that something
- is going wrong? How can we together come up with
- solutions in order to improve the sense of belonging?

International experience with different academic cultures is mentioned as a possible way to become aware that hierarchical power differences do not need to be taken for granted:

- Recently we had a postdoc. He’s Dutch and studied in
- Canada [...] he told the other postdocs that they aren’t
- respected enough. For him, postdocs and PhD candidates
- are the same level. So, it is a very cultural thing and
- sometimes different for people who come from different
- backgrounds.

Second, the harmfulness or ethical dubiousness of certain actions in everyday situation in work and study, is not always recognized. Therefore, before even taking the step to speak up or seek help, participants express the need for a realization that “what happened really is wrong or weird”:

- Just sometimes you run into things and you, at least
- through my experience, your first thought is, “Am I the
- one who’s getting crazy here? Is this normal? Am I
- overreacting? Am I seeing this clearly?” And you just want
- to have someone you can tell your story kind of to see if, if
- it really is, you just seeing things that aren’t there or if
- you’re really not crazy.

The lack of awareness that bias occurs, and that certain behaviours and processes are in fact discriminatory or exclusionary, also hampers easy monitoring of DE&I issues in education. One of the

focus group discussions focused on how the organisation, in particular educational quality management, could pick up signals from students about lack of inclusion. After the idea of asking about such issues in an evaluation was proposed by a quality manager, a student responded that first awareness is needed in students themselves (and this applies to staff as well) about “what actually the problem was”:

- And also I couldn’t if I was asked in an evaluation, see
- what the problem was at that time, I didn’t know the term
- power abuse, so I couldn’t know, but I didn’t even know
- what happened at that moment. And slowly realizing what
- the styles of teaching he was using and what effect had it
- on the students and on me. Yeah. But that situation, I
- didn’t know.

“but that’s not an excuse for him to think about whether I deserve to be in that class. If I got into the UT, I deserve it.”

According to a quality assurance officer, a key difficulty of picking up signals in formal assessment procedures, is the implicit nature of belonging and inclusion that does not fit well with the explicit nature of evaluations.

- She had a good vibe with this person in the room like she
- had the vibe of belonging. I think all of these signals are
- quite implicit, so our evaluations right now are very
- explicit. Like the teachers show, the objectives of the
- course, was even, I think there is something about like the
- environment of the class or something, but there are very
- specific signals that are not being treated.

A **third** awareness issue, pertaining to the important distinction between the person and their actions, comes to the fore in the following story. This example points towards the importance of realizing that a good person can act unknowingly and unintentionally in a biased and harmful way.

- It’s also hard to call these people out, because they have
- some positive aspects as well that you cannot ignore. The
- professor was very supportive during my research phase.
- That makes it really hard. I cannot ignore that part of his
- character, you know. If doesn’t feel well.

It all starts with realizing the more general human tendency to judge, and recognize that we all may have unconscious biases:

- **Story 23. “Everybody wants to be a good person, but I know that I’m racist”**
- But the the issue there has been that I don’t think the people that say these things are bad. Not all of them are. And that has been hard for me to recognize. They are just people that are extremely racist and don’t know it. At a level on which they really think that they are being helpful. You know, they are just like « why wouldn’t I say that if it is true? ». So they refer to people from particular areas of the world as they have lower educational level, even if they come to our masters. And that comes repeatedly in different type of comments by different people in different settings. The issue is that they don’t even question it because they truly believe that that’s a fact. So we get as a generalization.
- Of course, everybody wants to be a good person. [...] And I think also that a lot of people are just unaware of what they’re doing to other people. A guy might think he’s just joking. Somebody else might just be like « Yeah, I’m just curious about your level of education ». I mean, from his own mind, it might be that he’s not doing anything. I think it’s a thing of implicit bias and that a lot of people don’t know what they’re doing wrong. And implicit bias also really nasty because you don’t know yourself that you have a bias. So I think maybe an implicit bias training might be helpful.

“I know that I’m racist, but I know this because I know I have implicit biases.”

- **Speaker 2:** It’s true. Many people people don’t know they are racist.
- **Moderator:** Yes. If you ask anyone at the UT, no one is racist. And, for example, I know that I’m racist, but I know this because I know I have implicit biases.
- And I know that sometimes I’m making a decision based on implicit biases. I won’t even know that I just made a weird or bad choice. So I think it’s quite difficult to just target people who are racist. If something happens, and there has been an incident, yeah, you can point them out and say « yo, What you’re doing right now, it’s not really cool ».

Fourth, a more general problem in making people aware of the road still to go to become a fully inclusive organization, is that the transition to an English-speaking university is not yet widely accepted:

- I think this has to do with the general idea of many people at the UT believe that we shouldn’t speak English and we shouldn’t be this international and we should go back to a Dutch classroom. He is probably one of these guys.

In sum, what becomes visible in these stories is that what can be called awareness-in-action, i.e. realizing that something is indeed wrong and in need of taking action, is a precondition before signals can even be sent out to the organisation.

7.4.2 EMPOWERMENT: COURAGE, PROTECTION, AND RESPONSIBILITY

Empowerment as understood here is a “construct that links individual strengths and competencies, natural helping systems, and proactive behaviours to social policy and social change” [27,28]. The construct underscores the need to focus on capabilities instead of risk factors, and an exploration of “environmental influences of social problems instead of blaming victims” [29]. Theories of empowerment include both processes and outcomes. This paragraph is mainly concerned with the outcome of individuals “situation-specific perceived control and resource mobilization skills” [29] that could result from empowering actions, activities, or structures. In the current paragraph, the focus is on when and what for participants felt the need for empowerment, and what processes, actions and structures could facilitate becoming empowered. This could be processes and actions involving non-normative (non-white, non-EU, non-Dutch-speaking) students and staff who are most subjected to exclusion, and allies they encountered in the organization willing to help but who do not always fully know how. Although the allies were not present in the roundtables, we heard about their experienced powerlessness frequently in conversations in our role as SEG members. For the non-normative, excluded group, after awareness and the realization that in fact bias is a reality in the organisation, finding courage to speak up or take action is mentioned as a next step. Helplessness and powerlessness are experienced, especially in cases

of dependency (for example being dependent on a teacher for getting a grade or passing a course):

- I think that deciding to step up and talk to somebody
- about actually doing it is that there's also step between
- that. And if you finally found the courage to go and talk to
- someone and then if that is not the right person, you have
- to talk to them or talk to someone else again, to tell your
- story multiple times. It's not a happy story, and you might
- already feel uncomfortable sharing the information
- because you might get emotional and feel because you
- really feel helpless in a way.

- I have the feeling that the professor might know who filed
- the complaint. And I don't want the retaliation. Even
- though I know it is anonymous, I still have that feeling. So
- that's why I decided to wait until I finish to file a complaint.

- Another thing would be the feedback provided to the
- person that is brave enough to come out with this story
- because I think you were very brave. Not everybody goes
- and speaks up. Maybe you spoke up, but there are many
- other students in this situation, and it's really hard to come
- with this story.

Importantly, finding courage does not (and should not) have to be a virtuous act of an individual, but can be actively facilitated by the organization, for example by offering (legal) protection and information about rights as this participant mentioned:

- And at the time I also didn't know that I could say, No, I
- don't want to talk to him. I mean, I probably would have
- preferred not to talk to him. And like, if I'm sitting, then
- have to defend myself in front of three people that my
- story is valuable, I guess that would be a really a really
- uncomfortable situation. So I'm like, Yeah, you said, I
- don't know what rights I had. I don't know what the
- consequences would have been.

- "I remember a couple of months ago, I was talking to a
- student who graduated three years ago. They told me
- that, if she knew their rights and had the position they
- have now, she could and would've sued him. But she
- didn't know they rights. But she was a PhD student with a
- scholarship like me, so she was scared that he would find
- an excuse to fire her. And the professor could. She was
- not a staff member."

The severity of how some cases affect those involved can also be seen in how some mention that they contemplated as a last resort that they "would quit or change my job" or give examples of people who actually did quit instead of seeking support.

In addition to ideas about what the role of the UT organization should be in supporting empowerment, some participants mentioned their own responsibility in bonding and bridging with others. The following story is about a Muslim employee joining the hitherto white UT staff association. He advocates the need of self-empowerment, to speak up and take action towards diversity:

- So I, I have written myself, what is that called, or
- registered at several clubs, just like the UT staff
- association, I also think that is a very white program, that
- is also not inclusive, so I just approached the chairman,
- like: with, with that call like is there going to be something
- else in the schedule? Once there was something with a
- visit to a mosque, [...] I organized that. [...] Well, if I can take
- my responsibility, then I have to be in those clubs myself
- and then I have to make my voice heard and then I'll
- emphasize which... what desire is there in us, where they
- should pay more attention. But as long as they're white
- people, not much is going to change. We also have to join
- those clubs. We also need to show our voice.

- Maybe we are too modest. I do know that the vegetarian
- people, they shout from the rooftops that they are
- vegetarian. Nobody dares uh... No and they, they also ask
- for alternatives. I don't want one meal, I want several. So
- that... I think oh yes I could have done it like that too. I
- don't have to be so modest in my voice... I don't eat pork,
- that's how it was the first years, as modest as possible,
- that's how we were raised, huh? You are happy when you
- have a nice job at the UT. So, you're going to be very
- modest... But we also have to emancipate a bit and take
- our podium as well. Like that vegetarian who yells yes, no,
- I don't eat meat, oh, there's only one choice? He just calls
- that. Maybe we should too.

"Is this normal? Am I overreacting? Am I seeing this clearly?"

In a similar vein, a master student who already thought a lot about how to deal with racism in student life, became actively involved in raising awareness among his fellow (white) teammates:

- I made a presentation [...] for my [sports] team because I
- want to share some stories that they don't experience but I
- do because of my skin color. I'm just talking about a group
- with somebody who just knows how to give people a
- feeling of like « Alright, this happens. If it happens again,
- maybe I'm more empowered».

Finally, support can also take the form of a peer support/empowerment group, to share experiences, empower each other and sustain a hopeful mindset.

- I know how it feels to be called racial slurs, and it's kind of
- difficult to know what to say to yourself, just not to get into
- a mindset of I'm less than everybody else and those kind of
- stuff.

Sharing stories of how one successfully deals with day-to-day racism, can be empowering as well. A good example of a role model is this staff member with a history in facing racism, despite being born in the Netherlands (with two international parents) and speaking Dutch fluently. She talks about having found her own way of dealing with day-to-day racism based on long experience with a mother-in-law who is amongst the most racist persons she knows:

- **Story 24: "Together we managed to get along"**
- So it's always, together we have managed to get along.
- Just by discussing and being upfront because that's what in
- my experience Dutch people need. Don't avoid them. If
- they avoid you go to them straight away. So I don't think my
- experience is, it's not only the Dutch, but it happens with
- Moroccans, it happens in every ethnic group, people have
- beliefs and it's very difficult to make them believe
- something else or move them in the other direction, even
- young people.

What we can learn from these stories is how racism as a pervasive experience in daily life forms the background of racism in the work place and calls upon the patience and perseverance of coloured staff. In contrast to some (young) students for whom everyday racism comes as a shock, for more senior students and staff this reality is taken as a matter of course.

In sum, being empowered to speak up involves more than brave individuals. The organization can encourage individuals, take them seriously when finding courage, and offer protection so that they feel safe to speak up. Individuals can find inspiration in how others have spoken up and taken action (make role models findable/visible) and can find support from like-minded people (facilitate storytelling roundtables and make stories available).

7.4.3 SEEKING AND FINDING SUPPORT: ACCESSIBLE, APPROPRIATE, EMPOWERING

Once people feel empowered to speak up and seek help, the stories showed a mismatch between help sought and found, problems with accessibility of support, and lack of expertise of those providing support. Students talk about the difficulties in locating the appropriate person to talk to and get support: "they didn't know how, who to turn to". In case they do know who to turn to, it is unclear to them who is responsible for what.

- And um, there's one actually that's inspired me to actually
- really go to this conversation because I just did not know
- where to go with this. Like, no student counsellor, no. I
- even looked up racism at the UT, discrimination at the UT, I
- googled it. There was not really a place where I could go
- with this.
- I think the confidential advisor is also responsible to make
- sure that, in this case, legal steps can be taken, but I'm not
- sure how that works.

Students report having to go through a chain of people before finding what they need.

- Students often get lost in the jungle of service portal,
- internet, examen regulations, you name it. So yes, it's very
- good if they take a step to talk to someone with it. Yes, it's
- good that they're are being introduced early on.

The expectations do not always align with what particular services (think they) are for. For example, some expect the student association to be able to play a role in settling serious issues, only to find out that the association representatives see their role mainly as organizing fun activities for students. The experienced difficulty in finding and getting appropriate support, results in a high threshold that only very motivated and assertive students may be able to cross:

- if you have to tell that story multiple times to different
- people because you stumble upon someone who cannot
- help you is willing, but it's not the right person. It should
- really be clear who you can turn to, and you only have to
- tell your story once. I think that would also help.

The importance of easily accessible staff also comes to the fore in the wish for students to have:

- people known to students that they can easily turn to and
- talk to just to check and might be seeing like ghosts here,
- maybe they're already well, it gives you an idea that at
- least somebody is listening to you who may be part of a
- solution.
- the step towards a study advisor is so much smaller than
- going to confidential advisor in this case, because they're
- most of the time, they're much closer to the student, of
- course. And nine out of ten times they know they know
- who their study advisor is luckily.

A study advisor who took part in the roundtables, explains from the support structure side the struggle in *"How to communicate that everyone is welcome, that we are the first point of contact"*. When the students do find the person in the relevant function for their question, sometimes they find the quality of the support insufficient.

- I decided to talk to someone and that someone told me: «
- It's just how Dutch people are. They are so direct. And I
- was thinking: "This is not being direct ».

Also in their private lives, it leads to extra frustration when experiences with racism are belittled or downplayed by people around them. In the following example the student talks to the guy she was dating about racist comments she had to endure from his roommates:

- Of course I was very mad and telling the guy I was dating
- like what the f**k? Yes, and he was like and this is answer
- that I always got like "that doesn't matter" like "they're
- joking

Therefore, the importance of training staff in confidential roles is proposed, because of the need for a highly qualified profile:

- "it would have to be some really freaking good person,
- you know, to be able to support everything".

- Yes, that's what I wanted to say. Because if the
- psychologist tries to justify what the teacher said by
- saying « Ah, he's just direct » then that's not OK. No, that
- person should also be trained in the matter. That was the
- second time I didn't got a positive response. So it's just
- me being victimized all over again. It's a never ending
- cycle. So probably not one person, but a group would be
- okay. I don't know.

7.4.4 RESPONSIBLE ACTION: COUNTERPOWER, AUTHENTICITY, FOLLOW-UP

After speaking up and seeking support from peers or support services, the next hiccup in the organizational response has to do with the kind of action undertaken by these peers or support services. The idea of what is considered to be responsible and appropriate action after a DE&I problem has been signalled, is not the same for everyone.

First, while a listening ear is deemed relevant, and psychological help may be desired by some students and staff members who experienced inappropriate behaviour, they also expect support to go further than that. Some expect others to act as intermediaries, only to learn that this is not possible:

- I think it's the biggest disappointment to hear "Well, thank
- you for your story, but I think you need to go here or you
- need to go there and tell it again because I'm not allowed
- to tell it. You need to tell it yourself". And I know that's
- that there are all kind of legal things behind that, but I can
- understand it's really difficult for students.

From an HR officer we hear that on their end, they sometimes want to talk to people about whom they receive complaints, but they cannot do so unless the person filing the complaint gives permission. Because of fear for repercussions, they are reluctant to give permission. Those expecting action to be taken, ask who has *"a mandate [to] act upon the information that they're receiving"*. A study advisor underscores the importance to "reach someone with power to give the counter power".

Second, the authenticity of the response matters as the following example shows. In this case, action is taken towards a teacher about whom complaints have

been received. It took some persuasion by the program coordinator to convince the teacher to talk to the student who filed a complaint. The resulting (partial) behaviour change was then questioned by the student:

- And sometimes, I think it was like he tried to act it, he said,
- “Oh, that’s so cool. That’s so nice. I really love that book”.
- But actually, I think he didn’t even. So, he just pretended
- to say so, and it was really difficult to understand when he
- was like giving real advice because sometimes he said,
- “that’s so perfect, so cool. I see that you have a gift”. And
- the next moment, he said, “you’re not worth teaching.
- You, you’re incompetent and you don’t value it or you
- don’t respect the university”.

The issue here is not only about the authenticity of the person who initially acted in an exclusionary manner, but also in the lack of follow-up from the program.

“But as long as they’re white people, not much is going to change. We also have to join those clubs. We also need to show our voice.”

There appears to have been only a talk with the teacher, but no follow-up in terms of training in the required competence or monitoring of the situation. This example raises questions such as what happens in case there is no improvement in the behavior of a teacher? What then are the consequences if any? Is there a protocol on how to deal with violations of inclusive behavior? Do programs deal with this locally, or is there a UT policy?

Third, who is responsible for the responsible action and for following up? In the example story, the need to take the signal seriously is expressed by the study advisor, and the responsibility for that action is attributed to the faculty.

- Taking ownership is also taking the signal serious.
- Because I’ve heard those comments before, of this
- teacher. And like, I think you were asking [name
- Participant 1], is he still there? Yes, he’s still there. So
- that’s something not going right in my faculty about taking
- seriously the signals.

The lack of follow-up on actions taken, is also reported in relation to incidences in which staff from service departments were treated as inferior. The importance of not taking it personally came to the fore, to protect one’s mental health. Also, personal action was taken in the form of speaking up, but this did not necessarily result in real change, showing how structural change needs more than assertive individual action.

- Afterwards, I had a good conversation about it, but I still
- some weird and awkward situations in the next meeting.
- So, I don’t know what more I can say about it.

Fourth, we also observed some systemic problems, as in the known unequal access to UT-Flex for non-EU students. However, the consequences differ across faculties depending on how actively and creatively staff deals with the restrictions they face. The following example is about a student who suffers from being unjustly perceived as an EU student due to their foreign name:

- And then they go to UTFlex and they get the notification
- and it’s “oh, never mind. Actually, we can’t do that. We
- can’t hire you” and I was like “OK, for what reason?” And
- they said, “because you’re a non-EU”. And then they just
- didn’t respond to me for three months and then I called
- them emailed them. I was like that’s not OK. And I called
- UT Flex. I was like, “OK, is there a problem with my
- enrollment? Is there’s a problem with anything”. They
- were like no. They just didn’t check. And it was so strange
- to me because I was like, did I do something wrong at UT
- flex? Even the lady at UT Flex was like, There’s nothing
- wrong, like, they should be able to put you in there if they
- just give me a call, I can put you on their list right now.
- And then finally, I got an answer, and they were like, they
- sent me a link to a government website saying non-EU
- students cannot work for more than 16 hours, blah blah.
- And I told them, “look, that’s completely great, but that
- doesn’t apply to me” and in that same week, I had a
- different job interview and they sent me an email, “Hey,
- we got a notification saying, you are not EU. Is this
- correct? Otherwise, let us know. And then we can just put
- you in”.

- I think it’s just the assumption that is made that is such a
- big problem to me because with my name, with my
- friend’s name, it’s just the assumption “Oh, I see a foreign
- name. So, it’s probably going to be difficult”. It’s just the

- assumption. So, if they just take that out and just ask
- directly, “Hey, this is what’s up, it might be a little difficult.
- But is that OK then?”, that would be so much better.

This story is corroborated by a staff member trying to hire a non-EU student.

- So, it was a little bit harder to hire a person. But then I
- said, “Well, this is the one I would like to have”. We had a
- conversation and it’s it matches with my question. So, I
- want to hire this person. And then the H.R. department
- says, “Well, yeah, it takes a lot of time to process. And are
- you sure you want this because you have to get a work
- permit and you have to get a health insurance”. and it is
- possible if you want to. It is possible. But it was kind of
- hard because, yeah, I just took him to [place] with my car
- and we had to first and then health insurance and that sort
- of thing. So, I can imagine the link, the system says no.
- But then hopefully there are enough people who think
- from themselves, from themselves and just sent you this
- email or a question. Yeah. [...] It is [hard] for non-EU. It is
- quite administrative. It’s hard to get a working permit for
- only those 8 to 16 hours. And most of the time, if it’s a
- master’s students, it’s only for half a year and the process
- to get a working permit can take almost three months. So
- yeah, if you want to hire someone for six months, most of
- the time, yeah, if you work at UT, I have an assignment for
- next week, I don’t want to wait for three months. So, then
- it’s yeah. But yeah, if you have some assignments for a
- longer term, in UTFlex, you should think that we can alter
- the system, that you can be ahead of it. If you subscribe
- for you next to then, already make sure it is possible and
- then you don’t have to say no to EU or non-EU people.
- Then you can make sure they are all evenly treated. It’s
- about the quality of the people. It’s not about where you

- come from, that sort of thing.

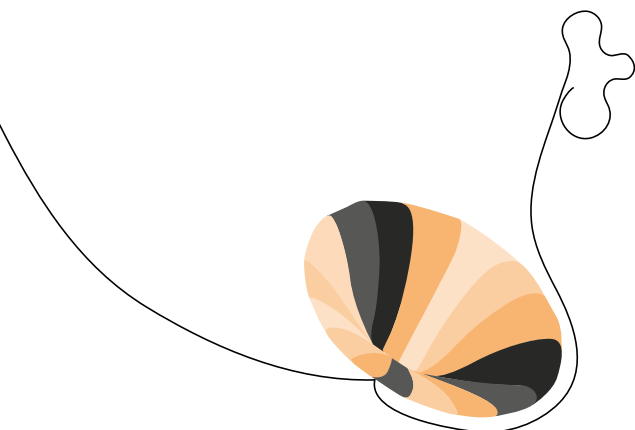
Even when HR and the supervisor pursue the appointment of a non-EU student, this often leads to disappointment about adverse financial and social security consequences (loss of health insurance and having to pay for a doctor’s visit, having to pay more for health costs than the little salary could compensate for) unknown to the student:

- And I’m just super happy that my team chose me and
- decided to go through the whole process. But then just
- being in it was like, OK, it’s not ideal for me. And yeah, so
- in the end, it was not really like a financial benefit. Of
- course, there are some other benefits. I learned a lot from
- the project like I can benefit from it, but the initial objective
- of me applying to that position was not really fulfilled.

The difficulties in the UT-flex job application process for non-EU students depend on the department:

- And I know that here at the DesignLab almost everyone is
- international and they are very aware of the work permits
- to progress and they send everyone notification, every
- once in a while.
- That was perfect. Yeah, the process was similar for both
- [job applications]. So, it was an interview. And then one
- session that I just came along were like a training session
- and then they would actually put me in the team. So, in
- the in the bad experience, they had the interview with me.
- I was supposed to go in the trainings. I had already signed
- up and then they found out about my nationality, and they
- were like, never mind. But I had already, they basically told
- me, if you get through the interview, you’re basically in.
- And then the other one, the good one, it was an interview,
- I did one session there were like, OK, perfect. And then
- they sent me an email, “Hey, we see this notification. If
- that’s correct, then that’s fine. If it’s not. Let us know we
- can change it”. And then I was in the team and that took
- maybe a week tops and that the not so good one took
- three months for me, calling, emailing everything to even
- ask, “Why is that a thing?”

During the roundtable discussions, possible reasons for the differences between departments in how they deal with UT-flex students were mentioned: ignorance of HR officers, lack of time due to workload issues, or not giving priority to providing equal access for(international) students.



In sum, regarding the question what constitutes responsible action at the individual and systemic level, a complex picture emerges in which counterpower, authenticity and following-up on the consequences of actions taken play a role. Often a mismatch was experienced between the expected actions and structure on the one hand, and the actual actions and structures on the other hand. Creative and active individual action could remedy some of the systemic forms of exclusion, but inclusive action should not be solely up to individual discernment and become part of a structural, systemic response.

7.4.5 ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE: REWARD & RECOGNITION, ACCOUNTABILITY & VISIBILITY

In the previous sections the role of awareness, empowerment, support structures and responsible (systemic) action as part of an inclusive organizational response has been described. While all of these aspects contribute to becoming an inclusive organization, some participants also foregrounded that the organizational culture needs to back individual, group and structural actions and processes. The role of a change in organizational culture to back up systemic action at personal and group level, comes to the fore in various ways, hence underscoring the need for an integral approach to inclusion in which all five aspects of an inclusive organizational response are addressed.

The organizational culture is embodied in individual members at various levels, and examples were given about people can make a difference and contribute to a culture of inclusion in the sense of feeling part of and being valued as member of the organisation.

- I also sometimes wonder because if you have like the cleaning crew, I always greet them. But just so people just walk and pass them and just ignore them. And I think well they're also doing a very valuable task here, and it's a human being. [...]It's a really small thing, but it can make, make or break your day.

Also people in leadership positions showing inclusive behaviour were appreciated by participants:

- **Story 25: "She gives you the feeling that everybody has a purpose"**
- And one of those mornings [name of former member] our

- former [inaudible] member was there and I was working at the UT for four years, and it was for me, it was the first time that I was with her in a room and I was kind of a bit of starstruck. I know it maybe it sounds really ridiculous, but she had a certain vibe over her that gives you the feeling that everybody is important in the whole university because everybody has a purpose of being there, but that you are responsible for how people see you. And when I look at the fact that she has a really at that moment, of course, she had a really high level of hierarchy and she was telling us she was giving us tips and how you could do that, even if you're not the person to always speak up or be always are always being in the picture because a lot of things the leader, the leadership people who were there were always, are always but are mostly working in the background. So, we are not teachers or we're not people are who are in the research department we're mostly the supporting staff. But it's she gave me such a feeling that the support staff are just as much important as the research our teaching staff and that we really should take, be together and make it the best for everyone. And that gave me a really, really, really good feeling. So, I think that was a really positive vibe in the hierarchy setting in the university, at least for me. And it's more than half a year ago, but I still I can still feel that vibe that was hanging in the classroom at that moment. And afterwards, we talked with each other about it, how did you cope with her attending such a morning? And we were mostly just grateful for her being there and taking some time out of her schedule to, yeah, to take the time and talk to us. And it was really, really a good experience. So, yeah.

However, they also mention that management cannot alone make the required change happen as in the following example in which public acknowledgement by a board member of the importance of a centre of expertise, was perceived as insufficient to counter the perceived lower status of the service department involved, and how this is considered to obstruct their work.

- A member of the executive board criticized that publicly by stating that this is the centre of expertise and we have them for a reason. But beyond that, I don't know if anything else ever happened. I wasn't there. I think it's interesting, how our department was conferred some authority to enforce some of the aspects of the [domain] policy by the executive board. So, we have on paper in principle, we have some power here to make changes and enforce them. But, in reality, we have very little power

- because if no one views us as having authority or
- expertise or knowledge, then they won't even come to us
- or they won't listen to us. The acknowledgement on paper
- doesn't matter if the culture doesn't back it up.

The participant in this example questioned available means of improving the status of people in service departments (and those without a PhD degree). A sense of powerlessness comes to the fore in the inability to affect the culture in which the hierarchical difference in status is endorsed.

The preferred culture that came to the fore, can be characterised as valuing people regardless of rank, but also a culture of ownership and freedom instead of the perceived culture of control:

- **Story 26: "Freedom to be yourself and set your own targets"**
- I think it's really important to set the right culture about ownership and to feel like you have the freedom to be yourself and set your own targets. [...] I am working in one of the departments, and I find it really weird to hear managers just say « Okay, but no. You have to put this in your agenda and you have to do this first because you're paid out of my budget.» In my previous function and organization, I was in a manager position, but I never used that kind of approach to get something done. [...] I really like self-managing and to feel the freedom to be yourself, because then you can get the most of me and I can really flourish. Work from confidence and not from fear or pressure.

Some participants pointed out how cultural background plays a role in the reproduction of a hierarchical work culture:

- Personally, I am also from a humble culture influenced by my family's roots. I really was raised with the view that you have to act normal and don't do anything, be in the background. In relation to hierarchy, it's something difficult for me as a person.

To gain trust that the desired cultural change is more than lip-service, is seen in this story about a board member proactively modelling inclusive behaviour in an authentic manner.

- I had to go to the university board, board of directors, the executive board in this case, and it was like, "Oh my

- goodness, I'm going to the executive board" and the first thing that [name president] who was the president at that moment said, "Well, please call me [first name president] yeah, because I'm just one of your colleagues" I just told a different office full stop that that cleared like completely all the anxiousness and fake admiration I thought I should have for a person in that position because he said, "Well, I'm just one of the team members and just to a different part in the whole machine". And so it's just, again, a very small thing that can do so much for a colleague, a team member, a student, a staff member.

In contrast to open and clear setting of norms, when people look away from unethical behaviour (e.g., unwarranted authorship claims), this can in effect normalize what in this story is called "slave labour".

- [Are other people aware of his behaviour?] Yes. And nobody does anything. He's a very nice guy, at the same time. He will, for example, do you a favour by involving you in certain research, but in return, they expect you to close your eyes for certain things. [...] When I was a postdoc, some colleagues said: OK, we believe that you people who work for this professor are kind of slaves. Because you do a lot of work.

Other reasons provided for inaction were: (a) that it was a relatively minor case *I heard a lot of worse from other people. He's even one of the nicest*, (b) that the behaviour was circumstantial (*when a professor was adhering to ethical guidelines in student supervision but not in more prestigious contexts such as conferences*), (c) a sense of powerlessness because of the perceived untouchability of professors with permanent contracts combined with the perception that firing people was the only possible course of action. Altogether, these seemingly individual reasons for inaction, together constitute a pattern. Toning down the harmfulness of unethical behaviour, while simultaneously envisioning only harsh, black and white solutions, amounts to an unsafe culture of unaccountability and condoning harmful practices. Instead, a culture of a learning organisation should be promoted, in which preventive measures, early intervention, and accountability become the norm.

7.5 KEY FINDINGS

- Overall, the UT staff is characterized as

well-intending and friendly. However, the perceived good intentions and friendliness also present an obstacle to creating a real felt awareness that implicit and explicit bias is indeed occurring, leading to unintended consequences.

- There is lack of awareness on what inclusion and diversity entails. When people are (perceived as) aware, that does not automatically result in accountability and competence in how to respond well is lacking, leading to a sense of powerlessness by those willing to act inclusively.
- Students, and to a lesser extent staff as well, experience difficulties in finding and accessing relevant information on DE&I topics. Who is responsible for what? Where can information be found?
- A climate of unaccountability and social unsafety is sustained by a combination of (1) belittling the harmfulness of certain practices; (2) inaction toward 'nice' people who act in biased and harmful ways, (3) a limited array of action responses (black and white solutions, either a formal complaint or doing nothing, either firing people or not speaking up).
- The image that emerges from the roundtables is a power imbalance in which the normative UT

“The acknowledgement on paper doesn't matter if the culture doesn't back it up.”

employee is a EU citizen with a PhD degree and an assertive communication style. The non-normative person at the UT is non-EU (in particular those with an Islamic background), without a PhD degree (or with a PhD degree but not in an academic position) and a humble/modest communication style.

- The UT is perceived as a (highly) hierarchical organization [REF]. This hierarchy, while functionally relevant, brings the risk of power dynamics that negatively impact belonging of the non-normative employee and student.
- Belonging often takes the shape of in-group inclusion, for example in student housing and the onboarding process. We observe a pattern of separation between internationals and locals to which both groups either implicitly or explicitly, voluntarily or involuntarily, contribute.
- Examples of racist language and jokes are encountered in informal exchanges, in educational settings and on the UT website (e.g., language

referring to 'people from former colonies' and a reference to 'patatje oorlog' are still there even after our repeated efforts to have it removed).

- Muslim students and staff experience explicit and implicit bias most often. This is most notable in repeated questions to explain themselves or defend their culture, typically from an uninformed and prejudiced perspective of religious customs and practices. While those more experienced with daily acts of religious and ethnic bias have invented personal strategies for dealing with prejudice, such as an attitude of nonchalance, Muslim staff specifically express their disappointment especially with how little the majority takes their culture in account. In making their voices heard, they walk a fine line because of the marked nature of religion.
- Christian and Hindu students do not experience obstacles to belonging based on their religious background. They do not face the same discrimination as the Muslim students. However, when there is space for their religious practices (e.g., the celebration of religious festivals, well-being enhancing meditation practices), this is positively viewed as enhancing their sense of belonging, in particular their sense of community and well-being.
- Small things can make a big difference when it comes to a sense of belonging, visible in feeling gratitude or being supported.

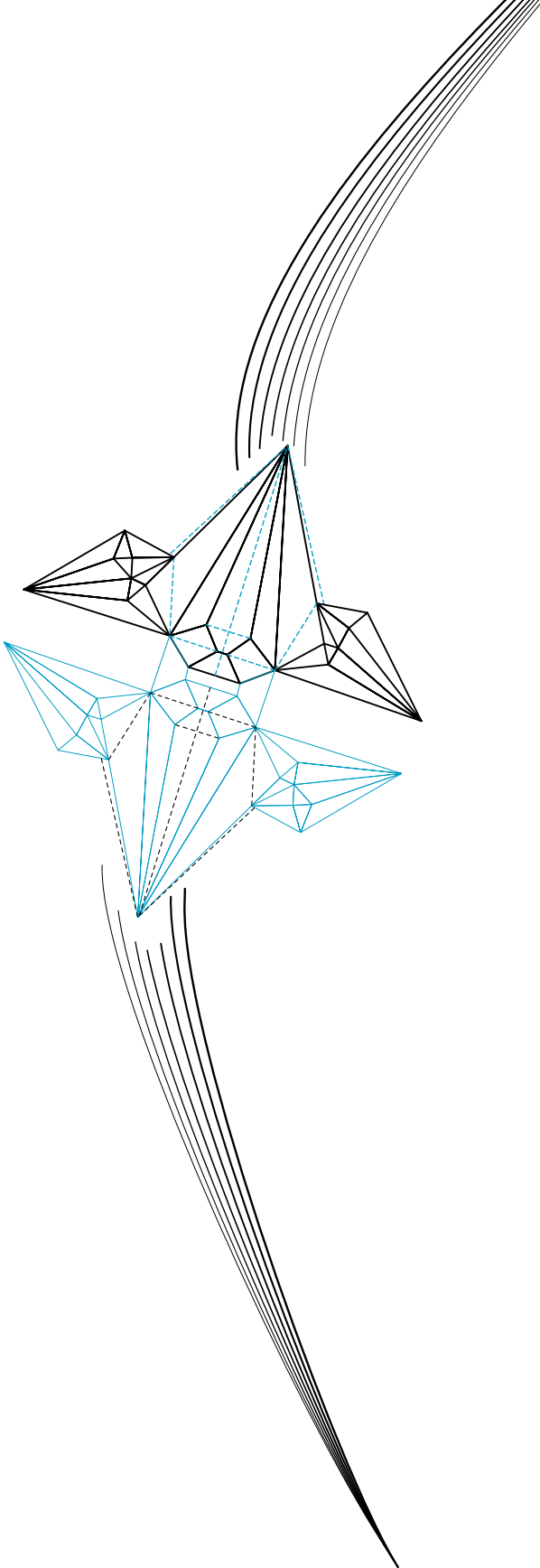
7.5.1 ADVICE

The following requirements and recommendations were formulated on the basis of the views of participants of the roundtables, conversations and observations with UT staff and students, and our own expertise. Some of these recommendations follow or extend already existing developments and we hope to strengthen those developments already set in motion.

7.5.2 REQUIREMENTS

Roundtable participants mentioned several requirements, considerations and concerns to guide the implementation of the recommendations:

1. How to reach those unaware of the importance of inclusion, diversity and equity. The reality of bias and exclusion is not visibly felt for all who work at the UT. Should inclusion training be mandatory for example? How can awareness campaigns reach those unaware of what bias is and how it operates



in day-to-day interactions? Do we need confrontational stories? How can we avoid adverse effects in affected storytellers? How can we show their resilience and strength and not victimize them?

2. Workload and structural barriers to inclusion. It should not depend on courageous, assertive and highly driven individuals to act and speak inclusively. Rather, inclusive behavior should be made easy and a natural part of working.
3. Inclusion should not be incidental or superficial, but made into a real, felt experience in day-to-day (inter)actions.
4. DE&I strategy and policy should be implemented in the spirit of a culture of learning, not of control, blaming, shaming and policing. A safe space is needed in which making errors is perceived as part of a learning process.
5. The need to belong to a specific community needs to be balanced with openness beyond the ingroup. Inclusion of one group at the expense of exclusion of others need to be avoided.
6. In creating opportunities for people to mingle and connect beyond their ingroup, consider organizing events around the year following various festivities (including religious ones) so that people can (on a voluntary and fun basis) learn about each other in an informal way.
7. Because of the often implicit nature of bias, qualitative forms of monitoring and reflection are needed as reliance on quantitative measures and indicators alone is insufficient.

7.5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The overarching recommendation is that an integral approach is needed in which all 5 aspects of an inclusive organizational response (see paragraph 7.4 and figure 7), which we deduced from the stories told, is needed to make an inclusive UT organisation a reality in the future. The recommendations are divided into 5 blocks, corresponding to the five aspects: awareness, empowerment (and bonding, peer-support), (professional/organizational) support, (structural) action, cultural change. For each block, recommendations are formulated with concrete points per main recommendation. Recommendations could be at a personal, group, structural or cultural level.



Awareness:

- **Awareness campaign.** Mobilize creative means to create awareness via posters, stories, ambassadors, theater performance, satire, U-today.
- For (confidential) support: take complaints seriously
- Raise awareness among line management of how **power dynamics** affect inclusion; Create a felt sense of positive power dynamics via inclusive leadership on a day-to-day basis
- **Storytelling roundtables:** facilitate (supervised) storytelling roundtables in which staff and students are confronted with real life examples of (non-) belonging



Empowerment:

- **Empowerment groups:** facilitate online and offline peer empowerment and support groups (where desired with professional supervision or coaching)
- **Training.** Focus active-bystander training on DE&I issues; Encourage speaking up training; DE&I training for line management, staff in recruitment and selection, and (confidential) support staff
- **Capacity building:** facilitate support, teaching and research staff to make inclusive action easy



Support:

- **Information access:** visible, easily accessible support and information about available services; create visibility of confidential advisors and be transparent about their personal and professional expertise to enhance trust
- **Communication:** keep the student/employee up-to-date on the complaint process development; make rights and regulations in a complaint or mediation procedure clear and protect those rights; encourage dialogue before formalizing into a complaint procedure

- **Quality of support staff:** task alignment and regular communication along the chain of confidential advisors, study advisors; increase diversity of confidentiality support staff to enable broader representation



Action structures:

- **Procedures, systems, protocols:** install a protocol for dealing with DE&I violations; implement inclusive recruitment and selection procedures; enable exchange of (religious) holidays in the HR system – start with implementing the VSNU agenda
- Set inclusion as new norm: implement alternative performance indicators focused on collaboration and supportive leadership; require inclusive teaching competence for all teaching staff; establish a DE&I focus in awarding & recognition
- **Monitoring:** monitor inclusion in educational quality assessment and employee survey;
- Design an ethically sound online space for collecting complaints and suggestions for improvement to identify structural issues and pick up early signals

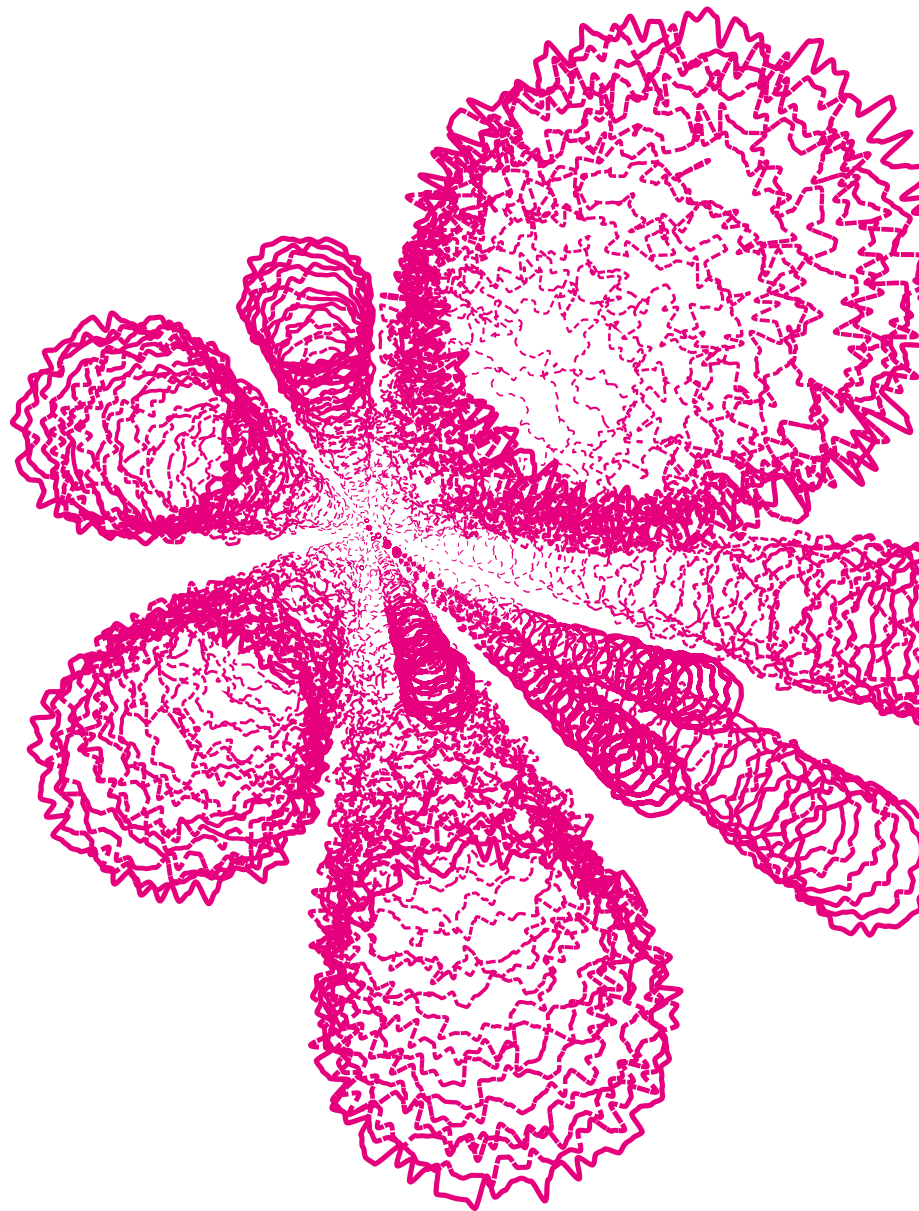


Cultural change:

- **Community of belonging:** active promotion of opportunities for socializing beyond ingroup (e.g., between internationals and locals); create a sense of belonging@UT via exciting, fun activities, storytelling, rituals and symbols; take a multicultural and multireligious workforce as default when organizing events
- **Culture of learning:** learn together how to communicate and act inclusively without creating new forms of exclusion; accept making mistakes as part of the learning process; focus on continuous reflection-adaptation
- **Social safety:** increase social safety, specifically a safe space for openly discussing and confronting bias; set house rules for inclusive and respectful behaviour, language and communication

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CHAPTER 8

SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER IDENTITY AND GENDER EXPRESSION (SOGIGE)

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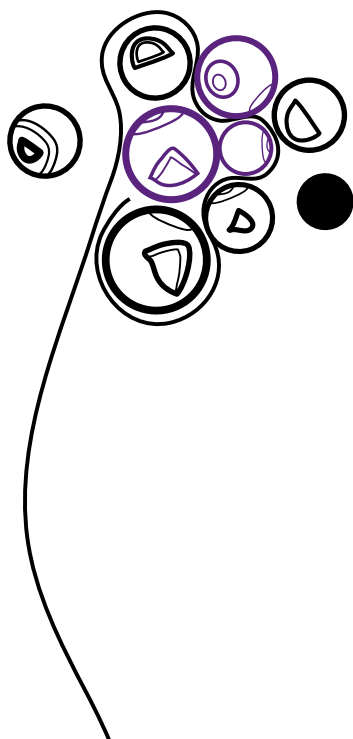


TEAM SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER IDENTITY AND GENDER EXPRESSION (SOGIGE)

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8.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the results of the roundtables organized by the SEG on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression (SOGIGE). We focus on the experiences of both students and staff who, in terms of any or all of these categories, are queer – that is, they do not conform to societal expectations of binary sex categories and potentially reproductive heterosexuality. SOGIGE held three roundtables, in which 4-6 people participated, with a total of 14 participants. All but one participant identified as queer in the sense sketched above. One participant identified as an ally, indicating they were interested in the topic of the roundtable. Below, we will first discuss the participants' conceptions of belonging in general, followed by experiences of belonging or non-belonging at the UT. We will then discuss structures – generally and at the UT – that foster or impede belonging, and end with concrete advice and recommendations.



8.2 MEANING OF BELONGINGNESS

In the first part of the roundtables, participants shared objects or photographs that symbolize what belonging means in their own lives. The working definition of belonging, provided to participants in preparation of the roundtable, was that a sense of belonging encompasses both feeling at home and being a part of something. Throughout the roundtables it became clear that participants had similar conceptions of the meaning of belonging, but there was great variety in the attributes connected to this term. For the participants, belonging meant feeling accepted by the social environment or in a social context, and thereby feeling supported to disclose one's sexual orientation and gender identity, and express oneself, without being limited by (the fear of) negative responses. A safe environment was considered a key requirement for belongingness, but this required more than the mere absence of violence, threats, or discrimination. Instead belonging was connected to explicit signals of support, through responses of family, friends and peers, symbols such as rainbow-colored flags, events like the gay-pride and diversity week, and the use of inclusive language. One of the participants, for instance, explained: *"I [...] brought a postcard, one that I got from a friend of mine when I first came out as non-binary and it made me really feel like I belonged, both because they were so nice to send me a card on this occasion, but also in a broader sense that, well, apparently that's something to celebrate and they make cards for this"*. This example is paradigmatic for many others that were brought up during the roundtable in that it signifies the importance of interpersonal affirmation. It is also one of many examples where participants, when prompted to give an account of experiences of belonging, chose examples that involved close friends and family.

8.3 EXPERIENCES OF (NON)BELONGING AT THE UT

When participants referred to experiences of (non-) belonging at the UT, this was frequently connected to structures or patterns within the organization, such as policy measurements or support structures, but also to specific interpersonal interactions or incidental events, both related to the UT in general and specific departments of the UT.

THEME	SUBTHEME	NR	STORY TITLE
NON-INCLUSIVE STRUCTURES	Policy and support systems	1	“Non-inclusive administrative systems within UT”
		2	“Non-inclusive administrative systems connected to UT”
		3	“Hetero-normative policy”
	Educational environment	4	“Non-inclusive and discriminatory study materials”
		5	“Lack of support in the use of pronouns”
VISIBILITY AND REPRESENTATION		6	“Visibility of LGBTQI+-people and networks”
		7	“Visibility and representation of LGBTQI+ people in support staff”
HIERARCHICAL POWER DYNAMICS		8	“Dean visiting a pride event”
		9	“Job interview”
		10	“Welcoming presentation from the upper management”
DISCLOSURE		11	“No response to disclosure”
		12	“Hesitance to disclose”

TABLE 3 OVERVIEW OF (NON-) BELONGING STORIES PER (SUB)THEME

Non-inclusive structures

During the roundtables, the participants referred to non-inclusive structures and patterns typically in the UT which created experiences of non-belonging. On type of these non-inclusive structures related to policy and support systems, such as non-inclusive administrative systems, hetero-normative policies and lack of gender-neutral toilets in buildings on campus. Participants highlighted the importance of inclusive support systems as a requirement for fostering belonging. They also indicated that while they did not experience these encounters as explicit discrimination, they nevertheless indicated problems within the organization. Below, we list a specific example shared by a trans student mentioned at the roundtables:

- **Story 1 - Non-inclusive administrative systems within UT**

- “In my transitioning process, I changed my name, and I wanted to change this into the administrative systems of the UT as well. For most systems, it is not a problem to change the first name, but you cannot change your last name. This is problem for students and employees who come from a background with gendered last names. I have encountered this difficulty myself, and I get a lot of questions such as why is your name written this way in your e-mail, and why is it written in that way on your

- LinkedIn or whatever. This has put me in a situation where I have to explain over and over again why this is the case, which can be quite annoying.”

In this context, it should be noted that this is not merely an issue for students and staff who are transitioning, but also for those whose names do not conform to the standard, Western European, heteronormative “first name, last name” template, as illustrated by the stories of two gay male employees below.

- **Story 2 – Non-inclusive administrative systems connected to UT**

- “I got married to my husband and I have his name as my second surname. When I just started working at the UT, I got my NS Business card, which automatically assumed that I was a women as there was a hyphen between my two surnames. I asked them to change my gender in the system to male, up to the manager of customer relations of the NS helpdesk, but they said that nobody knew how the systems works and they were unable to change it. They suggested to change the hyphen into a space. But then I thought, what if this were to happen to somebody who spent years transitioning to another gender or somebody who doesn’t identify as a specific gender?”

• Story 3 - Hetero-normative policy

• “My boyfriend and I have started a family, and I want to ask for maternity leave as a male. Because, although I don’t had to carry a child, I have to care for the child when it has the age of 0 day. So the paternity leave of getting four weeks off doesn’t suffice. And here comes the difficulty, because if you go to the HR-system, you can only indicate maternity leave as a female, and there is no option for a male. So I have to discuss this with my boss and get into this battle of getting sufficient time off to taking care of my newborn child, which feels unfair to me, because the system, and even the Dutch legal system is not designed for a situation as ours, it is designed for straight families.

In the context, it is important to consider that Dutch law provides different period of paid leave for expecting mothers and their partners. While a new law will give both parents an equivalent amount of unpaid parental leave, and while there are leave schemes available for adoptions and taking in foster children, this will not change the fact that the leave granted in relation to the birth of a child is still determined in terms of traditional opposite-sex marriages and assumptions about the role of motherhood. While the UT has no power to change this legal situation, it is possible to consider leave schemes that make it easier for queer families to spend time with their newborn children.

“The system, and even the Dutch legal system is not designed for a situation as ours, it is designed for straight families.”

Other experiences about non-inclusive structures in the UT were related to the educational environment. One student reflected on pro-conversion therapy as discussed in a social science textbook (see story 4). Another example discusses the use of pronouns in class (see story 5). An employee provided a story of a student that was undergoing a transitioning process, but fellow students kept using wrong pronouns. The story does not only indicate our bias in using pronouns, but also the lack of support for teachers on how to deal with such situations.

• Story 4 - Non-inclusive and discriminatory study materials

• “Yeah, but what I can say is that it’s actually something just

• make me think of sometimes we do have textbooks where we do and I do notice some insensitivities and things that well, that’s the typical she or he or the opposite gender or conflating sex with gender. In one of the more extreme cases where we had to read about psychopathologies and how to give therapy for like gender dysphoria and which types of therapy can be given. And there was a whole paragraph that was pro-conversion therapy. I was like, holy moly, it is not a good idea to distribute a book that stands behind the idea of conversion therapy. Luckily, we didn’t have to learn this chapter for the exam, but of course, students like me are curious about these topics. I’m also planning to go to the module coordinator to raise the issue of this book.”

• Story 5 – Lack of support in the use of pronouns

• “I mostly have to think of a story actually, but it’s about one of my students. So that’s why, yeah, asked in the beginning, so I do a course which is called [course name], where it sees students for 20 weeks. So it’s quite some time and they have to do all kinds of exercise or to get out of their comfort zone. So I get to know them, yeah, quite well I would say and I see them very often for a long time. And I had one student who went through the transitioning process throughout these 20 weeks. So somewhere in the middle he shared that with us, and then I also had a conversation with the student about like what are the preferred pronouns. We discussed this, but I have noticed then... First of all, the student made clear to me that was the first time ever that any teacher asked something like that and it was very much appreciated and I felt very sorry to hear that. For me that was really like a shocking moment that this is not something that’s just asked on, even if it’s just you know, ‘what are your preferred pronouns’ was not never asked before. Yeah, so that’s one thing that stood out to me. And then afterwards I notice that the rest of the weeks many students kept making the mistake so they kept saying she instead of he. And the students tried to correct multiple times and I could see it was very frustrating for the student because it was also the same students who kept doing it, and I mean it can happen of course ‘cause it’s an adjustment process, but I found it very difficult as a teacher about my role could be like am I going to correct these students as well like should I do that to stand up for this student or should I stay more in the background because this something that’s just for the student to deal it, so I just tried to ask the student about that. But it was also just a bit difficult and student also didn’t really have the answers to these issues, so to say, or for example, sometimes they addresses student wrong when student wasn’t present actually. So then I’m like am I then for example also

correcting? So, it was for me so much like I don't know where to go with these questions and I don't know like what to do really and it would just be nice if there's maybe some kind of support available for these kinds of situations. Or that was for me really a moment that I realized like how difficult is supposed to be for the student, but also for people on the on the other end."

Visibility and role models

The different stories above illustrate cases in which non-inclusive systems, policy, and educational environments were encountered at the UT that directly translated to experiences of non-belonging. It may be tempting to assume that the absence of such discrimination would result in experiences of belonging. However, as previously discussed, to experience of belonging also requires explicit support. Yet while support is available, it is not readily found by queer individuals when needed. Furthermore, support might be improved by a better representation of queer (support) staff. This is illustrated by the two stories below.

Story 6 – Visibility of LGBTQI+-people and networks

"OK, so I'm just going to start with my story here. I would definitely subject this kind of story as an experience to explore myself. As a background story, I've always wanted to go here in the Netherlands since I was a kid because I have a family here, and it didn't start because I was trying to because I was. I knew that I was gay. But as time goes on and I heard a lot of stories about a country here about like it is the first country to allow gay marriage and everything like that. And it kind of made me inspired to at least find a way for me here and explore myself in different kinds of environments. It's been a very tough journey because my whole life I didn't know that there was a space for me to essentially experience and be myself all the time. And finally, I got into here by a scholarship. It was so sudden I was so young. I didn't know I would get this, this young at 19 years old. And then I got into this faculty, [faculty name]. But there is a moment where I was so excited and trying to not forget myself through everything. But when I get into the UT, at first I didn't know which way to go. I have to find everything by myself. And the information that stated on the welcoming session, it didn't really mention what the community here was the gay community. So I had to wait a little bit for at least a month or two months until I found about Pride program. Yeah, it's been a very nice experience, but I think there should be a space for new students to essentially collaborate right away in the

community, you know? And but but yeah, it's it's been an amazing experience. I got into the team with Pride Rainbow Days, I get into Exaltio and I had a lot of fun communicating with the members there. Yeah, but one problem that I'm having right now is with the faculty that I'm in right now because the [name of faculty] faculty, it's a very international kind of faculty. It has a lot of students from different backgrounds, but most of them, they never there's never a space for people in [name faculty] faculty about this, but the LGBTQ students or anything like that. And whenever I feel like I'm in the faculty, I have to stay in the closet because I don't feel safe in there in that way. Because when you want to study here, you have to respect to the community, respect the culture and everything like that. And I feel like whenever I study in the [name faculty], you see, I feel like I'm going back to the closet and I don't find any friends that I can be myself with."

"Whenever I feel like I'm in the faculty, I have to stay in the closet because I don't feel safe in there in that way."

Story 7– Visibility and representation of LGBTQI+ people in support staff

Moderator: You also mentioned that you would like to have interaction, like, that is not like a one-way street, but you would like to have a two-way street with someone who may have similar experiences.

Participant: If I can briefly react to that, that's maybe also one of the reasons why I do not talk about this with my study advisor. Because I think we can talk about it, but I do feel more comfortable if it would be with someone that has like more similar experiences and more knowledge on the subject also and maybe some authority that comes along with it. **Moderator:** Okay. Do you think the UT provides everything that. Or you think that the UT should do more with?

Participant: Well, it should. Uhm, I should be able to find it, and I don't think I would be able to find it, let's say, four months ago. Now, because I've been very much in Inclusion and talking to people it, you know, people, I do know about this. But as I say four months ago, no. So in that sense that that's, I think, really something that could use improvement because I do think there are some things like systems and people that have the knowledge and the experience of this in place. And it is there, I think. But that if people cannot find it and do not know about it, then yeah, we are losing out."

Summarizing, the biases and stereotypes in policies and educational environments and visibility of LGBTQI+ people and networks can be connected to structural issues that are related to the UT in general in terms of support systems from HR, strategy and policy, and communication. These systems are often based on traditional gender norms, and disadvantage of queer people. This can lead to feelings of frustration and exclusion, showing the importance of reflecting on the inclusiveness of these systems. Furthermore, as illustrated by the example 'visibility of LGBTQI+ networks', the structural components can also relate to cultural aspects of the UT or a specific department, whereby a lack of visibility and explicit support for queers might lead to feelings of non-belonging. Obviously, the cultural aspects are shaped by the people working and studying at (a department of) the UT, as can be seen below by the examples of interpersonal experiences. However, one could argue that it is the responsibility of an organization to foster an inclusive culture. Lastly, some students pointed out that they encountered non-inclusive content of courses, assignments and study materials to be cisheterobased, and in one example even explicit discrimination against gender dysphoria. Evaluating course content and literature might help to create an inclusive university where all students feel that they can belong.

Hierarchical power dynamics

Participants also referred to interpersonal experiences in relation to belonging at the UT, both in a positive and negative way. These experiences show that even one interaction might have a great impact on the feeling of belonging. One important aspect that was reflected in these interpersonal experiences were hierarchical power dynamics. The three stories below illustrate how people with high perceived power specifically can foster (non) belonging. The first two stories are positive examples, which are followed by a negative example.

• Story 8 - Dean visiting a pride event

• "Recently I joined an event that was very LGBTQI+ focused and also my dean also joined, which made me feel very supported by that. Thanks to the dean being present at such an event, I felt more comfortable telling something on this topic to my research group, because I also knew that I felt like I got the dean at my back. So if ever being open might cause negative responses, and uh shit hit the fan,

• then I would still, you know, not feel completely alone and isolated. So I think that these actions can have a huge effect. For me, such as visit shows that it's not just supportive words, but also like actions that she puts herself out there as a dean. I feel that a lot of people tend to shy away from more like political statements or whatever, and I can understand that. But for me it was very important and very supportive that the dean came to such an event and thereby explicitly supporting the LGBTQI+ community. This gave me a feeling that the workplace is a safe and made me comfortable to share other things as well."

• Story 9 - Job interview

• "So I don't work that long here at the UT yet and during my job interview I got a lot of questions, obviously, about the position I applied for. But then the manager also asked the question: 'tell me something about yourself'. And I was thinking, this is my opportunity to tell, well, the honest story about myself. And I told some personal details of myself, but also that I am gay. And the first thing the manager said was: 'oh, that's cool'. And I was thinking: 'well, we've got that out of the way, so we can make an honest start'. And for me this interview, where I was asked to tell something about myself and where the manager gave such a positive response on my kind of coming out, gave me immediately of feeling at home here at the UT."

• Story 10 - Welcoming presentation from the upper management

• "You know, it's hard enough being gay. So I never expected to have to like... to, to feel belonging within work. So let me tell you about the first week when I started working at the university, I was a young guy. I just finished my internship. In this first week I got an email from the management of the university, and they were like: 'We want to get to know you.' So I'm stressing, I'm preparing. I'm writing that. What am I going to say to them? Because they're the upper management. And then the call starts and I'm in a group with like 60 other new employees and they don't ask us anything about ourselves. It's just like them talking about how great they are because they hire more women or something, which is great. It's like a forty-five-minute meeting about boasting about how great the UT is. But then they end the meeting with asking us if we have any questions. And me being a young queer person in the university was like: 'Do you guys have anything for LGBTQ employees?' And they answered: 'Yeah, we have Exaltio.' I'm replied: 'I'm already in Exaltio, but they have an age limit Exaltio that ends at 28 or something'. And I thought, shouldn't there be something of the university that's trying

- to make a safe space for us queer employees? So I said:
- 'Isn't there something besides Exaltio?'. They were like,
- 'Yeah'. So I asked: 'Could you elaborate? Because 'yeah' is
- a one-worded answer.' And then they said: 'this is taking a
- lot of time, next person'. So, there I was being denied an
- answer, on a question they did not consider to be
- important. And just basically they were not prepared to
- have queer people, and that made me feel sad. They could
- have sent me an email with a PowerPoint, and I would have
- gotten the same boastful idea of the university. But no, they
- put me on that stage, made me look stupid and made
- themselves look stupid for not being able to answer my
- questions. Not being prepared to have queer people
- wanting to find safe spaces within your work field. So sorry
- if I'm getting a bit like heated, but it was just such an
- annoying experience, and I was disappointed by the upper
- management."

"So, there I was being denied an answer, on a question they did not consider to be important."

All three stories stress the importance of support by people perceived to be in power; a dean, a manager, and upper management. It appears that these interactions specifically shape queer individuals' sense of (non)belonging. Also telling is that in all stories encountered in the project, queer individuals at the UT did not appear to possess such positions of power themselves yet.

Disclosure

Story 9 also reflects another theme that often appeared in the roundtables, namely the consciousness and internal negotiation of queer people to disclose oneself to others. Almost all participants explained that they were very conscious about this. Some, for instance, explained they used 'partner' amongst their colleagues to bypass any disclosure, others explained their internal negotiation of whether to tell about their family life, sexual orientation or transition, and others provided specific examples of positive experiences of disclosure. In all instances the response of peers (fellow students or colleagues) and supervisors was highlighted as an important factor for creating a sense of (non)-belonging. The story above (story 9) is an example of a positive experience, and the two stories below are examples of negative experiences.

Story 11 - No response to disclosure

- "I don't know what it is exactly, but for me, it feels like a lot
- less open here than were I studied before. But I think that's
- maybe also a transition from being student to being staff.
- And maybe also like I'm like, there is one other Dutch
- person in my department for the rest, it's like all over the
- place. So and I don't know, I'm always quite wary when like
- who I am about to come out to and not to come out to and
- yeah like, I often come out by accident to the colleagues at
- my department. I usually refer to 'my partner' in
- conversations, but then I say 'she' by accident now and
- then, which makes it clear that I'm in a queer relationship.
- And then there is like not response it all, more neutral or
- sometimes even walking away. So yeah, I feel it's not really
- a warm place. There is nothing bad being said to me, but
- it's just not like a topic at all, I don't feel supported or
- something. And I and I have some bad experiences outside
- the UT, also, with coming-out to persons from a different
- cultures than the Dutch culture, and I always struggle with
- like what to do and do it."

Story 12 – Hesitance to disclose

- "I notice that in almost every new team I am whatever I
- always say "partner", I have a girlfriend or I just leave it out
- at all. But I do that. So apparently, I don't really feel safe
- sharing it right away. Yeah, but I don't really know why
- necessarily. So yeah, but it really stands out. I think to me,
- so I think that's quite similar to withhold on those
- information. It feels like every time you have to come out."

None of the participants reported experiencing explicit discrimination, bullying, or violence at the UT. However, this does not mean that the UT is a safe space for people who identify as queer, a space where they feel accepted enough to be themselves. Both positive and negative examples illustrate that participants are acutely aware of cues in the environment in relation to their sexual orientation or gender expression. Explicit signals of support from peers (fellow students or colleagues) or supervisors are key, in which one interaction can set the tone for future belonging.

8.4 UNDERLYING PROCESSES OF INCLUSION

A general consideration mentioned by several participants was "cisheteropatriarchy" as a social structure that still undergirds many (if not most)

support systems and interpersonal interactions. In general terms, cisheteropatriarchy stands for the (often tacit or implicit) assumption that stable, binary sex categories and reproductive heterosexuality are the societal default. This default can be expressed in many different ways: from violence and overt discrimination to much more subtle social dynamics. While our roundtables did not include examples of (sexualized) violence, such as “gay bashing”, some participants did address worries about discrimination and overt hostility in response to a disclosure of one’s sexual and gender identity. While it is important to focus on overt discrimination, and demand that institutions of higher learning treat their queer students and staff, and their “rainbow families” as deserving of equal respect and support, problematic social structures are also expressed in less conspicuous ways. While not amounting to discrimination or bullying in the legal sense, these less conspicuous patterns can nevertheless create an environment in which queer persons do not feel safe to be themselves, and not welcome in the institution.

Several participants noted hesitation about disclosing their queerness or their family situation to supervisors or colleagues (see story 12), while others noted that disclosure was met with disinterest (see story 11). One participant recalled a painful experience in which their inquiries about queer-specific groups at the UT were dismissed by the Board of the University during a welcome meeting for new employees (see story 10). These instances, while differing in their severity, point to underlying social structures, in which “traditional” family forms and “traditional” relationships are still treated as the norm – meaning that they shape expectations about what would be shared during meetings, small talk with colleagues, and other work-related activities.

This is not necessarily expressed as overt hostility, it can also be expressed (implicitly or explicitly) as the message that one’s queer identity does not matter, or that one’s family situation is not relevant. Especially when uttered by supervisor or other persons with power in the institutional hierarchy, this can reinforce a hostile environment without rising to the level of overt discrimination.

While participants commend the UT’s commitment

to inclusive events and symbols, particularly during the Diversity Days, others point out that symbols and isolated events are not necessarily indicative of an overall inclusive experience. There is opportunity for everyone – queer or not – to contribute to an inclusive experience to everyday interactions; and indeed, several participants also remembered and noted specific interactions with peers, colleagues or supervisors that they regarded as affirming and welcoming (see stories 8 and 9).

Aside from these specific interactions, participants also note a general lack of information, and complain that resources can be very difficult to find, especially on the online systems of the UT (see stories 6 and 7). Both students and staff are often unsure where to look, and even if they find specific contact persons, their competencies and responsibilities often remain unclear. Two examples of this are the UT’s diversity & inclusion officer, which one participant described as a “great person to talk to”, while noting that they were still confused about the DEI’s actual role and tasks. Other participants mentioned confidential counselors and study advisors as contact persons, but in these cases, it is their role and their (lack of) authority that might interfere with fulfilling a (purely) supportive role (see story 7). Study advisors’ primary responsibility is to the study programs and the faculties they represent, while confidential counselors can listen and advise, but have no power to mandate specific actions, nor instigate structural change.

In addition to difficulties of finding direct support, some participants also note the relative invisibility of queer communities on campus outside of dedicated events (such as the Diversity Days). One staff participant pointed out that, while they were aware of groups and events for students, there seemed to be no organizations for and no visibility of queer staff members. This observation is reflected in the hostile reaction from the executive board detailed above (see story 10).

Given that the stories in our roundtables reached from the very personal to the structural, they also point to factors of inclusion and exclusion that cover this entire range. That is to say, there are individual actions that foster or thwart belonging, but there are also important structural factors to consider.

We would like to point to two stories to illustrate this point, and branch out to structural considerations: One staff member recalled having a trans student in class, and wondering whether to remind others in the class to address him with the correct pronouns (see story 5); and one student participant recalled taking a course with a textbook that contained outdated material hostile to trans people (see story 4). In both cases, responsibility initially falls on individuals: the teacher who chooses (not) to intervene when peers misgender a student, the teacher who chooses a particular textbook.

However, such incidents are located within a broader institutional structure: While not part of the particular stories, it is relevant, for instance, to ask about the institutional level (e.g., program committees) at which textbook selections are discussed, to what types of support are available for trans students (both in general and in specific cases where they might encounter discrimination and hostility). Both levels, the individual and the structural, need to be kept in view in order to foster inclusion successfully. Individuals can be equipped with information and communicative tools to become, for instance, more inclusive supervisors or teachers, which would presumably contribute to an overall more inclusive culture at the UT. On the other hand, there are clear structural issues that cannot be addressed via individual empowerment. These concern the lack of information, the lack of power and training on the part of support staff, and the diffusion of responsibilities (e.g., the fact that study advisors and counselors both fulfill supportive institutional roles, which are nonetheless very different in scope and authority, and might leave students with the feeling that no one is responsible for them).

One common denominator in these reflections is the significance of information, both for queer students and staff seeking support and community, and for those who wish to support them as peers, teachers, or managers. In addition to this, one important factor is administrative staff (e.g., in Human Resources) who would treat queer individuals and queer families as part of our current social reality, and not as “aberrations” that threaten to disrupt established procedures. Illustrative examples in this context are some of the stories in roundtable that focused on the way in which names and gender are recorded in

official systems. This is immediately relevant for trans persons who seek to change their recorded name and gender, and for non-binary persons who continue to be “gendered” by the system, but it also raises further questions about when and where gender is necessary as an address and a matter of record, and whether the UT needs to maintain a physical and digital infrastructure that labels everyone as a “man” or a “woman”.

8.5 ADVICE: HOW CAN WE MOVE TOWARDS MORE INCLUSION?

As the previous section shows, moving towards inclusion and fostering belonging need to happen both at the individual and at the structural, institutional level. Both levels influence each other, which is why it is important that decisions taken at managerial levels can “set the tone” for individual interactions. While we are very much aware that the UT cannot and should not mandate rules and regulations for individual interactions, we want to point out that individual interactions can also prompt us to reflect on the environment in which they take place.

A. Recommendations from participants

Recommendations from our participants roughly fall into three groups: 1) better and more accessible information on the websites of the UT, 2) more visibility for queer persons, associations, and topics at UT-wide events, such as introduction weeks, and 3) more support from HR and other administrators for queer students, staff, and their families. Regarding the latter point, this concerns issues such as requests to correct names, pronouns, and forms of address; and taking into account the needs of non-traditional families in, e.g., leave schemes. Participants note that while the existing queer representation at the UT is welcome, it could be expanded beyond specific events and become a part of everyday life at the university.

B. Requirements

Strict requirements that can be deduced from the recommendation and the analysis can be distilled into two main points:

- Respect for staff and student’s gender identity in

administrative processes, especially regarding names, pronouns, and forms of address. This point extends beyond the concerns of queer students and staff, as e.g., issues regarding name changes also apply to married persons in general, and issues regarding the incorrect or misleading registration of names in the HR system also apply to many international students and staff.

- Efforts to increase the visibility of queer students and staff and queer topics beyond isolated events. This includes queer representation at UT-wide events, as well as discussion of teaching materials and showcasing research on queer topics, and support for existing and emerging queer spaces at the UT.

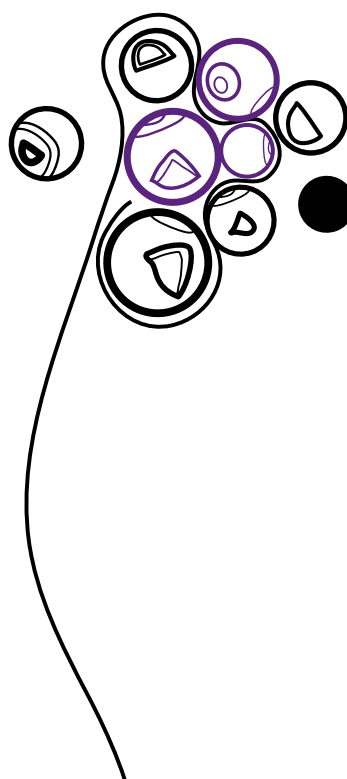
C. Further recommendations and reflections

In addition to the requirements explained above, we would like to draw attention to another prominent theme in the roundtables. A number of participants indicated either that they were worried about how disclosure would be received among colleagues and peers, or they reported that disclosure was not received at all, i.e., met with little or no attention or interest. This stands in contrast to reports of positive experiences that stood out for participants, e.g., a dean attending a drag event, or conversations with peers and colleagues that felt welcoming and affirming. The contrast here is particularly striking when compared to positive, affirming narratives with friends or family members.

While our results do not seem to point to serious concerns with discrimination or bullying, the disinterest (or concern about disinterest) still points to an underlying problem. The attitude of disinterest in particular points to a social environment where queer students and staff are not yet a part of the social reality of the institution, and they are still considered exceptions and outliers. One overarching recommendation – which cannot be directly translated into a set of requirements – is to “normalize” queerness in teaching, research, administrative policies, but also the social life of the UT more generally.

In this context, allyship and role-models are particularly relevant, especially when offered by people perceived to be in power. Teachers, senior staff with managerial duties, but also more

experienced students can, whether they are queer or not, become allies and role-models. Indeed, one of our students’ participants pointed out that they appreciated “ally” stickers at the offices of teachers at another university. While these mere symbols of allyship and support are not sufficient (and may be problematic in themselves), the point here is: everyone can do their part by being open-minded and keeping themselves informed on queer issues; and the UT can do its part by highlighting such information to staff and students.



CHAPTER 9

WOMEN'S EQUITY

Authors: Veronica Junjan and Anneke Sools



TEAM WOMEN'S EQUITY

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9.1 INTRODUCTION

Women represent a significant group within the employees and students of University of Twente, albeit the distribution is unequal across the faculties, educational programs, and along hierarchical lines. Three round tables were organized to discuss experiences and perspectives regarding perceptions of, and experiences concerning Women equity. Each round table addressed a different target group: employees, PhD researchers, and students.

Notes:

1. The tables which had low numbers of participants (students, employees) illustrated a different dynamic of the discussion than the one with a higher number of participants.
2. For the student's roundtable it was not clear whether they were pursuing bachelor or master programs, but for the purpose of the roundtable this is deemed less relevant.

9.2 SYMBOLS: THE MEANING OF A SENSE OF BELONGING

The participants brought symbols which could be divided along the line of the link of *memories* with the origin country, friends, or family members (photos and keychains) and *personal identification* (sports, cards and photos with the research group where they currently work). The two types of symbols suggest both a personal sense of self, as well as pride in professional achievement, such as a photo together with the research group consisting of women.

9.3 STORIES OF (NON)BELONGING @UT

Stories of (non) belonging illustrate a multi-faceted concept of self-identification and achievement as a woman within the UT setting. There is a clearly outline the sense of self as a woman which achieved a specific status (student or researcher or staff working within the setting of a technology university). The setting of a technology university is (explicitly and implicitly) outlined as a "male setting" one, where -as a woman- one needs to be clearly present, active, and make her voice heard in order to be acknowledged.

The stories were organized along four core topics:

1. Hierarchical power relations
2. Stereotyping, discrimination and prejudices
3. Bonding and bridging- in onboarding and housing
4. Visibility and role modelling

9.3.1 HIERARCHICAL POWER RELATIONS

Hierarchy and the associated power relations are present in the experiences outlined by the participants in diverse ways: sometimes very explicit, whereas other times implicit. The participants to the round tables illustrated different experiences between manifestations of academic hierarchy, for instance from full Professor to an employee in a junior position [*Transcript 12, Speaker 5 "From my direct supervisor. I didn't. It was too long to wait for any interior support. So, I went to the dean and the dean told me, [...] you can do that, you can do that. So yeah, the support is a bit lagging."*] as well as on behalf of the support or administrative staff [*Transcript 9, Speaker 2, "she actually went to the, I think service desk or a first aid section [...] And she got a really mean response from that person at that point, asking for a period products like It's your fault, you should have been prepared, which is, of course, a personal thing that maybe that person was in a bad mood at that time."*]

Employees and PhD researchers experience hierarchy particularly when it comes to career and promotion opportunities. Next to hierarchy, there are differences perceived across the departments and across the faculties. Also, the transparency of the procedures and the considerations regarding promotion procedures is important for the female employees, as the considerations behind the allocation of tenure track appointments are often not clear [*Transcript 12, Speaker 2 "this tenure track or not tenure track, and I think there should be clear to position one tenure track, which is a research professor and one in education. [...] Why two men? We both had been non tenure track. Now we both are tenure track and we see the differences in terms of recognition, [...] I don't think I'm doing different things than what I would do when I would not tenure track. But it's just the label and that made so much discrimination."*]. It is remarkable that the acceptance in the tenure track (TT) trajectory is associated to a perceived increase in status of the work performed by an employee and to a lack of professional development. Lack of transparency in the conditions that need to be fulfilled in order to accede

to the TT trajectory can lead to disaffection, lack of motivation, and to a lower sense of belonging to the UT.

The PhD researchers deal with hierarchy not only in terms of the relationship with the Professor or the Principal Investigator (PI) of the project for which they have been hired, but also when proposing measures to increase representation of women in the management structures of the department [Transcript 9, Speaker 2 “you know, choosing a representative as a board that’s important by representation is important. [...] people who are do, don’t feel that there is a problem. There will never not understand why representation is important. I’ve had a colleague [...] talking about like why I was talking about representation and he’s like, Yeah, that’s just being politically correct. And I was just staring at him like, Excuse me, but, uh, I knew him well enough to know that there’s no point getting into this topic with him because it will not go anywhere”]. Treating women representation as political correctness issue to be treated as window dressing leads, again, to disaffection and lack of belonging on the UT.

“It felt really good that at least they’re taking the initiative to make that change.”

There are also positive experiences in dealing with hierarchy reported by the participants. One specific example illustrated about being asked to provide advice and being acknowledged as having a distinct perspective as a woman in situations such as preparing a vacancy announcement [Transcript 9, Speaker 3 “right after I joined one of the professors from a different group [...] he knew me. And when I joined, he was going to post a new vacancy for a PhD position. And before posting, he sent it to me asking if I can make sure [...] you know, if the language in the posting is not alienating any certain groups of people and over there in the benefits you get, they had included like you can get maternity leaves and stuff like that. And I was like when I applied that posting did not have these things. This is amazing. Like they’re actually trying to make that change, that the language in everything, the information they are giving, it’s not alienating any certain groups of people. [...] it felt really good that at least they’re taking the initiative to make

that change. Particularly relevant here is to note that the recent efforts towards inclusive language within the official are observed on the work floor and the progress is positively appreciated.

9.3.2 STEREOTYPING, DISCRIMINATION AND PREJUDICES

Prejudices are experiences in terms of the different behaviors observed between the formal acknowledgement of the need to recognize diversity and the level of informal, daily interactions with colleagues who still issue sexist comments [Transcript 9, speaker 2 “where they’re not acknowledging that you need representation, where they’re acknowledging you need diversity, but that inherent sexism in your head is still very obvious in normal conversations.”]

Perceived stereotyping remarks on behalf of colleagues can also lead to experiences of not being accepted [Transcript 7, Speaker 2 “a male colleague was [...] all these women issues. Where do you stand? [...] what do you think [...], are you a feminist? And I just felt [...], yeah. Okay, I’m a feminist. But why would you need to [...] load this question on me? I don’t know if it’s because they don’t have other female friends to talk about this, but, and they make it into such a joke”] The responsibility to justify one presence and different perspective is put on the woman staff member, with apparently limited efforts on behalf of the majority (male usually) member to educate themselves in regard to diversity.

Stereotypes are also present in terms of the language policy [Transcript 9, Speaker 3 “[...] if the language in the posting is not alienating any certain groups of people and over there in the benefits you get, they had included like you can get maternity leaves and stuff like that. “]. It is unclear from the text whether the stereotype was implicit by considering that only women candidates for the position may pay attention to the announcement about the secondary benefits and family leave, or explicit, by asking a female co-worker to check the text of the job announcement. The Speakers reported also corrective actions through language which help address gender stereotype, as in expectations that some positions can be filled only by men [Transcript 9, Speaker 2 “we were talking to hire someone for the project [...] a programmer. So he always said when we interview him and I said, Him or her, right? And now every time we talk about the

position, he says him or her.”] It is positive to note that the corrective action undertaken was well received and subsequently used by other colleagues.

Exchanges related to offensive jokes concerning stereotypes also lead to alienation and do not contribute to the feeling of belonging to UT [Transcript 7, Speaker 1 *“That’s so difficult I think when they say like don’t take it personal, but the women in general, blah blah blah. Like how I will not take it that personal?”*]

An underlying theme regarding women seems to be the stereotype about women lacking ambition, or the surprise observed when a woman from scientific staff indicates having career ambition [Transcript 12, Speaker 2 *“So I’m just taken for granted. Whatever I do, it just is. So at one point it became very suffocating. How am I going to grow out of this? [...] I mean, come on, guys. We can also be ambitious.”* This stereotype about women being less capable and less ambitious is reported also early on in the educational career [Transcript 7, Speaker 1 *“how they treat that things in a sense of teaching, or everything that I think make a special making not special, [...] you’re the women, you will do it less. Or you are the women, you need be better to be same similar position. The expectation is*

“You are the women, you need be better to be same similar position. The expectation is kind of lower but then also higher.”

kind of lower but then also higher.”

9.3.3 BONDING AND BRIDGING IN ONBOARDING AND HOUSING

Onboarding and housing experiences with both with colleagues as well as support staff, particularly when moving to the Netherlands from abroad, do impact upon the experience of belonging, and can both strengthen (when support is explicit and present) or alienate (when absent) women.

Experiences with support staff during onboarding can be intimidating [Transcript 9, Speaker 1 *“In the one of the times that I came to the uni before the lockdown, my computer was super bad. So I went to the technicians because [...] as a computer scientist, so I know how to take care of my computer. And I already*

knew that it was a software issue, not a hardware issue. It was a second technician who started, not yelling at me, but with his voice pretty high and imposing: why’d you have this software install, do you think we don’t know how to do our jobs and so on? And I thought, well, I didn’t say that. I just know that it’s a software issue. I’m sure it’s a software issue. And maybe that they don’t know how to do their job, but I didn’t say that. But it was already our first interaction with a man like older than me, taller than me.” Also, the support for partners in job search is experienced as not adequate to the situation and where there is limited awareness about the professional experience and standing in the partners, especially when they move from abroad to the Netherlands [Transcript 12, Speaker 4 *“they said we’re going to have to find a job. You know what they did? And we’re meeting with him to tell him that he should have a LinkedIn profile with keywords”*].

9.3.4 VISIBILITY AND ROLE MODELLING

The search for role models is an underlying theme across the three focus groups. The need for female role models is perceived across the board as particularly acute, particularly in areas where few women professionals are present, either as teachers to function as role models for an already limited number of female students) or as researchers or mentors for the scientific personnel in various stages of their professional career [Transcript 12, Speaker 5 *“I’m really sorry my grandma couldn’t go to university. [...] My mom had no chance of finding the position. When I was doing my PhD there was no female professor [...] I didn’t have any mentor. I wanted to have a mentor. It was all male mentor.”*]

Additionally, the women who initiate activities to promote women equality and equity of treatment, they understand that sometimes that task comes with additional responsibilities of performing the task of the role model themselves [Transcript 7, Speaker 1 *“Yeah, like a role model. Like hey, I’m not the only one”* and Speaker 2 *“I think I felt the need to be like, oh, if I’m that one woman, I have to be good [...]”*].

There is advice offered to colleagues based on personal experiences, and it focuses on self-reliance [Transcript 12, Speaker 6 *“You should find a way in another department, another in another faculty, and you build your career just like that. It’s hard. [...] It’s*

not easy. But you have to survive. That's the path you have]. The implicit lack of confidence in the existing procedures and available information is worrisome, as

“In our reality, we’re the only ones working here.”

it can decrease employee’s motivation and belonging.

The differences across faculties, particularly between the lived experiences in the technical faculties versus the social science faculty do impact upon the expectations of the participants also regarding role models and support [*Transcript 9, Speaker 2 “there were two women [...] not angry, but more [...] confused, [...] saying, okay, but this is not our reality. We work in BMS and we like almost female exclusive groups. [...] But in our reality, we’re the only ones working here. [...] Depending on where you’re at, how, how large the problem is and how, how visible it is in one direction if a BMS the other way around.”*] It is helpful to note that the lack of awareness that in other faculties/groups suggests a lack of horizontal communication across staff and suggests also different paths for the measures to address belonging within the UT.

9.4 CONCLUSIONS AND KEY FINDINGS

There are similar underlying themes in the stories shared across the focus groups. Some of the experiences presented by the participants referred explicitly on intersectionality aspects, usually in terms of being a “Woman and International” or “Woman and Asian” or the specificity of the professional identity as “Woman and Scientist.” The participants emphasize the need for female mentors and role models, in all stadia of the career. Stereotypes play a key role in the functioning at the UT, and, to some participants, the actions taken recently about trainings and language policy are welcome initiatives.

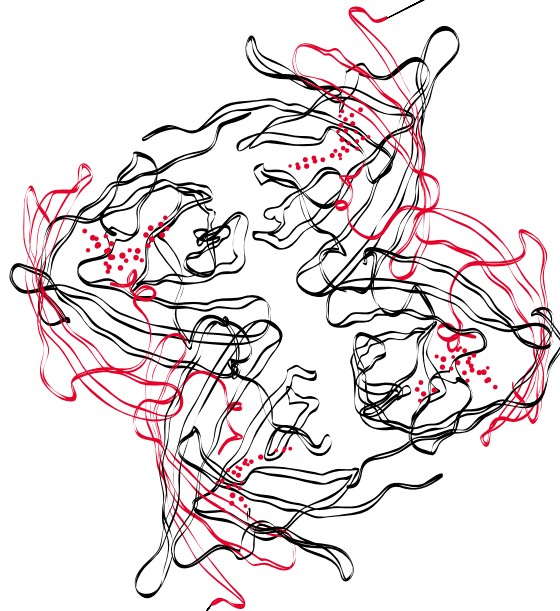
9.5 ADVICE: REQUIREMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Several recommendations could be derived from the interventions of the participants:

1. Clarify and communicate formally the procedures and the requirements to be achieved for academic promotion.
2. Facilitate the communication and identification of the relevant labor policy information, and make them findable on the university website.
3. Make bias training compulsory (and recurrent) for the members of selection committees and career committees as even with clear criteria it is known that these are often not applied equally to women and men [1, 2].
4. Improve the support for the onboarding process, both for staff and for students. Cultural training can facilitate the communication and integration of new personnel. The current support for moving to the Netherlands (particularly for staff coming with family members) is perceived as insufficient, and, in certain situations, family support is inadequate.

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CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Authors: Anneke Sools, Laura Vargas and Hatice Kizgin



In this final chapter, we summarize the main conclusions and recommendations. In the first part, we present some key findings obtained from the presentations, interviews and round tables. In the second part, we describe our vision to give direction to UT's Shaping2030 ambition on inclusion and we make recommendations for embedding our advice in the line organization according to the SMART priorities presented and approved by the Strategic Board in March 2022 (see appendix 6).

For more detailed and practical recommendations, we refer to the conclusions and recommendations of the individual chapters 3 to 9.

10.1. HIGHLIGHTS

Overall, we found that the experience of inclusion, belonging and discrimination varies between the individuals and groups we interviewed. Common themes we found in the stories of individuals and groups were:

- (1) the importance of bonding with the in-group for creating a sense of belonging and the need for bridging beyond the in-group to become a truly diverse university (see 7.3.1 for more information about the bonding and bridging theory);
- (2) the role of hierarchical power dynamics in the exclusion of vulnerable groups but also its crucial role in establishing inclusion as the new norm;
- (3) visibility and role modelling as important for women and people of the LGBTQ+ community but sometimes contentious for religious minorities;
- (4) the importance of respect and curiosity for other perspectives to counter disinterested and prejudiced views and behaviours.

Some highlights of the main findings from the presentations, interviews and roundtables are:

- The various stakeholders across the UT were committed to add or strengthen the dimensions of diversity and inclusion to their projects. While inclusion is considered and embedded in some of the plans and activities of the units mentioned in this report (see appendix 4), different ideas on what inclusion means were present, and the emphasis on promoting inclusion and celebrating diversity beyond preventing discrimination varied (chapter 3).
- While local (Dutch) first generation students experienced belonging, internationals (students and staff) and Dutch first-generation students with a migration background did so to a lesser extent and would like more support in the onboarding process (chapter 4 and 6).
- People with a disability and neurodiverse people reported that tailor-made solutions work to some degree in supporting them, but the reliance on individualized responses can lead to arbitrariness in outcomes (chapter 5)
- Financial issues presented a key obstacle to first generation students in making the most of their

studies (chapter 6).

- Queer staff and students reported experiences of belonging and non-belonging in everyday interactions (e.g., disinterested responses), and are most negatively impacted by structural discrimination, particularly in HR and education structures and policies (chapter 8).
- Religious background was a source of non-belonging, discrimination and prejudice in daily interactions for Muslim staff and students, but not for Christians and Hindus. However, they would all appreciate a genuine interest in their religion, which to them is a source of strength and pride and part of who they are (chapter 7).
- Female staff members emphasized the need for female mentors and role models in all stadia of the career. They experienced stereotypes to play a key role in UT recruitment and promotion processes. Furthermore, experienced lack of transparency in promotion criteria and family support facilities affected female staff more than male colleagues (chapter 9).

In the various chapters, concrete recommendations for improvement can be found. A good first step to facilitate inclusion of more diverse individuals and groups would be to target activities, structures and processes related to entry and access to UT research, teaching and organization (e.g., improvement of recruitment, selection and the onboarding process).

10.2. OUR VISION

The approach underlying this report is to foster inclusion practices and belonging, while celebrating diversity and preventing discrimination and exclusion [1]. This approach acknowledges that efforts to prevent discrimination should be made, and that structural issues that lead to discrimination need to be addressed. However, such efforts should be complemented by inclusion promoting actions, policies, processes and structures. Our vision on inclusion aligns with an integral approach to inclusion [2] that moves beyond a fixation on equality and diversity that expects marginalized individuals and groups in need of help to conform to the norm employee/student (in the UT context we found this to be a male, white, heterosexual, able-bodied, assertive EU citizen with a PhD Degree). An integral approach

means that the entire organization is involved, so that also employees and students who belong to the dominant group have an important role [3] [4] [5]. The idea is that marginalized and dominant groups together learn how to act and speak inclusively. Integral also means structural integration of diversity and inclusion at all levels of the organization, personal, professional, structural and cultural.

Importantly, inclusion enhancing practices with attention to discrimination will require that potential tensions between individuals and groups be addressed in a reflective, sensitive, accountable and dialogical manner. We learned that the inclusion of one group may be felt as exclusion of another. Rather than preventing this from happening, we think that we should recognize these tensions as an essential part of living and working in a globalized world.

A combined approach of enhancing inclusion practices while addressing discrimination [1] can be achieved by endorsing the following four principles:

- We, students and staff, can be **fully ourselves**, we feel physically and psychologically safe to share different opinions and views. We dare to take risks, make mistakes or be wrong without fear. We feel respected, valued, and supported in our uniqueness.
- **Promoting belonging.** We feel and experience we belong, we have a sense of purpose, what we do matters and we have a sense of belonging to a community, we participate and are involved in formal and informal groups and processes. We have access to information and resources and our ideas and perspectives influence decision-making. We can develop to our full potential while also contributing to the larger collective.
- We **recognize, honour and advance diversity**, and work on organizational inclusion practices that focus on the prevention of exclusion in a proactive way. We strive for a diverse representation at all levels to avoid power structures with structural marginalization.
- We confront discrimination and develop **accountability systems** for inclusion. We facilitate the dialogue around tough issues. We are aware of possible problems and trained and empowered to reflect and react to them.

The broadened vision on inclusion outlined here should be the basis for the implementation of the recommendations we formulate in the following sections: developing an integral, long-term coordinated effort (10.2.1.), organizing community support (10.2.2.) and developing inclusion monitoring (10.2.3.).

10.2.1. DEVELOPING AN INTEGRAL, LONG-TERM, COORDINATED EFFORT

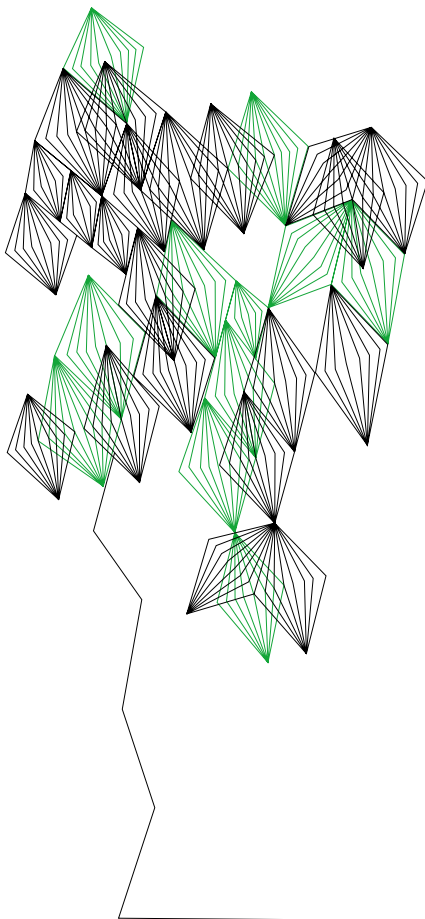
Already **multiple great initiatives** working towards inclusion exist in **various groups** (HR, DE&I team, Ambassadors Network, initiatives awarded by the UT incentive Fund, P-Nut, from study and student associations and teachers). There are individual and organizational initiatives (see chapter 3). However, DE&I is still a relatively new topic at the UT, and some initiatives are in the early stages of development. They often are developed in an isolated fashion without knowledge from other initiatives. This results in **fragmented and dispersed action**. Knowledge sharing and knowledge-building has increased over the last two years, but can and should be improved so that the implementation of inclusion@UT can be optimized.

At individual, group and organizational level we observed differences in what goes well and what could be improved in terms of an **(integral) response to becoming an inclusive organization**. This response can be captured in five aspects: awareness, empowerment, support, action (structure) and organizational culture (see figure 7, chapter 7), which were inductively derived from the roundtables:

1. All in all, there is growing **awareness** of what DE&I is about, why it matters, and specifically how to recognize its effect in daily work and study situations, but it does not happen automatically, it is not self-evident. As we have learned throughout our work as SEG members, each one of us has implicit biases and may inadvertently act in a way that excludes others. We need to acknowledge that, despite our good intentions, we may cause harm through our actions. So, we need to recognize that, hold each other accountable in a professional way and learn along the way. Awareness also includes awareness of the risks of a neutral position in a context of hierarchical power relations (see chapter 3).
2. Awareness alone is not enough. Those who are victims of exclusionary practices do not always feel **empowered** to speak up and act. There is a need for peer support groups (online and offline) where

experiences and information can be shared.

3. **Support.** Once empowered, people do not always know where to find information and support, nor know who is responsible for what. The overview of instances and persons that can be reached in case of issues should be easily accessible and clearly visible to employees and students who have problems and to employees and students who manage others. We recommend learning from other universities how to organize access to information and support.
4. **Action structures.** While many people are really involved and making an effort, inclusive action currently relies too much on individual perseverance and courage. Those willing or in a



position to provide support, do not always know how to act adequately, effectively, and responsibly (*handelingsverlegenheid*). Work overload and lack of time are also mentioned as obstacles to act inclusively. Or there are limited or inadequate procedures, regulations and systems in place. There are issues that keep coming up, some of which are more structural and important to solve. The underlying problem seems to be that the UT relies on tailor-made (personalized) solutions which has many advantages, but it also puts the burden of responsibility on the student/employee, and can lead to **arbitrariness and randomness in outcomes**. Inclusion should instead be proactively set as the standard way of working across systems, procedures and regulations.

5. **Cultural change.** Finally, even when people are aware, empowered, supported, and capacitated to take appropriate action, they may face a lack of cultural bedding (we identified the need for a **culture of learning, accountability and belonging**) that includes real felt psychosocial safety. In practice, this means that we should for example invest in training UT employees, especially those in management roles, to uphold a culture of accountability and to deal with tensions in an open, dialogical and ethically responsible manner in which we do not avoid difficult conversations. Moreover, psychosocial safety cannot be fully achieved unless power dynamics that negatively impact those of lower rank are actively denounced. The UT is perceived as a highly hierarchical organization, which is inherent to the functioning of a university, and which can also be used positively to promote inclusion and combat discrimination by setting inclusiveness as the norm.

Our recommendations are to create a:

- **Long-term overarching vision and coordinated effort** to implement inclusion, aimed at increasing awareness, empowering individuals and groups at risk of exclusion, improve available support structures and create new ones where needed, enable individual staff members and the system to act inclusively, invest in a cultural change; inclusion should be firmly embedded in all the layers of the UT. The coordinated effort should start with mapping which of the five aspects of an integral response needed to becoming an inclusive organization are already addressed with existing initiatives, projects, and tools and which new tools should be developed (or existing ones improved).
- **Toolbox (SMART PRIORITY 2 in Appendix 6)**. This toolbox is a dynamic varied collection of different trainings, activities, and materials to help realize our diversity, equity and inclusion goals.
 - There should be a **set of tools for every different aspect of an integral inclusive response** we want to work on: awareness (campaigns, storytelling roundtables, a UT inclusion game), empowerment (peer support groups, website for anonymous sharing of stories), support (easily accessible and findable support structures), action (structural changes in recruitment, promotion, educational and other processes, policies and systems – see Appendix 4 for plans and initiatives already present), and culture change (accountability, learning culture, psychosocial safety).
 - The toolbox should be used in a **tailored fashion**, according to the specific needs of individuals, teams, and organizational units. Some examples of the activities are targeted trainings, storytelling roundtables, interviews, debates, presentations, case solving/scenarios, interactive theater/ podcast, voicing dilemmas or interactive forums.
 - To develop the toolbox a group of experts for each kind of activity or tool is needed **supported** by, for example, skilled moderators for the round tables or debates.
 - Already relevant activities such as the active-bystander training, should be adjusted to incorporate a DE&I focused version and tailored for different target groups.

The next step would be to make an implementation plan to prioritize which activities to (further) develop

in accordance with the conclusions and recommendations in the various chapters. Second, a **roadmap** needs to be made to identify at the level of organizational units which of the five aspects, with which concrete activities and instruments (see chapter 3-9) should have priority so that local solutions can be offered.

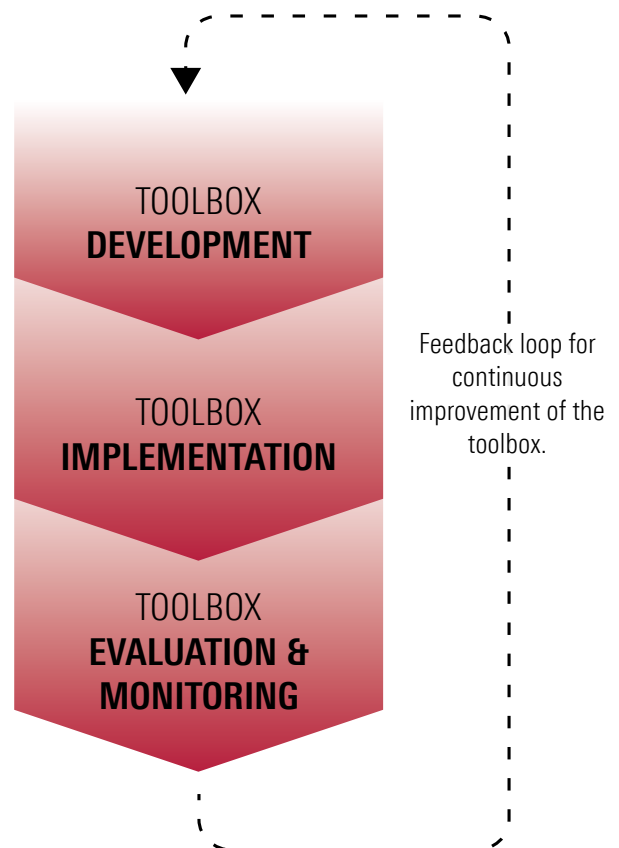


Fig.8 Iterative design process of the development, implementation and evaluation of the inclusion toolbox.

10.2.2. ORGANIZING UT COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The topic of inclusion, diversity and equity has really gained momentum at the UT, as became visible in the enthusiasm, dedication, openness and willingness of so many people to engage in conversations about inclusion and take action. We have brought together a community of more than 400 people that care about inclusion, people willing to speak up and who are intrinsically motivated to make things better. To make the most of the gained momentum, we need to organize and facilitate UT community support **(taskforce = SMART PRIORITY 1 in Appendix 6)** to achieve our objective. Moreover, for inclusion to become a reality, we need engagement beyond the already dedicated. Following the lead of the DE&I Team, our advice aligns with ongoing efforts to create shared responsibility for inclusion with ownership at all levels. Everyone in the organization should be aware of potential problems and be committed and empowered to reflect and react to them. We think an Inclusive University can be achieved by a bottom-up approach supported by someone at a high management level and dedicated persons at a faculty/service department level for the DE&I portfolio.

- **Supporting dedicated persons in faculty/service departments.** Capacity should not be on a voluntary basis during the free time of employees and students, rather, intrinsic motivation needs to be organized, supported, and facilitated. The time of already employed staff dedicating time and efforts to inclusion related activities should be recognized and rewarded (example chair Ambassadors Network or member of de EEMCS DEI team² in your free time). We should also find a way to pay students that cannot be linked to a job at UT Flex (like some

German students or some students from outside the EU). We want a **long-term assurance of inclusion** and we think the only way to guarantee this is to embed it in the faculties and service departments (as well as other organizational units of the UT). Only in this way we will bring the required culture change needed to become an inclusive organization. We have considered arranging it only through HR, education and research (like is done in the VU, for example) [6] but we think this would not be enough. This idea of embedding it in the faculties is supported by the recent research on change management by Kogel (2021) [7] and by Neises (2021) [8] during their master project. Bottom-up, each faculty and service department could have a group comprised of academic and **support staff** from different job levels and with **students** working on DE&I topics in a way fitting with the faculty/service department, adapting it to their own needs, and, following the advice of Neises¹, in a way that guarantees permeating and spreading inclusion through every cluster and research group. This kind of organization fits well with what is done in other Dutch and international universities (UU, EUR, Maastricht, UVA, Leiden) [9], [10], [11], [12], [13]. Also, the study and student associations could have somebody with DEI as recognized task in their portfolio.

- **Strengthening of the current DE&I team** that will be guiding the implementation of inclusion is needed to achieve our goals for 2030. We need to grow to be able to expand current activities to more structural changes in more areas (research, education, services, outreach, valorisation) as other universities in the Netherlands and abroad do. Taking the way DE&I efforts are organized at other universities as benchmark, we propose to add at least one senior researcher who can initiate and supervise research on DE&I topics. Additional support may come in the form of student assistants, a managing assistant and a managing director. The extended DE&I Team should align efforts with the Ambassadors Network (advisory board for DE&I), HR and other important partners and stake/shareholders involved in inclusion related activities.

¹ Yannik Neises conducted interviews and found that many UT employees were not sure how the content of the strategy Shaping2030 should be interpreted and that adequate communication between the policy makers and the work floor seemed to be lacking. The interviews that were conducted showed that many employees struggled to completely understand the new strategy, interpret it in other ways than intended, or even had never heard of it. Involving employees and students in the change process at the department/research group level seems essential to have a successful implementation.

² A good example of a DEI team in a faculty has already been organized in our university. The faculty of EEMCS started a project team in 2021 to identify the topics within diversity and inclusion where they could develop further and, in September 2022 the kick-off of the EEMCS DE&I team took place (see Appendix 4 for more information).

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

👁️ Create a long-term overarching vision and coordinated effort. This should start with mapping which of the five aspects of inclusive response are already addressed with existing initiatives and which new tools should be developed (or existing ones improved).

🔧 Develop an Inclusion Toolbox: This toolbox is a dynamic collection of trainings, materials and activities tailored to various needs to help achieve our DE&I goals. There should be a set of tools for every different aspect of inclusive response

🔍 Inclusion Monitoring & Reflection: Establish a baseline of how inclusive the UT is and monitor development of inclusion over time with a reflection tool. A reflection tool that helps individuals and groups to become aware of what inclusion means.

👥 Organizing community support: Supporting dedicated persons in faculty/service departments with a bottom-up approach and strengthening of the current DE&I team that will be guiding the implementation of inclusion to achieve our goals for 2030.

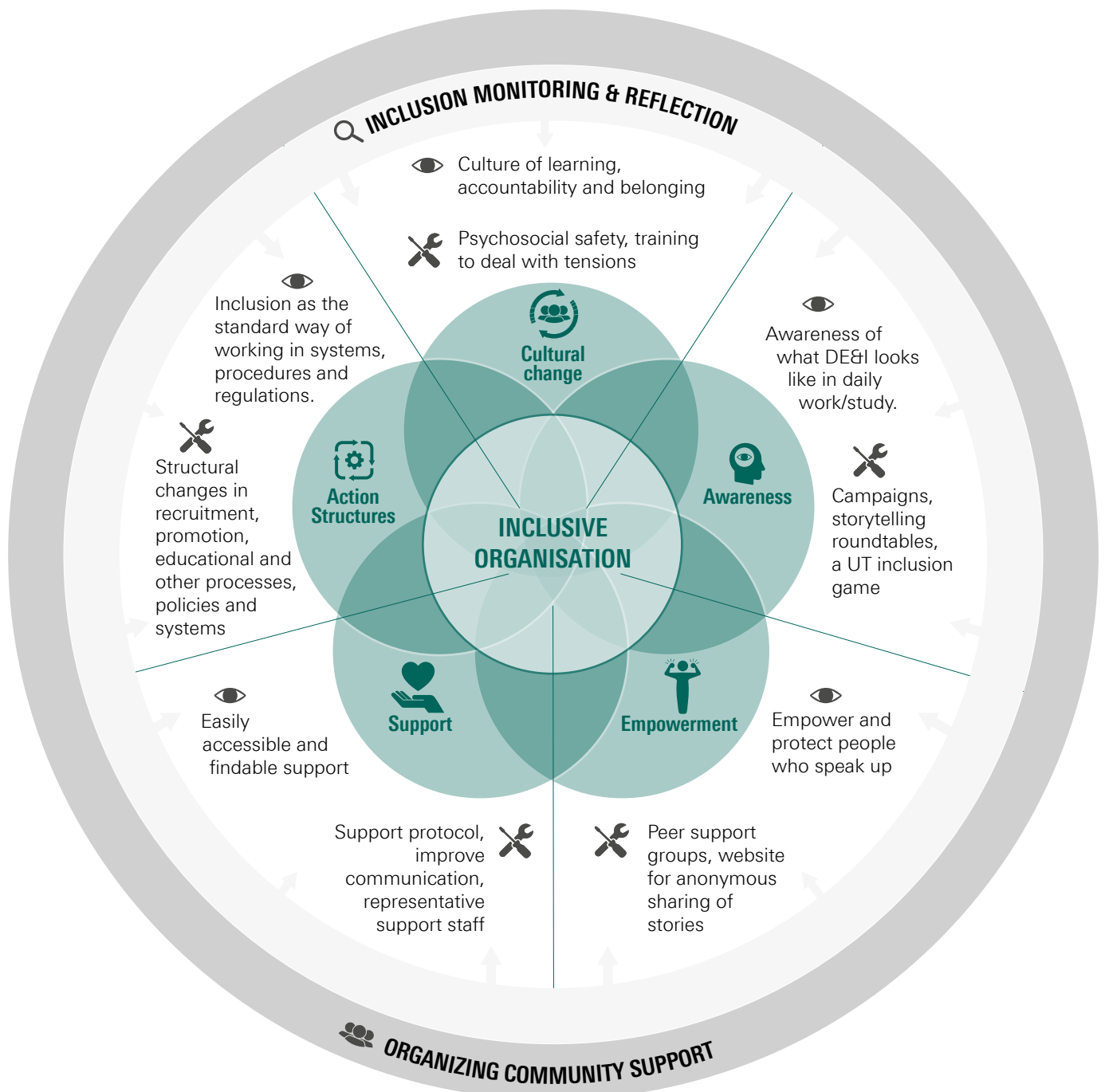


Fig 9 Final conclusions and recommendations

10.2.3. INVESTING IN MONITORING INCLUSION

Attention to DE&I topics in already existing monitoring is gradually increasing (see appendix 4-Monitoring). Multiple student monitors include inclusion related topics (e.g., wellbeing), although the scope is limited. Space for better student inclusion monitoring with more parameters focused on inclusion is limited due to external criteria to uphold; employee inclusion monitoring is also limited but more space for improvement is possible due to more direct (local, UT) control options.

We envision a monitoring system (**SMART PRIORITY 3 in Appendix 6**) that not only facilitates a measurement of certain parameters but is also an instrument to increase awareness and encourage reflection. The idea behind this dual focus on research and reflection is that inclusion and discrimination practices are often implicit. Exclusion is often the result of subtle, hidden forms of power and normalized processes inherent in routines, (implicit) rules, documents, policies and trainings [14], [15] which together constitute a presupposed neutral qualification structure. This assumption, the image of a taken-for-granted status-quo functions to de-legitimize and marginalize those students and employees perceived to be different from the status quo [16], [17], [18]. A monitoring system designed as a method of reflection can aid in the creation of a learning culture, that moreover enables **self-governance and talent development**. In sum, the envisioned monitoring has two objectives that go beyond conventional measurement to include reflection-on-action:

- (1) Establish a baseline of how inclusive the UT is at various levels, institutes and groups and monitor development of inclusion over time
- (2) Function as a reflection tool that helps individuals and groups to become aware of what inclusion practically means in their everyday education, research and organizational work. It also should help them become aware of obstacles and desired changes and help them reflect on how to achieve their inclusion goals.

We recommend that a **postdoc and PhD-candidate** develop the envisioned DE&I monitoring under supervision of the DE&I researcher and the CHEPS

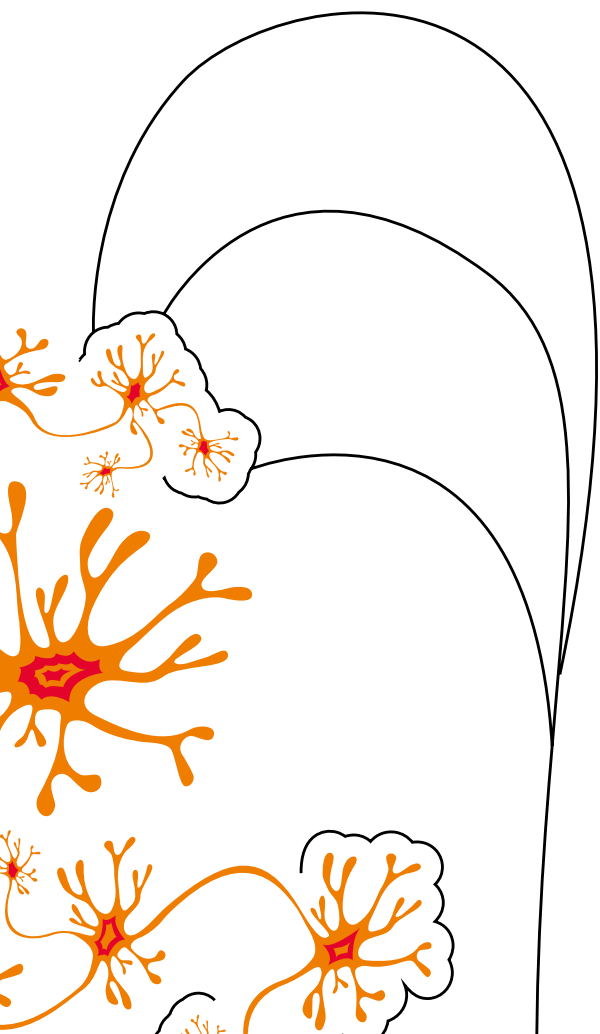
department in close collaboration with relevant experts on DE&I at UT.

The development of the monitoring system should take into account:

- **Alignment.** The development of (improved) DE&I monitoring should align with existing monitors, experts and groups (from both research groups and service units) already working on monitoring in the UT. Alignment is necessary with institutional and educational accreditation frameworks and criteria. First, a systematic review of national and international monitoring efforts and instruments needs to be made. Second, a roadmap needs to be made on how to develop a tailored UT inclusion monitoring system. While inclusion monitoring is currently being developed in various places, definitions and methods greatly differ and are in need of further conceptual and methodological clarification. Third, actual monitoring instruments need to be (further) developed or aligned. In addition to quantitative measures, also qualitative, small-scale measurement is needed for targeted sections or groups and to gain more in-depth knowledge about inclusion processes, experiences and practices. The insights of the roundtables as presented in this report, should also be included in the development of inclusion measures and criteria.
- **Methodological innovation.** Use more targeted recruitment methods for specific hard to reach groups (with low participation rates), and employ multiple state-of-the-art evaluation methods (close to students/staff, qualitative, small-scale, interactive, participatory). Explore the possibility of computational text methods to assist the analysis of open answers to surveys and the development of human-computer interactive monitoring tools that aid reflection.
- **Focus first on employee monitoring**, because it is easier/faster to take steps there and there is more freedom to design a monitor (see Appendix 4). When it comes to student monitoring, do not create a new monitor, but deepen existing monitors, for example by setting up limited surveys for certain groups or by holding panel discussions.

We envision the development, implementation and evaluation of the toolbox (SMART PRIORITY 2) to go hand in hand with inclusion monitoring (SMART PRIORITY 3). This should be an iterative design process in which progress is evaluated, and evaluation leads to readjustment of the toolbox (see figure 8). The activities in the toolbox should be evaluated directly, while also the outcomes of the monitoring process can feed back into further development of the toolbox. The DE&I team, reinforced with a senior researcher, would be in charge of the development and evaluation of the toolbox and monitoring, guided by the broadened vision on inclusion outlined in 10.2. and its implementation supported by the dedicated persons in the line organization (SMART PRIORITY 1).

Altogether, we hope this report provides inspiration, food for thought and discussion and guidance for action. We want the implementation of the three priorities as a joint effort to succeed so that we become a recognizably more inclusive university in 2030!!



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APPENDIX 1

TERMINOLOGY

In this part the definition of and relationships between the concepts diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, bias and prejudices will be elaborated. It also includes a glossary of important terms that may not be (fully) familiar to novice readers.

Diversity commonly refers to people with different identities, perspectives, and training. It focuses on social categories or individual differences based on observable or non-observable characteristics (*e.g.*, Harrison & Klein, 2007; Mor Barak, 2015; Roberson, 2006). While diversity is about representation, inclusion is about participation and belonging. An organization can be diverse in terms of representation of men and women, people from diverse nationalities etc., yet inclusive only to certain groups (*e.g.*, white men). On the other hand, a homogenous organization or organizational unit can be inclusive. Changes in the discourse about diversity have seen a shift beyond diversity to focus more extensively on the notion of inclusion. Research shows that while explicit goals for diversity may be set, implicit biases often limit the ability to achieve those goals [Macan, T., & Merritt, S. (2011). Diversity alone does not promise or inherently promote equity or inclusion. These concepts and practices are secured via uniquely different processes.

The concepts of **equality** and **equity** refer to the acknowledgement that people are different in access to resources and capabilities, and that this difference should be acknowledged. Equality means each individual or group of people is given the same resources or opportunities. Equity recognizes that each person has different circumstances and allocates the exact resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome. **Social justice** is the legal term for equity. To illustrate the basic idea, take the

example of a bicycle. If the same bicycle were given to a child, to an adult, and to an adult with a physical disability, then clearly the adult has an unequal advantage over the other two cyclists. When the child is provided with a smaller, children's bike, and the adult with the physical disability with an adjusted device (for example a motorized tricycle), they would have more equal access to transport and increase their mobility.

Inclusion - in the context of cultural integration - means perceived and experienced sense of belongingness, fairness, and participation in and contribution to formal and informal groups and processes in reaching someone's full potential (Berry, 2016; Pelled *et al.*, 1999; Roberson, 2006; Shore *et al.*, 2011). Diversity focuses on differences between individuals, while inclusion touches upon humanistic values – making everyone feel part of the organization and being able to thrive.

Inclusive organization: There are six major features of inclusive workplaces (Shore *et al.*, 2018):

1. Feeling safe: Psychological and physical safety: people dare to share their identity and opinions.
2. Involvement in a workgroup: Everyone has access to information and resources and their ideas and perspectives influence decision-making. They can develop to our full potential while also contributing to the larger collective.
3. Feeling respected and valued: people feel and experience they belong and have a sense of purpose, what they do matters. They have a sense of belonging to a community and participate and are involved in formal and informal groups and processes.
4. Influence on decision-making: a good decision-

making process is a critical piece in supporting inclusion. It is often where the power lives in teams.

5. **Authenticity:** Students and staff can be fully themselves, feel physically and psychologically safe to share different opinions and views.
6. **Diversity is recognized and honored while working on organizational inclusion practices that focus on the prevention of exclusion in a proactive way.** We strive for a diverse representation at all levels to avoid power structures with structural marginalization. Biases are confronted and accountability systems for inclusion are developed. The dialogue around tough issues is encouraged and facilitated. Students and staff are aware of potential problems and trained and empowered to reflect and react to them

(Sense of) belonging is a mental health concept predictive of social and psychological functioning, and widely applied in the context of higher education (Hagerty et al., 1992; Hagerty et al., 1996). It describes the experience of being valued, needed and important to other people, groups objects, organizations, environment, or spiritual dimensions while also experiencing a fit with these same people, groups, organizations, etc. through shared or complementary characteristics. The working definition of belonging, provided to participants, was that a sense of belonging encompasses both feeling at home and being a part of something.

In this project, we considered sense of belonging as a tangible sign of inclusion practices and processes, particularly safety, involvement, and feeling respected and valued (see model of inclusive organizations, Shore et al. 2018). Using sense of belonging as the starting point of conversations (rather than inclusion or discrimination) had two major benefits. First, since belonging is experiential, it allowed participants to discuss inclusion from their own experience. This limited discussion of opinions, to avoid polarization. Second, it allowed us to focus on a positive approach of promoting inclusion, beyond the mere absence of exclusion, e.g., harassment and discrimination.

Ally: Someone who speaks out on behalf of someone else or takes actions that are supportive of someone else.

Advocate: Someone who publicly supports or

recommends a particular cause or policy.

Activist: Someone who gets involved in activities that are meant to achieve political or social change; including being a member of an organization working on change.

Bias: Bias is a broad category of behaviors including discrimination, harassment, and other actions which demean or intimidate individuals or groups because of personal characteristics or beliefs or their expression. There are various kinds of bias: prejudice (emotional bias), stereotypes (cognitive bias), and discrimination (behavioral bias). Biases can be explicit (overt and conscious) or more implicit (automatic, ambiguous, and ambivalent).

Cisgender: Someone whose gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth.

Disclosure: The extent to which an individual reveals their sexual orientation and/or gender identity to others, colloquially referred to as 'coming-out'.

Gender expression: How an individual chooses to outwardly express their gender, within the context of societal expectations of gender.

Gender identity: An individual's innate sense of their own gender, whether male, female or something else, which may or may not correspond to the sex assigned at birth.

Non-binary: Umbrella term for individuals whose gender identity does not sit comfortably with 'man' or 'woman.' Non-binary identities are varied and can include people who identify with some aspects of binary identities, while others reject them entirely.

Orientation: umbrella term describing a person's attraction to other people. This attraction may be sexual (sexual orientation) and/or romantic (romantic orientation). These terms refer to a person's sense of identity based on their attractions, or lack thereof.

Pronoun: Words used to refer to people's gender in conversation - for example, 'he', 'she' or 'they'.

Transgender: Umbrella term to describe individuals whose gender identity is different from the sex they were assigned at birth.

Transitioning: The steps a trans person may take to live in the gender with which they identify. Each individual's transition may involve different things, including medical intervention, dressing differently, and changing official documents, but not all trans people want or are able to have this.

Queer: A term used by those wanting to reject specific labels of romantic orientation, sexual orientation and/or gender identity. It can also be a way of rejecting the perceived norms of the LGBT community (racism, sizeism, ableism etc.). In this report, it is used to refer to individuals who do not conform to societal expectations of binary sex categories and potentially reproductive heterosexuality.

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APPENDIX 2

METHODOLOGY OF THE ACTION RESEARCH

PHASE	PERIOD	TOPIC	METHOD	SAMPLE
I	September 2020-September 2021	Diversity and exclusion/discrimination via semi-structured roundtables and personal interviews	<p>The research on the themes Internationals, Disability and First Generation took place until April 2021 and was done using semi-structured interviews specially designed within the SEG Inclusion (see Appendix X) and approved by the Ethics Committee (of the BMS faculty). The interview protocol for both personal interviews and roundtable conversations had an open format without a fixed order of questions to allow for a natural conversation tailored to the individual situation. A topic list was used to ensure that the same topics were covered in all interviews.</p> <p>The round table conversations and the personal interviews were conversations with people directly involved with the target group. Therefore, not only the students or employees who self-identified as belonging to the target groups were interviewed, but also the staff members who arrange things for these groups. Several round table conversations were arranged on the theme Internationals, not only with internationals themselves but also one with Dutch employees and one with Dutch students (and employees?) to gain insight in how Dutch people experience the internationalization of the university. Because of the sensitivity of the themes, we decided to arrange personal interviews for disability, neurodiversity, and first-generation people.</p>	<p>The recruitment for the round tables about Internationals and the interviews on Disability and Neurodiversity was done by approaching staff and students known by the different SEG members and asking them to participate and to spread the word. Finding first generation students was a challenge. The concept of First-Generation student is not widely known. Students do not know they are first generation; they do not identify themselves with the term. Most study advisors and other staff in charge of the students did not know the concept either and that together with privacy rules made the recruitment laborious. First, we had to work on awareness about first generation students and that we did by means of presentations in different gremials and articles in the UTtoday. Mirjam Bult's fund for first generation students also helped to increase awareness of the challenges of this group.</p> <p>Initially, semi-structured interviews were also foreseen to start the dialogue on Ethnicity, Race and Religion. However, while organizing the round tables, it gradually became clear that the subject matter easily led to polarization and to fraught discussions even between the SEG members. Therefore, we concluded that another method and approach was needed to avoid polarization and facilitate fruitful and respectful dialogue.</p>

TABLE 4 METHODOLOGY: TWO PHASES

PHASE	PERIOD	TOPIC	METHOD	SAMPLE
II	September 2021-April 2022	Focus on belonging and intersectionality via story telling in groups	<p>From September 2021 the SEG switched from a focus on discrimination (negative approach to inclusion, i.e. preventing exclusion, see introduction) to a positive approach of promoting inclusion by making belonging and non-belonging central. In addition, we broadened the scope of our approach to encompass both commonalities and differences between individuals and groups. Moreover, we wanted to pay attention to intersectionality, i.e., experiencing with or identifying with more than one dimension of diversity simultaneously (e.g., women with a non-EU background). Because the SEG had already been set up as 6 identity-based subgroups, and we wanted to maintain some coherence in our approach, we continued partially within those divisions. The result chapters in this report are also organized according to those specific groups.</p> <p>A storytelling roundtable method was specially developed for the SEG inclusion by experts in our group on qualitative and narrative methods. The storytelling roundtable part, also officially approved as a research study by the Ethics Committee of the BMS faculty, provided in-depth insight into the complexity, nuance and ambiguity of how (non) belonging is experienced by staff and students. The dialogical format, with a focus on the narration of experiences instead of opinions and discussion, was chosen to avoid polarization. To facilitate ethically responsible exchange on sensitive topics, we took care to set up a safe space for storytelling and trained the moderators to maintain the safe space. All moderators were carefully selected based on motivation and skill and required to participate themselves in a roundtable as participants and follow the training.</p> <p>>></p>	<p>he recruitment of participants for the storytelling roundtables was done by choosing some fixed dates and topics beforehand and advertising them via Instagram, in the big screens at the campus, with flyers and by addressing student organizations. At the same time SEG members spread the word asking colleagues or friends to do the same (snowball sampling recruitment) or asking potential participants personally to join and ask their friends or colleagues. For some topics like religion or women's empowerment it was not possible to find participants with an open invitation, so we looked first for a group and then arranged a date and a moderator. Recruitment was a very intensive and challenging task that we underestimated.</p>

PHASE	PERIOD	TOPIC	METHOD	SAMPLE
			<p>>></p> <p>During the pilot phase, we developed and tested the methodology of the round tables iteratively in several rounds with ourselves as participants. This way we adhered to the principle that we are on equal footing with participants sharing personally sensitive experiences and do not ask others what we are not ourselves prepared to do. Because the SEG consists of students and employees together, the pilot roundtables also were mixed. The mix of students and staff turned out to be quite successful in helping both groups to understand and empathize with the perspectives of the other. Breaking the hierarchy was perceived especially by the students as quite valuable. They urged us to redesign the roundtables so that student-staff were mixed in in the actual study set-up. We together discussed the risk of power dynamics, and took two measures to ensure that participants could speak freely: (1) host the roundtables with a moderator team consisting of a student and staff member to signal hierarchical equality in our own performance; (2) ensure that students and staff members from the same department/program were not placed together in one roundtable session (by giving them a choice to withdraw without explanation once they saw who the other participants were). In the actual roundtables with UT staff/students, some were indeed mixed, but others were student- or staff only when this seemed opportune (for example when recruitment was targeted via student associations). Because there is no special staff at the UT arranging things for students or employees from these groups, we could not include separate interviews with them.</p>	

APPENDIX 3

INTERVIEW GUIDELINE DISABILITY

The interview model is a guideline to cover the most of the theoretical framework based on the bachelor thesis of Bas Koelewijn (Koelewijn, S.K. (2015) [\(Un\)limited opportunities? : access and participation of students with disabilities at the University of Twente.](#)).

Nevertheless, when the interviewee student indicates another subject of note the strength of the semi-structured interview is to be able to engage with the interviewee on such matters.

- Choice of university/course
 - Asking about the reasons behind the original choices for enrolment
 - Whether disability was taken into account
 - Previous knowledge concerning facilities
 - Visited open day for students with a disability or not. If yes, was it useful? If no, why not?
- Assistive provisions/practice
 - Does the student feel that he or she can fully access his or her studies: lectures, materials, examination forms, access and adaptation
 - Was the information on the facilities easy to find & comprehend? Was it accessible?
 - Does the student feel that he or she can fully participate in his or her studies: lectures, group work, materials, examination forms
 - Are there adaptations in place: which and what are the experiences
- Adaptations such as individualized programs, adaptations concerning testing or examinations, support systems
 - What are the experiences with the TEM structure: deadlines, group work, roster scheduling
- Assistive technology
 - Is the student informed about the options of technological assistance
- Does the student use technological support systems and if so what are the experiences with technological support systems
- What are the experiences with the library (systems)
- Does the student experiences added financial burden due to disability
- College experiences
 - What are the experiences in your social life concerning interactions with for example flat mates or friends
 - What are the experiences with fellow students concerning study related interactions in for example group projects
 - What are the experiences with teachers and professors in disability related interactions, for example when disclosing your disability or discussing possible challenges.
 - What are the experiences with university staff in disability related interactions, for example in meetings with the study advisor or discussing adaptations
 - Do you feel included and 'at home' at the UT?
- Other
 - Referring to issues addressed during previous interviews – does the student recognize the issues?

APPENDIX 4

CONVERSATIONS WITH THE STAKEHOLDERS

Table 5 shows the units and groups contacted by SEG Inclusion and this appendix summarizes some of the conversations SEG members have had. The interviews are clustered according to the topics discussed in chapter 3.

As already explained in chapter 3 when reading this appendix, it is important to note the following: (1) The SEG has not spoken to every unit at the UT, only some of them (2) Our conversations may not cover

everything a unit is involved in, there may still be important issues that have not been discussed with us and therefore do not appear in this report. (3) All conversations are experiences and opinions of an individual or group, and we have not conducted a large-scale investigation or verified the factual state of affairs. That is not within the scope of our work. (4) The themes are outlined independently of a hierarchical or indicative order of importance.

Faculties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ITC: Faculty Board, ATLAS - S&T: Faculty Board, BMPI, MCS - ET: Faculty Board, MS3 - BMS: PGT - EEMCS: HR
Service departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CES: SACC, Career Services, UTLC, CELT, Mobility Erasmus Platform, KLEIN Study Advisors - Strategy & Policy (S&P) - HR Policy Team - Campus Facility Management (CFM) - Marketing & Communication (MC) - General Affairs (GA): DE&I, Safety Team, Internal audit, Ombuds Officer
Interconnected units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Platform Internationalisation Affairs (PIA) - Ambassador Network: UT Incentive Fund - Twente Graduate School (TGS) - Shaping Coordination team - Other SEGs - PRE-U - Design Lab, University Innovation Fellows (UIF) - Group Inclusive Health @UT (TechMed's research program Personalized e-Health Technology))
Associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Female Faculty Network (FFNT) & OBP Vrouwen - Th!nk with Pride & Exaltio - Student Union (SU), Erasmus Student Network (ESN), UniTe - Arago

TABLE 5: UNITS AND GROUPS CONTACTED BY THE SEG INCLUSION

AWARENESS

Awareness is the knowledge that something exists, or understanding of a situation or subject. Here it refers to practices and behaviors to bring recognition and understanding about diversity and inclusion. While likely to cause discomfort for some, they will add value to diversity and drive a positive culture change toward greater inclusion.

Throughout our conversations, the **diversity within the units** came up to create awareness about the benefits and to identify potential blind spots and bottlenecks. Diversity and multidisciplinary are important ingredients in project groups and units. The lack of diversity within some service departments such as Marketing & Communication, Strategy and Policy, CES or CFM has been discussed with several employees of these service departments and emphasized the benefits of having more perspectives on board. Diversity is also an important point of attention for some student organizations such as the SU, which is struggling to bring more diversity to the SU board and committees. The SU has shown interest in finding out which barriers international and/or students with a disability experience that prevent them from being more participative in student associations.

Many academic departments and units within the university are becoming aware and follow suit with a desire of being more inclusive. An example of action is taken by the Image Gallery of the UT [\[1\]](#) displaying images of on-campus student life, portraits of students and employees, photos and videos. In their response to make the image gallery at UT more inclusive, they have taken several angles to answer this. The image gallery usually portrays “perfect” people beautiful, smiling, young, thin, with nice outfits, and everything neat. However preserving this portrayal is not an option anymore. Showcasing “real” people is the plan of action in which the values of diversity and inclusion are fully present. Another example is the photographs used in the Shaping2030 style which are not representative. The Image Gallery wants to avoid stereotypes in any form (e.g. male technician). Also representative people should be chosen carefully which is explained by the example that “five out of ten people in a wheelchair is not realistic”.

The FFNT (Female Faculty Network Twente)

addresses bottlenecks in women’s academic career and raises awareness of gender bias. This association has many members with an international background, who raise issues of discrimination in the Netherlands compared to their country of origin. An example illustrated that, for example, in countries such as Bulgaria, Spain or Romania women are encouraged to study math and physics throughout their lives. FFNT highlights the importance of a buddy or mentoring program at the UT, especially to support women to thrive and maximize their potential. The importance is evidenced by the unbalanced representation of women in faculties. The members of the FFNT also pay also attention to the use of gender-neutral language in official documents used at the UT. It is their advice to have a structural revision to make sure everything is up to date.

Similarly, **OBP Vrouwennetwerk** advocates for reward and recognition for women working at the UT in support positions, among others for secretaries which make 47% of the members. A point of attention for this association is their website which is currently only in Dutch.

For **Arago**, the study association for Applied Physics students, inclusion is a very important theme as it can be seen in the attention they give to (psychological) well-being and awareness about discrimination against women and members of the LGBTQ+ community. A concern for the study association is the fact that because the Bachelor’s program is in Dutch and only the Master’s in English, many international students who enroll for the Master’s cannot fully participate in the association.

The **Ambassador Network** advises the Executive Board on the topic of diversity and inclusion and aims since 2019 for a broader scope, not limited to women. They have an important role in creating awareness about the importance of diversity and inclusion.

Another active unit to create awareness at UT is the **Th!nk with Pride**, a joint platform with Saxion to promote queer (LGBTQI+) staff visibility, diversity and inclusion since 2018. Th!nk with Pride faces difficulties to acquire members at the UT, which may relate to applicants’ desire to separate work and private life. Furthermore, in the report “Inclusion of

LHBTQ+ employees at the University of Twente” by M. Renkema, it is argued that many LGBTQ+ employees are not aware of initiatives such as Th!nk with Pride and state that support is not needed (anymore).

Exaltio promotes queer (LGBTQI+) visibility and support within the student community. Some critics from International LHBTQ UT students is that they do not feel welcome. The experiences and way of acting of LHBTQ in The Netherlands are seen sometimes as very conservative to students from other countries.

The project **Antiracism survey** by four ATLAS is a research project to study the extent in which racism exists at the UT. Through this project, they wanted to create a baseline of knowledge and data that shows that there are students facing discrimination on campus based on race, so that steps can be taken for further research aiming to solve this issue. The status of the project at the moment of writing this SEG report is unknown.

Inclusive Earth Observation for all (**EO4all**) is a group founded by EO women scientists at the ITC faculty. It aims to promote gender equity and inclusion in Earth observation and Geoinformation. The SEG has supported the Internal Ingenuity Proposal “Inclusive Earth Observation for all” (EO4all), submitted in 2021.

DISCRIMINATION

What happens after you speak up in your group or when an interview in the UToday is published with your experiences at the UT? The experience of several students and employees is negative. The negativity stems from the consequences of the “silence” that an interview is ignored, not discussed or even future collaborations are abruptly ended with a lack of support. The **risk of a blame culture** is created, where these interviewees are potentially singled out, blamed and criticized. This tends to result in a situation where people are afraid of reprimands and also results in unwillingness to speak out. It needs to be pointed out here that we could not find a procedure that supports people to discuss and follow up these problems.

Discrimination is experienced intensively in student housing. **Co-optation** for example is a Dutch tradition in which campus residents select their new

roommates. Room applicants who submit their application in English language are often immediately discarded. For many years this phenomenon is discussed with the executive board and whether this is indeed discrimination or not. However, international students appear to have a greater disadvantage to find a room compared to Dutch students, while it is acknowledged that many Dutch students houses do not accept or wish to include “others” i.e. they want to live with people like them. [\[2\]](#), [\[3\]](#).

Housing is directly related to exclusion in another example: **Camelot** (recently known as Mosaic World), an organization offering rental in the Upark. The name Mosaic World changed due to a bad reputation. Camelot is independent of the UT but many UT students and staff are referred to it to find a room. The charged prices are exorbitant high which excludes a large portion of potential tenants (e.g. international staff with an income lower than 1000 euros per month). [\[4\]](#), [\[5\]](#).

Another **discrimination situation** is described in a faculty dominated by male students in which female students are openly discriminated. Types of discrimination include insults, openly communicating that women are not good in this study program, they are inferior, and that women should select a different occupancy. In this specific case, females may be underrepresented, they feel threatened and undervalued which develops in a lower self-esteem. To issue this problem (young) lecturers are appointed to organize events in order to eliminate discrimination, create an inclusive environment and support these students. However, these lecturers are not skilled and not specialists in this area. This results in an unsafe environment for them. Furthermore, not only these lecturers but the female students feel unsafe too and therefore do not wish to be involved in any organized activities or even apply for a teaching assistant position.

One of the sub-associations in the UT-Kring is **GEWIS** (Goed en Wel in Samen zijn). GEWIS is active for the pensioners of the UT and it has more than 300 members, but it is not linked in any way to UT, like Alumni do for example. They do not feel involved in UT activities, and they would like to be. There are also some concrete discrimination examples as the time

that employees who retire can use their UT e-mail address depends on their rank. These are questions affect the employee journey where HR is working on together with MC and the phase of former colleague is on their schedule.

INTERNATIONALIZATION

The topic of internationalization is fundamental when talking about inclusion at the UT.

Since 2020, the **Student Union (SU)** has a portfolio Communication, Internationalization and Well-being. The teams aim is to stimulate internationalization as well as to safeguard inclusion of international students in policy plans and initiatives set out by the UT. The importance of SU's focus on internationalization and international students is confirmed by study advisors, who state *"Especially international students seem to have a difficult position. The pressure experienced by international students is often very high"*.

SU has set future objectives not limited to internationalization and aims to expand their scope including disability, diversity of cultural backgrounds and LHBTQ+ community. Therefore, the SU finds it important to include everyone, ensure equality in participation, as well as reaching out to groups who are currently either not taking part or are invisible.

Equally, **ESN (Erasmus Student Network) and UNITE** are also highly active supporting international students (housing, sports, cultural and social events, excursions and trips etc) with diverse members. Some best practices are the monthly Language Café organized by ESN to practice language skills and meet people. ESN also organizes "Sports Monday" with clinics in different sports every monday, because they realized it is not easy for international students to find a suitable sport and to join sports associations. These two units encourage the efforts of the SU for more diversity to achieve a representative SU board.

The **UTLC (UT Language Center)** has a very diverse group of students and staff making use of the services they offer, and inclusion is a constant point of attention in their activities. Their work requires experience with other cultures, understanding how to teach to multicultural groups, being aware that learners from different countries may have different

preferred learning styles. UTLC argues that it is necessary to make sure the content of the educational materials being used are well developed and inclusive. Considering global political situations (e.g. students from Ukraine and Russia in one class), sensitivity and consideration is required at the UTLC and is a theme taken into account by the UTLC.

Language is a key factor in internationalization and the UTLC supports the UT community with language and communication courses, a writing center and a skills lab focused on academic, personal and development skills and learning how to improve intercultural communication.

The commitment of the UT in becoming a more international organization is supported by the cluster **International Affairs**. In January 2021 they launched a project to bring all the international dimensions of the employees at UT together: in business, in education, in research. The project resulted in an integrated view on internationalization at the UT, a white paper "International dimensions of the UT", an integrated approach, part of the main policy framework of the UT in Shaping 2030.

INCLUSION AT UT

The Centre of Expertise in Learning and Teaching (CELT) consists of a group of experienced educational advisors that work for part of their appointment as faculty education experts at one of the five UT faculties. They support educational managers and teaching staff with designing, implementing, conducting, and evaluating lectures, projects, modules, or programs.

During our conversations, CELT addressed key issues with respect to inclusion:

- They point out that denial of problems in this area are an important barrier. Awareness, specially the lack of, is a key issue. Although some people may believe they are non-judgmental, this illustrates the lack of awareness of one's own assumption and biases.
- Students argue that the exemplary behavior of teachers is important. For internationals acceptance can be stated as a challenge as it is expected that internationals adapt, implicitly stating that one cannot be themselves.
- CELT offers a compulsory nationally acknowledged

qualification of pedagogical competences of university teachers, the University Teaching Qualification (UTQ, or in Dutch BKO, Basis Kwalificatie Onderwijs). Diversity and inclusion are not explicit in the UTQ courses and CELT argues for greater awareness to create inclusion also within this program.

- TOM education, makes it difficult for some students (e.g. chronic illness, difficult to participate in the entire module). TOM2.0 is better for them, as students can follow parts of modules.
- When guiding groups of students, the group dynamics is very complicated if diversity and psychological safety are not on your mind.

The university **Ombuds Officer** assists both employees and students with advice on issues and difficult situations related to studying or working at the University of Twente. He has an important role in making the UT a more inclusive place. Mediation and preventing cases from escalating are among the most important tasks of the ombudsman. The ombuds person is impartial and does not report to any other authority, this position is defined as a “neutral intermediary” which is a big difference with the role of confidential counselors or student counselors, that always take the side of the person speaking. He assists staff and students but mainly staff because of his involvement at a later stage in a process.

The ombuds officer is part of a service department (GA), which is headed by the secretary general of the UT and is in close contact with the Executive Board. The issue of objectivity and impartiality is raised by some members of the UT community. The threshold to get in touch with him is also experienced as very high by some staff and students, for some he does not seem close enough and accessible enough to contact him. As became apparent during the round table discussions and other discussions, the visibility of the ombudsman is also very limited, so that many students and staff are not aware of its existence,

Many themes in UT’s strategy, **Shaping2030**, have to do with inclusion: lifelong learning, ECIU university, sustainability (also about social sustainability), citizen science, prizes and awards, recognition and rewarding or inclusive wellbeing leadership are just some examples of this. Inclusion is implicitly embedded in our strategy.

A change in the cultural mindset at UT is one of the most important themes where the **Shaping team** is working at. Inclusion has everything to do with this mindset: how can a research group, a unit become more open and transparent, more innovative, more entrepreneurial, more sustainable or inclusive?

The **Internal Audit (GA)** department has an advisory role as ‘trusted advisor’. They committed to discussions within the organization as an institutional self-reflection: what policy is out there and how is it being institutionalized, in order to determine which areas of attention or risks are relevant for an audit or advice. In the annual audit plan adopted by the Executive Board in September 2021 and discussed in the audit committee in October 2021, 12 areas of attention for the UT have been found: leadership, job satisfaction, workload, awareness security and privacy, reward and recognition, diversity, entrepreneurship, digitalization internal processes, talent management, health/well-being, implementation U4ERP and sustainability.

The **HR Policy team** believes that everyone has uniquely great talents and aims to create a talent-powered culture and mindset that recognises and reward everybody’s talents. They have several talent milestones related to inclusion and talent:

- Take measures to become a more inclusive employer throughout the employee journey, including through branding for specific target groups.
- Strategic Personnel Planning and target group-oriented recruitment in co-creation with faculties and services, in such a way that future positions can be filled in time (with regard to i.e. sector plans.).
- Suitable onboarding for all colleagues (also PhD, external colleagues, flexible positions, OLD’s).
- Personalised, inclusive and demand-driven learning experiences to stimulate employees to gain insight into their talents and to proactively shape their own career and personal growth.
- Support employees and teams in developing the necessary future-proof skills (such as global and inclusive mindset (DE&I), complex problem solving and communication skills, data and digital skills).
- Supportive HR policies and practices in place concerning individual talent development and performance management (attracting, identifying, developing, ensuring retention). Recognition for

talent diversity: creating room for everyone's talent with a focus on quality, content and creativity.

- Challenge leaders to develop 21st-century leadership skills in line with the UT leadership vision/profile (e.g. people-oriented, inclusive, and global leadership and team-based leadership).

Other talent (DE&I) projects and initiatives related to inclusion are the following:

- Gender balance: working on target figures for women full professor, the gender equality plan is in place, participating in the LNVH benchmark etc.
- Recruitment: Hypatia (gender equality), new recruitment webpage/ career site, inclusive language in vacancies with Textio etc.
- Improvement of the DE&I course offer to eliminate the gender gap
- Inclusion of LGBTQI+ group by doing research for more inclusive employment conditions (birth leave, parental leave)
- Inclusive pronouns and registration in the HR administration
- Evaluation of onboarding practices (information for specific target groups)
- Stimulating and funding of DE&I bottom up initiatives supported by the Ambassadors' Network

The UT Incentive Fund aims is to fund initiatives that encourage innovative, bottom-up initiatives on DEI. Since 2019 it is not only meant for projects on empowerment of women but for a wider scope of themes. The SEG actively supported several UT Incentive fund 2020 awarded projects (Dialogical Spaces, Ana Bustamante, Fenna Hoefsloot; Inclusion of LGBTQ+ employees at the UT, Maarten Renkema; Utoday Special on Inclusion, Anouk Geenen). The SEG has also been co-author in two UT Incentive Fund awarded projects, Inclusive workplace in 2021, together with DesignLab and in 2022, *Let's meet at ANDY's": Developing A Neurodiverse Do-it-Yourself Online Platform to Promote Student Wellbeing*.

The **Twente Graduate School (TGS)** coordinates doctoral programs at the University of Twente. To understand what is at stake regarding inclusion and equality at TGS, four types of doctoral candidates need to be distinguished:

1. A. Doctoral candidates who are on the UT payroll (former AIOs paid for by the university, former OIOs paid for by external research funds such as NWO),

because these are formally employees not students or B. UT employees who are in a PhD track

2. Scholarship PhD w[1]ho receive funds to conduct a PhD in the Netherlands and who are internationally perceived as students not as employees. At the UT website and in other formal communication, these candidates are often referred to as guests (not employees) to confirm their status for, for instance, the IND and fiscal services.
3. Externally financed doctoral candidates who conduct their PhD paid for by their employer (also includes applied university doctorates with a partial teacher fund), and who have a PNUT (zero-hours) contract with the UT
4. External PhD candidates, who fund their PhD themselves.

At the University of Twente, we aim to treat all PhDs as equal as possible. The Charter for Doctoral Candidates [6], for instance, specifies the rights and duties that apply to all doctoral candidates. Only when it is for legal reasons not possible to treat the different PhD categories the same, the Charter for Doctoral Candidates makes a distinction. In footnotes in the Charter, you can see where a difference is made between the categories (see text box for the main four differences). These derive from the fact that some PhD categories have an employment contract with the university and are paid to work as a PhD while others want to do a PhD and find their own funding to pay for that trajectory.

Across the UT, some faculties or service departments are more creative and flexible than others in accommodating and supporting the non-employed PhD's in dealing with the restrictions. While some provide explicit communication and support, others offer less or no support.

Regardless of the underlying reasons, inequalities exist, whether we like it or not. To give some examples: First, and as mentioned before, only employed doctoral candidates can be asked to be involved in teaching responsibilities. While some non-employed PhD candidates perceive this situation as unequal in that they are *not allowed to teach* (thus hindering their career prospects), some employed PhD candidates object to being exploited by *having to teach*. Second, some PhD's not employed by the UT get cooperation to obtain paid jobs alongside their

PhD trajectory and others encounter obstacles or outright rejection. But then again, many employed PhD candidates have to work on projects not related to their dissertation and find that this hinders them in finishing their dissertation in time. Third, some PhDs not employed by the UT do and others don't receive a Christmas package, depending on their departmental policy. Fourth, the onboarding process also differs per group, as in some groups, scholarship PhD candidates do and in others they do not have access to the buddy system that is available for the employed doctoral candidates. But then again: there are also groups where no buddy system is in place at all. Finally, there are participation bodies (UC, FC and PC), where we have representatives of employees and students. PhDs with a labour contract can vote and be elected for the employee section. Non-employed PhD candidates cannot be considered as employees (because that would be to suggest they have an employment contract). Because the Charter stipulates, they can be deemed students it has been decided for the time being to allow non-employed PhD candidates to vote (and be elected) in the student section. The option to include non-employed PhD's as part of the student representation is not perceived as desirable by this group, because they perceive this as adding to status inequality between them and the employed PhD candidates. So, this may be second-best, but it is better than not being represented at all.

Better communication about the various systemic causes of the resulting inequality, and about how the university thus far has tried to operate inclusively within the restrictions we face, is a good first step that is currently being undertaken, but more work needs to be done. Regardless of the category a PhD belongs to, or the faculty, we also observe that non-Dutch PhD's have more difficulty finding their place in the university; they face more obstacles than others.

There are as so often no easy solutions, and the problems cannot be solved by simple rules, but establishing conditions (of safety and trust) in which dialogue can take place to jointly find solutions that work for both staff and PhD candidates, seems paramount. January 1, 2023, Lucelle Dankbaar will start at TGS in her role as policy advisor. One of her main tasks is to develop a plan to improve inclusion of all categories of PhD's and to align the

implementation of this (and other) PhD policies between the faculties.

Some further observation: Studium Generale offers its program often in Dutch only. This excludes international PhD candidates (and staff).

Recommendations:

- Integral policy to ensure internal UT equality for all categories of doctoral candidates
- Clear communication about the rights, status and consequences for the different categories of PhD's that is consistent across faculties
- Finance and facilitate an onboarding system for all doctoral candidates, regardless of employment status and faculty
- Facilitate FA and HR to enable PhD's not paid by the UT to get paid work alongside their PhD projects, learn from good practices (Designlab)
- Ensure a healthy ratio of supervisory staff and (PhD) students
- Encourage all PhD candidates, and their supervisors, to attend the "build your intercultural muscle" workshop (developed by CELT)
- Establish conditions (of safety and trust) for dialogue between staff and PhD candidates to jointly find workable and equitable solutions.

EEMCS D&I TEAM

The faculty of EEMCS started a project team in 2021 to identify the topics within diversity and inclusion where they could develop further. This project resulted in a specific D&I plan of action for the EEMCS faculty. In this plan, a number of direct concrete actions in the areas of recruitment, onboarding, training & development, organization, education and culture within EEMCS are proposed. It also proposes creating an EEMCS D&I team that will drive and monitor progress, organize events, and take up a number of mid to long term recommendations formulated in the document. The idea of forming of the EEMCS D&I team was received with great enthusiasm by the EEMCS staff and as a result, a team has been formed with a core group of 6 people (three scientific- and three support employees) and a sounding board with 12 members. This team will pick up some points of attention of the EEMCS DE&I plan.

ITC's Sounding Board Integrity (ISBI)

At the ITC Faculty, a sounding board was created in 2021 to promote and support actions for the existence of open, safe, responsible, accountable, diverse, and inclusive academic and workspaces, culture, and practices by/for all members of the ITC community (i.e., students, academic, and support staff). The board comprises one representative of each of ITC's academic departments and two from support departments, as well as ITC's vice-dean of research, ITC's HR head, and as of December 2022, ITC's student representative.

The ISBI's first-year work has resulted in the first ITC's Integrity Action Plan focusing on scientific and social integrity (for the latter, specifically on social safety). The ITC Integrity Action Plan aims to define and implement strategies and instruments to assess the ITC community's current integrity status and the most pressing issues while carrying out direct concrete actions to enhance integrity @ITC. There are plans for a survey as our assessing instrument, perhaps focus groups and discussion spaces, training workshops, and the definition of (institutional) communication spaces to discuss our findings and progress at the faculty level.

Some observed personal challenges and recommendations:

- People tackling issues and organically falling into support points for staff or students in topics of DE&I (in particular, social safety) are starting to be emotionally and mentally overburnt despite their interest and disposition due to the lack of training on working with sensitive or potentially traumatic issues.

Recommendation: To provide training on trauma management and non-violent communication to all staff that would like to take it. It would need also active promotion for staff, academic and support, that are acting formally and informally as support points for other members of the UT community.

- People, formally and informally, being support points in topics related to DE&I (in particular, social safety) struggling with adequate handling of the stories, unsure on how to support or manage them,

or missing information on appropriate channels and procedures in place at the UT to recommend the person or groups impacted.

Recommendation:

- Create analogue and digital material UT wide with the different contact points available at the UT.
- To provide special information sessions to the UT community on these contact points and their roles and discussion spaces on how these are going for the uni (SEG's focus groups for instance be kept on a more frequent basis and structurally embedded withing the UT). Discussions spaces (individual and group) need to have a clarity of what will happen with the stories and the data and how these will be handled.
- To provide open training sessions on facilitation of sensitive discussions and handling of these information as well as on non-violent communication to avoid potential distressing moments for both the person sharing and the (formal/informal) support contact point.

- People working on DE&I (formally/informally) across the UT, lacking resources (physical and financial) to conduct their work. Activities sometimes not being recognized by the system (inclusion in Unit4) to be purposely accounted for as 'work', also not so many financial resources are available (except for the UT DE&I Incentive Fund) for activities on this at the UT.

For the **UT-Kring**, the staff association for UT employees, bonding is a very central topic. The UT-Kring is currently giving priority to becoming a more inclusive association where all employees at UT feel welcome. Their website is being translated to English and the range of activities will be broadened to various target groups (young, old, with children, without, international, local, sport types, cultural types, social types...). They see the need to evolve and develop, moving forward. Also with the venue of ITC to the campus, the contact with the staff association of ITC has been sought for collaborating together.

The UT offers a career counseling service for students to gain insight in their skills, interests, traits and motivations which will help you to identify the types

of work and fields that would match your profile. The **Career Services** at the UT is a platform to support students from job search, orientation up to applications. Their future aim is to be aware and support students with autism and first generation students.

The **student mobility coordinators** are responsible for students who go for an internship to a company or abroad (outgoing students) and incoming students from other universities or from other countries. They support staff and students with questions about international education and internships and educational programs in the process of admissions. They aim to promote an atmosphere of inclusion, where all students receive the support they need, especially for incoming students. Equally to the career services, they aim to make their services more inclusive by offerings to first generation students, students from a lower socio-economic background as well as students with disabilities or international students. The activities and tasks of mobility coordinators are not uniform across the UT. Every faculty has its own way of doing things. For example, ITC gives a lot of personal attention to the students because they have less students.

The **Kick-in** week at the UT is the official introduction period for bachelor students and it is meant to meet new friends and get to know the university, the campus and the student associations. This week is organized by the kick-in committee, a group of 6 students that devote a year to organize this. Inclusion is a relevant theme in the organization of this week. There has always been attention for female students of studies with less than 20% female students (the Ladies Introduction Days) and there was two times a small introduction for students with a disability which has been cancelled because of lack of participants. Currently, extra attention within the Kick-In to include all students is given: also, for international students, with the main objective creating an understanding of the importance of participation for timely information regarding travelling and housing arrangements. There is also more attention to inclusion of lhbtq+ students. The formation of a diverse Kick-in committee in order to include broader perspectives is advised, which has the potential to position the program attractive and suitable for a larger group of incoming students.

ITC offers a very different kick-in program, the ITC introduction week, which is mandatory for ITC students which are mostly internationals. This week is focused on learning about Dutch and other cultures, knowing the surroundings and on practical things like biking, safety information or registration at the municipality. Some of these ideas could be implemented in the campus kick-in.

The **Pre-U** offers activities at three programs, Pre-U Junior (for primary school), Pre-U (for secondary school) and Pro-U (professionalization of educational professionals). Through these programs the areas of expertise of the UT are connected with the school's curriculum and extracurricular learning.

Schools that make use of Pre-U activities are often schools with a higher CITO test score, with higher quality of education and that makes already privileged children to have even more advantage. Although, pre-U could engage more and contact schools and children that would not register by own initiative (e.g. prices of the activities). Pre-U has a role preventing drop out of students with for low income families, a migrant background or first generation.

The project **Students-4-students** is initiated by Pre-U at the UT, a collaboration with Saxion in the Students-4-students campaign and therein in the project 'Equal opportunities for everyone?', funded by from the ECHO Foundation (Expertise Center for Diversity Policy). In this project, a student platform with students from Saxion, the UT, ROC van Twente and Twente secondary schools was set up to promote equality of opportunity specifically for non-western students. [7].

Since November 2020, Pre-U has an online platform the **Skills Lab**. Senior high school students can independently take courses in skills relevant to advanced academic studies. They learn how to prepare themselves academically, and how to deal with cultural barriers. The online nature of the platform is expected to be more accessible to a broader student group. Furthermore, the **PAL project** (Personal Assistant to the Teacher) UT students assist secondary education teachers with developing and providing (digital) education, supervising projects or other activities. Inclusion could be a topic that could be brought in through this PALs.

In addition, a topic of discussion was how Pre-U could have a inclusion as a perspective when they design (new) activities. Pre-U is working with Dutch primary and secondary schools, which requires, students who perform and support these activities, must have the Dutch language proficiency. However, it could be an option to recruit students from other backgrounds to act as role models for the children. Also for the designing of activities a diverse group of students could be recruited (in this case Dutch language would also not be necessary).

Connecting Hands was started in 2015 by the Student Union of the University of Twente to create a platform for refugees. The [DEAR-initiative \[8\]](#) is a pilot project of Connecting Hands that trains former refugees to become role models for new refugees. This project got funding in 2020 from the UT and it has been successfully completed. The organizers are looking for sponsors to organize a follow-up with the municipality, M-pact and the UT.

The UT has had a role acknowledging refugees from Ukraine by forming a **working group Ukraine** that organized meetings with student refugees, and arranged possibilities for them to study or work at UT. The group also had contact with the Eurasian study organization (student organization that unites Russian speaking students) to support them. The UT shared openly their view against the war without taking parties and supporting all the employees and students that have to do with it in any way. It also openly supported associations like Twente voor Ukraine and NUTwente.

The **EXPAT Center East Netherlands (world trade center) [9]** is the Central point for expats living and working in the east of the Netherlands. Their mission is to support international oriented companies in Twente and their highly skilled workers, scientific researchers and their families originating from all over the world. They help with practical services (work permits, housing, taxes, public transportation), with domestic services (everyday life in the Netherlands: supermarkets, drugstores, post offices, garbage and recycles), language and with social and cultural activities. They have a buddy program (local Dutch buddy with knowledge about the place you are living and who helps expats getting settled in their new environment. They organize every month a Meet and Greet for expats.

An important topic in the Expat center is keeping talent in the region, in Twente and this is also one of the main challenges for the UT. They organize workshops with practical information on the Dutch labor market, for the partners of expats who are looking for a way to use their skills to keep their career going in Twente but have troubles finding a job. They advise and help companies in the region to open to expats in their company and to become more attractive for internationals. They collaborate both with Saxion and UT. Their focus was on highly skilled migrants, but it is shifting to include students too, how to keep students in Twente, in this region.

The changing demographic of the campus community, the number of students and the COVID-19 pandemic are affecting the way we meet at the campus and Campus & Facility Management (CFM) is trying to get a better idea of the current needs. The **campus as a meeting place** is an impact point for CFM with regard to campus development. They look at the people, the physical environment and the activities that take place and what is possibly missing or should be adjusted. This is a project meant to improve inclusion at UT. They try to find out the important aspects when meeting on campus outside of the educational timetable and what meeting activities (specific sports or culture activities, workshops, free use activities, group activities or events), meeting accommodation or facilities are missing on campus.

WELL-BEING

The **Student well-being improvement program (SWIP)** aims to inspire and support continuous improvements for student well-being within education, communication, support and guidance as well as within student life. In order to do this, it is necessary to relate well-being to different aspects among others, to the diversity of our student population and to inclusion.

Student well-being is an important topic at the UT and there had been several studies about well-being of UT students. UT research has confirmed the results on stress and burnout obtained from the national research among university students, but the UT study revealed very [too strong] clearly and in more detail than other existing studies that serious mental health issues were widespread among UT-students. Of

special interest for the SEG Inclusion is a study in the spring of 2019 where other variables like Dutch/non Dutch, were taken into account. In this study significant differences were found based on nationality (international students showing more symptoms than Dutch students), gender (female students showing more symptoms than male students), sexual preference (LGBT students showing more symptoms than hetero students) and health (students reporting illness/disability showing more symptoms). A description and analysis of the UT-context of student well-being and input from students and members of the chain of student guidance reveal some actions that can help improving the well-being of our students: 1) the need for professionalization of members involved in student guidance; 2) the need to increase student involvement within their own guidance (student to student guidance) 3) improvement of provision of information on existing facilities (information, if existing, is difficult to find, and the information in Dutch is much more extensive than in English) and 4) the need to incorporate student well-being and student guidance within quality assurance at all levels (there is no structural evaluation, no regular PDCA, Plan Do Check Act cycle, at this moment for FAINCOs or study advisors for example). Also important is have a clear common well supported definition of the duty of care to students.

SACC (Student Affaires Coaching and Counseling)

is organized with several groups including Student deans (3), student psychologists (7), coordinator students with a disability (1), career counselling (4); griffier (2) well-being; central service for student counselling. One of the student deans is also a PhD counsellor.

Summary of the discussion:

- Some students have big financial problems, not only first-generation students. International students experience sometimes high pressure because of this.
- There are several personal circumstances that can affect students: studying with a physical, sensory, or cognitive disability, with a chronic illness or with autism, depression; pregnancy/parenting during study; activism; sport or top-level arts
- There is attention for students that have to deal with unacceptable behavior: intimidation, sexual

- harassment, discrimination, aggression, bullying
- Social problems: family, loneliness
- There are students that are exceptionally good in their study and need more; some students get stuck because they do not know what to do next, they are afraid of the future.
- (International) students sometimes bring situations from their past with them. There are often taboos and many financial problems
- For PhD students, hierarchical relationships play a significant role in transgressive behavior.

Enactus Twente is a worldwide known organization active in 37 countries that enables students to realize their ideas into projects that could run for years. The focus of project is on SDGs to create a positive social impact on the world.

Student loneliness threatens their quality of life and mental health. The project [Alone2Allies \[10\]](#) aims to make it easy for students to connect with each other, find mates that share their interests, and as a result, have a better experience studying in the Netherlands. The idea is to offer a digital platform divided into communities around topics/interests in which one can easily join and network/socialize, so they can enjoy their time here without suffering from loneliness.

Enactus Twente has another project called [Race like her \[11\]](#) to increase women participation in motorsport by facilitating opportunities to young female aspirants by acting as the mediator and increase awareness by offering workshops, webinars, and act as a middleman to increase funding and activities to captivate women's interest to pursue a career in motorsports.

P-NUT is the PhD Network of the University of Twente that connects, informs and represents PhD candidates and PDEng at the UT. Inclusion is a very important topic at P-NUT as it can be seen by several [projects](#) organized within the network that have to do with inclusion and well-being: the impact of [COVID19 \[12\]](#); [Include-U \[13\]](#), and [the Well-being report by the Equity working group \[14\]](#).

Doctoral candidates represent a crucial group within the academic workforce and fall at the UT into a category between students and researchers: for some things they are treated as students (e.g. UT's

confidential advisors are not intended for doctoral candidates, they have two counselors from SACC that they share with students) and for others they are employees. It is also important to note here that not all the PhD candidates do have the same kind of contract and rights as it can be read earlier in this chapter about inclusion at TGS. Doctoral candidates are a risk group in what refers to stress and mental health. They are in a vulnerable position because they are dependent on factors outside their immediate control to finish their doctoral degree on time, think for example of the hierarchical relation between supervisors and candidates. The role of the supervisor is crucial and supervision-related issues, like control and power abuse, can be exacerbated by an environment which discourages doctoral candidates from addressing these issues. More about this can be read in this article of UToday “[P-Nut: there should be serious consequences to misconduct](#)” [15]

We have had contact with several P-Nut members in several occasions related to the project **Include-U**, that explores the factors that facilitate or limit the inclusion of international doctoral candidates to the UT’s international learning environment. The focus was on international doctoral candidates as a unique group of migrants at the UT: they share many every day’s life commonalities with international students and employees (housing, mobility, language, health) but there are some differences like having a temporary job, being in a group with more internationals than Dutch people and sharing (as other candidates) a status at the UT that is sometimes that of an employee and sometimes of a student. P-NUT has publicly reported the [results of a qualitative research](#) in their website [13]. Their main conclusion is that *international doctoral candidates see and appreciate the efforts of the UT to diversify and to be inclusive, but they think it is not enough and, they are unsure if the diversity and inclusion objectives were initiated only as marketing, branding or image-building gimmicks targeted at the outside world or genuine movements for ideological and practical systemic changes at par with prevalent needs and realities*. P-NUT’s Include-U also conducted a survey, to collect more extensive evidence that built upon the qualitative findings, the results of which are in the process of being published in a scientific journal.

From December 2021 to February 2022 the **EQUITY** working group from P-NUT (former Female Doctoral

Candidate Initiative) conducted an independent survey on the current well-being of Doctoral Candidates (PhD and EngD) at the University of Twente [14]. The survey was circulated through the official P-NUT newsletter, the social media platforms from P-NUT (WhatsApp and Instagram), and through e-mails which we asked the secretaries to forward to their PhD/EngD candidates, for which we collected 205 responses in total. The main conclusions are:

- There is a need for Doctoral candidates to be more in contact with industry and scientific partners to be able to decide about their future.
- The university could improve the connection with Doctoral Candidates after they graduate, which would allow networking.
- Doctoral Candidates are still impacted by loneliness as a result of the pandemic COVID-19.
- Doctoral Candidates should be treated equally independent of their employment status.
- The voices of non-employed Doctoral Candidates are easily overlooked/not heard, doctoral Candidates require more support for housing situation, especially for external/international candidates and more legal support (e.g., with VISA).
- Doctoral Candidates do not approach HR, TGS and PNUT with their problems, the connection between doctoral candidates between working groups and faculties does not seem too strong.

The HR Policy team has several well-being milestones related to inclusion:

- Two sub-measurements in 2023 for the employee well-being survey for current, specific, and reliable insight into the mental, physical, and social well-being of our employees.
- Expand expeditions in the field of well-being leadership: 8 annual expeditions and associated pilots.
 - Pilots and innovation on content of the expedition experiences by enrichment with current topics such as recognition and reward, DE&I, social safety fundamentals.
 - Pilots on the expedition with an expanded target group of managers: including expeditions for PhD candidate supervisors, and expeditions with room for team development.
- Strengthen the ‘Let’s Connect’ Leadership Community and its impact. Organise 4 annual meetings (in addition to carousel with

masterclasses and continuous informal meetings), that meet the development needs of the members and are in line with Shaping2030 objectives.

- Continuation of personalised workshops and courses adapted to the current well-being needs of employees.
 - Organize well-being weeks with various data-driven activities in the context of well-being for both students and (guest) employees.
 - o Specific focus on identified risk groups.
 - Specific attention to identified absence signals and risks (such as mental illness) and current topics (such as social integrity, recognition and reward).
- Strengthening social safety and integrity at UT through the social safety campaign (together with DE&I team), the Active bystander training, Mindlab, etc. Working together with GA and DE&I, focusing on increasing social safety in the workplace, making it easier to ask for help, and enhancing the role of HR as part of the support structure. Thereby stimulating, supporting and facilitating faculties, services, partners, (and study associations) to incorporate DE&I and social safety principles in their ways of working and practices.

And also important projects and initiatives related to inclusion:

- Include the topic of inclusion in the well-being survey
- Improve the access of all UT buildings
- The topic of DE&I is part of the agenda in the leadership expeditions and the leadership community
- Putting effort on the inclusion of vulnerable groups in the labour market (Participatiebanen)
- House of integrity: social safety campaign, Mindlab, Active bystander training

EQUITY

There are several tools at the UT to promote Equity:

Target figures for the percentages of female professors: On paper, people of all genders have the same opportunities but the numbers don't add up and women currently account to 21% of full professors at UT the goal is to reach 25 percent of female professors by 2025

In their efforts to create equal opportunities for women, the UT supports the existence of the Hypatia

chairs, women only vacancies, to improve diversity at the top.

Strategies for diversity and for equity like the target figures or Hypatia chairs are contradictory to the inclusion strategy, but that they are necessary. They are a tool to address barriers in the organization that prevent women from working there. But positive discrimination will not work without a good strategy for inclusion: if we do not understand why this is done and we resent the women that get the jobs, and they do not feel included, then it will not work. The difference and the need of both strategies, for equity and for inclusion, should be explained and discussed more often in the units.

Another important tool to promote equity at the UT is the **FOBOS** (Financial Support Special Circumstances Students) which can be used by students in case of study delay due to circumstances beyond your control (e.g. illness, impairment, pregnancy, special family circumstances or insufficient feasible educational program), activism, top sport level and top art level.

In order to contribute to equal opportunities for everyone, former Vice-President of the Executive Board, Mirjam Bult, started the First generation fund. Students who are the first of their family to go to university are often less aware of the development opportunities next to their studies and lack more often financial support for these extra activities. This fund gives them a helping hand so that all students of the UT can continue the tradition of student activism together.

Equity and inclusion are taken more and more often as important aspects within different **research themes**. Tackling equity and inclusion in the field of artificial intelligence (AI), smart technologies or any other technological developments is an important topic for some researchers at UT and for the 4TU as it can be seen in the *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for Embodied AI initiative* (DEI4EAI) [16] where some tools have been developed to use in academic work striving to design for social justice. This project has recently won (Dec 2022) the Diversity Initiative Award from NWO, (€50,000) [17].

Also in healthcare, the use of ICT is a promising strategy for sustainable health (TechMed's research

program Personalized e-Health Technology) but it has to go hand in hand with an strategy for DEI to make sure patients understand and can make use of proposed methods.

Within the **HR Policy team**, in the domain HR Basics they believe that all employees should be enabled to focus optimally on their core work and to get the best out of themselves. This means they aim for efficient processes, (self) services and clear information, making use of (digital) innovation while complying with applicable laws and regulations. They have in this domain several milestones related to inclusion:

- Reduce the (complexity of) information found on the HR webpages (such as the integrity and social safety pages), increasing user friendliness of information and support systems. Enabling employees to be self-sufficient in finding information.
 - Develop HR employees on communication skills (clear, concrete, useful, intercultural & inclusive) so that the end user is better informed.
 - Providing training to employees on ways to access and use the HR operational processes and systems information, creating insight into processes and trends in a timely and efficient manner.
 - Further development of HR systems; topicality, findability, accessibility, clarity, recognizability, usability, including use of language, bilingualism.
 - Investing in modern and attractive employership within legal and collective labor agreements. E.g. Terms in relation to hybrid working, evaluation of the working from home scheme & compensation for commuting.
 - Specific attention for target groups (e.g. international employees, DE&I). Explore the possibilities to enhance parental leave for e.g. rainbow families and explore the possibilities to draw up a trans leave policy.
 - Specific attention for current topics (e.g. Recognition & rewards, sustainability and well-being)
 - Design a framework for cross border employment which is data driven and co-created in dialogue with international colleagues to improve services for international employees/guests and staff exchange.
- They also have some projects and initiatives related to inclusion:
- Collaboration on social safety: HR, DE&I and integral safety. Also restructure of the social safety

and integrity webpage (on the service portal)

- Creating insights on inclusion by using HR data (gender, nationality, age, salary etc.)
- HR dashboard for inclusion
- Adapt AFAS (HR system) to support an inclusive approach

As an organization we must comply to several **national and European demands**:

The main goal of a **Strategy Evaluation Protocol (SEP)** evaluation is to evaluate a research unit (a faculty) in light of its own aims and strategy. The three main assessment criteria 1) research quality, 2) societal relevance and 3) viability are central in the assessment of the research unit. These three criteria include several aspects depending on the aims and strategy of the research unit. Among all relevant aspects, the research unit has to address their Academic Culture (social safety and inclusivity) and their Human Resources Policy (diversity) The SEP had to be filled in for the first time in 2021 by all faculties and there are explicit questions about inclusion, openness, social safety and research integrity.

Inclusion in academia has to do with **recognition and rewarding**, with team effort even when it is about a personal grant.

Gender Equality Plan (GEP) is a mandatory document for universities in Horizon Europe with a set of commitments and actions to promote gender equality in an organization. The UT has since 2021 its GEP written by the DE&I team. [\[18\]](#)

MONITORING

State of art and recommendations for the development of a DE&I monitor with a specific focus on inclusion

Main recommendation: ensure that the further development of a DE&I monitor links up with existing monitors, people and groups. Particularly important that monitoring (to be developed) takes account of institutional and program accreditation frameworks.

Who is involved in monitoring?

There is currently a group that deals with matters at the intersection of student welfare and DE&I and

integral safety (i.e. social safety), consisting of: Sterre Mkatini (DE&I officer, General Affairs), Linda Pasqual (DE&I and Integral Safety policy and communication advisor, General Affairs), Annet de Kiewit (Program manager student welfare (SWIP, CES), Erwin Medendorp (Integral Safety Officer, General Affairs), Minke Klomp (confidential advisor and student counselor CES-Student Affairs Coaching & Counselling) and there is also student representation (last year in particular a group of activist-minded students from Amnesty, focusing on the theme of sexual violence and a Student Union representative). Monitoring is one of the aspects that this group should focus on (in addition to e.g. awareness, training for students & staff, processes and procedures). One possibility would be to expand this group with research capacity (an employee who is an expert in DE&I monitoring).

In the SWIP expert group that will now be dealing with student welfare, closer collaboration between staff of services and scientific research is already being sought, so that science and implementation/policy go hand in hand. (this wish has also been expressed the other way around by e.g. CHEPS, who see that researchers are not always involved in policy studies/implements in which they are experts).

Recommendation: There seems to be a gain by bundling the different types of expertise (scientific and services) within the UT.

What is there already in the field of student monitoring at the UT:

- National Student Survey (NSE), to which a block on diversity was added last year (a maximum of 3 questions). It is possible to add qualitative questions, but the space is limited.
- National housing monitor (questions about diversity? Is a report available about problems in housing that particularly affect certain target groups? And is there also information available about the homogeneity/group formation in student housing, which means that it is either difficult for certain groups of students to find a room or no diversity within housing units is achieved? reached?) → see zie Landelijke monitor studentenhuisvesting - Kences [19] for more information about this housing monitor
- International Student Barometer [20] which provides

universities with and understanding of the motivations, expectations and experience of international students studying at various universities all over the world.

- CES-CELT and study programs: educational quality surveys (module or course evaluations). At the moment, no attention is paid to diversity & inclusion. However, in panel discussions (e.g. internationalization of education)
- Dutch Network of Women Professors (LNVH): national network of female professors promoting equal representation of women within the academic community.
- Universities intake monitor
- Netherlands Inclusivity Monitor (NIM) offers organizations insight into the coherence of their DE&I policy and connects this with employee experiences. It is broader than just for universities, for organizations in NL.
- CBS cultural diversity barometer that links information from employees from the HR system to other databases. There has been a lot of fuss about the problem of change in measurement method from non-Western to EU-non-EU. House of Representatives questions asked about blogs and activism among employees, especially in Leiden and Utrecht.
- Employee Surveys
- Student well-being research offers room for sense of belonging students. It has 4 items that are not entirely satisfactory, lacks socio-cultural capital. Limited room for change.

Characteristic of the current method of student monitoring at the university is that the responsibility for the various monitors has been placed with different departments/organizations, each with their own research method, recruitment and communication channels. This makes it difficult to arrive at an integral or better coordinated whole. The national surveys in which the UT participates provide limited room for maneuver to adjust things and make them more tailor-made for the UT or for DE&I topics.

The university (who exactly) is sometimes forced (unclear: who gives the coercion and who experiences the coercion?) to participate in benchmarking. Due to the many parties involved in and outside the UT, student monitoring is therefore quite complex.

In the case of employee monitoring there is more space to come up with your ideas to develop it and your own interpretation. The current employee survey is conducted entirely in-house (UT). This is carried out by the HR department (Jan de Leede). In 2022 some questions about DE&I were added (which ones? How many? link?).

Existing (national) research into diversity shows: Income is a very determinant for various parameters of exclusion. In addition, non-binary people, people with a disability and people transferring from MBO to HBO university appear to belong to a risk group.

Recommendation: Qualitative research is a desirable way to develop further in order to better understand the background and causes of differences and experiences. VU is currently doing most of the qualitative research.

Investigating representativeness:
Students feel overwhelmed and don't always see what's in it for them when they participate in surveys. Only the indirect benefit of contributing to improvement for future students is insufficient motivation for some of them to participate in research. The turnout is therefore often low. Reaching certain target groups in particular is difficult, and surveys have limited generalizability due to a bias in the sample. Participation in surveys is mainly done by the usual suspects, i.e. students who experience problems or have complaints or are not feeling well.

Recommendation: more targeted recruitment and other research methods (closer to students, more qualitative, smaller-scale, more interactive).

A group that often falls between two stools are PhD students, and in particular scholarship PhDs from abroad. They see themselves as students, while in the NL system PhD students are regarded as employees. They are also sometimes not reached for practical reasons, because they have a PNUT appointment (and therefore do not appear in certain communication channels?).

Recommendation: focus first on employee monitoring, because it is easier/faster to take steps there and there is more freedom to design a monitor. When it comes to student monitoring, do not create a new monitor, but deepen existing monitors, for example by setting up limited surveys for certain groups or by holding panel discussions (qualitative research in addition to questionnaires).

Governance

Furthermore: There is great administrative support for giving more attention to DE&I at universities (also at the UT), but there is a governance issue in order to be able to properly implement the implementation (of monitoring).

Recommendation: design suitable, workable solutions for the governance issue and call in the help of experts in the field of governance in the UT organization (for example CHEPS and the Public Administration department).

Scholarship students

With regard to problems with paid work of scholarship students, both the criteria of the scholarship provider (which sometimes does not allow the student to work in addition to the PhD program) and visa status play a role here. A student visa allows 10 hours of work per week or 2 months full time. That is limited and jobs are often for more hours. There are also insurance implications. Basic insurance is mandatory if a scholarship student goes to work. Without paid work, on the other hand, no Dutch basic insurance may be taken out by a non-EU student. In many cases, these two criteria (maximum 10 hours of work and compulsory health insurance) mean that the wages are largely spent on paying the health insurance. The student then has nothing left financially or even loses on it.

We are a university and that means that we are committed to research to be able to train students to become highly qualified staff. Developing a new monitoring system for inclusion based on the appropriate indicators of inclusion [\[21\]](#) is a way to contribute to this goal. and how can we use them to establish a baseline and see the effect of certain interventions

U-Multirank is a university ranking that acknowledges the performance of universities in areas like humanities and social sciences, teaching quality and community outreach. U-Multirank develops new indicators for social inclusion and sustainable development. The question is what is the information that must be collected, what are the indicators of social inclusion. U-Multirank is a very quantitative project, they look for info that can be quantified; it is not the kind of info that we get from the round tables, but the results of our analysis could be used to develop interventions and then monitor the effectiveness of the interventions.

Exit surveys (when someone leaves the UT) are extremely useful and not conducted presently (HR task)

DIGITALIZATION

Belonging and inclusion in digital education and work at UT

While digitalization is not unequivocally negative for inclusion, think for example about the positive impact of recorded lessons for students that cannot come to the campus [22], in the roundtables digital education and work mainly came to the fore as negatively impacting belonging, e.g., But because everything was online, we didn't really bond and make friends like in the first quartile. Some students initiated app groups to "help each other out and share ideas or strategies". So students rely more on random initiatives than structural ones, but when those random initiatives happen they can have large effects. When implementing such initiatives, there are however important differences between students to take into account, for example part-time versus full-time students or those who already know each other from previous years, to ensure that such technological solutions benefit more students.

• Story 15. "Ghost students"

• It was a bit difficult to get to know a lot of ghost students.
 • And I realize now that from some of my students that I haven't seen that much or still really know the name and the face that go along. I'm not really good [with] that either, but it's difficult. But yeah, there was just we had like we were added to the pre master group with all the pre masters of our study and then someone shared a link. We have a different group for everybody who wants to discuss the statistics course and ask questions and share information

• there. So if you want to become a member, then click on this link. So we had a different statistic groups where we could help each other out, and it was really full [...] And I was lucky that during the online introductory day, I mentioned somewhere to the I'm a part-time student and another of the part-time students just sent me a message like "Hey I'm a part time student too, do you want to like hook up and or at least online at group?" And so we worked together a lot and we still do. So, it was quite fortunate that we found each other, but it was difficult to get to know everybody [...] because I was always also working and having a family that the distancing problem affects me less than students who were full time students and were sitting on their in their rooms all the time.

Also the type of education (lecture or workgroup for example) and the size of the class, matter in how difficult it is for teachers to establish a personal connection with students in a digital environment. Such a felt personal connection is highly valued by students and contributes to their sense of belonging. How such a personal connection, the experience of being seen as a "person not a number", can look like, can be seen in the following example:

• Story 16: "He was just there, curious and waiting for students"

• But one of the things that I really liked was the statistic course with one of the teachers here [name teacher], and he was really nice. We had to do that online, so it was very difficult for him to gain attention of 198 students in an online environment. But I think that he really tried his very best to keep everybody focused on the lesson. And then after the exam, when we had our first exam and he was just there, he didn't has to supervise in the room, but he was just there and curious and waiting for students when they left the hallway and asking them how they felt about the exam and if they felt that that they managed. And after the second exam, he did the same thing. And me and my study buddy, we we walked outside and we met him there and we got to talk to him for like 15 minutes. And he brought his wife along with him as she was very friendly. And I could really feel that he was such an engaging teacher and really trying to get everybody on board. And that felt really comforting. This is going to be very difficult and can be a bit dull at times if you're not really into numbers that much, well, you we really felt that he wanted everybody to succeed and belong in the UT. So, yeah, I really like that about him.

The same applies to staff members as described in the following example about what it looks like to be recognized and valued in a truly personal manner:

• **Story 17. “I see what you’re doing, and I appreciate all the work that you put in”**

• And it it doesn’t, I just had a big discussion with with my supervisor, talking about starting off the new year. Because last year, the end of the year, normally we always have like a party for for the department where you’re working and you do something nice together, right? And we couldn’t do that because everything was closed, of course. And then I said, “Well, maybe we don’t do it like something to close the year off, but maybe we can do something to start the new year to make sure that everybody feels joy to put the effort in again after a pretty difficult year”. And you don’t do that by giving people money or gift cards or something like that. You do that by thinking, what would they like and what would they appreciate? And in my case, I think it’s more like I see you, I see what you’re doing, and I appreciate all the work that you put in. [...]

• And I think that’s somehow also the same as what [name teacher] does, because the way that he talks to his students, make sure that he knows that he’s very proud of his students as well, that there’s even if two one third of flunks, two thirds do pass the exams and that’s that’s the students doing. And he helps but the students make sure that the statistics grow on that as well. So, he’s like proud father who can see his child cycling away for the first time on the bicycle. And I think that’s also really, the fact that somebody takes their time to to acknowledge that. I think that’s the the greatest gift, actually, that you can give your co-worker or your student. It doesn’t matter where you are and it’s the same for [name president] that, he says I’m I’m just, you know, he just got me out of here and there. Let’s calm down. What are we going to do today, because that’s far more important then all the other things that are going around.

Inclusion in the roadmap presented by the SEG Digitalization

Digitalisation can both help and hinder inclusion. For example it can increase accessibility to lectures and other forms of education as well as help create a suitable workplace, where a standard situation doesn’t suffice. It can also easily exclude people when the required level of digital literacy required is too high, or machine learning is implemented, with (unknown) biases. From an inclusion perspective, the

SEG Digitalization recognizes these challenges as well as the possibilities. We will work together in the upcoming years with LISA and other parties within the UT to increase the support of digitalisation where it helps inclusion and equity and to signal, and tackle risks wherever necessary.

Website Accessibility: status and challenges

UT websites, apps and other online content must be built and designed in such a way that they are accessible to everyone, including people with disabilities, to ensure that everyone can access online information and services. There is a “read aloud” (lees voor) button to make websites accessible to visually impaired or blind people which is mandatory in Dutch government agencies but we do not have it. It seems that this button is not for visually impaired people but for people that cannot read or have difficulties reading (low literate people). For visually impaired or blind people there are special programs that can be put in the computer.

The UT does many things to improve website accessibility:

The UT published an Accessibility Statement (utwente.nl/accessibility) for the website in 2018, but first efforts to work on website accessibility date back to more than ten years ago. For details on accessibility see the UT website standards & agreements page ([23](#))

Website accessibility is often related to visually impaired people, but in reality covers a wider range of topics. Some examples of situations and related requirements:

- Use of website when only mobile devices are available (third world countries) > mobile site required
- Use of video on website when audio is not possible (in public transport) > subtitles required
- Use of website by people with limitations like colour blindness or limitations caused by medicine > website must be operable with keyboard, buttons must have certain minimum sizes and links must have unique and meaningful words (not ‘read more’)

To meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1, AA level, the UT website has to meet about 180 requirements that can be divided into technical level (to be managed by the business

information managers of the UT systems) and the content level (to be taken care of by the individual website admins). Technical requirements (e.g. mobile friendly, high contrast colours and keyboard only navigation) are taken care of by the central admins, though meeting all requirements is a challenge and definitely not the case yet.

A large number of requirements related to content improvement need to be taken care of by website editors in the various UT departments. The UT employees who update the websites in the UT content management system WebHare (CMS) need to have certain knowledge on accessibility when placing content on their pages. To educate website editors on this matter, the UT webteam

- Covers accessibility in the CMS courses on all levels
- Publishes information about accessibility in the online documentation
- Sends newsletters to the website editors
- Gives individual advice when structural issues are detected

Technical and content requirement both can partly be monitored with software. The UT uses Monsido to

- Identify possible technical improvements
- Create a list of best practices for content improvements that can be used by website editors
- Monitor on other possible improvements not directly related to accessibility:
 - Too large images or too large pdf files
 - Wrong spelling
 - Broken links

As mentioned in the accessibility statement, the way UT is set up (a large number of content owners and pages) creates some challenges:

1. More than 1200 users work in the default CMS and there are even more UT members who create content
2. A lot of websites are built outside the UT CMS and are not monitored on accessibility. The same accounts for cloud of self-built applications (Osiris, AFAS, etc)
3. Monitoring tools are expensive, and licences are related to the number of pages, therefore too expensive to cover everything.

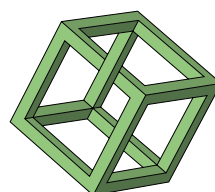
CORPORATE IDENTITY “PEOPLE FIRST”

The slogan “ultimate people-first” has been discussed in multiple settings and occasions with many people. The meaning of the slogan does not seem to be clear and when it is understood as meaning that the organization treats everyone with respect and attention it is seen by a number of students and staff as cynical or even hypocrite. It is in that sense that the SEG supports the last developments proposed by the president of the Executive Board, Vinod Subramaniam, on the use of the slogan: “*people first niet roepen maar uitvoeren*” [24]

The UT wants to renew and strengthen the brand of the UT and for this the **Brand Key model** is used. This model has been presented to several service departments and to two groups of employees from different faculties. The theme is intertwined with Shaping2030 and with theme of inclusion, not only because he says inclusion is one of the selling points of UT, but also because it is important to make sure that employees and students feel represented by the corporate identity model that is being proposed. Ultimate people-first, “inclusive, emancipatory, people-centered and open” as presented by the Brand Key model has raised questions by the employees of the UT. The responses from staff indicated a form of controversy. They do not recognize this statement as embedded characteristics in which the organization currently complies with.

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APPENDIX 5

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Organizational goal:

The Shaping Expert Group (SEG) Inclusion contributes to creating a safe learning and working environment at the University of Twente (UT) where everybody can feel at home and have equal opportunities to develop their full potential.

Marketing and communication goals:

Inclusive marketing and communication help in making sure that all employees are aware that UT strives to be an inclusive community and helps to focus on the advantages of being an inclusive university. We try to make our internal audiences aware that not everyone has experienced or is experiencing equal opportunities. And that some colleagues have experienced more difficulties in just being who they are or want to be. We wish to contribute to creating a positive attitude towards inclusion at UT and wish to contribute to inclusion itself. The ultimate result: employees and students who, given their own role and capabilities, contribute to establishing an inclusive community in which everyone gets equal opportunities for development.

Target groups:

Our marketing and communication activities are focused on the internal target groups; employees, students and internal stakeholders within UT.

Communication strategy

- This communication strategy aims to let employees and students of UT communicate and act in a more inclusive way. This requires a change in knowledge, attitude and behavior. Managers play a key role in this. It is important to inform, train and guide them. The HR department plays a crucial role in making

these changes happen.

- In addition, the following principles are leading in the communication approach:
 - Communication statements clearly express why UT strives to be an inclusive organization.
 - Internal stakeholders are involved in the development of communication tools.
 - Internal target groups are approached in a focused manner and receive no more, and no less, information than necessary.
 - Communication tools link existing and new initiatives in order to join forces.

Action plan

- By sharing content on the employee portal, service portal, student portal, e-mails to management, LED screens, webpage, UToday and during the diversity week we work on creating awareness.
- A change of attitude is achieved through the event, presentations, listening sessions, trainings and workshops. In which we share advice for inclusive communication.
- With the organization of round table sessions and collaborations in project groups, we work on changing behavior around this theme.

APPENDIX 6

SMART PRIORITIES

JOINT SMART PRIORITIES 2022: SEG INDIVIDUALS & TEAMS + SEG INCLUSION

Definition and scope: **Inclusive University**, where employees and students perceive and experience a sense of belonging, fairness, being recognized and rewarded, with participation in and contribution to (in)formal groups and processes.

Main goal: concrete actions as well as cultural & behavioral changes at all university levels, to become the ultimate people-first university.

Operational goals:	Deliverables / activities	Resources needed / Concrete steps:
<p>1) Taskforce: an action group of dedicated individuals with HRM, R&R, D&I expertise (from current SEGs, the D&I office, working groups on D&I, R&R taskforce, Ambassadors network, TTers, PhDs and students)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> September 2022 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and build capacity/expertise The implementation of inclusion policies Alignment of diverse initiatives Role behaviour, role models Sharing of good practices Internal audits by faculties and service departments Development of the training programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project management (administrative, financial, time) of the dedicated individuals Training of dedicated individuals/teams in knowledge, attitude and skills in the areas of inclusion, diversity and R&R Training of dedicated individuals/teams in effective leadership and making impact
<p>2) Toolbox: a set of activities (digital and F2F) tailored to specific individuals, teams, and organizational units within the UT</p> <p><i>Type of activities (examples): training, storytelling roundtables, interviews, debates, presentations, case solving/scenarios, interactive theater/podcast, voicing dilemma's, interactive forums.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> End of 2023 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empowerment of individuals and teams Enforcing visibility to enact inclusion Greater awareness A continuous dialogue through all the layers of the organization for cultural change An inclusive, open, transparent and safe learning and working environment Proactive problem solving of inclusion issues for/by staff and students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support structure of skilled moderators, student assistants, secretarial and administrative support for executing the activities in the toolbox
<p>3) Talent Development: a research-inspired set of practices for talent inflow-throughflow-outflow, tailored to specific individuals, teams, and organizational units within the UT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2022 - 2026 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concrete policy- and practice-oriented talent development insights and tools for scientific and support staff Inclusion and talent development monitor Team-based talent practices Enhanced leading role in VSNU R&R initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PhD project (action research) Postdoctoral research Interdisciplinary supervisory team

TABLE 6: JOINT SMART PRIORITIES SEG INDIVIDUALS AND TEAMS + SEG INCLUSION

