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Implementing organisational change for workplace diversity in transport organisations

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Introduction

The transport sector is highly masculinised and lacking in diversity, with few women or those from ethnic groups rising to key positions. This creates a culture where the needs of marginalised groups

are not understood or considered. Evidence shows increasing workplace diversity is beneficial in improving decision making, performance and developing wider social awareness. Organisational changes across the Transport Business Ecosystem will help deliver the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which requires consideration of women's role in the green economy, and sustainable development.

Providing a replicable methodology which encourages gender diversity in organizations is a significant challenge, which will have enormous impact on women as employees and transport users. In this paper, we share how we have applied key learnings from our work on organisational change in local authorities conducted in the in H2020 CIVITAS SUITS project (Nienaber et al, 2020) to transport organisations to foster behavioural change that transforms a masculine dominant organisational culture to a "gender-balanced" culture.

Method

A case study approach has been adopted to enable the exploration of change management and the context in which the change occurred, during intensive cooperation with the transport organisation Zeelo.

The theoretical approach is based on Kotter's structured Eight Stage Process (Kotter, 1996) for organisational change in combination with workshops driven by an engagement strategy for interaction and communication between the project team (UK TInnGO) and the organisation focusing on knowledge exchange for mutual benefit. This approach allowed to leverage the knowledge and capabilities of employees, which results in better performance as employees get in a better position to deal with uncertainty, variation and adaptation, and makes them more resilient towards changes on gender equality. Although Kotter's Eight Stage Process is one of the key models of change management, few real life case studies show implications for practice (e.g. Pollack & Pollack, 2015).

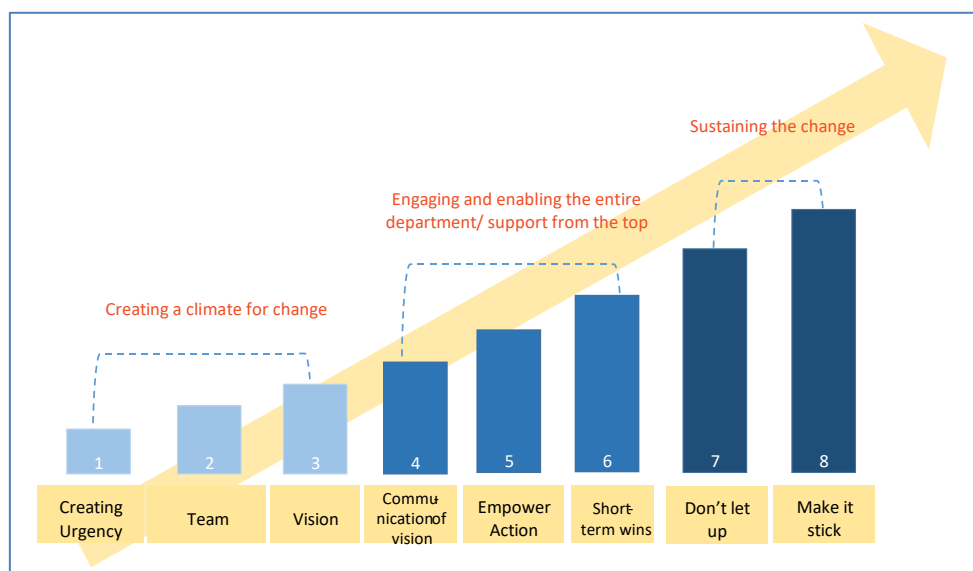


Figure 1. Organisational Change Process to increase workplace diversity

Results

Five clear guiding principles have been identified during the implementation process of organisational change. These are key for a successful organisational change in transport organisations.

1. Identify a key person - the change agent - who will be the driver for successful behavioral change in your organisation. A change agent should be knowledgeable, committed and well respected, with a clear route of communication through to senior management.
2. Support the change agent from the top and bottom in your organisation.
3. Communicate your vision organisation-wide if you want to become effective and resilient to change.
4. Celebrate little successes to keep your employees motivated to support the change over the long term.
5. Make change continual so that the organisation itself has the ability to be flexible and resilient.

Discussion/Conclusion

Implementing organisational change to increase workplace diversity is challenging, as the investments made are relatively high and thus, the majority of transport organisations try to postpone such changes. However, the impact of increasing workplace diversity is beneficial in improving decision making, performance and developing wider social awareness. Based on data from working with transport organisations in the TInnGO project, we are able to provide a replicable methodology which encourages gender diversity in transport organizations that make up the Transport Business Ecosystems (TBE), that has enormous impact on women as employees and transport users

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