DEI Practices of Cefalo Bangladesh Ltd

Business Psychology

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# **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)**

Diversity, inclusion, and equity represent an organization’s efforts, policies, and practices aimed at ensuring that individuals from various backgrounds are culturally and socially accepted and integrated into the workplace. An organization prioritizing diversity, inclusion, and equity will employ a diverse team of people that reflects the society in which it operates.

*Diversity is being asked to the party, equity is getting to contribute to the playlist, inclusion is being asked to dance.*

**–** Dr. Robert Sellers, chief diversity officer at the University of Michigan

## Diversity as the Foundation:

Diversity refers to political beliefs, race, culture, sexual orientation, religion, class, and/or gender identity differences. In the workplace, diversity means an organization’s staff consists of individuals who bring new perspectives and backgrounds to the table.

At its core, diversity serves as the foundational pillar upon which inclusion and equity efforts are built. It encompasses the multitude of differences among individuals within an organization, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, and abilities. A diverse workforce provides the essential raw material necessary for fostering inclusive practices and promoting equity.

## Inclusion as the Practice:

Inclusion means that everyone in the diverse mix feels involved, valued, respected, treated fairly, and embedded in an organization’s culture. Empowering all employees and recognizing their special talents is part of creating an inclusive company.

Inclusion represents the active practice of leveraging diversity to create an environment where all individuals feel welcomed, respected, and valued. Inclusive organizations prioritize fostering a culture of belonging, where diverse perspectives and contributions are celebrated and integrated into decision-making processes. Inclusive practices enable employees to fully participate, collaborate, and thrive, regardless of their background or characteristics.

## Equity as the Goal:

Equity involves ensuring fairness and justice in the distribution of resources, opportunities, and rewards within the organization. It acknowledges that individuals may have different needs, circumstances, and starting points, and seeks to address systemic barriers that may prevent certain groups from fully participating and succeeding in the workplace. Equity initiatives aim to level the playing field by implementing policies and practices that mitigate inequalities and promote equal access to opportunities for all employees.

Equity extends beyond diversity and inclusion, focusing on addressing systemic barriers and promoting fairness and justice within the organization. Equity initiatives aim to ensure that all individuals have equal access to opportunities, resources, and support systems necessary for their success. By identifying and eliminating disparities, organizations can cultivate an environment where everyone has the chance to reach their full potential, irrespective of social identity or background.

# **About our company: Cefalo Bangladesh Ltd**

Cefalo is a Norwegian software development company with unique access to premium developers.

Cefalo is known in Bangladesh as a highly attractive workplace that puts emphasis on technology, the work environment, and sharing of knowledge for collective growth and success. The company continues to grow, currently employing more than 200 people.

Their clients are mostly Norwegian companies, ranging from young businesses experiencing rapid growth to traditional and larger ones like media groups. They are a very client-oriented partner, with a flexible form of cooperation and a commitment to delivering high quality.

# **Key Observations and Highlights:**

## Nationality:

At CEFALO Bangladesh Ltd., being primarily a Norwegian-hosted company, official managers are recruited from Norway to ensure alignment with corporate standards and practices. However, recognizing the importance of incorporating local culture and diversity, a top manager from Bangladesh has also been recruited. This strategic decision aims to maintain and promote local diversity and cultural integration within the organization. Moreover, for local branches, only Bangladeshi citizens are recruited as employees, facilitating collaboration and synergy between the local workforce and the host country.

## Generation:

In the past, CEFALO Bangladesh Ltd. exclusively recruited individuals with 3 to 4 years of work experience. However, in response to evolving workforce dynamics and industry trends, the company has expanded its recruitment strategy to include fresh graduates. This strategic shift reflects a commitment to fostering talent development and embracing a multi-generational workforce, ensuring a diverse and dynamic team capable of meeting the organization's objectives.

## Gender:

CEFALO Bangladesh Ltd. initially set a target of 5% female engineer recruitment, in response to the identified gender disparity where only 2 out of 100 engineers were female during 2015-2016, with support from the host company in Norway. Through focused recruitment strategies, they successfully achieved this target. Now, aiming for a 10% representation, they are implementing new initiatives and refining recruitment strategies.

## Ethnicity and Religion:

## Fostering Diversity and Inclusivity

At CEFALO Bangladesh Ltd., employees hail from diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds, working collaboratively while demonstrating mutual respect. The company upholds the value of inclusivity by permitting employees to observe religious festivals, even those not recognized as government holidays, allowing them to take time off as needed.

Furthermore, as a gesture of respect for the diverse backgrounds of its employees, certain food items, such as beef, are excluded from the dining lounge menu. This practice ensures that all employees feel valued and accommodated within the workplace, contributing to a culture of understanding and harmony.

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## Promoting Inclusive Leadership:

The company actively promotes gender or generation diversity by appointing female or junior employees with leadership abilities as team leads, irrespective of seniority or technical prowess, thereby fostering an inclusive and empowering work environment.

# **Key DEI Initiatives**

## Talent Acquisition and Development: Fostering Inclusive Practices

At CEFALO Bangladesh Ltd., rigorous measures are in place to ensure a fair and unbiased recruitment process. Individuals from any university or background are encouraged to apply based on their skill set and capabilities, fostering a merit-based approach to talent acquisition. An inclusive environment has been cultivated, where individuals feel empowered to freely express their ideas and opinions. Decision-making processes are collaborative, with input sought from all employees, not just managers. Furthermore, employees are encouraged and motivated to work with a free mind, promoting creativity and innovation within the organization.

## Corporate Programs: Fostering Professional Development and International Collaboration

At CEFALO Bangladesh Ltd., comprehensive internship programs have been established to provide valuable industrial training opportunities for individuals. These programs aim to enhance participants' skills and knowledge, preparing them for successful careers in their respective fields.

Furthermore, in a concerted effort to strengthen collaboration with the host country, CEFALO organizes an annual trip to Norway for the employees. This initiative offers a unique opportunity for employees to visit the host company, engage in knowledge-sharing sessions, and gather innovative ideas to drive organizational growth and development.

Through these corporate programs, CEFALO Bangladesh Ltd. remains committed to nurturing talent, fostering international partnerships, and facilitating continuous learning and development among its workforce.

## Capacity Building: Facilitating Smooth Integration and Talent Development

At CEFALO Bangladesh Ltd., upon recruitment, new employees are provided with a grace period of six months to acclimatize themselves to the company's environment. During this transitional phase, employees are not assigned any workloads, allowing them to focus on familiarizing themselves with company culture, processes, and expectations.

Moreover, interns who demonstrate the capacity to swiftly adapt to the company's environment and exhibit requisite skills are considered for permanent employment opportunities. This proactive approach reflects the company's commitment to nurturing and retaining top talent, ensuring a skilled and motivated workforce capable of driving organizational success.

## Fostering Collaboration and Inclusivity: Creating Diverse Spaces at CEFALO

To enhance collaboration among employees, CEFALO has implemented various initiatives. Each floor is equipped with relaxing spaces and coffee corners, providing opportunities for employees from different departments to interact during their free time. Furthermore, the office features a dining lounge where staff members, including managers, can gather to eat and engage in casual conversations together. Additionally, the office contains a game room, common rooms, and prayer rooms to further increase inclusiveness. It is noteworthy that all facilities are self-serviced, emphasizing an inclusive environment and aiming to reduce cultural barriers among employees.

## Awareness and Outreach: Promoting Employee Well-being and Addressing Concerns

At CEFALO Bangladesh Ltd., a strong emphasis is placed on maintaining a healthy and supportive work environment. Employees are actively encouraged to prioritize their well-being, both professionally and personally. Any challenges faced by employees, whether related to the workplace or personal life, are promptly addressed by management and colleagues alike, with a collective effort to provide support and assistance.

To prioritize the personal well-being of its employees, CEFALO offers extended maternity leave lasting four months for female employees. Additionally, should an employee face conditions preventing physical presence in the office following this period, the company provides the option of remote work for a specified duration to accommodate their needs.

To facilitate open communication and address concerns effectively, the company has implemented a complaint box within the office premises. This platform allows employees to voice their grievances confidentially, either by disclosing their identity or anonymously. Only managers have access to the contents of the complaint box. Periodically, all complaints are gathered and addressed promptly to resolve any issues or challenges raised.

It is noteworthy that CEFALO has maintained a remarkably low incidence of complaints, with only a single complaint recorded in the past year. This achievement underscores the success of the company's efforts in maintaining a healthy and harmonious work environment, reflecting its commitment to the well-being and satisfaction of its employees.

# **Hiring: An analysis of recruitment pattern**

## Initial Targets:

In response to the gender disparity identified in 2015-2016, wherein only 2 out of 100 engineers were female, CEFALO Bangladesh Ltd. established a target of 5% female engineer recruitment. This target was proposed and supported by Cefalo’s host company in Norway.

## Achievement of 5% Target:

Through concerted efforts and targeted recruitment strategies, CEFALO is proud to announce that they have successfully achieved the 5% female engineer recruitment goal.

## Next Target of 10%:

Building upon this success, their next objective is to further increase the representation of women within the engineering workforce to 10%. To accomplish this, they are implementing new initiatives and revising our recruitment strategies.

# **Conclusion**

While the Organization has made progress in working towards greater diversity and inclusion through their established initiatives, they recognize the need for continuous improvement in these areas. They look forward to the road before them, as they strive to shape better policies.

“Our staff come from across the country, representing different ethnicities, educational backgrounds, gender identities, nationalities, languages, cultures and beliefs. This diversity promotes unique perspectives and innovative solutions to address global challenges.” - Ferdous Mahmud Shaon, Managing Director, Cefalo Bangladesh Ltd.