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# Raise awareness among teams and welcome the difference

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**Our human resources management practices seek to contribute to the reduction of inequalities, through a business model clearly committed to DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion), says Paula Lobinho, responsible for the Diversity and Inclusion area of El Corte Inglés Portugal.**

**El Corte Inglés has the seal of Inclusive Employer Entity, having been awarded and recognized more than once in this area. What does this certification mean in practice? Where is the greatest impact felt, in corporate culture, in visibility, in employer branding?**

The Inclusive Employer Entity Brand Seal distinguishes and recognizes public and private organizations with open and inclusive management practices for people with disabilities. El Corte Inglés has had this distinction since 2017 with the award of the Mention of Excellence since 2021; this recognition represents, above all, a huge responsibility with the commitment to Inclusion, but also with the positive impact we can have internally at the level of the construction of increasingly **plural** work environments, but also for the outside; for other companies and for the community where we are inserted.

**How do they deal with discriminatory behaviors within the company and how do they work to empower employees so that each of them is a facilitator of diversity, equity and inclusion?**

We internally have an "ethical channel" through which employees can and should report discriminatory behavior, and each situation is ascertained and managed, which can lead to suspension and dismissal. Our human resources management practices seek to contribute to the reduction of inequalities through a business model clearly committed to DEI. We know that the appreciation of diversity in teams contributes to the stimulation of environments that inhibit discriminatory or harassing behaviors. El Corte Inglés has been a signatory of the Portuguese Charter for Diversity since 2019, a commitment formally assumed with a focus on building an increasingly diverse organization, in which everyone can see themselves represented.

” "We have an internal 'ethical channel' through which employees can and should denounce discriminatory behavior"

**What Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) projects would you highlight as the ones that best translate the DNA of El Corte Inglés?**

Our management approach within DEI is based on four main axes:  
Employability of people with disabilities - Practice that currently allows us to comply with the quota law for people with disabilities and be an inclusive employer of reference.  
Socially Useful Activities (ASU) and Socioprofessional Integration Experiences (EISP) - In collaboration with social partners, we provide these actions, which aim at personal appreciation and maximum use of the capacities of people with disabilities, towards their autonomy, facilitating a possible transition to socio-professional integration programs.  
Employability of people in a situation of social vulnerability - With intervention models adapted to each of the vulnerable groups and aimed at their integration into the labor market. The main groups have been: the refugee population, immigrants, young people at risk of social exclusion, people over 50 years old and women victims of domestic violence.  
Awareness actions / Sharing of good practices and projects with the community - Our way of being close to the community leads us to share the good practices we have and the projects we develop within the DEI.

**In the actions of inclusion of people with disabilities, what is more challenging, preparing the internal teams that will welcome, or training new skills in the new employees recruited and eventually some adaptation of the workplace?**

In any process of hiring people with disabilities it is necessary to make adaptations, this is what makes it challenging. On the one hand, the evaluation of the job is a step in this process, in which we seek to identify the needs of adjustment to the candidate's abilities. On the other hand, there is a permanent concern in raising the awareness of the teams to the acceptance of difference, in general, but more concretely whenever we integrate a new element and in collaboration with the social partner, we make a targeted awareness to that team, its tutor and leadership, in relation to that person and their context in terms of disability.

” "In any process of hiring people with disabilities it is necessary to make adaptations"

**Talking about DEI is also talking about gender equity. At the leadership level, is the commitment to this equity present? What remains to be done?**

In 2021, we adhered to the National Goal for Gender Equality and made a commitment to reach 40% of women in decision-making positions by 2030. However, six years earlier, this commitment was not only fulfilled, but exceeded; currently, the Management of our company is composed of 45% men and 55% women. The workforce of our company is mostly made up of women, who have a representation of 66%. In leadership positions, the percentage, by gender, is balanced with 50.2% of men and 49.8% women.

Since 2022, we have been members of iGen - Forum of Organizations for Equality; we are thus committed to strengthening and highlighting the organizational culture of social responsibility by incorporating, in our strategies and management models, the principles of equality between women and men at work.

Already in 2020 we had adhered to the WEP's (Women's Empowerment Principles) - Principles of Women's Empowerment, of the UN, following all the steps to, every day, work on gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, in the market and in the community.

” "The workforce of our company is mostly made up of women, who have a representation of 66%"

**In the realization of your commitment to the integration of refugees, where do you identify the greatest difficulties? How is the integration of these people done?**

We have in the company a program that specifically aims to hire young refugees, who arrive in our country as MENAS (Unaccompanied Minors). We do it in partnership with Social Innovation Sports, an entity that previously prepares them in terms of social skills and Portuguese language through sports practice. In the company they go through a professional internship program, paid, lasting eleven weeks, after which, those who have a positive evaluation, are hired, with the appropriate adaptations in terms of schedule, because many are still students. In this process, the biggest difficulties we identify are in the mastery of the Portuguese language, as it is a determining factor to be able to work in contact with the customer.



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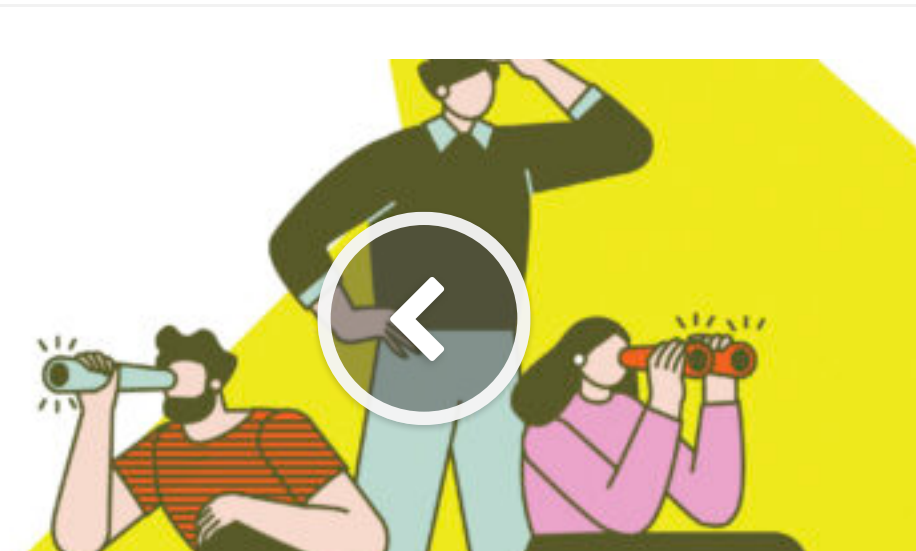
” "We have a program in the company that specifically aims to hire young refugees"

**The great challenge today common to most companies is recruitment. What do you put your DEI practices at the service of attracting new talent?**

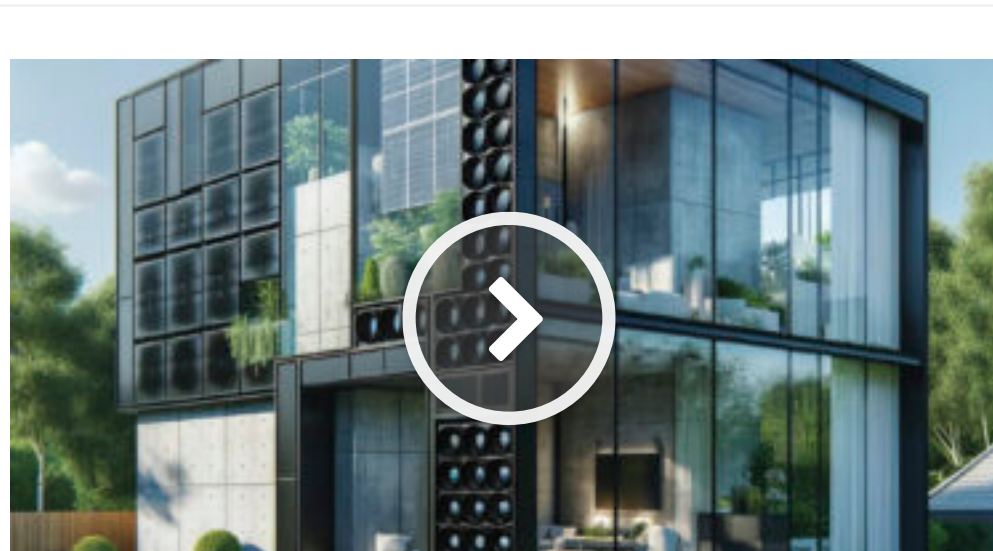
Creating concrete opportunities to approach our professional reality through employability programs, with social partners, adjusted to each reality and in areas where there is actually a need to attract labor. For example, the *Bora Jovens* Program, in partnership with the NGO Ajuda em Ação, aims to attract and integrate young people in situations of social vulnerability, in different areas of the food retail. The *PESCA* program, on the other hand, is oriented to older candidates and/or immigrants, developed in partnership with Redemprega Lisboa, and seeks to meet the needs of employees in the area of perishables - Fishmongoo. These are just two examples of talent acquisition programs, in which we reconcile the need for employees for sectors with greater turnover or lower attractiveness with the employment opportunity that is created in populations that seek professional stability and an opportunity to be able to show their value and that tend to seize this opportunity with greater commitment.

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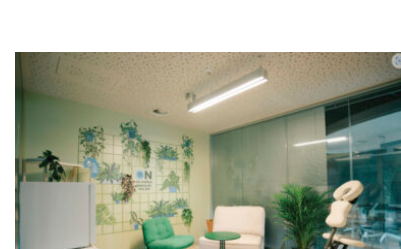
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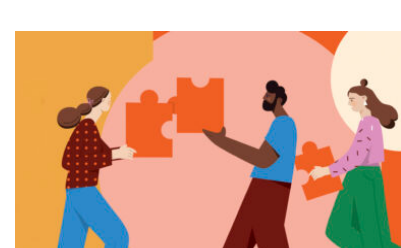
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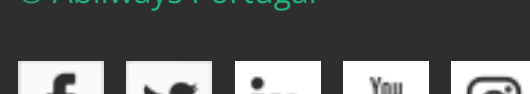


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