

EMBRACING DIVERSITY

CREATING EQUITABLE SOCIETIES THROUGH PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION

Embracing Diversity is more than just a training
– it leads to personal transformation and it provides the resources needed to implement changes as we strive together to create equitable societies.



INTERNATIONAL
STEP by STEP
ASSOCIATION

Embracing Diversity: A Transformative Learning Experience

Drawing on more than a decade of extensive work with diverse populations, ISSA is pleased to offer its training, mentoring, and consulting services to groups through **Embracing Diversity**, a training tailored to meet the needs of participants, which can be offered in person or online. **Embracing Diversity** promotes the values of anti-discrimination, anti-bias, and respect for diversity in classrooms, in communities, at the workplace, and in society. Intended for adults, the trainings guide participants through a process of personal transformation which helps us all become agents of change, working together to create equitable societies which honor and protect diversity.

Changing Society Starts with Personal Transformation

Adults and children are often exposed to discriminatory attitudes and practices just because they are different! We are all products of the societies in which we were raised. Biases and stereotypes are taught and reinforced by the society around us, and are often perpetuated by the institutions governing our societies. In order to create a more equitable society, where diversity is valued, respected, and protected, we must learn not only to recognize such biases for what they are, but we must transform the way we relate to each other, and such change must spread to all levels of society.

Through **Embracing Diversity**, ISSA will help training participants take the first steps towards effecting this change. The goal of ISSA's work in **Embracing Diversity** is to empower adults working with diverse groups to recognize their own attitudes, beliefs and behaviors in relation to marginalized groups; to raise their awareness and knowledge about issues of discrimination; and to help them take responsibility and build the capacity for change on personal, professional and institutional levels.

Who Can Participate?

ISSA can provide training and consulting to groups from different sectors of society in the format best suited to meet their needs. In the past, ISSA and its members have successfully adapted the course for teachers, parents, school administrators, local education authorities, school or community mediators, medical staff, social workers, police officers, local government officials, journalists, and other community members who interact with diverse populations. In addition, the training may benefit international organizations or agencies working with grantees or partners in the areas of education, community-building, human rights, anti-discrimination, etc. Institutions are welcome to invite ISSA to run the training for their staff or grantees. ISSA also has a course designed specifically for educators, which will help educators develop respect for diversity among children, our youngest members of society.



How is Embracing Diversity More Than a Simple Training?

ISSA is committed to providing more than just simple training; it also provides the support needed to implement changes: the development of action plans, follow-up and coaching on how to implement specific actions. ISSA's general approach is to offer participants time in between trainings to apply the principles and knowledge they have learnt before going to the next step. Although the program was designed to offer 6 days of training in total in two training sessions, ISSA's consultants are flexible with the number of days, time between training sessions, and exercises that it offers in order to best meet participants' needs. The training can also be offered via an online course. ISSA's goal is to provide training which is custom-made to meet the needs of the organization, so that participants are provided with content which is relevant to them in their day-to-day work. ISSA can offer trainings to a minimum of 10-15 participants, either in person (on site) or through an online platform.

Embracing Diversity - An Overview

This training program builds on the resources and expertise developed in the ISSA network. The program works on cognitive and psychological levels, as well as on the level of concrete action: increasing knowledge, acquiring new terminology, developing individual and group self-esteem, changing attitudes and designing concrete mobilizing activities.

Here are some examples of topics explored in the training:

Identity – Participants will explore the importance of positive self-identity and group identity to everyone's healthy development and will analyze how cultures shape our identities, behaviors, and influence relationships between different groups.

How Exclusion, Inequity, Discrimination, and Oppression Are Perpetuated – Participants will analyze stereotypes and how they perpetuate discrimination and oppression, the impact such stereotypes have, and how they are propagated.

Breaking Cycles of Oppression – Participants will reflect on their own experiences and identify their own level of intercultural sensitivity, exploring strategies for moving forward and acting as an ally for those who experience discrimination and oppression.

Language and Communication – Participants will come to understand how the languages we speak influence the personal and social identity of ourselves and others and may have the power to exclude others. Participants will learn non-violent and empathic communication techniques.

Giving Voice to Families and Communities – Participants will learn to recognize the competences of families and communities and identify strategies for working with them in ways that build on their competences.





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About ISSA

ISSA is a membership organization that connects professionals and organizations working in the field of early childhood development and learning. ISSA promotes equal access to quality education and care for all children, especially in the early years of their lives, and supports family and early years practitioners' empowerment. Established in the Netherlands in 1999, ISSA's network today stretches across the globe, with Members and Friends from more than 40 countries. While ISSA offers general membership and information-sharing to all interested individuals and organizations, ISSA's core members are non-governmental organizations, located primarily in Central Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Within its network, ISSA supports a wide array of programs that collectively provide a comprehensive set of services and advocacy tools intended to influence policy reform for families and young children, with a special focus on the years from birth through primary school.

Learn More

To learn more about **Embracing Diversity** and ISSA's work in social justice, please send all inquiries to admin@issa.nl. You can also visit www.issa.nl for more information on ISSA and its other trainings and services.

