



INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

*Equity and Belonging
in Our Communities*

Edited by

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**BUILDING
LEADERSHIP
BRIDGES**



Inclusive Leadership

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INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP: EQUITY AND BELONGING IN OUR COMMUNITIES

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

To the countless individuals who inspire us every day with their unwavering commitment to fostering a world that embraces diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging – this is dedicated to you. We hope that the collective wisdom, experiences, and insights presented within these pages will ignite meaningful conversations and empower and guide the next generation of scholars, practitioners, and advocates as they work to create a more just and inclusive society.

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Foreword

It is often tempting to proclaim, “We’ve come a long way,” but the persistent challenges faced by historically underrepresented and marginalized individuals tell a different story. In a world where not everyone is granted equal opportunities and the “just keep trying” mantra persists, there remains an urgent need to practice and understand diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB).

Some may argue that in our globalized world, we already champion and comprehend diversity. They may further note that women lead countries, as exemplified in *Time*’s 2022 publication featuring 13 accomplished female leaders. However, we must also confront the harsh reality of those facing exclusion and a lack of opportunity and belonging in their chosen professions. It is disheartening that despite Juneteenth being recognized as a federal holiday in the United States, numerous institutions of higher learning and businesses fail to grasp the significance of this date. This raises the question we fear facing: Are we all truly free?

We must not only acknowledge the multiple ethnic and racial groups that enrich our cultures but also wholeheartedly seek to understand and embrace the diversity of identities, generations, sexual orientations, religious beliefs, and more across our communities, workplaces, and learning institutions. Each individual brings immeasurable value to the workforce and society, and we must actively listen to their stories and unite to find meaningful solutions to the world’s pressing challenges.

This book you hold in your hands, *Inclusive Leadership: Equity and Belonging in Our Communities*, serves as a guide to what it means and looks like to be an ally and advocate for DEIB. Divided into four parts – (a) Understanding Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging, (b) Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging, and Education, (c) The Application and Practice of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging/Accessibility, and (d) Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging/Accessibility: A Community and Global Perspective – this book offers readers a roadmap toward fostering inclusivity and fairness.

I know that the editors and authors of this book sincerely hope that the chapters contained within illuminate the path for you, your leadership, and all who seek to prioritize and implement DEIB principles for the betterment of society as a whole. We can collectively build a more just and harmonious world by embracing DEIB. Let us embark on this transformative journey together.

— Daisy Auger-Domínguez

Author of *Inclusion Revolution: The Essential Guide to Dismantling Racial Inequity in the Workplace* and Chief People Officer at Vice Media

Acknowledgments

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Finally, we wish to acknowledge everyone who responded to our request for chapter proposals for being willing to share their experiences and best ideas. Regardless of whether their chapters were included, these individuals represent an illustration of the larger, worldwide group of dedicated and generous people who are engaged in this important work.

Introduction

The Multifaceted World of Leading Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging, and Accessibility

Joanne Barnes, Michael J. Stevens, Bjørn Zakarias Ekelund and Karen Perham-Lippman

“Our ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and the test of our civilization.”

—Mahatma Gandhi

It seems we can find, almost daily, increasing calls in public life to minimize – and even unwind – the hard-fought gains that have been achieved by fostering greater diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and accessibility (DEIBA). The need for a more thoughtful, nuanced, and insightful approach to inclusive leadership thus appears to grow more urgent by the day. By pulling together a broad and comprehensive collection of perspectives, this book is our attempt to address this need. Expanding on two successful International Leadership Association (ILA) Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Virtual Summits, this book answers the call for greater awareness, advocacy, action, and transformation for inclusive leadership, while bringing a global perspective to bear on the intersectionality of the different components of the DEIBA space.

Through the results of a rigorous and competitive review process, we share the final selected chapters in this book, which come from an array of academic researchers, educators, organizational leaders, nonprofit scholars, development and consulting professionals, and others. If the number of submissions we received in response to our call for proposed chapters is an indication of the enthusiasm for this work, we are filled with optimism.

The chapters in this book are organized into four parts, each dedicated to helping leaders better understand and advance DEIBA initiatives and applications. Our goal in presenting this collection is to provide a practical book that helps improve not only how we conceptualize and think about the DEIBA space but also to provide tools and case studies to help guide the practice of inclusive leadership.

When authentic and mutually respectful DEIBA are leveraged to advance a shared common purpose, we can see amazing things happen – everyone connected to an enterprise is far more likely to wrap their “hearts, minds, and souls” around a shared mission and vision. Though not an easy task, we have seen

firsthand that it is possible to leverage our collective differences to build creativity, innovation, and enduring organizations – not despite but precisely because of our differences. As the editors of this volume, we are committed to developing a robust and rigorous DEIBA mindset that can both inform our core values and self-identity as leaders, while also serve as the foundation for a steadfast commitment to strengthening “our universal web of interconnected human dignity” (Martin Luther King Jr, Letter from Birmingham Jail). We invite readers to join us on this journey.

— Joanne Barnes
— Michael J. Stevens
— Bjørn Zakarias Ekelund
— Karen Perham-Lippman