



# Examining Diversity & Inclusion From an Asian Perspective

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## Introduction

With impressive growth rates and untapped market opportunities, Asia as a region continues to be an important strategic growth market for many global companies. As companies set their sights on Asia, there is growing recognition of the importance of diversity and inclusion – not just as an internal talent management strategy but as a way to capitalise on the external market opportunities and gain competitive advantage.

However, when it comes to promoting diversity and inclusion across their organisations, the mistake many companies make is to simply roll out their headquarter or corporate strategies on a global basis. Whilst clear directives and mandates are given from the centre, often there is minimal effort to understand the dynamics of the local markets in Asia and adapt the approach accordingly. The result is many end up being disappointed or dismayed at the lack of engagement from local teams in Asia – particularly at the middle management level.

Community Business' previous research, *Engaging Managers in Asia on Diversity and Inclusion*, highlighted that there are various practical challenges that can get in the way – but there are important cultural challenges too. Diversity and inclusion is often perceived as 'a Western concept' that requires an approach and set of behaviours that can be at odds with cultural norms. This can be exacerbated by companies driving a global diversity agenda that may not resonate with pressing issues on the ground. The research concludes that if we are to see diversity and inclusion evolve as a business strategy and take hold in Asia, it is important to take the time to examine from an Asian perspective and engage with in-country stakeholders, examining the dynamics at play within their teams.

## This New Research

This research, *Examining Diversity & Inclusion From an Asian Perspective*, is the logical sequel to our previous study and again, is an initiative of our Diversity & Inclusion in Asia Network (DIAN). It seeks to support companies be more effective in promoting diversity and inclusion in their organisations across Asia, by:

- exploring how relevant the concepts of diversity and inclusion are in Asia;
- uncovering key diversity and inclusion dynamics at play in teams in different markets in Asia;
- recommending how companies can adopt an approach to diversity and inclusion that resonates locally.



## Overview

Based on telephone interviews with diversity and inclusion experts, facilitated dialogues with groups of business managers and HR professionals in different markets and a regional online survey, this research examines diversity and inclusion from an Asian perspective in five markets in Asia including: China, Hong Kong, India, Japan and Singapore. The findings from this research are presented as follows:

**Part 1: Diversity & Inclusion – How Relevant in Asia?** How relevant are the concepts of ‘diversity’, ‘inclusion’ and ‘meritocracy’ in different countries in Asia? How well are they understood? How does the cultural context influence attitudes towards these concepts?

**Part 2: Uncovering Key Diversity & Inclusion Dynamics in Asia** What insider-outsider groups and unconscious biases exist in different markets in Asia? What enables certain groups or types of people to be successful? What can hold people back?

**Part 3: Recommendations: How to Develop a Locally Relevant Diversity & Inclusion Strategy in Asia** How can companies examine diversity and inclusion from an Asian perspective – uncovering local issues and positioning in a way that resonates?

## Full Report

Packed with expert views and local insights on the context for diversity and inclusion and key dynamics in different markets, this research is a must-read for all organisations committed to rolling out an effective diversity and inclusion strategy in Asia.

[Download a copy of the full report for US \\$19.99. Member discounts apply.](#)



### ABOUT THE DIVERSITY & INCLUSION IN ASIA NETWORK (DIAN)

The Diversity & Inclusion in Asia Network (DIAN), an initiative of Community Business, is a unique network of leading companies committed to progressing diversity and inclusion in Asia. Members work together to understand diversity and inclusion issues pertinent to the region, share and develop best practice and impact positive change. Each year, members also collaborate on a pioneering project designed to advance diversity and inclusion in Asia – in their own organisations and beyond. In 2014, DIAN comprised 39 companies including: Accenture, AIG, ANZ, Bank of America Merrill Lynch, Barclays, BHP Billiton, Bloomberg, BNY Mellon, Brown-Forman, Cargill, Cisco, Citi, Coca-Cola, Commonwealth Bank of Australia, First State Investments, Credit Suisse, Deutsche Bank, EY, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, Goldman Sachs, Google, Herbert Smith Freehills, Hogan Lovells, IBM, J.P. Morgan, Linklaters, Microsoft, Moody's, Morgan Stanley, Nomura, PwC, Prudential, The Royal Bank of Scotland, Shell, Standard Chartered Bank, State Street, Telstra, Thomson Reuters, Unilever and Walt Disney Parks & Resorts. For more information about DIAN please see the Community Business website at: [www.communitybusiness.org/DIAN/index.htm](http://www.communitybusiness.org/DIAN/index.htm).

### ABOUT COMMUNITY BUSINESS

Community Business is a not-for-profit organisation whose mission is to lead, inspire and support companies to have a positive impact on people and communities. Recognised as a thought leader in corporate responsibility in Asia, Community Business conducts research, facilitates networks and events, leads campaigns and provides consultancy and training. Its major areas of focus include: Community Investment, Diversity & Inclusion, Work-Life Balance and Corporate Responsibility Strategy. Founded in 2003 and based in Hong Kong, Community Business works with companies of all sizes and from diverse industries across Asia, harnessing the power of business to drive social change. For more information, <http://www.communitybusiness.org>.

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