

From resistance to gain

Handout for building support and engagement for diversity and inclusion policies among managers and employees

What is the purpose of this handout?

Support is essential for the success of diversity and inclusion (D&I) policies. While the board defines the vision and allocates resources, it is primarily the support of managers that determines how policies are implemented and experienced in the workplace. At the same time, support among employees forms the foundation for an inclusive culture in which policies truly take root.

This handout shows how support for D&I policies is distributed among managers and employees, and why their support in particular is crucial. Support and resistance can take different forms. In addition to distinct champions and opponents, there are also ambivalents, bystanders, and reluctant. Understanding these profiles is essential, as each profile requires a different approach. In this way, you can not only reduce resistance but also transform it into opportunities for growth and more effective policy.

Support profiles

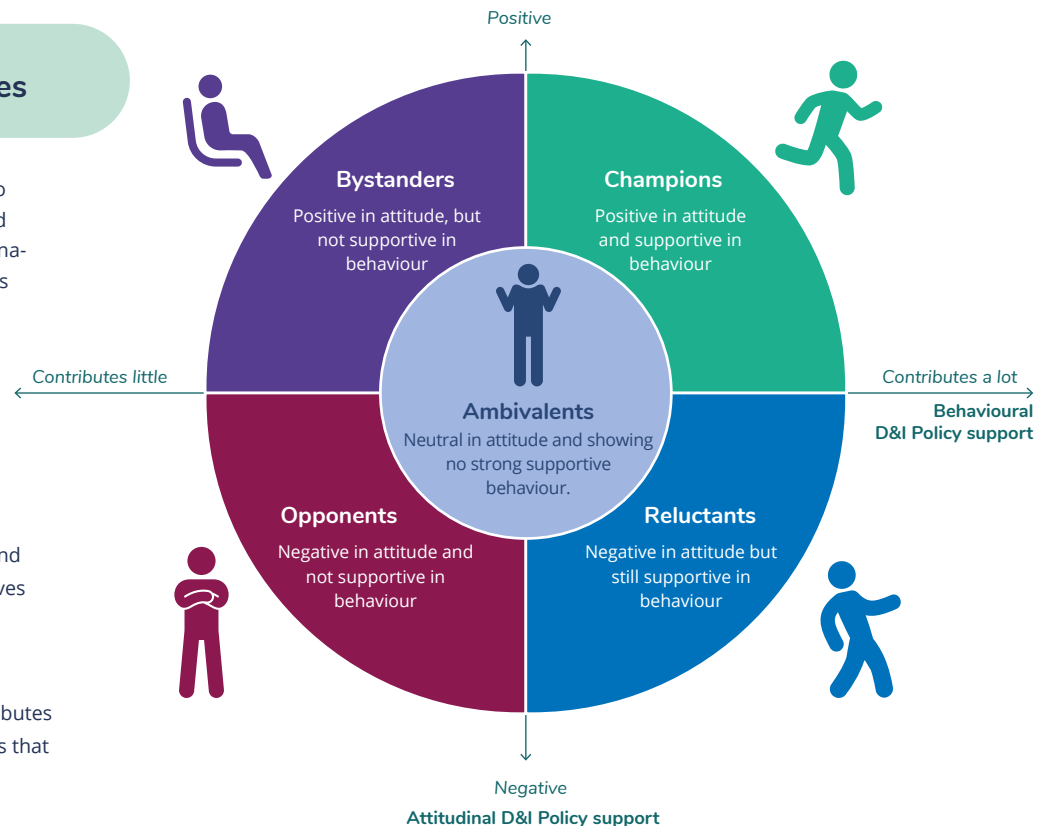
Support consists of two elements: **attitude** and **behaviour**. The combination of both determines the support profile.

Attitude

How valuable, useful, and trustworthy one perceives the D&I policy to be.

Behaviour

How actively one contributes to D&I policy and shows that they value it.



In attitude and behaviour

What does attitudinal and behavioural support for D&I policies look like?

From intervention to understanding

Resistance to D&I policies is often seen as something that needs to be fixed. But it is not always unwillingness; sometimes employees are unfamiliar with the policy, or they wonder how they can contribute. By better understanding where support, hesitation or resistance comes from (see figure below), as an organization you can respond more effectively. These insights help strengthen and improve the effectiveness of the policy.

Minimal opposition, widespread unawareness

The group that is truly strongly opposed to D&I policies is often smaller than expected, but it does receive a lot of attention. In many organizations, it turns out that employees mostly do not know what the policy actually entails. That is precisely where a major opportunity lies. Clear communication about the goals and content can significantly increase engagement and support.*



*Prevalence of support profiles, based on research among 13,441 employees from 27 organizations participating in the NIM.

Curious to see what this looks like in your organization? Take part in the [Netherlands Inclusivity Monitor \(NIM\)](#)

Leadership and Inclusion

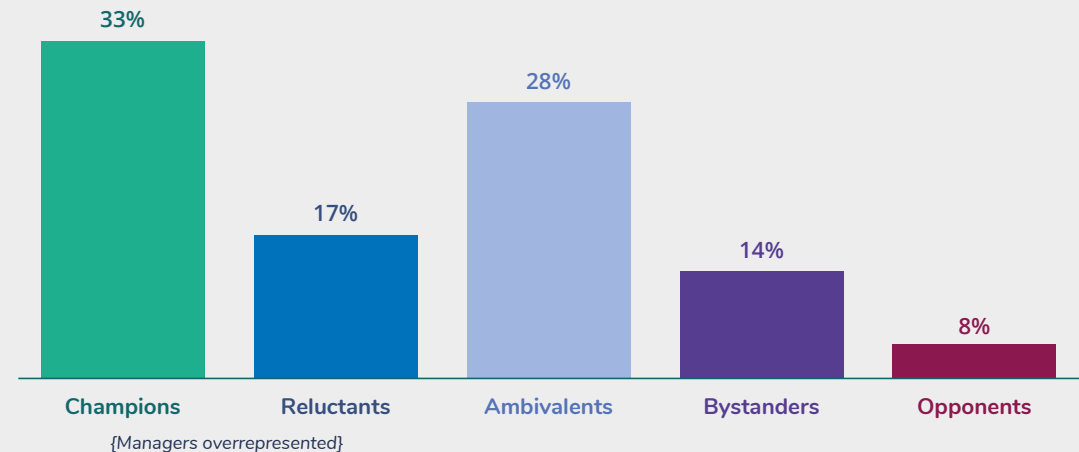
The importance of support in attitude and behaviour among managers

The importance of leadership

Leadership plays a key role in the success of D&I policy. It is not only about the implementation in the workplace, but also about promoting the organization's vision. This page shows how managers perceive their own role in D&I, how employees view that role, and what that means for the perceived climate for inclusion.

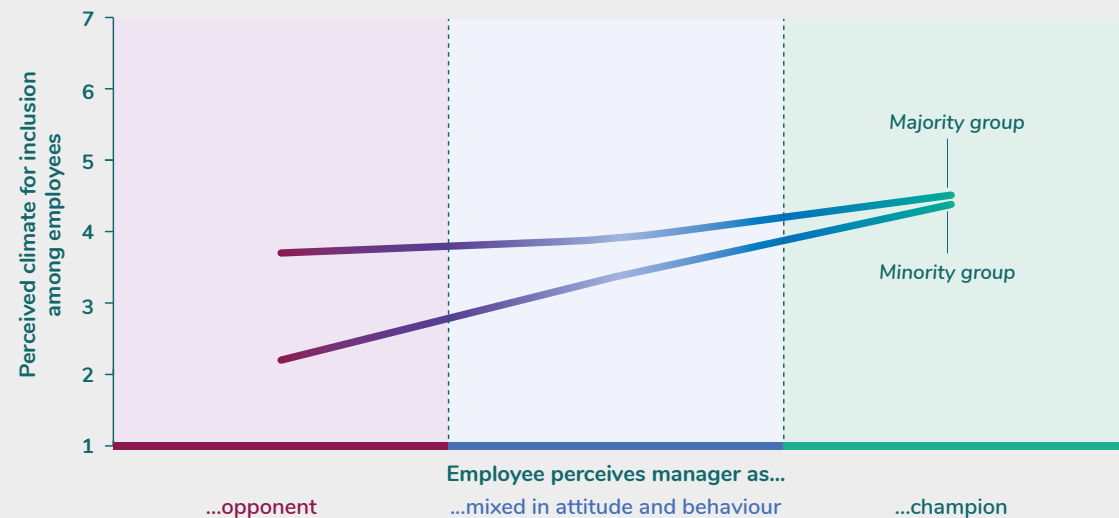
How do managers see themselves?

Managers are more likely than employees to see themselves as champions or reluctants in relation to D&I policy. Regardless of their attitude, they report supporting D&I policy in their behaviour more often.



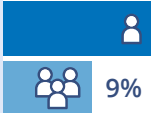
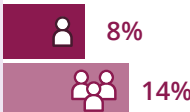
Which leader leads you towards inclusion?

When employees perceive that their manager supports D&I policy both in attitude and in behaviour, they experience more inclusion in the workplace. This is reflected in the average scores on the perceived climate for inclusion (see figure). This is particularly the case for employees who feel different from most colleagues (Minority group).



From resistance to gain

Practical advice to strengthen support

		Characteristic stance	Distribution of support profiles	What is needed to strengthen support?		
Champions		Value D&I and are intrinsically motivated to contribute to it.		Express appreciation Actively express appreciation for their commitment and highlight their role model function, e.g. during a team meeting.	Make room for a pioneering role Offer opportunities to take on a pioneering role, for example as an ambassador or member of a working group.	Inspire others Invite them to share experiences and good practices during events or meetings.
Reluctants		Are engaged but critical: they support D&I, but have concerns about the contents of the policy or how it is implemented.		Take questions seriously Take their questions and concerns about the D&I policy seriously and show understanding for their perspective.	Acknowledge their input Create opportunities for them to share opinions and doubts in a safe setting.	Further develop policy together Offer space to jointly explore how the policy can be improved so it better fits practice.
Ambivalents		Are not aware of the policy, do not know where to find it, or what it actually entails.		Provide clear explanation Provide accessible information about the D&I policy, e.g. on the intranet and during onboarding and information sessions.	Make information sources visible Clearly show where they can find more information and who they can contact with questions.	Emphasize relevance Point out how the policy also connects to their own work and role.
Bystanders		Support D&I in principle and endorse the values, but take little action themselves.		Explain D&I goals Clearly communicate the organization's D&I vision and goals and explain their importance, e.g. during team meetings.	Actively invite Personally invite them to contribute, e.g. by sharing an idea or joining a working group.	Lower barriers Make it clear that contributing can be done in low-threshold ways and indicate how much time it requires so it feels achievable.
Opponents		Have little knowledge of the policy, or consciously reject it — often based on the idea that everyone has equal opportunities as long as they work hard.		Engage in open conversation Enter into dialogue about the meaning of values such as equality and equity and listen to their objections.	Repeat the D&I vision Remind them of the shared vision and values of the organization and explain why D&I is part of this.	Clarify codes of conduct Ensure there is a clear code of conduct that contains the shared norms and values and refer to it when necessary.
		 Managers  Employees		<i>Prevalence of support profiles, based on research among 2,317 managers and 11,114 employees from 27 organizations participating in the NIM.</i>		