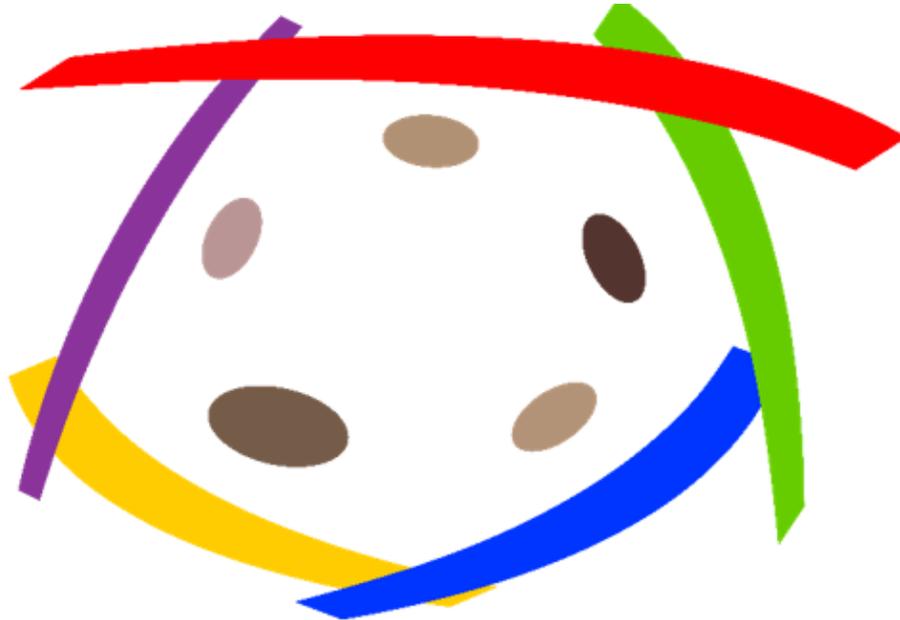


# *Hosting Worlds Together*

Annual Report of the ISS Diversity and Inclusion Team

**January-December 2018**



# ISS DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION TEAM

**Rosalba Icaza (Chair), Tamara Harte, Silke Heumann, Helen Hintjens, Anthony Otieno Ong'ayo, Femke van der Vliet, Constance Dupuis & Zuleika Sheik (Research Assistant)**

**\*\*With special thanks to our former members (2017-2018):**

Sylvia Bergh, Sharmini Bisessar-Selvarajah, Peter van Helden, Zhiren Ye (Research Assistant)

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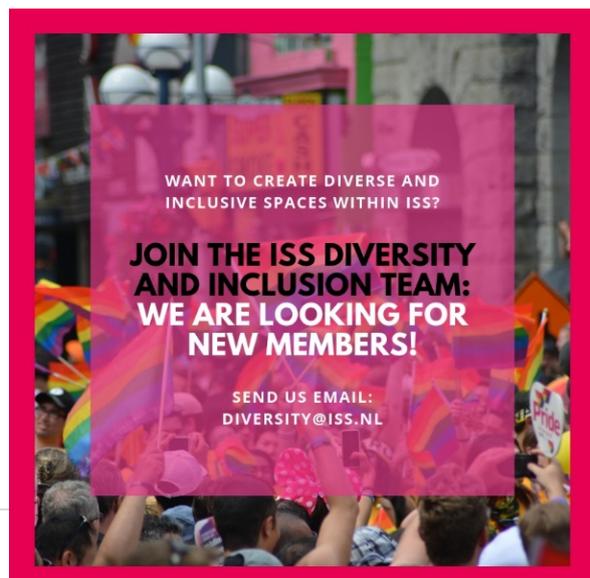


## 1. Overall Balance: A busy but fruitful year!



2018 has been a busy but fruitful year for the ISS Diversity and Inclusion team (D&I team) as it marks the beginning of the implementation of our Action Plan “*Hosting Worlds Together*”. However, it was also a year of complex challenges for the team’s work and vision. For example, two of our founding members stepped down to take up new responsibilities within ISS, and another two postponed or cancelled their participation due to workload pressure. These latter two departures, in particular, reverberated as a warning bell among the remaining members regarding the professional commitment and emotional work that is required to encourage and sustain institutional changes at ISS when aiming to create an environment that can host differences. With this in mind, the D&I Team circulated a public invitation in September to everyone at ISS who was interested in working with us. The response was very positive!

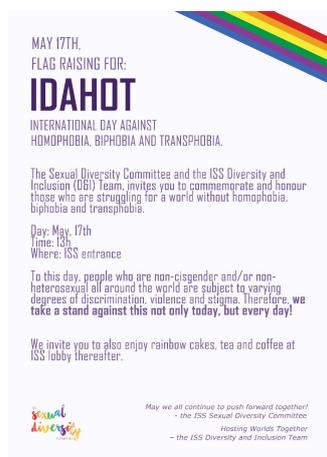
Today, our team reflects ISS at its best, as it is composed of a mix of academic and support staff, genders, nationalities, and race/ethnicities. We share common goals and aspirations for change, but our individual visions on how to encourage and sustain those changes differ. Precisely, these different visions is what have enriched our conversations, decisions and planned strategies for the next 12 months in which **accessibility will receive special**



attention.

The ISS D&I Team also faced the challenge of carving its own role within ISS and Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR). At ISS the team has been working to develop a role as facilitator of dignifying forms of addressing discriminatory attitudes and behaviors. In this process, we have learnt that embarking in conversations with those negatively and painfully affected has to be expedited if the aim is to undo wrongs. This was the case when discriminatory remarks formulated against ISS PhD researchers was published in Erasmus Magazine in August 2018. At the same time, as a team we have learnt, from the Implicit Bias Pilot Training session held on 6 December 2018, that conversations on discrimination and unwanted behavior in general are challenging in different ways to different members of the ISS community. We also realized that despite the urgency of undoing wrongs, enough time to plan and prepare an environment of mutual trust is a pre-condition for successful (un)learning. The positive feedback from participants of the 14 November 2018 'Jos Mooij Annual Teaching Day on Diversity and Inclusion in Higher Education' confirms this last observation in particular.

The D&I Team also faced the challenge of carving its own space within EUR. During these past 12 months, we have managed to identify and highlight the areas in which support from EUR's Central Diversity and Inclusion Office is needed (e.g. institutional visibility and acknowledgement); but also those areas in which the team is leading the way forward within EUR (e.g. addressing imbalanced representation; accessibility; awareness). This has laid an important foundation for further cooperation with the recently appointed EUR Chief Diversity Officer, Professor Semiha Denktas, who has publicly acknowledged the ISS D&I team for our work within EUR.



In facing all these challenges, the collaboration and solidarity between the D&I Team, ISS SCHOLAS and PhD representatives, was strengthened. This is an invaluable outcome that manifests to this day in a relationship of mutual trust and commitment for the co-organization of successful activities such as the *International Day Against All Phobias* on 17 May, and the roundtable on 12 October on *Pinkwashing and Homonationalism*.

Still for us, an ISS that is accessible to everyone regardless of race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, age, and/or differently able bodies; in which positions of decision-making reflect the actual composition of our student body with a majority of women of color from the Global South and in which everyone feels safe and at home is not yet a reality, but a long term common goal.

*"Hosting Worlds Together"* aims to capture what is at stake right now at ISS. Inspired by the work of intercultural philosopher Raimon Panikkar and decolonial feminist Maria Lugones

*“Hosting Worlds Together”* invites us to think of ‘hosting’ as the contrary to ‘tolerate’. For Panikkar to host is to be able to reach ‘others’ that are not like ‘us’ in order to understand who ‘we’ are. Meanwhile, Maria Lugones invites us to stop consuming the worlds of ‘others’ to become fellow travelers in the pluriverse even if this entails relinquishing our own certainties and privileges.

*“Hosting World Together”* points at the collective responses that are required for institutional change to happen at ISS in the present context. Universities and research centers across the world are facing public scrutiny on the role they have historically played in silencing or promoting plurality in approaches to knowledge generation. As capitalist and pro-market rationalities enter Universities’ boardrooms and classrooms, calls to document and learn from teaching practices that nurture transitions from mono-cultural disciplinary thinking to a truly global inter-connected reflexivity, are increasingly growing. This is taking place at a time when right-wing and openly racist politics have forced Universities to publicly endorse the fostering of difference through practices of research, teaching and learning as key to academic and scientific excellence.

In the following pages, we report on our activities and outcomes of 2018 by centering around 3 focal points for action– *Accessibility, Awareness, Addressing+Redressing Unbalanced Representations* - and the cross-cutting area of *Communications*. For the team, this report is not only a responsible exercise of transparency and accountability but it also serves the purpose of documenting our trajectory as the first D&I team in ISS’s 65+ year history.

To that effect, this document is divided into 3 sections. The first section presents the activities and outcomes achieved in the past 12 months of work per focal point of action. The second section presents our plans for 2019. The appendix presents a short financial statement.

## 2. Focal Points, Activities and Outcomes

The ISS Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Team's Action Plan for 2018 identified as its central aims:

*“not only to detect and change what is wrong and needs to be improved, but more importantly, to initiate a collective inward reflection to identify and acknowledge our own in house expertise and our best diversity and inclusion practices in research, teaching and student mentoring. The reflection and data gathered through the different actions that will be conducted, aim to feed into the ISS' strategy while showcasing ISS as a leading center on diversity and inclusion in higher education”.*

To realize these aims, the D&I Team identified three focal points for action -*Accessibility/Awareness/Addressing* - and organized an agenda of interventions and activities for 2018. These are briefly presented in the following paragraphs.

### Focal point 1: Ensure a disability friendly ISS (Accessibility)

This focal point was led by Sylvia Bergh during 2018 and undertaken by Helen Hintjens and Tamara Harte at the end of the year. Five concrete sets of actions were proposed and several concrete activities organized aiming to advance this focal point:

- a) Follow up on the [Voorall](#) foundation's recommendations on accessibility at the ISS building and identify funding sources that could help offset the costs to make all of ISS disability compliant
- b) Ensure child care needs of staff and students are addressed
- c) Develop clear guidelines for teaching support and academic staff to prepare for the arrival of visually impaired students in coordination with ISS ICT services team
- d) Make sure that the ISS's image in all public relations communication output match the objectives of the diversity policy
- e) Create an atmosphere of trust for differently abled conditions to be disclosed among staff and students, e.g. dyslexia

### Activities and Outcomes

The D&I team worked with architects and staff from ISS/EUR to assess the ISS building and propose a feasible plan of reconstruction. Based on the assessment, a visit by the Voorall foundation was planned which served as a basis for a Report on ISS accessibility drawn in April 2018. The report made concrete recommendations for improving accessibility in the building and presented two designs for a disable-friendly entrance. As a follow up, in June the D&I Team invited municipality officials to further examine the



feasibility of reconstruction of ISS's main entrance.

In September 2018, the D&I Team followed up on the recommendations with the former ISS Institute Director, Coen Alders, to propose the use of the team's remaining year budget to pay for concrete improvement measures including improvements to the 'disabled toilet', installing a baby changing table, and so on, before the end of the year. This proposal was approved on the basis that this was an efficient use of funds while the more costly and structural-related transformations for a disable-friendly entrance was approved.

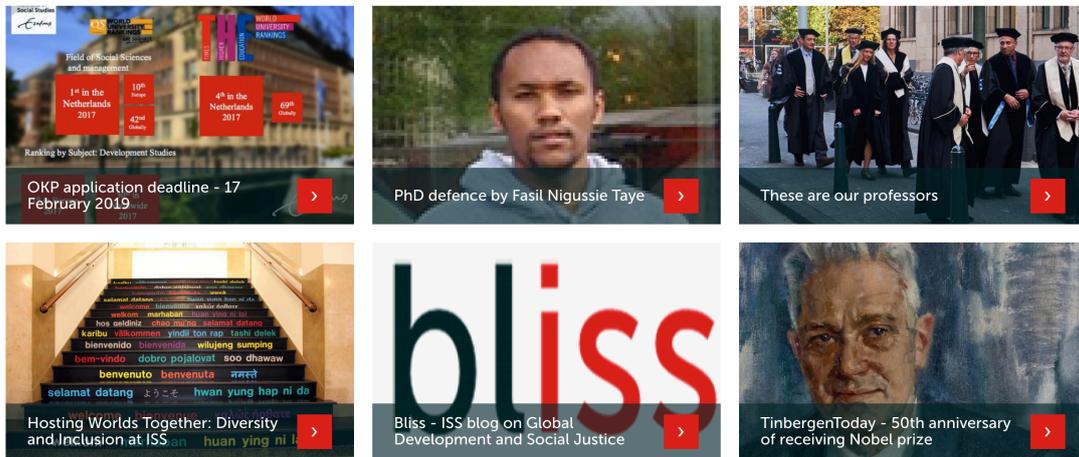


In October 2018, the D&I Team drafted a plan for small but concrete improvements, which was submitted to the ISS Director and Facilities Department. By the end of the year, a small but concrete improvement was finally reached: a dedicated **'Disability Parking Space'**.



To make sure that ISS's image in all public relations communication output match the objectives of the diversity policy, the ISS D&I Team conducted a small research project about this topic on other universities around the world. On the basis of our findings, a series of

consultations started with the ISS Marketing and Communication Team, to explain the relevance of having accessible information on our D&I vision and plans for visitors to the ISS website. **As a result, a new space on the landing page of the ISS website has been created.**



This year the D&I Team took the first steps in creating an atmosphere of trust for differently abled conditions to be disclosed among staff and students, e.g. dyslexia; by taking the responsibility of encouraging ISS participation in the EUR research on studying with and without functional impairments. The ISS D&I Team collaborated with Kristel de Groot, a PhD Candidate at Erasmus University Rotterdam’s Institute for Behaviour and Biology (EURIBEB) **to develop the first ISS survey** to obtain information on our students that carry out their MA with a functional impairment. MA students from the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 batches answered the survey and the data will be processed and disseminated during 2019. The team expects that this data will be relevant for the following detected needs at ISS:

- a) ISS guidelines for teaching, support and academic staff to prepare for the arrival of physically impaired students (e.g. visually impaired). This is expected to happen in coordination with Student Counsellor Marlijn Timmermans-Muller (coördinator studeren met een functiebeperking)
- b) Develop an inventory of the ICT resources, including different learning challenges aimed at servicing specific learning challenges/disabilities



## **Focal Point 2: Promoting an organizational culture of positive awareness regarding diversity and inclusion (Awareness)**

This focal point was led by Rosalba Icaza in 2018. Since early January, Zuleika Sheik and Antony Otieno have joined the team to support this focal point's objectives and activities. As stated in the 2018 action plan, two-types of activities were conducted:

- The D&I Seminars on Diversity and Inclusion in Academic Research; and
- The Teaching Day on Diversity and Inclusion in Higher Education

These events were well attended and counted on the support of MA and PhD students, Facilities Department and DREA. Below we provide a more detailed description of the events and outputs.

### ***Seminars on Diversity and Inclusion in Academic Research***

The D&I team organized 3 seminars in 2018. These were understood as an opportunity for the ISS community to listen to experts from different disciplinary backgrounds that have conducted research that is attentive to epistemic diversity. The seminars are also considered an opportunity to encourage collective realizations at ISS of what we have already done and what we can further develop in this area. The seminars are thought as moments to showcase ISS's in-house expertise, and ISS colleagues were invited to participate as respondents in each seminar.

#### **7 May 2018: "Research and the task of epistemic diversity"**

**Description:** Research on diversity and inclusion in Higher Education is vast, but nonetheless few studies have dealt with the theoretical, ethical and methodological implications of conducting research that takes into account epistemic diversity.

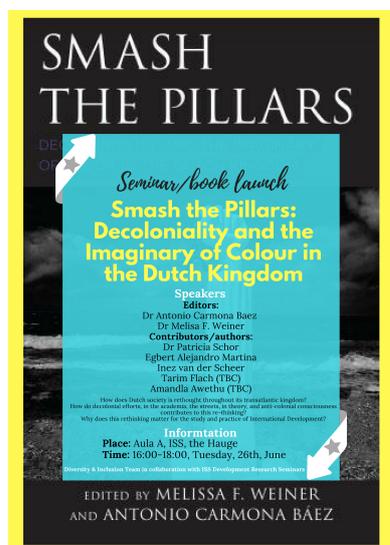
**Invited Speakers:** Dr Olivia Rutazibwa, University of Porthsmouth (UK) and Dr Sruti Bala, University of Amsterdam (NL)

#### **Outputs:**

A series of 5 blog posts on Epistemic Diversity written by the invited speakers and ISS colleagues were published by ISS's BLISS Blog:

- Epistemic Diversity | "I am where I think": research and the task of epistemic diversity [by Marina Cadaval and Rosalba Icaza](#)
- Epistemic Diversity | The challenge of epistemic poverty and how to think beyond what we know [by Sruti Bala](#)
- Epistemic Diversity | From 'do no harm' to making research useful: a conversation on ethics in development research [by Karin Astrid Siegmann](#)
- Epistemic Diversity | The Feast and the liberation of sensing [by Zuleika Sheik](#)
- Epistemic Diversity| Understanding epistemic diversity: decoloniality as research strategy [by Olivia U. Rutazibwa](#)

**26 June 2018: “Smash the pillars: decoloniality and the imaginary of color in the Dutch kingdom”.**



**Invited Speakers left to right:** Antonio Carmona, Melissa F. Weiner, Patricia Schor, Egbert Martina, and Amandla Awethu.

**Description:** This seminar and book launch was organized in collaboration with ISS’s Development Research Seminars. The seminar focused on the questions: How is Dutch society rethought throughout its transatlantic kingdom? How do decolonial efforts, in academia, the streets, in theory, and anti-colonial consciousness contribute to this re-thinking? Why does this rethinking matter for the study and practice of International Development? This seminar opened the opportunity for people to listen and engage with the editors and contributors of the book "Smash the Pillars", which deals with the theoretical, ethical and methodological implications of re-thinking contemporary Dutch society from the perspective of their transatlantic kingdom.

**12 December 2018: “Why race matters in the Dutch context?” Inaugural seminar of the Debating Discrimination in Dutch Academia: Experiences and Contestations beyond Diversity**

**Background:** An article published in August 2018 in Erasmus Magazine, in which racist remarks were made about PhD students from the Global South received swift response from the ISS PhD community. A list of demands was sent to the ISS Rector, an article titled ‘The Innocence in Knowledge Production’ challenging those remarks was published in EM Magazine and the PhD community called for a real and honest discussion on racism in academia at ISS, clearly stating that this is a structural problem that requires a strong institutional response.



As a result a seminar series, **Debating Discrimination in Dutch Academia: Experiences and Contestations beyond Diversity** was initiated by the Diversity and Inclusion Team in collaboration with the ISS PhD Community. The aim of this series is to start an open discussion about (1) the varied forms of overt and covert discrimination and racism within academic institutions, (2) the role of academic institutions in reproducing colonial stereotypes and racism in society and (3) alternatives and contestations within and outside academic institutions.

The inaugural seminar '**Why race matters in the Dutch context?**' featured invited speakers Dr. **Patricia Schor** and **Grâce Ndjako**.



**Description:** In light of the recent debates and protests surrounding Zwarte Piet (Black Piet), which received wide-spread international media attention, the invited speakers attempted to go beyond a discussion on Zwarte Piet by contextualizing issues of race and discrimination in Dutch society. This was achieved by looking back at Dutch history and its role in the Transatlantic Slave Trade, and linking this lack of awareness to contemporary issues of racism and discrimination in Dutch society. The role of Dutch academia was interrogated, with the speakers reflecting on their own experiences, key moments, and coping strategies. The ISS PhD Community, SJP Major and the Diversity and Inclusion Team hosted this first seminar.

### ***Teaching Day on Diversity and Inclusion in Higher Education***

The D&I Team in collaboration with the ISS Counselling Team and DREA organized the ISS 'Jos Mooij Teaching Day', as a one-day workshop on 14 November on the theme: *Diversity and Inclusion in Higher Education Teaching*.

**Description:** Teaching practices at ISS that are contributing to diversity and inclusion need to be identified and institutionally recognized. To that effect it is necessary to promote an environment of institutional appreciation and one way of doing that is via existing spaces at ISS where we collectively reflect on what we teach and how we do it. This is the case of ISS Jos Mooij Teaching Day (JMTD).

The JMTD was instituted in 2011 by the late Deputy Rector for Educational Affairs, Jos Mooij, following the practice at many universities to discuss amongst colleagues, once a year, important and/or new developments in higher education. The idea is that all teaching staff of a university (or department) comes together to be brought up-to-date in a certain didactical area as well as to share experiences or good-practices.

The D&I Team organized a day of training with special guest: **Dr Aminata Cairo, Lecturer in**

**Inclusive Education at The Hague University of Applied Sciences.** The day was organized as a 6-hour interactive workshop and the entire morning session was dedicated to laying a (interpersonal) foundation among the 22 participants. During the afternoon session, participants worked in small groups moderated by Aminata Cairo and Rosalba Icaza who encouraged participants to reenact real scenarios, which take place in ISS classrooms to identify and reflect upon learning opportunities within the classroom. The guiding questions were: What do you need to create an inclusive learning environment and what interferes with this.

### **Focal point 3: Address the imbalance in representation of women and staff from Southern backgrounds**

This focal point was led by Silke Heumann until July 2018 and taken up by Rosalba Icaza supported by Celinka Roevers from HR. To contribute to this focal point, the D&I Team's work has focused on two main areas: a) the representation of women and staff of Southern backgrounds at all levels of senior academic, administrative and management positions; and b) the selection processes of academic and support staff.

To this effect, the D&I Team supported by ISS HR started the planning for Implicit Bias Training as one intervention that could eventually lead to positive changes in the selection of staff at ISS and redress our present imbalance in representation.

In mid 2018, the D&I Team and HR department consulted with EUR regarding the university plans for implicit bias training for all faculties, after all EUR Deans had gone through it in 2017. In consultation with the policy officer at the Central EUR Diversity and Inclusion office, we approached the proposed person for this training and conducted interviews with another candidate, Ms Sarita Banjath who was finally selected. A pilot training was scheduled and executed on December 6.

The session had 18 participants including members of the IB, management, academic and support staff. The training consisted of 2 sessions: a masterclass on intersectionality and a privilege walk. After the pilot, the 18 participants shared with the D&I Team and HR extensive comments on the session. As a result of this feedback, a series of collective decisions have been made:

1. The D&I Team and HR will revisit the terms of reference for implicit bias training and generate an alternative framework
2. Alternative options for trainers and types of training will be researched, including EUR training options

## **More and closer collaborations**

### ***Building connection with Erasmus University Rotterdam***

On 18 October 2018, Professor Semiha Denktas, Chief Diversity Officer visited the D&I Team

at ISS. SCHOLAS representatives also joined the meeting. On this occasion, we presented our work on diversity and inclusion and reflected upon the challenges encountered while implementing our Action Plan. Professor Denktas highly praised our efforts and acknowledged that the D&I team and SCHOLAS committees are playing a leading role within EUR on diversity and inclusion.

A month later, on 22 November 2018, the D&I team was invited to a private consultation meeting with Professor Curt Rice, a world-renowned pioneer on the subject of gender equality in academia. The ISS D&I Team was invited by the EUR Chief Diversity Officer to share our experiences and outputs of these past 12 months of intense work.

### ***Closer collaborations at home***

During 2018, the D&I Team worked to create a stronger relationship with the ISS student committees, including the SCHOLAS Executive, the Gender Committee, the Sexual Diversity Committee, the PhD Committee, the ISS Counselling Team, ISS Welfare Office, IC, DREA, the SJP Major Teaching Team and Student Representatives, the Housing Committee, and so on.

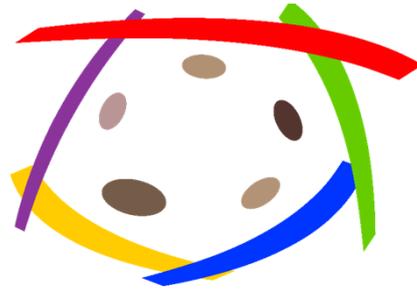
As a result, various joint activities were successfully organized, including:

- Workshop on mental health prevention and protection on 8 June
- Roundtable on Religion and LGBTQ+ Issues on 15 May
- The Hague Pride Parade on 9 June
- Seminar on Pinkwash and Homonationalism on 12 October



### ***D&I Team Logo***

Thanks to the creativity of PhD researcher Brenda J. Rodriguez Cortes and MA student Haydhar Muhammad Bachtiar, the D&I Team now has its own logo!



ISS DIVERSITY  
AND INCLUSION TEAM

## 1. Plans for the future

The ISS D&I Team requested this budget allocation to continue working on the 3 focal points – Accessibility, Awareness, Addressing+Redressing – plus the area of Communication.

As stated in our Action Plan and Vision, these focal points not only require short and medium term actions, but also regular follow-ups in order to achieve institutional change in the long term. To that effect, our actions are focusing on detecting what is wrong and what needs to be improved, but more importantly, these have also initiated a collective inward reflection to identify and acknowledge our own in-house expertise and our best diversity and inclusion practices in research, teaching and student mentoring. Our aim is that this reflection and the data gathered through the different actions will directly feed into the implementation of the ISS Strategic Plan 2018-2022.

In order to achieve the stated long-term goals, the following activities are planned for the period 2019-2022:

### 1. The D&I Team's focus for 2018 will be on *accessibility* for differently abled people at ISS

- The D&I Team will continue its work with the ISS Communication and Marketing team to think through promotional material aimed at potential new students that are differently abled. We aspire to create a dedicated page on the ISS website that can provide information on available resources for potential new students who are differently abled that can encourage them to apply.
- Consultations with experts from within and outside EUR and the Netherlands will be planned for this year. Our objective is to start creating the conditions for those who are differently abled to feel encouraged to actually apply to ISS.
- Investment in physical and ICT infrastructure to promote accessibility is needed.

### 2. Closer Collaborations in the city of The Hague

The organization of events on Diversity and Inclusion at ISS with local-based partners such as The Hague University of Applied Sciences (HHS) to explore concrete measures that promote inclusiveness by and for students and staff.

### 3. Implicit Bias Training Program

In collaboration with other ISS Committees and Teams, facilitate trainings on implicit bias for all members of the ISS staff involved in hiring and promotion committees. Our aim is to sensitize and create awareness among all staff, and as a first step we will start with ourselves in the D&I Team and with people in management/decision-making positions, with a particular focus on hiring and promotion. This is in line with EUR's wider plans to train all staff with funding from EUROPA. As that is a longer-term process, we have already started the process with a first pilot at ISS and in that way hope that this can help to move forward the process at the EUR level.

## **2. Mental Health**

In collaboration with other ISS Committees and Teams, such as the Mental Health Working Group, Counseling team and the Institute Council, we will facilitate professional training on mental health in higher education, as well as sexual harassment, and other forms of discrimination and exclusion. This includes supporting and facilitating more regular mandatory sessions for students about diversity-awareness and respectful ways of dealing with each other at ISS, including building up intercultural communication skills.

## **3. Communication+Visibility**

In order to showcase ISS as a leading center on diversity and inclusion in higher education, we will develop and implement a communication strategy of our own in-house expertise via different means, including a more visible space on the ISS website and social media platforms.

## **4. Education and Research**

Promote and encourage research on diversity and inclusion at ISS by subsidizing students willing to engage with this topic in their MA research paper.



## APPENDIX

### ISS D&I Team Budget 2018

The ISS D&I Team 2017-2018 Action Plan and Budget was approved in March 2018.

For this period the D&I Team budget amounts to a total of 20,950.00 Euros.

For the period 2018-2022, we expect to exercise at least the same budget each year.

Budget in detail for the reported period - January-December 2018 - by focal point:

	Activity	Item	Costs	Totals
<i>Accessibility</i>	BTS/Voorall verslag vertaling.	Report	548.01	548.01
<i>Awareness</i>	Diversity Research Seminars	Dr Rutazibwa ticket Antwerpen - Den Haag.	59.4	1441.77
		Dr Bala/Diversity research seminar	15.23	
		Dr Patricia Schor/reiskst 26-6-2018 event launch	14.1	
		Professor Philomena Essed flight	760.24	
		Accomodation and Dinner Costs Court Garden/logies O. Rutazibwa 7 mei 2018	83.4	
		Declaratie van 25.06.18 Tot 25.06.18	112.9	
		Declaratie van 07.05.18 Tot 07.05.18	107.2	
		*Declaratie van 12.12.18 Tot 12.12.18	289.3	
	Jos Mooi Teaching Day	Trainer fee	800	800

<i>Addressing+Redressing Unbalanced Representations</i>	Implicit Bias Training Pilot	Privilegewalk on the 6th of December 2018 Implicitbias training: Lecture on the 6th of Decem	968  968	1936
Communications		Multicopy/A5 Flyer Flag Raising ISS.	57.6	57.6
Assistant	eurflex/Z.Ye wk 33		97.84	97.85

**Total: 4881.23**