

Reducing identity threat to promote an inclusive environment

Delia Mensitieri wins the Stone Soup Award on Research in Social Innovation 2021

January 18th 2022. [Stone Soup Consulting](#) has granted the 4th edition of its [Award on Research in Social Innovation](#) to the academic research “**Inclusion starts with I: Reducing identity threat to promote an inclusive environment and to improve performance, career aspirations, and satisfaction**” by Delia Mensitieri. This edition of the award is dedicated to “Diversity in the workplace” and will dedicate its 5,000€ fund to support Mensitieri’s work in this academic field.

According to Mensitieri, “this research will help to have a clearer view on how both leadership and certain organisational practices have an influence on how included employees feel and in turn on several business KPI’s”. Although organisations are investing time and efforts to create a truly diverse learning environment, they **still struggle to foster an inclusive space where all employees feel that they belong and can reach their full potential.**

Research shows that there are still discrepancies between performance, career aspirations, and employee satisfaction between certain minority groups and the dominant group. Delia Mensitieri’s research argues that **before diversity practices can work, there first needs to be an inclusive environment where everyone feels they can be their authentic self.** If an employee feels that he/she cannot express who he/she is in their organisation, it can 1) trigger subtle and unintentional behaviours such as microaggressions (comments or actions that subtly and often unintentionally express prejudiced attitudes toward a member of a marginalised group), 2) negatively impact the way some employees perceive their organisation as inclusive, 3) which in turn impacts their performance, career aspirations, and employee satisfaction.

This four-year research started in 2021 and focuses on three main areas: the **definition of an inclusive organisation** by a thorough literature study; the **relationship between identity threat, the organisation and experiencing microaggressions**; and finally, **the effect of interventions** focused on reducing identity threat. The scope of the research will also cover several companies ranging from a large multinational to a smaller SME located in Belgium.

At Stone Soup, we believe that this work contributes to **understand the relationship between climate for inclusion** (which refers to the extent to which employees collectively perceive that the organisation values differences), **inclusive leadership** (i.e. the capacity to lead a heterogeneous group of people efficiently, while respecting their uniqueness in an empathetic, bias-free way), **and felt inclusion** (the perception of inclusion employees have within the organisation).

Stone Soup Consulting is an international proactive and forward-thinking consultancy with a social heart. Also, a certified B Corporation since 2016.