ADDRESSING CULTURE AND ORIGINS ACROSS THE GLOBE

Lessons from Australia, Brazil, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States
ADDRESSING CULTURE AND ORIGINS ACROSS THE GLOBE

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The changing world of work will continue to reshape Sodexo in every way. By leveraging a global approach towards culture and origins, it can only help bridge understanding faster and acknowledge every difference sooner. It is for us to then localize that impact across our business so that we really can deliver the best possible employee experience at work.

RAJ VERMA
Senior Vice President
Human Resources
Corporate Services Worldwide
and
Global Executive Sponsor for Local Minorities - Cultures and Origins

The changing world of work will continue to reshape Sodexo in every way. By leveraging a global approach towards culture and origins, it can only help bridge understanding faster and acknowledge every difference sooner. It is for us to then localize that impact across our business so that we really can deliver the best possible employee experience at work.
INTRODUCTION

Founded in 1966 by Pierre Bellon in Marseilles, France, Sodexo is a global leader in services that improve Quality of Life. For nearly 50 years, Sodexo has developed unique expertise delivered by 460,000 employees in 75 countries across the globe, touching 100 million customers a day.

Sodexo has succeeded in leveraging diversity and inclusion as a key business driver. As a result, the company has been acknowledged externally for its innovation, brand recognition and reputation. Today the Sodexo brand is synonymous with diversity leadership. Sodexo was one of the first non-U.S. based companies to embrace and implement diversity and inclusion globally. The diversity work fosters an inclusive culture, including but not limited to gender, disability, sexual orientation, generations and culture and origins.

Sodexo’s global Culture and Origins work has four strands: Local Minorities, Refugees, Faith and Religion, and First Nations. Sodexo’s Culture and Origins journey has been rich with lessons. Contexts differ – groups that are considered “local minorities” shift based on the history and politics of each country. Sodexo has a global strategy, but inherent in that strategy is the flexibility to adapt initiatives to the needs and drivers of each setting.

This study features aspects of work in five countries. The case studies do not reflect the breadth of work done in each place – rather they focus in on an element of the work for deeper examination. In Australia, the report looks at work with Aboriginal and Torres Islander peoples; in Brazil, the hiring of refugees; in Canada, collaboration with indigenous communities; in the United Kingdom, approaches to faith and religion; and in the United States, addressing race and ethnicity through employee network groups.

While the approaches are varied and have many differences – there are key lessons and themes that cut across all five case studies. These lessons have been summarized at the end of the report in the discussion section.
AUSTRALIA - STOPPING THE CYCLE OF DISADVANTAGE
ENGAGING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES

Sodexo Australia has made a commitment to use its corporate influence to improve the quality of life of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their communities. It seeks to enhance equality through direct employment, community engagement and supply chain solutions.

THE CONTEXT

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people represent 3.3% of Australia's population. They have faced a history of oppression and exclusion: forced removals, dislocation, truncated education and racism have erected significant barriers to employment. Between 1910 and 1970 an estimated 100,000 children of mixed descent were taken away from their families and raised as white. This was particularly enforced in certain areas of the country as part of an assimilation policy. Many of these children were put in institutions where there was rampant abuse.

Australia is still recovering from this history. The government has created incentives for organizations to hire and procure from Aboriginal and Torres Islander people and suppliers. Sodexo has joined a national reconciliation effort by implementing a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and has been nationally recognized as a leading business in reconciliation efforts.

SODEXO’S JOURNEY

Sodexo first introduced an organizational Reconciliation Action Plan in 2011. The following 8-year journey has seen the employment of over 500 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, resulting in $33.5 million in wages earned. Sodexo is committed to meaningful action and outcomes that stop the cycle of disadvantage and advance economic inclusion, health and equality.

> THE DRIVERS FOR CHANGE

Sodexo works in remote areas as a guest on Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples’ land. Many Sodexo sites on Traditional Lands have Land Use Agreements that ensure all stakeholders live up to a commitment to the community as part of their responsibility.

In addition to the business imperative, Sodexo’s values underpin the approach to reconciliation. “This is part of who we are,” says Sodexo’s Asia-Pacific Region Chair, Johnpaul.

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1 We respectfully use the inclusive term Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples wherever possible, recognizing that this does not fully reflect existing diversity. Sodexo acknowledges that many people prefer to be known by their language group or other cultural name. Any similar term used also to quotes or extracts should be considered interchangeable.

2 Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/employment.html
Dimech, “not just what we do.” The company’s global mission of “improving quality of life” and contributing to “economic, social and environmental development of the countries where we operate,” has been contextualized in Australia, and translated and prioritized in its approach.

> THE CHALLENGES

Sodexo faces challenges in hiring and retaining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. “We didn’t become citizens of our own country until 1967,” says Darryl Rae, Indigenous Recruitment Specialist. “A lot of people don’t have birth certificates, so therefore no passports or driving licenses. Then there were people who were taken away from their birth parents. That creates mistrust. People worry that if they register their baby, the government will come and take their baby away, so they don’t have the paperwork.”

“For some people,” continues Darryl, “English is their fourth, fifth or even seventh language. We have to tailor our language. There can be a challenge also for non-Indigenous Australians to truly understand the deep connection to the land and sea, the ancient cultures or the damage of the past 200 years.” That can lead to cultural misunderstandings and stereotypes that go beyond language barriers.

> SODEXO’S APPROACH

Sodexo Australia takes a multi-pronged approach – through recruitment, retention, and ensuring supplier diversity. Underlying every aspect is the importance placed on Relationship. Sodexo works with a diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – from Elders and communities undertaking traditional practices to urban-based professionals.

A national Indigenous team holds key strategic positions across the country, including two full time Indigenous recruitment specialists. These specialists build relationships with Elders, communities and individuals and help people navigate the hiring process. Once they are hired, Sodexo is committed to giving them a chance to grow and develop within the organization. These career pathways are encouraged through mentoring, training and succession planning. Often recruitment specialists keep an informal mentoring relationship with those they recruited. They stay available for conversations as people adjust to Sodexo’s working culture. A dedicated Indigenous Community Advisor formally follows-up with individuals to check on their health and welfare.

Workforce education initiatives are an important part of creating a culture that is welcoming to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. A full week (called NAIDOC week) is dedicated each year at Sodexo to the celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures – with speakers, dinners, interactions with Elders and communities, awards and more. Sodexo has partnered with local organizations to provide cultural competence training for employees. Occasionally, employees will
initiate informal approaches. Darryl Rae hosted a Yarning Circle for colleagues – a traditional gathering of people where stories and knowledge can be shared. “We are going to be talking about Aboriginals,” he explained the day before the Circle, “why we are a bit different, our beliefs and cultures, and why we do the things the way we do.”

Government requirements provide incentive to **procure from Indigenous business.** Sodexo’s in-house expertise and nurtured relationships with Elders and communities allow due diligence. “Are these businesses truly aboriginal businesses?” asks Sean Armistead, General Manager for Indigenous & Community Engagement as he describes the vetting process. “Who is running this business? What does equity look like? A lot of times you’ll get a flashy booklet, email, website. It all looks fantastic on the surface, but we need to make sure that the people and business are respected in the community.” Sodexo taps into informal networks, relies on their in-house historical understanding and carefully nurtured relationships to establish innovative partnerships with legitimate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.

**Sodexo prioritizes relationships over transactions.** This means that Sodexo supports, hosts or participates in important cultural events, lends its influential voice to support campaigns, and establishes joint ventures that ensure more than simply a financial benefit, but also a transfer of knowledge and skills. The Reconciliation Action Plan says: “We have learned to listen respectfully, make time and take the amount of time required to establish and nurture relationships that honor Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, try to build inclusive and meaningful relationships, invite representatives into our planning process.... We have also learned the importance of doing what we say.”
Our core values of Service Spirit, Team Spirit and Spirit of Progress continue to be strengthened by our commitment to reconciliation. Through these values, we continue to work closely together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, organizations and partners in finding our way forward. We seek to not simply participate, but to work alongside, act strategically and leverage our experience to make a real and measurable difference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

MARK CHALMERS
Chief Financial Officer and Country President, Sodexo Australia

In FY18 Sodexo spent $8.4 MILLION WITH INDIGENOUS BUSINESSES, with more than 50% of this being spent with businesses based in remote and regional areas.

Since its first RAP in 2011, Sodexo has hired 516 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees across the organization – representing OVER 6% OF EMPLOYEES as compared to 3.3% of the general population.

Sodexo is the 14th organization in Australia to be recognized by Reconciliation Australia as being a thought leader in reconciliation, expressed by being promoted to Elevate status with their Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). Sodexo believe they have an organizational responsibility to share their methods to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across the country benefit. As part of that they host “Sodexo Aboriginal Business Forums” each financial quarter to provide Indigenous businesses they have worked with the opportunity to meet other corporates or share their story.
BRAZIL - BRINGING THE WORLD TO SODEXO
SODEXO BRAZIL’S REFUGEE HIRING PROGRAM

When Sylvie Mutiene fled political violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), she had no way of knowing that soon, she would be in Brazil, earning a living as a bilingual receptionist for one of Sodexo’s clients. Sodexo Brazil’s refugee employment initiative has not only helped Sylvie and other refugees now working with Sodexo, but it has also benefited the community, improved quality of life for employees and heightened Sodexo’s reputation as a model employer.

THE CONTEXT

Sylvie is one of thousands of refugees who have been pouring into Brazil since 2014. Most of the refugees come from Syria, Cuba, Haiti and, more recently, Venezuela. In 2017 Brazil received 33,660 asylum applications from refugees fleeing persecution or violence around the world. Brazil prides itself on its warm welcome, and has a program to fast track applications to grant refugees the same labor rights as any other citizen. However, there is a backlog and the shrinking economy has made it increasingly difficult to find work.

SODEXO’S JOURNEY

In response to the world refugee crisis, and the rise in numbers of refugees seeking asylum in Brazil, Sodexo launched its initiative to hire refugees in 2015. It partnered with a UN project called Empowering Women, committing to hire at least 3 refugees a month. In parallel, Sodexo hired other refugees and currently Sodexo Brazil has 75 refugees among its employees.

THE DRIVERS FOR CHANGE

Sylvie was a lawyer in the DRC, but her Congolese credentials are not recognized in Brazil. Like many refugees, she is more highly educated than the average Brazilian; many refugees are teachers, lawyers, and doctors but their certifications do not translate to Brazil. As such, they must look for less specialized jobs. In addition to its clear commitment to diversity and its aim of contributing positively to communities, Sodexo also saw the clear benefits to bringing highly skilled people into the company. When Sodexo heard that a client was in need of a bilingual receptionist, it recruited Sylvie by tapping into existing partnerships with organizations providing resettlement assistance and language training to refugees.

Research shows that when companies make adjustments to integrate refugees into their workforce, refugees are less likely to leave than other employees. In the U.S. leisure and hospitality industry there was a 10% annual turnover rate for refugees compared to an industry average of 35%3. If refugees are happy working for a company, they in turn can

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promote the company as a prospective employer to their networks. Refugee assistance agencies also help with recruitment – pre-screening and training prospective employees. When refugees are happy with a company this can open up a channel of collaboration between agencies and business that benefits all parties.

Being known as a company that helps refugees strengthens a company’s brand, leading to improvement in sales and recruitment. 75-85% of millennials consider a company’s social and environmental contributions when deciding where to work, and they are more loyal both as workers and consumers to businesses who help them support those issues.

> THE CHALLENGES

Most refugees are arriving in a heightened emotional state: many have left behind family and they are worried for their safety; they are homesick; many are traumatized from war or political imprisonment; most do not speak Portuguese on arrival and need help navigating the Brazilian transport systems, banking, health care provision, employment law and more.

On the receiving end, many people do not know much if anything about refugees. There is a common misconception that refugees are fleeing their countries because they have committed crimes and are escaping justice. Language can be a barrier and it takes patience as new employees learn Portuguese.

> SODEXO’S APPROACH

Sodexo has published two guides. The first is an entirely practical employment guide for refugees beginning work within Sodexo. It provides information about legal documentation, pay slips, banking and more. This, along with Human Resources support in orientation to the transport and health systems and mentoring, eases refugees’ transition into the work place.

The second is a guide intended for employers. It busts commonly held myths about refugees and offers practical information on legal requirements, along with a step-by-step hiring guide.

A monthly newsletter and video-logs highlight the personal stories of refugees working at Sodexo. Diversity and inclusion week includes speakers who talk about the benefits of hiring refugees.

In addition to these tangible initiatives, Sodexo Brazil has found that what is most important is preparing hearts and minds before refugees begin work. Lilian Rauld, Head of Diversity and Inclusion, makes a point of meeting with colleagues who will be receiving refugees. She explains who is coming, what a refugee is, and reminds the team of Sodexo’s commitment to inclusion.

4 Ibid
She explains that some refugees have left their home countries very recently, and may be arriving in some emotional stress. They have a different culture and will take some time adjusting to working in Brazil. Likewise, she meets with refugees to ensure they know what to expect.

**THE IMPACT**

Lilian observes a heightened morale in the teams that welcome refugees. Many refugees are appreciative of the work opportunity and the care Sodexo takes in helping them adjust. Their resulting high levels of engagement seem to be infectious: other employees feel more engaged and committed, knowing they are working in a company that takes corporate responsibility seriously.

Having highly skilled workers has led to innovation and capacity building within Sodexo. For example, Sylvie – who speaks English and French fluently – has started teaching English to other receptionist colleagues.

As word spreads of the successful track record in hard work and innovation, Lilian and her team receive requests for refugees to fill certain positions. Sodexo has become a model employer with a heightened reputation – invited to speak to other companies, as well as national and international government bodies about the challenges and benefits of hiring refugees.

Lastly, its reputation attracts more talent. “We are viewed as a company that cares about people,” says Lilian. “So people want to work for and with us.”
This preparation work is extremely fundamental to success,” says Lilian. “If you don’t do that, you can face prejudices or discomfort because no one has explained. This care with people is fundamental.

| LILIAN RAULD, HEAD OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Diversity is in the DNA of Sodexo. We believe that working with refugees provides great benefits to the company. Inclusion contributes to the engagement of our teams, provides greater innovation for the business due to cultural differences, and consequently yields better results. This is an excellent opportunity for both the refugees and the company, because the employees have rich cultural exchanges with people from different nations, and the refugees have a hope to start a new life in a new country.

| ANDREIA DUTRA
Region Chair, Sodexo Brazil

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Canada - Investing in Sustainable Development
Sodexo Canada’s Partnerships with Indigenous Communities

Sodexo’s Energy and Resources sector works with 23 Indigenous communities across Canada. These relationships have evolved into true partnerships that are mutually beneficial, boosting education, health and overall wellness in the communities Sodexo serves.

| THE CONTEXT |
Indigenous people make up 4.9% of Canada’s population. The Indian Act of 1876 aimed to “civilize” Indigenous people through a set of coercive and controlling policies. Under this Act, 150,000 Indigenous children were removed from their families and sent to residential schools. The intent was to isolate them from their cultures and assimilate them into the dominant culture. Most schools were closed in the 1970s, but some remained until the late 1990s. Research has exposed widespread sexual, physical and emotional abuse in these schools. This, along with exploitative economic practices, has left a legacy of poverty and inter-generational trauma. Many communities have limited infrastructure, poorer health facilities, lack of access to education and few employment opportunities. As a result, Indigenous communities tend to have lower education and employment rates, and higher rates of incarceration, alcoholism, and suicide than is found in Canada’s general population.

| SODEXO’S JOURNEY |
In 2015 Canada committed to its Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s 94 Calls to Action. #92 addresses economic reconciliation, calling on Canada’s corporate sector to build authentic partnerships with Indigenous communities, educate their employees on the history, and ensure that any business venture results in lasting economic development.

| THE DRIVERS FOR CHANGE |
Sodexo was perfectly poised to respond to this call on corporate Canada. 20 years earlier, Sodexo had signed its first modern Indigenous partnership agreement and has been developing experience, relationships, and joint ventures ever since.

“We can’t do business in the Energy and Resources sector without partnering with Indigenous communities,” says Katherine Power, Vice President of Corporate Affairs. Construction sites tend to be in treaty land or in areas...
The indigenous network group really took off like wild fire. When these employees went home and started talking, people from our sister sites wanted to start their own chapter. It started to spread and it was hourly people doing it. NAAC was the smallest network group, but once our indigenous employees really took notice of it and made it their own, it gave it life.

— MICHALE CHIDANE, DISTRICT MANAGER AND NATIONAL CHAIR, NAAC
Impacting Indigenous communities. Sodexo competes with other companies for contracts with Indigenous communities, so there is a strong incentive to develop a mutually beneficial approach. This, combined with Sodexo’s business imperative to improve quality of life, drives Sodexo Canada to ensure that any collaboration advances the wellbeing of the communities it serves. That, in turn, allows it to leverage Indigenous talent to help deliver services.

> THE CHALLENGES

After years of oppression and exploitation, trust is in short supply and building relationships takes time and patience. Hiring from the local community is an imperative, but it also carries with it significant obstacles. Limited access to education means people may not have the skills they need. For many, this will be their first experience of employment. Differing expectations around time keeping and absenteeism can cause conflict. Non-Indigenous employees may not be familiar with the history or cultures of the communities where they are working. The enormous diversity among Indigenous Canadians and the history between groups can also at times be a source of tension. Most construction sites are remote, requiring employees to live and work together for intense 21-day periods. This can exacerbate existing dynamics, but the residential nature of the work environment also offers opportunities for innovative solutions.

> SODEXO’S APPROACH

Sodexo often begins working in a community years before a contract is signed. The community “has to be confident in Sodexo”, says Réjean Gosselin, Director of Indigenous Relations for Eastern Canada. “It’s a partnership. You cannot cheat. You have to put things on the table and you have to listen to their needs, their wants, their priorities and focus on them.” Sodexo shares its profits with communities, and enters into joint ventures or partnership agreements – supporting the development of new Indigenous business such as delivery services, cafés, laundromats and more.

Even before a contract is finalized, Sodexo pro-actively arranges pre-employment training so that the project can begin with local hires. On the job training further develops the talent pool and offers opportunities beyond the life of a particular project. Recognizing that when people travel away from their support networks and jobs to study, there is a high failure rate, Sodexo lobbied Apprenticeship Manitoba and University College of the North to try a new model of on-site training for the nationally recognized Red Seal Chef Certification. With this new approach, students were still surrounded by friends, they were still working, and there was more opportunity for follow-up. They spent 50% of their time working their shift, and the other 50% in class. 90% completed the program. The success rate was so high that the approach is being considered for other trades. When a skill set does not exist within a community, companies are forced to hire from outside. “In the future”, says District Manager Michael Chidane, “we will be able to hire Indigenous cooks first from within the community that we are operating with. We feel very proud to be elevating training and development beyond the entry level.”

Employees at all levels, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, receive cultural awareness training that teaches history and uses personal stories to draw people together and enhance understanding. ”It was powerful, embarrassing, inspiring and emotional all at once“, says Sandra Jackson, Director of Distribution, after a cultural awareness workshop. “Holly [the trainer] shared her soul with us through the stories and experiences. I am proud of being a Canadian and knowing we are moving in the right direction of change.”

Flexibility is also key. Managers need to understand, for example, that hunting season is essential: “The hunting period and fishing period is important,” says Jonathan Kruger, Director of Indigenous Relations for Western Canada. “You have to give them a break for that period otherwise they will quit, and we want to keep our good employees happy.”
With this new approach, culinary students were still surrounded by friends, they were still working, and there was more opportunity for follow-up. They spent 50% of their time working their shift, and the other 50% in class. 90% completed the program. The success rate was so high that the approach is being considered for other trades.
The Native American and Aboriginal Council (NAAC) is an Indigenous networking group for Sodexo employees and unlike most other Sodexo resource groups, it includes hourly as well as salaried employees. After they heard about NAAC at a town hall meeting, Michael Chidane’s hourly employees approached him. “They said, hey, we want to start our own group,” Chidane recalls. “So the next question was – what do you want to get out of this? Eight hourly employees plus a few managers got together for a few months to define what they wanted.” They decided to focus the group on connecting them to their own culture and communities. These were connections that had been broken over time due to the residential school history.

Soon, they mobilized 50 active members at this one project site. Management supported the network, allowing some work time for organizing events, and offering mentorship in establishing a viable structure. “It really took off like wildfire,” says Chidane. “When these employees went home and started talking, people from our sister sites wanted to start their own chapter. It started to spread and it was hourly people doing it. NAAC was the smallest network group, but once our indigenous employees really took notice of it and made it their own, it gave it life.”

One of the most successful initiatives of NAAC is also its most simple. In the evenings on site, they host Sharing Circles once a week. Drawing from a cultural practice, people can only talk when an elder passes the talking stick to them. This helps people listen. At first it was just for members to share, but it quickly spread to others who welcomed the space to tell their stories. “You hear their personal stories, and what people are going through” says Chidane. “Now you start to connect and start to understand. To see beyond the uniform. Attendance and performance issues began to be more manageable. Instead of talking from the level of authority – you’re an outsider already, and they are coming from a history of being pushed around – this helped us break that wall down, and have that trust and build that relationship. So our performance management changed. If there is a personal problem amongst the team that is impacting the operation or if there is an ongoing challenge with an individual, we’ll ask someone from the community to facilitate a sharing circle. Listen to what’s really going on, what their real struggles are.”

Sodexo is not only providing training for Indigenous employees; Indigenous cultural values are impacting and enriching Sodexo’s corporate culture as well.
An NAAC member suggested that the network join the national Orange Shirt Day campaign to promote awareness of the residential school system. Rather than simply wear the shirts on the designated day, NAAC initiated a deeper sharing process. Younger employees talked about the impact on their parents and families, older employees shared their own experiences at the schools. Now the initiative of an hourly employee has been taken on board: Sodexo D&I leadership has decided to promote this campaign every year at all Sodexo sites in Canada.

> THE IMPACT

Sodexo was the first company to be Gold Certified by the Progressive Aboriginal Relations program of the Canadian Council of Aboriginal Business. This reputation brings in more business. Indigenous partners look out for opportunities, make introductions, and invite Chiefs of other communities to come meet with Sodexo. Sodexo corporate culture is positively influenced, as is evidenced by strengthened relationships in the workplace and innovative approaches to management. New Indigenous business boosts economic health of communities and increases opportunities for both Sodexo and their partners. The local workforce has transferable skills that will last beyond the life of any given project.

“...”

Our overarching purpose is to improve the communities we serve. For us at Sodexo, corporate responsibility is not merely a nice-to-do; it is the anchor of our business and our market differentiator.

SUZANNE BERGERON
President, Sodexo Canada
UNITED KINGDOM - FAITH BEHIND BARS
SODEXO UK’S FAITH INITIATIVE IN HM PRISON BRONZEFIELD

The women at HM Prison Bronzefield came from courts across the South of England. They are accommodated in four houseblocks. The women are unlocked at 8 am for breakfast and at 9 am they go to their lessons or work. They might work as chaplaincy orderlies or in catering, the hair and beauty salon, the gym, cleaning, and more. They break at 12 for two hours, and then return to work until 4:30. At 4:30 they return to their houseblocks for association and dinner before lock up at 6:45. When they can, many women visit the Multi Faith Centre – an area designated for worship and religious celebrations.

THE CONTEXT

Sodexo-run Bronzefield Prison houses over 500 women from 52 different nationalities. Half are Christian. 10% are Muslim, a third are not religious, a few are Agnostic. The other religions represented include Buddhism, Judaism, Hinduism, Paganism, Spiritualism and Sikhism.

The United Kingdom is officially a Christian country, but those who are religious in the UK can now be considered a “local minority.” A British Social Attitudes Survey published in September 2017 showed that just over half of the population had no religion. Between 1983 and 2015, the proportion of Britons who identify as Christian fell, while members of non-Christian religions – principally Muslims and Hindus – quadrupled. Over a million of those identifying as Christians were born in other countries and immigrated to the UK. In addition to the correlation between faith and ethnicity, there is also a connection with age: older Britons are more likely to be religious than younger.

SODEXO’S JOURNEY

Faith is important to many of Sodexo’s employees, clients and consumers. Sodexo encourages employees to share openly with one another about their faith so that colleagues are aware of festivals and religious requirements. They work with clients to ensure that faith is considered when preparing meals and offering other services.

> THE DRIVERS FOR CHANGE

“People sometimes brush religion under the carpet,” says Megan Horsburgh, Head of Diversity and Inclusion, “but because of our industry, it’s an important topic.” Religious considerations are essential when providing food service. If a range of culturally sensitive menu selections is not provided, this excludes segments of the customer base. In a prison environment where residents have no other options, providing not only appropriate food but also worship opportunities becomes imperative.
SODEXO JUSTICE SERVICES POLICY

- We will only work with democratically elected governments where rehabilitation is a core objective;
- We will **not** provide prison services in countries with capital punishment;
- We will **not** own any prison;
- We will **not** provide services requiring our employees to carry firearms;
- We have **not** and will not lobby for tougher sentencing laws;
- We have never sought to persuade governments to outsource their prison services and have never knowingly supported any organization with such an agenda.
> THE CHALLENGES

In a women's prison environment, there are particular challenges to practicing one's faith. Muslim women are allowed to wear a hijab – a scarf covering their heads – but for security reasons, they are not permitted to cover their faces with burqas or niqabs. Matches and lighters are prohibited, so special arrangements must be made for the lighting of candles and incense. This becomes particularly important during Hanukkah, for example, where the lighting of candles is central to observing the holiday. In addition to this, women live in close quarters – often with people whose faiths they may not understand. For some it may be the first time they have encountered a particular religion. There is the potential for prejudice, discrimination and conflict along religious and ethnic lines.

> SODEXO'S APPROACH

Every staff member goes through a full day of diversity and inclusion training before beginning work at Bronzefield. Every resident receives similar training soon after arriving. This sets the groundwork for a climate of inclusion and mutual respect.

The chaplains at Bronzefield aim to make the Faith space a safe and quiet place where all are welcome. Chaplains are faith leaders employed by Sodexo to support the prison residents. Bibles, Qurans, prayer mats, incense and candles are available. Some women come to pray or meditate quietly. There are religious services for different faiths. Many residents participate in religious festivals. There are Eid, Diwali, Hanukkah, Christmas and other celebrations that are open to all. In practice, women will regularly participate in each other’s festivals, and the process of doing that educates and builds community.

Staff within the faith and diversity departments work closely together. They are knowledgeable about each other’s religions and model mutual respect.
More broadly, Sodexo UK has developed a series of Faith Fact Sheets that can inform employees about practices, dietary requirements and beliefs. Messaging in company-wide newsletters remind managers when festivals are coming up. Some managers incorporate this into team meetings, inviting people to share with colleagues and opening up time for dialogue and conversation about faith. A campaign entitled “My Culture and Me” featured videos of Sodexo employees sharing about their cultural identities, including faith.

> THE IMPACT

Inclusive festival celebrations, whether within Bronzefield or more broadly in Sodexo, *build community and a culture of open sharing.*

Faith fact sheets have led to clients, service users and staff feeling recognized and valued. The My Culture and Me campaign sent a message that “you don’t have to change [your culture] to succeed,” says Amolak Dhariwal, former Co-Chair of Sodexo UK’s Cultures and Origins network.

This in turn can foster increased staff engagement and customer loyalty.

**Within Bronzefield, the model of a respectful, inclusive working staff team has a trickle down effect.** “It’s a mirror image,” says Chaplain Sharon McPhee. “How we treat each other is mirrored in the women who come here [to the Multi Faith Centre], and then that is mirrored back on the house floors.”
At Sodexo, we are committed to promoting healthy working relationships across differences, and our UK justice work is no exception. We prioritize diversity and inclusion training for all staff and residents because we know that when we respect and understand one another we can improve our own quality of life and that of those around us.

JANINE MCDOWELL
CEO, Justice Services
Sodexo UK & Ireland
 Employee network groups have been at the heart of Sodexo USA’s diversity initiatives since 2002. These affinity groups bring the culture of inclusion to life, fostering connections across the company, adding value to clients, and contributing to the communities Sodexo serves.

| THE CONTEXT |

The United States is a racially and ethnically diverse country. White Americans make up 61.3% of the population. African Americans are the largest racial minority, comprising 12.7% of the population, while Hispanic and Latino Americans are the largest ethnic minority at 17.8%. Asian Americans are 6% of the population.

A long history beginning in the colonial era has systematically discriminated against racial and ethnic minorities, resulting in entrenched disadvantages in employment and education.

In 2002, Sodexo leadership did not reflect the nation’s diversity. They were similar in age, experiences, styles and philosophies. They tended to develop other white men similar to themselves. With few role models for people of color, top diverse talent often left the organization. It became increasingly clear that to remain competitive, Sodexo had to change.

| SODEXO’S JOURNEY |

Sodexo USA began to directly address barriers to the recruitment, development, retention and promotion of people of color – an untapped talent pool within the food service industry. In 2002, the Senior Vice President of Human Resources invited African American employees to gather in Maryland to hear about Sodexo’s diversity goals and how they might contribute. Attendees decided to form an employee-driven network group. This group would be inclusive of any employee – regardless of their identity – who wanted to participate. They named the group the African American Leadership Forum (AALF) and a year later AALF was formally launched as Sodexo’s first Employee Network Group. As AALF began to grow, new groups were formed. Currently, AALF has 729 members, the Pan-Asian Network Group (PANG) has 365 members and Sodexo Organization of Latinos (SOL) has 374 members.
Today Sodexo has nine network groups. The first five were organized around race, gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. Later groups were developed for disability, military and generations. This full range of EBRGs ensured that all identity groups, including white men, felt a sense of engagement with diversity and inclusion efforts.

Over time, it became clear that these groups were not only developing and advancing employees but were also contributing to the business. They were renamed Employee Business Resource Groups (EBRGs). They are intended to support employees who have been historically under-represented and excluded from the mainstream, or have been

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>GROUP THEY SERVE</th>
<th>FOUNDED IN</th>
<th>MEMBERSHIP</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFRICAN AMERICAN LEADERSHIP FORUM (AALF)</td>
<td>AFRICAN AMERICAN</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOTOGETHER USA (FORMALLY WING - WOMEN'S NETWORK GROUP)</td>
<td>GENDER</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1279</td>
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<tr>
<td>PAN-ASIAN NETWORK GROUP (PANG)</td>
<td>ASIAN</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SODEXO ORGANIZATION OF LATINOS (SOL)</td>
<td>LATINO</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEOPLE RESPECTING INDIVIDUALITY, DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY (PRIDE)</td>
<td>LGBT</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SODEXO ORGANIZATION FOR DISABILITIES RESOURCES (SOAR)</td>
<td>PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERGENERATIONAL NETWORK GROUP (I-GEN)</td>
<td>GENERATIONS</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HONORING OUR NATION’S FINEST WITH OPPORTUNITY AND RESPECT (HONOR)</td>
<td>MILITARY</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATIVE AMERICAN ABORIGINAL COUNCIL (NAAC)</td>
<td>NATIVE AMERICAN AND ABORIGINAL PEOPLE</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>88</td>
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</tbody>
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marginalized or targeted for discrimination in general society. They are internal, non-profit employee groups that organize activities to promote networking, mentoring, and professional development among employees. In Sodexo USA, they are funded primarily through a $25 membership fee, which affords them a degree of autonomy that similar network groups elsewhere may not have, although the Office of Diversity supplements some activities. They are inclusive of any exempt employee who wants to join and they are national in scope, with regional chapters to cover the geographically dispersed footprint.

> THE CHALLENGES

Sodexo’s size and the decentralized nature of the company made it difficult to establish a foundation for cultural transformation. Most Sodexo employees were physically located at client sites. This often led to employees identifying more with the client’s brand than with Sodexo’s. As a result, the Sodexo sense of connection was harder to maintain. Being a large company, Sodexo was a microcosm of the larger society. There were early adopters who embraced Sodexo’s diversity initiatives, but there were also those who resisted the idea of affinity groups, believing they would balkanize the organization. Even for those who were supportive of the idea, participation could be hindered by workload and competing responsibilities.

> THE DRIVERS FOR CHANGE

The formation of the network groups came at a time when Sodexo was redoubling its diversity and inclusion efforts. Michel Landel, then Sodexo’s North America President and CEO, saw diversity as an opportunity to differentiate Sodexo in the marketplace and establish a culture of inclusion in the workplace. He wanted Sodexo to become “the reference and benchmark in diversity and inclusion” not only in the industry, but in corporate America. He hired Dr. Rohini Anand as Vice President of Diversity, reporting directly to him. Leadership viewed the network groups as not only benefiting its members, but also having the potential to contribute to the betterment of the organization overall. They could enhance recruitment, retention, and engagement as well as the reputation in the community, thereby leading to expanded capacity and new business opportunities.

Employees also felt the need for these networks. “I will walk into a room,” says Linda Lan, Director, PMO, NORAM Strategic Sales and National Chair of PANG, “and will know within ten seconds how many Asians are in the room. My level of comfort will be much higher if there are more Asians. If you’re comfortable and familiar, you are more confident. And if you’re more confident then your true self will come out. These ethnic groups need a safe space for
Sodexo’s focus on gender balance and diversity strongly influenced my decision to join Sodexo in 2017. I am so glad for the decision I made and proud to work for an organization that confronts tough issues including race. Our Employee Business Resource Groups (EBRG) are reinforcing Sodexo’s core values while challenging the status quo; something that is absolutely necessary if we are to cultivate workplaces that nurture talent and enable full contributions to the business.

CHARLOTTE JENSEN
CEO, Airline Lounges, Sports & Leisure
SOL Executive Sponsor

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Over the years I have seen our Employee Business Resource Groups (EBRGs) have a tremendous impact on the inclusive culture of Sodexo. They contribute directly to our diversity priorities and help individuals network and grow in their careers. As importantly, EBRGs directly enhance our business through building employee capacity and enhancing Sodexo’s reputation in the communities where we work. They enhance value for our clients, who—seeing these thriving employee networks—turn to us for guidance. I couldn’t imagine Sodexo without our EBRGs!

EBRGs have a clear governance structure both nationally and at a chapter level, with key leadership roles that are assigned through a membership election drive (chair, co-chair, treasurer, secretary, membership, programs). Every year, each EBRG develops a business plan that explicitly links to Sodexo’s Business Strategy and the Office of Diversity strategy, reinforcing the business case for EBRGs.

A cross-EBRG governance structure encourages them to collaborate across groups to amplify impact. In addition to joint events, EBRG leadership from all 9 EBRGs hold regular calls to share best practices. A dedicated resource within the Diversity and Inclusion Team supports the EBRGs. Executive sponsors from the Executive Team are a sounding board and advocate, helping groups overcome obstacles. They are chosen based on their identity, their passion for an area, or their need for growth. Legal and HR sponsors anchor EBRGs in their focus.

Commitment surveys actively measure EBRG impact, building in accountability to both their membership and organizational leadership. Membership surveys help EBRGs ensure that their programming remains relevant.

For example, some members of PANG found that some of the communication styles they were taught at home risked translating into lack of visibility in the workplace. Some PANG members felt this cultural difference between the U.S. dominant mainstream culture and some Asian cultural values could impede their ability to move up within the company. They asked for leadership and public speaking training and ultimately established a

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**EBRGs & Sodexo’s A Better Tomorrow Strategy**

**Sodexo as Employer: Nurture Talent**
- Mentoring
- Training
- Networking
- Recruiting

**Sodexo as Corporate Citizen: Anchor Corporate Social Responsibility**
- Scholarships
- Community engagement
- Fundraising
- Volunteer Mentoring

**Sodexo as Service Provider: Client & Consumer Centricity**
- Collaborative events
- Mentoring
- Workshops and Training

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**PANG MISSION**
The mission of the Pan Asian Network Group (PANG) is to leverage multi-generational differences and commonalities for personal and professional growth in order to attract and retain talent that enhances Sodexo’s strength of diversity and inclusion in the marketplace.
Relations, “20-35 parents attended the first time. Then each time another dozen came and before you know it, we are at 150 to 200 in some cities. They bring their children. We usually have a separate room for the children, but we’ve found middle and high schoolers want to join in on the workshop and they too become very engaged.” The workshops have been so successful they are now being adapted for African American and Asian communities in different parts of the country – with new culturally relevant recipes and cookbooks. In addition to addressing wellness in the community and especially diabetes through healthy cooking guidance, participants also get to experience the range of opportunities available at Sodexo. Workshops are often held at client universities, so the university gives the youth a tour. This amplifies the impact, helping clients with community outreach, and exposing the community to avenues for education and employment.

EBRGs also add value for clients. The 2019 African American Leadership Forum (AALF) CEO Panel, *A Bold Conversation About Race*, provided a platform where companies could openly discuss this critical topic. Held at the Dallas Museum of Modern Art, the experience included celebrity and CEO discussions on diversity and inclusion from varying perspectives. Approximately 60 CEOs, senior executives, clients and prospects from industries serviced by Sodexo and Inspirus attended the event.

Toastmasters chapter within Sodexo. All the groups provide peer-to-peer mentorship, webinar series and popular networking events to develop their members.

PANG, SOL and AALF all contribute to improving the Quality of Life in the communities in which they work. AALF raises scholarships to help young African American students go through school, or develop business and facilities management skills through internships. It has also raised tens of thousands of dollars for the American Diabetes Association through sponsored walks, runs and cycle rides. PANG provides volunteers to mentor and support young recipients of Asian Pacific Island American Scholarships.

SOL and the Office of Diversity partner with the Mexican Legal Defense Fund to offer 3-hour Holistic Nutritional Wellness workshops for parents around the country. A chef shows parents how to read labels on the products they bring home, what the quantity of ingredients mean, and how that impacts health. Participants sample healthy meals chefs have prepared and leave with cookbooks in Spanish or English – packed with culturally appropriate recipes and tips so they can begin making changes at home. At some sites they are provided bags of fresh produce donated by vendor partners. The response has been overwhelming: “When the partnership began in 2009,” says Gloria Puentes, Director, Diversity Community
Members of EBRGs say that the exposure granted by the groups is highly beneficial. “AALF exposed me to so many other people and other parts of the business,” says AALF National Chair Sam Hill. “Through the training and teachings, the Diversity and Inclusion journey helped me connect and build relationships on my own teams, and also impacted how I interact externally.”

EBRGs support employees’ career progression. Sam began with Sodexo as a part-time housekeeper, eventually became a District Manager and now is a Senior Consultant for Learning and Development. He credits AALF in part for this progression. “I was excited by the AALF movement and what it represented. I saw it as a growth opportunity for me.”

Daniel Garcia, National Chair of SOL, remembers a similar story – he invited a retail manager he worked with to a joint networking event he hosted with AALF. “I introduced her to some Vice Presidents and District Managers from AALF. I sold her background. Because of that introduction, she was invited to apply for a General Manager role. She was appointed.”

Members’ capacity and confidence are enhanced by EBRG trainings. Jolene Love Hubbard, General Manager, Government Services says, “I will FOREVER remember the Executive Presence presentation at the AALF Conference in 2017. It definitely paid off as I was awarded General Manager of the Year 2018 for Government Services, and I never would have made it without you making me think of how I presented my talents when it was time to shine!”

Other members talk about the feeling of belonging and comfort that EBRGs offer – which in turn leads to retention of diverse talent. Sodexo has nurtured a reputation as a model employer, and this helps with recruitment also. People will want to work for Sodexo, says Gloria Puentes. “We are showing that we are a company that cares not only about our employees but about our communities.” As a result of these efforts, along with other diversity initiatives, representation of people of color in overall management has increased by 21% since 2013. Among executive senior leadership, it has increased by 87%.

Every other year an EBRG commitment survey measures the impact of EBRG participation on retention, engagement and productivity, demonstrating the value of the EBRGs. The impact of all the EBRGs, says Daniel Garcia, “has been that of living the values that the company has set forth for all of us. It’s hard to measure impact. We’ve touched people, we’ve networked. At the end of the day when you factor in the activities that we all do, they all keep this culture of inclusion alive. If these things didn’t exist, it would be just talk.”

The fact that EBRGs are an anchor in the organization and provide a sense of community is especially critical for new employees who find a safe space with those with similar backgrounds and experiences. That EBRGs have also helped to amplify business impact has made it a win-win for all.
As a global organization, it’s imperative that we reflect the diversity of the many places where we do business. It is also important that our workplaces do the same, if we wish to remain competitive. At Sodexo, our Employee Business Resource Groups (EBRG) lead the way in not only creating an inclusive and engaging environment for our employees, but also in ensuring that diversity and inclusion is fully integrated into the many aspects of our business.

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### DISCUSSION: KEY LESSONS LEARNED

In spite of the variety of approaches in these case studies, and differences in the meaning of “local minorities” in each distinct social and political context, there are common key lessons that cut across the globe.

### WHAT DRIVES CHANGE?

A company’s motivation for their diversity and inclusion efforts is fundamental. The nature of the motivation shapes the size and structure and degree of company strategy. In these case studies, we see a confluence of drivers for diversity and inclusion of local minorities. Some contexts may have just one or two of these drivers, others have all four. These drivers include:

- Leadership Commitment and Engagement
- Employee Initiative and Engagement
- Connection to Sodexo’s Core Business and Branding Strategy
- Accountability and Measurement

When one or two drivers are at play, we see effective but often distinct, discrete programs. When three or more of these drivers converge, we are more likely to see embedded, lasting change.

### LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

Across the globe, Sodexo’s leadership is strongly committed to diversity and inclusion. These values are inherent in the vision of the organization. A global strategy provides a blueprint for Sodexo to develop initiatives that suit each context. One of the most important roles of leadership is to develop strategies for change and invest the resources necessary to ensure their success and accountability. But lessons from the case studies also emerged for leaders in the “softer” areas of culture change.

#### Key Lessons in Leadership

- **Leadership commitment should be visible.** Statements of support for diversity initiatives, public recognition of diversity champions, and participation in events all make a difference and encourage employee engagement.

- **Leadership commitment must be authentic.** Employees can tell when a commitment comes from conviction. Authenticity means meaning what we say and doing what we promise. This authenticity helps to build the trust necessary for creating an inclusive culture.

- **Leaders have the power to enable employee initiative.** Where leaders were supportive of employees’ ideas, and looked for ways to support them structurally or financially, employees stayed engaged and were able to transform the company culture.

- **Leaders are found at all levels of the organization – from district managers, to unit leaders, to shift managers.** Start where you are.

- **Modeling behavior can be as important as policies.** Leaders who model inclusive work styles and challenge intolerance can empower others to do the same.

- Modeling behavior internally will often naturally result in a company being viewed as a **model employer** externally.
“It has to start with the leader. It doesn’t have to be the CEO. It’s the leader of that unit. YOU set the tone. You can’t force this onto people, but you can set the tone in your work areas. If you as a leader start living those values yourself, and calling out people blocking it, people start to follow. Then you will see that core start to grow. They will start to feel empowered.”

- MICHAEL CHIDANE, District Manager Sodexo Canada

EMPLOYEE INITIATIVE AND ENGAGEMENT

Lasting culture change results from a simultaneous top-down, bottom-up and middle-out approach. Even with committed leadership, change cannot happen without staff buy-in. It is not enough for policies to be in place at the top – employees must feel empowered to act. Bottom-up and middle-out initiatives must accompany any top-down approach for change to become embedded and lasting.

Key Lessons in Employee Initiative

- Involve employees with a heart for the work. The most effective initiatives involved staff with a passion for inclusion and diversity.
- Involve employees from all sectors of the company. The more representative of the organization a network group is, for example, the more far-reaching and effective it can be.
- Listen. The initiatives that resulted in the most broad-based change often began with assessments or surveys.
- Go where the energy is. Diversity and inclusion is a journey, and successful initiatives tapped into an expressed need – making sure people were ready.
- Leaders can help by creating an enabling environment. If employees have ideas that are blocked they can soon lose energy and trust in leadership support.
CONNECTION TO SODEXO’S CORE BUSINESS AND BRANDING STRATEGY

When inclusion of local minorities is central to a company’s business, this becomes a powerful and sustainable driver. Whether it is to attract and retain the best talent, to be well positioned to negotiate contracts with communities who live on resource rich land, to inform innovative solutions for clients and customers, or to develop vibrant partnerships with diverse suppliers, when a company recognizes its business interests it becomes imperative to invest in diversity staff and structure. Government incentives – from requirements for supplier diversity, non-discrimination laws, hiring targets, and refugee aid programs can fortify a business imperative, and lead to fruitful public-private partnerships.

Key Lessons in Connecting to Business and Branding Strategy

- Articulating a business case leverages buy-in from a broad cross-section of a company.
- Buy-in results in financial investment in recruitment, accountability mechanisms and workforce education.
- When diversity and inclusion becomes an integral part of a company’s brand it is distinguished from its competitors, attracting clients and diverse talent.
- A reputation as a model employer attracts more top talent for whom diversity is a priority, thereby compounding the culture of inclusion.
- A company with a solid reputation is looked to as a thought leader in its sector, or more broadly in the corporate world. This attracts clients and innovative business collaborations.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND MEASUREMENT

Benchmarking and collecting metrics on the impact of diversity initiatives is imperative to success. A culture of inclusion can be difficult to measure, but initiatives that consider employment engagement survey results, recruitment, promotion and retention numbers and regular monitoring of business plans ensure that any initiatives become integrated into the company strategy and culture.

Key Lessons in Accountability and Measurement

- Hard evidence of success encourages further company investment and boosts morale of diversity champions.
- Built-in evaluation systems encourage accountability so that plans and promises are delivered on time and to an excellent standard.
- Feedback from surveys and metrics enables evidence-based improvement of initiatives that are not delivering.
- Regular measurement allows for course correction to ensure that the efforts are meeting the business needs of the company.
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