C-DICE recommendations for creating a diverse, accessible, and inclusive conference.

In 2023, C-DICE hosted the National Postdoc Conference. The following is our tips for designing a conference that is both accessible and inclusive, making a richer conference experience for everyone.

Planning.

1	Embedding EDI from the outset.	Embedding EDI at each stage of the conference process can enable you to host an equitable, diverse, and inclusive conference. Objectives, definition of concept or themes, format of programme, budget, venue, speakers, and team roles are all areas where EDI should be embedded in conference planning.	
2	Devising a representative programme.	Expertise is essential but look beyond the "usual suspects" for your core programme of speakers and activities for a diverse range of speakers cutting across genders, race, and other EDI characteristics. Ensure reserve presenter list is also diverse.	
3	Review programme.	Reviewing the draft programme with a diverse set of people can help identify blind spots related to EDI.	
3	Initiating a Steering Committee with diverse postdoc representation.	Ensuring the conference Steering Committee has diverse postdoc representation across regions and disciplines within the institutions, and demographics provides a range of lived experiences that can be drawn upon to create an inclusive, welcoming conference.	
4	Invite EDI experts to be on the Steering Committee.	Does your organisation have an EDI expert? Inviting EDI experts on the Steering Committee can help to identify blind spots and to provide expertise to overcome any issues identified.	
5	Anonymise where possible.	Present papers and award nominations to your review panels in an anonymised format to avoid bias.	
6	Make review/judging panels diverse.	This will help to provide a well-rounded evaluation process.	
7	Consider the venue.	Venue restrictions can limit how inclusive you can make your conference. Things we look for in venues include: • Hearing loops in rooms. • Wheelchair accessibility. • Ability to provide quiet space, breastfeeding room, prayer room etc. • Availability of gender neutral and accessible facilities.	

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		• Sanitary products are (or can be) provided free of charge.	

Preparation.

1	Support your presenters.	Provide your presenters with optional training and/or support on making presentations accessible. Support C-DICE provided included: • One-to-one meeting with presenters, where we highlighted EDI aspects to note while presenting. • Provided EDI guidelines to presenters in written format. • Produced a video of hints and tips for presenters. • Invited postdocs who applied to present workshops to a "How to design a workshop" training session that included how to embed EDI into your workshop.	
2	Support your conference delivery team.	Delivering a national conference is a team task, thus it is important to ensure that all team members have the tools to make it as inclusive and welcoming as possible. Support C-DICE provided to our delivery team included supplying: • The names of speakers, and where possible guest, in phonetic format to avoid mispronunciations. • A detailed list of EDI interventions including location of quiet rooms and prayer rooms, how interactive each session was, which sessions included a sign language interpreter, etc. • An identified point of contact for EDI queries.	

3	Support your delegates.	It is important to make your delegates feel welcomed and supported in the run up to the conference as well as during the conference itself. C-DICE provided the following to help us achieve this goal:
		• Pre-conference information webinar and meet & greet sessions.
		• Option for delegates to request alternative format of presentations.
		• Mechanism for delegates to provide us with information on dietary and accessibility requirements.
		• Published a detailed programme that highlighting accessibility of sessions including information on availability of
		    ○ British Sign Language translator.
		    ○ Hearing loops.
		    ○ Wheelchair access.
		    ○ How interactive each session is.
		• Provide travel grants and careers grants so financial considerations were not a barrier to participation.	

4	Pro-actively identify and implement	Consider reasonable adjustments that delegates may require and pro-actively implement them. This is especially important if implementation has budgetary implications and/or has a long lead time. An example from	

	support for delegates.	NPDC23 is providing a British Sign Language translator in the plenary room, this has a lead time of 6 months and requires budgeting for.	
5	Re-actively identify and implement additional support for delegates.	Collecting accessibility information at registration can help identify additional reasonable adjustments that could be adopted. Keep a list of these so at the next event they can be pro-actively implemented.	
6	Ensure website has been created and styled with accessibility in mind.	Following the WCAG 2.0 guidelines can really help with this, plus including text like "should you find any issues please let us know and we will do our best to help" so you can be alerted to any issues.	

On the day.

1	Ensure good signage.	Good signage can significantly reduce stress for delegates. Include signage to wellbeing spaces, quiet rooms, and prayer rooms if you are making these available.	
2	Have a nominated EDI person.	Make sure this is person is prepared to answer questions on the day. It would also be beneficial for this person to have undergone active bystander training so that they can identify and react to any situations that occur.	
3	Make sure planning is put into practise.	Have a list so you can easily check that planned interventions happen.	

Follow up.

1	Post conference debrief.	Get feedback from a range of stakeholders by holding separate debriefs from different stakeholder groups including: • Speakers. • Delegates. • Conference team. • Steering Committee.	
2	Feedback questionnaires.	Make these as easy as possible to complete, provide QR code on the day during closing session and include link in follow up after event email.	
3	Create an action plan based on feedback.	Once you have feedback it is important to plan how you will act it to make your next event even better!	

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