



# **Case Study - PROGEDI – Tackling Unconscious Bias in Greek SME**

## **WP 2**

### **Activity 1 (Cases)**

Developed by EMVIO | November 2025

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**Co-funded by  
the European Union**

## Case Card

<b>Name/ title of case study</b> <b>Organization/institution name:</b>	PROGEDI – Tackling Unconscious Bias in Greek SME Recruitment PROGEDI Consortium, led by IRC Hellas, Generation 2.0 RED, and KEAN
<b>Location:</b>	Greece / Attica / Athens
<b>Size and scale of organization:</b>	Network of NGOs and project partners supporting Greek SMEs and public agencies; directly trained approximately 40 SME HR professionals and 30 public sector officials under PROGEDI.
<b>Industry/Sector:</b>	Human Resources, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion within SMEs and public sector in Greece.
<b>Contact info (for follow up, if available):</b>	Through IRC Hellas, Generation 2.0 RED, and KEAN websites; guide and training contact available via PROGEDI portal <a href="https://progedi.eu/">https://progedi.eu/</a>
<b>Additional details:</b>	The project is co-funded by the European Union under CERV (Citizens, Equality, Rights & Values) and ran from January 2023 to April 2024.
<b>Sources of information/References:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ PROGEDI project homepage, retrieved here: <a href="https://progedi.eu/">https://progedi.eu/</a>, <a href="https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/projects-details/43251589/101084967/CERV">https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/projects-details/43251589/101084967/CERV</a></li> <li>○ “Unconscious Bias in Recruitment” Guide by Generation 2.0 RED retrieved here:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="https://g2red.org/new-unconscious-bias-in-recruitment-guide/">https://g2red.org/new-unconscious-bias-in-recruitment-guide/</a> /</li> <li>○ <a href="chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/PROGEDI_Unconscious%20Bias%20in%20Recruitment%20Guide_EN.pdf">chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/PROGEDI_Unconscious%20Bias%20in%20Recruitment%20Guide_EN.pdf</a></li> <li>○ <a href="chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/PROGEDI_Toolkit%20for%20the%20Implementation%20of%20Brown-Bag%20Sessions_EN.pdf">chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/PROGEDI_Toolkit%20for%20the%20Implementation%20of%20Brown-Bag%20Sessions_EN.pdf</a></li> <li>○ <a href="https://www.accmr.gr/en/tools/ekthesi-tou-generation-2-0-red-sto-plaisio-tou-ergou-progedi-me-tin-ypostirixi-ton-etairon-irc-kai-kean/">https://www.accmr.gr/en/tools/ekthesi-tou-generation-2-0-red-sto-plaisio-tou-ergou-progedi-me-tin-ypostirixi-ton-etairon-irc-kai-kean/</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ IRC Hellas press releases and project reporting, retrieved here:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <a href="https://www.rescue.org/eu/where-we-work/hellas-en/progedi-promoting-gender-equality-diversity-and-inclusion">https://www.rescue.org/eu/where-we-work/hellas-en/progedi-promoting-gender-equality-diversity-and-inclusion</a></li><li>○ <a href="https://progedi.eu/news-events/">https://progedi.eu/news-events/</a> <a href="https://diversityintheworkplace.gr/progedi/">https://diversityintheworkplace.gr/progedi/</a></li></ul></li></ul>
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## Case Data/Content

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<p><b>The bias illustrated in this case:</b></p>	<p>Cognitive bias in hiring—specifically unconscious, confirmation, and affinity bias—in the recruitment practices of small and medium-sized enterprises.</p>
<p><b>Context and specifics of the bias present:</b></p>	<p>Greek SMEs often rely on informal hiring practices guided by intuition rather than structured evaluation. This approach tends to favor candidates who conform to existing stereotypes or resemble decision-makers, embedding unconscious bias into the selection process. Without formal procedures or awareness, cognitive biases like confirmation bias and affinity bias remain unchecked, resulting in homogeneous teams and the exclusion of underrepresented talent—even when using automated CV screening, which may inadvertently perpetuate bias rather than mitigate it.</p>
<p><b>Why this case matters:</b></p>	<p>The PROGEDI case offers a clear and innovative example of addressing subtle but pervasive cognitive biases in everyday recruitment decisions within the Greek SME sector. It centers on inclusivity beyond gender or racial bias, targeting systemic issues that affect equity in hiring. The multi-stakeholder structure—combining NGOs, SMEs, and advocacy groups—enables both capacity building and structural change. This approach promotes diversity through systems-oriented interventions and knowledge-sharing collaborations, making it highly relevant and transferable for similar contexts across Greece or beyond.</p>
<p><b>Action Plan - methods and strategies used to address the bias:</b></p>	<p>Between December 2023 and early 2024, Generation 2.0 RED delivered targeted workshops to SME HR staff and non-profit organizations on identifying and mitigating unconscious biases during recruitment. Participants learned to recognize bias types such as confirmation, halo, and affinity effects, and were introduced to inclusive hiring techniques—including standardized interview protocols, diverse panel assessments, blind CV reviews, and structured scoring rubrics—to reduce subjectivity. Complementing training, the project published the "Unconscious Bias in Recruitment" Guide—available in multiple formats—which outlines bias origins and offers step-by-step guidance for bias-resistant recruitment across all phases. PROGEDI also facilitated peer-learning dialogues, advocacy sessions, and encouraged organizations to sign the Greek Diversity Charter to strengthen D&amp;I ecosystems.</p>
<p><b>Measurable outcomes and impact:</b></p>	<p>By the beginning of 2024, dozens of SME executives and HR professionals had participated in PROGEDI's training modules. Following the intervention, many organizations adopted bias-aware adjustments: some implemented blind CV screening while others introduced objective evaluation rubrics and collaborative decision-making panels to counteract individual biases. Although comprehensive quantitative data is still being collected, participants reported improved confidence in recognizing bias during hiring. Moreover, a growing number of companies and</p>

	<p>public bodies formally embraced the Diversity Charter Greece, marking a shift toward institutional inclusion. Early qualitative indicators show greater candidate diversity in pilot recruitments and a stronger inclination among managers to question assumptions—critical progress in organizations previously unused to structured D&amp;I approaches.</p>
<p><b>Key lessons learned:</b></p>	<p>One key insight is that visibility and gender-disaggregated data collection are foundational to recognizing systemic bias. Standardizing application processes with transparent scoring and protocol significantly diversifies early-stage recruiting. Including women and diverse voices on hiring committees can help counter <b>affinity bias</b> (the tendency to favor those who seem “similar” to us). For instance, if a woman or someone from a different background sits on the panel, they may challenge the instinct to pick a candidate who “seems familiar.”</p> <p>At the same time, providing <b>confidence-building training</b> and <b>bias-interruption skills</b> (e.g. pausing before judgments, reflecting on first impressions) empowers individual decision-makers to recognize and override their unconscious biases.</p> <p>For lasting change, organizations must combine these <b>micro-level interventions</b> (skills and diverse panels) with <b>structural reforms</b> — such as standardizing evaluation procedures, using blind CV reviews, and embedding inclusive policies — across all recruitment stages.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> In one SME pilot, the HR team revised its interview process so that each candidate was assessed by a diverse panel (one woman, one older employee, one junior staff member). During debrief, the minority panel member noted a tendency to prefer candidates with similar educational backgrounds. The team paused and added a “diversity check” step: each member had to explain how a candidate might bring something new or different, not just “fit in.” Over time, this led to more varied hiring beyond the usual “safe” choices.</p>
<p><b>Other info/notes:</b></p>	<p>The PROGEDI initiative produced additional resources such as a toolkit for implementing informal “Brown-Bag” dialogue sessions, stakeholder consultation workshops, webinars, and a Diversity Career Fair. These components fostered continuous exchange across SMEs, NGOs, governmental bodies, and academic institutions with the aim of embedding inclusive culture and policy beyond the project’s lifespan.</p> <p>Toolkit can be reviewed here: <a href="https://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/PROGEDI_Toolkit%20for%20the%20Implementation%20of%20Brown-Bag%20Sessions_EN.pdf">https://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/PROGEDI_Toolkit%20for%20the%20Implementation%20of%20Brown-Bag%20Sessions_EN.pdf</a></p>



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