

Everyone Can Make a Difference // Global

Advanced Management Development (AMD), part of the Smurfit Kappa Academy is one of the global training and development programmes we offer our employees.

The Academy has been developed to complement many local programmes, held across all our sites, which are tailored to meet local needs.

Each year, the AMD programme delivers five Group-designed projects to help participants learn about teamwork, project management, and leadership, as well as delivering fresh ideas for the Group to implement. Each project group is made up of colleagues from around the world, working in different functions and jobs; all bringing unique, individual and collective perspectives to the projects they work on. In 2019, one project focused on Inclusion and Diversity.

Luis Alvarez from Mexico and Elisa Romanello from Italy worked with their project team, whose other members were from Colombia, Poland and Belgium, to present a plan for how the Group can continue its focus on Inclusion, Diversity & Belonging programme. The idea was to find ways to ensure the Company and all of its employees find ways to benefit from the opportunities Inclusion and Diversity offer.

“We have a very diverse workplace,” explains Luis, “So the challenge was to encourage inclusion and belonging within the Group.” Elisa continues, “Because gender is such an issue in our industry we tend to focus on it exclusively, and we needed to get beyond this. Working with a team of five SK colleagues from all regions was a great opportunity to listen to and appreciate different perspectives,

and see the value of a really diverse group working together.”

The team concluded that diversity is a continuous journey, with every SK employee having a role to play. Elisa explains: “An effective way to educate about Inclusion, Diversity & Belonging is to be open to others’ stories and listen to their opinions, no matter what their background, gender, sexuality or abilities.”

The project team recommended that everyone questions their own openness to listening to others, to ensure it becomes part of their ways of working. They also proposed a four-stage approach for the management to implement including: awareness-raising, Executive Diversity Committee, reviewing ways of working and improving our diversity data. Their project was well-received by the executive team and will be incorporated into the work the Group will do over the coming year in the area of Inclusion, Diversity and Belonging.

“The AMD programme and our project have been an excellent way of learning about ourselves and how we can become better leaders,” concludes Luis.

