

15th International Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Conference (EDI)

Workshop Proposal: Building Resilience with Humanistic Management

Cape Town, South Africa, 22-24 July 2022

Conference Theme: Disruption

The University of Lucerne in Switzerland together with the South Africa Chapter of the Humanistic Management Network proposes to offer a workshop titled Building Resilience with Humanistic Management at the 15th International Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Conference (EDI) taking place from 22-24 July 2022 in Cape Town, South Africa.

Topical Focus: Disruption, Resilience and Humanistic Management

The EDI Conference website is highlighting positive aspects of disruption as it not only upsets the status quo, creates ‘abnormality’ and tends to be highly uncomfortable for all involved. Simultaneously disruptions have also led to substantial progress in creating greater inclusion and equality and desirable innovations. Hence organizations are confronted with the task to respond to disruption in ways that mitigate the adverse and strengthen the positive effects of disruptions.

In doing so resilience plays a vital role for it allows organizations to respond flexibly while standing firm. Resilience is frequently described as being flexible and rigid at the same time which allows actors to advance despite adversity which is precisely what organisations require to sustain success in times of disruption.

In this workshop we offer to explore our view that the three stepped approach to Humanistic Management holds substantial potential for building resilience. We have developed a three stepped approach to Humanistic Management to offer guidance and an anchor for reflection on managerial decisions as well as decision making processes. We understand Humanistic Management on the basis of three interrelated dimensions which are:

- Firstly, that the dignity of life deserves unconditional respect.

- Secondly, that ethical considerations must form an integrated part of business decisions and
- Thirdly that actively embracing corporate responsibilities is contingent upon initiating and maintaining an ongoing dialogue with stakeholders.

In summary, humanistic management is the pursuit of strategies and practices aimed at the creation of sustainable human welfare. In combination, these three dimensions promote sustainable economic activities that are life-conducive and add value to society at large. Submitting business decisions to these three guiding principles is what we call Humanistic Management.

The Hypothesis we would like to explore during this workshop is that Humanistic Management builds resilience on three levels that correspond to the three steps of Humanistic Management. The three levels of enhancing resilience through Humanistic Management are:

- Creating benefits from strong relationships
- Strengthening innovative capacity
- Being less prone to making “bad moves”

In short, this workshop will provide a platform to discuss and assess Humanistic Management as a driver for more resilient organizations that in turn are better equipped to make productive use of disruptions.

Workshop Format: World Café

We propose a World Café set up where three World Café tables will represent the three stepped Approach to Humanistic Management as outlined above. On the foundation that resilience allows organizations to better navigate disruptions the Tables will discuss the question of if and how each of the three steps of Humanistic Management is able to enhance organizational resilience.

Given the current uncertainties surrounding travel arrangements and physical interaction at conferences we would suggest reviewing the suggested format closer to the conference date and, if need be, adapt it.

Workshop Facilitation

The workshop will be facilitated jointly by Aura Mbolela South Africa Chapter lead of the Humanistic Management Network and Ernst von Kimakowitz, senior research fellow of the University of Lucerne and Co-Founder and Director of the Humanistic Management Network.

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