**EDI Conference 2024, Seville, Spain**

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**Workshop proposal**

**Workshop title: “*Gendered barriers and cross-cutting issues in the workplace: how can we trust the numbers?*”**

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Background:

There is a growing understanding in employers that creating inclusive workplaces immensely improves the organization’s sustainability. (Shore et al., 2018; Jetha et al, 2023; Evan et al, 2023; Pizarro et al., 2023) Considering the shrinking labour force and the dwindling pool of talents due to, among other mitigating factors, gender discrimination, the lack of equal opportunities for certain groups, the Equality Diversity and Inclusion challenges in workplace have been identified as a critical element for both organization’s competitiveness and employer’s branding competitiveness in the war talent. (Horne, 2023) While some progress is observed, for example in some industries gender and ethnic diversity has increased in corporate boards, effective EDI practices remain a challenge, whereas verification through EDI assessments remains questionable if not rare. (Global DEI Census, 2023)

Organizations often apply horizontal EDI policies scratching only the surface of the workforce needs. Most of them revolve around gender-based policies and race to improve talent competitiveness and corporate leadership representation. Scholarship and EDI experts report that these mono-categories approach is insufficient to capture the depth of EDI challenges experienced by workforce and result in a misalignment between the workforce and the organization. (WTW, 2023) Sixty five percent of employees have the opinion that their managers do not foster an inclusive environment. (ILO, 2021). Whereas the “diversity washing”, namely the significant and growing disconnect between organizations’ firm commitments to EDI and their underlying actual EDI policies, aggravates the shaken trust in the achieved gendered-related scores across organizations. (Baker, 2023)

A key reason for falling short on EDI efforts at organization level, is that employers often do not get a nuanced understanding of the full spectrum of employees’ real needs and experiences. They do not have adequate and proper data to understand the root causes and potential solutions, to assess in an evidence-based way what impact EDI policies may have on employees’ satisfaction, productivity and, in turn, on organization’s performance and competitiveness. On the other hand, research on EDI in workplace has been increased over the last years offering a better and multi-faceted understanding in the field. However, growing concerns have been expressed regarding the proliferation of weak data-driven studies around EDI and its impact (Marra, 2023).

EDI practitioners and researchers often quantify diversity along visible demographic characteristics. However, there may need to consider further that very little in the EDI is generalisable and that true impact cannot be achieved with weak data along separate demographic lines (Marra, 2023). By intersecting those mono-categories crucial cross-cutting aspects may be addressed and allow better knowing, studying, and understanding of employees within the organization. Practice and academia need to work together, hand in hand, empirically and scientifically, to capture the full spectrum of EDI barriers and cross-cutting issues as they are experienced by the employees, to enhance trustworthiness in data-driven EDI strategies and to generate sustainable, inclusive change across the organization.

Main questions to be addressed:

* What are the gendered barriers and cross-cutting issues in workplace?
* How can I identify, measure, and weigh their manifestation and prevalence in the workplace?
* What data do I need to better understand the (un)seen gendered barriers and cross-cutting issues in the workplace?
* How can I collect and interpret such data?
* How can I trust the harvested data?
* How can I use efficiently the harvested data?
* How can I measure the impact of gendered-related policies in the workplace?

*Aim of the workshop*

The aim of the workshop is to discuss that gender data are not enough to address efficiently gendered barriers and cross-cutting issues in workplace. The workshop aims to showcase that comprehensive, disaggregated, and anonymized data on barriers to EDI has the potential to draw a detailed canvas of the real EDI needs of employees in the workplace and built organization wide efficient and measurable EDI strategies and practices.

Learning objectives

In this workshop the participants:

* Will learn that disaggregated data referring to gender and cross-cutting issues may be the key to unveil the full spectrum of real gender-related issues in workplace.
* Will learn how they can harvest such data, how to read through the data lines and get an in-depth understanding of the real gendered barriers in a workplace.
* Will understand that data can (un)mask reality on gendered barriers and cross-cutting issues in workplace, when harvested in a comprehensive, bottom-up and anonymized way.
* Will learn how disaggregated data may lead to an efficient EDI strategy with a holistic, human-centric approach, allowing for organization-wide measurable progress, systemic change, and sustainability.

*Method*

The workshop will be interactive. The cohort will be divided into small groups; each group works on a case study on gendered barriers data harvested by the EDI barriers tool against the horizontal gender data in the explored workplace; each group analyses the (un)seen gendered issues; each group presents a working solution. The plenary thinks critically and comes up with a synthesis of the best working solution to address the gendered barriers and cross-cutting issues in the workplace. The session closes with a facilitated discussion.

Applied methods: short presentations, testimonials, case study, group work, online access to EDI barriers tool.

Duration: 2 hours

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