

Business Management Education and Training Provision on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Addendum

WP 2 – D2.1

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Contents

Overview	3
Presentations and Findings	3
Main Insights.....	5
Conclusion.....	5

Overview

This report presents the findings from the “Educating for Gender Equality in the Workplace” conference, held in Dublin on June 7th 2024.

The conference was a collaboration between the EDIFY EDU consortium, and Springboard+ programmes in IADT. The purpose of the conference was to bring national and European industry and academic experts together that represented both the public and private sectors. The aim of the conference was to validate the findings of the EDIFY EDU European report in the context of current national and European research and reports of practices on the ground. The conference was held on the Eurofound premises in Loughlinstown, Dublin, Ireland.

The conference was opened by the President of IADT, David Smith and emceed by the IADT Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. Dr Claire McGing.

There were four keynote presentations: Barbara Gerstenberger (Head of the Working Life Unit in Eurofound); the Irish EDIFY EDU delegation – IADT and the DLR Chamber; Marcus Purcell (the Partner sponsor for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for the Ernst & Young Ireland); Dr Lisa Wilson (Senior economist at the Nevin Economic Research Institute). All keynotes participated in a panel that discussed areas of the value of part-time employment and how this could be implemented; the changing face of the role of men in organisations and especially new fathers; and the slow progress of gender equality in the workplace.

Dr Suzanne Carthy (Lecturer in IADT and researcher on Gender Equality), and five graduates of the Masters of Business in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) presented their Masters research, which was focussed on Irish studies ranging from gender equality in the construction industry, the use of paternity leave amongst new fathers, psychological safety, the support for families with transgender children, and a statistical analysis of the outcomes of the Workplace Relations Committee (WRC) in relation to gender disparities. All academic presenters participated in a panel discussion that raised questions around organisational support for employees; and how to address current gender equality and EDI issues.

On the theme of gender equality and sustainability, five businesses hosted stands in the foyer that promoted equality, sustainability and inclusivity: Green Bikes; Urhired.ie; Cycling Without Age; the Local Enterprise Board; and the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Chamber.

In total, there were ten academic posters from the current students of the Masters of Business in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. The academic studies were specifically focussed on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the workplace.

The conference was attended by 59 delegates across the duration of the day, this figure includes the keynote speakers and presenters. In total, 15 delegates attended online for the duration of the conference. The delegates were representative of a number of public and private institutes from across Ireland: Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council, private consultancy firms (public relations, human resources, business), recruitment, Eurofound, IADT, National College of Ireland, Blackrock Education Centre, Nevin Economic research Institute, Sandymount Business District, the Menopause Society of Ireland, private education institutes, Childminding Ireland.

Presentations and Findings

There were two keynote presentations with European perspectives of both statistical and qualitative findings: Eurofound and EDIFY EDU. Two keynote presentations addressed Irish research, one of which reported on current cross-sectional data on the value of part-time work and the other reported on lessons learned in the implementation of EDI practices within the Irish branch of a large global organisation. There were six academic presentations focussed on smaller scale studies with an Irish context.

Barbara Gerstenberger is the Head of the Working Life unit at Eurofound. In this role, she coordinates the research teams investigating job quality in Europe based on the European Working Conditions Survey and

has overall responsibility for research into industrial relations in the EU. Her presentation was titled "The gender gap at work – it's not just about the money". The European statistics suggest that there still exists a gender pay gap and gender employment gap in Europe, however the explanations for this gap are not yet fully explained. The data showed that there is a higher gender pay gap at senior management level, this is possibly attributed to career disruption for women. The presentation considered the breakdown of full-time work and part-time work between males and females and found that females tend to work more part-time jobs and have more unpaid work (e.g. work in the home) in comparison to their male counterparts. There were differences in family structure from a single person with no children to greater than two adults with children, where females tended to work more unpaid hours and therefore more hours in the week than their male counterparts. The findings from this presentation concurred with EDIFY EDU findings on gender segregation and the glass ceiling. However, the areas of research on the distribution of paid and unpaid work is an area that is not considered by the EDIFY EDU project and could possibly be considered as a future area of research.

Marcus Purcell is a partner in Ernst and Young (EY) Ireland and is the Partner Sponsor for Diversity Equity & Inclusion (DE&I) for the EY Ireland practice. His presentation on the "Learnings on Gender Equality in the Workplace" provided practical examples of practice in EY Ireland to bring greater gender equality to senior leadership representation. They found that the female participation rate increased in 2023, this was a steady rise since 2021. Overall they found lower participation at senior management level and find that the process of change is slow. The change that they initiated within EY Ireland is data focused, based on training and coaching, providing allyship and mentorship, all towards changing the mindset of employees and addressing the role of men in the organisation. From the perspective of the EDIFY EDU European research, both EDIFY EDU and EY reported on the use of data to inform decision making in relation to EDI, where the statistics tell a different story to perception. EY Ireland are focussed on training and mentorship which is inline with EDIFY EDU in relation to improving business management education as well as beginning to change the mindset of employees across all levels of the organisation. These findings from EDIFY EDU were validated by the findings from EY Ireland. However, the role of men in this new organisational landscape that integrates EDI into its culture, is not an area that is addressed by the EDIFY EDU project. The "privileged white male" was discussed during the International seminar in Helsinki in September 2023 and warrants more investigation, possibly into the impact of the change of culture in organisations and how work roles are changing for both males and females, the business impact of this could be investigated along with work-life balance.

Dr Lisa Wilson is a Senior Economist at the Nevin Economic Research Institute (NERI), where she carried out a broad range of work in areas related to labour market, income distribution, poverty, public expenditure, living standards, and well-being. In addition to her role at the NERI, Lisa is a former member of the Independent Fiscal Commission in Northern Ireland. Her presentation on "Job Quality in Ireland – The implications of not valuing care has for female labour market outcomes" covered areas including the drop in home duties (% of those not employed/unemployed/retired) from 72.3% in 2003 to 30.7% in 2023. Also discussed was the employment rate by children (Ireland) where the lowest employment rate for women were those with children between the ages of 0 to 5 years old. Echoing Barbara Gerstenberger's presentation, the vast majority of unpaid work was performed by females and dual earner households still reported a divide concluding that children are the biggest factor in the persistence of the gender divide. In relation to the EDIFY EDU project the areas of employment rates by children; unpaid work and the value of unpaid work and part-time work; the mental and physical load on the parent while in part-time or full-time employment are areas not addressed by the EDIFY EDU project. While relevant in the area of EDI and gender in equality, these areas could be investigated further using a qualitative approach in a European context to further explain the statistics and to provide a framework for reference to understand the nuances and complexities of changing mindsets when it comes to the role of women in the workplace.

The academic presentations addressed areas of inequality of representation, social norms, organisational culture, education around early career choices, career progression, family and caring commitments, that

were in agreement with the findings in the EDIFY EDU European Report. Other areas were not addressed by the EDIFY EDU project such as structural concerns (e.g. access to childcare); organisation sponsorship to encourage gender equality; organisational support for families and parents of transgender children; encouragement to take paternity and parental leave for new fathers. These areas are possibly foundations of future academic and industry projects that could be explored either nationally or internationally.

Main Insights

In relation to the EDIFY EDU European report, the presentations at the conference validated the report findings, these included: gender segregation, the glass ceiling, data informed decision making, training and coaching, allyship and mentorship, changing mindsets, home duties and responsibilities, organisational culture, social norms, career progression, family and caring commitments, empathy as part of the role of the manager, decline in females in the workplace as they age and as their career progresses.

The main insights from the conference included areas that were not addressed in the EDIFY EDU European research and report. Some of which are not directly related to business management education, however, it constitutes mentioning in the light of future research in the area:

1. Role of men:
 - a. What are the barriers to new fathers taking leave and how can these be overcome? What are the implications on taking leave on careers, on business, on work life balance?
 - b. The privileged white male: what do men think of the changes in organisations? Do the statistics reflect perception or lived experience? What effect is this having on businesses, motivation, the economy, education?
2. Distribution of paid and unpaid work
 - a. Employment rates by children (Ireland)
 - b. Unrecognised value of unpaid work
3. Supports
 - a. Supporting parents of transgender children in the workplace – possibly could review other supports for parents/carers/siblings in the workplace?
4. Organisational sponsorship
 - a. Promote gender equality in industry or within organisations
 - b. How can businesses be encouraged to do this e.g. government initiatives?

Conclusion

The presentation content from the conference “Educating for Gender Equality in the Workplace” both confirms and highlights the need for an improved undergraduate business education, as outlined by the European Commission, that embeds equality, diversity, and inclusion and can contribute to alleviating existing gendered labour market and workplace EDI discriminatory practices.

Research suggests that gender inequality in the workplace is not simply about the money, it is about underrepresentation of females in the workplace and especially in senior management roles. The reasons behind the gender employment and pay gap are complex and could be attributed to factors such as home duties and unpaid work causing disruptions in career progression. The role of men is coming into the fore in relation to gender inequality in relation to career progression, the uptake of leave entitlements, the societal expectations placed on men and possibly other areas that are not yet explored. Research around organisation support for families is paramount in changing mindset around inequality in the workplace, this is an area of future research that could be explored as a continuation of this project.