

PERSPECTIVES

A LOOK AT DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION



It's Time to Humanize
Diversity and Inclusion



Don't Judge a Book by
Its Cover



AI and Bias in
University Admissions

INTRODUCTION

by Kimberly Reeve



Diversity. It's the reason many of us came to ISM. As an international institution, ISM recruits students, faculty, and staff from around the globe. Compared to other ACBSP schools, ISM has a rich mix of students from North America, Europe, and Africa, and a growing number of students from Asia and Oceania. The benefits of diversity are well documented. Whether it is hearing different perspectives in the classroom or avoiding groupthink in the conference room, diverse classes, teams, and leadership can yield better decisions, higher financial results, and a stronger competitive advantage.

However, diversity is just a beginning. ISM is also committed to inclusion. In looking for ways to better serve its students, they posed the questions: Does the diverse student body have equal opportunities to succeed? Are there ways that the school can better prepare students from countries that do not have European education systems? Diversity and inclusion begin from within and at the top. Because of this, the ISM Board of Directors recently approved a diversity and inclusion initiative that was launched with the development of a diversity and inclusion plan and a committee comprised of faculty, staff, students, and graduates. It is my privilege to be the chair of the inaugural Diversity and Inclusion Committee. To date, this group of individuals representing seven countries on three continents has offered feedback on the diversity and inclusion plan, provided suggestions on marketing and student support, and led and assisted with research and the development of

internationally-focused resources. As part of this initiative, several members of the committee contributed their stories and experiences to this first magazine focused exclusively on diversity.

Diversity and inclusion is a journey, and there will always be work to be done. I am thrilled that ISM is proactively seeking to be both a thought leader and an active practitioner in diversity and inclusion to ensure that ISM as an institution retains the strength of its diversity while becoming fully inclusive.



About the author

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MEET THE COMMITTEE

The Diversity and Inclusion Committee was started at ISM in the spring of 2018. The goal of the committee is to oversee ISM's diversity and inclusion initiatives related to the recruitment, retention, and graduation of its population. As part of their responsibilities, the Committee will review diversity and inclusion plans, assess the outcomes and impacts of these plans, suggest improvements, review academic papers that are submitted on the topic of diversity and inclusion, as well as actively provide resources and best practices. The Committee is comprised of 7 members who represent a range of affiliations with ISM, industries, and geographic locations. The current chair is Dr. Kimberly Reeve, PhD graduate of ISM and current professor at the NY campus at St. John's University. We are proud to welcome the committee to ISM!



**KIMBERLY
REEVE**
Chair

Kimberly Reeve is an associate professor of business and the director of the NYC City Semester – Business program at The King's College in New York City. She is also an adjunct assistant professor of business at the Zicklin School of Business at Baruch College in New York City. Prior to joining King's, Kimberly worked as a management consultant and had the opportunity to work with business and non-profit clients throughout the US, Europe, South America, Africa, and Asia. Her research interests include mergers and acquisitions in the non-profit sector, measuring impact in social enterprises, the economic impact of corporate social responsibility initiatives, and identifying effective means of scaling enterprises. She has a BA from Colby College, an MBA from the University of St. Thomas, a Certificate in Global Affairs from New York University, and a PhD in international business management from the International School of Management.



IVONNE CHIRINO- KLEVANS

Ivonne Chirino-Klevans is a member of the International School of Management's core faculty. She is an expert in global executive education and has held executive positions such as Assistant Dean of Executive Education for the Fuqua School of Business at Duke University, as well as Program Director for Duke Corporate Education. Her experience is in program design, international client management, cross-cultural organizational environment assessments, international talent attraction and retention, compensation programs, training needs assessment, training management, and impact of training. She has consulted for clients such as Deutsche Bank, TRW, and Ford Motor Company, among others. Her work has been featured in CNN, *Caribbean Business*, and *Talent Management Magazine* to name a few.

Earlier in her career, she served as the psychologist for the Mexican national rowing team and contributed to the team winning a silver medal at the 1991 Pan Am Games. She herself is a Pan American games medalist in gymnastics. She combines her experience as an executive, an elite athlete, and psychologist to create action learning experiences in online and face-to-face learning communities. Ivonne received a PhD in psychology from Universidad Iberoamericana, an MBA from Universidad de las Américas, and a master's and BA in psychology from Georgia College and State University.



CÉSAR BAENA

César Baena is the Dean and Director of Doctoral Research at the International School of Management. He is a professor of strategic management and international business, and has taught in business schools and universities in various countries (France, Finland, Spain, Argentina, China, Lebanon) in undergraduate, MBA, PhD, and executive education programs. He holds a PhD from the London School of Economics, as well as a BA from York University (Toronto) and an MSc from the University of Montreal in Canada.

César's previous managerial experiences include being director of an MSc in international business in a leading business school. One of his accomplishments in managing this program was the introduction of a global business plan competition, a project that combines entrepreneurship, innovation, and all aspects of international business. César is also the founder of Global Strategic Consulting, a start-up company that offers advice to companies in the areas of internationalization, business process management, mergers and acquisitions, strategic alliances, and education.



PATRICIA MURUGAMI

Patricia Murugami is the Regional Academic Director for the Women in Leadership and Board Diversity Programmes at Strathmore Business School, the leading business school in the Eastern Africa region where she has designed and implemented over 15 programs over the last decade. She is also the founding CEO of Breakthrough Consulting Solutions Group, which focuses on unlocking the potential of leadership talent and organizations for sustainable progress. Formerly, she was the Vice Dean of Executive Talent Development at SBS, where she provided strategic oversight and insightful leadership to two divisions: Executive Education and Executive Coaching. She holds a DBA from the International School of Management and is an experienced, certified executive coach with Pan African clients.



HENRY AJAGBAWA

Henry Ajagbawa is the CEO of Hemon Consulting, a boutique firm in the management advisory, auditing, and training services. He also engages in pro bono teaching at the University of Lagos. Before his retirement from banking to pursue his entrepreneurial interests, he led many transformational projects across several banks in Africa including UBA, Eco Bank, and others in an executive capacity over the last 22 years. At UBA, he got extensive executive experience spanning over 11 years in various areas including transactions banking, retail banking, corporate and special projects amongst others, and led the retail banking transformation agenda of the bank. His last assignment in the banking industry was leading the establishment of the public corporate group for the Eco Bank Transnational Incorporation covering the 32 countries of the group, following which he joined the Nigerian Board as Executive Director. Henry holds a BSc and an MSc in economics from the University of Lagos and is a fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria. He also holds a PhD from the International School of Management in international business management. Henry is married with two children, and his hobbies are tennis, football, and reading.



SUNNY GHALI

Sunny Ghali is a human resources executive and is currently focusing on building **Laksh Labs Inc.** Having taught diversity management for the past 15 years, as an instructor and HR professional, he hopes to contribute lessons learned from practice and present new ideas that build awareness, engagement, and innovative solutions in business and in society. Sunny is a current DBA candidate at the International School of Management.



ADRIANA TORRES

Adriana Torres is a transformational leader and a global operations visionary with more than 30 years of experience in operations management, customer service, and customer experience. She is the recipient of the Powerful Women of Bay Award for 2018. Currently, as Senior Vice President of Global Customer Support at Oracle Corporation, Adriana oversees the operations of a half-billion-dollar organization. She was brought on board in June 2016 to develop and lead the implementation of a new support model for point-of-sales and property management solutions for the hospitality industry customer base. Previously, she was the Senior Vice President of Global Customer Care Services at Visa, Inc. There, she led the organization's credit, debit, and digital consumer products for 2.2 billion Visa cardholders. During her tenure, she was the recipient of the Top Entrepreneur Award in the Corporate Champion for Diversity & Inclusion category by the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce.

Adriana holds an MBA from Florida Atlantic University, a master's degree in computer science from Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, and a bachelor of science degree from the University of Campinas, Brazil. She is currently pursuing a PhD in international business management at the International School of Management.



TIMELINE OF ACHIEVEMENTS

JULY

Alison Knight and Stephanie Naudin have a brainstorming meeting in NYC and come up with a plan to make ISM more inclusive for its diverse population. They ask Professor Kimberly Reeve for support in tackling an in-depth research project to get institutional buy-in.

JANUARY

Alison Knight and Stephanie Naudin, the diversity and inclusion (DI) internal working group, present extended research to ISM's Executive Leadership Team to get institutional buy-in to proceed with research, creation of a committee, and an institutional diversity and inclusion plan to roll out in all departments.

Kimberly Reeve submits an abstract paper based on ISM's DI research to the Independent Association of Business Scholars Journal (IABS), and Alison Knight and Stephanie Naudin respond to a call for papers by the 2018 Graduate Management Admissions Council (GMAC) Annual Conference to present on diversity at ISM and how it relates to retention and graduation.

MARCH

The final members of the Diversity & Inclusion Committee are confirmed.

2017

AUGUST-DECEMBER

Kimberly Reeve, Alison Knight, Stephanie Naudin, and ISM Librarian Judy Knight dig deep into research, best practices, and data collection to analyze diversity in ISM's key stakeholder groups based on gender and nationality.

2018

FEBRUARY

ISM makes a call within its community for committee members.

Kimberly Reeve's paper "Diversity and Inclusion: Exploring Factors Related to Graduate Business Student Retention and Success" is accepted by the *IABS Journal*, and ISM is selected to present at the 2018 GMAC Annual Conference.

APRIL

The first Diversity & Inclusion Committee meeting takes place.

JUNE

Kimberly Reeve goes to Hong Kong and presents her paper at the IABS Conference on “Making the Invisible Visible in Business & Society Research.” Her paper titled “Diversity and Inclusion: Exploring Factors Related to Graduate Business Student Retention and Success” touches on the “invisible” or underrepresented populations in business schools, mainly non-western students and students of color. The paper looks at the relationship between nationality, gender, age, and GPA as they pertain to the retention rates of graduate-level business students in France.

In Boston, Stephanie Naudin and Sara Stivers, ISM’s Admissions Officer, attend the 2018 GMAC Conference and present ISM’s research in a workshop titled “From Enrollment to Graduation: The Role of Diversity and Inclusion.” The presentation focuses on diversity in higher education based on gender and nationality, and closely examines the retention and graduation rates of all students at ISM from the 2010 intake.

SEPTEMBER

The DI working group sends the plan to all staff at ISM for review. Broken up by department (e.g. admissions, academic, student services, marketing), the plan lists concrete ways to improve diversity and stakeholder inclusion. The committee will hold the DI working group accountable for implementing improvements and evaluating progress.

2019

Kimberly Reeve, Alison Knight, and Stephanie Naudin plan on conducting a second phase of research which will be mostly qualitative, including interviews and surveys of ISM alumni and students, to report on student experience, retention, and challenges as they relate to inclusion and success.

JULY

The DI working group submits a draft of the institutional diversity and inclusion plan to the Diversity & Inclusion Committee for review and feedback. The committee has their second meeting to discuss the plan.

OCTOBER

The DI working group has meetings with each institutional department to discuss best practices, questions, and timelines for milestones.

ISM adds diversity and inclusion as a strategic priority in its 2019-2023 five-year plan.

2019

Talking the Talk: Effective Communication in Global Organizations

by Ivonne Chirino-Klevans

One of the characteristics of successful organizations is the ability to bring talent from different backgrounds, encouraging the effective integration of different perspectives, values, and work styles. A key element that helps this effective integration is the ability to communicate effectively. It may seem like a simple task, but, in reality, communication can make or break a global team.

Let's take the case of Ming (names have been changed to maintain confidentiality). This was her first job out of college. She got her master's degree in the US as a foreign student, and, because of her excellent references given by professors, she was able to land a job at a medium-sized American company. She was the model of conscientiousness, hard work, and discipline. After all, these had been the qualities that had helped her graduate with honors.

She was originally from a country in Asia where power distance (respect for authority), indirect communication, and saving face were important non-spoken practices in the workplace. Her job as an analyst was a great start in the American work environment, and she was very eager to be successful. Her boss was very supportive, and soon Ming became her right hand. One day, Ming was getting ready for a client presentation, and she realized that she was missing some key information. She decided to send a group email to the members of another department within the company to obtain some information. She made sure to copy the VP so that she was informed of what Ming was requesting; she knew that keeping key decision-makers informed was important.

Ten minutes after sending that email, one of the other managing directors (we will call her "Helen," Ming's boss's boss) sent Ming a message, copying Ming's boss as well. In that message, Helen asked Ming not to send any more mass emails without first asking for help with her grammar. Helen also copied the VP on that email. When Ming read this email, she felt that her career was over.

She had never officially met the VP, but Ming thought she had lost face in the eyes of the VP. Ming felt ashamed, and this is something that in her culture was hard to reverse in the workplace. The next morning, Ming sent a letter of resignation to her boss. Her boss reached out to Ming trying to find out more about the incident. Her boss was very empathic and could understand the level of shame Ming was going through. The VP and Helen did not.

Unfortunately, this is not an uncommon situation. Organizations continue to invest in great employees claiming to have inclusive environments where everyone is welcome. Nevertheless, organizations need to understand that welcoming a diverse population goes beyond acknowledging a special cultural day. Organizations that demonstrate a strong commitment to diversity will have in place programs that address cultural competence in an intentional and effective way. More importantly, organizations that support diversity in the workplace need to implement strategies that help effective communication across cultures. Talent can be found everywhere. Let's not only attract talent but keep them too, creating an inclusive organizational culture that goes beyond a nice slogan or a poster.



About the author

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Don't Judge a Book by Its Cover

by Maria Kuts

As the old saying goes, "Don't judge a book by its cover." I'd like to take this further and add, "Especially if it's a passport cover."

This sentiment might seem outdated or obvious considering how globalized and transnational our business world is today. Even more so to people who were born in the European Union or the US, or those who never had any issues applying for a visa or were never denied a job opportunity because of their nationality.

I am Russian. I have been living and working in Europe for the past 10 years, and I have all the legal permits. Yet, every time I cross a border and approach the passport control, I am scared. Scared that for some reason I will not be allowed into the country, scared to receive an "access denied" stamp in my passport, and I am always ready for the long interrogation process. Have you ever felt that way when flying to Italy for vacation?

It becomes even more complicated when we talk about finding a job in the EU or the US with a different nationality. Every large international company in the world is now talking about diversity and inclusion (DI), shifting the understanding of these words from simply race and gender to instating an "everyone is welcome" policy in terms of recruitment (retrieved from www.aperianglobal.com). This sounds promising, but is it actually true, even in the context of nationality, the DI cornerstone? Have you ever tried to get a job in a large international company while not being an EU or American citizen? This would be assuming that you have the required experience and a legal status in the country to even try. In my personal experience, the rules "Americans first," "Germans first," or "French first" are still in place and

sometimes even embedded in the policies of companies. Some well-known international organizations (NGOs included) indicate on their job search panels a preferred nationality that has nothing to do with the actual duties of the position. Is that the DI that we are all talking about? Or is that just the window dressing? Will inclusive corporate environments and policies ever be established not just for show and numbers?

I can't help but admit that I am lucky. I am lucky to live in the EU and to have a job that I want, that I love, and that allows me to grow. I am lucky to work in a diverse, inclusive, and open-minded environment. But others are not so lucky, and they might not ever be. All they can do is be twice as good as others to have half of what others have.



About the author

Maria Kuts is the External Programs Manager at the International School of Management, with over ten years of experience in various fields including international project management, cross-cultural communications, and international trade. Over the course of her career, she has worked in various roles and in different countries within the European Union and Russia. She ran international projects in the US, France, Germany, and the UAE as head of an international department in Russia. She has a master's degree in international relations from Saint Petersburg State University and an executive MBA from the International School of Management. Maria speaks Russian, English, French, and German. She loves traveling and is passionate about fashion.

It's Time to Humanize Diversity and Inclusion

by Sunny Ghali

// **We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their color.**

Maya Angelou (1928-2014)

Diversity. Inclusion. Sensitivity training. Though well intentioned, I would posit that organizations and, more specifically, individuals feel these initiatives are not making progress or having an impact. For the past 15 years of teaching diversity management, here is what I have learned: It's time to stop pitting people and ideas against one another. Instead, it's time to humanize diversity and inclusion initiatives, build bridges around awareness in the power of the collective (true globalization), and create a solutions-driven mindset that draws on our personal and global diversity to build engagement, creativity, and innovation.

So, what does humanizing diversity and inclusion mean? Simply put, each of us is a diverse being, and each of our experiences should be valued. This is not about one group of people or another. When someone asks if you're white, black, short, tall, skinny, heavy, introverted, extroverted, conservative, liberal, religious, or agnostic, the answer shouldn't be limited to this, that, or the other. We shouldn't get grouped with others who, on the surface, are similar. That's when we start arguing for more diversity and inclusion because we are being marginalized. Some of our characteristics are related to biology, and others have developed because of our environmental upbringing and influences. This tribal mentality where we stereotype, put people in boxes to form frames of reference – granted, innate – needs to evolve.

Jack Mezirow introduced us to the central thesis of transformative learning: "An important part of transformative learning is for individuals to change their frames of reference by critically reflecting on their assumptions and beliefs and consciously making and implementing plans that bring about new ways of defining their worlds" (Jack Mezirow, 1991, *Transformative Learning*).

So, where do we start? Instead of making this about certain categories of people, let's work with each individual and help them realize their own uniqueness, their own diversity. Each of us has different:

- Communication styles, not only in terms of how we express ourselves but how we listen
- Learning styles and pace
- Personality profiles and, subsequently, tendencies, blind spots, and preferences
- Levels of emotional intelligence
- Language skills (while some of us speak only one language, others are multilingual)
- Abilities and disabilities (Pause, and think about that one...)

All across the globe, there are nationalistic movements where countries and people are withdrawing into themselves. Categories and stereotypes about people, and groups of people, are being thrown around, and the mere mention of diversity and inclusion is met with scepticism.

The central question, therefore, for me is: What is diversity and inclusion?

It is awareness... of ourselves. If we don't learn about ourselves first, how can we expect to learn about others and transform our understanding? Communities across Earth are screaming for engagement, for innovation, for creative solutions. In order for that to happen, people need to learn to work with one another, respect one another, and help one another. There is power in the collective experience.

Before we can start building bridges with other communities, to harness the energy of the collective, we need to be aware of our individual diversity first and understand what it means to be human. Then, and only then, can we start to realize our true potential – as collective beings.



About the author

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Changing the Way Businesses Deal with Cultural Diversity

by Finn Majlergaard



In 2001, I left behind my corporate life at IBM in search of something completely different, namely how global businesses leverage cultural diversity. Two thirds of all mergers and acquisitions fail to meet their objectives due to cultural clashes, and very few managers and leaders have the cultural intelligence needed to develop and run a global business.

After years of experience working with IBM, Computer Sciences Corporation, and Arthur Andersen Business Consulting, I have learned what makes a consulting firm successful and how problematic it is to underestimate the influence of cultural diversity. The traditional approach to dealing with cultural diversity is totally wrong. Assuming that all people from a country share cultural norms, values, and basic assumptions is fundamentally inaccurate, but, nevertheless, it is the foundation on which almost all consulting and training are based. In fact, making that assumption just creates more cultural conflicts.

We all belong to so many cultures based on our profession, education, gender, sexual orientation, hobbies, relationships, religion, nationality, etc., so it doesn't make sense to assume that all people from a country necessarily share common values. Perhaps there were more similarities 50 years ago, but society is extremely different now. We travel much more, we move to large metropolitan cities, we have access to endless information online, and we have more access to financial wealth.

After my departure from IBM, I founded **Gugin** with the purpose of helping companies and organizations around the world become better at synergizing their cultural diversity rather than regarding it as a problem that should be solved. I knew that, if we were going to be the best in class when it came to cross-cultural consulting and training, then we had to do things completely differently.

That was one of my main reasons for my interest in the DBA program at ISM. I chose ISM because it offered a very flexible program where I could opt out of all the topics that didn't interest me (finance, for instance) and focus on the things I wanted and needed. It also gave me the opportunity to study in several different countries, which I found particularly interesting. This flexibility gave me the opportunity to research the topic that would set my company ahead of the competition, namely how to create competitive advantage from cultural diversity.

I graduated many years ago, but we continue to conduct research at Gugin. The company stands on three pillars: training, consulting, and research. They fuel each other nicely and enable us to secure constant momentum for innovation and development. Right now, for example, we are working with a number of clients on how artificial intelligence is going to affect the corporate culture. Society is constantly changing, and businesses need to be ready for it.



About the author

Dr. Finn Majlergaard is the founder and CEO of Gugin, which helps companies around the world leverage cultural diversity. He has published several books on the subject. He teaches in business schools and universities, and he is a weekly contributor to *The Entrepreneur India Magazine*. Finn has a DBA from the International School of Management.

How Inclusive Are We Really?

by Patricia Murugami

Recently, I was delighted to be running an Africa-wide Women in Leadership program at Strathmore Business School in Nairobi, Kenya. This two-day program was fascinating; with delegates coming from various African countries, we had very diverse participants including two women with disabilities.

As I started to facilitate the leadership sessions, I discovered that my natural habit of moving towards the participants to hear them and engage them in an integrated way of learning was proving to be an impediment. During the first session, someone pointed me towards the left where the delegate who could not hear was struggling to see her interpreter, as I had blocked her unknowingly due to my teaching movements. That was my first “aha” moment.

That evening I reflected: Was I suffering from unconscious bias? With all the research I had done on diversity and inclusion, was I blind and deaf towards the special needs of those with disabilities? How inclusive was I really in my work?

As the program continued, I was impressed at how all the delegates continued to look out for each other and understand the different viewpoints of their various cultures and attitudes. On the final day, I asked them to think about how they could be more inclusive in this age of diversity, and one big idea came up: Operation Build a Ramp. They observed that many buildings in their respective countries did not have access for those who used wheelchairs or had disabilities. This was discriminatory to them, and they committed to mobilizing their networks to build ramps and lifts.

As we graduated this cohort of progressive African Women in Leadership (recipients of the Australia Awards Scholarship for their master’s and doctoral educations), I learned something else from the Deputy High Commissioner of the Australia High Commission. As we presented the certificate to one of the delegates who was in a wheelchair, he knelt to be at the same level as she was, and I quickly followed suit for the certificate presentation. The lesson is that, to understand and respect others, we need to get to their level to see the world through their eyes.

What do you intend to do this year to strengthen your diversity and inclusion lenses? Here are 5 simple yet habit-changing ideas that you could consider:

1. Listen deeply with the intent to hear the unsaid.
2. Develop work processes that can be used by those who have physical disabilities or are underrepresented in your workplace and communities.
3. Turn quota systems into real progress by active mentoring to raise competent women, youth, and people with disabilities into leadership roles and, ultimately, to board service.
4. Develop heightened awareness on any discriminatory perceptions and unconscious bias that you may have. Upon knowing your blind spots, develop skills to reduce these biases.
5. Seek 360-degree informal and formal feedback to understand the impact you may have on others who are different from you. These could be customers, suppliers, team members, and other stakeholders in your ecosystem.

Together, let’s aim to be more inclusive and empathetic. Then we will change our world, inside out.



About the author

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AI and Bias in University Admissions

by Sara Stivers

New technologies are rapidly transforming the landscape of higher education across disciplines. Classrooms are harnessing the powers of virtual reality as an innovative approach to learning, and, through the development of MOOCs and open learning platforms online, access to knowledge has expanded globally. Institutions are using predictive analytics to identify struggling students in order to provide early interventions and improve retention.

In the world of university admissions, artificial intelligence is making waves as a new tool to sift through the applicant pool to uncover the best talent and predict which applicants will be the most successful. New software can measure criteria such as test scores, GPA, or grades, and make recommendations for acceptance based on predefined conditions set by the school. College admissions remains highly competitive with schools competing for top students and higher rankings. This automated process helps schools process through huge numbers of applications, saving staff time while providing deeper insight into candidate profiles.

In many ways, AI is being touted as a way to take individual bias out of the admissions process by removing the possibility of human-influenced discrimination of candidates. However, AI in areas such as admissions or hiring is often based on historic data sets that may unintentionally favor a specific candidate profile, therefore propagating existing inequalities.[1] “Bad inputs can mean biased outputs, which led to repercussions for women, the disabled and ethnic minorities,” states Wendy Hall, a UK-based professor of computer science who has studied AI in hiring processes.[2] This could pose significant concerns for university admissions, as AI becomes more and more prevalent. For example, a school may design an algorithm based on the data of their students who have the highest test scores, which could disproportionately represent one group of students. If success standards are defined by the data of a majority group, then the AI will have an implicit bias and default to excluding minority groups.

This is why experts stress the importance of having a diverse group of stakeholders throughout the design, development, and operation of the software.[3] Diverse input can help to offset some of the biases that may be built into algorithms. Many admissions professionals also stress that AI should not replace the human element of the application process. There will still be a

need for holistic admissions approaches to evaluate extracurricular activities, personal qualities, or creative talent to find students who are the right fit for the school. The impact AI can have on diversity and inclusion efforts is beginning to be studied in more depth for both its positive and negative impacts. The hope is that AI will work together with these holistic methods to continue to build diverse classes and provide access to higher education to underrepresented populations.



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About the author

Sara Stivers holds a Master in Education in higher education administration, with a bachelor’s in global studies and French. She is experienced in the areas of student services, academic advising, program management, and enrollment strategies in both the American and French higher education systems. Currently the Admissions Officer at the International School of Management, she is responsible for the recruitment of qualified students for the IMBA, DBA, and PhD degrees.

The Illusion of Diversity: Lessons Learned from Working with a West-African Supranational Organization

by Simon Stoepfgeshoff and Helen Emore

ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) consists of 15 countries and aims at strengthening the regional, economic, political, cultural, and social integration across its member states in West Africa. As such, it is comparable to the European Union, which has, however, reached higher levels of integration ever since its foundation. ECOWAS was founded more than 40 years ago and is headquartered in Abuja, Nigeria.

In 2018, we launched an organizational development initiative to strengthen the leadership maturity of directors and high-level professionals to take them to “the next level.” Working with senior management to develop more strategic leadership capabilities, the topic of diversity could not be left out. While from a European perspective the African continent and its countries might seem “homogenous,” cultural and ethnic diversity are amazingly high. In Nigeria alone, there are more than 300 ethnic groups.

A diverse ethnic mix of senior leaders might imply that diversity is a “given” and proactively embraced. What we experienced though was that exploiting diversity as a key asset for the ECOWAS organization remains a tremendous challenge. At first, many senior leaders felt principally positive about the diversity, even praising ECOWAS for its diverse workforce, but digging deeper and engaging them in the discussion made them realize that their understanding of diversity was rather limited and focused mostly on visible factors such as language, religious rituals, and dress code.

An additional layer of complexity of course is the political nature of the ECOWAS organization, where national interests are channeled through respective national employee groups – a risky pattern hard to avoid. Just one country, Nigeria, accounts for almost two thirds of the region’s economic weight, and the six Anglo-Saxon countries represent 80% of the economic power, against the eight French-speaking countries. This presents a more than difficult context for diversity. However, true diversity is a multifaceted concept spreading across cognitive, physical, societal, and value-based dimensions (e.g. religion, attitudes, spirituality). Not only acknowledging this but also using it to foster an organizational climate of innovation, trust, and recognition does not come easy. While on the surface issues like gender and culture were not identified as problematic in a climate marked by “political correctness,” they showed up clearly as key challenges in more individual discussions where participants were placed in peer-coaching situations.

So what can we do? Diversity needs to become a topic on the organization’s strategic agenda. While this needs to start with the political (statutory) commissioners at the top, at the end of the day, it is each and every employee of the organization who needs to live and model appropriate behaviors. It should start with continued investment into the awareness of diversity but extends to daily communication routines, encouraging teamwork in diverse teams and zero tolerance for discriminatory behaviors. One piece of anecdotal evidence that both authors witnessed working with the approximately 70 participants was the implicit expectation of the male participants that the female participants would take the notes. A small signal, but highly emblematic. Men, grab your pencils!



About the authors

Simon Stoepfgeshoff is a professor at the International School of Management and part of its core faculty, teaching in the fields of strategic human resources, leadership, change, and topics related to the future of work. As Director of Corporate Programs at the Executive School of the University of St. Gallen, he works with international companies to build and deliver tailor-made high-impact executive education programs. He started his career in HR consulting in Germany and France followed by senior HR roles at Hoffmann-La Roche in Switzerland and Alstom in Paris.

Helen Emore is a business and project development expert, an agribusiness specialist, and a sports business advocate. She is an adjunct faculty member at the Enterprise Development Centre of Pan-Atlantic University in Lagos and a guest lecturer at the Lagos Business School Agribusiness Management Programme. She is an independent non-executive director at STACO Insurance Plc and at Courteville Business Solutions Plc. She has over 26 years of post-graduate experience during which she worked with major national and multinational corporations across multiple sectors. Helen is the Chief Executive Officer of Aunty Helen Foods Processing Limited, co-founder of Scientia Consult, and a PhD candidate at the International School of Management.





Why Are There Still So Few Women in Leadership Positions?

by Adriana Torres



Gender equality has been gaining a steady stream of traction in the last few years, addressing the disparity between female and male employees in the workplace. A recent study conducted by McKinsey & Company pointed out that, while women represent more than 50% of the population worldwide and account for over 50% of the world's higher education graduates, only 25% occupy management positions.

According to Catalyst research (2017), the distribution of women in S&P 500 companies is as follows: 5.2% are CEOs, 11% are top earners, 21.2% sit on boards, 26.5% hold executive/senior-level or manager positions, 36.9% are first- or mid-level managers, and 44.7% are employees. This research begs the question, "If women represent 50% of the highly educated workforce, why are there so few women in leadership positions?" Shouldn't women also represent 50% of the leadership positions currently available?

Historically, women do not advance in their careers as fast as their male counterparts, and they also tend to be paid much less. Without question, the gender gap is still a global issue in the workplace. The "Getting to Equal 2017" research conducted by Accenture reveals that women earn an average of \$100 for every \$140 a man earns. The same research indicates that the pay gap could be closed in developed markets by 2044. While it's staggering to realize that salary parity is still nearly 30 years away, this study reveals that the year 2044 represents a date that is 36 years earlier than previously estimated.

It is important to remember that if women represent 50% of the working population, then they are also active consumers. They are savvy, smart, aware, and vital to the ever-changing market dynamic. Diverse teams – equal part male and female – increase your chances of succeeding, as they have a better understanding of the target market differences, niches, and customer needs.

In the aforementioned study, McKinsey & Company presents the macroeconomic case to show the advantage of closing the gender gap.

Closing or narrowing the global gender gap in the workplace could have a significant economic impact. Approximately \$12 trillion could be added to the annual global GDP in 2025. That represents an additional \$2.1 trillion to Western Europe's GDP in 2025, \$3.1 trillion in North America and Oceania, and \$2.5 trillion in China. Surprisingly, the highest potential boost to the 2025 GDP is in India and Latin America.

Many developed countries have labor laws that support equality in the workplace. Many, if not all, Fortune 500 companies have diversity and inclusion committees and initiatives. Yet, research still estimates that we will have to wait 26 more years to close the gender gap. Why should a qualified female employee that works equally hard and well as any of her male peers have less opportunities to get promoted or to be fairly compensated?

While there is no unilateral panacea, I believe the solution to this problem is very simple for private and public organizations: Put the right leaders in place, strive for fair and transparent human resources practices, and "walk the talk."



About the author

See page 5.

Recommended Reading from Harvard Business Review*

by Judy Knight

Emerson, J. (2017). Don't give up on unconscious bias training: Make it better. *Harvard Business Review Digital Articles, 2-5*. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=123076124&site=ehost-live>

Paradigm, a company that conducts organizational diversity training, recommends three tenets to guide the development of unconscious bias training sessions. These principles can increase the likelihood of positive and successful long-term outcomes.

Learn more: delve deeper into unconscious or implicit bias in the workplace with Catalyst at <https://www.catalyst.org/be-inclusive/unconscious-bias>.

Lorenzo, R., & Reeves, M. (2018). How and where diversity drives financial performance. *Harvard Business Review Digital Articles, 2-5*. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=128059075&site=ehost-live>

Over 1,700 companies from eight countries were surveyed to determine if there was a correlation between diversity variables and innovation and revenues. Companies with above-average diversity scores were found to have higher innovation revenues.

Learn more: research from McKinsey & Company in 2018 also found that over 1,000 companies with more diverse workforces performed better financially. The full report "Delivering through Diversity" can be found at <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/delivering-through-diversity>.

Neeley, T. (2015). Global teams that work. *Harvard Business Review, 93(10), 74-8*. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=109338239&site=ehost-live>

Multinational companies are challenged by a geographically dispersed workforce, and team projects are often complicated by social distance. The author, a consultant, researcher, and teacher in this field, developed the "SPFIT" framework (structure, process, language, identity, technology) based on components that can be sources of social distance and lead to global team dysfunction. The framework provides a way to identify and successfully manage social distance. She also provides "rules of engagement" for global team meetings.

Learn more: watch Tsedal Neeley's TedXTalk "Why Global Success Depends on Separating Language & Culture" at <https://youtu.be/B8VoxpR08Vg>.

Pruitt, A. S., Brinkworth, C., Young, J., & Aponte, K. L. (2018). 5 things we learned about creating a successful workplace diversity program. *Harvard Business Review Digital Articles, 2-7*. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=128881533&site=ehost-live>

The University Corporation for Atmospheric Research offers a four-part training course to employees called UNEION. Participants meet monthly for four months, and training includes a three-hour

bystander intervention training. Five key practices are outlined on how to implement a successful workplace diversity program based on this training course.

Learn more: you can view the UNEION course syllabus and materials at <https://www.ucar.edu/who-we-are/diversity-inclusion/community-resources/uneion-101>.

Sherbin, L., & Rashid, R. (2017). Diversity doesn't stick without inclusion. *Harvard Business Review Digital Articles, 2-5*. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=121272865&site=ehost-live>

Diversity and inclusion cannot be lumped together as equivalent, according to the author. One distinction is that diversity can be measured with headcounts, while inclusion is more difficult to quantify. Research done by the Center for Talent Innovation resulted in four practices that drive inclusion.

Learn more: read Deloitte Insights "The Diversity and Inclusion Revolution: Eight Powerful Truths" at <https://www2.deloitte.com/insights/us/en/deloitte-review/issue-22/diversity-and-inclusion-at-work-eight-powerful-truths.html>.

Zenger, J., & Folkman, J. (2017). Leaders aren't great at judging how inclusive they are. *Harvard Business Review Digital Articles, 2-5*. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=126004975&site=ehost-live>

The author administered 360-degree feedback assessments to 4,000 leaders from one large organization to see if leaders are as welcoming of diversity and inclusive as they think they are. The assessments showed that leaders who are the worst at valuing diversity are more likely to overrate their effectiveness, while leaders who are the most effective tend to underrate their effectiveness.

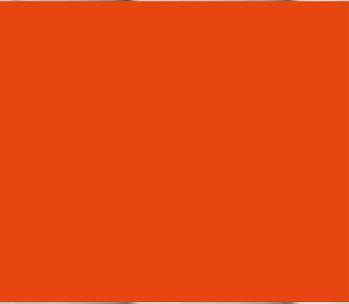
Learn more: Diversity Best Practices' "Bold and Inclusive Leadership: The Time is Now" incorporates self-awareness as one of the key differentiators of inclusive leaders: <https://www.diversitybestpractices.com/bold-and-inclusive-leadership-time-is-now>.



About the author

Judy Knight received her master's degree in library science from Kent State University in 1999, with a concentration in business, medical, and legal librarianship. She has worked for the International School of Management for five years and previously worked in the hospital setting as a medical librarian.

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-  [ismparis](https://www.instagram.com/ismparis)

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

We are committed to the advancement of our diversity and inclusion initiatives, and we welcome any feedback, suggestions, and articles from our community members. To share your thoughts, contact the DI internal working group members at **alison.knight@ism.edu** or **stephanie.naudin@ism.edu**.