A Global Examination of LGBT Workplace Equality Indices

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Our Book Chapter


LGBT Challenges

• Legal discrimination, few protections.

• Social stigma

• Violence

• Higher rates of poverty, challenge to livelihoods

• Occupational segregation, labor market discrimination
Move Toward Benchmarking

- Voluntary partnerships between corporations and LGBT civil society organisations

- Benchmarking efforts have arisen in the form of workplace equality indices that track and promote corporate policies of diversity and inclusion

- Most of these indices are centred around a particular country, with a few having a global reach & participation

- Change can be achieved by focusing on the business case, encouraging participation, and a sense of healthy competition
Our Research Rationale

• We offer one of the first cross-national analyses of various LGBT workplace equality indices

• Distinct lack of research on LGBT indices

• Interested parties are potentially missing out on key patterns, trends, emerging best practices, and common challenges

• We uncover critical observations that are based on a robust, evidence-based approach that provide insights for further research inquiry
Scope of Indices Included

- HRC’s Corporate Equality Index (CEI – U.S.)
- Stonewall’s Workplace Equality Index (WEI – U.K.)
- Fulcrum’s Ukrainian Corporate Equality Index (CEI – Ukraine)
- Forum’s South African Workplace Equality Index (SAWEI – South Africa)
- Presente’s Diversity and Equality Diagnostic (Empresas Presente – Peru)

Statement from LGBT Ukrainians in America:
Methodology and Analysis

• Semi-structured interviews with key informants

• Interview guide covered each index’s: origin and history; methodology utilized to approach corporations and collect data; additional applications; strengths and weaknesses; and future directions for the index

• Particular questions focused on the overall reason for its being, extent of private sector participation, challenges, potential impact, and indicators
Comparison of the Indices

We compared the strengths and weaknesses of the five indices across:

- content of the index
- approach to assessment and validation
- ranking, benchmarking, and reward systems
- reach and scope of participation
- extent of transparency and wider applications
# Ranking, Benchmarking, and Reward System

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>USA: HRC CEI</th>
<th>UK: Stonewall WEI</th>
<th>Ukraine: Fulcrum CEI</th>
<th>South Africa: The Forum SAWEI</th>
<th>Peru: Presente D&amp;E Diagnostic</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Strength</strong></td>
<td>Visible rankings of Fortune companies, and these inform other rankings. Listed according to score overall, as well as scoring by theme.</td>
<td>Lists online top 100 ranked organizations. Awards for specific best practice areas.</td>
<td>High scoring organizations have choice to be published in report, ranked in order of score. Organizations can receive follow-up trainings.</td>
<td>Published report details highest achieving organizations as Gold, Silver, Bronze. Those that score below threshold are not publicly reported.</td>
<td>Final report classifies more advanced organizations as “inspirer” and less advanced as “beginner”. Organizations can receive follow-up trainings.</td>
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<td><strong>Weakness</strong></td>
<td>Seems unlikely it can cover country offices of MNCs. All participants are listed and visible</td>
<td>Increased participation has led to lower probability of getting into Top 100. Limited feedback for those not in paid program. Only lists “Top 100”.</td>
<td>Given its broader remit, potentially hard to differentiate organizations specifically on LGBT issues. Only lists higher performing participants</td>
<td>Challenge to know which organizations took part and the progress each is making. Only lists higher performing participants</td>
<td>Challenge to know which organizations took part and the progress each is making. Does not list any name of participants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Reach and Scope of Participation</td>
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| USA              | HRC CEI       | **Strength**: No cost to participate. Focuses on large private sector organizations to ensure comparability. Participation rates have been rising.  
**Weakness**: No focus on small/medium sized organizations. Response rate difficult to track recently. |
| UK              | Stonewall WEI | **Strength**: No fee to take part but encouraged to pay for “Diversity Champion” program. **Wide range of sectors** represented, (at the time 2019 - rising participation).  
**Weakness**: Very hefty time/resources to participate. Difficulty in engaging small organizations. |
| Ukraine         | Fulcrum CEI   | **Strength**: Allied with other civil society groups to help boost participation. **No fee to participate in index or in follow-up trainings. Mostly MNCs.**  
**Weakness**: Significant challenge of engaging domestic organizations. |
| South Africa    | The Forum SAWEI | **Strength**: No cost to participate. Small level of participation, mostly from MNCs, professional/legal services, but expanding.  
**Weakness**: Less participation from domestic organization. |
| Peru            | Presente D&E Diagnostic | **Strength**: No cost to participate, in index or follow-up trainings. Has seen a rise in interest and participation over last year, yet most of this comes from MNCs.  
**Weakness**: Domestic organizations were not as interested to participate. |
## Extent of Transparency and Wider Applications

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<td>All methodology and indicators are online. Has been utilized within academic research. Has highly influenced indices emerging in other countries.</td>
<td>Conducts its own analysis of data. Facilitates sector-specific “knowledge sharing” networks. Has highly influenced indices emerging in other countries.</td>
<td>Methodology, indicators, index findings, are available in final reports, which are online. Findings directly feed into trainings.</td>
<td>Methodology, report findings, and indicators are available online. Has increased awareness and some competition among national organizations.</td>
<td>Methodology, report, and indicators are available online. Findings directly feed into trainings. Has allowed a public discussion on LGBT issues.</td>
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### Weakness

- Limited research on employee outcomes, or changes in implementation over time.
- Limited information online, hesitant to share indicators to the public.
- Index is on hiatus, partly due to difficulties in engaging with potential funders/policy makers.
- Wider applications not apparent yet. Small number of participants.
- Wider applications not necessarily apparent, since it is now in the second year.
Discussion

• All have ambitions to strengthen capacity for long-lasting positive change

• Yet, variation exists in extent to which systematic review is in place

• Three core areas for the future: growth, participation, lived experience

• Need to validate employer data with employee surveys and/or independent research to analyse employer data
Conclusion

• First cross-national comparisons of LGBT workplace equality indices

• Growing appetite for change through these indices (e.g., societal)

• Still, significant challenges exist that need addressing for sustainability

• Overall, positive with a growing number of indices emerging

• More established indices can help support newer, emerging indices