

Politics and regulation

Expanding gender, ethnic and sociocultural diversity

The National Research University Higher School of Economics Institute for Statistical Studies and Economics of Knowledge (HSE ISSEK) presents the results of a human capital trends study. The study methodology included big data mining using the HSE ISSEK-developed **iFORA system**, expert sessions, and a Delphi survey of more than 400 leading international and Russian scientists specialising in human capital.

The project is being implemented by the World-Class Human Capital Multidisciplinary Research Centre and the UNESCO Futures Studies Chair (UNESCO Futures Literacy Chairs network). A complete list of trends is available at the unique open-access database at https://ncmu.hse.ru/chelpoten_trends.

This trendletter is based on data obtained from issek.hse.ru, rosstat.gov.ru, eshre.eu, pubmed.com, statista.com, thelancet.com, gminsights.com, and who.int.

The authors are fully responsible for the selection and presentation of the material in this publication and the opinions expressed therein, which are not necessarily shared by UNESCO.

The Trend's Structure

- **Spreading a culture of equal opportunity**

The development of a culture of diversity and equality of representatives of different ethnic and social groups, generations and minorities is facilitated by demographic changes, the acceleration of migration processes, economic factors, as well as the aggravation of issues related to the equality of people of different ethnic or national origins. Despite the progress achieved through the efforts of international and human rights organizations, governments and businesses, problems remain related to the lack of inclusion in the workplace, ageism (caused, in particular, by the increase in the proportion of older people and the duration of working activity), the unequal participation of women in the economy and politics, etc.

One way to ensure equal opportunities is to create an inclusive environment. In the world, 17% of the population has some form of disability, of which 80% are able-bodied people aged 18 to 64 years. The legislation of various countries increasingly establishes norms that require hiring employees with disabilities. Due to the widespread introduction of assistive technologies, the number of employed citizens in this category can increase significantly.

The reduction of the working-age population will push companies to invest in maintaining

- **Creating an inclusive environment**

- **Eradicating ageism**

the employment of the elderly. Leading corporations are already creating conditions that meet the needs of the older generation: they organize ergonomic spaces (Porsche), introduce cobots to reduce physical activity (BMW), attract retired employees as consultants (Bilfinger, Daimler). Measures are also increasingly being taken to increase women's participation in economic and political life. According to forecasts, the GDP of OECD countries could increase by \$2 trillion if the gender pay gap can be reduced, and by \$6 trillion if women's employment in each member country rises to the level reached in Sweden.

Many violations of civil, economic, and political rights occur on the basis of race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, and language. Issues of protecting minority rights have been on the international agenda for over 60 years and remain relevant. In the corporate sphere, discrimination manifests itself in the infringement of workers' rights and an unfavorable working atmosphere. Ascriptive status can still play an important role in a person's career advancement. At the state and international levels, in the context of increasing ideological and value factors in world politics, issues of national and ethnic identity and related historical facts are subject to manipulation.

- **Combating ethnic discrimination**

Key Estimates

30 times

has increased the number of references to the concept of “culture of equal opportunities” in public statements by representatives of large companies over the past 10 years

The Trend’s Characteristics



Impact on human capital¹

1

2

3



Weak signal²

The growing importance of a culture of equal opportunity



Strongest manifestation period

After 2030



Wild card³

Widespread use of AI to eliminate bias (e.g. in court or when applying for jobs)



Effect of COVID-19 pandemic

Did not affect the development of the trend



Consequences of the wild card event actually taking place

The persistence of inequality in the least developed countries



Presence in Russia

Below the world level

¹ 1 = weak, 2 = medium, 3 = strong.

² Weak signals are insignificant (rarely mentioned or discussed) events which indicate the trend may radically change in the future.

³ “Wild cards” are difficult-to-predict events which, if they do happen, can significantly affect the trend.

Drivers and Barriers



Drivers

- Demographic changes
- Structural changes in the labor market
- Strengthening the value component in business
- Human rights advocacy
- Intensification of issues related to equality among representatives of various ethnic and social groups, generations, and minorities
- Activities of human rights activists



Barriers

- Lack of attention to diversity issues at governmental and corporate levels
- Insufficient measurable criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of inclusive approaches
- Strong influence of cultural differences and persistence of stereotypical thinking

Trend Effects



Opportunities

- Development of an inclusive environment, a culture of equality and diversity in the corporate environment
- Dissemination of relevant programs in educational institutions



Threats

- Politicization of issues of national, ethnic, religious, linguistic, gender identity
- Preservation of stereotypical thinking (mainly in societies with low levels of access to education)