

EAWOP Small Group Meeting – Call for Submissions

COVID-19 and the asymmetric impact on careers and work-life balance of women and ethnic minority individuals

9th-10th January 2022, Adam Smith Business School, University of Glasgow

Proposed Aims of SGM

Our proposed SGM seeks to advance our empirical and conceptual understanding of both the medium and long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic for women and ethnic minority employees' careers, work-life balance and senior leadership ambitions. We will do this through the exploration of four sub-themes:

1. How has the pandemic shaped the professional job prospects and career progressions at all levels for women and ethnic minority employees?
2. What are the long-term career consequences of pandemic health and wellbeing issues for women and ethnic minorities?
3. What are the consequences of the pandemic for balancing work and family life with the ongoing impact of the pandemic?
4. What practical support can work psychology provide organisations and policy makers in ameliorating these consequences of employees and their talent pipelines?

These four sub-themes address distinct yet related facets of the challenges we face and the ongoing impact of the pandemic at the intersection of gender, ethnicity, careers, wellbeing and work-life engagement. Collectively, the exploration and analysis of the first three questions improves our understanding of the structural and institutional challenges and opportunities that we face in rebuilding the future of work for Europe and the UK as we learn to live with COVID-19. Second, through attention to the fourth question, we seek to bring together researchers, practitioners and policymakers to set agendas and provide briefings and other practical evidence-based guidance aimed at improving women and ethnic minority groups' work prospects and work-related wellbeing post-pandemic, and through this ensure more inclusive and prosperous societies. In particular, our format is designed to provide knowledge exchange and cross-national learning across Europe to understand responses to the pandemic. Finally, through a problem-focused enquiry we open discussion and debate across policy, academia and practice to facilitate more productive dialogues with impacts beyond our professional silos to produce cross-sector discussions, cooperation and research. Only through harnessing the power of this triumvirate can we better understand and respond to the impacts of the pandemic for women and ethnic minority employees' careers, wellbeing and work-life engagement.

Contribution of SGM

The European continent as a collective has been hard hit by the health and mortality impact of COVID-19, with well over half a million fatalities since the start of the pandemic (European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, 2021). However, the financial impact is likely to be felt across the world long after vaccines have been rolled out, and the relative economic impacts across the continent in terms of work, employment, work-life balance and wellbeing are far reaching, and long lasting. Both the EU and the UK have publicly committed to use the pandemic as a springboard to build a more equitable and resilient economy, and we believe women and ethnic minority communities are central to doing this. Thus, we seek through the SGM to further our understanding of how we can build on good practice learnt

from the pandemic, but crucially start a conversation about how we address the institutional and structural factors that made women and ethnic minority communities so exposed and vulnerable and how we can shape and engage with institutional parameters to positively develop and improve the careers, lives and wellbeing of women and ethnic minorities. We aim to address conceptual, empirical and methodological advances in understanding these issues in relation to (but not limited to) the following research questions:

1. **Early careers** - How has the pandemic impacted women and ethnic minority employees who are starting out on their professional career? What positive initiatives have been developed?
2. **Home working and career progression** – What has been the impact on the professional career progression of women and ethnic minority employees who were able to work from home during the pandemic? Are there any best practices or initiatives that have been helpful? What role has policy played in these situations?
3. **Mental health & wellbeing** – What are the mental health and wellbeing implications for women and ethnic minority employees stemming from home working? Are there sustained impacts of lockdown on mental health that shape women and ethnic minorities' desire or motivation to work outside the home? What positive examples are there of how to best support mental health?
4. **Career ambitions** – How has the pandemic shaped professional women and ethnic minority employees' career ambitions? How have organizations responded?
5. **Key workers** – How have the experiences of working at the frontline in public-facing roles during the pandemic impacted women and ethnic minority keyworkers' career ambitions, prospects, motivations or mental health? What steps are being taken to arrest the burnout of those in these critical roles?
6. **Career success** – What are the positive impacts on women and ethnic minority employees' careers from changes to our working structures following the pandemic? How can we leverage this for a post-pandemic world of work? Has the pandemic led to a reassessment of what constitutes career success?
7. **National institutions** - What are the national level institutional structures, such as welfare provisions, labour market characteristics and national cultural factors shaping labour market outcomes for women and ethnic minority employees in a post COVID-19 world? What have been the policy successes?
8. **Executive and senior leadership** - What are the long-term impacts on the corporate executive leadership pipeline of the pandemic, and the leadership diversity agenda? What are the long-term implications for professional women and ethnic minorities whose professional careers were interrupted by the pandemic and their desire to reach the upper echelons of their profession? How have organisations tried to retain these talent programmes?
9. **Work-life balance** - What are the on-going consequences of the pandemic for balancing work and family life? What initiatives should be retained going forward?

Meeting format, location and date

The format of this small group meeting (25-30 participants) is designed to foster extensive discussions, constructive feedback, research collaboration, policy and practitioner impact around women's and ethnic minorities' post-pandemic career outcomes. Across the two days, there will be six paper sessions from submissions based around the research themes of job prospects and careers; health and well-being; and work and family-life balance. There will also be two keynote academic speakers. In addition, on each day there will be an interactive panel session. The first of these will focus on policy, with different countries taking differing approaches to supporting women and ethnic minority careers both pre- and during the pandemic. Policy considerations will be discussed, with policy-makers and the academic audience, to support optimal career and wellbeing outcomes for these groups. The second

interactive panel will focus on practitioners, where again a cross-fertilisation of academic and practitioner understanding and approaches will focus on practical solutions to propose to individuals and organisations.

The meeting will be held over two days on 9th-10th January 2022. The meeting will be held at University of Glasgow in Scotland, United Kingdom, preceding the annual EAWOP Conference. Glasgow is Scotland's largest city and recently voted the world's friendliest city. The University is Scotland's second oldest, founded in 1451. (See <https://www.gla.ac.uk/explore/history/>). Glasgow has good access to Europe through regular domestic and international flights to Glasgow and Edinburgh airports. It has good train and motorway access, too.

Attendance at the workshop involves a small fee of €100 (€50 for PhD students). Tea, coffee, lunches and conference dinner on Sunday 9th are provided by courtesy of EAWOP sponsorship. In addition, there will be a Welcome Drinks Reception on the evening of Saturday 8th January. Participants need to provide for their own travel and accommodation costs. Participants whose papers are selected for presentation will be advised of suitable hotels and locations when their presentation proposal is accepted.

Submission of extended abstracts

Extended abstracts (max of 1000 words) should be submitted by 15th July 2021 to Ruth Sealy (r.sealy@exeter.ac.uk). Please structure extended abstracts around the following headings: statement of the problem (including the objectives of the research); description of the method, e.g., review, conceptual, empirical, and so on; and contributions (how addressing the problem advances our understanding of women's and/or ethnic minority career outcome post-pandemic, plus any practical or policy implications). Conceptual and empirical contributions are welcome. Empirical papers can use any rigorous research designs and should describe methods, sampling and sample size, measures/analysis and findings. Conceptual papers should pose specific and unanswered questions and/or make specific and novel predictions. Participants will be notified of the decision by the end of September 2021.

The organizers will look for opportunities to publish a selection of the papers as a special issue of an academic journal (e.g., *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology – EJWOP*, *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology - JOOP*), and/or to contribute to a position paper for EJWOP. There is also the possibility of a White Paper, given the focus on policy and practitioner contributions, and a policy brief for the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. These will focus on the key outcome of the meeting - setting agendas towards improving women's and ethnic minorities' post-pandemic career prospects, with implications for more inclusive and prosperous societies.

More information and updates

Please follow us on Twitter (@RuthSealy, @jlg27 (Johanne Grosvold), @drdeeanderson, @ProfSearle, @EAWOPI – the EAWOP Impact Incubator) for information and updates on the meeting organization. **To receive more information please, contact Ruth Sealy (R.Sealy@exeter.ac.uk).**