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**World Employment Confederation (WEC)
Conference Report
6 – 8 September 2021
“Steering a labour market in Transformation”**

SA Participants: Bev Jack (CAPES/APSO)
Jacqui Ford (APSO)
Face-2-face attendees 23 (paying & organisers/support)
Virtual attendees 323

OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMME: 53rd ANNUAL CONFERENCE, 6 – 8 September 2021

The 53rd Annual Conference which was hosted in Madrid and accommodated face-to-face and virtual participation, centred around 4 main themes, namely:

- Leveraging Technological Change
- Understanding Changing Employee Expectations
- Thrive Under Increased Uncertainty
- Focus on Spain and Latin America

**6 – 8 September 2021 WORLD EMPLOYMENT CONFEDERATION CONFERENCE, MADRID
“Steering a labour market in transformation”**

Day 1: Programme

Opening Ceremony: Bettina Schaller - World Employment Confederation
Andreu Cruañas - ASEMPLEO

Keynote address: Peter Hinnsen -The Day After Tomorrow: Seizing Opportunity

Networking Session: Changing Employee Expectations – Robin Lechtenfeldt WEC

Break-out: The Future Workplace: Can Hybrid Really Work for Everyone?

Adam Hawkins · LinkedIn EMEA & LATAM

L. Reed Kennedy · Coffreo

Marie Puybarand · JLL Work Dynamics

Break-out: Talent Exchange

Jessica Bayon - A. Nebrija University

Santos Miguel Ruesga · Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

Bettina Schaller · World Employment Confederation

Bruno Pérez

Sponsor Break-out: LinkedIn - How to create impact with your executive voice

Day 2: Programme

Break-out: Platform Technologies: Business as Usual, or Radical Revolution?

Menno Bart · The Adecco Group

Adam Pode · Staffing Industry Analysts

Thomas Jajeh · Randstad Sourceright

Marius Osterfeld · Swiss Staffing Association

Keynote: Kemi Nekvapil - Building the Capacity to Recover

Keynote/coaching covering three crucial components to build personal & team capacity
Plenary: Speak Up! An Open Forum Where Labour Market Challenges are Shared & Solutions Found
Charles Cameron · RCSA Australia and New Zealand
Break-out: It's More than Money: What People Want in the New World of Work
Michael Freytag · World Employment Confederation
Jerick Develle · The Adecco group
Christina Behrendt · ILO
Ahu Yildirmaz · ADP Research Institute
Break-out: The Currency of Future Labour Markets: What If We Could Measure Worker Employability
Brian Holland · American University
Julie Fionda · European Commission
Networking Session: Thrive Under Increased Uncertainty

Day 3: Programme

Break-out: The New Talent Frontier - Opportunities for the HR Services Industry
Kristine Langenbucher · OECD
Madeline Hill · Randstad
Elodie Fazi · European Commission
Jurriën Koops · ABU
Plenary Panel Discussion: Policy Action! Enabling Labour Markets in Transformation
Roberto Suárez Santos · International Organisation of Employers (IOE)
Bettina Schaller · World Employment Confederation
Sangheon LEE · International Labour Organization (ILO)
Stefano Scarpetta · OECD
Sharan Burrow · International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)
Break-out: Are We Walking the Talk? How to Drive Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in the World of Work
Bev Jack · Moderator - APSO
Michelle Nettles – Manpower Group
Kate Shoemith · The Recruitment & Employment Confederation (REC)
Rui Rocheta · GiGroup
Break-out: I Didn't Think of That! What You Really Need to Know about Implementing AI Technology
Rob McCargow · PwC UK
Gabriele Molteni · Arca24
Glen Cathey · Randstad
Anny Pinto · The Adecco Group
Anna Milanez · Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
Keynote: Philippe Silberzahn- How Leaders Deal with Disruptions and Radical Uncertainty
Conference Close: From Talk to Action – Denis Pennel

CORE THEMES

Leveraging Technological Change

This stream in the conference addressed how technological change can be harnessed to enhance recruitment supply chains and the management of the workforce. It sought to uncover the solutions the employment and recruitment industry offers, which ensure benefits to both workers and businesses alike.

Understanding Changing Employee Expectations

Whether in an office or remotely, workers' preferences and expectations will drive the future of work. From reimagining the human experience at work to offering a new employee value proposition, this conference stream also addressed how we can collectively build a more diverse, equal and inclusive world of work.

Thrive Under Increased Uncertainty

This stream of the conference showed what solutions exist today, from career guidance and new leadership and workforce management models, to build more organizational and personal resilience helping business to thrive, rather than just survive in this ever-changing world of work.

Focus on Spain and Latin America

The conference took a closer look at how the various trends driving transformation affect labour markets in both Spain and Latin America and how they add on to existing challenges such as globalisation and mobility. The different sessions offered resources to make this new reality coexist with a labour market that continues to maintain levels of security and decent working conditions. Similarities to South Africa market – limited job opportunities; skills developed in public institutions attracted by external market opportunities; and restricted labour legislation in some Latin American countries.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. This format of a blended conference had significant deficiencies. In consideration of future hosting of this, or similar events, to seek either face-2-face or online. Virtual programmes present different needs including duration of daily sessions and methodologies for engagement/interaction of delegates.
2. The “Never Normal” topics and content afford CAPES and its members to differentiate and position as thought-leaders. Opportunities to be sought through PR as well as information exchanges with relevant stakeholders. The Mega trends have been introduced to the SA staffing industry through Kryptonite’s Magnificent 7. These can be considered through the lens of the employer and employee.
3. As subject matter experts, introduce and drive the concept of “Simplexity”, simplifying the increasing labour market complexity. Both employers and the State can be targeted; there are numerous examples through the Covid TERS funding of the lack of knowledge and understanding of the new world of work. Trends include the progress from JIT (Just in Time) to JIC (Just in Case) reflecting competencies to operate in uncertain markets.
4. Explore & look at opportunities to communicate “What has really changed in the Workplace”

Accelerated Trends	New Impacts	Pendulum Swings
Remote and dispersed workforce	From just-in-time to just-in-case	Restrictions (cross border) labour mobility
Digitalisation and Automation	Reinventing social interactions at work	From global supply chains to inshoring
Polarisation of labour markets	Health and safety / well-being issues	The return of Welfare States
Increasing uncertainty in running business	Need to redefine critical skills	From business growth to resilience and efficiency
Wider use of diverse forms of work	Output-centred work	Lower attractivity of large cities
↓	↓	↓
Hybrid Work	Increased Complexity	New Business Environment

5. Explore mechanisms and approaches to address the trend of ‘hyper connectivity’ in order to connect differently with a broad range of stakeholders including current / potential members
6. Monitor policy and regulatory developments through WEC relating to Platform Technologies and AI application to ensure appropriate regulation without stifling business progress and opportunities

7. The LinkedIn presentation on the increased importance of having strong, vocal leadership reinforced that when leaders speak, people listen. The presentation which has been requested or with presentation by LinkedIn as an offering to members, could enable industry members to “Find their voice”.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Overview of Programme

The programme was structured around the four core themes, namely:

- Leveraging Technological Change
- Understanding Changing Employee Expectations
- Thrive Under Increased Uncertainty
- Focus on Spain and Latin America

Three excellent keynote speakers. There were attempts to structure the Panel discussions and Break-outs to ensure different insights presented. Varying global perspectives, with mature countries in Europe facing the war for talent and ageing populations expressing different labour market and economic needs from countries such as Spain and South Africa, with high unemployment, as well as a loss of skilled talent to developed nations.

The programme also highlighted the differentiation between the corporate role-players and the SME sector, with the global corporates sharing advances in technologies to complement service delivery, with bold visions and creative mindsets. The need for a human-centred agenda was identified, with Private Employment Services increasing their HR Services offerings with Skills Development identified as a focus area.

Whilst the 3 x keynote speakers enriched the programme, in general, having shifted from its planned face-2-face format, to a blended programme delivered to an online audience, the conference was, to an extent, disappointing. On reflection, the full day sessions were too long and lacked delegate engagement, through a lack of interaction. Despite this, it was a rich learning experience. Global trends and similarities; many countries implementing Diversity and Inclusion strategies and policies; the changing expectation of workers and digital not the “cherry on the cake”, it is the cake. Transient competitive advantage in the exponential world, as opposed to sustainable competitive advantage.

Employee expectations were presented through a range of surveys and studies; overwhelming the trend that employees have no appetite to return to the old “normal”, seeking the flexibility and positives which the pandemic introduced such as remote work from home and flexibility in working hours.

Key message: Never normal (Peter Hinssen) recognising the non-linear, super fluid, hyper connected and ultra-speed of the new world of work. Principle of AC/BC – Before Covid/After Covid where the old normal does not exist anymore. The world is getting more disorderly.

6 SEPTEMBER 2021: DAY 1 - WORLD EMPLOYMENT CONFEDERATION CONFERENCE

Welcome – Positive positioning of the industry – Build back better

32 Countries present – 45 National Federations

Current terminology and positioning - HR Services Industry

Trends – Remote work -life around work, rather than work around life; diversity in work; war for talent
HR Services sector ideally positioned to enable addressing the key levers:

Digitalisation

Diverse Workforce

Productivity and well-being

Diversity and Inclusion

Social innovation

Keynote 1: The Never Normal – Peter Hinssen

The mega trends to the Never-normal (very similar to Kryptonite's Magnificent 7) needed to be considered in terms of their impact on employers and employees.

Non-linear (specifically skills needs) Super fluid – flexibility

Hyper connected Ultra speed

Not “digital natives” but “network natives”

Strategy for the “never normal” – bold on vision, flexible on details

Need to look at the day after tomorrow:

 Today – Current value

 Tomorrow – Future value

 The Day after Tomorrow – Long term value

Extremely engaging presenter

Networking Session: Changing Employee Expectations – Robin Lechtenfeldt WEC

Open discussion primarily focussed on the desire by employees to remain in the “new normal”

Issues included autonomy, self-management, flexibility of working time, desire for independence

Desire to return no more than 2 or 3 days to work

Surprisingly no losses/negative impacts expressed (loss of direct human connection)

Trend applied to white and blue-collar workers (being cognisant of workplace restrictions due to the nature of the work i.e., not all work can be done remotely)

Break-out: The Future Workplace: Can Hybrid Really Work for Everyone?

 Adam Hawkins · LinkedIn EMEA & LATAM

 L. Reed Kennedy · Coffreo

 Marie Puybarand · JLL Work Dynamics

Culture shift and a change of management attitudes

The need to match workforce capabilities with leadership capabilities – Trust and the trust deficit

Remote work broadens diversity of the workforce – access to new talent pools

Break-out: Talent Exchange

 Jessica Bayon - A. Nebrija University

 Santos Miguel Ruesga · Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

 Bettina Schaller · World Employment Confederation

 Bruno Pérez

The new realities facing the future of work present complex issues including knowledge transfer, constant training throughout our working lives and how organisations manage the flow of talent.

Two key variables:

 Time – Development and upskilling take time

 Education – need of a national system to deliver skills to meet labour market needs

Addressed issues similar to South Africa where the majority of training is in the hands of the public sector, with inefficient and ineffectual use of funding

Talent leakages – developing countries losing skilled learners / workers to developed countries

Sponsor Break-out: LinkedIn - How to create impact with your executive voice

The importance of strong, vocal leadership, both internally and externally

 Employees expect greater transparency – when leaders speak people listen

 Culture has been diluted / damaged by remote work

Demonstrated how reach and impact can grow as interaction is increased and enhanced

Valuable capacity building tools – presentation has been requested as feel it would be useful for membership upskilling

7 SEPTEMBER 2021: DAY 2 - WORLD EMPLOYMENT CONFEDERATION CONFERENCE

Break-out: Platform Technologies: Business as Usual, or Radical Revolution?

Menno Bart · The Adecco Group
Adam Pode · Staffing Industry Analysts
Thomas Jajeh · Randstad Sourceright
Marius Osterfeld · Swiss Staffing Association

Technology is not the differentiator, but through technological adoption new business models arise Platform Technology (PT) forces the re-evaluation of services, as can offer relatively simple transactional solutions, replacing traditional service offerings and models

The competitive advantage is how the technology is used and how it adds value to the solution, in a customer-first era

The large corporates are building on technologies as well as acquiring digital services, as these can add to a better functioning labour market

Some “uberisation” of recruitment services – low profile, ease to fill, flexible and temporary staffing

The same principle should be applied to technological solutions i.e., no fees to work seekers

Policy makers need to recognise platform technologies, step up regulatory efforts but not stifle opportunities

Keynote: Kemi Nekvapil - Building the Capacity to Recover

Keynote/coaching covering three crucial components to build personal & team capacity. Before knowing what, we are capable of now, we need to understand what capacity means and:

What has worked in the past (reflections)?
What is missing now?
What resources and mindsets will move us forward?

Approach proposed: Consider REALITY REFLECTIONS RESOURCES

A powerful presentation which reinforced the importance of TRUST as the new fundamental

Plenary: Speak Up! An Open Forum Labour Market Challenges are Shared & Solutions Found

Charles Cameron · RCSA Australia and New Zealand

One of the few interactive sessions where overviews were provided on country status and initiatives

- Several countries are facing regulatory challenges despite increased employer demand for flexible labour (Germany, Norway, Netherlands)
- To mitigate risks, Norway confederation implemented a regional / provincial strategy to connect with and influence new political decision makers
- Australia working with the Chartered Institute of Procurement Supply to stop the race to the bottom

Break-out: It's More than Money: What People Want in the New World of Work

Michael Freytag · World Employment Confederation
Jerick Develle · The Adecco group
Christina Behrendt · ILO
Ahu Yildirmaz · ADP Research Institute

There is no doubt that the pandemic has radically shifted what we want from work. The lines between work and play have blurred and workers no longer want compromise on their preferred ways of working

Overarching trends: Workers' needs

Flexibility Autonomy Stability

Realtime learning Meaning (Personal)
The 4 Cs for leaders to reconnect with the Disconnected
 Confidence, culture and diversity
 Collaboration and soft skills
 Coaching and Emotional Intelligence
 Communication

The ILO has finalised its 2021 Report on Universal Social Protection for inclusive cover of workers including part-time, temp, self-employed

Break-out: Currency of Future Labour Markets: What If We Could Measure Worker Employability

Brian Holland · American University
Julie Fionda · European Commission

Recruitment is one of the costliest and potentially riskiest investments that organisations face. The presentation outlined a conceptual framework for measuring gains in employability. It also offered a benchmarking tool to assess capabilities of candidates to enter and progress in the labour market.

- There is a perceived danger that the use of a predictive index could reinforce bias against a disadvantaged group (s)
- The ESCO (European Skills, Competencies, Qualifications and Occupations) classification seeks to standardise identification and terminology for categories of skills for the labour market. It is being aligned to the OECD Skills taxonomy and the US ONET.
- Labour Force participation by occupation is an important measure and Private Employment Agencies are perceived to be role players in advocating for standardisation

Networking Session: Thrive Under Increased Uncertainty

Poorly attended session

Co-design and co-creation were common elements identified when partnering with stakeholders including government, when addressing market place challenges

France has introduced a Skills Tool, an enabler, to allow employers freely to access skilled candidates

8 SEPTEMBER 2021: DAY 3 - WORLD EMPLOYMENT CONFEDERATION CONFERENCE

Break-out: The New Talent Frontier - Opportunities for the HR Services Industry

Kristine Langenbucher · OECD
Madeline Hill · Randstad
Elodie Fazi · European Commission
Jurriën Koops · ABU

Approaches to reconnect people with jobs including Public Private Partnerships (PPP)

The PES network shares best practice and recommended bilateral agreements are part of the pathway to building formalised partnerships

Numerous partnerships throughout Europe – both low and high intensity – areas of commonality:

 Sharing vacancies
 Coaching programmes / services for young people

Need to recognise the diverse objectives of the partners, including that PrEAs have a profit motive

A pilot model – Recruitability – which addresses diversity and Inclusion of People with Disabilities was presented by Randstad Australia

Plenary Panel Discussion: Policy Action! Enabling Labour Markets in Transformation

Roberto Suárez Santos · International Organisation of Employers (IOE)
Bettina Schaller · World Employment Confederation
Sangheon LEE · International Labour Organization (ILO)
Stefano Scarpetta · OECD

Sharan Burrow · International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)

The need for Governments to take action and provide appropriate policy frameworks, post pandemic was debated by the panel

There needs to be agreement on the reforms needed

It is broader than job recovery; job creation must be at the core

Prioritise and capitalise on growth areas – green jobs; health care

Strengthen skills and development systems

Promotion of diverse forms of work

Facilitate government actions to transform rural communities

Break-out: Are We Walking the Talk? How to Drive Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in World of Work

Bev Jack · Moderator - APSO

Michelle Nettles – Manpower Group

Kate Shoesmith · The Recruitment & Employment Confederation

Rui Rocheta · GiGroup

Focus on three key issues:

1. What women want (from work) – Principle of Conscious Inclusion
2. Importance of data driven approaches to enable Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace (REC Study)
3. Best practice – Inclusion of People with Intellectual Disabilities (GiGroup)
Awareness Authenticity Accountability

Making parity a reality: Actions Employers can Take

10 Ways Employers Can Progress to Parity			
01	Communicate the benefits	06	Make goals measurable
02	Remove obstacles	07	Focus on output
03	Make work from home work	08	Identify adjacent skills sets for new roles
04	Start with yes	09	Approach learnability as the great equalizer
05	Leadership owns it	10	Hire for soft skills

External Public ManpowerGroup | What Women Want (at work) 6

Break-out: I Didn't Think of That! What You Really Need to Know about Implementing AI Tech

Rob McCargow · PwC UK

Gabriele Molteni · Arca24

Glen Cathey · Randstad

Anny Pinto · The Adecco Group

Anna Milanez · Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

AI stands to change the HR Services industry, but implementing it is not as straightforward as portrayed. Industry leaders shared how to leverage and shape AI implementation plans, addressing digital adoption and emerging technologies which are defining how we engage with the workplace

- Opportunities to drive economic growth and employability through improving labour market efficiencies
- Potential use of AI in HR, not just focused on high skilled employees, but an enabler to inclusion
- Need to be alert to potential discriminatory and unfair application. Bias can be subtle, and non-explicitly discriminatory

AI is often dependent on data – clean data, ease of access and data protection

European Commission is addressing AI Regulations with the draft out for public comment.

Have followed a risk-based approach

HR Services have been classified ‘high risk’ as dealing with individual’s personal data

Compliance and governance to ensure accountable processes foreshadowed to be implemented by 2024

Opportunities for small businesses, as there are numerous off the shelf solutions

Digital transformation is a dynamic transformation process – not static

Keynote: Philippe Silberzahn- How Leaders Deal with Disruptions and Radical Uncertainty

A snapshot of what it takes for leaders to embrace uncertainty, perpetual change and a complex economic environment

Radical and sudden challenges of models

Some organisations faltered; others thrived

In uncertainty, look at “your true self”

Importance of collaboration – humans collaborate on complex issues and we share stories (mental models)

A company is set up to create value based on a set of beliefs

In uncertainty, leaders need to find an anchor to lead, which should be the true self of the organisation

Outstanding keynote address reaffirming that the ‘true self’ is the deep identity of the organisation

Conference Close: From Talk to Action – Denis Pennel

The role of the HR Services industry in steering a Labour Market in Transformation

1. Support the transition to new economies
 - Reskill workforce to drive sustainable recovery
 - Delivering diverse working models and career management to facilitate transitions
 - Supporting adaptation to change by delivering agility and flexibility in solutions
2. Drive social purpose and social inclusion
 - Connecting people to work, delivering diversity, equality and inclusion
 - Improving social protection mechanisms to cover new forms of work
 - Contribute to reduce informality in the labour market by offering decent and sustainable forms of work
3. Simplifying increasing labour market complexity (**simplicity**)
 - Contributing to an in-depth understanding of the reality of labour markets (talent analytics, job vacancies, shortages of skills etc) thanks to research and field expertise
 - Developing digital solutions to simplify and automate routine tasks (HR analytics, e-signature, ID checks etc)
 - Implementing sustainable “hybrid” work models that recognise the shift to remote and flexible work

4. Act as a solution provider in terms of risk management
Playing a pivotal role in managing and mitigating risks related to health and safety, productivity, skills obsolescence, business failure, talent supply chain etc
Main new risks – uncertainty and volatility, matching stop and go economy labour demands, fill gaps by sickness or leave, find niche specialists
5. Deliver responsible intermediation and make jobs markets work
Delivering new forms of work under an organised and regulated framework
Ensuring a high degree of compliance with labour laws and protecting the interests of workers and end users
Committed to constructive industrial relations resulting in positive outcomes for all parties

Call to Policy Makers: From Talk to Action!

1. Promote diverse forms of work to enable labour market inclusion and formulisation.
2. Develop effective activation and transition support (ALMP) to enable workers and business to mitigate impact of the pandemic.
3. Support re-and up-skilling as a joint investment (life-long learning).
4. Encourage social innovation to make social protection schemes future proof.
5. Enable the positive contribution of the private employment services by adopting supportive regulation at national level.

54th World Employment Confederation Conference 2022: TBA

No launch of the 2022 Conference; to be advised following reflections on 2021.
Foreshadowed to be held in May/June 2022

Stakeholder engagement and networking

- Standard engagement & networking with conference participants severely hampered by online delivery, as limits the depth of engagement and the meeting of new role players
- Have very visible and active presence through Jacqui Ford's WEC Board representation
- Represented industry as Moderator of the Best Practice session
- Invited to share industry "innovation" in plenary dialogue – presented Wits CAPES programme

Report submitted by:
Bev Jack and Jacqui Ford
15 September 2021

Annexure: WEF Skills at Work – A Global Taxonomy