

HSE Support Foundation

Budget

Travel

Zurich - 1600€

Flights: 400 per person, 800 altogether

Hotel: 600 (2 nights)

Local transport: 200

London - 2200€

Flights: 400 per person, 800 altogether

Hotel: 1200 (4 nights)

Local transport: 200

Transcription 20h x 60€/h = 1200

Total amount 5000€

Timetable

Throughout 2022	Conducting interviews, transcription of interviews for data analysis
June 2022	Data collection at Femtech Summit 2022 in Zürich, Switzerland
Fall 2022	Visit to Femtech Lab London, observations and interviews

Summary

Tutkimuksen nimi: Complexities of equity and inclusion - an investigation of the emerging Femtech field

Työryhmä: Oona Hilkamo and Emma Sandström (PhD Candidate, Organization and Management)

Inclusive organizing has undoubtedly been one of the most important areas of scholarly interest in the past years. The burgeoning literature on inclusive organizing is predominantly focused on workplace diversity and inclusive organizations as well as how organizations tackle societal inequality. However, we know less about how organizations can contribute to inclusivity beyond organizational boundaries and how organizations tackle the complexities of equity and inclusion while doing so.

Our research project is set in the context of the rapidly growing Femtech industry. The term Femtech is a label coined by Danish entrepreneur Ida Tin in 2016 to legitimize the market of technology addressing needs related to women's biology. In recent years, investments in

this area have skyrocketed as what was once considered a niche market: In 2019, Femtech companies attracted \$1.69bn in venture capital funding and investments, with the value of the market estimated to reach \$3bn by 2030. Femtech has been considered as much a social movement advancing gender equality as it is a class of technology products. For example, in addition to product development, companies aim to tackle the gender data gap by collecting gender specific medical data and collaborating with universities and research institutes to conduct academic research on female specific health issues. The lack of female inclusion in medical trials is a long-standing issue in the field and has been recognized by the World Health Organization and UN as one of the sustainable development goals. However, Femtech has also been criticized both for its focus on specific issues, such as reproductive health as well as its underlying assumptions about femininity and gender. This discourse is a prime example of the complexities of inclusion: work aiming to increase equality may on the other hand be seen as degrading or as excluding other groups of people.

To explore these issues we collect a large qualitative data-set including observations and interviews with key stakeholders in the field. We have already collected archival data and conducted pilot interviews, and plan to continue our fieldwork for several years to come. The real-time approach provides us with unique and rich longitudinal data about the field. In our first paper (presented at Gender, Work and Organization Conference 2021 and EGOS Colloquium 2021) we adopt a social-symbolic work perspective to investigate how a Femtech company aims to be more inclusive in an industry that is by definition gender exclusive. In doing so, we are moving beyond studying inclusion in workplaces and organizations, instead shifting the focus to how organizations contribute to inclusion beyond organizational boundaries. Going forward, we aim to explore topics related to the gendered construction of technology, strategies of Femtech companies to bridge the gender data gap, and differentiation based on equity, diversity and inclusion.

Additional information

We apply for funding for fieldwork during 2022. The costs include data collection in European locations, transcription of interviews and research material purchases (e.g. books and webinar recordings).

Our plans are as follows:

Data collection: In 2022, we conduct participant observations and interviews in European Femtech events. We are applying for funding for two specific events. First, we are planning to attend Femtech Summit 2022 in Zürich, Switzerland on June 2-3, 2022 (<https://femtechnology.org/>). Femtech Summit is one of the largest conferences in Europe focusing on technological innovations in women's health. The event attracts startups and researchers in the Femtech field and hosts discussions on how companies can find innovative ways to bridge the gender data gap. Attending the conference will give us the opportunity to observe the latest innovations in the field as well as establish crucial connections with company representatives.

Second, we will conduct observations and interviews in Femtech Lab in London (by invitation of Ms. Terri Harris, Head of Media at Femtech Lab). Femtech Lab is a startup accelerator

program helping Femtech companies to take their products to market. The three-month program runs twice a year, and we are planning to visit Femtech Lab during the fall 2022 program, which is scheduled to start in September 2022. We will stay in London for five days to observe the program as it is running. This will give us unique insights into the specific problems the startups are tackling, the ways in which they aim to bring their products to the market, as well as the pain points they are experiencing. During this time, we will also conduct interviews with participant startups as well as program organizers, mentors, and coaches.

Transcribing costs: We have all interviews transcribed by an agency. The estimated amount is 20 hours (20 interviews of 1 hrs), and the hourly rate is 60 €/ hour.

With the support of HSE Foundation we will be able to conduct 20 qualitative interviews and approximately 40 hours of observations, forming the first data set for our research project. The purpose of these interviews is to form an understanding of the Femtech field and the main challenges companies face when launching their business.