

The Role of CSR in Promoting Gender Equality in the Workplace

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Abstract: *Corporations address gender equality issues in the context of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainable development. As in other areas of CSR, various standards, certifications, and similar initiatives have been proposed to promote gender equality. Despite an increasing number of self-regulation and signaling schemes being proposed, their study has been overlooked by the scholarly literature. This article tries to shed light on these standards through a two-stage exploratory study. First, the main worldwide initiatives that focus on gender equality standards are scrutinized and mapped. Second, their main characteristics are analyzed, based on a content analysis of the information disclosed by organizations that foster the most relevant initiatives. A systematic analysis of relevant gender equality standards is provided. This work highlights a dispersion and lack of uniformity in terms of missions, results, measurement, and even the definition of gender equality or the term used to refer to it. No framework has prevailed. Gender equality standards lack gender mainstreaming and intersectionality is invisible. The business case appears to be the main driver of gender equality standards. The present study is one of the first attempts to thoroughly examine the institutional design of gender equality standards, their standard-setting process as well as their enforcement. We suggest a rethink of the policies that promote the gender equality standards in organizations, as well as a need for collaborative work between managers and policymakers towards the use of common terminology, indicators, and uniformity regarding the terms to be certificated.*

Keywords: CSR