Grassroots Key Performance Indicators: A Contribution to the Monitoring and Evaluation of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Initiatives in Higher Education

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Abstract: This article summarises a frame of grassroots Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that centres on everyday transformation, displacing the opportunistic use of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) initiatives as marketing tools. It is based on ethnographic research conducted at the University of Galway (Ireland) from 2018 to 2021. Instead of focusing on the development of KPIs within the policy field or by a panel of experts, the paper fleshes out the collective attempts of rank-and-file staff to judge if, how, and to what extent EDI initiatives have changed the university. Evidence shows that several indicators are effective and already operational amongst staff. Grassroots KPIs serve a dual function: assessing change and expanding EDI goals.

Keywords: Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of Equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), grassroots KPIs (key performance indicators), Irish higher education.

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Introduction

Almost a century has passed since Virginia Woolf's essay *A Room of One's Own* (1929) made the critical connection between the closed gates of the elite university of "Oxbridge" and women's subordination within political, familial and intellectual spheres of life. Since then, the enormous changes galvanised by feminist movements have deeply altered the scenario prevailing within institutions of higher education (HEIs), albeit not enough to be able to claim that we have attained gender equality in teaching and research or that HEIs can be taken as role model institutions for the promotion of gender equality (O'Connor et al., 2015; Pereira, 2017).

There is today a considerable corpus of research shedding light on the gendered dimensions of processes of knowledge production and distribution, opportunity structures and social and pedagogical relations within HEIs (Lynch, 2010; Coate and Howson, 2014). Feminist research has constructed the understanding that gender is an unescapable and structuring aspect of institutionality and interpersonal relations within universities, and one whose epistemological impact cannot be ignored (O'Keefe and Courtois, 2019; Ivancheva et al., 2019; Lund, 2020).

Awareness of the importance of gender equality within HEIs has gained increasing momentum in many parts of the world, including the European Union. In the Republic of Ireland, the national gender equality policy for higher education, first implemented in 2016, represents a crucial turning point in the promotion of change and offers a particularly fruitful research locus for examining how gender has been addressed by HEIs (O'Connor and Irvine, 2021; Hodgins at al., 2022).

While the current moment may be promising for Irish universities, it is vital to keep in mind the paradoxes and complications of processes of change. As Ahmed (2012) has shown, there is a gap between a professed commitment to change and real change within HEIs. One of the ways to bridge this gap is through monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems. M&E work must be ingrained in the action plans and ongoing equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) efforts, for it is decisive to sustain momentum for transformation (Duvvury, 2011).

To progress in this regard, it is necessary to define goals for equality, diversity and inclusion in HEIs and create appropriate change indicators. A robust M&E system must be premised on the understanding that EDI is not limited to its quantitative

measurement, that several forms of social inequality (race/ethnicity, gender, class, nationality, disability) intersect, and that multiple and diverse actions at all institutional levels are required, which makes the construction of M&E indicators a challenging task.

M&E systems for EDI need to be aware that institutional resistance is often a significant issue in implementing change, and this resistance "reflects the enactment of hidden or stealth power" (Hodgins and O'Connor, 2021, 1). In other words, opposition to equality is often warranted by people in positions of power and privilege (Hodgins, 2021). Thus, in the context of HEIs, senior management ought to be assessed by M&E efforts.

In Ireland, the Irish Higher Education Authority (HEA) is developing key performance indicators (KPIs) for EDI (HEA, 2018; Huck et al., 2020). Such KPIs are primarily concerned with comparisons between institutions and with assessing the success of the national gender equality action plan. Following the European model, most HEA indicators focus on the increase in the number of women in senior positions (Ruggi and Duvvury, 2023). They are tailored to grasp EDI issues consolidated in the policy but do not expand the EDI agenda or deepen its remit. Furthermore, the national KPIs are part of the EDI expert realm, requiring central data collection, specific policy knowledge, and conceptual know-how. They do not necessarily communicate with or empower the part of the academic community committed to change but who are not EDI practitioners, i.e., feminists.

Instead of centring on the development of KPIs within the policy field, this paper flashes out the collective attempts of rank-and-file staff[1] to judge if EDI initiatives have transformed the university. In this sense, our approach addresses the need to understand the constitutive role of context in policy practice (Ní Laoire et al., 2021, 579).

The article is organised into the following four sections. The next one is dedicated to the literature on KPIs in HE. The second presents the research context and methodology. The third considers the empirical data and offers a summary of grassroots KPIs for EDI synthetised from ethnographic interactions. The final section concludes the paper.

[1] In this text, the term ‘staff’ refers to academic, administrative, technical, and ancillary staff in permanent or precarious contracts, directly employed or hired by outsourced third companies. From now on, all mentions to ‘staff’ concerns rank-and-file, that is, employees who are not senior managers.

Key-performance indicators in HEIs

The use of KPIs in higher education is deeply intermingled with neoliberal governance reforms that concentrate decision-making power in senior managers' hands. It is not surprising, thus, that for some authors, "one of the main strategic tasks of the university administration is to draw up Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and to rate academic staff on their bases" (Safonov et al., 2022, 153). In such a view, KPIs are taken as a tool management uses to control staff. However, KPIs can be repurposed to serve staff's examination of senior management's performance. Indeed, as indicated by the literature, "[t]he main advantage of KPIs is their versatility" (Safonov et al., 2022, 155).

Although controversial, KPIs have become 'indispensable' in HEIs (Leiber, 2019, 77-78). One of their primary functions is to link the everyday functioning of HEIs with the strategic goals (Masron et al., 2012, 497; Broshkov et al., 2020, 288; Safonov et al., 2022, 153). This is done by creating a record system to produce and analyse institutional data as part of decision-making. For this to work, "[t]he development of appropriate indicators is the most important part because meaningful results can be generated from using the right measuring tools" (Kim et al., 2018, 315). Several authors agree that "developing KPIs is a non-trivial task [and] that [it] requires a deep understanding of the business or operation" (Collins et al., 2020, 196; Leiber, 2019).

Broshkov et al. (2020, 289) highlight several indispensable principles for developing KPIs for HEIs: relevance to institutional goals, measurability and transparency, manageability, specificity, time-reference, and achievability. One of the benefits of KPIs is the increased transparency of information (Broshkov et al., 2020, 290) and the "creation of an effective teamwork and collaborations between all the participants of the educational process" (Safonov et al., 2022, 160). Indeed, KPIs help draw and implement collective "visions of the future" (Masron et al., 2012, 497), for their primary function is to "track progress towards the strategic goal" (Safonov et al., 2022, 153).

In summary, KPIs are one of the ways to dispute power and influence the future of HEIs. Since KPIs are premised on institutional transformation, they are helpful for EDI efforts. An example of EDI-focused KPIs for higher education is given in Kayyaly (2022). This approach stresses the benefits of increasing diverse representation by recruiting students and staff from underrepresented groups, developing an inclusive curriculum,

and creating a safe and welcoming campus environment. Complementary to Kayyaly's, our proposal focuses on EDI actions targeted at decision-making processes, organisational transformation, and employment conditions.

Context and methodology

The University of Galway (formerly known as National University of Ireland, Galway) is a public institution located in the West of Ireland that houses approximately 19,000 students and 2,300 direct employees. In 2014, the university became the stage of a national polemic related to the discrimination of women academics (Sheehy-Skeffington 2016; Quinlivan, 2017; Ruggi, 2023). This gender crisis resulted in the implementation of a Gender Equality Task Force[2] in 2015 and the creation of dedicated EDI management structures like a Vice-President for Equality and Diversity in 2016. Since then, several institutional policies, procedures, and practices have been assessed and transformed to prioritise EDI, with sustained academic attention focusing on their outcomes (Hodgins and O'Connor 2021; Hodgins et al., 2022). Because of the local crisis, the national policy for HE was also changed to prioritise gender equality (Walsh 2018; O'Connor and Irvine 2020; Ruggi and Duvvury, 2023). Such context makes the University of Galway a fruitful location to investigate EDI initiatives in higher education.

This paper is based on four years of ethnographic research conducted as part of a PhD project developed by one of the authors and supervised by the other. The participant observation was done from 2018 to 2022, including in-person and (due to Covid restrictions) remote interaction as well as extensive document analysis[3]. Institutional research sites included the office of the Vice-President for Equality and Diversity, an academic union, and four decision-making committees[4]. The ethnography included interviews with 43 employees, conducted between September 2020 and June 2021. The recruitment of interviewees aimed at ensuring the presence of diverse experiences and contrasting views[5]. A careful anonymity protocol was developed to ensure that

[2] One of the authors was a member of this task force.
[3] A detailed account on the methodology can be found in Ruggi, 2022.
[4] Namely, the Academic Council, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee of the Governing Authority, the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Campus Committee, and the Athena SWAN Institutional Self-Assessment Team.
[5] Details of the interviewees' profiles: 28 cis women, 13 cis men, and two non-binary persons. Most (31) declared to be heterosexual/straight; two declared to be homosexual/gay; one self-designated as queer, one

interviewees identities would not be disclosed. The data collection focused on EDI efforts to promote institutional transformation and the perception about the gender equality action plan.

The methodology was grounded on decolonial feminism, aspiring to co-theorise with research participants (Leyva et al. 2018). The principle of such an approach is to consider research participants not as bearers of *data*, but as bearers of *knowledge*. One of the insights resulting from co-theorising was the development of the notion of "grassroots KPIs", consolidated from converging the work of EDI practitioners and the ongoing critical assessment of staff. The ethnography made it possible to identify the several indicators that staff use to monitor transformation. In this sense, the proposal of grassroots KPIs was an outcome of the research process, not being a part of the EDI effort observed during the ethnography. Participant observation revealed that the continuing effort to materialise change in HEIs requires pressuring powerful groups to relinquish power and privilege (Hodgins, 2021) while implementing equitable management (Vara-Horna et al., 2023).

Traditional methods to develop KPIs for HEIs draw from the input of a 'panel of experts' primarily composed of senior managers who are knowledgeable about the internal processes and institutional goals (Suryadi, 2007; Badawy et al., 2018; Varouchas et al., 2018; Kim et al. 2018; Bashir et al., 2023). In terms of EDI, however, evidence shows that senior managers are not prepared to identify or address crucial issues (Grummell et al., 2009; Treanor, 2015; O'Connor, 2020). For this reason, it is vital to design alternative approaches to foster EDI-targeted KPIs. One possibility is to adopt a bottom-up method built on how staff assess EDI initiatives. This article sustains that the systematisation of grassroots KPIs may be a tool in this direction. In the next section, we present ethnographic data to demonstrate this proposal.

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as bisexual, and eight did not inform their sexual orientation. Most (37) did not disclose a disability, whilst six did. In classifying ethnicity, the 37 people self-declared as Irish, Caucasian, and any other white background; six interviewees self-described as black, brown, mixed, Traveller or from other non-white backgrounds. Considering the staff category, 18 were academic, 14 worked in professional services, seven were researchers, and four were outsourced; 29 were permanent employees, while 14 were temporary. In terms of institutional affiliation, nine interviewees were based in the College of Arts, Social Sciences & Celtic Studies; five in the College of Medicine, Nursing & Health Sciences; six in the College of Business, Public Policy & Law; six in the College of Science and Engineering; seven in Central Services and ten in Student's Services. Most interviewees (33) did not occupy leadership positions, seven were in middle management (heads of units), and three were in senior management (encompassing Presidents, Vice-Presidents, Registrar and Deans).

Staff assessment of EDI actions

Staff at the University of Galway are constantly evaluating their work environment and monitoring institutional transformation/stagnation. A valuable framework of reference to the development of an M&E system was offered by an interviewee when she identified two main EDI approaches: 'pity' versus 'party'. The first is based on denouncing exclusion and identifying the worst situation possible, as she explains: "Especially with the Coronavirus, someone is in a room that is very small, they can only work from their bed, [and] they don't have anything" (Laura[6]). This 'pity' approach triggers charity responses, focusing on remedial and emergency actions. The 'party' approach follows the opposite direction, that is, the promotion of EDI as a positive feature, in her terms: "Literally, let's throw a party to celebrate the diversity we have! Let's do a coffee morning!" The problem with these opposing views, she argued, is that "then you forget everything in the middle; you forget that inclusion is in everyday activities." This insight highlights that EDI should be embedded in the daily functioning of the university, thus grounding one of the goals of a M&E system (summarised in Table 1 below).

Focusing on the day-to-day is an insightful principle. It refuses both the self-congratulatory and the defeatist positions that bind the debate on change to an unfruitful dichotomy of celebratory accomplishment against pessimist Lampedusianism. Both stands make it hard to identify partial change and the re-accommodation of interests resulting from shifts in power relations. Refusing the extremes of 'pity' versus 'party' and foregrounding the everyday, it is possible to place the assessment of change within the hands of people for whom change is needed, such as those suffering from institutional inequalities.

Additionally, focusing on the everyday prevents confining EDI work to initiatives more concerned with PR exercises than transforming practices, policies, and relationships. Criticisms voiced by staff often despised the effort to *look* equal instead of *being* equal. EDI work was frequently named 'box-ticking exercise', 'lip service', 'window dressing', 'cosmetic exercise', 'showmanship', and 'optics.' The scepticism expressed in such terms critically highlights the distance between what is said and what is done and the emphasis on perception over practice.

[6] Pseudonyms are used for all research participants. Due to anonymity protocols, no individualised information is disclosed.

The ethnographic research revealed that staff resent the misuse of EDI as a PR exercise, shifting the aim of promoting equality to promoting the institution. Such admonishment is worth considering because it is collective and continuous. The source of EDI transformation is precisely such internal criticism (Ahmed, 2021). Disregarding complaining staff as representatives of 'pockets of dissent or dissatisfaction' is a failure to understand how the energy to question inequality depends on political dissent and dissatisfaction. Friction is intrinsic to EDI work, especially when scrutinising the institution's workings. Thus, EDI needs to be integrated into the decision-making processes (a second KPI goal). This is done by ensuring inclusive institutional practices, both in terms of the representation of different demographics and of different staff cohorts and grades.

Interestingly, nearly all research participants highlighted that one of the indicators for institutional transformations is the dislocation of EDI issues from the margin to a legitimate position within university politics, confirming previous research (Agócs 1997; Hodgins and O'Connor 2021). The discursive shift is crucial since it empowers internal questioning through participation. One interviewee reasoned, "The recognition that there have been gender equality issues at the university is some progress because that was something that was largely just denied" (Evelyn). To strengthen this recognition over time, it is important to include standing EDI items in the agenda of decision-making committees.

To dismantle a 'culture of compliance' (Lynch, 2010), staff must be confident in contesting daily inequalities. Several interviewees spoke about the importance of normalising 'speaking truth to power', which is a significant indicator of culture change. They declared: "Mentoring and coaching people and developing them to be able to challenge others in positions of power, to be able to do it in a confident and non-confrontational way, is really important" (Anthony) and "We need to teach people that they don't have to accept that kind of discriminatory behaviour" (Adrian). This goal requires the promotion of equitable management and the prevention of cases of abuse of power and exclusionary behaviour.

There is no example more convincing about the importance of long-term voicing of dissatisfaction than the demand for women's access to senior academic and managerial positions (Hodgins et al., 2022). The ethnographic observation of decision-making bodies confirmed that the collective call for women's promotion is sustained by

people (mainly women academics) pushing the agenda on an everyday basis. They probe and question available data, require explanations on the implementation of action plans, and recap previous commitments. They verify if the increase in women professors is due to external appointments or internal promotions. They keep a constant flux of information and sustain the momentum for equality.

Interview data corroborated the effectiveness of this persistent and cooperative, although unofficial, effort done by solidarity networks to promote women academics. Aspiring and working for equality, these groups assess ongoing practices, identifying insufficient actions and commemorating successes. In this sense, they develop several grassroots KPIs and effectively monitor and evaluate EDI actions. Their effort was crucial to (partially) overcame institutional gender-blindness. This fact demonstrates the importance of ensuring that underprivileged groups are represented in decision-making fora.

There is plenty of scepticism about the promises of senior management to transform the university. An interviewee described how leadership is constantly under scrutiny regarding the intentions behind the discourse: "The actions of leaders can't be seen to contradict what they say. If there are mission statements, if there are declarations around values, and yet actions follow that are a contradiction of those statements, people are very smart. They pick up the contradiction, and then they disregard any attempt to change" (Mary J). The university staff has developed mechanisms to verify the coherence of institutional goals. One of the criteria used to assess whether EDI institutional pledges are trustworthy is the allocation of resources.

Discussing mental health services and disability support for students, an interviewee explained the need for proper implementation: "It's one thing to have all these things in place; it's another thing to have them materially accessible and actually functioning" (Christine). Indeed, under-resourcing was denounced by several interviewees, who criticised the opportunistic use of EDI: "The resources just aren't behind the prestige. (…) They need to put their money where their mouths are" (Bart). The refusal to allocate appropriated resources has been identified by literature as a form of institutional resistance to transformation (Hodgins and O'Connor 2021). There is an understanding, thus, that EDI units need to be fully resourced, and this includes avoiding hiring precarious employees to perform EDI tasks. This is the third EDI goal identified by the research, namely, that EDI ought to be an institutional priority.

Thus, staff mentioned the need to ensure the institution appropriately values EDI work: "Particularly senior management, those that are in those powerful positions, that do step up to the place and do support it. When I say support, I mean resources, not just turning up for a press release or a photo. It's really putting resources behind it, rolling out a consultation process, creating this plan and getting it moving" (John M). Several research participants abhorred EDI opportunism, emphasising the relevance of material redistribution. In this sense, material support (including human and financial resources) for EDI initiatives is one of the KPIs staff use to judge if commitments for change are reliable. To make sure that EDI is an institutional priority, transparent, easily accessible, and updated information of resource allocation models must be part of the M&E system.

A crucial issue repeatedly voiced by staff relates to the distribution of care work within and across different units. Previous research demonstrated the tendency of academic care work to be 'dumped' on subordinate/precarious staff (Lynch, 2010; Coate and Howson, 2014; Lund, 2020). A similar concern is raised for committees regarding who occupies the visible position of being the chair and who does the behind-the-scenes work. This requires daily negotiation and is directly related to EDI goals, premised on the insight that people's time is one of the main forms of institutional resource. One interviewee reasoned: "If transformation projects are happening, there has to be an understanding that people need to be given time to do that" (Cathy). The investigation revealed that a critical EDI action, the development of Workload Allocation Models, was not implemented in several units due to overwork.

Except for a limited number of practitioners whose job description relates specifically to EDI, for most remaining staff at the University of Galway, EDI is a commitment on top of an already stretched workload. This unfavourable dynamic can be identified with the implementation of the University of Sanctuary (UoS), an international initiative joined by Galway in 2019. The initiative aims at "challenging inequitable access to third-level education, particularly for Irish Travellers, asylum seekers, refugees, and other vulnerable migrant groups" (Harte 2020: 6). The UoS awards scholarships to undergraduates and postgraduates from these targeted communities, ensuring annual recruitment is gender balanced.

The UoS is an important initiative, prioritising underrepresented groups. An academic mentor is nominated to support Sanctuary students on their educational path. This mentor offers insight and information, helping incoming students to navigate the

university. It is undoubtedly an essential EDI-caring role, which was not formalised in workload allocation models. An interviewee described a conflict that arose in 2020 when one of the colleges refused to appoint mentors without the appropriate consideration of time allocation: "In previous years, we would have seen people have mentored on a voluntary basis. (…) This escalated to HR to look at what is the work model. What hours should be given to lecturers if they decide to become academic mentors? So maybe this is the way to go in the future? I don't know. Maybe it is, and that becomes embedded" (Penelope).

This example demonstrates how EDI work is routinely taken for granted or made invisible in the distribution of tasks, taken 'on a voluntary basis.' Staff identity groups face similar problems. In Galway, they include the University Women's Network, the LGBT+ Staff Network, and the International Staff Network. Although these groups offer an essential space to formulate and express collective demands, they also represent an increased workload for people who tend to be a minority and/or disadvantaged cohort. Staff who invest their time in ERGs are rewarded with little acknowledgement and few resources. The labour, including emotional, is mainly done voluntarily, which is to say, on top of other obligations. This demonstrates the need for the university to ensure staff is allocated time to perform EDI tasks, and thus explicitly recognising the resources required for sustained EDI work.

In other words, to foreground the everyday, EDI efforts must inquire about what is happening, where and how. Due to institutional heterogeneity, attention needs to be placed at the level of units. Even a straightforward policy like scheduling meetings during core hours to accommodate employees' care responsibilities has an uneven implementation. Several interviewees voiced the understanding that EDI awareness is not the same across the institution: "Some units are better than others (…) I'm very privileged and lucky to work in a unit that everyone is respected equally (…) But I think it's in little pockets in the university" (Adrian); "I find the environment I am in extremely supportive. (…) I am aware of how fortunate I am, how lucky I am. I'm coming from an empowered space" (John M).

It is worth highlighting the 'luckiness' voiced by some staff. Although adequate to describe individual experiences, fortune is a limited analytical concept. It does little to help us understand how some units successfully ensure EDI principles are embedded and, therefore, acknowledged as a daily experience by staff. In the context of this

research, it would be risky to name the units praised by interviewees because their anonymity would be in danger. It stands out, however, that most research participants commended as inclusive precisely the units where EDI-related work is performed.

There is, thus, a meaningful connection between EDI remit, EDI expertise, and EDI embeddedness. The coherence attained within some units is not often acknowledged as an institutional resource that can be shared with the broader university. This lack of appreciation is also expressed in terms of the working conditions of people responsible for institutional EDI. This is a serious issue, and the research identified a significant number of EDI-related staff who were precariously employed, outsourced or hired as post-doctors/researchers while performing administrative EDI jobs. This situation is especially acute for people who worked with students from underrepresented backgrounds in the Centre for Adult Learning and Professional Development or who offered front-line support for students with disability through a third company.

As the example of UoS' mentorship demonstrates, EDI work often requires expanding the conversation beyond one's unit, dislodging the usual way of doing things, formalising the job, and involving HR. That is, EDI creates work. The examples discussed hint at another indicator staff use to monitor if change can be trusted. It relates to bestowing responsibility for EDI work. More than one interviewee pointed to the meaninglessness of a non-targeted aim. This dimension is also acknowledged in the literature, which questions the "busyness" of action plans failing to bestow responsibility, coupled with foot-dragging and slippage preventing transformation (Hodgins and O'Connor 2021).

Such an issue relates to how EDI work is distributed and verified by the university. Research participants often stressed the importance of creating management-tools to ensure commitments are not floated irresponsibly but followed up with an action plan. In many senses, an action plan offers a prioritisation platform and a leverage to pressure different units to follow institutional commitments. The success of the plan largely depends on empowering the people affected by it. For instance, to make sure a policy like the meeting at core hours is successful, staff on the ground scheduling and attending the meetings must monitor it, sometimes against their own line managers. This means another indicator relates to the enforcement of EDI commitments. As reasoned by an interviewee: "Policies are no good to me if I have no implementation" (Kate).

The appointment of a Vice-President for EDI at the University of Galway in 2016 partially ensured a senior manager overseeing the agenda and granted institutional power to control other people's work. The presence of the VP and the standing EDI agenda item at the Governing Authority is crucial, and EDI also depends on re-organising work at all levels. Thus, EDI power must flow through the system to other EDI units or EDI-responsible roles. This means that EDI work necessitates horizontal power, a mandate to enforce decisions to different units. Several interviewees involved in EDI understood the need for accountability and sanctions in the case of non-compliance. Moreover, they stressed the need for cases of harassment and abuse of power to be dealt with consistently.

The EDI agenda should not be siloed, although there is undoubtedly a risk of that happening. Research participants explained how EDI requires transforming the very power structure of the university and the distribution of resources. There is virtually no dimension of HE that is untouched by aspirations for transformation. This was stated by an interviewee: "I was on the EDI Campus Committee for a few years, and I remember coming out of one meeting, thinking that it is amazing that so many aspects of the work of the university are now either impacted by EDI issues or impacted on EDI issues, heretofore. It just amazes me how far-reaching the issue is" (Anthony).

Overall, it is possible to synthesise three main goals emanating from the efforts of staff to monitor institutional transformation: firstly, EDI must be an institutional priority. Second, EDI must be integrated into decision-making processes. Third, EDI ought to be embedded in everyday functioning. The table below summarises the grassroots M&E system based on the empirical data presented. It offers an initial attempt to develop indicators for EDI change that are built from the bottom up.

Table 1. Summary of grassroots EDI monitoring & evaluation system for higher education

KPI	Target
Goal: EDI is an institutional priority	
Recruit staff from underrepresented groups	Increase in the number of underrepresented staff by year
Prioritise EDI and care work	Transparent, easily accessible and updated information on resource allocation models
Fully resource EDI units	Yearly self-assessment of units' demand in comparison to available resources
Reduce, and ultimately eliminate, precarious employment for EDI practitioners	Assessment by year
Assess budgets from EDI perspective	Publicly reported in yearly budget
Monitor and evaluate the EDI system	Publicly reported EDI data
Goal: EDI is integrated into decision-making processes	
Promote equitable management	Qualitative assessment of staff's perception of consultation and input mechanisms
Prevent abuse of power and exclusion	Monitor incidents of harassment, incivility, and abuse of power by year
Include a standing item on EDI issues in all decision-making committees' agenda	Assessment of committees' minutes
Ensure gender and racially-balanced senior management reflecting the composition of the university community (staff and students)	Assessment by year
Ensure all committees, and hiring and promotion panels are gender and racially-balanced reflecting the composition of the university community (staff and students)	Assessment of committees by year
Ensure all decision-making committees have representation of non-academic, junior, and precarious staff in proportion to their presence in all staff	Assessment of committees by year
Goal: EDI is embedded in everyday functioning	
Attribute EDI responsibilities/duties to academic and non-academic units	Develop and implement EDI Action Plans
Empower EDI-responsible units to enforce policies' determinations	Existence of sanctions and disadvantages to units that do not accomplish EDI goals
Ensure work allocation models (WAMs) recognise time for performing EDI	Qualitative assessment of WAM criteria and implementation by units
Institute EDI experience as hiring criteria for senior and middle management positions	Assessment of job description and hiring outcomes by units
Institute contribution in EDI initiatives as promotion criteria for academic and administrative grades	Assessment of promotion criteria and promotion outcomes by units
Mentoring units to implement EDI practices	Qualitative assessment of staff perception in each unit

Conclusion

In the previous pages, we offered an alternative approach to developing KPIs for EDI in HEIs. Instead of drawing from 'expert panels', we relied on ethnographic data to identify the criteria used by rank-and-file staff to assess institutional transformation. This method effectively connects EDI goals to the everyday functioning of the university. It prevents the opportunistic use of EDI as a marketing tool and reveals that decision making processes and employment conditions are crucial to prioritise EDI. Grassroots KPIs serve a dual function: assessing change and expanding EDI goals. The paper demonstrates that staff's informal indicators can be synthesised to become the source of a robust EDI M&E system.

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