

IOE-ILO ACT/EMP Compilation

Women's Economic
Empowerment – Good
Practices from National
Employers' Organisations
& Partner Companies



International Organisation of Employers
Organisation Internationale des Employeurs
Organización Internacional de Empleadores
The Global Voice of Business



ACT/EMP
The Bureau for Employers' Activities

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Foreword

In order to contribute to the ILO Director-General's "Women at Work" Centenary Initiative, the IOE (International Organisation of Employers) in collaboration with ILO ACT/EMP (Bureau of Employers' Activities) conducted a survey of employers' organisations and IOE partner companies. The survey aimed to better understand their experiences in promoting women's economic empowerment and build a knowledge base of good practices.

Based on the 17 survey responses obtained, this compilation draws some interesting conclusions on the situation of women in the various organisations as well as the efforts of these organisations to empower women both in their organisations and in member organisations. In addition, the examples of good practices provided by respondents also raise some useful questions that can direct our work moving forward.

While the responses have provided useful information on efforts made in empowering women, care needs to be taken to avoid generalising the results of the survey as the sample is not representative of all employers' organisations and companies worldwide.

The survey results show that there is a difference between initiatives taken by national employers' organisations to empower women in their own organisations and outreach initiatives directed at their member organisations. While the internal and external outreach initiatives can be related, this is not necessarily the case for all organisations. Internal initiatives mentioned in the survey usually deal with mentoring programmes and flexible working arrangements while the external initiatives include policy guidance to members on a broader range of issues (such as non-discrimination and prevention of harassment policies; promoting female entrepreneurship; and advancing women to management and board positions).

Despite efforts made by the different organisations, the results still remain limited. Some of the good practice initiatives taken by responding organisations are still in their early stages and have yet to produce

any conclusive or tangible results. In particular, in most of these organisations, women still remain overly represented in the lower and middle echelons. This clearly demonstrates that bottlenecks are still present in breaking the "glass ceiling". Other challenges raised by respondents include a lack of resources and buy-in from the top levels as key challenges hindering the full empowerment of women in these organisations. These responses raise a couple of important questions such as how national employers' organisations can lead by example for their members and how public policy can support efforts by the private sector.

This overview shares in-depth case studies on initiatives from five employers' organisations and partner companies around the globe. Eleven additional examples are also separately featured to serve as a good basis to learn from one another's experiences and for further work to ensure that efforts towards women's economic empowerment are accelerated and intensified.

The IOE and ILO ACT/EMP wish to put on record their sincere appreciation for the contribution made by national employers' organisations and partner companies. Without the pertinent information provided by them, this compilation would not have been possible.

Thanks also goes to the coordinators of the survey and the authors of this compilation, respectively: Dr Thannaletchimy Housset (formerly IOE), Ms Jae Hee Chang (ILO ACT/EMP), and Mr Matias Espinosa (IOE),

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- Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI)
- Business Unity South Africa (BUSA)
- Coca-Cola Company
- Confederación Española de Organizaciones Empresariales (CEOE)
- Employers' Federation of Pakistan (EFP)
- Fasken Martineau
- Federación de Cámaras y Asociaciones de Comercio y Producción de Venezuela (FEDECAMARAS)
- Federation of Uganda Employers (FUE)
- Honduran Private Business Council (COHEP)
- Iranian Confederation of Employers' Associations (ICEA)
- Jamaica Employers' Federation (JEF)
- Malaysian Employers' Federation (MEF)
- Montenegrin Employers' Federation (MEF)
- Mouvement des Entreprises de France (MEDEF)
- United States Council for International Business (USCIB)

Our appreciation is also extended to **Ms Ronnie Goldberg (USCIB)** for her insights on women's economic empowerment and her guidance on the survey and final compilation.

Introduction

In today's changing world of work, the quickening pace and nature of technological change and the ongoing reach of globalization demand a qualified labour force, i.e. a workforce displaying a wide range of higher-level skills and the ability to work in non-traditional settings under uncertain and changing conditions. Women's economic empowerment is an integral part of an effective response to this changing world of work, if only because women represent at least half of the world's potential human resources.

There is an undeniable economic and business case for women's economic empowerment in the workplace, market place and community. Strengthening the economic, political, and social positions of women is fundamental to economic growth and development, as well as to enterprise productivity and competitiveness.

Empowering women to participate fully in economic life across all sectors and throughout all levels of economic activity is essential to:

- Build strong economies;
- Establish more stable and just societies;
- Achieve internationally-agreed goals for development sustainability and human rights;

- Improve quality of life for women, men, families and communities; and
- Boost competitiveness and profitability of enterprises.

This compilation, which is part of the IOE's and ILO ACT/EMP's contribution to the ILO Director-General's "Women at Work" Centenary Initiative and continued collaboration under Women in Business and Management, aims to provide employers and their representative organisations with examples of initiatives that the different member federations have embarked upon to empower women in their organisations and economies in a bid to optimize their potential to address the challenges facing the world of work.

Survey results

INTRODUCTION TO THE SURVEY

This section presents the survey and analyses the responses to the survey.

The compilation is primarily based on the information collected through the joint IOE and ILO ACT/EMP survey carried out between November and December 2017. Additional exchanges with some respondents were also conducted to clarify further queries.

The survey considered the following elements:

- General information on national employers' organisations/companies
- Specific measures undertaken by national employers' organisations/companies to promote women's economic empowerment at the national/enterprise level
- Case study of good practice

The survey collected 17 responses from various organisations – 14 employers' organisation responses and 3 company responses. Among the employers' organisations' responses, we had the following geographical distribution – 2 from Africa; 3 from Asia; 4 from Europe and 5 from Latin America.

Despite the wide diversity of responses, the sample size remains limited and cannot be said to be representative of all of the diversity prevalent in employers' organisations and partner companies worldwide and of the range of national employers' organisations and partner companies worldwide (in terms of staffing size, membership and geographical locations, among others). Therefore, it is important to treat the results gleaned from the survey responses with care.

Based on these responses, a couple of key themes emerged.

KEY THEMES

1. The results reveal a diversity of efforts in the face of a universal problem

The survey sample, as highlighted above, is limited yet diverse. The responses come from a small group of

organisations, both from developing and developed countries. Some organisations are larger (in terms of staff size and membership) than others. Despite this diversity, the slow progress made in empowering women, especially in the highest echelons, continues to affect all organisations, as reflected in the figures on women in management and board level positions.

In today's world of work, the quickening pace and nature of technological change and the ongoing reach of globalization demand a qualified labour force, one with a wide range of higher-level skills, and an ability to work in non-traditional settings, under conditions of uncertainty and change. Women's economic empowerment is an integral part of an effective response to the changes in the world of work.

While these changes in the world of work have varying degrees of impact in attracting women to the labour market in developing and developed economies, both groups still struggle with achieving gender parity in many aspects of the economy, largely as a result of cultural stereotypes and social norms. As a result, the female labour force participation rate, albeit on the rise, continues to lag significantly behind that of men.

The survey results show that all national employers' organisations and member companies in both developing and developed countries have a common interest in promoting women's economic empowerment in their organisations and their economies, though the way they go about this varies widely from country to country and from organisation to organisation.

2. There is a difference between internal and external policies

All employers' organisations who responded to the survey demonstrated that not only do they have gender-related policy advocacy and guidance materials to support their members in adopting gender equality approaches in the workplace (i.e. external policies), but they also practice what they preach by having policies in place to support the empowerment of women internally in their own organisations (i.e. internal policies).

Most of the internal policies reported by employers' organisations cover issues such as mentoring

programmes and flexible working arrangements. These policies are similar to those undertaken by companies in optimising their female talent and building a pipeline of female talent to assume leadership roles.

External policies, which are policies that employers' organisations advocate to their members, tend to cover a broader range of issues, such as non-discrimination and prevention of harassment policies, promoting female entrepreneurship and advancing women to management and board positions.

While there seems to be a link between the internal and external policies, this link is not explicit in all cases. The lack of a possible link indicates the need for further work to better understand how national organisations can lead by example to their member affiliates.

3. Women still remain under-represented in leadership roles

All organisations mentioned the various efforts they have made to empower women within their organisation. Despite these efforts, the figures provided by these organisations on the number of women in board and management positions remain troubling, with the exception of the Board of Education of Antigua and Barbuda, and the Federation of Uganda Employers. Women remain overly represented in lower and middle levels of the organisations.

It may be useful to note that some of the initiatives adopted by organisations to target women in leadership roles are still in their infancy. It is therefore too early to tell if these initiatives will result in positive, tangible outcomes.

According to ILO ACT/EMP's Women in Business and Management Global Report (2015), while there are definitely more female role models as leaders today than a decade ago, there remains a continuing dearth of women in top decision-making positions, such as CEOs, board members and politicians. The Global Report highlights the following challenges that need to be surmounted in advancing women in leadership roles, which are also raised in the responses to the survey.

- Gender stereotyping is a powerful force: Social customs and traditional gender roles in many countries and certain regions greatly influence the role women are able to play in labour markets and in decision-making generally.
- Corporate culture needs to be more inclusive: Women need flexible solutions to manage work and family commitments and this calls for a closer examination of corporate culture.

- Women need to receive the same opportunities at all levels of their development: Understanding the reasons for the attrition of women and putting in place measures to address them is critical if the young women of today are to be part of the future generation of top managers and leaders.

4. Closer analysis of the challenges to implementation is needed

This compilation which reports on several initiatives around the globe by employers' organisations and their affiliates, reflects not only the results of initiatives taken, but it also considers the challenges these organisations have faced in implementing their initiatives.

Some key challenges that were identified include:

- Lack of resources: many of the initiatives are still not allocated sufficient resources (both in terms of financial resources and personnel input) which has a negative impact on the sustainability of these initiatives to make long-run changes to the organisation and the economy, as a whole.
- Lack of a gender-specific focus: some of the initiatives are general human resources policies which do not focus predominantly on gender issues. As such, the focus that is required to address gender parity and women's empowerment is often missing, as other aspects of the organisation often have priority over gender.
- Limited buy-in: even if an initiative is put in place, this does not mean it will automatically influence corporate culture to be more inclusive of women. Often, societal norms and a strong male-centric corporate culture hinder full buy-in of all employees for these initiatives. For instance, even if there are flexible work arrangements offered, employees do not readily make use of them for fear of backlash from employers or other employees, rendering these initiatives unproductive.
- Lack of coordination and support from the public sector: while the responses focused on private sector efforts to empower women, there is limited mention of public sector efforts and how these efforts can be coordinated and strengthened. Of particular interest is the issue of controversial mandatory quotas for women on company boards. Some responses indicated the existence of quotas, yet it is unclear if these quotas have helped private sector efforts in promoting women to leadership positions. This information would be useful in order to better understand how synergies can be drawn so

that efforts are not duplicative but rather, are supportive of one another.

Further research to follow up on these initiatives and the resulting outcome as well as the challenges of implementation (such as lack of commitment and/or resources, amongst others) can help to provide a clearer picture on how one can apply and improve upon these initiatives in the context of their country/organisation.

FURTHER QUESTIONS

While the responses provided in the survey provide important insights into a couple of key areas, they have also raised further questions on the private sector's efforts to empower women at both the enterprise and national level. The additional queries raised help to further guide the work of the IOE and ILO ACT/EMP on this issue of great importance. These questions provide a baseline for further work to be undertaken.

- It is clear that employers' organisations have internal policies on women's economic empowerment, so that they can lead by example. How successful are employers' organisations in leading by example?
- With respect to the external policies, how successful have employers' organisations been in supporting their members in achieving gender parity and empowering women nationally?
- What is the role of public policies on women's economic empowerment? How have public policies supported efforts by the private sector

to this end? What experience have organisations had with quotas in particular, given their controversial nature?

- What barriers remain in advancing women in leadership positions?

CONCLUDING REMARKS

While there is no miraculous global panacea to achieving gender parity and empowering women, there are ways to better integrate female talent in today's labour force. By sharing and better understanding what works and why, policymakers are better equipped to make informed decisions. As such, this compilation serves as a good basis to learn from one another's experiences and for further work to ensure that efforts towards women's economic empowerment are intensified.

As policymakers seek short- and long-term solutions to the challenges of the changing world of work, expanding opportunities and fostering the talent of the previously untapped pool of female talent becomes even more important. This will require the joint efforts of governments, employers, and workers to remove the cultural, economic and social barriers hindering women's participation in the labour market. The IOE, its member organisations and partner companies and ILO ACT/EMP have an important role to play in contributing to the construction of effective policies to ensure the inclusion of women's talents, skills, experience and energies in the economy. This compilation is one of the many steps in that direction.

Appendix I

Good practices catalogue

INTRODUCTION TO THE GOOD PRACTICES

This section showcases 5 examples of good practice initiatives carried out by a diverse range of national employers' organisations and a partner company in promoting women's economic empowerment.

The rest of the examples collected from the responses to the survey, can be found in Appendix II and are organised in the following manner: company examples followed by examples from employers' organisations. The employers' organisations examples are grouped by internal and external policies.

NATIONAL EMPLOYERS' ORGANISATIONS (EO) INTERNAL POLICY EXAMPLES

Internal EO Example 1: Business Unity South Africa (BUSA) (Website)

Basic Characteristics

- National employers' organisation in South Africa
- Composed of unisectoral organisations, organisations of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, professional business organisations and corporate representative organisations
- Does not have direct corporate membership other than a group of 25 companies that are part of a Board of Trustees
- 72 percent of staff members are female
- 75 percent of management staff are female
- 19 percent of board members are female

Specific Measures

- Has a clear gender equality policy that is part of the documented Transformation Approach

- Conducts training for women on board
- Has employment equity targets, but not quotas
- Non-discrimination and harassment policies are contained in employment conditions
- Has flexible working arrangements in place for all staff

Case Study of Good Practice

BUSA's initiative involves the formulation of the **Business Approach to Transformation**, that is, to develop a coherent business position on transformation in the context of the changing world of work and the changing business model. Though this is not an initiative that specifically targets gender equality, it is an aspect that is considered in this approach, as part of a bigger transformation strategy.

This initiative involves the following actions:

- Meetings with all members;
- Policy Committee meetings;
- Establishment of a Think Tank;
- Drafting of Position;
- Board and Membership approval of Approach;
- Stakeholder Engagement on the Approach;
- Media to reinforce the Approach; and
- Embedding the Approach into the organisational strategies.

Given that this initiative deals with the bigger challenge of operating in a changing world of work, the challenges facing the adoption of this approach are linked to the limited availability of credible data and to the limited ability of the organisation at present to implement elements of this approach.

The results of this initiative include a coherent business position on transformation that bolsters business legitimacy to engage on key issues of interest in a changing world of work. Most importantly, it reinforces the importance of women's economic empowerment as an integral part of the discussion on and solution to the future of work.

NATIONAL EMPLOYERS' ORGANISATIONS (EO) EXTERNAL POLICY EXAMPLES

External EO Example 2: Honduran Private Business Council (COHEP) (Website)

Basic Characteristics

- National employers' organisation in Honduras
- Composed of 73 business organisations from all economic and productive sectors
- 56 percent of staff are female
- 8 women in management positions

Specific Measures

- Currently working on a gender equality policy to be adopted by the end of 2018
- Has different gender equality training programmes in place through partnerships with the ILO ITC (Gender Academy CIF)
- Promotes entrepreneurship among women and youth business development services through the Micro, Small and Medium Development Centres
- Promotes women's entrepreneurship opportunities through the Gender Academy, fairs, Business Match making, amongst others
- Has alliances with large enterprises to support training costs, seed capital and other business education/training for women and youth in the rural areas through the Junior Achievement Programme
- Contributes expertise to students (mostly women) in the Rural Agricultural School, together with the Eolic Energy Company, on issues such as food security and the sustainability of rural livelihoods
- Offers mentoring for women professionals through the Vital Voices programme under Junior Achievement as well as through the Micro, Small and Medium Development Centres
- Has a statement on Gender Equality to promote non-discrimination
- Offers frequent training for staff on preventing harassment at work
- Supports women's economic empowerment by encouraging member retail companies to offer marketing to products made by women entrepreneurs

- Created the Gender Committee of Sustainable Businesses to promote the issue of gender equality
- Offers training and workshops to women in associations or companies that are part of the private sector through the Committee
- Currently conducting a study on the role of women in business and management in Honduras in order to create a specialized strategy, plan or working agenda on promoting women in management and board-level positions

Case Study of Good Practice

The initiative adopted by COHEP is the "Encounter Exchange of Successful Experiences among Lenca women and Successful Entrepreneurs". This forum convenes Lenca women producers and successful women entrepreneurs belonging to COHEP, the COHEP Gender Committee together with FEDECAMARA and UN WOMEN to share their experiences in starting their own business.

This initiative has contributed to the empowerment of Lenca women to attain leadership positions and to become entrepreneurs.

There have been some good practices that COHEP has developed within its Gender Committee. These are detailed below:

1. *Efforts on preventing violence and harassment against women*
 - The "Tegucigalpa Safe and Free of Violence for Women and Girls" Initiative is the first global programme with a perspective that designs, implements and evaluates an integral approach to preventing and responding to sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls in public spaces.
 - A Validation and Training of Trainers programme was carried out to prevent and combat discrimination in employment and to promote talent in companies. The Guide has received positive feedback from regional ILO experts and work.
 - Training on Sexual Harassment, Labour Psychological Harassment and Domestic Violence is provided to educate and raise awareness among personnel of the companies that are affiliated with the Honduran Maquila Association (AHM) on issues surrounding harassment at work.
 - Support "In the face of violence, do not be silent" reporting campaign with the objective of informing and guiding the working population about the importance of knowing

the Law against Domestic Violence to act preventively on this issue.

2. Efforts to create a future generation of female talent

- A documentary entitled “GIRL RISING” was created, that demonstrates 9 different stories of 9 extraordinary girls, narrated by 9 renowned actors. The documentary highlights the importance of education to guide the future generation and to prepare them to become future leaders.
- A “Training of Trainers in the Guide of Good Practices” was conducted to promote equal opportunities and treatment in employment and to promote talent in companies.
- A follow-up breakfast, to establish connections between Lenca women and companies.
- A Saturday Bazaar was launched. This is attended by more than 200 microentrepreneurs, who have the opportunity to sell various products such as footwear, handbags, plants, jewellery, dairy products, beverages, coffee, food and fresh products, among many other processed products. The Saturday Bazaar is growing every Saturday and is expanding to other cities in collaboration with other Chambers that want to replicate it. The Bazaar started in the Bay Islands. Also, the women and other exhibitors receive training, legal services, health and sanitary registry assessment, as well as a formalization assessment and finally they are helped to become members of the Chambers of Commerce.
- The majority of companies in Honduras have an Equal Employment Opportunities Policy.

The Honduran private sector has also been active in promoting women’s economic empowerment through two specific programmes:

- The “Women Entrepreneurship Programme of Francisco Morazán” identifies business initiatives and offers training, technical advice and support to woman-led businesses in the process of formalization in the region of Francisco Morazán.
- The programme has strengthened more than one hundred enterprises led by women each year, through the development of sustainable business capacities.
- The “Woman City Programme” contributes to the improvement of the living conditions of women in Honduras in the areas of economic autonomy, violence against women, sexual and reproductive health, collective education and other related areas, through a network of

services offered in an integral manner by the competent public institutions. The private sector of Honduras is part of the Board of Directors of this programme.

Despite the numerous activities organised by COHEP, designed to raise awareness and support their members on gender-related issues, COHEP continues to face challenges related to cultural norms that prevent the full empowerment of women in the labour market. Society will need to be well-educated from the outset on the benefits of women joining the labour market. Women should also be provided equal access to opportunities such as education and training so as to foster their full potential in society.

EXTERNAL EO EXAMPLE 3: MOUVEMENT DES ENTREPRISES DE FRANCE (MEDEF) (WEBSITE)

Basic Characteristics

- National employers’ organisation in France
- Composed of 127 593 direct enterprise members and 953 000 indirect enterprise members (through collective bargaining agreements)
- Out of the 50 members of the Executive Council, 9 (or 18 per cent) are women
- 68 percent of staff in the organisation are female

Specific Measures

- Has a gender equality policy
- Has gender equality training programmes for employees
- Has specific programmes to support women entrepreneurs
- Has mentoring programmes for women professionals in place
- Has a quota for women in management positions
- Has non-discrimination policies in place
- Has clear policies on preventing harassment at work
- Has gender-related CSR initiatives
- Has flexible working arrangements in place for all staff

Case Study of Good Practice

The programme adopted by MEDEF is entitled “Patrons champions du changement” (CEO

Leaders of Change). With the gender mix as the first axis of work, the objective of this initiative is to develop the presence of women in the French economic landscape and to help them have access to more visible responsibilities. The method chosen is based on the voluntary commitment of a male “champion” and on his ability to convince his peers to take measures to that end.

The objective is to set up a dynamic, a movement whose objective is to grow in time. For this purpose, the male “champions” have the following mission:

- To recruit three other “champions” during the year;
- To mentor three professional women within their organisations; and
- To continue their action internally and to monitor this progress (by evaluating the change in their profits annually and reporting back at the dedicated MEDEF meetings).

This initiative is meant to help the private sector take charge of this issue of great importance, which has been under the purview of the public sector for a long time.

Commitment from the highest level of management is a critical step towards the corporate and cultural change needed in a company or an organisation to fully implement gender equality.

MEDEF’s initiative is aimed at creating a positive culture of change as male CEOs encourage one another to address gender inequality in their own organisations.

Over 50 enterprises, ranging from SMEs to multinational companies, have committed to implementing this initiative, which was launched in October 2015.

EXTERNAL EO EXAMPLE 4: MONTENEGRIN EMPLOYERS’ FEDERATION (MEF) (WEBSITE)

Basic Characteristics

- National employers’ organisation in Montenegro
- Composed of entrepreneurs, SMEs, business associations and individual members
- Composed of 1101 individual members and 51 association members
- 64 percent of staff are female
- Two leading management positions are held by women (President and Secretary-General)

- 33 percent of Vice-Presidents are female
- 75 percent of Heads of Department are female
- 38 percent of the members of the Executive Board are female
- 16 percent the members of the Management Board are female

Specific Measures

- Has an Employers’ Code of Ethics which binds all members to respect the principles of the UN Global Compact and the UN Millennium Development Goals
- Signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights to promote gender equality and non-discrimination
- Offers gender equality trainings to members through the “Promoting equality and preventing discrimination at work in Montenegro” project, funded by the ILO. MEF also supports companies to apply and integrate equality and non-discrimination principles in companies’ daily HR practices, through 3 brochures ([link1](#), [link2](#) and [link3](#))
- Encourages women’s economic empowerment at the workplace, for instance, at the round table discussion on “Principles of Decent Work for Women”, as part of a project with UN Women
- Founded the Business Women Association of Montenegro (BWAM) to support the development of women in entrepreneurship and management
- Has a strategic document entitled **“Assessment of the Environment for Women Entrepreneurship in Montenegro”** with the ILO’s support to promote an environment conducive for women entrepreneurship. It is one of the key documents from which content was used for the development of the national Strategy for the Development of Women Entrepreneurship in Montenegro 2015-2020
- Offers a training plan for the BWAM to support women entrepreneurs
- Organises the Annual CSR Award Conference to promote good practices of CSR in companies, including gender-related practices
- Since 2015, once a month, in cooperation with Radio-Television of Montenegro (RTCG), MEF advocates, educates and raises public awareness on the role and importance of women in business and management, within the special TV show “Business info”

Case Study of Good Practice

“Women in Management in Montenegro – Support to Leadership and Professional Development of Women in Montenegro” is a programme implemented by the MEF, with the support of the ILO.

This MEF project is part of a regional project entitled “**Promoting Inclusive Labour Market Solutions in the Western Balkans**” implemented jointly by the ILO and the UNDP and financed by ADA. The project aims to contribute to women’s leadership and career development in Montenegro. More specifically, by promoting successful women managers, and their potential, role and importance, this MEF project intends to support the processes of strengthening gender equality (eliminating discrimination and promoting equality in the workplace) as well as to raise awareness about the necessity of an enabling environment for women’s economic empowerment.

MEF has conducted a survey among companies and has also produced a report on women in management and business in Montenegro. The survey findings were publicly presented within the conference to launch the Project on July 21, 2017 in Podgorica, Montenegro.

MEF has also established a trainer’s team and organized a series of training courses for women in management as well as women aspiring to higher management or leadership positions.

Other on-going project activities include:

- Creating a database on women in managerial positions;
- Drawing up a handbook/guidelines for companies to ensure that more women attain leadership and managerial positions, and a (short) company statement on new initiatives and measures for more women in the management structures;
- Organizing competition and award ceremony - the Award for the best women managers; and
- Filming a short documentary movie.

The main challenges are of a technical nature. Having the right expertise in coming up with practical tools to encourage companies to promote women in business and leadership positions is essential. Not all companies are the same. The right expertise will therefore be required to come up with customised solutions to overcoming the company’s challenge in advancing women to leadership positions.

Nevertheless, MEF’s initiative has led to the achievement of the following outcomes:

- A better understanding of the current situation of women in management and business has been gained through a stocktaking exercise;

- Support mechanisms for companies to promote women in business and management have been developed;
- Best practices for women in management have been developed and promoted; and
- This programme has contributed to women’s leadership and career development.

COMPANY EXAMPLES

Company Example 1: The Coca-Cola Company (Website)

Basic Characteristics

- World’s largest beverage company
- 43 percent of total staff are female
- 33 percent of senior leaders are female
- 44 percent of middle managers are female
- 29 percent of board-level positions are held by women

Specific Measures

- Has an equal opportunity and affirmative action policy statement that ensures that all employees are provided with equal opportunities and maintains a work environment in which all employees are treated with respect and dignity
- Has a pay transparency policy
- Has a gender equality training programme called “Women in Leadership”, which provides key female talent the opportunity to advance their development in an accelerated manner and to contribute to building Coca-Cola’s pipeline of capable female leadership talent
- Has the “5by20” initiative to provide entrepreneurship training to current and potential women-owned and operated businesses along Coca-Cola’s value chain
- Has a wide variety of mentoring programmes in each of its markets including “Diversity 50” which offers monthly mentoring sessions and opportunities for mentees to leverage their mentors to elevate exposure and broaden their network of business partners
- There are no quotas for women in management positions, but the company aims to achieve gender parity by 2020

- Has a human rights policy within the company that addresses issues such as community and stakeholder engagement, healthy lifestyles, diversity and inclusion, freedom of association and collective bargaining, land rights, and a safe and healthy workplace, amongst other
- Has a policy against harassment, discrimination and retaliation
- Has in place gender-related CSR initiatives notably through the Coca-Cola Foundation, which retains 1 per cent of the company's operating income to support the community well-being
- Has in place flexitime working hours policy which allows employees to have flexible working time arrangements
- Has a teleworking policy in place that allows for workers to work from home

Case Study of Good Practice

In 2010, Coca-Cola launched the “5by20” global initiative aimed at enabling the economic empowerment of 5 million women entrepreneurs across its value chain by 2020.

Coca-Cola’s strong commitment to give back to its community is the motivation for this initiative. The recognition of the role of the private sector as an important development partner confirms that only successful and sustainable businesses can contribute to the development and prosperity of nations and the global community. Unleashing female talent, particularly the entrepreneurial potential of women, is an essential means to contributing to the development and prosperity of societies.

Evidence overwhelmingly indicates that empowering women not only directly benefits them, but also creates larger ripple effects benefitting society. Women invest a sizable portion of earned income in the health and education of their children and in their local economies. Recognizing the challenges faced by women and their economic potential, Coca-Cola’s “5by20” initiative strives to enable the economic empowerment of 5 million women entrepreneurs across the Coca-Cola value chain by 2020 – including the small businesses the Company and our bottling partners work with in more than 200 countries—from fruit farmers and recyclers to retailers and artisans.

The programmes address the barriers that prevent women entrepreneurs from succeeding in the marketplace by increasing access to business skills’ training courses; financial services and assets; and networks of peers or mentors. The “5by20”

implementation design differs by country, enabling it to fit local needs, aligned with local partners, to have a greater local impact.

This initiative is built on the power of partnerships of business, government and civil society to create positive social change. Some partners include UN Women, the Inter-American Development Bank, TechnoServe, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the International Finance Corporation, among others. Each partner organisation brings unique expertise that greatly increases the impact of these programmes.

Since the programme is integrated into the business and is not a philanthropic programme, the initiative is locally resourced and funded. Therefore, business unit leaders must clearly understand and embrace the business case as there will always be competing priorities for funding and human resources. Developing and emerging countries were the first to acknowledge the business case and invest in this initiative, however, developed countries are also beginning to recognise the business case and have piloted and scaled successful “5by20” programmes over the past few years.

By the end of 2016, 1.75 million women were cumulatively enabled, through business skills training, access to financial services/assets, and/or peer networking and mentoring as a result of this initiative. In particular, a recent impact study by

Coca-Cola and Ipsos which took a random sample of “5by20” participants in the Gauteng and North West provinces near Johannesburg, South Africa revealed the following results:

- A 46 percent increase in total average business sales over the 18- month survey period after participant training;
- Women reported a significant improvement in the affordability of their basic expenses such as children’s education, medical visits and clothing since baseline;
- A significant increase in the number of women reporting their ability to save money in a typical month since the baseline, as well as an increase in the amount saved over time;
- Over half of the participants reported significant improvements in their business as a result of the training; and
- More than 90 percent of women reported that they were confident that their businesses will not only be sustainable but will also grow.

The IOE is the largest network of the private sector in the world, with more than 150 business and employer organisation members. In social and labour policy debate taking place in the International Labour Organization, across the UN and multilateral system, and in the G20 and other emerging processes, the IOE is recognised as the Global Voice of Business.



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