

Women's Employment

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR INVESTING IN WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT AROUND THE WORLD

Empowering women to participate in full and productive employment is essential to expand economic growth, promote social development and enhance business performance. However, the positive impacts of women-focused employment practices on firms, communities and the economy are often under appreciated. To achieve sustainable development and unlock future growth, *WINvest* and the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) call on business to invest in better employment opportunities for women.

Why invest in women's employment

It makes business sense:

- **Inclusive recruitment and training policies** can give businesses a competitive advantage by expanding the pool of job candidates and ensuring that women are part of the "talent pipeline."
- **Programmes that improve work-life balance for women** (and men), such as childcare support, health services and alternative work arrangements, can lead to significant savings from reduced absenteeism and staff turnover.
- **Higher levels of gender diversity can drive up productivity and innovation**, by introducing new perspectives and ways of working, strengthening team dynamics and improving decision-making processes.
- **Employing more women can enhance a company's relations with the local community and with other business**

partners, providing companies with the acceptance that they need to conduct their business activities.

- **Hiring more women can** ensure that a company's workforce is representative of its customer base and **can provide greater insights into consumer preferences.**

"Women's participation is critical to meet the demand for skilled labour in emerging markets. Investing in women's employment is a win-win strategy for all, strengthening both companies and communities, and changing the face of the global economy."

—Usha Rao-Monari, Director
IFC Sustainable Business Advisory

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES

1. Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality.
2. Treat all women and men fairly at work—respect and support human rights and nondiscrimination.
3. Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers.
4. Promote education, training and professional development for women.
5. Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women.
6. Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy.
7. Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality.



Photo Credit: El Soldado, Anglo American Copper



Photo Credit: Belcorp

How to invest in women

- **Designing solutions for everyone:** Many companies set up terms and conditions of employment that benefit both women and men, such as work-life balance policies, while recognizing that women may benefit from extra support or sponsorship in some areas (e.g., programmes to redress historical gender imbalances in management).
- **Setting up employee data infrastructure:** Ensuring that relevant human resource data are available on a gender-disaggregated basis can help monitor how women are positioned in the organization, the extent to which women's needs are currently being met, and what kind of interventions might make a difference.
- **Reviewing HR policies and systems** to ensure clear commitment to women and men as employees and to identify existing gaps in policy and practices.
- **Attracting women into non-traditional roles and sectors** by reaching out to women and their communities, providing skills development and training, improving career pathways to senior roles, setting numerical targets for change or making simple adaptations to the physical working environment to create more gender inclusive workplaces.
- **Creating women/family-friendly working conditions:** Case studies and research show that company-sponsored parental leave, predictable shift patterns, better access to quality childcare and health programmes for women and their families can be cost-effective interventions.
- **Incorporating “gender smart” action into broader sustainability goals** by ensuring equal opportunity and equal access to training.
- **Creating a supportive management culture:** Senior management commitment plays an invaluable role in creating and maintaining a supportive working environment for women and men. This includes ensuring a representative proportion of women in management positions and shifting mindsets on gender through training for supervisors and managers.
- **Being systematic:** Promoting women's employment often takes deliberate action. It is likely not to happen on its own. Not tackling the issue can lead to backsliding.

A TOOLKIT FOR MEASURING THE BENEFITS—TIPS FROM WINvest

Stage 1: Collect the Data

- Identify the change/initiative on women's employment
- Establish a baseline
- Identify key stakeholders
- Decide which employment metrics to use
- Decide which business metrics to use
- Identify and allocate resources needed for monitoring and collection
- Track the results

Stage 2: Analyse the Data

- Bring the relevant information together
- Analyse employee data metrics
- Analyse business data metrics and monetize outcomes where possible
- Make a list of the tangible business benefits
- Compare the costs and benefits
- Take time to learn from the outcomes
- Get feedback from key stakeholders on the interpretation of the data

Stage 3: Communicate the Business Case

- Document the business case
- Disseminate the information inside (and outside) the organization

Company example: Nalt Enterprise incorporates family-friendly working conditions



Photo Credit: IFC-ILO Better Work

Nalt Enterprise, a Vietnamese export garment factory, identified strategic advantages in investing in working conditions and enhancing relations with its workforce. Recognizing childcare as one of the main obstacles to retaining and developing women garment factory workers, Nalt built a kindergarten next to the factory. The centre, which is free of charge for children of workers of the factory, offers meals, clothes, school bags and books to children between the ages of 2-5

years old. Since the kindergarten was launched in 2008, average monthly employee turnover rates have fallen by a third. In addition to the kindergarten, the factory also offers to pay annual school fees for workers' children who have reached school age, up to and including university.

The company has also set up an accredited health clinic for workers and their families. The centre, which exceeds all local statutory requirements by offering free medical care and medication to workers, contributed to a reduction in worker absenteeism by 50% in 4 years. Overall, Nalt found that the long term benefits of investing in childcare and healthcare services far outweighed the short-term investment costs.

Nalt's commitment to investing in its workers is highlighted by the company's participation in the IFC/ILO Better Work Partnership. As global competition increases, Better Work helps supplier factories meet and exceed international labour standards, which can lead to increased productivity and enriched support from international buyers and consumers.

Company example: El-Soldado - Anglo American in Chile invests in non-traditional jobs for women



Photo Credit: El Soldado, Anglo American Copper

As one of the world's largest diversified mining companies, Anglo American is always looking for innovative ways to maintain its competitive edge. In the face of a skills shortage, Anglo-American's El Soldado copper mine in Chile began targeting women with its training programme for local workers and was able to access a previously untapped section of the local labour market.

In 2007, the company implemented a truck driving training programme with minimal entry requirements to increase women's enrollment. Whilst the 2007 programme resulted in the recruitment of only a handful of women, a second training programme in 2009 saw enrollment spike to 200 female applicants (out of a total 735). The company found that the three women hired in 2007 valued the working environment at Anglo American and helped spread the message to their social networks about the benefits of working for this company.

For El Soldado, one of the major benefits of its training programme for women is the extent to which it has improved its outreach to the local community. The company found that providing employment opportunities to local women boosts social and economic development and enhances acceptance of the mine in the local community. Senior managers highlighted the value of opening up competition for jobs at the mine and broadening the range of background and experience amongst applicants. Managers are adamant that greater gender diversity makes a concrete contribution to high performance levels and improved team dynamics.

About WINvest and the WEPs



IFC, a member of the World Bank Group, is the largest global development institution focused exclusively on the private sector. Working with private enterprises in more than 100 countries, we use our capital, expertise, and influence to help eliminate extreme poverty and promote shared prosperity. In FY13, our investments climbed to an all-time high of nearly \$25 billion, leveraging the power of the private sector to create jobs and tackle the world's most pressing development challenges. For more information, visit www.ifc.org.

WINvest (women-specific investment), is a global partnership initiative of the World Bank Group with private sector companies aimed at creating win-win outcomes for business and development by improving working conditions and employment opportunities for women while increasing productivity in business performance. With the WINvest Secretariat housed in IFC, this two-year initiative brings together IFC clients and private sector partners with a vested interest in substantiating the business case for investing in women's employment and investigating where and when investments in improved working conditions for women can result in higher firm productivity.



The **Women's Empowerment Principles** are a set of 7 Principles for business offering guidance on how to empower women in the workplace, marketplace and community. The Principles, which were launched on International Women's Day in 2010, are the result of a collaboration between

the **United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)** and the **United Nations Global Compact**. Subtitled Equality Means Business, the voluntary principles emphasize the business case for corporate action to promote gender equality and women's empowerment and are informed by real-life business practices and input gathered from across the globe. The Women's Empowerment Principles seek to point the way to best practice by elaborating the gender dimension of corporate sustainability, the UN Global Compact, and business' role in sustainable development. As well as being a useful guide for business, the Principles seek to inform other stakeholders, including governments, in their engagements with business.



To learn more, stay tuned for the launch of the report *Investing in Women's Employment: The Business Rationale* at the World Bank Group/IMF Annual Meetings in Washington D.C. (October 11–13, 2013). For more information or to become involved in this initiative, contact: Nasim Novin (nnovin@ifc.org). For more information on the WEPs, contact Lauren Gula (gulal@unglobalcompact.org).