

GENDER EQUALITY

Why it is important in business



IDH Fresh & Ingredients Program

WHY



Companies that become aware of the role women play as direct employees and as workforce in their supply chain, are better positioned to improve business practices.



Women are often under-represented in leadership roles and over-represented in part time and informal roles.



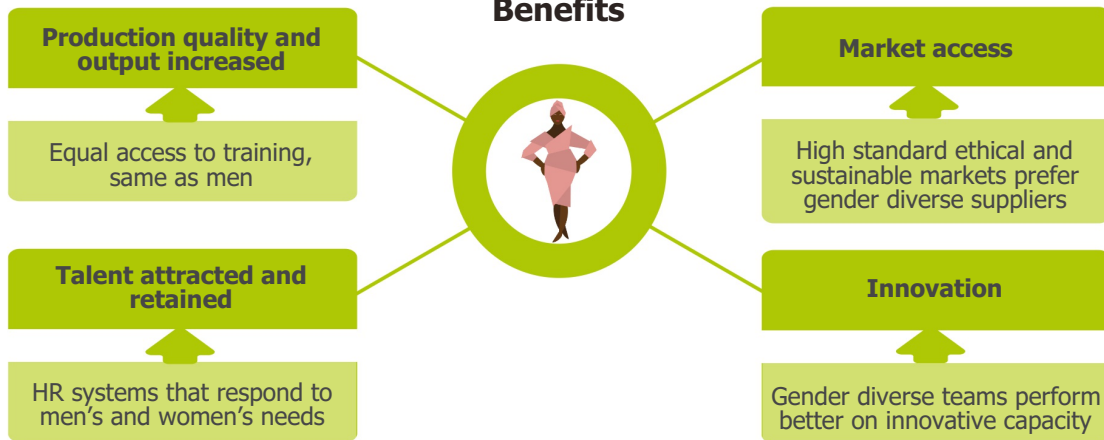
Investing in issues that are relevant for your female workers is an important step towards worker satisfaction and improved production.

"The business case for gender equality is compelling. Investing in women is indeed smart economics"



Philippe Le Houérou,
IFC Executive Vice
President and CEO

Benefits



HOW

Ensure equal opportunities and support



- Equal contracts for equal jobs
- Management positions for women
- Technical jobs for women
- Trainings accessible by both men and women
- Include gender business strategy with specific actions

Guarantee good working conditions & safety



- Extra protection against dangerous chemicals for pregnant women
- Zero tolerance on sexual harassment & discrimination
- Home-work transportation for women
- Health and sanitation facilities

Provide fair payment



- Equal pay for equal tasks
- Support for women's control over income by own bank account

Facilitate work-life balance



- Maternity leave
- Support for breastfeeding in the workplace
- Support for childcare
- Flexible working hours

Gender Impacts on Business

The examples below demonstrate gender strategies by companies in three countries and their results.

Strategy <<<<

>>>> Results



Improved production quality



Decent working condition for women, e.g. transportation for women



Non-traditional jobs for women, e.g. export managers, financial controllers



Childcare support in harvest time

Vegetables & Fruits

Fundo Dona Pancha, Peru

- + Capacities of 400 female employees well utilized, resulting in improved production quality
- + No shortage of employees, even in time of labour shortage
- + Good reputation in and outside Peru



Reduced staff turnover & absenteeism



Health training program for 1,150 garment workers



35 female peer educators are trained to pass on training information to employees

Garments

Ismailia factory, Egypt

- + The absentee rates dropped from 19% to 10.7% over 12 months
- + The employee turnover rate declined from 14.5% to 8.1% over 12 months
- + Good return on investment: cost reduction fourfold of cost of investments in gender



Women empowerment



Training of 400 male and female employees as peer educators



Awareness raising in (member) producer companies on rights, sexual harassment, hygiene

Engaging local stakeholders knowledgeable on gender issues

Flowers

Ethiopian Horticulture Producer Exporters Association & member farms

In cooperation with: IDH, Floriculture Sustainability Initiative (FSI) & BSR HERproject

- + Raised awareness of 7000 female employees of supplier companies on their rights regarding protection from sexual harassment, and on nutrition, family planning and reproductive health
- + Female employees start claiming their rights
- + Improved hygiene and sexual reproductive health among female employees
- + Scaling up to 20,000 employees in follow up project

Contact

IDH, Fair & Sustainable Consulting and ICCO provide companies and organizations guidance on gender strategies. If you want more information, please contact us.

 Info@fairandsustainable.nl

Source

BSR, 2011, HERproject: Health Enables Returns
IDH, internal sources
BOP Innovation Center, Women as inclusive business partners, Fundo Dona Pancha
Photo: ICCO Cooperation / Eva de Vries