

# WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES

**EQUALITY  
MEANS  
BUSINESS**

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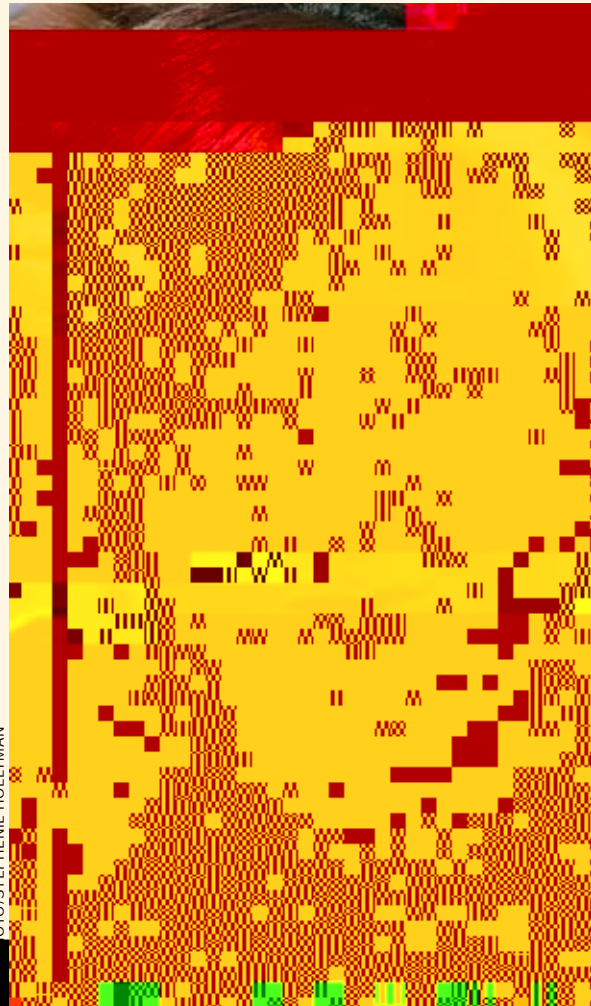
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PHOTO/STEPHENIE HOLLYMAN

**E** **Б** **Е** 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
- Propel businesses' operations and goals.

Yet, ensuring the inclusion of women's talents, skills, experience and energies requires intentional actions and deliberate policies. The Women's Empowerment Principles provide a set of considerations to help the private sector focus on key elements integral to promoting gender equality in the workplace, marketplace and community.

Enhancing openness and inclusion throughout corporate policies and operations requires techniques, tools and practices that bring results. The Women's Empowerment Principles, forged through an international multi-stakeholder consultative process

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to the factory floor to the supply chain – remains unfulfilled. Current research demonstrating that gender diversity helps business perform better signals that self interest and common interest can come together. UNIFEM, the UN Global Compact, other leading UN agencies, the World Bank and the World Economic Forum,



- Affirm high-level support and direct top-level policies for gender equality and human rights.
- Establish company-wide goals and targets for gender equality and include progress as a factor in managers' performance reviews.
- Engage internal and external stakeholders in the development of company policies, programmes and implementation plans that advance equality.
- Ensure that all policies are gender-sensitive – identifying factors that impact women and men differently – and that corporate culture advances equality and inclusion.



- Taking into account differential impacts on women and men, provide safe working conditions and protection from exposure to hazardous materials and disclose potential risks, including to5 Td[(e)h0(f)7(

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- Invest in workplace policies

- Work with community stakeholders, officials and others to eliminate discrimination and exploitation and open opportunities for women and girls.
- Promote and recognize women's leadership in, and contributions to, their communities and ensure sufficient representation of women in any community consultation.
- Use philanthropy and grants programmes to support company commitment to inclusion, equality and human rights.

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- Make public the company policies and implementation plan for promoting gender equality.
  - Establish benchmarks that quantify inclusion of women at all levels.
  - Measure and report on progress, both internally and externally, using data disaggregated by sex.
  - Incorporate gender markers into ongoing reporting obligations.



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- To open opportunities for women's career advancement in IT fields, a US-based multinational technology company maintains strategic partnerships with women's organizations in many of the countries where it operates, to promote education and training and recognize women's accomplishments in IT.
  - A large European airline company reaches out to youth through education projects to break down the barriers that traditionally limit women to certain jobs in the industry and men to others.
  - A large financial services company in Australia offers

# How to Make & Measure

The following suggestions align with each of the seven Women's Empowerment Principles and indicate approaches on how to make and measure progress. However, the most powerful assessment tools derive from an organization's own culture and objectives, matched with a clear measurement framework. While we share common goals, the routes to get there will, by necessity, be diverse.



Define clearly company's strategic case for advancing gender equality within the organization and in its field.

Establish a high-level task force to identify priority areas, establish benchmarks and monitor company progress.

Include company-wide goals for progress towards for gender equality in job descriptions and performance reviews.

## THINGS TO CONSIDER...

- Is the stated commitment to advancing equality and promoting nondiscrimination and fairness prominently featured on the company's website and in company recruiting materials and corporate sustainability reports?
- Is there a designated board-level individual who champions the organization's gender equality policies and plans?
- Are there trainings, including for male leaders, on the importance of women's participation and inclusion?
- Does the company's annual report or sustainability report include leadership statements on reaching gender equality goals?



Prominently publicize an explicit company statement that prohibits gender-based discrimination in hiring, retention policies, promotion, salaries and benefits.

Design recruitment initiatives that reach out to more women.

Review and analyze remuneration of all employees by gender, employee category and job title.

Ensure equal opportunities for women to lead on important assignments and task forces.

Survey employees to elicit the views of women and men towards company policies on equal opportunity, inclusion, nondiscrimination and retention.

Establish and implement a confidential grievance policy and procedure for incidents of discrimination, sexual harassment and gender-based violence.

## THINGS TO CONSIDER...

- Is there a gender breakdown of the company's board of directors and top management?
- Does the company track and analyze promotions by gender, employee category and title?
- Are fair pay reviews conducted on a regular basis?

- Are sufficient numbers of women – 30 percent or greater – being recruited and interviewed? Do interview panels have sufficient numbers of women participating?
- What is the retention rate for female employees by employee category and job title compared to male employees?
- Has the company designed flexible work options that incorporate the specific and different needs of women and men?
- Are there accessible channels for filing grievances on gender-based discrimination, harassment and violence?





# Progress

- Are company grounds adequately lit?
- Are female health care professionals available in company-provided health services?



Train and educate employees, particularly male staff, on the company's business case for women's empowerment.

Offer career clinics and mentoring programmes for women's career development at all stages.

Promote training programmes tailored for women.

## THINGS TO CONSIDER...

- What is the distribution between women and men of training and professional development opportunities?
- How many hours of training do women and men participate in annually, analyzed by job category and title?
- Are the demands of employees' family roles considered when scheduling trainings and education programmes?



Prominently publicize an executive level policy statement on the organization's support for gender equality practices in its supply chain.

Identify a 'women's enterprise

'champion' within the organization to target women-owned enterprises and help develop their capacity to become quality suppliers.

Request from current and potential suppliers information on their gender and diversity policies and include these in criteria for business selection.

## THINGS TO CONSIDER...

- Does the company perform analyses of its existing supply chain to establish the baseline number of suppliers that are women-owned enterprises?
- How many of the company's suppliers have gender equality policies and programmes?
- What is the ratio of women-owned enterprises compared to other suppliers?
- How does the company record complaints regarding its portrayal of women and girls in marketing and other public materials, and how are these concerns acted on?



Define company community engagement initiatives that empower women and girls.

Encourage company executives to undertake community consultations with local leaders—women and men—to establish strong ties and programmes that benefit all community members.

Craft a community impact analysis that marks the specific impacts on women and girls when establishing or expanding presence in a community.

## THINGS TO CONSIDER...

- What initiatives are supported by the company to promote equality in the community and how many women and girls, men and boys do they reach?
- Does the company survey participants through focus groups or written comments for feedback?
- Does the company review its criteria and policies that determine community engagement activities against results and community feedback?
- Are women's contributions to their communities recognized and publicized?



Report annually, by department, on company's gender equality plans and policies, using p

women will become a victim of rape or attempted rape in her lifetime.<sup>7</sup>

- Women experience sexual harassment throughout their lives. Between 40% and 50% of women in the European Union reported some form of sexual harassment in the workplace.<sup>8</sup>
- The cost of intimate partner violence in the United States alone exceeds US\$5.8 billion per year: US\$4.1 billion is for direct medical and health care services, while productivity losses account for nearly US\$1.8 billion.<sup>9</sup>
- In Canada, a 1995 study estimated the annual direct costs of violence against women to be approximately Can\$1.17 billion a year. A 2004 study in the United Kingdom estimated the total direct and indirect costs of domestic violence, including pain and suffering, to be £23 billion per year or £440 per person.<sup>10</sup>



- The AIDS epidemic has a unique impact on women, exacerbated by their role within society and their biological vulnerability to HIV infection – more than half of the estimated 33 million people living with HIV worldwide are women.<sup>11</sup>
- The prevalence of violence and of HIV/AIDS is interrelated. Women's inability to negotiate safe sex and refuse unwanted sex is closely linked to the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS. Women who are beaten by their partners are 48% more likely to be infected with HIV/AIDS<sup>12</sup>.



- When women are afforded the equality of opportunity that is their basic human right, the results are striking. In 2006, *The Economist* estimated that over the past decade, women's work has contributed more to global growth than China.<sup>13</sup>
- If Japan raised its share of working women to American levels, it would boost annual growth by 0.3% over 20 years, according to *The Economist*.<sup>14</sup>
- In 2007, Goldman Sachs reported that different countries and regions of the world could dramatically increase GDP simply by reducing the gap in employment rates between men and women: the Eurozone could increase GDP by 13%; Japan by 16%; the US by 9%.<sup>15</sup>



- About two-thirds of the estimated 776 million adults – or 16% of the world's adult population – who lack basic literacy skill are women.<sup>16</sup>



bottom lines. See: <http://www.globalreporting.org/CurrentPriorities/GenderandReporting/>.

A recent report (January 2010) by McKinsey & Company, 'The Business of Empowering Women', presents a case for why and how the private sector can intensify its engagement in the economic empowerment of women in developing countries and emerging markets. The re-

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