



SRI LANKAN Businesses Advance **GENDER EQUALITY**

SheWorks Sri Lanka Private Sector Partnership

#TOGETHERWECAN

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



Creating Markets, Creating Opportunities

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IFC—a member of the World Bank Group—is the largest global development institution focused on the private sector in emerging markets. We work in more than 100 countries, using our capital, expertise, and influence to create markets and opportunities in developing countries. In fiscal year 2020, we invested \$22 billion in private companies and financial institutions in developing countries, leveraging the power of the private sector to end extreme poverty and boost shared prosperity. For more information, visit www.ifc.org.

About IFC's Women in Work Program in Sri Lanka

Women in Work (WiW) is a five-year, \$9.5 million initiative launched in partnership with the Australian government in April 2017. It is IFC's largest, standalone country-based gender program designed to close gender gaps in the private sector while improving business performance. The program, which benefits from multisector program design and works closely with the World Bank on research, tackles women's access to jobs and assets at the same time. It aims to increase women's workforce participation in Sri Lanka's private sector, create more and better jobs for women, and has the potential to increase profits and drive overall economic growth. WiW also contributes to the vision of the government of Sri Lanka where all citizens can achieve higher incomes and better standards of living by 2025.

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2121 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20433

Internet: www.ifc.org

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November 2020



IMAGE: COURTESY OF MAS HOLDINGS



FOREWORD

I congratulate the SheWorks partners on their achievements towards greater gender equality. Your organisation's commitments have paid off – you have boosted business productivity, increased the number of women employees and women in leadership positions, and have created more respectful and supportive workplaces.

This publication is proof that organisations committed to make practical policy changes can advance gender equality. It is a testament to the success achieved by SheWorks partner organisations in improving the work environment for women and men both. It is encouraging to see how organisations were able to successfully adapt their operations as a result of COVID-19.

We hope the conversation to increase the bottom line through gender diversity will continue among the SheWorks partners and, in turn, the partners will be advocates to other organisations. The IMF has estimated Sri Lanka's GDP could be 20 percent higher if female workers had the opportunity to participate and contribute to the country's productivity. Australia's Women in Work program aims to galvanise conversations and actions on gender-smart policies to close this gap. Gender equality and women's empowerment are a core part of the foreign policy, economic diplomacy and development work of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

SheWorks acts as an exemplar that will encourage other companies in Sri Lanka and globally to adopt similar best practices for greater gender equality in their workplaces. The business organisations participating in SheWorks have provided the proof that commitment to gender diversity is good for their businesses. Together we can push for progress on gender equality in the workplace, at home and within our communities.

H.E. David Holly

Australian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka and the Maldives

FOREWORD

The evidence of gender diversity adding to economic and business sustainability is irrefutable. Equal representation of men and women, inclusive policies and practices all have positive impacts on a business' financial performance, talent retention, shareholder value, reputation, and investor confidence.

Increasing women's participation in the workforce is also in a nation's best interest, potentially boosting Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by billions, especially in countries with low rates of women's participation in the formal workforce. In Sri Lanka, the country could raise its GDP by as much as 20 percent over the long term by closing the workplace gender gap. The gender growth boost could be felt in very real terms by the economy.

Breaking down socio and economic barriers which limit women's contributions to the workforce can help lift thousands out of poverty in South Asia. As this report shows, women can be and are the breadwinners for their families and every effort must be made to ensure they have the same opportunities as men to contribute to their families' livelihoods.

The private sector plays a crucial role in recognizing this business imperative. The 15 companies under the SheWorks Sri Lanka Partnership are demonstrating in real terms the business benefits of gender equality in the workplace. When the Women in Work Program was launched in partnership with the Australian government in 2017, our objective on employment was clear: improve job opportunities and working conditions for thousands of women. This led to the two-year SheWorks partnership. Our approach was a practical one: focus on the "how" by supporting leading companies to advance gender equality in their workplaces and creating a forum for companies to share their experiences and challenges.

IFC is committed to improving gender equality. Through the SheWorks Partnership, IFC has equipped these Sri Lankan companies with the tools they need to close the gender gap. This has led to over 170,000 employees benefiting from greater employment and advancement opportunities and more equal and respectful workplaces. Our hope is that other Sri Lankan businesses will benefit from the experience of the SheWorks companies and take similar actions to advance gender equality.

In some cases, implementing these changes has been challenging; it has taken perseverance, leadership and commitment, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has presented unique and unprecedented difficulties for us all. Yet, these SheWorks businesses have achieved exceptional results and have brought about profound changes to their workplaces. They are beginning to reap the rewards of gender equality and will continue to do so for years to come.

On behalf of IFC, I would like to thank all the SheWorks companies for their efforts and commitment. While the program is now complete, the journey continues. As part of the World Bank Group, our commitment to boosting shared prosperity and eliminating extreme poverty is unwavering. Only by working in tandem with the public and private sectors will we be able to more effectively encourage women's participation in the labor market and create opportunities where they are needed most.

Amena Arif

Country Manager for Sri Lanka and the Maldives
International Finance Corporation





IMAGE: COURTESY OF JETWING

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report, Sri Lankan Businesses Advance Gender Equality, is a product of the SheWorks Sri Lanka Partnership, produced by the IFC led Women in Work (WiW) Program in partnership with the Australian Government. It was developed under the overall guidance of Henriette Kolb (Head Gender and Economic Inclusion Group, IFC) and Amy Luinstra (East Asia and Pacific Lead, Gender and Economic Inclusion Group, IFC). It was led and authored by Aarthy Arunasalam (Employment Lead, WiW Program, IFC) with Samurthi Perera (Communications Consultant, WiW Program, IFC). The report was prepared under the leadership of Sarah Twigg (WiW Program Manager, Sri Lanka, IFC).

The team would like to thank Amena Arif, Alexa Roscoe, Bhattiprolu Murti, Camille Funnell, Heather Mae Kipnis, Maria Teresa Garcia, Rob Wright, Savani Jayasooriya, Shabnam Hameed, Shyami Siriwardena and Victor Navaranjan Antonypillai from IFC for all their help and inputs. Patricia Ann Shadforth provided copy editing, and We are Designers provided layout.

IFC would also like to acknowledge the partnership of the Australian Government, especially Danielle Cashen and Pubudu Gnanissara, without whom the SheWorks partnership and this publication would not have been possible.

This report is the result of a collaborative effort with SheWorks member companies and partners. Appreciations are extended to the following SheWorks Sri Lanka members who have been featured and those who generously shared their company journey of bridging the gender gap and business results. Chathuri Munaweera (AIA Insurance Lanka Ltd), Anusha Alles, Nilangani De Silva (Brandix Apparel Limited), Kumudini Welmillage, Jayani De Silva (CBL Group), Dilrukshi Kurukulasuriya, Suwatthi Kandiah (DIMO), Chinthaka Premaratne (Fairway Holdings), Amantha Nipuna, Manique Jayasooriya-David (Hela Clothing), Upulka Samarakoon, Dimuth De Alwis (Hemas Holdings PLC), Shashika Perera, Kanchana Nanayakkara, Tharindi Wickramasurendra (Jetwing), Kumudu Munasinghe, Isuru Gunasekera (John Keells Holdings), Bani Chandrasena (London Stock Exchange Group), Taniya Lewwanduwage, Thanuja Jayawardena (MAS Holdings), Lilanthi Delgoda, Lasantha Dasanayaka (National Development Bank PLC), Delrene Seneviratne, Nilupama Madurawala (SANASA Development Bank), Thushara Jayawardana, Madusanka Gammanpila (South Asia Gateway Terminals), Ransi Dharmasiriwardhana, Tanya Rajendra (Standard Chartered Bank).

SheWorks Participating Companies



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The CBL Group's childcare facility helps working mother's like Himali Anuruddika, balance work and care responsibilities.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

IMAGE: COURTESY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT BANK PLC

Through the SheWorks Sri Lanka Partnership (SheWorks), a two-year peer learning platform, 15 leading companies, representing over 170,000 employees, have created more equal and respectful workplaces for women and men. At the same time, these companies have boosted their business productivity and growth. SheWorks companies are spread across Sri Lanka's growth sectors¹, including banking and finance, garments and apparel, information technology, and tourism.

Women's participation in the labor force in Sri Lanka remains stubbornly low at 34 percent and is less than half that of men (73 percent labor force participation for men)², despite significant progress on a range of other gender and human development metrics. Women in the 20 to 40 age group are

the most disadvantaged, securing only 30 percent of jobs in the private sector and are 6.6 times more likely to be unemployed than women in other age groups.³ For Sri Lanka's economy to continue to grow and expand into new key sectors, it needs to maximize the potential of its workforce. The intervention of the private sector is essential for meeting this pressing employment challenge to reduce the gender gap. In response, Women in Work, a joint initiative of the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), is working with the private sector to close the gender gap while improving business performance.

Over the course of SheWorks, 15 companies took 97 actions to advance gender equality across six areas:



This report, Sri Lankan Businesses Advance Gender Equality, consolidates lessons from the SheWorks Partnership and shares business results and good practices from the 15 SheWorks companies. The aim is to create a demonstration effect in the country by helping companies to identify and implement gender-smart policies and practices that can contribute to more equal and inclusive workplaces.

The five key business results achieved across SheWorks companies over the course of the two-year partnership are:

Twelve percent increase in women employed, equating to over 12,000* more women employed.

All 15 SheWorks members committed to being more proactive in how they recruit new staff and retain their top talent to ensure greater gender diversity. Overall, there has been a significant increase from 49 percent to 73 percent in some share of women newly recruited among SheWorks companies since the beginning of the partnership. This was driven largely by business growth across some sectors, and companies were also more likely to recruit women through targeted initiatives. Many of the SheWorks companies saw an increase in the retention of women, particularly at the middle management and executive level, where women's participation often declines; six companies experienced an 8 to 60 percent increase in the share of women in middle management, while eight companies achieved an increase ranging from 1 to 160 percent in the share of women in the executive cadre.

One-third increase in the share of women on boards of directors; 21 percent increase in the share of women in leadership roles.

Participating companies made significant progress in the share of women on their boards of directors, with an increase from 12 to 17 percent. Three companies achieved more than 30 percent representation of women on their boards. In comparison, the share of women on boards of companies listed on the Colombo Stock Exchange increased from 8.2 to 9.6 percent between 2018 to March 2020⁴. SheWorks companies also have higher shares of women directors than the South Asian average of 7.8 percent and the global average of 15 percent. The share of women in senior management positions at SheWorks companies increased from 17 to 21 percent overall, and three companies now have more than 40 percent women in senior management.

Increase in the share of women in non-traditional job roles and sectors.

Strong strides have been made towards appointing more women as engineers for the first time in male-dominated sectors such as automobile, shipping and logistics. Gender stereotypes and barriers are starting to be broken down by providing opportunities for women in non-traditional jobs, such as cutters, mechanics and technicians in the garments and apparel industry. Policies around flexible work, respectful workplaces, safe transportation and specific technical and soft skills training have supported this progress.

More parents stay employed due to employer provided childcare support.

At the outset of SheWorks, family commitments were among the top three reasons for both women and men to leave the workforce. By the end of SheWorks, family commitments and childcare are no longer among the top three reasons for women to leave the workforce. Eight companies that signed up for this commitment have introduced at least one initiative to support the childcare needs of their employees, such as extended maternity benefits, paternity or parental leave, establishing a lactation room, or by providing on- or off-site childcare.

Twelve companies have created more respectful and supportive workplaces.

Twelve SheWorks companies introduced or improved at least one policy or practice to create a more respectful and supportive workplace. These included policies on anti-sexual harassment, equal employment opportunities in the workplace, anti-bullying, third-party grievance mechanisms or through conducting awareness campaigns and training on anti-sexual harassment and bullying in the workplace.

*This was calculated as the change in number of women employed by SheWorks companies at endline compared to baseline. A total of 112,663 women were employed at endline, compared to 100,439 at baseline.

Note: While these results have been achieved during the two-year SheWorks program, a causal relationship has not been established. However, there are strong indications that SheWorks has accelerated progress, as demonstrated by the comparison with the overall change in women's labor force participation in Sri Lanka, which increased by 4 percent from 33.6 percent in 2018 to 34.5 percent in 2019.⁵

CONTEXT

Global Context

Gender equality is not only a social and moral imperative, but also an economic necessity. Companies increasingly recognize they can gain a greater competitive advantage and improve profits by targeting women as employees, entrepreneurs, consumers, and business leaders. If women, who account for half the world's working-age population, do not achieve their full economic potential, the global economy will suffer. As of 2019, women's participation in the global labor market is 47 percent, 27 percentage points below the male rate (at 74 percent)⁶. The world could achieve a 'gender dividend' of \$172 trillion by closing gaps in lifetime labor earnings between women and men.⁷

Sri Lanka Context

Despite improved education and health outcomes for women in Sri Lanka, women's participation in the labor force remains persistently low at 34 percent, and is less than half that of men (73 percent of men participate in the labor force).⁸ Across the 11 SheWorks companies not in the garments and apparel sector, women comprise 30 percent of all employees (in garments and apparel women comprise 71 percent of all employees, mostly at an operational level). Research indicates that the key impediments to women's participation in paid work in Sri Lanka are mobility constraints and childrearing and household responsibilities, which fall disproportionately on women.⁹

Sri Lanka's ranking in the Global Gender Gap Report,¹⁰ which measures the gap between men and women in terms of economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment, has declined over the past 14 years. In 2006, Sri Lanka ranked 13th out of 115 countries; while in 2020, Sri Lanka is ranked 102 out of 153 countries. While Sri Lanka scored high on health and education the gender gap between women and men's economic and political participation has widened.

Yet the benefits to increasing women's participation are significant; the International Monetary Fund predicts Sri Lanka could raise its GDP by as much as 20 percent by closing the gender gap in the workforce.¹¹

The world could achieve a 'gender dividend' of USD 172 trillion by closing gaps in lifetime labor earnings between women and men.



Women's participation in the labor force remains persistently low at

34%



Sri Lanka is ranked 102 out of 153 countries in the Global Gender Gap WEF Report 2020



By closing the gender gap in the workforce Sri Lanka could raise its

GDP by 20%



In response, through the Women in Work Program, IFC and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) are working to create more and better opportunities for women in Sri Lanka's private sector, and in doing so are helping to create more sustainable, productive and progressive businesses. SheWorks is one of the flagship initiatives of Women in Work. SheWorks supported companies to identify and implement workplace solutions to address barriers to women's workforce participation and increase employment and leadership opportunities for women and men across the private sector. In doing so, SheWorks also contributed to increasing business outcomes, productivity and growth among participating companies.

In 2017, the Government of Sri Lanka made various national commitments to advance gender equality, by publishing "Vision 2025". This included improving access to quality,

affordable childcare facilities, safe transportation, facilitating part-time and flexible work arrangements, increasing maternity benefits for private sector employees, and improving access to tertiary education and vocational training. Notwithstanding this progress, some legal constraints that limit women's full participation in the economy remain. These include restrictions on women's ability to work at night in some industries, and restrictions on the types of jobs women can do in certain industries such as mining and factories. The law also does not mandate equal pay for equal work.¹² While the law requires employers to provide 84 days of maternity leave, this leave is fully funded by the individual employer, without government contribution. Global evidence suggests there is a strong correlation between financial or tax benefits from the government for maternity provision, and women's labor force participation.¹³



IMAGE: COURTESY OF HELA CLOTHING

SHEWORKS SRI LANKA PARTNERSHIP

The SheWorks Sri Lanka Partnership was a two-year initiative to improve business outcomes in the country by advancing workplace gender equality. It was launched in March 2018, when 18 companies, employing more than 200,000 employees, made commitments to improve gender equality, focusing on six areas (see this page). Participating companies represented multiple sectors including banking, finance and insurance, garments and apparel, information technology and tourism. One aim of SheWorks was to create a demonstration effect across the private sector. The partnership ended in April 2020, with 15 companies, employing more than 170,000 people, completing the two-year commitment. Three companies were unable to complete the partnership.

In order to join SheWorks, each company was required to make gender-smart commitments which included taking at least three actions to do more to create an equal workplace for women and men. At the program's conclusion, **15 companies completed 97 actions.**

As part of SheWorks, IFC provided gender intelligence training, workshops, tools, best practice examples and peer learning opportunities to help the participating companies meet their commitments. IFC also monitored and shared the progress of each company against its targets through accountability mechanisms such as an HR survey at the outset to determine a baseline, a mid-term report (launched on April 2019) and this final publication.



INCREASE WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

- Offer company-wide mentorship, sponsorship or leadership development programs
- Strengthen or build an effective employee resource group

24 Actions by **14** Companies



RECRUIT, PROMOTE AND RETAIN WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE

- Implement flexible work solutions
- Increase the number of women employees in non-traditional roles

24 Actions by **15** Companies



TACKLE EMPLOYER-SUPPORTED CHILDCARE

- Conduct a childcare needs assessment and feasibility study
- Set up an employer-supported childcare facility and/or implement family friendly policies

12 Actions by **8** Companies



BUILD RESPECTFUL AND SUPPORTIVE WORKPLACES

- Implement effective workplace anti-sexual harassment and bullying solutions

12 Actions by **12** Companies



SUPPORT WOMEN IN THE VALUE CHAIN

- Identify the business case for gender diversity in the value chain
- Promote women's employment opportunities in businesses from which the company sources

11 Actions by **8** Companies



FOSTER LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT TO GENDER-SMART BUSINESS STRATEGY

- Pursue firm level workplace gender certification – Economic Dividends from Gender Equality (EDGE) Certification
- Senior management committed to showcase company efforts on the public stage

14 Actions by **10** Companies



IMAGE: COURTESY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT BANK PLC



INCREASE women in LEADERSHIP

Actions

- **12 companies** offer company-wide mentorship, sponsorship or leadership development programs
- **11 companies** strengthened or built an effective employee resource group
- **1 company** strengthened the female senior leadership talent pipeline (this was an additional action based on company interest)

Business Case

	Higher financial performance (ROE, ROA etc.)		
	Inclusive decision-making		Greater ability to serve new markets
	Improved corporate culture and governance		Greater ability to innovate

Numerous studies demonstrate that businesses with gender diverse leadership teams perform better on a range of metrics. This includes returns on equity, net profit margins, and earnings per share.^{14,15}

There is a clear and positive correlation between increased gender diversity at top levels of corporate leadership and better company performance in Sri Lanka. In 2019, IFC and DFAT¹⁶ found that among the top 30 companies listed on the Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE), companies with higher gender diversity on their board of directors perform better than those with less gender diversity in terms of return on equity, return on assets and price-to-earnings ratio. There has been some recent progress on women's corporate leadership in Sri Lanka, but the pace of change is slow. The share of women on boards of listed companies increased from 8.2 to 9.6 percent between 2018 to March 2020.¹⁷ This reflects progress and is higher than the South Asian average of 7.8 percent but is a long way from parity and trails the global average (15 percent).

Participating Companies

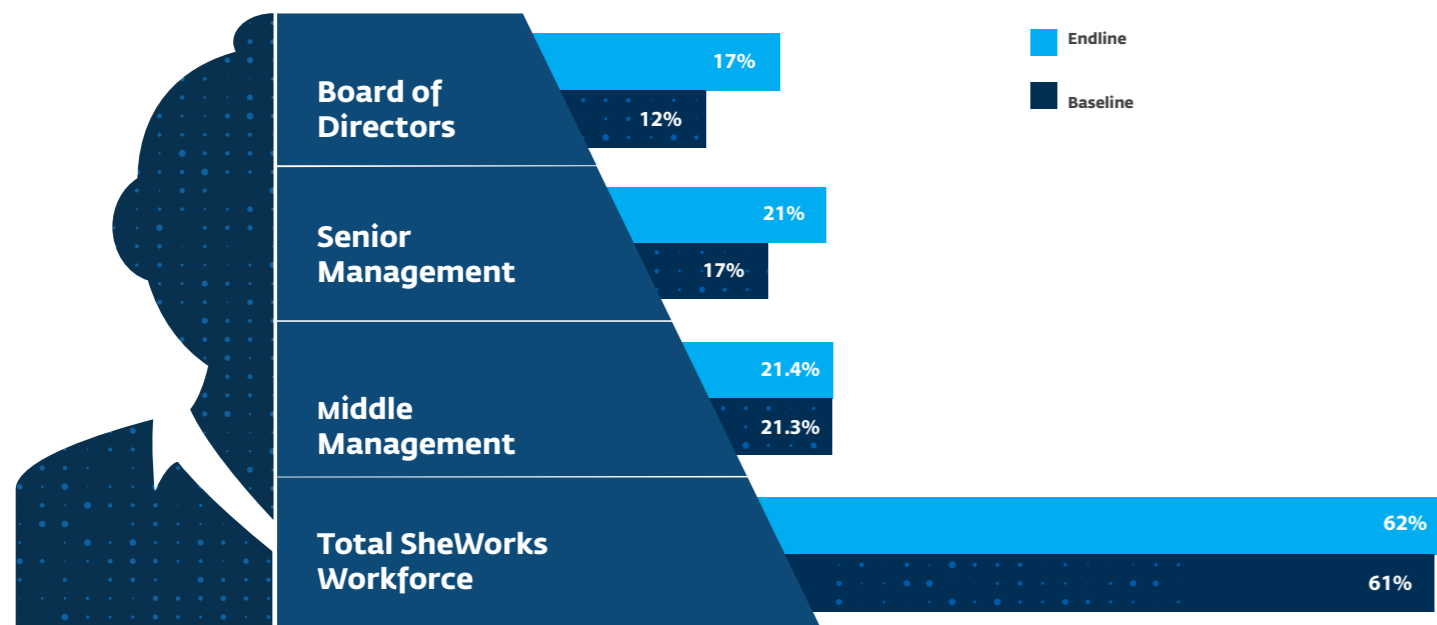
-  AIA Insurance
-  Brandix Lanka Ltd
-  CBL Group
-  DIMO
-  Hela Clothing
-  Hemas Holdings
-  Jetwing
-  John Keells Holdings
-  London Stock Exchange Group
-  MAS Holdings
-  National Development Bank
-  SANASA Development Bank
-  South Asia Gateway Terminals
-  Standard Chartered Bank

SheWorks Endline Results

All 14 companies that committed to increasing opportunities for women in leadership built a pipeline of women leaders and increased the participation of women in decision-making positions. This included establishing gender targets, employee resource groups, mentorship and sponsorship programs, leadership development training and succession planning, to help build a pipeline of female talent to take up future leadership roles, along with tools to monitor progress.

Participating companies made significant progress in share of women on their boards of directors, increasing from 12 to 17 percent across 14 companies. Three companies achieved more than 30 percent representation of women on their board. The share of women in senior management increased from 17 to 21 percent; with three companies achieving more than 40 percent women representation in senior management.

(Graph 1.1) Share of Women in SheWorks Companies Across Work Levels



In addition to increasing the number of women on boards, companies are focusing on women at the CEO, Senior Management, and 'first women' roles. **Hemas Holding PLC** (Hemas) made history by being the first publicly listed conglomerate in Sri Lanka to appoint a female CEO, Kasturi Chellaraja Wilson, in October 2020. During her twenty years at Hemas, Kasturi rose through the ranks, having worked in the aviation, travel, maritime, logistic and pharmaceutical areas of the group. As part of a planned succession, Kasturi took on the role of Deputy CEO and was appointed to the Board of Hemas Holdings PLC in July 2020. She has completed many leadership programs during her career, including the Senior Executive Leadership Program at Harvard Business School.

Hemas significantly increased the number of women in decision making roles, raising the total share of women in management by 7 percentage points to 24 percent.



Kasturi Chellaraja Wilson
Group CEO
Hemas Holdings

Increasing Women in Leadership Roles

Increasing the share of women in leadership roles takes time and significant effort; yet eight out of 14 companies increased their number of women leaders in two years. Five companies set targets for the share of women in senior management and/or board positions as a part of their gender diversity strategies.

To promote women in leadership, **Standard Chartered Bank** (SC) introduced a reverse mentoring program, a fair pay charter, a talent accelerator program, and focused personal branding sessions for upcoming female leaders, while continuing its focus on balanced succession planning.



The initiatives launched over the last two years to support the women in leadership agenda have resulted in us achieving a 36 percent female representation in the Country Management Team (CMT), 100 percent internal succession for female appointments into the CMT and achieving 50:50 gender equality in our workforce in March 2020."

Ransi Dharmasiriwardhana,
Head of HR at Standard Chartered Bank Sri Lanka.

DIMO launched a women's network in 2018 with the objective of creating a conducive work environment for men and women. DIMO operates in the automobile, construction machinery, power, energy and marine engineering sectors, which are traditionally dominated by men. Women comprise only one in ten of DIMO's workers, presenting a challenge for the company in terms of ensuring women's voices were heard. The network has four male sponsors and a mix of women and men as a part of the committee. Male participation has increased from 35 percent to 50

percent since its introduction. Senior leaders also highlight the importance of having men as allies in this initiative. DIMO has increased the number of women in leadership roles by 5 percentage points.

DIMO has seen an increase in the share of women in leadership roles by **5 percentage points**



Nilushi Thenuwara,
DIMO

(Box 1.1) **IFC supported participating companies to improve gender diversity in leadership by conducting the following learning series**

- **Employee Resource Group (ERG)** by Ernst & Young (UK&I) Diversity and Inclusion Networks
- **The Business Case for Gender Diversity in Sri Lankan Boards** was presented by the IFC Corporate Governance Team
- **Private Sector Roundtable with the Australian Ambassador for Women and Girls.**

(Box 1.2) **Call to Action – Lessons Learned to Build Greater Gender Diversity in Leadership**

ESTABLISH a baseline and set corporate targets for increasing women in leadership, particularly in roles that directly impact profit and loss. This helps break the glass ceiling that siloes women in certain roles and positions.¹⁸

FOCUS on middle managers to build the leadership pipeline. Providing middle managers with leadership training and succession planning programs that will foster talent and create a pool of potential future leaders. Research shows that employees often need the most information and guidance at the mid-tier stage. Being proactive in this area can help them reach their career developmental milestones and expedite top performers' readiness for advancement.

INTRODUCE sponsorship, coaching or mentorship programs and link these to the performance management and career development of mentors/mentees and sponsors/sponsees. Put in place rigorous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to measure the individual and business impact of such programs over time.

ENCOURAGE senior men to play an active role in mentoring and sponsoring women in middle management. It's also important for men also to have access to leadership and skills development training. Focusing too many programs on developing female leaders alone, without resources or programs targeting future male leaders, might drive this cohort away. High potential talent pools and leadership development programs should be gender-balanced.

Ensure a critical mass of women are represented in leadership because numbers matter and one woman on the board of directors or in senior leadership is not enough. 30 percent is generally acknowledged as the minimum representation to be targeted for women and men¹⁹.

CELEBRATE all kinds of wins, even small, incremental changes, which are just as important as big gains.



IMAGE: COURTESY OF CBL GROUP



RECRUIT, PROMOTE and RETAIN women in the workplace

Actions

- **12 companies** implemented flexible work solutions
- **12 companies** increased the number of female employees in non-traditional roles

Business Case

 Increased employee satisfaction	 lower recruitment and replacement costs
 Greater loyalty and motivation	 Cost-effective family-friendly support;
 Lower absenteeism and turnover	 Access to high-performing talent

Participating Companies

- AIA Insurance
- Brandix Lanka Ltd
- CBL Group
- DIMO
- Fairway Holdings
- Hela Clothing
- Hemas Holdings
- Jetwing
- John Keells Holdings
- London Stock Exchange Group
- MAS Holdings
- National Development Bank
- SANASA Development Bank
- South Asia Gateway Terminals
- Standard Chartered Bank

Companies are realizing that gender-smart recruitment and retention policies are key to ensuring they can access and retain the skills they need. Yet, women continue to be underrepresented in the workforce in most sectors, and even where women are present, existing workplace policies often fail to provide the support women need to help them stay employed over the long term.

In Sri Lanka, unemployment rates for women below the age of 40 are much higher than they are for men, with women of childbearing and rearing age the most likely to be unemployed. Women in the 20 to 40 age group, for example, are 6.6 times more likely to be unemployed than women in other age groups.²⁰

There are a number of barriers to women's employment and where employers can and should take action to ensure more gender-inclusive workplaces (Box 2.1).

By 2025 millennials will comprise three-quarters of the global workforce²³ and are presenting a new set of needs and demands in the workplace. Millennials are focused on shared work-life responsibilities and seek family-friendly policies that support both working parents. Employers can face challenges in retaining top talent if they do not adopt gender-inclusive policies quickly.²⁴

(Box 2.1) **Barriers to increasing the recruitment, promotion and retention of women**



Marriage, childrearing, and related household responsibilities dramatically reduce women's likelihood of working²¹



Gender bias and discrimination in job search, hiring, and promotion



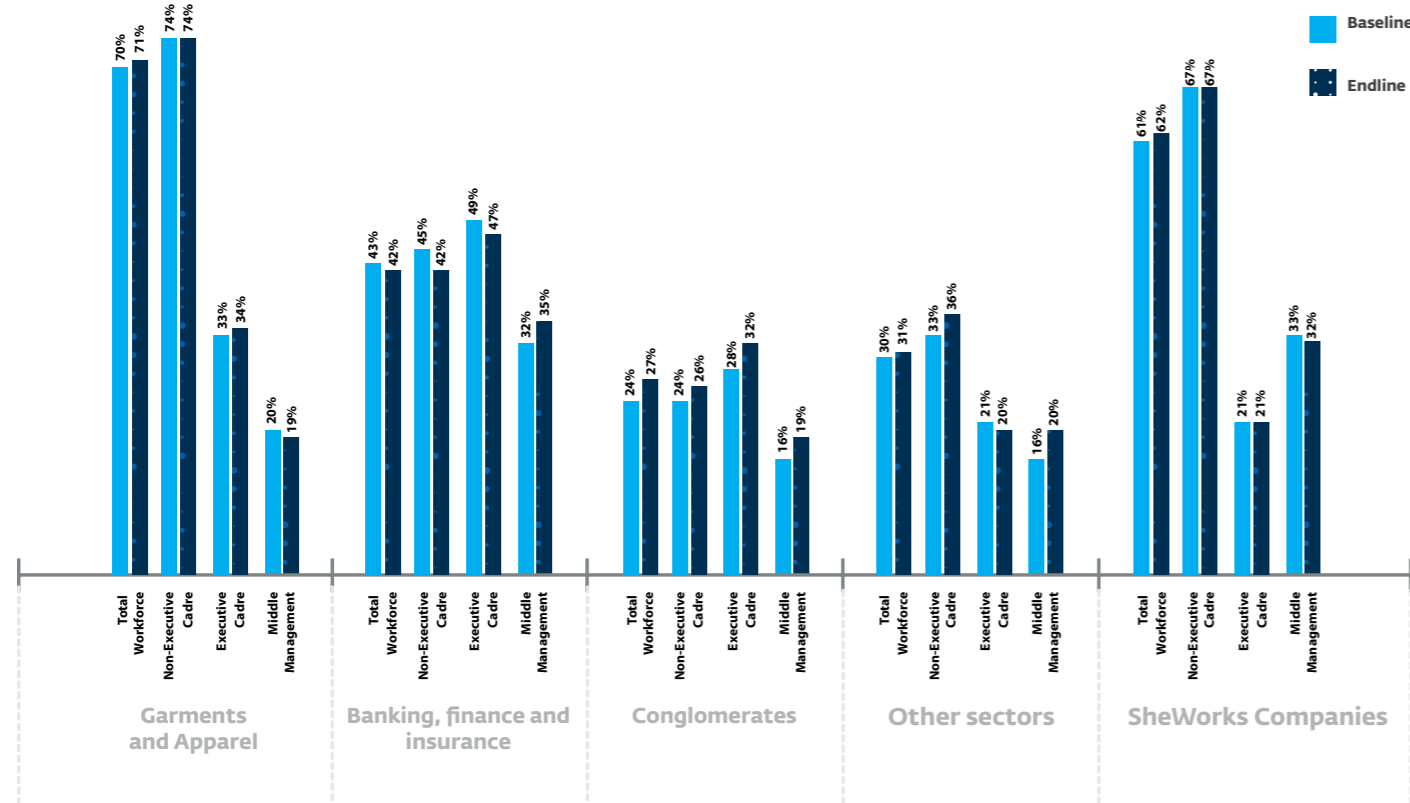
Women lack access to the types of skills that are sought by employers²²



Inadequate family-friendly and gender-smart workplace measures

SheWorks End-line Results

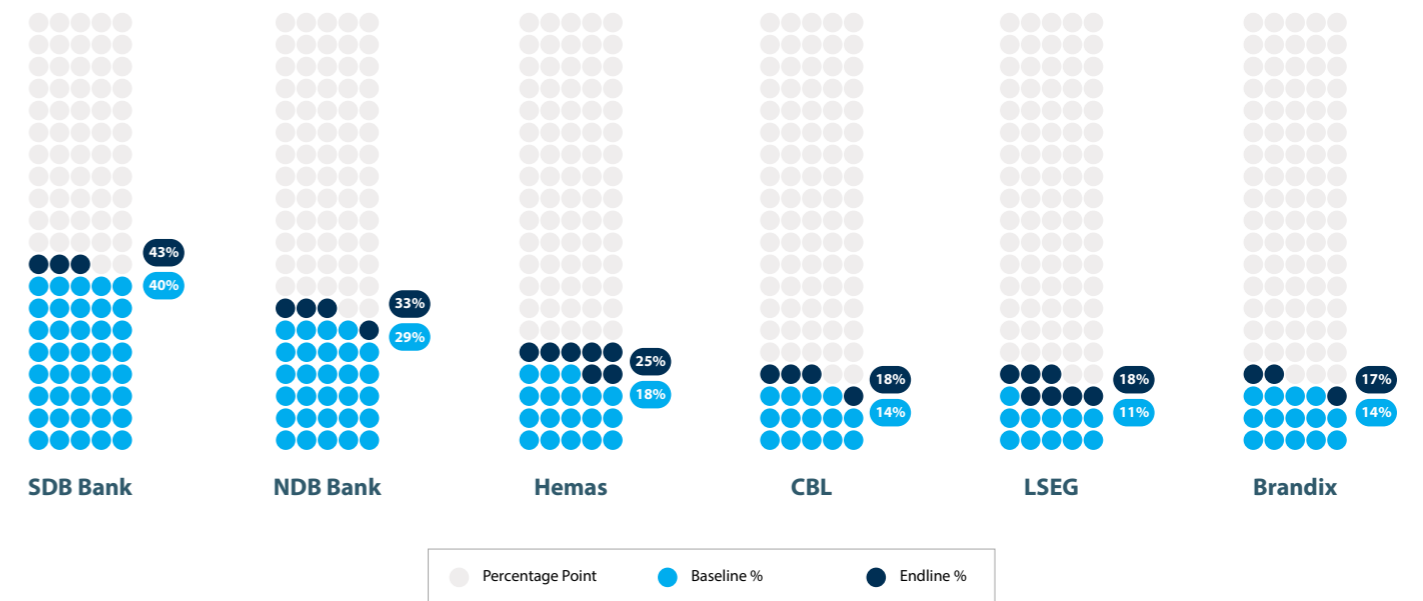
(Graph 2.1) **Share of Women in SheWorks Companies Across Work Levels**



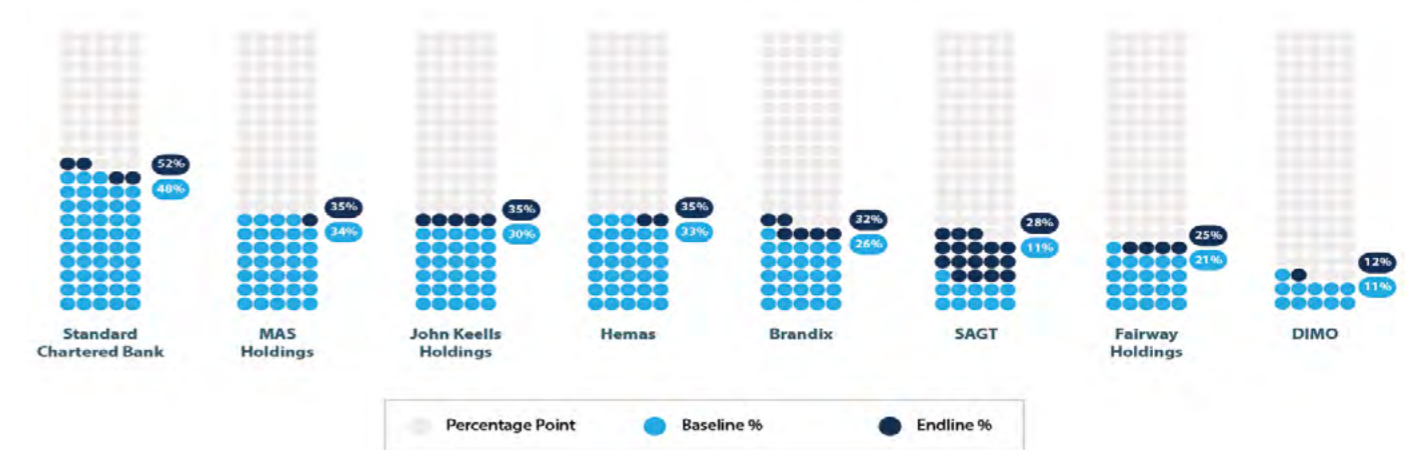
All 15 SheWorks members committed to creating equal opportunities for employment and are more proactive in how they recruit and retain their top talent to ensure gender diversity. Many of the SheWorks companies increased their retention of women, particularly at the middle management and executive level, where women's participation often declines. Six companies increased the share of women in middle

management by between 8 and 60 percent (graph 2.2). Eight companies achieved an increase in the share of women in the executive cadre ranging from 1 to 160 percent (graph 2.3).

(Graph 2.2) **Increase in Share of Women in Middle Management Roles**



(Graph 2.3) **Increase in Share of Women in the Executive Cadre**



Brandix Apparel Limited identified the middle tier of leadership as a challenging layer for women to breach. In 2019 an 18-month leadership training program was introduced. Through this, 73 candidates have been identified for succession, including 13 women. They are being supported with skills development and leadership training as well as coaching and

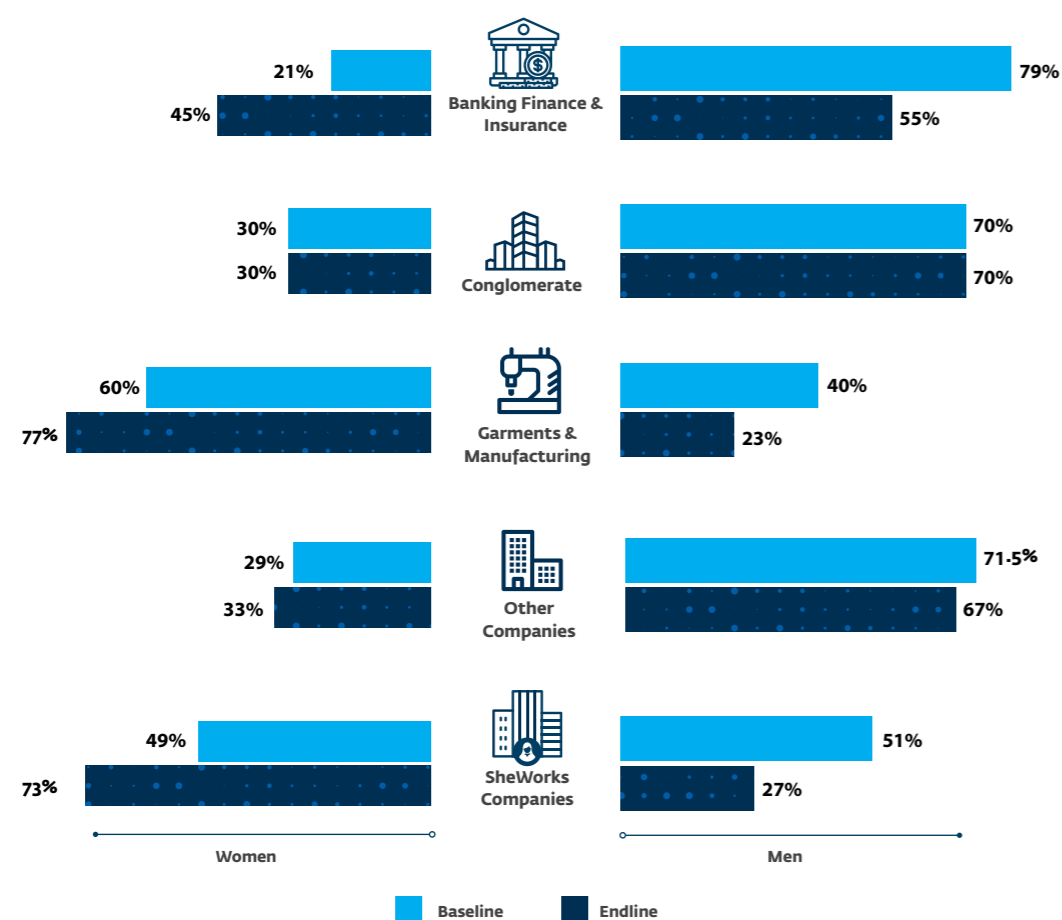
mentoring. The share of women in leadership has increased from 12 to 17 percent over the course of SheWorks, and two women were appointed to the board of directors, bringing the share of women up to 17 percent.

Recruitment

Overall, there has been a significant increase from 49 percent to 73 percent in the share of women newly recruited among 11 SheWorks companies since the beginning of the partnership (graph 2.4). This equates to 28,937 new female recruits over the course of the two years, compared to 5,262 across those same companies at the start of SheWorks. This was driven in part by business growth in some sectors and implementing targeted recruitment initiatives, such as the John Keells Holdings 'hire women or

explain' policy, as outlined below. The banking, finance and insurance sector experienced the highest increase of 114 percent followed by the garments and apparel sector with a 28 percent increase.

(Graph 2.4) Share of New Recruits by Gender



A 'hire women or explain' policy was introduced by the Keells supermarket chain, a part of **John Keells Holdings Group (JKH)** interventions in jobs traditionally done by men. As part of this policy, each Keells supermarket manager was asked to ensure the meat counter team included women and were required to make an explanation if this was not achieved. To increase the number of female applicants for the outlets, a targeted recruitment campaign featuring women supermarket employees was rolled out. The advertising campaign was designed to tackle negative social stereotypes that were preventing women from applying for jobs in retail.

Standard Chartered Bank put in place strategic recruitment policies to ensure gender balance in recruitment. These included gender-inclusive job advertisements, a requirement for a gender-balanced shortlist and

a gender-balanced interview panel for senior hires. People leaders (line managers who have direct reports) attended unconscious bias training. This has helped people leaders evaluate new recruits as well as their current teams on merit and limited the influence of unconscious bias in their day to day decisions. Such measures helped Standard Chartered to meet skilled labor shortages and minimize costs, whilst driving an inclusive culture.

Promotion

All 15 SheWorks companies introduced at least one policy or practice to support the promotion of women, with some introducing more than one. Eight companies introduced targeted leadership development programs for women, seven introduced a gender dimension to their succession planning and introduced a gender dimension for identifying high potential staff during talent reviews, and five companies focused on fostering high-performing female talent ready to take on international assignments.

SheWorks companies from the garments and apparel sector have shown a marked increase in the rates of women being promoted – between 26 to 38 percent of all promotions now go to women. Tackling an industry wide challenge in graduating factory associates to managerial positions, **MAS Holdings** has a structured process for career development called the Team Leader and Group Leader program and provides technical and leadership skills development which grants certification and a diploma to factory workers completing the course. A mentorship program was introduced for female team members, connecting them with a manager at their own facility to support and develop a pool of talent for the MAS flagship Empowered Woman of the Year Award. A female executive mentorship program was also introduced, connecting high performing female executives to mentors in senior management. This program aims to connect female mentees with female mentors, wherever possible, in a bid to develop both junior executive and senior women in the organization.

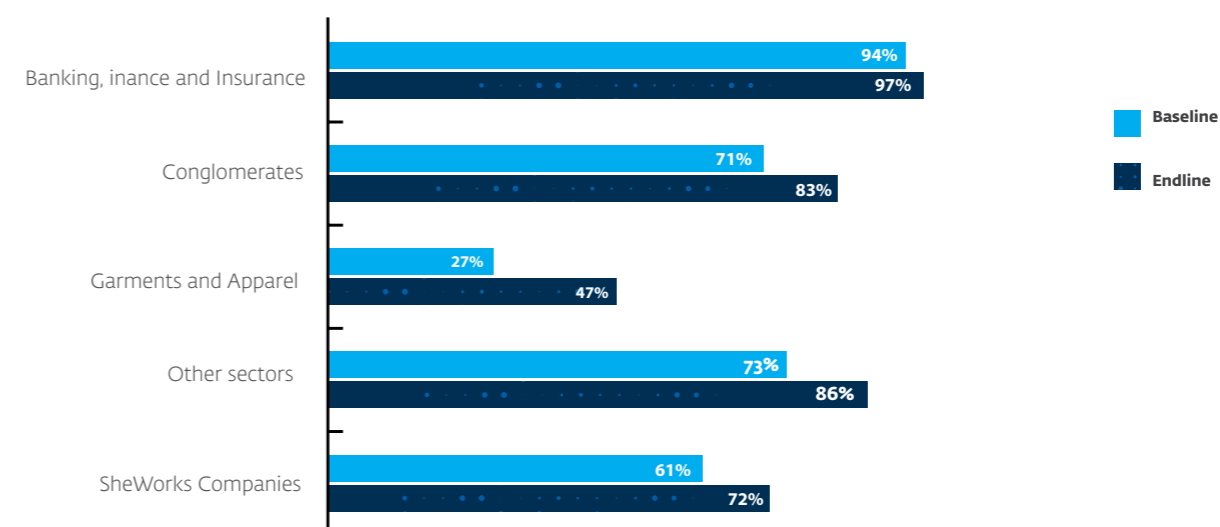
Since 2018, there has been a noteworthy improvement in the recruitment of women to the position of Assistant Manager and above, from 18 percent to 42 percent. Recruitment of females in the overall executive and higher grades increased from 35 to 38 percent which shows a substantial increase

in recruitment efforts. Internal promotions of women have progressed from 29 percent in 2018 to 37 percent in 2019.

Retention

All 15 SheWorks companies introduced at least one retention policy or practice related to employee well-being, including physical, financial, emotional and mental well-being. Other practices that companies introduced to support retention include flexible working policies, counseling support, after-hours transportation, and policies associated with equal pay for equivalent work and diversity and inclusion. Overall, there was good progress in improving the retention of women upon return from maternity leave among SheWorks companies, with an 11-percentage point increase (graph 2.5). All 15 SheWorks companies introduced at least one retention policy or practice related to employee well-being, including physical, financial, emotional and mental well-being. Other practices that companies introduced to support retention include flexible working policies, counseling support, after-hours transportation, and policies associated with equal pay for equivalent work and diversity and inclusion.

(Graph 2.5) Increase in Retention Rate of women after maternity leave*



*The retention rate of women following maternity leave was calculated as number of women who returned from maternity leave and remained employed for a year divided by the total number of women who went on maternity leave in the previous year. The other category includes baseline and endline data from only one company.



IMAGE: COURTESY OF HELA CLOTHING

Most companies underestimate the cost to replace an individual employee, and therefore fail to recognize the savings that come from implementing gender-smart recruitment and retention policies. The cost of replacing an individual employee is estimated to range from half of an annual salary to two times the employee's annual salary depending on the job role.²⁵

Standard Chartered Bank (SC) offers 'flexible working' to support employees to meet the demands of their personal lives, without impacting their careers. SC offers formal and informal forms of flexible working, such as Working from Home, Flexible Working Time or a combination of both. This benefit is applicable to all employees irrespective of tenure in the organization. Formal flexible working is permitted for arrangements that are regular and are likely to last 12 months or more. Informal flexible working is where a flexible working arrangement is short-term, or where the employee may need to change the arrangement from time to time.

To provide factory staff with a secondary income source, during COVID-19 **Hela Clothing** created the Hela Diriliya Club. This initiative allows interested employees to execute projects that will help them generate a secondary income and Hela supports with technical expertise by developing a business plan, providing technical training and linking participants with a financial institution and markets for their products. By the end of 2020, 350 female factory staff will complete the Diriliya program pilot.



Hela provides multiple platforms to build our skills and knowledge on the job. Be it 'Shark Tank' debates, weekly presentations on any business topic or webinars. They help us learn the importance of business strategies, building trust with our customer and team, and most importantly boosts my confidence level. Our leadership team gives us the opportunity to speak up."

Jayani Chinthika Weerasekera,
Assistant Manager, Merchandising,
Hela Clothing

Twelve SheWorks companies conducted employee engagement surveys and nine reported an increase in the employee satisfaction score among women compared with the previous two years. This suggests that the retention initiatives these firms introduced are paying off in terms of employee satisfaction. By implementing targeted gender smart policies **DIMO** saw employee satisfaction scores increase from 3.89/5 to 4.11/5 within a year. Box 2.2 describes the way in which **John Keells Holdings** were able to support one female employee in its hotel group to thrive.

Top Three Reasons for Women and Men to Resign

At the start of SheWorks in 2018, the top three reasons for women and men to resign revolved around family commitments, mostly due to childcare responsibilities, relocation to support the spouse, and career advancement, which also includes higher benefits (graph 2.6). By the end of SheWorks, very few companies reported family reasons as one of the top three reasons to resign, career advancement being the most common

reason for leaving. Amongst men, career advancement remains the number one reason to leave, while for women it is relocation or spouse migration.

(Graph 2.6) **Top Three Reasons for Women and Men to Resign**

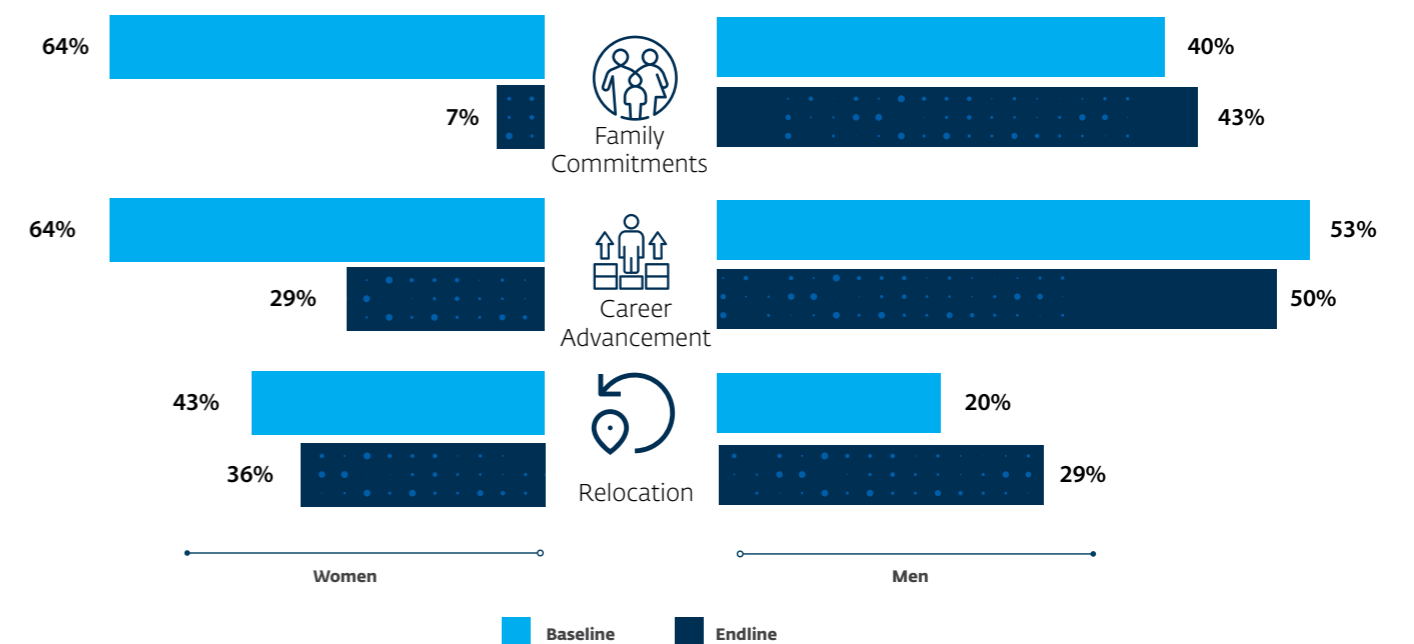


IMAGE: COURTESY OF STANDARD CHARTERED BANK



Thanuja Jayanethi
Executive Housekeeper,
Cinnamon Bay Beruwala

(Box 2.2) John Keells Holdings, Supporting Women in the Tourism Sector:

Thanuja comes from a rural village where it is not generally accepted for women to work in tourism. “There are negative perceptions among the community for a woman to work in the hotel sector, it was my father who stood by me and enrolled me into hotel school,” says Thanuja, who joined Cinnamon Hotels after completing her hotel study.

When Thanuja was ready for marriage, she was working at Cinnamon Lodge in Habarana. Her manager had a discussion with her about relocating to a hotel closer to home to help her stay employed and facilitated a transfer to Cinnamon Bay. She is now mother to a five-year-old and John Keells Holdings provides facilities for her to bring her son to work during an emergency to balance work and life.

“Cinnamon Hotels selected me as one of the staff members who were awarded a scholarship to study at the Emirates Academy of Hospitality Management in Dubai. I received two weeks training in management and leadership skills development. This was the biggest exposure I have received in my career so far. After this training I received a promotion as Executive Housekeeper at the Cinnamon Bay Beruwala, where I supervise 25 percent of the staff at the hotel. Managing around 200 rooms it was a big challenge, but the company supported me to be ready and take on this position of leadership.”

Increasing the Share of Women in Non-traditional Job Roles

Having more women in non-traditional roles or in male-dominated sectors can help pave the way for future women employees, managers, and even CEOs and directors, in the shipping and logistics industry where the global average for women's participation is 4 percent, **South Asia Gateway Terminals (SAGT)**, has made concerted efforts to bring more women into the business. Great strides have been made in the executive cadre where a 17-percentage point increase brought the total share of women executives to 28 percent. For the first time in two decades, SAGT boasts seven women employed in the engineering department. The company has introduced a targeted internship program, where it actively canvasses for female candidates, and the current intern pool has an all-time high of 11 women.



I passed many personal milestones in my life at SAGT, from marriage to children, and I never had to choose between work and life – I was able to do both.”

Sewwandi Wickramasuriya
Assistant Manager, Systems Engineer IT,
SAGT

Gender Diversity Targets: What Gets Measured, Gets Done!

Thirteen SheWorks members set gender diversity goals for their organizations. When targets are measurable and transparent, this sends a signal to employees and the market that the company is serious about building a gender-balanced workplace and is prepared to hold itself accountable.

DIMO has set an ambitious gender diversity goal of 15 percent women in the workforce by 2023 (currently 10 percent are women). MAS Holdings, in the garment and manufacturing sector, set its 2025 gender diversity goals to ensure that women would comprise 65 percent of employees overall, 50

percent of those in middle management, and 20 percent on the board of directors.

DIMO has set an ambitious gender diversity goal of **15%** women in the workforce by 2023

(Box 2.3) IFC supported participating companies to improve women's retention, recruitment and promotion by conducting the following learning activities

- Gender-Informed Communication in the Workplace: provided insights on how to ensure fair and equitable treatment for women and men
- Women and the Future of Work: Highlighting business implications and opportunities of gender that are emerging in technology
- Strengthening the role of businesses in addressing well-being in the workplace by AIA Insurance and United Nations World Food Programme, Sri Lanka

(Box 2.4) Call to Action: Lessons Learned to recruit, promote and retain women in the workplace

UNDERSTAND your employee demographics to identify potential obstacles to employees' full participation. Employees at different life stages have different priorities which translate into decisions about their career.

DESIGN family-friendly policies in ways that address specific needs of both women and men. Employee satisfaction and engagement surveys can also reveal if existing gender equality policies and practices have the right tone.

SET GENDER TARGETS, because what gets measured, gets done!

CONSIDER giving staff more discretion over which benefits to access and how. Depending on their individual circumstances, not all benefits will suit the needs of all employees.

WALK THE TALK as senior leaders. For the best uptake amongst employees on flexible work and other family friendly policies, senior leaders must visibly demonstrate their support for flexibility in the workplace.

ENCOURAGE proactive career management that helps women and men continue or get back on the career track after a break in their career for whatever reason.

COMMITMENT 3



IMAGE: COURTESY OF FAIRWAY HOLDINGS (PVT) LIMITED



TACKLE employer SUPPORTED childcare

Actions

- **7 companies** conducted a childcare needs assessment and feasibility study
- **5 companies** set up employer supported childcare facility and/or implemented family friendly policies

Business Case



Childcare is not only good for business; it is also good for development and economic growth. Poor access to quality childcare is a major barrier to women entering the workforce. It is also the reason for parents with young children to drop out of the labor force. This lowers household incomes and creates lost opportunities for workplace advancement. For businesses, it can mean high attrition rates and high expenditure on recruiting and training replacements.²⁶

Childcare and early childhood programs are critical to economic development. At only 0.0001 percent of GDP, Sri Lanka has one of the world's lowest rates of public spending on early childhood development.²⁷ It is crucial to recognize that returns on early childhood programs can be as high as 13.7 percent through better education and health outcomes, lower crime and a more skilled future workforce that will be prepared for the digital age. Such programs can also raise individual adult incomes by up to 25 percent.²⁸

To demonstrate the business case for employer-supported childcare in Sri Lanka, in 2018 IFC, in partnership with UNICEF and the Australian Government, produced a report – [‘Tackling Childcare: The Business Case for Employer-supported Childcare in Sri Lanka’](#). The report features ten company case studies (six of which are SheWorks companies) that demonstrate the different ways employers can use childcare and other family-friendly benefits to help recruit and retain parents as employees.

Participating Companies

- Brandix Lanka Ltd
- CBL Group
- DIMO
- Fairway Holdings (Pvt) Limited
- Hela Clothing
- London Stock Exchange Group
- MAS Holdings
- Standard Chartered Bank



At a time in my career I was thinking of resigning due to the birth of my second child. My mentors stepped in and provided me with multiple options where I was able to strike a balance between my family obligations and work. They also recognized my potential and guided me in making the best decision for me and my family, to keep my job and work towards my career goals.”

Kanchana Boyagoda
Manager Human Resources, AIA Insurance

SheWorks Results

All eight companies that signed up for SheWorks introduced at least one initiative to support working parents. These included extending maternity and paternity benefits, introducing parental leave, setting up a lactation

room or an on-site childcare facility, or supporting other childcare options such as facilitating access to off-site services or emergency backup childcare.



IMAGE: COURTESY OF CBL GROUP

Increased Maternity Return Rates

Collectively the eight companies that made this commitment saw an 11-percentage point increase in the share of women who remain employed with the company one year after returning from maternity leave. All sectors experienced an increase in maternity return rates, with the garments and apparel sector experiencing the highest – a 74 percent increase (graph 2.5).

CBL Group, a Fast-Moving Consumer Goods company, launched an in-house childcare facility ‘Senehase Piyasa’ (translated as Shelter with Love) in October 2018. The facility is open from 5.30 a.m. to 10.30 p.m. to accommodate factory working hours. Senehase Piyasa currently cares for 32 children (and can accommodate up to 40). Before establishing the center, around 10 new mothers would resign every year. After the creche was introduced, this dropped to two – an 80 percent improvement in maternity return rates. CBL also reported that absenteeism and lateness among parents reduced by more than 40 percentage points, and parents who use the creche reported lower stress and fewer distractions once they had access to quality, trusted childcare during working hours.

Committed to building a gender diverse organization in 2018, **Fairway Holdings** established a creche in line with the company’s diversity and inclusion policy. A dedicated inter-departmental team guided by management and including human resources, and parents was formed to execute the creche plan. During the planning phase Fairway connected with other SheWorks companies that had piloted similar childcare facilities, and the Sri Lanka Child Protection Authority, for guidance and to ensure the facility met all safety standards and regulations. After establishing the creche, significant improvements were made in the retention of new mothers, with maternity return rates rising significantly – from 35 percent to 100 percent.

Maternity and Paternity Leave and Benefits

AIA Insurance provides new mothers with 100 working days paid maternity leave (16 working days in addition to the 84 days entitled by law), provides five days of paternity leave for new fathers, and one month of paid leave for new adoptive mothers. AIA also offers feeding breaks for the first year of a child’s life. These approaches have contributed to 85 percent of women returning to the company after maternity leave.

Hemas Holdings introduced a back-up childcare facility and lactation room at its head office, and maternity leave was extended from the

government mandated 84 days to 100 days, with a further option of 10 working days at no-pay. Fathers were also given 10 working days paternity leave. Parents of adopted children under the age of one were given equivalent maternity and paternity leave benefits, and half maternity benefits were extended to new adoptive parents for children between the ages of one and five.

Regulatory Environment Matters

To offset the financial burden of childcare on employers, various avenues of funding maternity and paternity benefits should be explored. This could include a universal social assistance maternity benefit (financed by the government through public funds) or a compulsory social insurance scheme that provides maternity benefits, which can be financed through employee, employer and/or government contributions.

In case of the latter, any contributions due under such a system or any tax based upon payrolls to finance maternity and paternity benefits should be paid in respect of the total number of men and women employed, without distinction of gender.



LSEG's Bani Chandrasena speaks at the Global Tackling Childcare Working Group launch of 'Guide for Employer-Supported Childcare' in Washington DC

IFC | International Finance Corporation
WORLD BANK GROUP
Creating Markets, Creating...

(Box 3.2) LSEG becomes pilot company to implement IFC's Global Guide to Employer Supported Childcare

In November 2019, the Global Tackling Childcare Working Group launched [The Guide for Employer-Supported Childcare](#) in Washington DC, which is designed to help companies globally implement childcare support for their employees and highlights

the importance of quality, accessible and affordable childcare to families, businesses and economies. LSEG has been selected as one of six companies from around the world to pilot the guide's implementation and to help refine and improve it.

(Box 3.1) IFC supported participating companies to promote employer supported childcare

- Tackling Childcare: The business case of employer-supported childcare
- Effective Parental and Maternity Return Schemes (delivered by Shaweta Pandey, former Director HR and Corporate Relations, Unilever Sri Lanka Limited and Women in Work Team)

(Box 3.3) Call to Action: Lessons Learned to Tackle Employer-supported Childcare²⁹

EXPLORE childcare as an investment rather than a cost. It's important to put key metrics in place to measure business results such as recruitment, retention, productivity and promotions.

UNDERSTAND that one size does not fit all. An onsite crèche can make a powerful, visible statement about the company's values and culture, but not all parents want or are able to access an onsite crèche, and there are other alternatives such as off-site childcare, tie-ups, a workplace consortium or back-up care.

ENSURE quality in childcare. Whether establishing an on-site crèche or selecting outsourced childcare centers for employees to access, a thorough check of the facilities and practices to ensure they meet regulatory standards is critical and will help to reassure parents their children are in the best of care.

ENABLE MEN to embrace benefits. Encouraging fathers to engage with childcare support can foster family flexibility in childcare responsibility while augmenting employer gender-diversity benefits.

OFFER alternative work arrangements. Flexible options such as part-time or flexible working hours, career by choice, and career breaks may further reinforce benefits derived from employer-supported childcare.

INVEST for the future. By providing critical, family-friendly services employers are investing in their staff, and reaping business benefits in terms of motivation, productivity, and staff retention. Employers are also making a key strategic investment in the next generation, which will provide future employees and customers, as well as drive Sri Lanka's economic development.



IMAGE: COURTESY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT BANK PLC



BUILD respectful and SUPPORTIVE workplaces

Actions

- **11 companies** implemented effective workplace anti-sexual harassment and bullying solutions
- **One company** involved the leadership team to recognize, prevent, manage and mitigate harassments in the workplace

Business Case

-  Helps to fulfill employers' duty of care
-  Improves the health, wellbeing and safety of employees
-  Reduces absenteeism, presenteeism and turnover costs
-  Increases productivity
-  Helps position the company as an employer of choice

A respectful workplace is a safe place that is free from all forms of workplace bullying and sexual harassment, where employees and others associated with the company treat each other with dignity, courtesy and respect. Estimates suggest that 90 percent of women in Sri Lanka have experienced sexual harassment while taking public transport, with 37 percent reporting that it negatively affected their performance at work.³⁰

Global studies document the costs of disrespectful behaviors in workplaces.³¹ Businesses incur costs due to absenteeism, presenteeism, turnover, lost productivity, health and safety incidents, and poor reputation. In an average Fortune 500 company, the cost of absences, lost employees and low productivity due to sexual harassment is estimated to be \$6.9 million a year.³² An issue that does not get as much attention as absenteeism is the cost of 'presenteeism' where an employee is present but not fully productive at work because of the stress or demotivation associated with experiencing sexual harassment.³³

A study into the Cambodian garment industry suggests the productivity costs of the harassment are estimated to be \$89 million a year.³⁴ The study substantiated that everyday avoidance of harassment drives productivity losses, rather than individual instances of harassment, as many workers feel intimidated and fearful

Participating Companies

- Brandix Lanka Ltd
- CBL Group
- DIMO
- Fairway Holdings
- Hela Clothing
- John Keells Holdings
- London Stock Exchange Group
- MAS Holdings
- National Development Bank
- SANASA Development Bank
- South Asia Gateway Terminals
- Standard Chartered Bank

when they are exposed to sexual harassment, even when they are not directly involved, and engage in coping strategies which absorb considerable mental energy, affecting their productivity at work.



The training and sensitization helped see beyond the lens of culture, traditions and norms and made me think broader when it comes to equality and doing what is right to create the right environment for everyone to work and progress"

Muqith Kuthdoos

Senior Executive - Human Resources, MAS Capital, MAS Holdings

An issue that does not get as much attention as absenteeism is the cost of 'presenteeism' where an employee is present but not fully productive at work because of the stress or demotivation associated with experiencing sexual harassment.

SheWorks Results

All 12 SheWorks companies that signed up for this commitment introduced or improved at least one policy or practice to create a more respectful and supportive workplace, where employees felt safe and open to seek help. Nine companies introduced or improved policies on anti-sexual harassment or equal employment opportunity in the workplace, eight organized workshops to raise employees' awareness of anti-sexual harassment and bullying in the workplace, and five companies introduced or improved anti-bullying policies and a third-party grievance mechanism.

Brandix developed a new anti-harassment policy in 2019 and is presently working on a comprehensive communication and awareness campaign to support its rollout. The policy was developed with insights from global best practices and through knowledge sharing with other SheWorks member companies, AIA, HELA, John Keells Holdings, MAS Holdings, and National Development Bank. Driving anti-harassment from the top down, the company has taken a strong stance with the leadership team vocally advocating for a healthy respectful workplace across all tiers. Meanwhile the company is developing a new tri-lingual communications plan to disseminate information on the anti-harassment policy and strong stance towards harassment. An in-house counseling team is available to staff who want additional support.



IMAGE: COURTESY OF BRANDIX LANKA LTD



I have been working here for a little over two years and I can safely say that neither I nor my colleagues have encountered any harassment, and we are confident that we will not in the future. The company goes to the extent of orienting the spouses and parents about the work we do and provide us with a safe environment and safe transportation as well."

Pathampriya
Senior Production Associate – Team Leader,
Brandix, Batticaloa

DIMO launched its 'How does it make you feel' campaign in 2019, creating a platform for employees to express thoughts on how workplace harassment and bullying can make them feel. This was carried out among the Women's Network members to increase their understanding of the depth of workplace harassment and its impacts. A 2018 survey of 200 DIMO employees found that almost 90 percent (male and female alike) believe the company has an effective anti-sexual harassment policy, and 95 percent of women and 87 percent of men feel safe getting to and from work. Transportation is offered to employees traveling from Colombo to the TATA Service location in Siyambalape and from workshops to the head office.

(Box 4.1) IFC supported companies to implement respectful workplaces policies and practices through the following learning activities

- Effective Anti-sexual Harassment Mechanisms in the Workplace, by IFC
- COVID-19 and Gender-Based Violence: Workplace Risks and Responses, webinar featuring experts from IFC, ILO and UNFPA Sri Lanka

(Box 4.2) Workplace bullying and sexual harassment are likely to increase as a result of COVID-19³⁵

Workplace bullying and sexual harassment are likely to increase as a result of COVID-19 as negative social discourse happening outside a workplace may make harassment inside the workplace more likely or be perceived as more acceptable. Employees may also be bullied or harassed by colleagues or supervisors online. Employees in frontline services are also likely to experience an increase in sexual harassment from customers and clients.

Employees are also at heightened risk of quid pro quo sexual harassment at companies that are restructuring

or downsizing. Quid pro quo sexual harassment is likely to increase when there are significant power disparities within workplaces, and supervisors feel emboldened to exploit lower-ranking employees. Gendered power disparities in highly hierarchal organizations, where a predominantly female workforce reports to predominantly male supervisors will also increase the risk of quid pro quo sexual harassment.

Employers should take actions to address these risks and improve employee and community well-being and create a safe resilient workplace.

(Box 4.3) Call to Action: Lessons Learned to create a respectful workplace

COMMUNICATE authentically about respect in the workplace. Leaders must also demonstrate ways to create a respectful workplace, role model respectful behavior and support employees to report disrespectful behavior.

CREATE policies and procedures that support respectful workplaces by clearly articulating that disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated. Provide examples of disrespectful behavior to help employees understand and build empathy. Clearly articulate the consequences of disrespectful behavior, show employees how to report it and the support available to them.

INTRODUCE effective reporting mechanisms that are easily accessible across multiple channels. Provide several options that are informal and formal; face to face or online; and there should be at least one anonymous way

to report disrespectful behavior. Communicate clearly with employees through training and practice sessions so they know what they can do if they experience, witness or hear about disrespectful behavior.

CREATE and train a team to deal with workplace disrespect. This should include men and women and the team should act promptly to investigate and resolve all issues raised in a safe and confidential manner.

ENSURE that any disciplinary action taken is based on the outcome of a discreet but thorough investigation into the incident and is proportionate to the impacts of the harassment.

MONITOR and evaluate incidences and responses to disrespectful behavior and review guidelines, reporting mechanisms and employee engagement as required.

Specific actions to consider during COVID-19

- **PROMOTE gender equality** and diversity in the workforce and supply chain.
- **ENSURE a gender-balanced** and diverse team makes all company decisions such as restructures or downsizing and are transparent to reduce the discretion of individual managers and the likelihood of quid pro quo sexual harassment.
- **COMMUNICATE with employees** about the heightened risks of workplace bullying and sexual harassment during COVID-19 and encourage any employee who experiences, witnesses or hears about such harassment to report it immediately through the company's reporting mechanisms. Remind employees about existing policies, grievance mechanisms and support services.
- **ACT promptly to investigate and resolve** all issues raised in a safe and confidential manner.



IMAGE: COURTESY OF DIMO







Support **WOMEN** in the **VALUE CHAIN**

Actions

- **5 companies** identified the business case for gender diversity in the value chain
- **6 companies** promote women's employment opportunities in businesses from which the company sources

Business Case

 Supplier development	 Greater returns in the cost of procurement and reduced risk
 Improved ability to innovate and respond to customers' needs	 Increased brand recognition with local community

Women are present in every part of the value chain: as employees, as collaborators in leadership or positions of power within businesses, and as business owners, including as producers, suppliers, retailers and distributors.

Around one million SMEs—25 percent of which are women-owned—account for about 45 percent of total employment in Sri Lanka.³⁶ Many women-owned businesses struggle to transition away from micro-enterprises.³⁷ Research shows that gender diversity in the value chain can positively impact the bottom line by creating more diversity in the supply pool.³⁸

As micro and small-scale business owners, women face barriers to starting or expanding businesses – including access to the six Cs: capital, confidence, capacity, community, connectivity and contracts. Women entrepreneurs comprise 30 percent of SME owners in emerging markets, but the finance gap for them is about \$1.48 trillion (more than a third of the total SME finance gap).³⁹ Women in Sri Lanka face challenges in accessing the financing they need to grow their businesses, with 64 percent of women who borrowed money reporting to have done so from an informal source.⁴⁰

Participating companies

- CBL Group
- DIMO
- Hela Clothing
- Jetwing
- John Keells Holdings
- SANASA Development Bank
- South Asia Gateway Terminals
- Standard Chartered Bank

SheWorks Results

Eight SheWorks companies committed to introducing specific interventions to promote women in the value chain. This led to three companies promoting women as entrepreneurs and two companies promoting women in distribution channels for their business. Companies such as AIA Insurance, MAS Holdings, and National Development Bank have also introduced initiatives to promote women as suppliers, entrepreneurs or distributors despite not signing up on this commitment.

Women in the Value Chain as Entrepreneurs

Sanasa Developments Bank's Uththamavi SME loan facility was introduced so that women entrepreneurs can meet their financial business needs, offering collateral-free MSME, SME and personal loan facilities up to 10 million rupees, including insurance benefits to those obtaining a loan. Since the launch of Uththamavi, SDB has activated over 3,000 accounts with a total portfolio value of 1.6 billion rupees to date.

Over 60 free financial literacy programs have been delivered since 2018 for more than 6,000 women around the country. This is a tailor-made training program for women on financial planning, financial products, entrepreneurship and digital banking services. The training is available for Sanasa Development Bank's customers as well as for non-customers. An MOU has also recently been signed with John Keells Foundation to conduct Financial Literacy Programs focusing on women and youth.

Sanasa Development Bank, in collaboration with other stakeholders of the SANASA group, has launched the Entrepreneur Financial Centre in Sri Lanka (EFCS) for value chain financing in four segments: pepper, traditional rice, tourism and banana to promote entrepreneurship among women.

Women in the Value Chain as Suppliers

Jetwing has a proven history of engaging local communities and extending opportunities for them to become profitable stakeholders in the industry. 'Thrive' was initiated as a community outreach initiative to empower small-scale suppliers and was launched as a pilot at Jetwing Kaduruketha, in Wellawaya. Through the program, selected local suppliers are provided with opportunities to gain the awareness, training and financial assistance necessary to upscale their enterprises to deliver quality products and services. Among the suppliers benefitting from the program, 23 percent are women.

Women in the Value Chain as Distributors

The fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector – which accounts for 30 percent of the country's gross domestic product and close to 20 percent of employment – relies significantly on SME multi-brand distributors and retailers to reach consumers. In December 2019, IFC and CBL launched a program to provide training and business development opportunities to strengthen and increase female participation in CBL's distribution chain across Sri Lanka. In addition to business capacity building, the program also promotes digital payment methods among retailers and distributors. Through this program CBL aims to double the number of women distributors in its network to 20 percent. It will also support existing distributors and retailers to introduce new business processes, setting a target of 40 percent to be using new digital payments methods within two years.

There is a clear business case for CBL Group, as demonstrated through a pilot phase of the distributor program. During the pilot distributor and retailer revenues increased by 10 percent on average within six months after completing the program.

(Box 5.2) Call to Action: Lessons Learned to support women in the value chain

ESTABLISH a baseline of how many suppliers are women-owned to better understand the company supply chain and enable monitoring of the progress of value chain diversity efforts. Reach out to existing suppliers to identify women-owned businesses and hold buyer-supplier conversations or matchmaking events.

IDENTIFY and build a business case that shows how gender diversity in the value chain positively impacts a company's bottom line. Determine existing annual spend with women-owned businesses and compare this with male-owned businesses in high priority categories of spend.

ENGAGE women entrepreneurs in local communities to become more familiar with the company's operations and potentially more valuable contributors to a diverse supply chain.

BUILD capacity and train women so they are more eligible for procurement and distribution opportunities and other value chain roles.

COLLABORATE with banks or financial institutions to provide credit lines and other financial and non-financial services tailored to the needs of women-owned businesses in the value chain.

PROMOTE women's employment opportunities in businesses from which the company sources – potentially leading to more productive and stable supply chains and improving the company's reputation as an 'Employer of Choice' for both consumers and buyers. Many buyers want to work with suppliers that have equal opportunity policies and practices in place, such as equal pay, nondiscriminatory hiring, zero tolerance for sexual harassment, and employment targets for women.⁴¹

(Box 5.1) IFC supported participating companies to support women in the value chain by conducting the following learning activities

- Best practices on increasing women in Value Chain, delivered by IFC in partnership with WEConnect International
- Strengthening women in supply chains as entrepreneurs



IMAGE: COURTESY OF CBL GROUP



IMAGE: COURTESY OF JOHN KEELLS HOLDINGS



FOSTER LEADERSHIP commitment to gender- smart business strategy

Actions

- **11 companies** are exploring to pursue firm level workplace gender certification (EDGE Gender Certification)
- **7 companies** have their senior management committed to showcasing company efforts on the public stage

Business Case

- Increase accountability and delivery of results**
- Gain visibility for efforts and establish thought leadership**
- Gain a competitive advantage over other companies**
- Become an "Employer of Choice"**
- Inspire partners and leverage their investments and resources**

Senior management's public commitment to gender equality can contribute toward reinforcing the corporate brand and position the company as an employer of choice, thereby attracting and retaining the best talent. Gaining a better understanding of global initiatives, awards, and firm-level workplace certifications may help companies position themselves as an employer of choice or investee of choice.

Research suggests that one of the key barriers to gender equality in the workplace is the lack of genuine leadership commitment. According to a global study across 118 companies, almost three quarters of companies reported that their CEOs are committed to gender diversity, while less than half of employees believed it to be true.⁴²

Participating companies

- DIMO
- Hela Clothing
- Hemas Holdings
- John Keells Holdings
- London Stock Exchange Group
- MAS Holdings
- National Development Bank
- SANASA Development Bank
- South Asia Gateway Terminals
- Standard Chartered Bank

SheWorks Results

Ten SheWorks Companies have been formally recognized for their efforts towards gender diversity and inclusion:

Number of companies who obtained **EDGE Gender Certification**



Number of companies who have an **internal award system** to recognize achievements around gender diversity related initiatives



Number of companies who have senior leaders recognized as **diversity champions** by external organizations



Number of companies who have been recognized for **enabling or supporting women in the workplace** by an external organization



Number of companies who have signed up for external **gender diversity related initiatives** such as UN Women's Empowerment Principles



Lead by example

Senior management must walk the talk to change mindsets and company culture to build an equal and respectful workplace. Family-friendly policies might not have the desired impact if the senior leadership team does not devote the time,

people, or invest wisely to make them a success. Without leadership support, companies can have difficulties getting their gender equality efforts off the ground and reaping the associated business benefits⁴³.



In July 2019, **Sarinda Unamboowe**, CEO, MAS Kreedaa represented Sri Lanka at the High-Level Summit on 'Redesigning the Workplace of the Future: Sharing Responsibility for Family-Friendly Policies', organized by UNICEF in New York, USA. Sarinda shared an overview of the progressive measures taken by MAS Holdings to advance gender equality throughout their company eco-system and ways in which business can contribute. The event focused on governments and businesses to redesign the workplaces of the future, to enable parents to give their children the best start in life, while boosting productivity and women's empowerment.

Engaging Men in Gender Equality

At **AIA Insurance**, senior leaders within the company were identified as Diversity Champions, to mentor high performing female talent, providing guidance for career growth and create a pipeline of talent for succession planning.

At NDB, maternity return rates have increased from **88%** in 2018 to **100%** in 2020

Economic Dividends for Gender Equality (EDGE) Certification

National Development Bank PLC became the first Sri Lankan company to earn EDGE certification, the only global standard for gender equality in the workplace. EDGE is the leading global assessment methodology and business certification. The EDGE certification operates on the principle that 'what gets measured gets done' and is distinguished by its rigor and focus on business impact. National Development Bank is in an exclusive group of over 200 large companies from 37 countries across five continents, representing 24 industries, that have successfully demonstrated their ability to create an optimal workplace for both men and women and reap the benefits from it.

National Development Bank conducted a deep analysis on its overall gender distribution, which helped to identify further opportunities, including its customer interface. Paternity leave and an extended flexible work policy were introduced to enable staff to better manage their work and home responsibilities. As a result, maternity return rates have increased from 88 percent in 2018 to 100 percent in 2020.



Obtaining EDGE Certification provided much impetus for NDB's endeavors in promoting gender equality in the workplace. It complements NDB's mission of becoming the Bank of choice for every aspiring woman, from the perspective of a financier as well as an employer'

Dimantha Seneviratne

Group Chief Executive Officer, NDB

Awards and Recognition

Awards are a great opportunity for companies to benchmark, share knowledge, gain recognition for gender equality efforts, and can be inspiring for current and future employees. Companies should be aware of opportunities and apply for those which are most aligned with their objectives for gender equality. Individuals or leaders can also receive awards, which highlights good practices and provides visibility and credibility for fostering workplace gender equality.

AIA INSURANCE was recognized as one of the 'Best Workplaces for Women' in Sri Lanka, at the awards presented by Great Place to Work® (GPW®) Sri Lanka in 2018 and 2019.

Delrene Seneviratne, as the Deputy Chief Executive Officer of **SANASA DEVELOPMENT BANK**, was selected to share insights on economic inclusion for women-owned or led SMEs through a series of interviews led by IFC. This conversation involves a hand-picked group of women business leaders globally who were willing to help other female board directors, senior managers, and business owners navigate the crisis and the recovery, assisting them in the difficult task of stabilizing their companies and preserving jobs and income.



(Box 6.1) IFC supported participating companies to improve gender diversity in leadership by conducting the following learning activities

- Pursuing Firm-level Workplace Gender Equality Certification
- Engaging Men in Gender Equality by Australian High Commission Sri Lanka and UN Women Sri Lanka

(Box 6.2) Call to Action: Lessons Learned to foster leadership commitment as a smart business strategy

PICK the right medium to have the right impact. Whether it is print, broadcast, or social media, or whether business leaders choose to make public appearances and speeches on gender equality, choose the right medium depending on the situation, message, and target audience.⁴⁴

PURSUE an employment diagnostic and seek external recognition or certifications where relevant.

ENGAGE men and women in the conversation as both can provide diversity of thought and will provide a balanced approach.

UNDERSTAND and apply for global and local initiatives and awards that may help to position a company as an employer of choice or investee of choice.



IMPACT BEYOND SHEWORKS SRI LANKA PARTNERSHIP

SheWorks companies are now leading the way in creating more gender equitable workplaces. Beyond the SheWorks partnership, there is more work to do.

Paving the way forward for other private sector companies to advance gender equality through the “Together We Can” campaign. To ensure other companies in Sri Lanka can access the expertise and guidance they need to help them advance gender equality in the workplace, IFC will offer an online learning series based on the experience and lessons from SheWorks. This will include webinars on topics such as recruitment and promotion, family friendly policies, tackling employer-supported childcare, and building respectful workplaces.

Expanding gender-smart solutions beyond one location of a company. Many of the SheWorks Sri Lanka companies have been implementing policies and practices around recruitment, retention and promotion – typically as a pilot in one location. The natural next step for many members is to expand these initiatives – either fully replicating them or

improving on the learnings, ensuring business impact across multiple locations and, for SheWorks holding companies with various businesses, across sectors.

Growing gender equality initiatives from the firm level to the sectoral level. One of the strengths of the SheWorks Sri Lanka Partnership is that it includes a critical mass of leading employers representing key growth sectors. Initiatives such as a workplace consortium for childcare, or collective responses to developing more respectful and supportive workplaces, can be explored through private sector or public-private partnerships.

Provide safer transportation options for female employees to commute to work. The World Bank has found that restricted mobility is both a cause and a result of women’s low labor force participation rate, and that “improvements in providing safe, comfortable transportation to and from worksites” is one of the core recommendations for improving women’s access to jobs in Sri Lanka.⁴⁵ According to the International Labour Organization, 85 percent of women homemakers reported that safe and

convenient transport is a prerequisite for their returning to work, and 32 percent of women who work in the private sector reported turning down work at night due to lack of safe or reliable transport.⁴⁶

Reform restrictive provisions of the labor law that limit women’s ability to work in the same way as men.

There are several restrictions under the Shop and Office Act 1954 that inhibit women’s labor force participation, including restrictions on the employment of women at night, as well as ability to be employed part-time or with flexible work options. Reforms to these areas are expected to help increase women’s participation in the workforce and help parents better balance work and family.

State supported maternity leave benefits in Sri Lanka.

In Sri Lanka, private employers currently bear the full cost of providing maternity leave benefits (MLB) to their employees for at least 12 weeks. This requirement makes hiring women in the 20-40 age group more expensive for employers. Women in this age group are 6.6 times more likely to be unemployed than women outside this age group. The state

can reduce these disadvantages by allowing entities to set off the cost of maternity leave benefits against their taxes. State support for MLBs is consistent with existing MLB practices across the world, with 129 states either fully (96 states) or partially (33 states) funding maternity leave benefits.⁴⁷

Explore workplace consortium childcare models at special economic zones, tech parks or office buildings with multiple tenants. A workplace consortium model allows multiple employers to collaborate and share a crèche service that is located at or near the worksite. Joining with other employers allows companies to share the up-front costs to set-up the crèche, as well as share the ongoing operating expenses.⁴⁸ The Sri Lanka Board of Investment (BOI) has put in place a childcare facility in the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Katunayake and Biyagama in response to demand from companies present at the location (including MAS Holdings). The BOI, jointly with Katunayake companies, identified childcare support as a potential solution to better attract and retain their female workforce and to bring in smaller enterprises to the SEZ.

DETAILED TIMELINE OF ACTIVITIES

April 3, 2018	SheWorks Baseline survey and Independent survey
June 10, 2018	Baseline survey completed and group level presentation
July 6, 2018	Learning series: Employment Resource Groups
August 7, 2018	Private sector round table with the Australian Ambassador for Women and Girls
November 9, 2018	Learning series: Tackling employer supported childcare in Sri Lanka
January 18, 2019	Learning series: Effective anti-sexual harassment mechanism in the workplace
February 26, 2019	Learning series: Communications on best practices on Gender Equality
March 15, 2019	Learning series: The business case for gender diversity in Sri Lankan boards
April 4, 2019	SheWorks Sri Lanka Partnership mid-line progress report completed one-year progress report: Making Progress: Sri Lanka Businesses Advance Gender Equality Launch
May 30, 2019	Learning series: Strengthening the role of businesses in addressing well-being in the workplace
June 27, 2019	Learning series: Strengthening women in supply chain as entrepreneurs
August 5, 2019	DFAT-IFC Women in Work mid-term review round table
September 16, 2019	Learning series: Effective Parental Leave and Maternity Return Schemes and Future of Work
November 29, 2019	Learning series: Engaging Male Leaders for Gender Equality
February 13, 2020	Learning series: Private Sector Roundtable with Caren Grown, Senior Director, Gender, WBG and strengthening women in supply chain as distributors
March 5, 2020	Learning series: Launch of SheWorks Sri Lanka Partnership - Together We Can Campaign
March 10, 2020	Two-day Workshop: The Art of Business Storytelling
April 1, 2020	Learning series: Team check In during times of COVID-19 outbreak
April 23, 2020	Learning series: Good Work from Home Practices during COVID-19
April 30, 2020	SheWorks Sri Lanka Partnership Ends. End-line survey completed in June 2020

METHODOLOGY

The data included in this report was collected through the following activities:

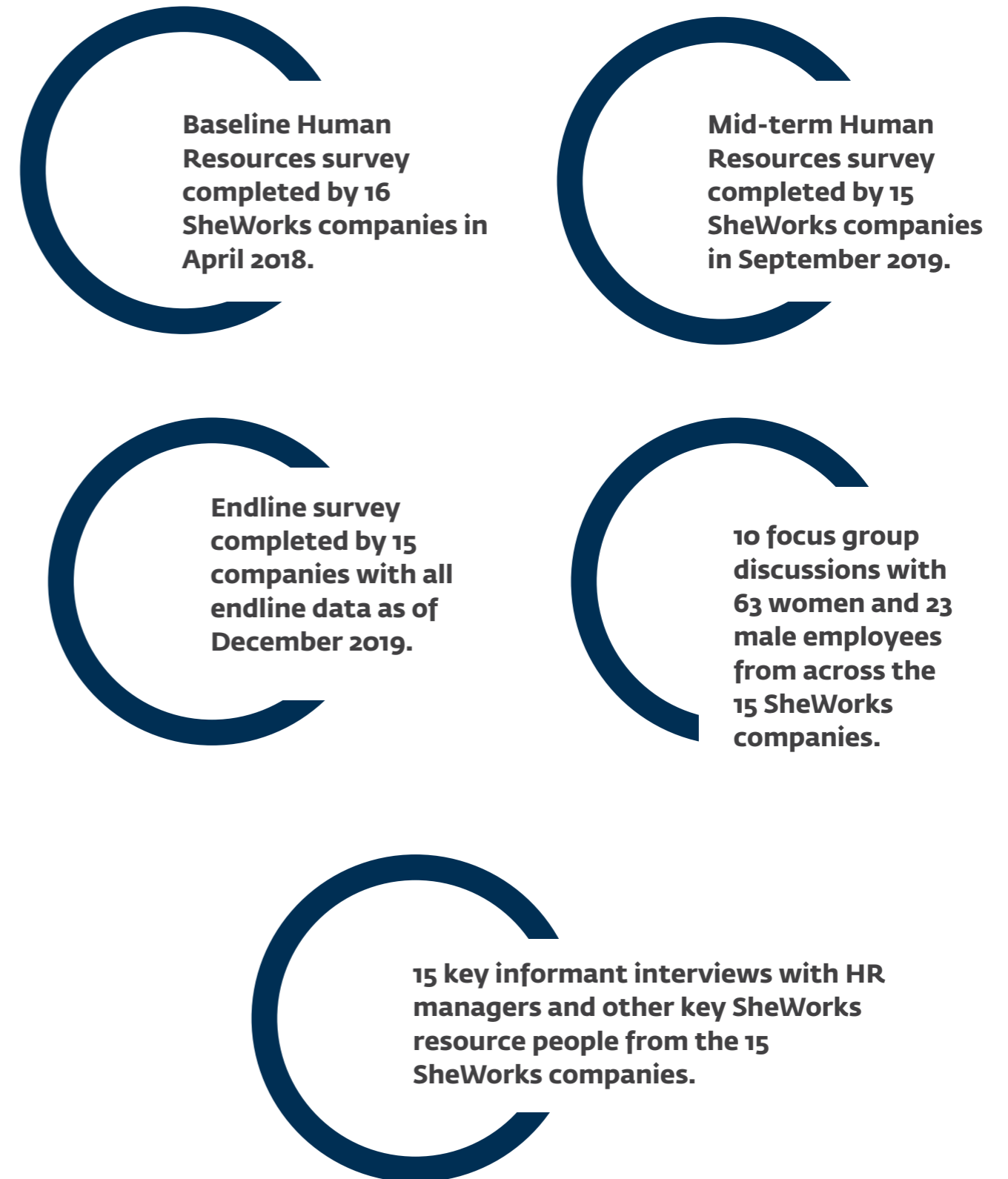




IMAGE: COURTESY OF AIA INSURANCE

AIA Insurance

Advancing gender equality for employees and wealth planners in Insurance

Commitment to action



AIA Insurance Lanka (AIA), is a member of AIA Group, the largest independent publicly listed pan-Asian life insurer, with a presence in 18 markets across the Asia-Pacific region. AIA employs over 3500 Wealth Planners and operates over 120 branch offices across Sri Lanka. It employs more than 700 permanent employees, of which 35 percent are women.

DISRUPTING THE INSURANCE-SALES GENDER GAP

Insurance sales is a traditionally male-dominated role in Sri Lanka. AIA is working to disrupt this norm by actively recruiting women as AIA Wealth Planners and Wealth Planner Managers. Through targeted recruitment campaigns powered by market research, AIA has achieved 25 percent female representation in its wealth planner cadre; and is looking to increase this. Additionally, 43 percent of women in the Top 100 High Performing Wealth Planners, bring in over half of new businesses.

In order to attract the best female talent to its sales force, AIA conducted market research to better understand the motivational drivers of female applicants. As a result, the company introduced flexible working hours and digitized many of its procedures. This improves wealth planners' ability to manage when and where they work and has streamlined processes through digital solutions. The company also created a supportive network for female wealth planners through a resource group for women agents.

BUSINESS RESULTS:



Share of **women in senior management** increased from **13% to 38%**

Gender-balanced recruitment, with women comprising **52%** of new recruitment applications



Women were **recruited** to fill **51.5%** of new roles introduced between Jan – Dec 2019

Merit based selection and **promotes equal opportunity**



AIA Insurance has been a pathfinder in bringing female insurance salespersons to the fore in Sri Lanka. At AIA, I got an amazing opportunity to harness my sales management skills and proud and humbled that today I am recognized as one of the most successful distribution leaders."

Primrose Samidon Lallyett
Zonal Manager Agency Sales Distribution, AIA



Female Wealth Planners are well received by customers; we get minimum complaints and high customer satisfaction score”

Surani De Alwis
Investigations Manager, AIA



SUPPORTING WORKING PARENTS

AIA provides new mothers with 100 working days paid maternity leave (16 working days in addition to the 84 days entitled by law) and provides five days of paternity leave for new fathers and one month of paid leave for new adoptive mothers. AIA also offers feeding breaks for the first year of a child’s life.

Over **85%** of women returning to the company after maternity leave

Additional benefits, including additional paid leave, are available for mothers or babies who need additional support prior or post confinement. These innovations have contributed to over 85 percent of women returning to the company after maternity leave.

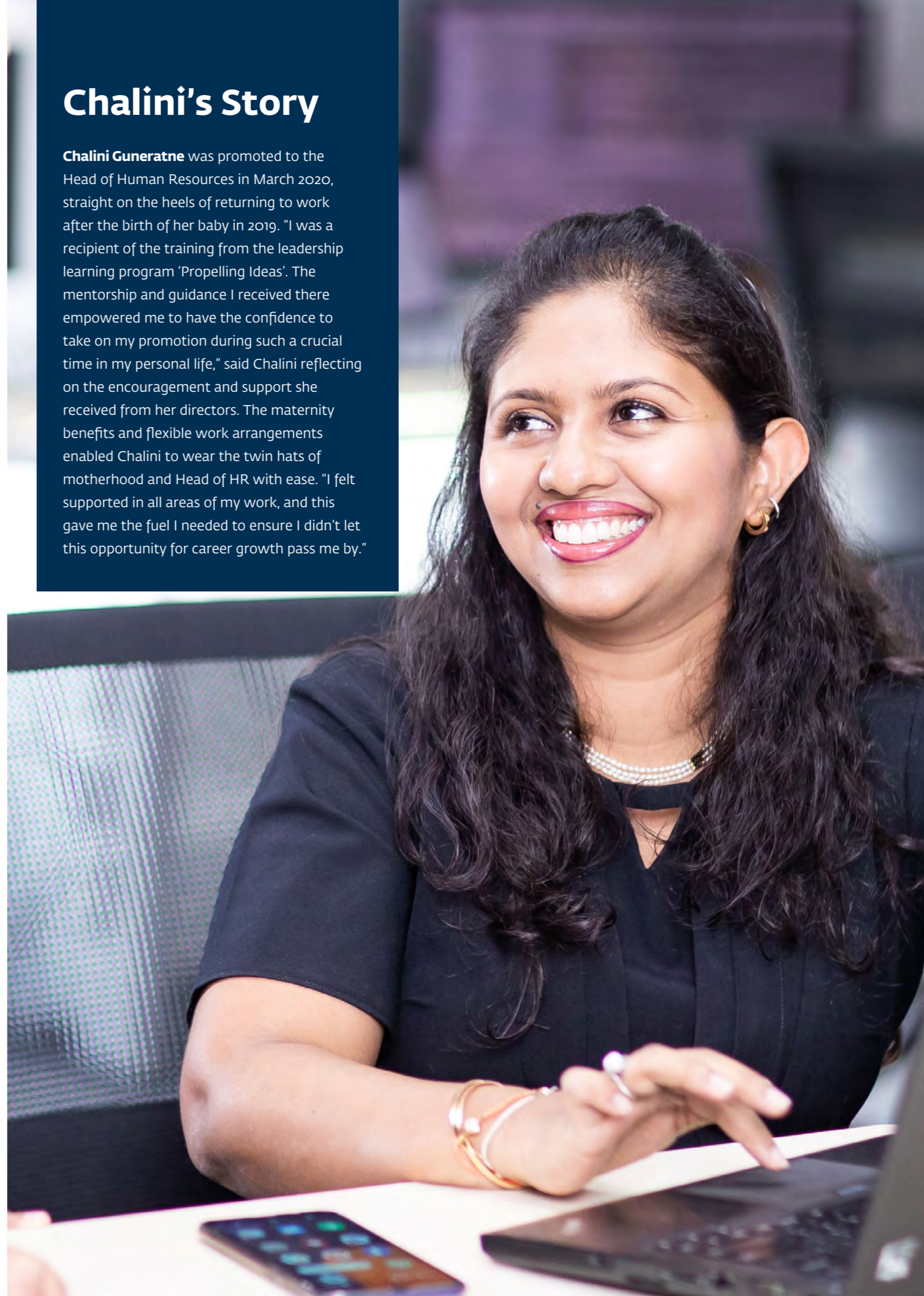


Before I went on my maternity leave, wonderful memories were created through celebrations with my HR and Operations Director and Team. I also received a surprise gift hamper once my son was born. The 100 working day maternity leave allowed me to enjoy every little moment with my baby until he was almost 6 months. The newly introduced reimbursement scheme was a huge support and flexible work solutions helped me to be productive by working from home during the pandemic”.

Kaumalee Amaradiwakara
Manager Life Operations, AIA

Chalini’s Story

Chalini Guneratne was promoted to the Head of Human Resources in March 2020, straight on the heels of returning to work after the birth of her baby in 2019. “I was a recipient of the training from the leadership learning program ‘Propelling Ideas’. The mentorship and guidance I received there empowered me to have the confidence to take on my promotion during such a crucial time in my personal life,” said Chalini reflecting on the encouragement and support she received from her directors. The maternity benefits and flexible work arrangements enabled Chalini to wear the twin hats of motherhood and Head of HR with ease. “I felt supported in all areas of my work, and this gave me the fuel I needed to ensure I didn’t let this opportunity for career growth pass me by.”



With the goal of promoting greater equality in the workplace, AIA introduced Diversity & Inclusion and Equal Pay for Equivalent Work policies and updated the company's Non-discrimination/ Equal Employment Opportunity Policy. Physical and psychological wellbeing programs, guidance and coaching support were also provided for female employees.

AIA updated its Harassment Policy/Anti-sexual harassment Policy and Domestic violence policy. The third-party grievance mechanism was also restructured. Employees underwent workshops and detailed communications on these policies. Quiz programs on workplace harassment as well as email communications were used to disseminate information, ensuring understanding and acceptance at all levels. AIA introduced additional measures like counselling sessions and regular well-being check-ins to help promote employee wellbeing as a result of the learnings from the Healthiest Workplace Survey. To ensure safe commutes, female employees working after-hours were provided with office transport services.

As a result of these initiatives, the company reports greater employee satisfaction with employees reporting they feel safer at work. The overall employee engagement score conducted through Gallup increased 12 percentage points in 2020 over 2019.

INCREASING THE SHARE OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

Increasing the share of Women in Leadership

With the goal of increasing the participation of women in leadership roles and ensuring experienced talent is represented at the senior management and board level, AIA identified structural barriers to women's progression within the company. As a result, AIA's leadership learning program, Propelling Ideas is enhancing women's participation in leadership through mentoring and building succession pipelines.

Six women leaders have been nurtured for future succession, while over 6,000 training hours have been invested in developing female leaders.

Senior leaders within the company were identified as Diversity Champions, to mentor high performing female talent, providing guidance for career growth and creating a pipeline of talent for succession planning.

AIA Insurance has a strong training infrastructure, with employees having access to overseas training, inter-departmental exposure and capacity building endeavors. As a result of these activities, the share of women in senior management has increased from 13 percent to 38 percent.

The overall employee engagement score conducted through Gallup increased **12%** in 2020 over 2019.

GPW® recognized AIA as 'Best Workplace for Women'

AIA Insurance was recognized as one of the 'Best Workplaces for Women' in Sri Lanka, in the inaugural awards presented by Great Place to Work® (GPW®) Sri Lanka. 2019 was the Second year GPW® bestowed this award as a separate category.

AIA was also recognized as a Great Place to Work® in Sri Lanka for the eighth consecutive year. This achievement comes on the heels of being inducted into the GPW® Hall of Fame in 2017.

Launch of the 'Healthiest Workplace Survey'

AIA Insurance launched Sri Lanka's Healthiest Workplace Survey (HWS), for the first time in Sri Lanka. HWS is a comprehensive survey of the health and well-being of employees around Asia-Pacific conducted in partnership with RAND Europe. Companies that participated got a clear understanding of the health and well-being profiles of employees in terms of lifestyle, clinical indicators, mental health, stress and other areas of concern.



I was promoted as a part of the succession planning program "Propelling Ideas". I am now heading the Financial Risk Functions Department. I was groomed for this larger function on the job while previously managing the Operations Risk Department."

Danushi Widanagamachchi
Senior Manager Risk and Capital Management, AIA



FACING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

AIA adapted to the rapidly developing COVID-19 situation by introducing work from home policies. The company was able to make a seamless transition to home-based work as most procedures had already been

digitized and the practice of flexible work was familiar to employees.



The infrastructure to work remotely was already in place - it was just a matter of ensuring that everything worked when suddenly it became mandatory to work from home. For me personally, it meant my team flocked together with a stronger bond, with a transformed energy to beat the challenges of COVID-19. This was demonstrated across the Company and we did not have pain points and made sure all deliverables were met.

Thushari Perera
Director Human Resources, AIA



Even though the whole country was on lockdown we managed to continue to provide insurance protection to our customers and keep our distribution and sales busy, working, protecting lives and earning livelihood. We used digital-based non face to face methods to conclude insurance sales. Our operations functions and call centers were fully functional to make sure our customers were reached to reconfirm insurance coverage or most importantly for them to reach us to have their insurance claims paid on time. Our business continued its momentum and therefore post COVID recovery was not bouncing back but bouncing forward for us."

Chathuri Munaweera
Director & Chief Officer – Legal, Governance & Operations, AIA



We ensured all customer payments were delivered with no disturbance to our processes. All our suppliers and employees were paid on time and continued to enjoy the additional benefits. We constantly tracked our staff's well-being, safety and whereabouts. We continued to have meetings, discussions, fun activities, quizzes, puzzles, birthday wishes, karaoke and even Avurudhu celebrations online.

Nilmini Abeysekera
Senior Manager Finance Operations, AIA



IMAGE: COURTESY OF BRANDIX LANKA LTD

BRANDIX APPAREL LIMITED

Fostering women leaders

Commitment to action



Brandix, a leader in Sri Lanka's Apparel industry and adjudged 'Exporter of the Year' at the 2018/19 Presidential Export Awards, operates apparel manufacturing units in Sri Lanka, India and Bangladesh, with operations in Haiti, Cambodia and UK. The company continues its inspired journey in developing, manufacturing and marketing end-to-end apparel solutions to world-renowned brands, whilst empowering sustainable development in the communities it operates in. Brandix has over 53,000 employees of which approximately 85 percent are women.

CREATING HARASSMENT FREE WORKPLACES

Brandix developed a new anti-harassment policy in 2019 and is presently working on a comprehensive communication and awareness campaign on the policy covering all levels of staff. The policy was developed with insights from global best practices and upon engaging in knowledge sharing with other SheWorks member companies AIA, Hela, John Keells Holdings, MAS Holdings and National Development Bank. The company drafted a detailed policy covering procedure, reporting structures and staff protection. Driving anti-harassment from the top down, the company has taken a zero-tolerance stance with the leadership vocally advocating for a healthy respectful workplace across all tiers.

An in-house counseling team is always made available to staff in general, while the company is in the process of developing a new tri-lingual communications plan to disseminate information on the anti-harassment policy. The communication will focus on socializing the policy material taking into consideration its sensitivities, while reinforcing the company's zero tolerance stance towards harassment.



"I have been working here for a little over two years and I can safely say that I nor my colleagues have encountered any harassment by far, and we are confident that we will not in the future as well. The company goes to the extent of orienting the spouses and parents about the work we do and provide us with a safe environment and safe transportation as well."

Pathampriya

Senior Production Associate – Team Leader, Batticaloa, Brandix Apparel

BUSINESS RESULTS:

Share of women in the non-executive cadre increased from **33% to 75%**



Overall share of women in the workforce increased from **67% to 71%**

Share of women in leadership increased from **12% to 17%**



Percentage of women in the executive cadre has increased by **26% to 32%**



Through our collaborations with other SheWorks companies, we learnt that the process we had earlier with just one central committee for anti-harassment is inadequate and can be replaced with a cluster approach across our premises. We have therefore included this approach into the new policy. Through SheWorks, we learnt that it is very important to empower each employee to feel safe enough to speak up, and to create the infrastructure to enable them to be vocal."

Nilangani De Silva

Head - Group Capability, Brandix Lanka Limited

To ensure they assess candidates in line with the aim of fostering a respectful workplace, Brandix worked with Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) to draft a series of questions to be asked at the interview stage of recruitment for all staff. These questions are designed to understand the candidate's compatibility with the values of the company and raise behavioral red flags, if any.

SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF FEMALE LEADERSHIP

Brandix identified the middle tier of leadership as a challenging layer for women to break into. In 2019, an 18-month leadership training program was introduced. Through this, 73 candidates have been selected for succession, including 13 women. They are being supported with skills development and leadership training as well as coaching and mentoring.



As a result of SheWorks, the two biggest competitors in the apparel industry came together to brainstorm our anti-harassment policy. I think that alone is an achievement. These competitors were at one table working together for one cause, which was quite inspiring!"

Anusha Alles

Head - Corporate Social Responsibility, Brandix Lanka Limited

PERSONAL ADVANCEMENT AND CAREER ENHANCEMENT (P.A.C.E)

The GAP Inc. flagship initiative – Personal Advancement and Career Enhancement (P.A.C.E) – learning program at Brandix, targets associate level female workers, providing personal and professional capacity building. Initiated in 2012, the program has since been expanded across the Group. Having developed the first batch of 68 P.A.C.E trainers and master trainers in 2018, the company increased the number to 130 trainers, of which 100 are master trainers in 2019. Lessons learned through SheWorks have influenced the curriculum of P.A.C.E. with subjects like financial literacy being introduced to the program. The company observes a sharp uptick in the rate of promotion for staff who undergo the P.A.C.E program, with more women being promoted to supervisory roles, an uncommon trend in the apparel industry. As of now, 46 percent of P.A.C.E. participants have received advancements in their careers.

FACING COVID-19

The pandemic expedited the introduction of the Brandix Flexible Work Policy, which encompasses flexible working hours, flex-week, flex-location and work from home modalities. The policy is planned for socialization and implementation across the company by November 2020, supported by a communication plan to share best practices and tips, and reinforce the importance of employee accountability throughout the process.

Brandix further engaged in personal protective equipment (PPE) manufacturing during this period and deployed its factories in Sri Lanka and India to meet the growing national and international need for health and safety gear. Throughout its operations, the company always remained committed to treating the safety of its employees as a non-negotiable priority and ensured complete alignment with Government regulations and practices.



Thuyamathy's Story

Thuyamathy Makeswaran
Sewing Associate, Batticaloa

"I saw a sewing machine for the first time when I joined Brandix. I was so nervous and just wanted to run back home. It's been over two and a half years since I've joined and I have handled multiple roles on the production floor with confidence," says Thuyamathy.

The Brandix Essential Factory commenced in late 2017 with 300 employees and now counts close to 5,000 employees. Women make up 90 percent of the workforce, of whom 56 percent are single female headed households; 18 percent are widows. As most of the factory staff are the sole income earners for their families, P.A.C.E includes life skills with practical tools to build the capabilities of women economically and socially. Relevant lessons learnt through SheWorks have also been incorporated to the P.A.C.E program.

Thuyamathy says, "Undergoing the P.A.C.E program was a life-changing experience – I finally understood what savings and investments meant. As a sole income earner, on a monthly basis I ensure to save money in different accounts for my three children and myself. I've also learnt to self-sustain and reduce our monthly expenses by investing and growing our own vegetables and chickens. I am much bolder and braver, and these life skills also help me negotiate and navigate problems much more effectively"



IMAGE: COURTESY OF CBL GROUP

CBL Group

Gender inclusivity for sustainable business

Commitment to action



The CBL Group is one of the largest and fastest growing Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) manufacturers in Sri Lanka, producing and marketing leading brands in confectionary, nutrition and convenience, organic fruit and spices. The business caters to a large overseas market and is a technology and innovation-led manufacturer. The Group employs over 6,000 employees of which 31 percent are women and works with a registered network of over 12,000 conventional and organic farmers of which 30 percent are women.

'SENEHASE PIYASA' (SHELTER WITH LOVE) – TACKLING CHILDCARE ROUND THE CLOCK

CBL launched an in-house childcare facility, using the services of a recognized service provider in October 2018. The facility is open from 5.30 a.m. to 10.30 p.m. to accommodate the needs of CBL working hours. Senehase Piyasa can accommodate 40 children and is available to staff at the subsidized rate of 6,000 rupees per month. CBL covers all overhead costs and half the monthly variable costs. A committee consisting of the service provider, associates' union, parents and management, conducts monthly quality assurance meetings to ensure the service delivers what parents need and addresses any grievances.



I was about to leave my job, as we just could not find childcare that suited my shift hours. The pressure from my family was increasing as well for me to resign. This increased my stress levels. But when Senehase Piyasa was opened, I was able to leave my daughter in a trusted place close to me, I know she is well cared for and is happy. My stress levels have reduced, and I don't need to take days off because of childcare commitments."

N P Monika Udaya Kumari
Manufacturing Department and mother of one

At present Senehase Piyasa cares for 32 children. CBL states that maternity return rates improved by 23 percentage point among the staff once the creche was introduced. Before, around 10 new mothers would resign every year, after the creche was introduced this rate drastically went down to 2 which accounts for an 80 percent increase of the return rates. Staff also report reduced stress and distractions due to the availability of quality, trusted round the clock childcare.

Since the creche was opened, there has been a marked reduction the number of no-pay leave days taken by staff who are parents – it has reduced by 40 percentage points, and lateness has decreased by 42.5 percentage points.

BUSINESS RESULTS:

Share of women in middle management increased from **14% to 18%**



Introduced On-site Childcare facility operational from 5.30am to 10.30pm



Maternity return rates increased by **23%**



Reduced absenteeism rate by **40%**

'Best places to work' Awards presented by Great Place to Work® (GPW®) Sri Lanka



Initiated training and business development program for women in CBL supply chain



While it is difficult to quantify the exact effect the creche facility has had on CBL's bottom line, since it opened two years ago, we have seen increased levels of staff engagement and decrease in absenteeism and lateness among parents using the creche. The CBL group won many people related accolades in the past year including ranking among the 10 Most Admired Companies in Sri Lanka, Top 10 in the Best Corporate Citizen Sustainability Awards, Gold Award for Social Dialogue and Workplace Cooperation, Great Place to work, Health and Productivity Awards, to name a few and I am sure our creche impacted positively towards those."

Kumudini Welmillage
Director HR

This year, CBL and CBL Natural were recognized as one of the 40 best places to work. CBL Exports was not only certified as a Great Place To Work in 2020 but became one of the top 10 Employers for Millennials.

WOMEN IN VALUE CHAIN

Sri Lanka's one million SMEs – 25 percent of which are owned by women – are an engine for job creation, accounting for 80 percent of all businesses in the country. The FMCG sector – which accounts for 30 percent of the country's gross domestic product and close to 20 percent of employment – relies significantly on SME multi-brand distributors and retailers to reach consumers. Limited business planning, coupled with weak financial and HR management, often curtail the growth of these retailers and distributors, with women retailers and distributors often the most constrained.

To help respond to this challenge, in December 2019 IFC and CBL launched a program to provide training and business development opportunities to strengthen and increase female participation in CBL's distribution chain across Sri Lanka. In addition to business capacity building, the program also focuses on promoting digital payment methods among retailers and distributors. Through this program CBL aims to double the number of women distributors, which is currently at 10 percent, in its network and to support existing distributors and retailers to introduce new business processes, including a target of 40 percent to be using new digital payments methods, within two years.

Increased sales demonstrate the clear business case for CBL Group with the distributor revenue increasing by 10 percent and the retailer's revenue increasing by 10 percent within 6 months.

Ananda's Story

When B D Iran Ananda's second child was born, he and his wife explored many childcare options.

"As my wife was working in Colombo, we tried a few daycare centers in the city. But we were not happy about the quality of service. My wife was going to leave her job, but when the creche opened at CBL I felt like I had won the lottery! It is a clean comfortable space and the kids are fed nutritious meals and most importantly they love going to Senehase Piyasa. My wife was able to continue work and I see a lot of development in my daughter, who is learning a lot and making new friends at the center," said Ananda, who works in the manufacturing plant at CBL.



FACING COVID-19

When the pandemic hit, as one of the country's largest food manufacturers, CBL Group was classified as an essential service. This meant the company had to introduce an entirely new way of working virtually overnight in order to meet the continued, and in some cases increased, demand for products while also ensuring the safety and wellbeing of its staff. CBL prioritized staff engagement and communicating detailed safety procedures, making them active partners in the process. Despite the grave economic challenges posed by the pandemic and with companies across Sri Lanka and the world compelled to resort to layoffs and pay cuts, CBL continued to ensure job security for its employees with zero layoffs or pay cuts and ensured that staff remuneration and benefit packages were rolled out, even providing essential goods and transport for employees engaged in factory work during the lockdown.

CBL established innovative solutions for how to meet the demand for its products in a context where members of the public were unable to access retail outlets. These included partnering with delivery platforms like PickMe and Daraz. The company also developed its own online platforms for select brands, ensuring the food distribution chain was intact.

Keeping the supply chain intact proved to be most challenging when the government mandated travel restrictions. With over 10,000 farmers supplying local produce for CBL's manufacturing, CBL was forced to find new ways of accessing supplies and supporting farmers. To protect these suppliers, CBL dispersed dedicated agricultural teams to help farmers face the challenges of the pandemic.

CBL continued to ensure job security for its employees with zero layoffs or pay cuts and ensured that staff remuneration and benefit packages were rolled out, even providing essential goods and transport for employees engaged in factory work during the lockdown.



"The Group's focus will remain on strengthening the food supply chain in the months to come. It is increasingly evident that the food supply chain must be developed to face the challenges of the future and, building a diverse and inclusive supply chain is key to its sustainability. We want to see increased participation of women and youth across our value chain, in our farmer network, our core manufacturing operations and our distribution networks so we will continue to take action that creates meaningful growth in these areas."

Shea Wickramasingha
Group Managing Director of the CBL Group reflecting on the Group's focus in the new normal.



IMAGE: COURTESY OF DIMO

Diesel & Motor Engineering PLC

Breaking gender-stereotypes in the Automobile Sector

Commitment to action



DIMO is a diversified organization engaged in automobile sales, automobile solutions vehicles, construction, marine engineering, retail, healthcare solutions etc. The company has over 1,800 employees, of which 10 percent are women.

ZERO-TOLERANCE POLICY FOR ANY HARM OF HARASSMENT AT THE WORKPLACE

DIMO operates a zero-tolerance policy for any form of harassment, sexual harassment, bullying or retaliation in the workplace and treats all incidents seriously and promptly by investigating all allegations. Awareness around accepted behavior, gender sensitization, and mutual respect is communicated to encourage employees report grievances. The company has a formal grievance handling process in place where disciplinary actions can include suspension or dismissal from employment. All management personnel, including the Chairman, remain accessible to every employee, in order to encourage reporting and to support the prompt resolution of problems. In addition, DIMO's whistle blowing policy encourages and enables employees to raise serious concerns within the company without fear of retaliation.



Attending the training on anti-bullying and sexual harassment has helped me to understand what behavior is acceptable and what is not acceptable; and by knowing my boundaries I lead by example and demonstrate my commitment to create a respectful workplaces culture."

Yohan Thilakaratne
Deputy General Manager – Corporate Communications

A campaign named 'How Does it Make You Feel' was launched in 2019, creating a platform for employees to express thoughts on how workplace harassment and bullying can make them feel. This was carried out among the Women's Network members to increase their understanding of the depth of workplace harassment and its impacts.

In 2018, IFC conducted a survey for 200 DIMO employees, which found that almost 9 out of 10 staff (male and female alike) believe the company has an effective anti-sexual harassment policy; and 95 percent of women and 87 percent of men feel safe getting to and from work. Transportation is offered to employees traveling from Colombo to TATA Service location in Siyambalape and from workshops to the Head Office.



If you treat someone differently, then you are creating inequality," there is no room for discrimination here! As a tribe we value our company history, culture, ensure equal pay for equal work, and everyone gets to work in a respectful and safe environment."

Madurika Samarasekera
Assistant General Manager - Business Support & Controls, – TATA Cluster

BUSINESS RESULTS:

Increase of women in male dominant roles



13
WOMEN
in engineering



5
WOMEN
in vehicle service



4
WOMEN
in warranty & tendering

Increase in share of women in leadership roles by **5%**



Increase in Employment Satisfaction score from **3.89/5 to 4.11/5** within a year

Zero sexual harassment cases reported



INCREASING FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN MALE-DOMINATED ROLES

DIMO's TripleE (Educate, Empower, Employ) program is designed for undergraduate students to collaborate with DIMO's professional staff to gain expertise and experience with current trends, technology and techniques, to help create a pathway for a career in the auto industry. Due to COVID-19 the workshop did not commence as planned, however, through this program DIMO aims to educate and motivate young women to 'power-up' in the STEM field and encouraging them to break gender stereotypes. In partnership with the Women in Engineering Sri Lanka (IEEE) a talent database has been created, to help provide a pipeline of female engineers for job openings at DIMO.

In partnership with the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission, DIMO is working on amendments and additions to the current curriculum of Automobile Vocational Education which will pave the way for more women to enter the industry, while also ensuring the training more directly meets the needs of industry. To date 15 women have completed the automobile courses offered by DIMO Academy for Technical Skills and have embarked on career journey, within and outside of Sri Lanka.

DIMO's leadership development programs such as Centurion's League and D Talent comprise of 360° appraisal, residential workshops and

management skills projects which focuses on developing a wide spectrum of leadership competencies necessary to create competent senior leaders. As a result, within a span of two years the number of women in the leadership talent pool grew from 13 percent to 36 percent.

As a result, within a span of two years the number of women in the leadership talent pool grew from **13% to 36%.**



Being a part of the 'Centurion League' was a turning point in my career. Through an outbound training approach, I was able to build my confidence, team building and leadership skills. DIMO heavily invests in technical and leadership trainings for its employees, and I've had the opportunity to be a part of a few international and on-the-job trainings which have helped me with my recent promotion."

Raehana Raban
Senior Engineer Lighting Designs and **Sayuri Sumithrarachchi**, Senior Electrical Engineer – Building Technologies Department



DIMO WOMEN'S NETWORK ALSO INCLUDES MALE PARTICIPATION

The women's network was launched in 2018 with the objective to drive meritocracy and create a conducive work environment for men and women at DIMO. The network has four male sponsors and a mix of women and men as a part of the committee. During monthly meetings addressing employees on respectful workplace practices and equality at work both men and women are encouraged to participate. Male participation has increased from 35 percent to 50 percent over the years. Senior leaders also highlight the importance of having men as allies in this initiative.

Being such a male-dominated company, with women comprising only one in ten workers, presented a series of challenges for the company in terms of ensuring women's concerns were being heard. In response DIMO's women's network, encouraged female workers to voice their opinions within a closed and trusted network.

Male participation has increased from **35% to 50%** over the years. Senior leaders also highlight the importance of having men as allies in this initiative.



The Women's Network has multiple cluster meetings and forums, which has made our tribe members aware of bullying, parental leave and other support available at DIMO. It helps enrich the culture that is being promoted within DIMO. I am proud to be a male ally and to be advocating for more women in the automobile industry."

Bhathiya Jayawardhana

Assistant Manager - Employee Engagement & Transformation



Thilini's Story

Thilini Gunasekara
Technician

Role models, mentoring, and leadership development programs can all play a critical role in building a women's career, especially in a non-traditional job or industry. Thilini is a role model to many who aspire to be an engineer. Thilini Gunasekara is the only woman working in the automobile service workshops as an Assistant Tyre Technician for the Mercedes-Benz Service. There are five women with similar qualifications working in the vehicle service and warranty sections, one in automobile vocational training and another nine-female staff as engineers. Having more women in engineering and automotive fields has resulted in an increase of customer retention, improved efficiency and better compliance.

"My father owned an automobile repair shop and I knew my way around it, as I grew up in a garage since I was a little girl. When I saw a post on Facebook, I immediately enrolled into DIMO Academy for Technical Skills (DATS). I underwent a two-year training and graduated last year. Now I'm living my dream role."

She feels that men in the workplace adapt as they get used to having female colleagues. I learn and grow with my peers as every day is a new challenge and an opportunity.





IMAGE: COURTESY OF FAIRWAY HOLDINGS

Fairway Holdings

Facilitating diversity and inclusion through meeting parent's needs

Commitment to action



An award-winning luxury property development company that has diversified to include real estate, manufacturing and trade, renewable energy, biotechnology, financial services and travel and leisure. The company has over 750 employees of which 24 percent are women.

PROVIDING QUALITY CHILDCARE SUPPORT TO PARENTS

This service is offered for a nominal fee to employees, the Fairway creche was opened in January 2018 at the company's head office in Colombo. The creche is open to all staff and caters to children aged six months to five years, and services have been extended to include after-school care as well. It has been so popular that it currently has a waiting list.

After establishing the creche, significant improvements have been made in the retention of new mothers, with maternity return rates improving from **65% to 100%** in 2019.

Committed to building a gender diverse organization, Fairway established a creche in line with the company's diversity and inclusion policy. A dedicated inter-departmental team including human resources, cross functional business and parents was formed, under the overall guidance of the top management, to execute the creche plan. Fairway connected with other SheWorks companies that had piloted similar childcare facilities, such as Standard Chartered Bank, as well as the Sri Lanka Child Protection Authority during the planning phase, for guidance and to ensure the facility met all safety standards and regulations.

The creche is managed in-house with staff, facilities and resources provided by Fairway. The company invested approximately 4.5 million rupees to develop and open the facility and incurs monthly operating costs of 200,000 rupees. Qualified professionals are hired to care for the children and the creche boasts a garden space, lactation room and child-friendly interior design.

Parents provide meals and change of clothes for children while a daily logbook is maintained for each child tracking: food, sleeping schedules, hygiene, speech and social traits etc. Monthly meetings are held with parents to address any grievances.

In addition to childcare services, the company offers flexible working hours, medical benefits and extended maternity leave for new mothers on a case by case basis.

BUSINESS RESULTS:

Increase in share of women on boards from **16.6% to 37.5%**



On-site childcare facility increased maternity return rates from **65% to 100%**



First time recruits of female pilots



66% women representation in real estate sector Senior Management

Thilanka's Story

When Thilanka Dissanayaka's son was almost two years old, a tough decision loomed ahead of her. Her elderly mother-in-law who had been helping to care for her son was unable to continue doing so, due to health concerns. Thilanka was faced with either finding a satisfactory day care center or resigning from her post as Senior Manager Business Development at Fairway.

"It was a tough time, with no place to leave our baby while we were at work, I was thinking of resigning to care for my little one. It was during this time that they opened the creche at Fairway. I now had the luxury of having my baby in the same building, where I could check on him. I didn't need to give up on my career goals anymore and could provide good quality care for my child," said Thilanka who has been employed with Fairway for ten years.

"The company gave parents the task of interior design for the creche, with free reign on the budget. Fairway went over and above our expectations in making this a safe, trusted space for our kids. My son loves going here!" shared Thilanka, adding that having the creche facility has helped reduce stress levels at work and increased her ability to concentrate on closing her sales, without worrying for her child's welfare.



IMAGE: COURTESY OF FAIRWAY HOLDINGS

PROMOTING WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

Focused gender recruitment and promotion strategies have helped to increase women in leadership roles at the group level. From 2018 onwards the group has seen an increase in share of women on boards from 16.6 to 37.5 percent. A more than 50 percent increase has been witnessed in the number of women in senior management positions.

From 2018 onwards the group has seen an increase in share of women on boards from **16.6% to 37.5%**

ADVANCING WOMEN IN NON-TRADITIONAL ROLES

Women's under-representation as pilots, as well as in maintenance, repair and overhaul, is largely a result of stereotyped views in the airline industry. To advance gender equality in management positions, at the Fairway Aviation Academy, for the first time, two female pilot instructors have been recruited to provide pilot training from casual to commercial airline pilots. Women are also represented in managerial positions in the renewable energy sector.

The real estate sector is considered the core business of Fairway; where the sales team consists of 50 percent women with 66 percent of the senior management team also female. Evidence shows that the rise in women senior management is resulting in increased productivity by the staff.



IMAGE: COURTESY OF FAIRWAY HOLDINGS



IMAGE: COURTESY OF HELA CLOTHING

Hela Clothing

Our strength lies in our diversity

Commitment to action



Hela Clothing (Hela) is a \$ 200 Million company focused on apparel manufacturing, design and innovation headquartered in Sri Lanka. The company has eight factories across Kenya, Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, and employs over 15,000, of which 71 percent are women.

CELEBRATING ZERO DISCRIMINATION DAY

In the lead up to Zero Discrimination Day, Hela introduced a new policy on Sexual Harassment and strengthened existing ones to ensure that the workspace remains a safe space for all. These policies include anti-bullying, third party grievance mechanism, non-discrimination, equal employment opportunity and sexual harassment in the workplace.



In my long career, this is the first awareness session on workplace harassment and bullying that I have ever attended. This experience was an eye opener as a manager and a human. Now I am clear on how to voice out any inappropriate incident or even engage in an intervention, as a by-stander, if I see it happen to someone else."

Muditha Ediriweera,
General Manager – Merchandising.

Furthermore, in partnership with the Employee Federation of Ceylon (EFC) an awareness training on workplace harassment was developed and made mandatory for all employees from the executive level up. This training will also be extended to the factory staff.



At Hela we strongly believe that it is our differences that make us strong. This belief is reflected in our hiring, promotion and retention policies, which help us nurture a culture of inclusivity. It is the different experiences, mindsets and points-of-view we all bring to the table that help us think outside the box and evaluate problems in interesting new ways to reveal novel solutions.."

Manique Jayasooriya
Group General Manager - Human Resources & Administration

BUSINESS RESULTS:

Increase in employee satisfaction



Employees feel respected and safer at work



13% of middle managers are women



TACKLING CHILDCARE IN THE WORKPLACE

Building on the SheWorks childcare learning events, Hela established a childcare facility at its factory in Kenya. This was in response to findings from an internal staff survey which indicated parents were enrolling children at low-quality childcare facilities because of financial constraints. These services often resulted in children becoming exposed to illnesses and other poor conditions. As a result, parents were often absent or were unable to focus at work due to concerns about the wellbeing of their children. The Kenya facility has the capacity for 70 children and caters for day and night shift workers. The on-site childcare facility is managed by nannies trained in early childhood development to ensure that children receive the best care and follow a curriculum that supports their mental and physical development.

In Sri Lanka, Hela supports parents in several ways. These include providing a daycare subsidy for children up to age six, a special healthy meal for pregnant women from the canteen, and 14 days of paid paternity leave for new fathers.

Hela was recently awarded the 'Most Inclusive Employer of the Year' by the Ethiopian Centre for Disability and Development (ECDD) at the Inclusive Employers Forum. This award was in recognition of Hela's efforts to nurture a culture of inclusivity within their workforce that is exhibited in their hiring, promoting and retention policies. While these policies were awarded in Ethiopia, they are standard operating procedure across the Group.

UPSKILLING AND PROVIDING A SECONDARY INCOME SOURCE

To provide factory staff with a secondary income source, the company created the Hela Diriliya Club. This initiative allows each factory to execute projects that will help staff generate a secondary income. Through an internal survey, the areas identified for income generation are home gardening, plant nurseries, food manufacturing, transportation, and beauty and skin care.

Hela supports interested employees by developing an action plan, providing technical training and linking participants with a market for their products. By the end of 2020, 350 female factory staff will have completed the pilot of the Diriliya program.

Mudhitha's Story

Mudhitha Ediriweera

General Manager, Hela Clothing

"Growing up, I have gone through the struggle of not being financially independent. My family could not afford my school fees. I was determined to not drop out of the Advance Level (A/L) class and started earning a little by giving English lessons. With that I managed to pay for my own education and successfully completed school."

"When I made the decision to get into the garment sector, I was very aware that I was in it to build my career as I was very passionate about design and pattern making. Just like most garment workers, I also got married at a very young age, 22 years old, and had children right after but was determined not to quit my career as I was the bread winner of my family."

Mudhitha started her journey as a Merchandizer in Hela Clothing seven years ago and has grown within the company and was recently promoted from Deputy General Manager to General Manager. She handles 56 percent of the business volume of intimates wear and manages a team of 80.

She says, "Hela invests in their people, especially in on-the-job learning experience. I was sent on a four-month PVH Internship Program in New York, which gave me the technical and business skills required to perform at my best on the job. My line managers also have been great coaches and sponsors of my work."





Hela provides multiple platforms to build our skills and knowledge on the job. Be it “Shark Tank” debates, weekly presentations on any business topic or webinars. They help us learn the importance of business strategies, building trust with our customer and team, and most importantly it boosts my confidence level. Our leadership team gives us the opportunity to speak up”.

Jayani Chinthika Weerasekera

Assistant Manager, Merchandising, Hela Clothing



DURING COVID-19

During the nation-wide curfew that was in place between March and June, Hela experienced an increase in demand for some products from international buyers. As a result, the company required a number of its factory employees to attend work. This was done in a safe and secure manner under the guidance of the Ministry of Health and with approval from the government. Hela prioritized employee health and safety during this time ensuring that no team member would be put at risk. In addition to providing transportation to and from work along with on-site meals during shifts, Hela set in place stringent safety protocols that included temperature checks, mandatory face masks, compulsory hand sanitization every couple of hours, staggered mealtimes, and a host of other procedures. The factory was also divided into four zones to prevent the possibility of an outbreak and allow for physical distancing within the premises.

Further, to alleviate the concerns of employees during this difficult and confusing time, Hela provided access to a 24-hour hotline to allow employees to access counselling and mental health and wellness support.

While the pandemic may have impeded the delivery of training and development programs it did not stop them. Over 60 technical and soft skill development programs were successfully completed over the course of the pandemic, through a combination of face-to-face and online learning. The programs included Strategic Thinking in Uncertain Times, Business Planning and Managing your Finances during a Crisis,

Telework and Virtual Teams, and Business Continuity - IR and HR Challenges.

INTRODUCING PERSONAL ADVANCEMENT AND CAREER ENHANCEMENT (P.A.C.E) PROGRAM

The PACE program introduced by PVH Corp. was launched at Hela in February 2020. It provides female factory staff with training on life and technical skills and helps them advance both in the workplace and in their personal life. To date over 210 female staff members across four factories have completed modules on communications, problem solving and decision making, financial and legal literacy and wellbeing. Hela aims to reach 10,000 female workers by 2022 across Sri Lanka, Kenya and Ethiopia. The program includes health and empowerment information on issues such as sexual and reproductive health, maternity care, and nutrition.



IMAGE: COURTESY OF HEMAS HOLDINGS

HEMAS Holdings

Building workplaces of equality

Commitment to action



Hemas Holdings (Hemas) is a leading publicly listed company with diversified interests in consumer, healthcare, mobility and leisure. With over 70 years of operations, Hemas has expanded regionally with operations in Bangladesh, West Bengal and Myanmar. Hemas provides employment to over 5,800 individuals of which 28 percent are women.

INCREASING WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

Hemas made significant strides in increasing the number of women in decision making roles, increasing the total share of women in management by 7 percentage points to 24 percent. Women in senior and middle management both grew by 6 percentage points respectively. Hemas also made history by being the first publicly listed conglomerate in Sri Lanka to appoint a female CEO – Kasturi Chellaraja Wilson, in October 2020.

In a career spanning two decades at Hemas, Kasturi rose through the ranks to having worked in aviation, travel, maritime, logistics and pharmaceuticals sectors of the group. As part of a planned succession Kasturi took on the role of Deputy CEO and was appointed to the Board of Hemas Holdings PLC in July 2020. She has attended many leadership programs over the span of her career, most notably the Senior Executive Leadership Program at Harvard Business School.

LISTENING TO THE 'VOICE OF WOMEN'

Hemas' employee resource group, Voice of Women (VOW), was launched in late 2017 with the aim of supporting the recruitment, retention and advancement of women at all levels across the group. Through VOW, childcare, maternity leave and after-hours transport were identified as the top challenges women face in maintaining work-life balance. As a response, the company introduced a back-up childcare facility and lactation room in the head office and maternity leave was extended from the government mandated 84 days to 100 days, with a further option of 10 working days at no-pay. Fathers were also given 10 working days paternity leave. Parents of adoptive children under the age of one were given equivalent maternity and paternity leave benefits, and half maternity benefits for adopted children between the ages of one and five. To provide safer transport after working hours, employees were given facilities to reimburse taxi services to avoid public transportation.

BUSINESS RESULTS:

10% share of women on the board of directors



Share of women in senior management increased from **16% to 22%**

Overall share of women in leadership increased from **17% to 24%**



Share of women in middle management increased from **19% to 25%**

Share of women in the executive cadre increased from **33% to 35%**



Women comprise **28%** of overall workforce, exceeding the company target of **25%** women in the workforce by 2020

INNOVATIVE CHILDCARE SOLUTION TO MEET THE NEEDS OF EMPLOYEES

Hemas Holdings set up a back-up childcare initiative as a pilot project at its headquarters, Hemas House. Designed to accommodate up to 10 children aged three to 12 years, parent employees 'hot desk' from an adjoining workstation. The space was designed to be used as an option when regular childcare arrangements failed, and the children's age group specifically chosen as it was agreed this age could be managed by parents without the additional support of a creche supervisor. The facility also provides a MumZone for lactating mothers and a MedZone for all employees needing medical rest. Hemas is monitoring the facility and tracking its impact on employee satisfaction and retention.

FACING COVID-19

Despite significant logistical challenges the company's pharmaceutical distributions responded to the Government's call to ensure essential pharmaceutical products were available across the country. Hemas' e-Commerce venture Healthnet, experienced a significant spike in demand.

Staff across Hemas' factories, hospitals, hotels and those in sales and distribution operations have been equipped with safety gear and protective equipment. Wherever possible work from home facilities were enabled and connectivity provided with dongles or internet usage allowances.



The extension of 16 days might not sound like much, but it really helped me as a new mom. I also received a two-hour daily feeding time that I could take whenever was flexible for me, until my baby turned one. I found that a great benefit"

Dinali Sugathadasa,
Brand Manager at Hemas Consumer Brands



Whenever I'm running late, my sons come in after school and stay at the childcare space at work. This is a great facility as I can keep an eye on them until I wrap up work, and they can do their homework or watch tv. I know they're safe and can keep an eye on their homework as well"

Anushka Sabanayagam,
Senior Brand Manager





IMAGE: COURTESY OF JETWING

Jetwing

Building enabling business environments for women to thrive

Commitment to action



One of the largest privately owned Sri Lankan resort and hotel brands, the Jetwing Group of companies is built on strong core principles of sustainable tourism. Founded in 1973 by Herbert Cooray, the company is now estimated at \$60 million. Jetwing employs over 3,000 employees, of which 12 percent are women.

OVERCOMING STEREOTYPES AND PAVING THE WAY FOR WOMEN TO ENTER HOSPITALITY

Women currently represent less than 10 percent of the tourism industry in Sri Lanka in comparison to the global average of 65 percent. Negative social perceptions and lack of access to vocational training hold women back from entering the industry.

Jetwing's flagship community outreach initiative 'Jetwing Youth Development Program' (JYDP) is designed to empower youth in economically disadvantaged communities, adjacent to locations the hotels operate in, providing free practical and theoretical training in hospitality, soft-skill development and English language proficiency. JYDP participants are equipped with skills to find suitable employment within Jetwing Hotels as well as elsewhere within the hospitality industry.

In 2018, JYDP was updated to address a range of social barriers that prevent women from entering the tourism industry, including by providing sessions on employee facilities and safety. Working at the community level, JYDP works to demystify the tourism sector and provides local communities a transparent overview of the working environment. This is a key step in tackling negative stereotypes that hold women back from entering the sector.

Upon successful completion of the JYDP program, participants are offered positions at the Jetwing Group of hotels. Jetwing works to achieve a 50:50 gender parity target at the selection process, whenever possible. Of new recruits from the JYDP programs held in Haragama and Gurudeniya villages in 2019, 37 percent were women. Jetwing's Recruitment Policy also commits to hiring locally wherever possible.

Women currently represent less than **10%** of the tourism industry in Sri Lanka

BUSINESS RESULTS:



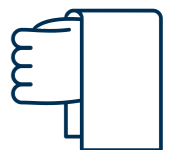
Introduced **50:50** gender targets at selection process of Jetwing Youth Development Project

5 Women General Managers



100% Maternity return rate

Only hotel with majority female butler service in Sri Lanka



Community level engagement in recruitment of women

Sakunthala's Story

Sakunthala Deshani Gunesekara,
Assistant Butler,
Jetwing Kandy Gallery hotel

Two years ago, Sakunthala Deshani Gunesekara would never have thought that she would be working as an Assistant Butler in a luxury hotel.

Sakunthala's mother had been reluctant for her only daughter to join the hotel industry, when their local Grama Sevaka shared the JYDP invitation letter. The perception in her village was that hospitality was not a 'suitable' industry for women. Awaiting her GCE Advanced Level results, with nothing to take up her time, Sakunthala wanted to participate in the training program offered free of charge. As per the instructions by Jetwing to bring an accompanying parent for the inauguration program, Sakunthala convinced her mother to attend JYDP with her.

"The chairman of Jetwing had come down to talk to us and they spent a lot of time telling us and the parents present, about the company policies. They did presentations on the job requirements and the safety guidelines for employees. My mother was happy with the level of responsibility the company showed towards us and gave me her blessing to continue with the program," said Sakunthala,

speaking of her family's experience overcoming the social prejudices against women joining travel and tourism.

Having undergone an extensive four months classroom training which included English language skill development, Sakunthala was given seven months practical training at Jetwing Yala. "I did not know anything about hotels when I joined the JYDP program, today I know all about customer service and how to work in various departments. Accepting my placement letter from Jetwing was the best decision I ever made!" said Sakunthala who is one of 10 Assistant Butlers, at the Jetwing Kandy Gallery hotel. Jetwing Kandy Gallery boasts the only female majority butler service in Sri Lanka and has made a concerted effort to ensure women are trained and promoted in an area of service, traditionally viewed as male centric.

"I want to be a General Manager of a hotel one day" says 22-year-old Sakunthala, who, with the support of her supervisors, is signing up for further training and succession planning programs offered by the hotel.



IMAGE: COURTESY OF JETWING

STRENGTHENING WOMEN IN LOCAL COMMUNITY SUPPLY CHAINS

The Jetwing Employee Resource Group, launched in December 2018, served as a think-tank for the organization. Focusing on the projects that have been materialized, 'Thrive' is one such program which was initiated as a community outreach initiative to empower small-scale suppliers.

Jetwing has a proven history of engaging local communities and extending opportunities for them to become profitable stakeholders of the industry. Jetwing launched a small-scale supplier sustenance program as a pilot at Jetwing Kaduruketha, in Wellawaya. Through the program selected local suppliers are provided with opportunities for awareness, training and financial assistance needed to upscale their enterprises to deliver quality products and services. Among the total suppliers benefitting from the program, 23 percent are women.

MORE WOMEN HOLD LEADERSHIP ROLES

A dedicated Training & Development Team of Jetwing, focuses on growing talent internally through multiple programs such as Jetwing Elevation, Achievers, and Ascension programs – all designed to enrich associates at various levels through interactive leadership experiences that build upon the company values. Succession planning along with training and development programs are geared at grooming associates for leadership roles. Jetwing currently has five General Managers and one Deputy General Manager who are women.

Among the total suppliers benefitting from the program, **23%** are women.

DURING COVID-19

Jetwing Hotels has offered five properties as premium quarantine centers at budget rates for repatriated Sri Lankans. The hotel stepped up to meet a growing need for quarantine centers as those run by the military were beginning to fill up with domestic contacts of infected persons.

During lockdown, apart from the skeleton staff at the hotels, the rest were given paid leave. Depending on the nature of the work, head office associates were given work from home facilities. With lockdown restrictions being lifted within the country, despite the airport remaining closed for overseas guests, Jetwing is restructuring its strategies to target more local tourists.



IMAGE: COURTESY OF JOHN KEELLS HOLDINGS

John Keells Holdings

Taking decisive action towards gender parity in the workplace

Commitment to action



John Keells Holdings PLC (JKH) is Sri Lanka's largest listed company on the Colombo Stock Exchange. JKH operates across seven industries through 70 companies. JKH businesses span hotels and resorts in Sri Lanka and the Maldives, ports, logistics, life insurance, IT solutions, manufacturing of food and beverages, and supermarkets. The company has a workforce of over 15,000 of which 29 percent are women.

INCREASING THE NUMBER OF WOMEN ACROSS THE ALL WORK LEVELS

JKH at present, through its newly formed Diversity and Inclusion team is working on formalizing targets and strategies towards achieving gender parity, but over the last three years has had business unit specific interventions to increase the number of women in the workforce. This led to a 5-percentage point increase in the share of women recruits over a span of two years. Special focus was given to the retail and leisure sectors, where the participation of women is low across Sri Lanka.

HOLDING MANAGERS ACCOUNTABLE – KEELLS SUPERMARKETS

A 'Hire women or explain' policy was introduced by the Keells supermarket chain for jobs traditionally done by men. As part of this policy one focus area was that each Keells supermarket manager was asked to ensure that the meat counter team included women and managers were required to make an official explanation if this requirement was not met. To increase the number of female applicants for the outlets, a targeted recruitment campaign was rolled out, featuring women supermarket employees. The advertising campaign was designed to tackle negative social stereotypes which were preventing women from applying for jobs in retail.



We conducted a study to understand why we were getting a very low number of applications from females for supermarket jobs. What we understood was that the society perceived women working in supermarkets were less worthy of marriage and that only men did supermarket jobs, especially in places like the meat counters. To challenge this, we ran campaigns with women front and center of our supermarket chain."

Ashan Ransilige

Vice President John Keells Group –Head of HR Retail sector

BUSINESS RESULTS:



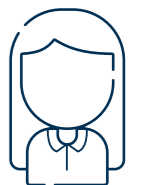
Increase in share of women in senior leadership (Vice President and above) from **19% to 24%**

Increase in share of women in executive and assistant manager roles from **30% to 35%**



Increase in share of women in non-executive roles from **23% to 28%**

Share of women in new recruits, has increased in the executive cadre by **3%** and Non-executive cadre by **5%**



increase in total share of women in the workforce

Lasanthi's Story

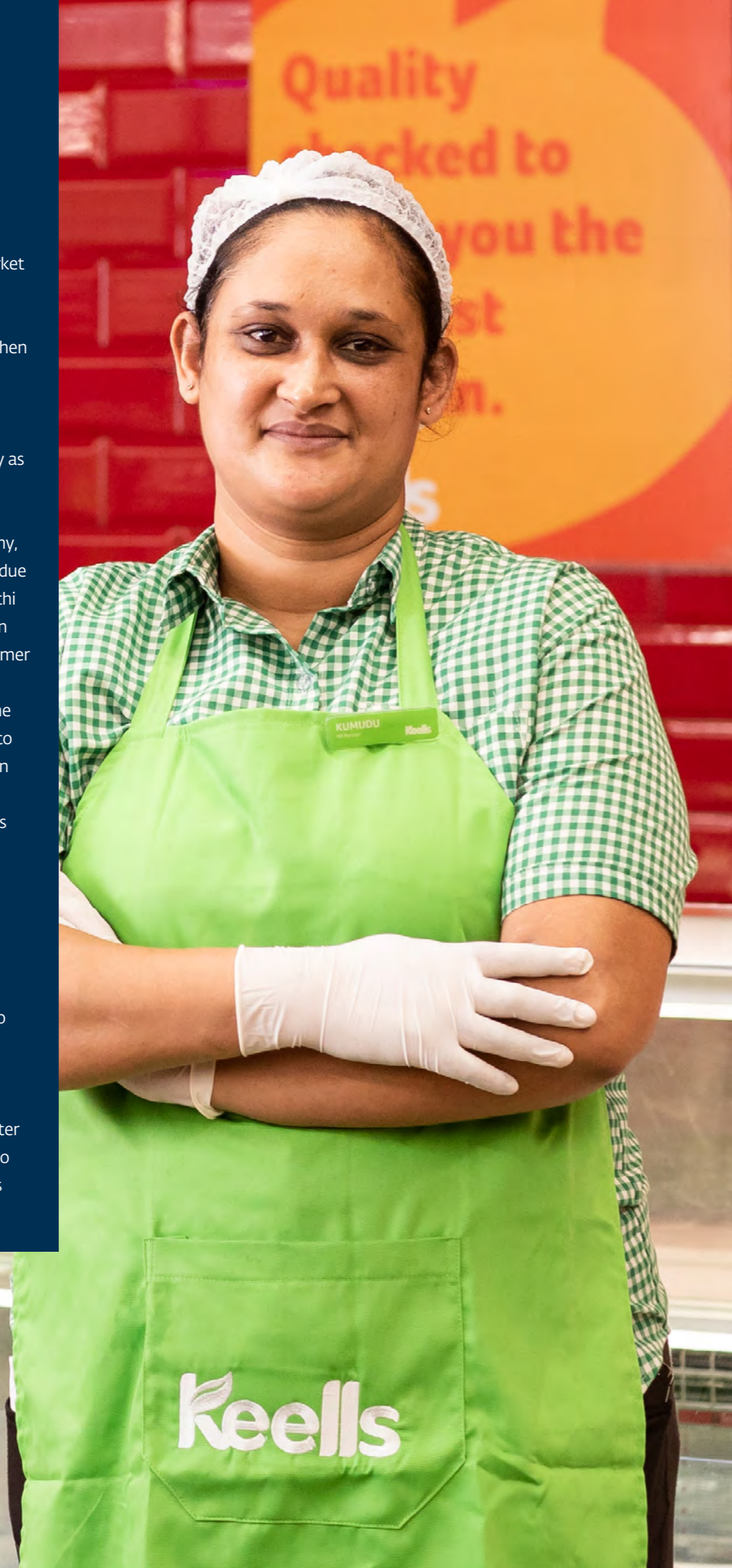
Lasanthi Madagama

Meat counter Supervisor, Keells Supermarket Makola

Lasanthi Madagama was a single mom when she joined Keells Supermarkets. The need to provide for her son, amidst economic hardships prompted Lasanthi to accept a position in the supermarket chain's bakery as a customer service assistant.

After a fruitful nine years with the company, Lasanthi had to resign to care for her son due to personal circumstances. In 2020 Lasanthi was able to rejoin the workforce and given her experience, this time as a senior customer service assistant, to a male-dominated meat counter. Identifying her potential, she was nominated by her regional manager to participate in the Keells career acceleration program 'Be the Boss Challenge' and within three months of her return she was promoted to the Makola outlet as a meat counter supervisor.

"When I rejoined the company, I thought it will take a few years for me to grow into a supervisory role, but because of the confidence my supervisors placed in me to participate in the 'Be the Boss Challenge', I feel like I was able to achieve career progression more quickly," said Lasanthi, adding that as the first female meat counter supervisor in the company, she was glad to see more women taking on the job across the chain.



PAVING THE WAY FOR MORE WOMEN IN THE LEISURE SECTOR

To overcome the entrenched cultural norms that prevent more women from working in Sri Lanka's leisure sector, JKH's Cinnamon Hotel chain introduced gender targets, which require each hotel to employ a minimum of 15 percent women. The company plans to increase the target to 20 percent in the coming year.

To encourage more women to apply for jobs at Cinnamon Hotels, targeted recruitment drives were rolled out where candidates were requested to be accompanied by a parent to the initial interview. Parents were encouraged to participate and ask questions to help understand the company culture and address reservations. This allowed applicants to progress through the recruitment process with the support of their families and communities.

A women's employee resource group, 'Yeheliya' (female friend), was introduced at each Cinnamon hotel. Employees were encouraged to raise concerns and share challenges with the HR teams and management through Yeheliya. As a result, the company invested 12 million rupees in improving quarters for female hotel employees. These measures have increased the participation on women in hotel chain from 10 percent in 2018 to 12 percent in 2019.

NURTURING LEADERS IN THE LEISURE SECTOR

Cinnamon Maldives appointed the chain's first female assistant manager in 2019. In Sri Lanka, the first woman front office manager was appointed at a Cinnamon city hotel.

JKH's Cinnamon Hotel chain introduced gender targets, which require each hotel to employ a minimum of **15%** women. The company plans to increase the target to **20%** in the coming year.



Cinnamon Hotels selected me as one of staff members who were awarded a scholarship to study at the Emirates Academy of Hospitality Management in Dubai. I received two weeks training in management and leadership skills development. This was the biggest exposure I have received in my career so far. After this training I received a promotion as Executive Housekeeper at the Cinnamon Bey Beruwala, where I supervise 25 percent of the staff at the hotel. Managing around 200 rooms it was a big challenge, but the company supported me to be ready and take on this position of leadership"

Thanuja Jayanethi

Executive Housekeeper, Cinnamon Bey Beruwala



FORTIFYING THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF RESPECTFUL WORKPLACES

Building on the existing code of conduct and anti-sexual harassment policy, JKH recently revised the policy with enhanced reporting mechanisms, based on discussions and suggestions from employees. Taking a stance of zero tolerance, the policy is supported through transparent, auditable reporting and automatic escalation. Employees were educated on the policy and encouraged to be open and come forward with any concerns. Detailed communications were shared with staff at all tiers, and refresher programs and quizzes were conducted by the HR team.

FACING COVID-19

In response to the outbreak of COVID 19, JKH undertook various Group-wide initiatives to support staff, customers and the wider community.

- **Agile Working**

During the COVID-19 lockdown, JKH, in addition to the existing flexi-work policy which was in play, introduced agile work at a group level. An agile work policy has been developed and is being piloted across select sectors. Job roles have been assessed based on their ability to function remotely and work from home has been assigned accordingly. The company is conducting detailed monitoring and evaluation on remote work to measure employee satisfaction and productivity.

- **Community Service**

In order to rapidly increase Sri Lanka's testing capacity, John Keells Foundation (JKF) in collaboration with SAGT and Deutsche Bank, contributed to the establishment of a Molecular Diagnostic Laboratory at National Institute of Infectious Diseases (IDH) pending the establishment of a permanent facility. This temporary facility became operational on 29 March 2020. JKF also donated personal protective equipment to five hospitals.

Moreover, JKF together with other Group companies distributed 12,500 packs of essential provisions free of charge to affected families in the Colombo district as identified by the Government Agent.

During the COVID-19 lockdown, JKH, in addition to the existing flexi-work policy which was in play, introduced agile work at a group level.



It has been incredible to see how empowered and vocal the women have become, compared to a few years ago. I sit on the sexual harassment complaints review committee and I see that our staff are not fearful to call out and report behaviors that they are uncomfortable with. Given the socio-cultural environment, it is great to see that women are not fearful and have the confidence to make their voice heard."

Nadja Tambiah

Executive Vice President, Head of Legal and CSR
JKH



The communications have been at every level on the anti-harassment policy, and new recruits go through an awareness session as part of their induction and annually, all staff take a refresher quiz on the policy to check understanding. The policy is very detailed and covers issues such as power dynamics and employees are given alternative mechanism when a direct supervisor is involved."

Imani Perera

Assistant Vice President – Head of Learning and Development JKH



IMAGE: COURTESY OF LONDON STOCK EXCHANGE GROUP

London Stock Exchange Group

Inclusion and wellbeing practices to target 40% women in employment and leadership by 2021

Commitment to action



London
Stock Exchange Group

London Stock Exchange Group (LSEG) is a global financial markets infrastructure business. Its diversified global business focuses on Information Services, Risk and Balance Sheet Management and Capital Formation. The Group supports global financial stability and sustainable economic growth by enabling businesses and economies to fund innovation, manage risk and create jobs. In Sri Lanka the company employs over 1,000 employees, 30 percent of which are women.

TACKLING CHILDCARE AND FLEX WORK SOLUTIONS FOR ALL LOCATIONS

Employer assisted childcare was one of the earliest inclusive practices that LSEG initiated back in 2012. Having identified childcare responsibilities and challenges of balancing work and family as a key barrier to advancing gender diversity and inclusion at the company, LSEG developed a suite of childcare solutions for parents including an on-site daycare and preschool at the Malabe premises and introduced more flexible working arrangements for all staff.

To support the 24/7 operations of the company, crucial for its global model, after hours crèche services are also extended for employees working on shifts, including emergency backup childcare with access to all the locations available across Colombo. LSEG also allocated designated lactation rooms across the different offices. As a result, more parents are using the company's childcare service, with an average of 30 children using the services across the locations with approximately six in infant care at any given time. Crèche usage has seen a 15 percent increase in growth over the past few years.

The company provides a subsidy to encourage employees to use the on-premises or independent daycare facilities which maintain a standard that meets LSEG requirements, which supports working parents who are at office or working from home.

In addition to the 90-day paid maternity leave, new mothers can request for additional leave if required. We also encourage paternity leave which we have seen being accessed extensively, supporting nearly 100 percent maternity return rate which was at 80 percent in 2017.

BUSINESS RESULTS:

Globally LSEG is at **33%** women in employment as well as leadership.



Share of women in middle management in Sri Lanka increased from **11% to 22%**

Overall representation of women in the workforce in Sri Lanka increased from **24% to 30%**



Childcare support is now available for all staff; maternity return rate is nearly **100%**

Improved maternity and paternity leave which will be reviewed annually

Overall employee satisfaction score increased from **71% to 78%**



Nishadhi's Story

Nishadhi Malalgoda,
Associate Business Architect, LSEG

Nishadhi was ready to leave her career at LSEG when she had her first child. "At one point I thought I would not be able to continue my work, having an on-site creche where I could work and still be close to my child made the difference between me staying at work and giving up my job."

Today Nishadhi, uses the creche for her three-year-old daughter as well as her one-year old daughter. She has become an advocate for the creche, encouraging new parents to use the facility. The state-of-the-art amenities, proximity to the office and quality of service offered at the creche are deeply valued by the staff.

"It was a lifesaver for me that LSEG had the creche facility for working parents. My stress levels have decreased, and I am better able to concentrate at work," Nishadhi added.



FLEXIBLE WORKING OPTIONS

To help employees better manage their work and personal lives, LSEG implemented a new flexible work policy. The policy was initially rolled out to a selected pilot group in Tech and Services while the company started manager training to ensure all people managers were better prepared for how to tackle work from home requests and be effective as managers with a remote team. The surveys done through the pilot and after indicated that approximately 30 to 40 percent would opt for working from home for which the appropriate enablers like technology platforms, and other virtual solutions are being implemented. These include mobile apps or other employee services, access to email, and audio and video conference facilities from any device.

TRACKING GENDER DISAGGREGATED DATA

Lack of gender disaggregated data limited the company's ability to make informed decisions about the needs of their male and female workforce. In response LSEG started tracking gender disaggregated data in 2019. Tracking whether there is gender parity at annual performance along with pay parity are reviews done to maintain and towards a more inclusive culture at LSEG.



Measuring and reporting through a gender lens has prompted focused actions in many of the programs within the company like recruitment and development. We have seen an increase in the number of women in succession planning and mentorship programs, while the numbers have helped us build a structured case for introducing inclusive practices and policies resulting in more than 22 percent of women in manager roles which we aim to push to the target of 40 percent by building on these best practices."

Pulasthika Wirasinha
Head of HR, LSEG Sri Lanka

INCREASING WOMEN IN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

The Recruitment team supported by Diversity and Inclusion, is building dashboards to monitor how many women resumes are received and to monitor how they progress through to hires at LSEG. Female mentors from LSEG also facilitate workshops organized by Talent Acquisition (University Reach team) for university students on how to interview better with a special focus for women, to support more women to enter the sector. University of Moratuwa and Colombo as well as SLIIT have

been part of these sessions over the years. LSEG also drives the Capacity Forum in the industry working with SLASSCOM (community of exporters of IT and BPM services in Sri Lanka) looking for effective ways to introduce more young people into the industry outside the present higher education track, especially giving rural Sri Lanka more access.



Initiatives to change the talent landscape in Sri Lanka is work that we take on with pride, as we believe that the LSEG Sri Lanka growth story is a story we are beginning to see across most of the IT companies and the only barrier we see is the supply of young talent"

Arjuna Nanayakkara,
Head of Shared Services Centre,
LSEG Sri Lanka.

WOMEN INSPIRED NETWORK (WIN)

LSEG expanded the scope of the internal women's network, Women Inspired Network (WIN), by prioritizing WIN members for participation in LSEG's company-wide mentoring program in 2019. With focused efforts like this, participation grew by 30 percent. New WIN members were given the opportunity to be mentored by senior executives while also becoming role models themselves in the university and student engagement programs in 2019.

Erangi de Costa, one of the first woman product managers in the LSEG Tech team, participated in the international mentor program, through the group's '30% Club', yet another development option for the senior women of LSEG engaging with mentors and mentees outside the company.



I have witnessed a tremendous change in women as a force to be reckoned with in the workforce in the past 2 years. Women helping women and vocally advocating for mentorship and training is creating a bigger pipeline of women leaders for the future and I am happy to see it starting at the school level with some of the WIN projects we launched."

Amani Gunawardena
Pre-Sales Manager, LSEG Technology & Co-Chair for WIN in Sri Lanka.



IMAGE: COURTESY OF LONDON STOCK EXCHANGE GROUP



As a young executive, WIN made me feel that I will always be relevant and that there is a place for me to grow in a progressive company."

Sachira Marambe
Diversity and Inclusion Team, LSEG - SL

DURING COVID-19

In comparison to other sectors, the pandemic's impact has been felt less in IT in Sri Lanka. Adapting to the new health regulations issued by the government, LSEG continued to work without disruption. The company noted that existing flexible work and work from home policies and practices (rolled out in 2019) enabled a seamless transition as the required infrastructure, such as laptops and connectivity was provided along with reimbursement or appropriate office equipment for staff at home. Well-being and how to manage our teams' well-being as well as operational outcomes have been a priority in 2020.



Having a fully-fledged work from home policy that had been rolled out in 2019, helped us hit the ground running in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and the work restrictions that ensued."

Feroz Cader & Rob Brower
Co-Heads of LSEG Technology, Sri Lanka.

Navigating the inherent business challenges of working in a COVID-19 climate, LSEG has also identified challenges faced by staff through a gender lens. Childcare, work-life balance, and mental health well-being is being addressed in ways that support the needs of both male and female staff, in tandem with finding solutions for remote consumer engagement and business management.



IMAGE: COURTESY OF MAS HOLDINGS

MAS Holdings

Empowering women to reach their full potential

Commitment to action



MAS Holdings is one of the largest design-to-delivery solutions providers in the apparel and textile manufacturing industry in South Asia. Headquartered in Sri Lanka, with 53 manufacturing facilities across 16 countries and design facilities in key locations across the globe, the company produces for brands like Calvin Klein, Marks & Spencer, Nike and Victoria's Secret among others. MAS Holdings employs more than 99,000 employees (70 percent women) globally, and close to 76,000 employees in Sri Lanka (70 percent are women).

PROPELLING WOMEN TO LEADERSHIP, WHILE EXPANDING JOB ROLES

Tackling an industry wide challenge in graduating factory associates to managerial positions, MAS has a structured process for career development called the Team Leader and Group Leader program and technical and leadership skill development that grants a certification and a diploma for factory workers. A mentorship program was introduced for female team members, connecting them with a manager at their own facility to support and develop a pool of talent for the MAS' flagship 'Empowered Woman of the Year' Award. A female executive mentorship program was also introduced in all divisions in the group, which connects high performing female executives to mentors in senior management. This program aims to connect female mentees to female mentors, wherever possible, in a bid to develop both junior executives and senior women in the organization.

Since 2018, there has been a noteworthy improvement in the recruitment of women to the position of Assistant Manager and above, from 18 percent to 42 percent. Recruitment of females in the overall executive and higher grades increased from 35 to 38 percent which shows a substantial increase in recruitment efforts. Internal promotions of women have progressed from 29 percent in 2018 to 37 percent in 2019.

INCREASING THE NUMBER OF WOMEN EMPLOYEES IN NON-TRADITIONAL ROLES

There were 67 women appointed to roles traditionally filled by men in the apparel industry, such as mechanics, electricians, printers, and cutters. Women were provided training under the 'Iron Lady training program', which aims to expand job opportunities for women in this sector. Twenty female employees were trained to be cutters, 11 to be mechanics, three to be end-line printers and 33 to be technicians in 2019.

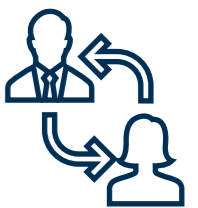
BUSINESS RESULTS:

Share of women on the boards increased by **8%** to reach **15%**



Over **850 women** were promoted

67 women were appointed on roles traditionally filled by men



WOMEN GO BEYOND PROGRAM MAKING POSITIVE DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF FEMALE ASSOCIATES

MAS' women's empowerment program Women Go Beyond (WGB), operating since 2003 as a strategic initiative, is resourced with people from across the group to carry out programming focusing on women's empowerment and gender equality. It recognized 154 inspirational women from across all MAS facilities around the globe for their exceptional achievements at the 13th Abhimani Empowered Women of the Year Awards in 2019. The awards also recognized excellence in entrepreneurship, innovation and continuous improvement, community service, sustainability and sports. Winners are recognized and their stories of achievement amidst extremely trying circumstances, are shared widely, through written media, audio and visual media, creating role models and ingraining women's empowerment as a core value of the organization. The organization carries out leadership development, language and other training for winners over the years following the award and winners also receive cash awards.

The MAS Women Go Beyond Program provides education, awareness and services in reproductive health and rights, female related health issues, gender-based violence, career development for women and skill development leading to the creation of female entrepreneurs.

MAS Vaanavil and Vidiyal together provide employment for approximately 2,000 direct employees in the northern region of Sri Lanka and positively contribute to the livelihoods of their families.



When I joined MAS Vaanavil and saw a sewing machine, I was terrified as it was the first time, I ever saw one and I had no idea what to do with it. The Women Go Beyond program really helped me to understand the culture of the organization and has taught me not only how to be the best in my job but also many other life skills. I lost my father during the war and had to take the family and financial responsibility of my mother and sisters. I have not only grown in my career but I am also proud to say that I have built a house for my family and also influenced many of our neighbors, that are also single female-headed households, to join MAS Vaanavil".

S. Rohiny
Raw Material Warehouse, MAS Vaanavil

CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE

MAS leadership advocated for increasing women's leadership throughout the company. Directors from across MAS companies voiced their support and outlined action plans for empowering women in the workforce via a series of video interviews. These messages from the 'Champions of Change' are being shared with employees and communities, with the objective of increasing employee buy-in for the Group's target of increasing the number of women leaders and of encouraging more women to pursue leadership positions. Sensitization workshops are being held for all executive and above cadre on the topics of unconscious bias and the business case for diversity.



There are over 100 mechanics and I am proud to be one of the three women in this department. The 'Iron Lady Training program' gave me the on the job training required for me to be the best version of myself in my role. I ensure production machines, equipment and the associated spare-parts and work-aids are installed, maintained, optimally utilized and improved in support of the factory operations."

S. Pirashanthi
Mechanic, MAS Vannavil

Mechanic, MAS Vannavil

AWARENESS RAISING ON ANTI-HARASSMENT

MAS strengthened its existing anti-harassment policies and rolled out comprehensive tri-lingual communications to ensure all staff are aware of the standard Equal Opportunity and Anti-harassment Policy. Educational videos, workshops and email campaigns have been used to disseminate instructions on procedures for addressing claims of harassment, as well as awareness raising of the types of behaviors that are considered harassment and bullying.



The awareness sessions have been really important in helping people identify and understand what problem behavior is. The visibility around the anti-harassment policy has also increased a lot over the last two years. There are informative videos that are played on the screens around the factories and offices, as well as dedicated officers to handle cases at each location. From recruitment itself there is an emphasis on creating a workplace free from bullying and harassment."

Sudesh Gunasekera
Manager - Innovation Strategy, MAS Active.



IMAGE: COURTESY OF MAS HOLDINGS

The MAS Women Go Beyond Program provides education, awareness and services in reproductive health and rights, female related health issues, gender-based violence, career development for women and skill development leading to the creation of female entrepreneurs.

TACKLING CHILDCARE ACROSS 11 LOCATIONS IN SRI LANKA, JORDON AND INDIA

MAS Holdings reported improvements in employee attendance and reduced turnover after introducing employer supported childcare facilities at 11 of its worksites across Sri Lanka, Jordan and India. Absences due to sick leave fell by 9 percentage points, within eight months of introducing a childcare center in the MAS Kreeda Al Safi-Madaba factory in Jordan.



Being able to use the MAS Kreeda childcare center has been really helpful, as my work takes me far from home. Earlier people would make fun of fathers taking the time to drop their kids off at school or creche, because taking care of the child was perceived as a mother's responsibility. Now I find that people are very accepting and supportive towards the fact that it's both parents' responsibility. As a family we have a great relationship with the center, and I can focus on work without worrying about safety and the quality of care my children get"

Supun Molligoda

Senior Executive - Plant Lean Enterprise - MAS Kreeda.

FACING COVID-19

MAS introduced a flex-work policy, in 2019 with full time and part time flexible work and started piloting a few options at a number of locations, working through the myriad of challenges posed by having manufacturing roles in a labor intensive industry and a huge mindset shift for many managers. With the Government mandated lockdown due to COVID-19, work from home, which was one of the flexibility innovations, was put to a rather extreme test.

Continuous email communications were shared with staff to help them familiarize themselves further with the policy and setting healthy guidelines related to working from home during this period. A hot line was also established for employees to flag any work-related issues. The Group HR department conducted a staff survey to assess the effectiveness of home-based work, in order to identify challenges employees were experiencing. Grievances were addressed for each employee at a team level, which increased the effectiveness and productivity of the process.

MAS is continuing to work on new ways of working with more flexibility and understanding job roles which are amenable to different types of flexibility.



Imani's Story

"The mentorship program is the best thing that happened to me in my career development. Before I was introduced to the mentorship program, I didn't have anyone to share my experience and concerns with, and to ask for unbiased advice," said Imani Wimalaratne, Manager - PCU at MAS Intimates, Linea Clothing in Kandy. Imani began her career with MAS in 2006 as a planning executive. After having been identified by the 'Women in Leadership' program as a high performer, Imani was referred to the MAS mentorship program, to be mentored by the Strategic Transformation Director at MAS Holdings, Kasuni Silva.

Undaunted by the fact that they were in two different provinces, Kasuni and Imani took a structured approach to the mentorship experience. With regular online check-ins and calls, supplemented by a few in person meet ups, Kasuni helped Imani venture out of her comfort zone and take on a new role at the neighboring MAS plant, where she oversaw improving supplier processes.

"We spent a few sessions getting to know each other, then Kasuni ran a perception check-up with my suppliers, staff and managers to understand how

other people I interact with at work saw me. This exercise was totally unexpected and was a great eye opener for me. She made me write down my career aspirations and my plans to achieve these. I saw that I was going through the motions in my present role and Kasuni helped me talk to my supervisors for me to join the MAS Casualline factory and work on improving the systems there. I loved this role and the challenge it posed!" Imani was recognized at the MAS Abhimani Awards 2019, where she was one of eleven employees who were recognized as upcoming leaders at MAS.

"We have a lot of women at the Assistant Manager level, but not enough come up to become General Managers. The Women in Leadership program introduced mentorship to help solve this. Imani was part of that program and was identified as a top talent who could one day reach that level," said Kasuni, adding that she has seen Imani grow in confidence in her own capacity as a leader.

Paying forward what she has learnt, Imani is now a mentor in turn to several other young women working with her at MAS and looks forward to her regular chats with her mentees where she helps them navigate challenges and rise up the corporate ladder.



IMAGE: COURTESY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT BANK

National Development Bank PLC

The bank of choice for women

Commitment to action



National Development Bank (NDB) offers a unique amalgam of products and services in both banking and capital markets with its services spread across retail and development banking, investment banking and advisory, security trading, wealth management, private equity management and property management. The bank also supports the micro and SME sectors through financial, technical and educational support. NDB has close to 3,000 staff of which 40 percent are women.

ECONOMIC DIVIDENDS FOR GENDER EQUALITY (EDGE) CERTIFICATION

NDB became the first Sri Lankan company to earn the prestigious Economic Dividends for Gender Equality (EDGE) business certification, the only global standard for gender equality in the workplace. NDB joins an exclusive group of over 200 large companies from 37 countries across five continents, representing 24 industries, that have successfully demonstrated their ability to create an optimal workplace for both men and women and reap the benefits from it.

The Certification assesses HR information, the bank's policy framework and practices as well as feedback from a bank-wide employee survey. The Certification has led to an actionable plan for further improvement in gender equality.

"Obtaining EDGE Certification provided much impetus for NDB's endeavors in promoting gender equality in the workplace. It well complements NDB's mission of becoming the Bank of Choice for every aspiring woman, from the perspective of a financier as well as an employer." Dimantha Seneviratne, Group Chief Executive Officer, NDB

NDB introduced paternity leave and extended flexible work policies to enable staff to better manage their work and home responsibilities. The bank's sexual harassment policy was updated and communicated to all staff through online and face-to-face activities. As a result of these introductions maternity return rates have improved from 88 percent in 2018 to 100 percent in 2020.

NDB also won the Top 50 Professional & Career Women Awards - 9th edition, organized by Women in Management and the "Best Private Sector Organization Promoting Women in Workplace" award for the second year.

BUSINESS RESULTS:



Share of women in senior management increased from **13% to 38%**

Gender-balanced recruitment, with women comprising **52%** of new recruitment applications



Women were recruited to fill **51.5%** of new roles introduced between Jan - Dec 2019

Merit based selection and promotes equal opportunity





Having flexi-hours has really helped across the board, as for younger staff it meant that they have more time for study and for the seniors it meant we could have time for family obligations, simple things like being able to drop the kids in school. It's made a huge difference"

Sydney Downall
Regional Manager, Colombo Region
Serving Female Customers Better – Araliya



An IFC Banking on Women client, NDB's strategic plan 'Transformation 2020' (T20) establishes Banking on Women as a major strategic pillar. Following extensive market research, in 2019 NDB launched a unique bundle of banking products for women under its Araliya product line. The bundle includes a loan facility, current accounts, credit cards and savings products, customized to three distinct segments of female clients: home makers, salaried professionals, and female entrepreneurs.

Promoting gender equality and nurturing a conducive work environment for women within the bank, NDB also enrolls female members of the leadership team in the Women In Management program, which provides networking opportunities as well and exposure to business forums and corporate mentorship opportunities in partnership with other organizations.



We did an analysis regarding repayment patterns on personal and credit card debts. What we found was that for these two categories the probability of default was lower for females. Subsequently gender was introduced as a criterion in our model. If you are a woman you get a slightly higher score, validated by the data of the bank"

Nadie Fernando
Chief Manager – Product Development and Institutional Banking

PROACTIVELY PROMOTING WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

A 'Management Committee' (MANCO) was created to help develop a strong succession pipeline for NDB's leadership team. High performing middle to senior level executives were appointed to MANCO. Members were given capacity building, leadership training and on the job exposure in different departments through decentralized decision making and inter-departmental projects.



Because of the triumphs we had with SheWorks and EDGE we made a conscious effort to ensure that adequate representation of women was present in the selected management levels. That is why 50 percent of the Management Committee members are women; these are the employees who have been identified as leaders with potential within the bank."

Lasantha Dassanayake
Vice President, Group Human Resources, NDB

PROMOTING WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Practicing responsible lending, the bank works to increase the capacity of women entrepreneurs in the SME sector by organizing financial literacy programs, women's empowerment programs and exporter events. Targeting the female SME clientele, NDB has organized nine events in 2018 and 2019, across eight districts in the country. The programs are designed to strengthen financial literacy and provide entrepreneurial support to women engaged in the informal sector, offering guidance on business management and marketing. The bank also supports women entrepreneurs through dedicated refinancing funding lines.

Enhancing the efforts to support women entrepreneurs across Sri Lanka, in 2020 NDB partnered with national media network, Sirasa TV, to launch the Vanithabhimani awards, an island-wide awards program to recognize female entrepreneurs. The awards are currently at the regional stage following which the regional winners will be eligible for the national awards, across eight categories ranging from MSME, SME to upcoming entrepreneur.

DURING COVID-19

NDB Bank kept open the credit lines to their existing portfolio of finance companies to tide over stressed liquidity during the pandemic. The bank introduced 'Jayagamu Sri Lanka' in June 2020, a product proposition designed to provide refinancing during COVID 19, to support exporters and innovators. NDB was one of the first banks to begin lending to customers when the pandemic hit, at a subsidized interest rate of four percent, from the bank's reserves.

NDB also launched mobile banks during the lockdown to enable customers to withdraw cash from their homes. The bank's digital customer proposition NEOS, underwent a significant uptick in adaptation and usage during this time.

Staff exercised work from home procedures during lockdown, with mobile-enabled HR facilities.

As a COVID-19 response measure, 'Araliya' clients have been extended additional support through the NDB Jayagamu Sri Lanka venture. Working Capital and Capital Expenditure Finances are funded under the Jayagamu Sri Lanka Exporter Facilitation, while non-financial assistance and cash management are also provided under the scheme. Women exporters and SME clients under Araliya have been given priority in accessing this facility during the pandemic.



The Araliya brand has given a sense of pride to the bank staff as well. People felt very good about this and to see the leadership champion this cause on a national stage has been great for moral."

Shera Hassen
Assistant Vice President, Head of Privilege and Privilege Select Banking

Enhancing the efforts to support women entrepreneurs across Sri Lanka, in 2020 NDB partnered with national media network, Sirasa TV, to launch the Vanithabhimani awards, an island-wide awards program to recognize female entrepreneurs.



Proactively we offered relief measures to our 'Araliya' SME Clients both in terms of financial and non-financial support, so that the businesses maintain normalcy. We were in the forefront of the government sanctioned relief packages for the SME sector."

Indika Kudagamage
Assistant Vice President, Business Banking, SME, Micro Finance and Liabilities



IMAGE: COURTESY OF SANASA DEVELOPMENT BANK

SANASA Development Bank PLC

Banking on women as a pillar of success

Commitment to action



SANASA Development Bank PLC (SDB), a licensed specialized bank registered by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka, under the Banking Act No. 30 of 1988. SDB bank serves rural and underbanked communities through an extensive network of over 8,500 co-operative societies and government organizations countrywide. SDB has an island-wide network of 94 branches and a workforce of over 1,500 staff of which 48 percent are women.

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

SDB continues its upward trajectory of women at the helm, recently appointing Dinithi Ratnayake to the Board of Directors and Delrene Seneviratne as the Deputy Chief Executive Officer. The bank also recorded a 6-percentage point increase of women in senior and middle management. Ms Seneviratna was selected by IFC to serve as an IFC Trailblazer and share insights on economic inclusion for women-owned or led SMEs at global panel on managing the COVID-19 crisis.



I was never made to feel that being a woman would be an issue in fulfilling my job role. When I was promoted as a Branch Manager, it was my skills and experience that were considered and the bank supported me in developing my capacity with technical training as well as personal capacity building."

Sewwandi Muthumali
Kaduwela Branch Manager, SDB bank

Currently there are two major management development programs conducted for the Corporate Management. There is a coaching program also running parallel to these. 'Corporate Leader' is the program for the Corporate Team with consists of 50 percent female representation. The Management Development program for managers has 25 participants, where there is only one woman as this is the first batch. Further SDB bank has commenced a fitness program for women with about 40 staff participating.



The bank tries to maintain 50:50 gender representation at all tiers and this is reflected as both men and women progress in their careers. The bank recognized my aptitude and gave me the opportunity to transition to a more technical role. Half my staff are women and I am proud to be a mentor to them.

Lakmini Muththunga
Head of Systems and Operations, SDB bank

BUSINESS RESULTS:



Number of women in senior management has increased by **3% to 29%**



Number of women in middle management has increased by **3% to 43%**

Number of women in non-executive roles has increased from **16% to 56%**

WSME portfolio has increased to **Rs. 1.6 Bn** since the launch in 2018.



60 Financial Literacy programs have been conducted for over 6000 women island-wide

STRENGTHENING WOMEN IN THE VALUE CHAIN

The UN Sustainable Development Goal 5, to Achieve Gender Equality and Empower all Women and Girls, is a key pillar in SDB Bank's 2020 strategic plan. Mainstreaming this goal to the company business strategy the bank introduced a MSME loan product to 'SDB Uththamavi Initiative' in 2018 specifically targeting women to enhance capacity building in financial literacy and client engagement. Uththamavi translates to mean 'empowered woman,' and offers female clients a comprehensive financial solutions package including savings, structured savings, investment accounts and MSME and SME loans.

Many women entrepreneurs encounter barriers in access to finance often with businesses registered in a male relative's name instead of their own. Lack of collateral and low levels of financial education sees them operating in the unregulated financial sector to fulfil capital needs. The SDB Uththamavi SME loan facility was introduced so that these women entrepreneurs can meet their financial business needs, offering collateral free MSME, SME and personal loan facilities up to 10 million rupees, including insurance benefits to those obtaining a loan.

Since the launch, Uththamavi MSME loan and has attracted over 3,000 accounts with a total portfolio value of 1.6 billion rupees to date.



Banking on women is a corner stone in our 2020 strategic plan. Our goal is to build a strong backbone of female entrepreneurs. We have expanded our initiatives to fit the needs of the women in the sector, extending our free workshops on financial literacy to include business management and start-up development, removing obstacles that existed in access to finance and introducing digital onboarding to enable more women access to digital financial solutions."

Delrene Seneviratne
Head of Business, SDB bank



In my experience of 12 years as a development banker, my understanding is that women are an asset in the banking sector. In most Sri Lankan homes, mothers are the financial controllers. So they have a drive to earn and save for the betterment of the family. On average women's repayment rates are high they are disciplined and keen to learn new skills like bookkeeping and business planning.

Nilupama Madurawala
Senior Manager – Product Development and Retail Business, SDB bank



DIGITAL FINANCIAL INCLUSION

By educating Uththamavi account holders to utilize internet banking through digital onboarding sessions held at local branches, SDB Bank is encouraging more women to use their Business Internet Banking platform, mobile app facility including fund transfers, on-line savings and FD A/C creations and make bill payments through the bank's UPay App including Lanka QR code payments. SDB goes beyond just financial services and fosters socio-economic progress by improving financial literacy and teaching sound financial habits among local communities. SDB bank UPay payment app recently reached 115,000 registered users. SDB has a rapidly growing SME customer base, and its varied portfolio provides solutions that span areas such as development, personal banking and leasing, while deposit products encourage rural communities to invest and save.

ENTREPRENEUR FINANCIAL CENTRE IN SRI LANKA IN COLLABORATION WITH OTHER COMPANIES

SDB in collaboration with multiple stakeholders of SANASA group has launched the Entrepreneur Financial Centre in Sri Lanka (EFCS) for value chain financing in four selected segments: pepper, traditional rice, tourism and bananas. Under the above value chain projects, heavy emphasis has been placed on financing women supply chain players and promoting entrepreneurship amongst women.

Under the SDB Uththamavi initiative for women, 60 financial literacy programs have been successfully completed since 2018 for more than 6,000 women around the country, free of charge. This is a special tailor-made training program for women on financial planning, financial products, entrepreneurship and digital banking services. The aim is to make aware the women of financial literacy, banking and digital banking services. This is a CSR project carried out for SDB customers as well as for non-customers. A MOU has been signed with John Keels Foundation (JKF) to conduct Financial Literacy Programs focusing women and youth.

PROMOTING RESPECTFUL AND SUPPORTIVE WORKPLACES

SDB bank recently set-up regional Human Resources (HR) teams to lead grievance and HR functions for staff including branch employees, 50 percent of whom are women. Through this mechanism, SDB hopes to demonstrate the organization's commitment towards a safe, respectful workplace, while implementing a structured process on gender specific issues.

EXTERNAL EVENTS

Taking its commitment to the recruitment and promotion of women to a wider audience, SDB Bank was the platinum sponsor of the Academy of Administrative Professionals workshop for women at work. A capacity building training session and networking event participated by executives from Sanasa as well as other organizations.

SDB bank earned a spot in the top 50 of the prestigious, Brand Finance Sri Lanka's 17th annual review 'Sri Lanka's 100 most valuable brands', earning the additional distinction of clinching the top spot among first-time entrants. With a brand value of 2029 million rupees, SDB Bank surpassed significantly larger banks to earn the accolade of being one of the best performing brands in the country.

Under the SDB Uththamavi initiative for women, 60 financial literacy programs have been successfully completed since 2018 for more than 6,000 women around the country, free of charge.



From the targeted 1000 workshops for 2020, the bank had allocated 150 workshops specifically for women. Of which 50 workshops had been conducted prior to COVID-19 lock down. From the new women clients who came from these workshops, we had a net increase of LKR 800 million to the bank portfolio."

Champa Dassanayake,
Head of SME Banking, SDB bank

FACING COVID-19

SDB bank continued to function during the COVID 19 pandemic lockdown. Staff worked from home and were equipped with laptops and internet connectivity. Customers were engaged through the bank's robust digital platforms. SDB Bank also facilitated special liquidity lines to

co-operative societies, enabling them to better support their membership and thereby stay relevant while facing the crisis.



'The COVID situation was tough. Our usual Business Continuity Plans did not apply in this scenario. But we were able to rally, distributing laptops to staff and ensuring our financial support functions continued uninterrupted. The teams have been working around the clock to roll out relief packages and ensure we served our clients' needs at this most dire time

Lakmini Muththunga,
Head of Systems and Operations, SDB bank



IMAGE: COURTESY OF SOUTH ASIA GATEWAY TERMINALS

South Asia Gateway Terminals

Opening the doors for women to join shipping and logistics sector

Commitment to action



South Asia Gateway Terminals (SAGT), a flagship venture of the Board of Investment (BOI) and the first public private partnership container terminal in Sri Lanka, commenced operations in 1999, launching the Port of Colombo as a global gateway hub to South Asia. SAGT has over 700 employees of which 4 percent are women.

FIGHTING THE TIDE TO BRING MORE WOMEN TO SEA

In an industry where the global average for women's participation is 4 percent, SAGT, has made concerted efforts to bring more women into the business. Great strides have been made in the executive cadre where a 17-percentage point increase brought the total share of women to 28 percent. SAGT has increased number of women for back-office vacancies as evidenced by the recently opened Assistant Manager and Junior Executive positions being filled with female candidates. For the first time in two decades, SAGT boasts seven women employed in the engineering department. The company has introduced a targeted internship program, where it actively canvasses for female candidates – the current intern pool has an all-time high of 11 women.

Future executive positions will also be targeted towards female candidates. SAGT will leverage existing local sports sponsorships, including with the Sri Lankan women's rugby team, to develop the network for potential candidates.

CREATING A SAFE AND RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE FOR ALL

A comprehensive anti-sexual harassment policy was introduced, and staff were educated via communications in three languages. Posters, seminars and workshops as well as email communications were used to ensure all layers of staff were reached through the awareness exercises. SAGT also implemented a third-party grievance mechanism for transparent and trustworthy reporting, conducting awareness sessions to all staff on the operational procedures of making a complaint.

BUSINESS RESULTS:

Share of women in executive roles increased from **11% to 28%**



Share of women in new recruits increased from **8% to 25%**

Share of female applicants for job vacancies increased from **5% to 21%**



2 female engineers employed for the first time

100% retention rate of female employees



Ayesha's Story

Ayesha Abeyratne
Junior Executive Engineering Planner

The first woman to be hired into the SAGT engineering department in 2018, Ayesha Abeyratne felt the pressure to prove her mettle. Fresh out of University, she was tasked with introducing a new system to improve the efficacy of crane maintenance planning.

'There was a bit of a culture shock, I had to prove myself as a young professional in a non-conventional role,' Ayesha said recalling the challenges she faced on the job. 'What I really appreciate is that the management didn't tell me to back down. They always told me to go out there, learn everything I need to know and strive to make a valuable contribution towards the organization.'

Ayesha is a trailblazer in an industry that struggles to attract female talent. Social perceptions around job roles deter candidates from applying.

A mechanical engineer by qualification, Ayesha says that she was reluctant to pursue her passion when she was choosing her electives at university. 'I was not sure if I should choose a job in Chemical engineering instead, because girls get jobs in Chemical but not in Mechanical. They don't want girls out there in the yard. But I am so glad that I took the plunge and stuck to what I love.'

I think the only way to change the status quo is to have more women in these roles and be leaders.'

Speaking of the impact that Ayesha's appointment has had, Assistant Manager - Sourcing and Procurement, Nilusha Jayamaha, said, 'In the last two years I do feel that there has been a difference in the work environment for women. The recruitment drives have targeted more women and it is great to see that we had our first female engineer in the department, Ayesha who is a role model for other young women wanting to join the industry.'

Ayesha is now joined by another female colleague in the Engineering department. Reflecting on the change these introductions have made with other staff, Thushara Jayawardana General Manager of HR at SAGT noted, 'The paradigm has shifted from the yard floor upwards, where workers see that women can do these jobs. Having two women now in the engineering department has made a great change.'

'When I was young, I used to watch the ships coming into the Port of Colombo and wonder at how amazing it would be to work here,' said Ayesha, adding a note to any aspiring female mechanical engineers, 'Don't give up on your dreams. You will get a job when you graduate and there is a place for you in the workplace.'



FACING COVID-19

Identified as an essential service, SAGT immediately introduced a slew of safety regulations and protocols to ensure uninterrupted services. Staff and other key stakeholders underwent enhanced health and safety procedures as well as stringent health monitoring. SAGT has embraced digital solutions to enhance ease of doing business, collaborating with TradeLens, a blockchain-powered data platform to improve operational efficacy and implementing a state-of-the-art visitor management system and e-clearance delivery advise (e-DA) process via email.

Non-essential staff and all support staff operations were moved to work from home during the pandemic lockdown. The company provided transport for all staff who were required to report to work, providing all meals and regular health check-ups.



IMAGE: COURTESY OF SOUTH ASIA GATEWAY TERMINALS



IMAGE: COURTESY OF STANDARD CHARTERED BANK

Standard Chartered Bank

50:50 gender balance drives business growth and builds community

Commitment to action



Standard Chartered PLC (SC) is a UK-headquartered, multinational banking and financial services company, operating across 60 markets and employing 85,000 people globally. In Sri Lanka, SC employs over 600 employees, of which 50 percent are women, across 7 branches.

PROMOTING WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

To promote women in leadership agenda, SC introduced a reverse mentoring program, a fair pay charter, a talent accelerator program and focused personal branding sessions for upcoming female leaders whilst continuing their focus on balanced succession planning.

SC established a reverse-mentoring program, through which a high performing junior staff member is paired with a member of the Country Leadership Team (CLT) to exchange skills, knowledge and experience. The program also encourages junior staff to suggest innovative ideas that can benefit the business. The ideas are brainstormed among the CLT, with the most promising ones selected for implementation, led by the staff member that came up with the idea under the guidance of the CLT member.



The initiatives launched over the last two years to support the women in leadership agenda has resulted in us achieving a 36 percent female ratio in the Country Management Team (CMT), 100 percent internal succession for female appointments into the CMT and achieving 50:50 gender equality in our workforce in March 2020."

Ransi Dharmasiriwardhana
Head of HR at SC Sri Lanka.

BUSINESS RESULTS:



50:50 Gender Balance

Share of women in senior management increased to **36%**



Gender-balanced recruitment, with women comprising of approximately **50%**

100% maternity return rate in the last financial year



SC established a reverse-mentoring program, through which a high performing junior staff member is paired with a member of the Country Leadership Team (CLT) to exchange skills, knowledge and experience.

GENDER-BALANCED RECRUITMENT

SC put in place strategic recruitment policies to ensure gender balance in recruitment. These included gender-inclusive job advertisements, a requirement for a gender-balanced shortlist and a gender-balanced interview panel for senior hires.

People leaders (line managers who have direct reports) attended unconscious bias training, to be aware and alleviate any unconscious biases. The training was completed with a 100 percent participation rate. This has ensured that people leaders evaluate new recruits as well as their current teams on merit and limit the influence of unconscious bias in their day to day decisions. Such measures helped SC to meet skilled labor shortages and minimize costs, whilst driving an inclusive culture.



At Standard Chartered, we see diversity as a platform to drive our purpose collectively. Performance and recognition are linked to results achieved in relation to what extent our defined valued behaviours have been lived. As People Leaders, we continuously administer mentorship programs and have also undertaken unconscious bias trainings ourselves to ensure an equal growth opportunity is extended to all, and new hires and promotions are free from any bias."

Roger Norton
Head of Transaction Banking at SC Sri Lanka.



Achieving gender balance in our new recruits and in our workforce has been a strategic priority for us for the last three years. Implementing strategic recruitment policies, whilst focusing on selecting the right candidate for the right role, has helped us achieve this."

Tanya Rajendra
Head of Talent Acquisition at SC Sri Lanka.

RETENTION OF WOMEN THROUGH FLEX-WORK AND CHILDCARE SUPPORT

SC offers 'flexible working' to support employees to meet the demands of their personal lives, without impacting their careers. SC offers many forms of flexible working, both formal and informal. This benefit is applicable to all employees, including our female staff irrespective of tenure in the organization. Formal flexible working is permitted for arrangements that are regular and are likely to last 12 months or more. Informal flexible working is where a flexible working arrangement is short-term, or where the employee may need to change the arrangement from time to time. Available types are working from home, flexible working time or a combination of both.

SC's Women's Network 'W3: Women Win @ Work' is an initiative that promotes networking, professional and personal development of women across SC. W3 activities include a maternity support program, International Women's Day celebrations and learning sessions on topics such as confidence and leadership skills.

Standard Chartered has maternity leave of 20 calendar weeks, exceeding

the legal requirement of 84 working days, while fathers enjoy paternity leave of up to two calendar weeks. New adoptive parents are entitled to two calendar weeks of adoption leave.

Improving work life balance was identified by SC as an important step towards increasing gender parity in the workplace. To further this objective, in 2008, SC established a crèche facility – 'Kidkare' – for its staff. The facility is in the heart of Colombo and currently accommodates up to 30 children from the age of six months to 11 years. SC subsidizes two thirds of the fee for its staff. The investment has paid off with SC's maternity return rate at 100 percent in the last financial year and parents reporting they are at ease and can better concentrate during work knowing their children are well taken care of.



To make the return to work a smooth transition for new mothers, we introduced a maternity support program where a buddy is assigned. This is a game changer as many issues such as post maternal stress, work-life balance etc. are openly discussed."

Dilini Baldsing
Head of Integrated Middle Office
at SC Sri Lanka.



NO TOLERANCE FOR SEXUAL HARASSMENT OR BULLYING IN THE WORKPLACE

On an annual basis, all employees pledge to provide a safe working environment which is inclusive and free from discrimination, exploitation, bullying and harassment. SC has conducted awareness campaigns on sexual harassment specifically and launched guidelines on sexual harassment for Sri Lanka as an addendum to the Group Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Standard. Training on managing conduct and risk in their respective businesses was rolled out to 90 percent of people leaders, it also included training on sexual harassment with a focus on the people leaders in turn train their teams on the subject.

Every individual has the right to speak up and any unacceptable or inappropriate behavior in the workplace can be reported via an anonymous channel. This anonymous channel is based out of the country and will always maintain confidentiality.

SC recently launched 'Here for you', its first Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Here for you is a counselling and guidance service provided by ComPsych, the global EAP vendor, offering services to both employees and their families free of charge. Each platform is confidential and is designed to help employees and their families whether it is to manage personal setbacks, emotional conflicts or even the demands of daily life which may impact staff, their health or their families.



If you don't 'walk the talk', then your peers and team will not follow your lead nor respect you. Communicating the business case has paved the way forward for others to follow suit. Also, the external activities SC has participated in have helped to solidify our D&I agenda."

Chamalie Serasinghe
Chief Operating Officer at SC Sri Lanka.



SENIOR LEADERSHIP 'WALK THE TALK'

The SC senior leadership team has been a key partner throughout the SheWorks journey and actively 'walks the talk' by ensuring the necessary resources are in place to embed diversity and inclusion in the bank's culture. Furthermore, SC has been certified as a Great Place to Work® for the second consecutive year. It is also the only bank to be certified in 2019 and 2020 for Sri Lanka.

PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY THROUGH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: GOAL

The GOAL program aims to empower young women using a combination of sport and education to promote change. Using sports (netball, karate etc.) and a customized curriculum, which includes subjects such as financial literacy, wellbeing and leadership, the program supports disadvantaged youth and aims to increase self-confidence, knowledge and opportunities. By enhancing the community and family perception of the value of girls, it enables the pathway for economic development. In partnership with SERVE, 20 schools with over 3,000 girls have been covered so far by this initiative. This project also won an award at the Best Corporate Citizen Sustainability Awards 2019 hosted by the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce.



Here at Standard Chartered Sri Lanka, sustainability is integrated into the way we operate at every level. 'GOAL' empowers the next generation to learn, earn and grow. We are truly humbled by the national recognition of our 'GOAL' program that empowers young girls in underprivileged areas, providing them with the skills and abilities to make it on their own."

Anoli Ratnayake
Director, International Corporates
at SC Sri Lanka.

FACING COVID-19

During Sri Lanka's lockdown, 20 percent of SC employees in branches, call centers and other core roles were required to come to work, while the remaining staff worked remotely. All employees who reported to the office or branch were provided allowances, food and transport. Because SC had already implemented flexible work policies as standard practice, the work from home transition was seamless – key decisions were made, and employee productivity levels were high. SC also supports multiple companies including SheWorks members, MAS Intimates (Pvt) Ltd and Brandix Lanka Ltd to drawdown under the bank's \$1 billion COVID-19 financing commitment. SC also handed over \$500,000 as a donation to the Red Cross Society in Sri Lanka to help support the fight against COVID-19 in the local community.



In response to the pandemic, SC leaders are "walking the talk" to accelerate the adoption of agile ways of working and customer transformation to help outmaneuver uncertainty. Our employees' safety and wellbeing are our number one priority and relevant steps were taken accordingly. It must be highlighted that all our front-line staff who came to work (regardless of gender), demonstrated willingness and morale to serve our clients during the lockdown."

Radesh D'Almeida
Branch Manager-Fort.



IMAGE: COURTESY OF STANDARD CHARTERED BANK

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AIA	-	AIA Insurance Lanka LTD
Brandix	-	Brandix Lanka Ltd
BoW	-	Banking on Women
CBL	-	CBL Group
CSE	-	Colombo Stock Exchange
CSR	-	Corporate Social Responsibility
DFAT	-	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DIMO	-	DIMO
D&I	-	Diversity and Inclusion
EDGE	-	Economic Dividends for Gender Equality
EFC	-	Employee Federation of Ceylon
Fairway	-	Fairway Holdings (PVT) Limited
FMCG	-	Fast-moving consumer goods sector
GDP	-	Gross domestic product
Hela	-	Hela Clothing
Hemas	-	Hemas Holdings PLC
IDEVAW	-	International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women
IFC	-	International Finance Corporation
IR	-	Industrial Relations
JKF	-	John Keells Foundation
JKH	-	John Keells Holdings PLC
LSEG	-	London Stock Exchange Group
MAS	-	MAS Holdings
MSMEs	-	Micro, small and medium enterprises
NDB	-	National Development Bank PLC
PPE	-	Personal protective equipment
SDB	-	SANASA Development Bank PLC
SAGT	-	South Asia Gateway Terminals
Sanasa	-	SANASA Development Bank PLC
SC	-	Standard Chartered PLC
SMEs	-	Small and medium enterprises
GDP	-	Gross domestic product
FMCG	-	Fast-moving consumer goods sector
BoW	-	Banking on Women
UN	-	United Nations
WIM	-	Women in Management
WIN	-	Women Inspired Network



IMAGE: COURTESY OF MAS HOLDINGS

FOOTNOTES



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IFC Women in Work Program

IFC, Level 15 , NDB-EDB Tower
42, Nawam Mawatha
Colombo 2
Sri Lanka

Email: womeninwork@ifc.org
Visit: www.ifc.org/sheworkssrilanka

November 2020



The IFC-DFAT Woman in Work program in Sri Lanka, partnering with leading private sector companies, aims to demonstrate that corporate performances can improve from closing gaps between women and men in the private sector.