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Women in business and management: **Gaining momentum in Asia and the Pacific**



ACT/EMP
The Bureau for Employers' Activities

Women in business and management:

Gaining momentum in Asia and the Pacific

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First published 2015

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Women in business and management: gaining momentum in Asia and the Pacific / ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific; ILO Bureau for Employers' activities (ACT/EMP). Bangkok: ILO, 2015

ISBN: 9789221298991; 9789221299004 (web pdf)

ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific; International Labour Office, Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP)

gender equality / equal employment opportunity / woman manager / sex discrimination / Asia / Pacific

04.02.3

ILO Cataloguing in Publication Data

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Printed in Thailand

Preface

While women are still globally under-represented in top management, significant evidence shows that the number of women in senior and middle management positions has increased over the last 20 years. A growing body of research also shows that utilizing the skills and talent of both men and women is beneficial for society in general. Expanding women's businesses and promoting more women to gain access to decision-making positions are particularly challenging and complex issues. Furthermore, these issues often mirror the inequalities that exist at all levels in gender-segregated labour markets. In this connection, the ILO Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) embarked on a research project combining statistics and authoritative data on measures that can be taken to advance women in business, along with analysis and recommendations for future areas of focus. At the global level, *Women in business and management: Gaining momentum* was released in January 2015, which shows that women's participation in the labour market is ever-increasing and has been the engine of global growth and competitiveness.

In the Asia-Pacific region, women's growing presence in the labour market is becoming a driver for economic growth and development. Women are catching up with and surpassing men in educational attainment in many countries in the region, and they represent an expansion of the talent pool and a national resource. Women are managing more businesses, and consumer-spending decisions are often in their hands. Strangely, these realities seem to be overlooked even though the search for talent and skills is intensifying as economies are increasingly based on knowledge and technology. More specifically, this report provides updated information and data on businesses run by women and women's participation in the management of companies in the Asia-Pacific region.

To provide an Asia-Pacific perspective, this report highlights statistics and information on women in business and management for countries in the region. Among other findings, the report demonstrates that women rarely reach positions such as chief executive officer (CEO) and company board member. Instead, they continue to be shut out of economic decision-making and the 'glass ceiling' that blocks women from top jobs remains firmly in place.

While there is still much to be done for women's talent to be fully realized and utilized in the workplace, the report highlights the resources, good practices, organizational structures and networks that are already in place in Asia and the Pacific. Though progress is slow, women who are appointed to the highest positions attract media attention from time to time, creating new role models.

Initiatives to challenge gender stereotypes, corporate cultures and the lack of measures to reconcile work and family responsibilities are found in the report. More attention to the career paths of women and men is needed to ensure that gender biases, sometimes subtle, are eliminated starting from the very first tasks assigned to entry-level employees in a company.

More concerted efforts and advocacy are needed to share the positive benefits of utilizing women's talent and skills at all levels, including in the boardroom. While many multinational companies are already on this track, a major challenge is for national firms in Asia and the Pacific, especially those of medium- and large-size, to receive advice and tools on how to advance women and improve the companies' business outcomes.

The national employers' organizations in Asia-Pacific have a strategic and timely role to play as the business world is beginning to recognize how women's contribution to economic decision-making can make a positive difference to the "bottom line" and business performance.

With the support of national employers' organizations in seven countries, 418 companies from the Asia-Pacific region responded to the 2013 company survey conducted by ILO ACT/EMP, providing rich material for this regional report.

It is our sincere wish that this report would provide inspiration and motivation for all the actors in the world of work in Asia and the Pacific to join forces in achieving gender equality at all levels. This is especially important, as gender equality is integral to the ILO Decent Work Agenda, ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization. It is also an important condition for sustainable development.



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Acknowledgements

The preparation of this report entailed a participatory approach with contributions from national employers' organizations in the region, ILO specialists on employers and gender experts, and consultants with expertise in gender equality and entrepreneurship.

National employers' organizations from the region made valuable contributions to the preparation of this report as well as the ILO global report published in 2015, *Women in Business and Management: Gaining Momentum*. They provided national reports on the situation of women in business and management and shared their knowledge, initiatives, challenges and recommendations at the regional workshop for employers held in Bangkok in April 2013.

In particular, national employers' organizations played a key role in disseminating and collecting responses for the ILO company survey conducted in 2013 by ACT/EMP. These organizations were as follows:

- Bangladesh Employers' Federation (BEF)
- Cambodian Federation of Employers and Business Associations (CAMFEBA)
- Fiji Commerce and Employers Federation (FCEF)
- Iranian Confederation of Employers' Associations (ICEA)
- Employers' Federation of Pakistan (EFP)
- Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP)
- Employers' Federation of Ceylon (EFC)

We wish to acknowledge and thank the 418 companies surveyed from the Asia-Pacific region that provided critical information and reflections on the situation of women managers in their companies, the barriers faced by women in leadership and the measures they considered effective for advancing women in management.

We also wish to thank the Employers' Federation of Ceylon (EFC), Korea Employers Federation (KEF), Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF), and Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) who provided further support in developing good practices which are included in this report.

The ILO regional senior employers' specialists played an important role in the development of this report, the preparation and holding of the regional workshop, as well as in mobilizing the national employers' organizations to assist in disseminating and collecting responses for the company survey. Particular appreciation goes to Ms Jae-Hee Chang who led the coordination of this report and Mr Gary Rynhart, Ms Miaw Tiang Tang and Mr Gotabaya Dasanayaka for the technical support.

Gender specialists and technical experts also participated in the workshop sharing their knowledge with participants from national employers' organizations. Particular appreciation goes to Ms Joni Simpson and Ms Nelen Haspels from the ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team for East and South-East Asia and the Pacific and Ms Susan Maybud from the ILO Gender, Equality and Diversity Branch for providing technical feedback on the report.

Appreciation also goes to the lead consultant, Ms Linda Wirth, who drafted this report. She also suggested the initial design of the ILO company survey and incorporated comments from those consulted. She analysed the survey results integrating them into this report. Ms Laura Greene supported the development of the final report. In addition, mention is made of Ms Seul-A Yi and Ms Rachita Daga who assisted with the compilation of aspects of the final report.

Ms Anne-Brit Nippierd of the ILO ACT/EMP Geneva conceptualized and managed the overall global ACT/EMP project on Women in Business and Management, including the organization and coordination of five regional workshops for employers (including the Bangkok workshop), the company survey and the abovementioned global report.

The guidance and support of the Director of ILO ACT/EMP Ms Deborah France-Massin, was key to the implementation of the various stages of the global project in which the Asia and Pacific region participated.

Finally, acknowledgement of the ACT/EMP-Norway partnership agreement is due for the provision of the funds necessary for undertaking this report and its related activities.

Abstract

This report provides an overview of the status of women in business and management in the Asia-Pacific region based on data collected in the ILO 2013 global company survey. The report illustrates that while some progress has been made, much remains to be done in the region in terms of gender equality in the workplace. In around 55 per cent of companies surveyed, either women represented 10 per cent or less of senior managers, or no women were appointed at senior management level. Women make up little more than 5 per cent of chief executive officers (CEOs) of publicly listed companies. The data clearly illustrate the lack of women in top management positions and the concentration of women in specific types of management and occupations. Based on available data, there are three countries in the Asia-Pacific region in which more than 5 per cent of CEOs are women, namely, China, New Zealand and Viet Nam. In the public sector, Mongolia, New Zealand and the Philippines, are included in the 22 countries in the world where 40 per cent or more of their legislators, senior officials and managers are women.

Increasingly evidence shows that gender diversity is indeed good for business competitiveness and productivity. Women represent a mostly untapped pool of talent, crucial for business in an age where talent and skill shortages are limiting business growth. Women today are better educated. In 11 of the 24 countries for which data were available women were the majority of all tertiary graduates and students. Yet, 50 per cent of businesses in the region reported that the retention of women in the workplace was a problem. This report highlights the double burden women face in balancing family and work responsibilities and battling gender stereotypes. Considerable strain is placed on women in the region given that they own or manage approximately 30 per cent of all businesses ranging from self-employed (or own account workers), micro and small enterprises to medium and large companies. The report serves to highlight the key role of employers' organizations in supporting business and advocating for gender equality and women's equal opportunity employment in the workplace and provides an overview of key actions for business.

Abbreviations

ACT/EMP	Bureau for Employers' Activities
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
CEO	chief executive officer
CII	Confederation of Indian Industry
DIAN	Diversity Inclusion in Asia Network
DTF	Diversity Task Force
EFC	Employers' Federation of Ceylon
GDP	gross domestic product
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NASSCOM	National Association of Software and Services Companies
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SGX	Singapore Stock Exchange
SNEF	Singapore National Employers Federation
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
VCCI	Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry
WEBC	Women's Entrepreneurs and Business Council
WEC	Women's Entrepreneur Council
WIPS	Women in Public Sectors



01

| Introduction

Increasingly achieving gender diversity is seen as necessary for competitive business performance. As more women participate and become competitive in the labour market, they become engines for economic growth within countries and more broadly in the region. However, still very few women attain top management positions or serve as chairpersons or members of company boards despite the increasingly evident conclusion of a growing number of studies that gender diversity contributes to the bottom line.

This report, *Women in business and management: Gaining momentum in Asia and the Pacific*, aims to provide the most recent statistics, trends and information from the International Labour Organization (ILO) and other sources on the situation of women in business and management in order to provide insight into practicalities, realities and understandings of companies in the Asia-Pacific region. Overall, the regional report also aims to create greater understanding on the barriers to women's advancement in business and management and to share recommendations on how to address these barriers.

1:
It should be noted that not all countries in the region were able to be included in this report due to the fact that some countries have not submitted data according to the International Classification of Occupations or have not submitted data disaggregated by sex.

The report builds off of the global report on *Women in business and management: Gaining momentum* by providing a regional perspective and collecting regional data and information on the topic. It presents information collected through means of the global ILO company survey, workshops and case studies of employers' organizations.

The global survey was conducted in 2013 by the ILO Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) among approximately 1,300 private sector companies in 39 developing countries across five regions in order to capture the extent to which companies have policies and practices in place to promote women in management (here forth referred to as the ILO company survey). In Asia and the Pacific, employers' organizations from seven countries facilitated 418 company responses to the survey by distributing the survey to their members. These companies were small, medium- and large-sized, as well as multinational companies. Their contribution is particularly unique in that much of the research literature on women in business and management focuses on large and multinational companies in developed economies, namely Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, Philippines and Sri Lanka. The survey questions are included in Annex B. Companies were asked about the barriers to women's advancement and what practical measures they would consider. They were also asked about how employers' organizations and chambers of commerce could best support women in implementing initiatives within their companies concerning equal opportunity for women and men in their career paths.

In addition, workshops were held in five regions, including one in Bangkok in April 2013 for employers' organizations from the Asia-Pacific region to provide quantitative and qualitative data and information on women in business and management. The workshop brought together representatives of national employers' organizations, business and gender experts across Asia and the Pacific. The workshop was the fifth in a series of similar workshops organized throughout 2012 and 2013 in different regions.

One key challenge in promoting women in business and management is the dearth of data emanating from the private sector.¹ The ILO statistical data on women as managers and business owners have considerable geographical coverage, but are limited in that they combine both public and private sectors. This makes it difficult to track trends in the private sector. A number of international and national surveys only focus on identifying the representation of women as senior and top management or as company board members. However, while these surveys give an indication of the trends on women in business and management, they are not necessarily representative of overall national contexts. In addition to data issues, this report also touched on the challenge of generating convincing evidence on gender diversity and female talent as factors for improved business performance.

The ILO company survey and above-mentioned workshops are a contribution to filling these data gaps in the region and to obtaining information on the proportion of women in management at different levels and in different management functions. The survey findings are of particular interest in that they express the experiences, realities and views of national small, medium- and large-sized companies in the Asia-Pacific region. They provide unique information and insights that supplement and extend already existing information and data.



02

The business case for advancing women in business and management

“Japan’s GDP would increase to 12.5 per cent if its female labour participation matched that of Japanese men”.

Goldman Sachs²

“Korea can witness a GDP growth as much as 6 per cent if the country boosts its female employment”.

The Asian Institute for Policy Studies³

2:

Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. *Womenomics: Japan’s hidden asset Japan portfolio strategy*, 2005, http://www.acareerinminingbc.ca/sites/default/files/womenomics_japan.pdf [accessed 15 May 2015].

3:

The Asian Institute for Policy Studies: *Womenomics: Increasing female employment and the future of Korea’s creative economy*, 2014, <http://en.asaninst.org/womenomics-increasing-female-employment-and-the-future-of-koreas-creative-economy/> [accessed 30 July 2014].

There is more evidence on the benefits to business and economies that occur by tapping into the talent pool women represent including, being in tune with a consumer market increasingly driven by women, benefiting from the innovation and creativity driven by gender diversity, and improving corporate governance and thereby enhancing company outcomes.

4:
World Bank: *World development report 2012: Gender equality and development* (Washington, DC, 2011).

5:
International Monetary Fund: *Jobs and growth: Analytical and operational considerations for the Fund* (Washington, DC, 2013).

6:
OECD: *Closing the gender gap: Act now* (Paris, OECD Publishing 2012)

7:
OECD: *In it together: why less inequality benefits all* (Paris, OECD Publishing, 2015).

8:
M. Dieleman, M. Qian and M. Ibrahim: *Singapore board diversity report 2013: Time for women to rise* (Singapore, Centre for Governance, Institutions and Organisations (CGIO) National University of Singapore, 2013).

9:
A. Rawani: "Women promoters beat big daddies", in *The Economic Times* (New Delhi), 8 Mar. 2009.

10:
The stupid curve: Asia's missing women leaders, I. Jalal, Asian Development Blog, 2014, <http://blogs.adb.org/blog/stupid-curve-asia-s-missing-women-leaders> [accessed 26 May 2015].

11:
E. Barbour-Lacey: "Vietnam's women CEOs outperform male counterparts", in *Hybrid News Limited*, 8 Apr. 2014.

12:
ILO: *The Road to the ASEAN Economic Community 2015: The challenges and opportunities for enterprises and their representative organizations* (Bangkok, ILO, 2014).

In the 2012 *World Development Report*, the World Bank concludes "greater gender equality is smart economics, enhancing productivity and other development outcomes."⁴ Similarly, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) states that "misallocation of women's labour as a result of discrimination, social norms and lack of opportunity results in economic loss."⁵ The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) concludes that investment in gender equality yields the highest return of all development investments and calls for a renewed focus on the economic case for gender equality and how changes in the labour market may provide better economic opportunities for both men and women.⁶ In its most recent report, the OECD stresses that promoting gender equality in employment is one of the keys to reducing inequality and boosting inclusive growth. Governments should broaden access to better jobs and encourage greater investment in education and skills throughout working life, especially for women.⁷

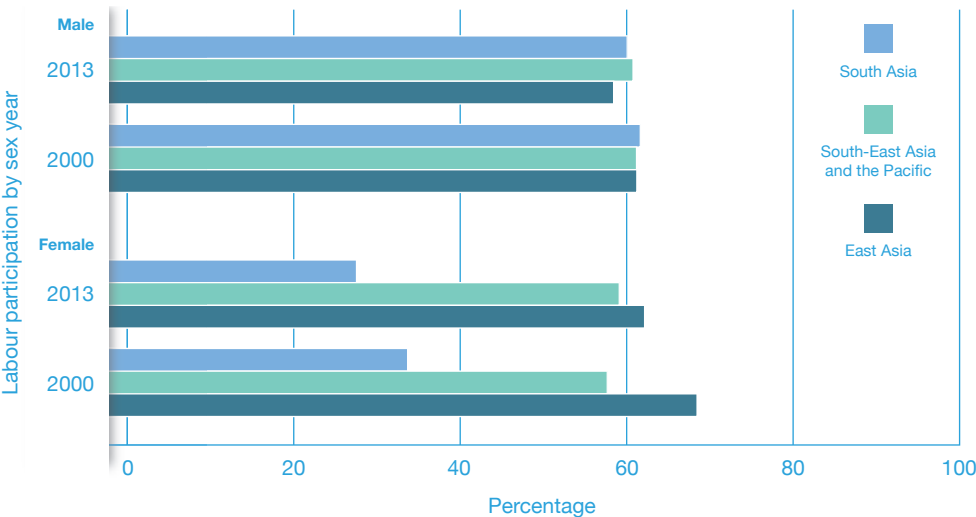
Several reports from the Asia-Pacific region attest to the positive effects of women managers on business outcomes, as demonstrated in other parts of the world. An empirical analysis on the relationship between the proportion of female directors and firm performance of Singapore Stock Exchange (SGX) companies over the period 2009-2012 found that more gender diversity had a positive effect on firm performance measured by return on assets (ROA) and return on equity (ROE), though not on market value. It also found a positive relation between gender diversity and corporate governance quality.⁸ According to a study conducted by the *Sunday Economic Times of India* in 2009, nine listed companies managed by prominent women promoters fared better than the top 30 firms listed in the Bombay Stock Exchange in year-on-year growth rates for the previous five years.⁹

Similarly, companies run by women in Viet Nam appear to do better than those run by men, even during times of financial crisis. For example, to mid-January 2009 in the wake of the Global Economic Crisis, Mekong Capital, a private equity firm, found that the value of shares for publicly traded companies fell less for those with female chief executive officers (CEOs) than those with male CEOs – 17.1 per cent compared with 38.8 per cent.¹⁰ Similarly, when the stock market value doubled from 2009 to 2013, the value of companies run by women tripled. This was double the country's benchmark VN Index increase over the same period.¹¹

Demographic factors also suggest that greater labour market participation of women will be needed to sustain economic growth. The ILO forecasts that due to population ageing, labour force growth will slow in every country until 2030. While most countries in the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) region anticipate the labour force to grow by 25 per cent to 35 per cent, by contrast, negative growth or virtually no growth has been forecasted for China, Japan, the Republic of Korea and Thailand.¹²

For example, in Japan – which has one of the lowest female labour participation rates among OECD member countries – the labour force is predicted to shrink by 15 per cent between 2010 and 2030, threatening gross domestic product (GDP) growth. Women could help fill this gap and help address the labour shortage.¹³ Figure 1 illustrates some of the demographic trends of female and male labour participation rates for the region.

Figure 1. Percentage labour participation rates by sex



Source: ILO: *Global Employment Trends 2014: Risk of a jobless recovery*, 2014, p. 94.

In order to encourage gender diversity and to ultimately achieve sustainable change in gender balance,¹⁴ organizations must also look to develop younger talent. The future female workforce is more educated and set on career progression than ever before. This commitment to further education is seen in 11 out of 24 Asia-Pacific countries for which data were available, where trends point to a higher number of women enrolling in universities and graduating at the tertiary level. Their needs and expectations are also different to previous generations as they look for flexibility and work-life balance, reputable employers and mobility. As the world of work evolves and talent becomes one of the key determinants in business success it is increasingly important that businesses are able to tap into the pool of talented women and young women.¹⁵

13: McKinsey & Company: *Women matter: An Asian perspective, Harnessing female talent to raise corporate performance*, (Australia, McKinsey & Company, 2012).

14: ILO defines a good gender balance or gender parity as between 40 and 60 per cent for either sex.

15: PwC: *Next generation diversity: Developing tomorrow's female leaders*, 2011, <http://www.pwc.com/gx/en/women-at-pwc/internationalwomensday/assets/next-generation-diversity-publication.pdf> [accessed 15 May 2015].

Making the business case for more women in business and management is important for Asia-Pacific companies when considering their competitive edge, particularly as human capital has become key for companies in economies that are increasingly based on knowledge and technology. While considerable research efforts have been made to examine the impact of gender diversity in management on the bottom line, making causal links is still a challenge. However, there is no shortage of research pointing to the numerous hurdles women face in climbing the corporate ladder. All reports continue to point to the lack of women in top decision-making positions.



03

Women in business leadership in Asia-Pacific

Many challenges still exist for women in business leadership in the Asia-Pacific region and around the world. Women are often concentrated at junior levels of management, seldom breaking into more senior positions let alone executive or board level positions. Gender-balanced boards, usually defined as between 40 to 60 per cent of either sex, have been elusive. Yet a report by Catalyst compared Fortune 500 companies with higher representation of women on their boards (three or more) to those with low representation of women and found that those with a higher number of women outperformed those with low representation by 84 per cent on return on sales, 60 per cent on return on invested capital and 46 per cent on return on equity.¹⁶ Furthermore, women are also often concentrated in specific business areas, and lack the variation in experience that is often required to assume more senior positions. This section provides more detail.

16: Catalyst: *The bottom line: Corporate performance and women's representation on boards* (2004-2008), 2011, http://www.catalyst.org/system/files/The_Bottom_Line_Corporate_Performance_and_Womens_Representation_on_Boards.pdf [accessed 15 May 2015].

3.1 The leaking pipeline

Women reaching senior management positions in greater numbers is critical for

building a pool of potential candidates for the top jobs such as CEO or company president. The ILO company survey results confirm the ‘leaking pipeline’, a term commonly used to describe the drop out or decline in number of women from lower to upper levels in the organization. More specifically, the survey showed that in the Asia-Pacific region at the supervisory or junior level:

- around 4 per cent of companies reported having no women managers at this level;
- almost 33 per cent of companies had appointed women as up to 10 per cent of all their managers;
- in 59 per cent of respondent companies less than 30 per cent of junior managers were women;
- some 15 per cent of companies had appointed women to between 41 per cent and 50 per cent of all their junior manager positions; and
- in 18 per cent of companies women represented more than 50 per cent of junior level managers.

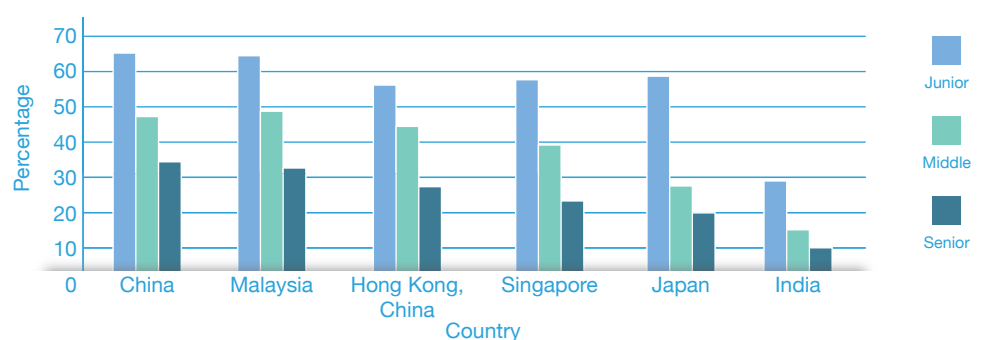
At middle management levels, nearly 32 per cent of companies reported up to 10 per cent of their managers were women.

And at senior management levels:

- around 11 per cent of companies indicated no women were appointed at this level;
- another 34 per cent indicated that 10 per cent or less of senior managers were women;
- a further 11 per cent reported that between 41 per cent and 50 per cent of their senior managers; and
- overall, 68 per cent of respondent companies had less than 30 per cent of their senior managers who were women, while for nearly 13 per cent of companies, 50 per cent of senior managers were women.

A 2014 survey conducted by Diversity Inclusion Asia Network, a professional network of 33 multinational companies in six markets in Asia including China, Hong Kong (China), India, Japan, Malaysia and Singapore, also highlighted the decrease in female representation between junior and middle levels and middle to senior management levels (see figure 2).

Figure 2. Percentage of managers who are women at different levels in multinational companies in Asian markets

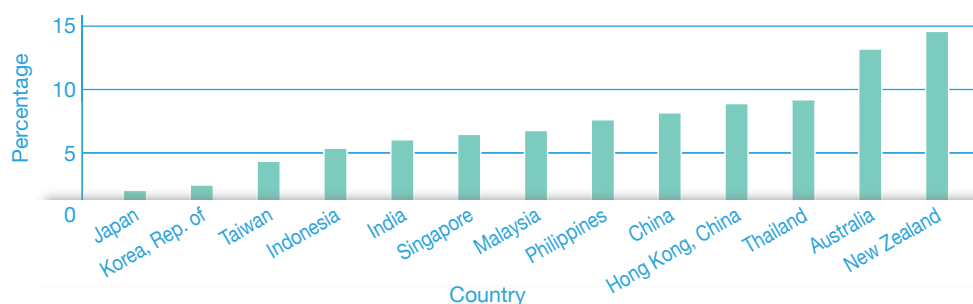


Source: Diversity Inclusion in Asia Network: *Gender Diversity Benchmark for Asia 2014*.

3.2 The 'glass ceiling': It's lonely at the top

In addition to the dwindling numbers of women in top management, the ILO company survey found the situation to be no better at the board level. Of the respondent companies, 26 per cent had no women on their boards, while 65 per cent in total had less than 30 per cent women, 30 per cent being often considered as the critical mass required for women's voice and views to be taken into account. Only 14 per cent had gender-balanced boards that is, between 40 to 60 per cent of either sex. Figure 3 shows the percentage of board seats held by women in the Asia-Pacific region based on a study carried out by GMI Ratings, an independent provider of research and ratings related to environmental, social, governance and accounting risks affecting the performance of public companies.

Figure 3. Percentage of women on company boards in selected Asia-Pacific countries



Source: GMI Ratings: 2013 Women on Boards Survey.

A number of governments in Asia and the Pacific have moved in recent years to increase the number of women appointed to boards. For example, in Malaysia in 2011, the Cabinet approved legislation where corporate companies must achieve at least 30 per cent representation of women in decision-making positions in the private sector. In August 2013 a new Indian Companies Act was passed requiring every listed company to have at least one female director on its board within a year. However, the deadline for application of this law was extended to April 2015. While other countries in the region, such as Australia, Hong Kong (China), Pakistan and Singapore, have stopped short of legislating quotas for women on boards, they have adopted a variety of measures to increase the number of women in management. These include corporate governance codes, codes of conduct, voluntary targets and cooperative initiatives between business and government.

While more women than ever before are business owners and managers, the glass ceiling still remains in place and prevents many women from reaching the top positions. Table 1 illustrates the lack of women CEOs globally and regionally. Based on available data, China, New Zealand and Viet Nam are the only Asia-Pacific countries in which more than 5 per cent of public listed companies have women CEOs. Thus the Asia-Pacific region is faring well, but in order to keep a competitive advantage more efforts are needed to support gender diversity.

Table 1. Women CEOs of public listed companies

Stock exchanges	Percentage
ASX 200 Australia ¹	3.0
BSE 100 India ²	4.0
CAC 40 France ³	0.0
China ⁴	5.6
DAX 30 Germany ⁵	0.0
European Union ⁶	2.8
FTSE 100, UK ⁷	4.0
HOSE and HNX Viet Nam ⁸	6.32
JSE South Africa ⁹	3.6
KOSPI 200, Republic of Korea ¹⁰	0.73
Latin 500 ¹¹	1.8
Mexico Expansion 100 ¹²	3.0
NIKKEI 225, Japan ¹³	0
NZSX 100 New Zealand ¹⁴	5.0
OECD ¹⁵	< 5.0
SGX Singapore ¹⁶	4.6
US Fortune 500 ¹⁷	4.8

1 Australia's boardrooms closed to women, Girl.com.au, 2014, <http://www.girl.com.au/australias-boardrooms-closed-to-women.htm> [accessed: 6 June 2014]. Women are CEOs of six ASX 200 companies (3%) - GasNet Australia Group, Harvey Norman Holding, Macquarie Airports, Macquarie Countrywide Trust, St George Bank and Telecom Corporation of New Zealand.

2 Spencer Stuart: *India Board Index 2012, Current board trends and practices in the BSE-100*.

3 European Commission: *National fact sheet, gender balance in boards* (France, 2013).

4 Yan (Anthea) Zhang: "Lessons for executive women from Chinese boardrooms" in *Forbes.com*, (10 Sep. 2010) (2,100 publically listed companies in 2010).

5 European Commission: *National Fact Sheet, Gender Balance in Boards* (Germany, 2013).

6 European Commission, *Fact sheet on gender balance on corporate boards: Europe is cracking the glass ceiling*, 2014,, http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/documents/140303_factsheet_wob_en.pdf [accessed 2 May 2015].

7 Financial Times (London), 17 Jan. 2014

8 Vietnam women CEO indexes, Intelligent Financial Research and Consulting, http://ifrcindex.com/articles/index_lab/vietnam-women-ceo-index.html [accessed 26 Jan. 2015].

9 South African Business Women's Association: *South African women in leadership census 2011 and 2012*. Available at: <http://www.bwasa.co.za> [accessed 26 Jan. 2015].

10 Segye Finance News, 8 Mar. 2013.

11 Latin Business Chronicle: *Analysis of Latin 500 as of March 5, 2012*.

12 Heidrick and Struggles: *The new breed of CEOs in Mexico*, 2010.

13 *Sexism stands in way of Abenomics saving Japan*, Bloomberg View, 26 May 2012, <http://www.bloombergview.com/articles/2013-05-26/sexism-stands-in-way-of-abenomics-saving-japan> [accessed 26 Jan. 2015].

14 Human Rights Commission: *Census of women's participation* (Wellington, New Zealand, New Zealand Human Rights Commission, 2012).

15 S. Zahidi and H. Ibarra: World Economic Forum: *The corporate gender gap report* (Geneva, World Economic Forum, 2010).

16 M. Dieleman, M. Qian and M. Ibrahim: *Singapore board diversity report 2013: Time for women to rise* (Singapore, Centre for Governance, Institutions and Organisations (CGIO) National University of Singapore, 2013).

17 Fortune.com, 3 June 2014.

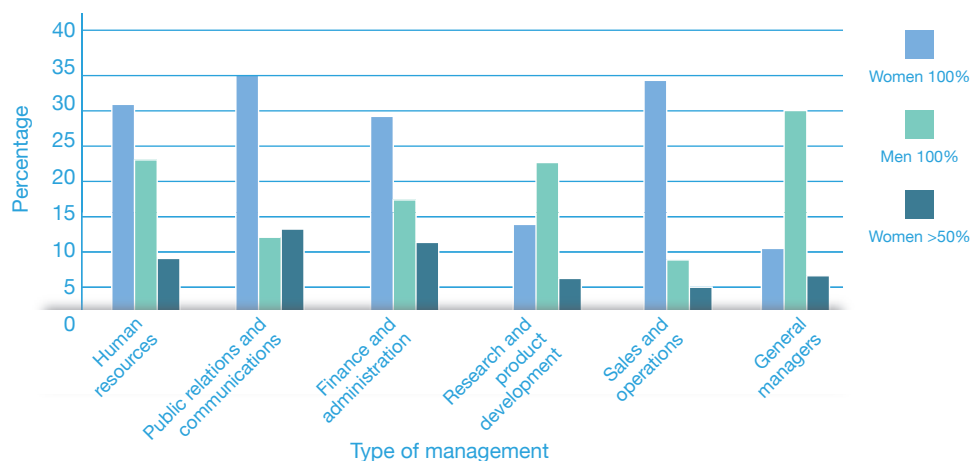
3.3 'Glass walls': Women concentrated in specific management functions

Not only does the glass ceiling prevent women from achieving the same heights as men but 'glass walls' within hierarchical structures also produce different career paths for men and women. One of the reasons that may make it more difficult for women to be selected for top management positions is that their management experience is not sufficiently diverse. The reason given is that they have not been exposed to all types of company operations during their careers and thus they have not gained sufficient experience in general management across several functional areas.

The ILO company survey confirmed trends already identified in a range of studies and surveys. The concentration of women in certain types of management reflects the “glass walls” phenomenon of segregating by sex within management occupations. While women are gaining access to more and higher levels of management, there is a tendency for them to be clustered in particular managerial functions.

Figure 4 illustrates a finding of the ILO company survey, namely that women tend to be concentrated in specific managerial functions such as human resources, public relations and communications management, and finance and administration. Fewer companies have a high proportion of women in managerial functions such as operations and sales management, research and product management, and general management. Attaining experience in the latter managerial functions is vital to ascending the central pathways of the organizational pyramid to reach top positions. As a consequence, women may rise within a business hierarchy only to a certain point as the managerial functions they typically exercise are located between the internal walls and sides of the pyramid, preventing them from reaching the top.

Figure 4. Percentage of companies in Asia and the Pacific by share of women and men in different types of managerial functions



Source: ILO company survey.

Box 1

Mizuho Financial Group Inc and “4R”

Mizuho Financial Group Inc., a Japanese banking company, adopted a simple female empowerment policy of “4R” - recruit, raise, retain, relate. The company evolved this strategy to attract and retain women with different needs. Itsuko Igarashi, General Manager of Mizuho’s Diversity Promotion Department says, “Women have so many different ways of thinking when it comes to work – some want to stay connected to society in some way but also place importance on family, while others want to work in the same way as men do.” So Mizuho developed three main career paths for employees to choose from: (i) relocate to anywhere in the world; (ii) limit to a particular region; or (iii) remain in one location. It has also developed support mechanisms for employees who want to move with their spouses without leaving the company and a rehiring system for those who left the workforce for family reasons. The company is committed to building its female talent pipeline for board positions and is expected to achieve its initial target of 15 per cent of management positions held by women in 2015 as a result of these efforts.

Source: M. Ito “Seizing the initiative for women at work” in *The Japan Times*. <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/life/2014/11/22/lifestyle/seizing-initiative-women-work/#.VSTjKlg9Lcs> [accessed 8 Apr. 2015].



04

| Barriers to women's leadership

Gender norms are slowly evolving in the Asia-Pacific countries with the gradual increase of participation of women in economic and political life, including decision-making. As seen in figure 1, women's share of the labour market often lags behind that of men's and the main role of women in the region is still primarily perceived, including by women themselves, as wife, mother and homemaker. Women struggle to combine these roles with active participation in the labour markets and economic activities of the region. Indeed, "... changes in politics and legislation may have facilitated the advancement of women's careers to some extent, but deeply entrenched cultural values and traditions appear to pose the barriers to women's progress in organizations."¹⁷

Much has been written about the leadership barriers for women, not only in popular magazines and in a range of social and financial specialist media columns, but also in scholarly articles and books. Common issues dwelt upon include the age-old challenge of gender stereotypes, whereby men and women are expected to perform different social and economic roles.

17:
C. Rowley and V. Yukongdi (eds):
*The changing face of women
managers in Asia* (Routledge,
2009).

18:
Comment from employer's
participant at ILO ACT/EMP
Asia-Pacific regional workshop
on Women in business and
management, Bangkok, 18-19
Apr. 2013.

19:
ILO ACT/EMP: Country report
for India, Asia-Pacific regional
workshop on Women in business
and management, Bangkok, 18-19
Apr. 2013.

Box 2

What are gender stereotypes?

“Gender stereotypes are generalizations on what is expected of men and women in a specific social context. They are over simplified ideas of the differences between women and men, their skills, psychological attitudes, ambitions and behaviour. Judgements based on these generalizations may initially appear to save time and energy. In reality, they fail to capture the richness of individuals’ traits and abilities.”

Source: ITC-ILO-EUROCHAMBERS: *Break gender stereotypes, give talent a chance toolkit* (European Communities, 2009).

Social customs and traditional gender roles in many countries of the Asia-Pacific region greatly influence the role women are able to play in labour markets and in decision-making generally. Much of these gender roles are influenced by cultural, religious and social norms that date back for centuries and remain deeply ingrained, even though the world of work and society has greatly changed.

In most countries in Asia and the Pacific, the main role of women is still perceived as carers for families and households. In terms of sheer daily hours of work, this has given rise to the so-called “double burden” of being a worker, a career or business woman in addition to attending to family needs. Flexibility, priority setting and multitasking have become part of the vocabulary associated with managing busy schedules that span from early morning to late evening most days of the week. This is even more challenging when Asia and the Pacific still lacks the development of public policies on childcare so all workers are able to better balance work and family life.¹⁸ Overall, the voice of women managers remains to be heard, especially in Confucian and patriarchal societies of the region.

“Confident, educated and highly credentialed women are fundamentally altering the talent landscape in India. But at the same time, they are confronted with deeply ingrained social and organizational barriers that can derail their careers and in the process deprive the companies of the essential talent and the necessary fuel to sustain the growth. Hence, organizations, government and associations need to work hand in hand to provide women with opportunities to leapfrog these barriers. By creating the processes and practices to enable these ambitious women to flourish, the organizations and the nation as a whole will surely gain a lasting advantage.”¹⁹

Historically, gender roles were translated into the differentiation of occupations as more suitable either for men or for women. Traditionally management, running a business and decision-making in the public arena were usually viewed as the domain of men. These norms informed educational curricula and recruitment and promotion policies for many decades. While these assumptions are being addressed today to eliminate gender bias, they remain ingrained in the psyche of a broad spectrum of men and women in all walks of life, despite the fact that neither men nor women are homogenous groups.

The ILO company survey asked respondents to rank in order of importance a set of 15 barriers. Respondents from various countries in Asia and the Pacific (Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, the Philippines and Sri Lanka) generally identified the same top five or six barriers to women's advancement in management as in other regions. Table 2 summarizes the responses. It is interesting to note that all regions except Central and Eastern Europe identified the same top five or six barriers. These are largely related to corporate culture and the social and reproductive roles of men and women.

The majority of survey respondents considered merit as the key to progressing in the company and appointments should be based on performance and not on gender. Nevertheless, the respondents pointed out barriers, such as traveling for fieldwork, being more difficult for female employees. In some countries, a husband's permission is required by law for a married woman to travel out of the country.

Table 2. Main barriers to women's leadership in Asia and the Pacific

Rank	Identified barriers
1	1a. Women with insufficient general or line management experience 1b. Women have more family responsibilities than men
2	Roles assigned by society to men and women
3	Few role models for women
4	Masculine corporate culture
5	Stereotypes against women
6	6a. Lack of leadership training for women 6b. Lack of flexible work solutions
7	Men not encouraged to take leave for family responsibilities
8	Lack of company equality policy and programmes
9	9a. No strategy for retention of skilled women 9b. Management generally viewed as a man's job
10	Inherent gender bias in recruitment and promotion
11	Inadequate labour and non-discrimination laws
12	Gender equality policies in place but not implemented

Source: ILO company survey.

Similarly, other surveys conducted in the region confirm the above listed barriers to the advancement of women. For example, McKinsey and Company conducted a survey in 2012 in ten Asian markets, surveying 1,500 senior managers. Some

20:
McKinsey & Company: *Women matter: An Asian perspective, Harnessing female talent to rise to corporate performance*, (Australia, McKinsey & Company, 2012).

21:
Mercer: Women's leadership development survey, 2011, <http://www.boardgender.org/files/Leadership-Development-Survey.pdf> [accessed 12 May 2015].

22:
Mercer: Asia Pacific diversity & inclusion research, 2012, <http://www.asean.mercer.com/insights/point/2013/diversity-and-inclusion-asia-pacific.html> [accessed 12 May 2015].

30 per cent of surveyed business leaders confirmed that women in mid-career or senior levels voluntarily left their jobs because of family commitments.²⁰

In addition to individual and societal barriers, organizational barriers such as lack of flexible work schedules and lack of corporate strategy for development of women leaders further hinder opportunities for women's career advancement. Nearly 40 per cent of respondents to the ILO company survey did not consider promoting women into senior positions or management positions as a priority of human resources policy and strategy for the company. Likewise, a Mercer study conducted in 2011 across the Asia-Pacific region reported "despite growing interest in workforce diversity among organizations in Asia-Pacific countries, the majority (73 per cent) do not have a clearly defined strategy or philosophy for the development of women into leadership roles."²¹ Mercer conducted a follow-up study in 2012 which confirmed that among companies that have diversity strategies in place, only 13 per cent offer women leadership development programmes as part of their diversity efforts.²²

Box 3

Childcare at Infosys India

At Infosys India, the non-statutory one-year childcare sabbatical and part-time policy have helped women balance their childcare priorities. As a result, 89 per cent of the women employees have returned from maternity leave.

Source: World Economic Forum: *Infosys Women's Inclusivity Network (IWIN) defines women's work environment*, Closing the gender gap repository (n.d). <http://www.weforum.org/gender-parity/infosys-womens-inclusivity-network-iwin-defines-womens-work-environment> [accessed 27 Mar. 2015].



05

| An expanding pool of female talent

As illustrated above, there are a number of barriers keeping women from advancing in the workplace yet women represent an increasing pool of talent particularly as the world of work is changing in the Asia-Pacific region with the demographic trends of falling fertility, aging of populations and migration, together with increased access to education and technology. Women are playing a significant role in the labour markets of countries in the Asia-Pacific region. The share of women among all employed people is considerably higher than the world average of almost 40 per cent in 21 out of 35 countries. Thus, women are increasing their economic activity as entrepreneurs and business owners and managers and, as elaborated in section 5.3, are also catching up with men in education in the region.

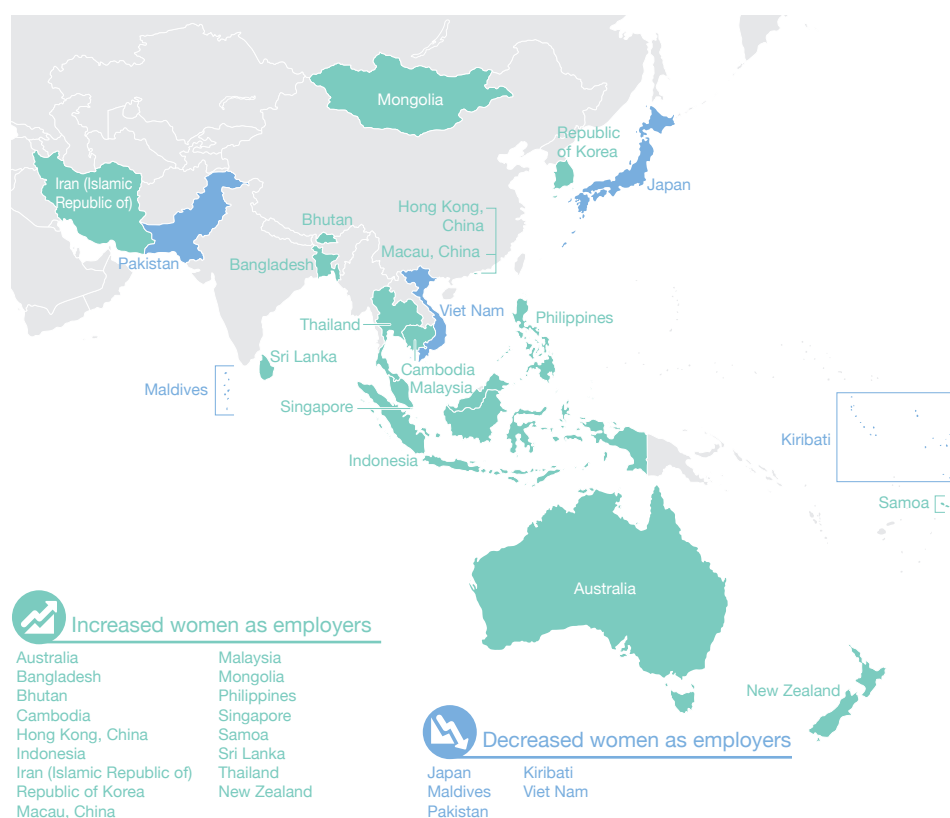
Research demonstrates that women's accelerating rate of entry into the labour market has been the biggest engine of global growth and competitiveness. Human capital has become key for companies to maintain a competitive edge in economies that are increasingly based on knowledge and technology. Employers' organizations

and development actors in the region, including the ILO, are beginning to view gender equality as an important foundation for long-term economic growth and development. A 2012 study observed that in terms of emerging markets across the world, women as consumers and entrepreneurs represent the “third billion” after the first and second billion in China and India.²³

5.1 Women in business

Today, women own and manage nearly 30 per cent of all businesses in Asia and the Pacific ranging from self-employed (or own account workers), micro and small enterprises to medium-sized and large companies. However, women tend to be concentrated more in micro and small enterprises. They represent around 26 per cent of all employers in Asia and the Pacific. The percentage of women employers increased from 2000 to 2012 in 17 out of 21 countries. It stayed the same in one country and decreased in five countries for which data were available over time (see figure 5).

Figure 5. Share of women employers in Asia and the Pacific

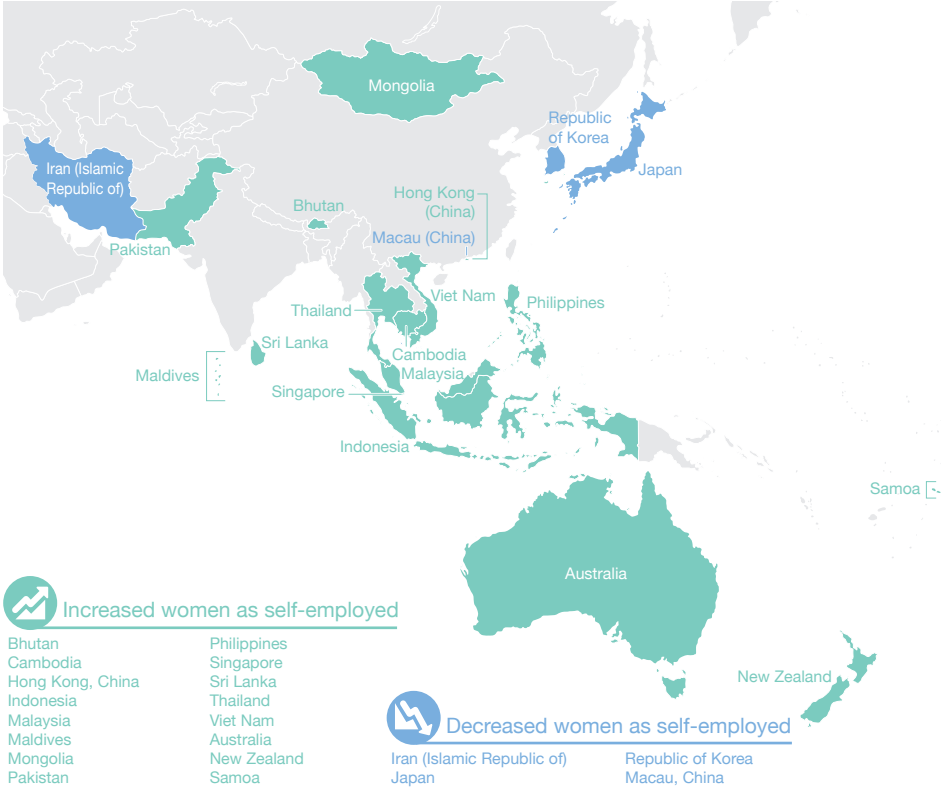


Source: ILO statistical database, Mar. 2015.

A higher proportion self-employed workers are women, while a lower proportion of women are employers, estimated at 32 per cent across Asia and the Pacific. An increasing percentage of own account workers are women in 16 out of the 20 countries for which data were available over time. The proportion of women as own account workers decreased in only four countries (see figure 6).

Behind these average regional statistics there is great variation between countries. Some countries have a small percentage of women engaged in business activity, while in other countries women run nearly half of all businesses.

Figure 6. Share of self-employed women in Asia and the Pacific



Source: ILO statistical database, Mar. 2015

5.2 Women in management

In recent years, in 14 out of 22 countries for which data was available women represented 25 per cent or more of managers in the Asia-Pacific region, while in six countries their share was less than 15 per cent. Three countries from the Asia-Pacific region namely, Mongolia, New Zealand and the Philippines, are represented in the 22 countries in the world having 40 per cent or more of their legislators, senior officials and managers who are women.

Table 3. Women as a share of all managers, latest year, ILO 2000-2012/13

	Country	Year	Percentage	Year	Percentage
Asia	Bangladesh	N/a	N/a	2011	5.4
	Bhutan	2005	14.4	2013	16.9
	Brunei Darussalam	2001	25.7	N/a	N/a
	Cambodia	2000	12.6	2010	18.0
	China	2005	16.8	N/a	N/a
	Hong Kong, China	2000	26.1	2013	31.1
	Indonesia	2007	19.7	2013	23.2
	Iran, Islamic Rep. of	2005	16.2	2010	14.6
	Japan	2006	10.7	2013	11.2
	Korea, Rep. of	2008	5.9	2012	11.0
	Macau, China	2000	23.0	2013	32.3
	Malaysia	2000	23.2	2013	22.0
	Maldives	2006	14.3	2010	13.4
	Mongolia	2000	30.2	2012	41.9
	Nepal	2001	13.8	N/a	N/a
	Pakistan	2001	2.9	2008	3.0
	Philippines	2000	57.7	2012	47.6
	Singapore	2001	24.8	2013	33.7
	Sri Lanka	2002	21.7	2013	26.6
	Thailand	2001	25.5	2013	38.6
	Timor-Leste			2010	14.3
	Viet Nam	2000	16.8	2013	24.4
Pacific	Australia	2000	32.9	2013	36.1
	Cook Islands	2001	36.1	2011	47.5
	Kiribati	2002	27.3	2010	36.4
	New Zealand	2000	38.2	2008	40.0
	Niue	2001	31.9	N/a	N/a
	Samoa	2001	28.5	2012	50.0
	Tonga	2003	26.6	N/a	N/a
	Tuvalu	2002	24.5	N/a	N/a
	Vanuatu	N/a	N/a	2009	28.6

Source: Legislators, Senior Officials and Managers, ILO Statistics, ISCO 88 and ISCO 08, ILO statistical database, Mar. 2015.

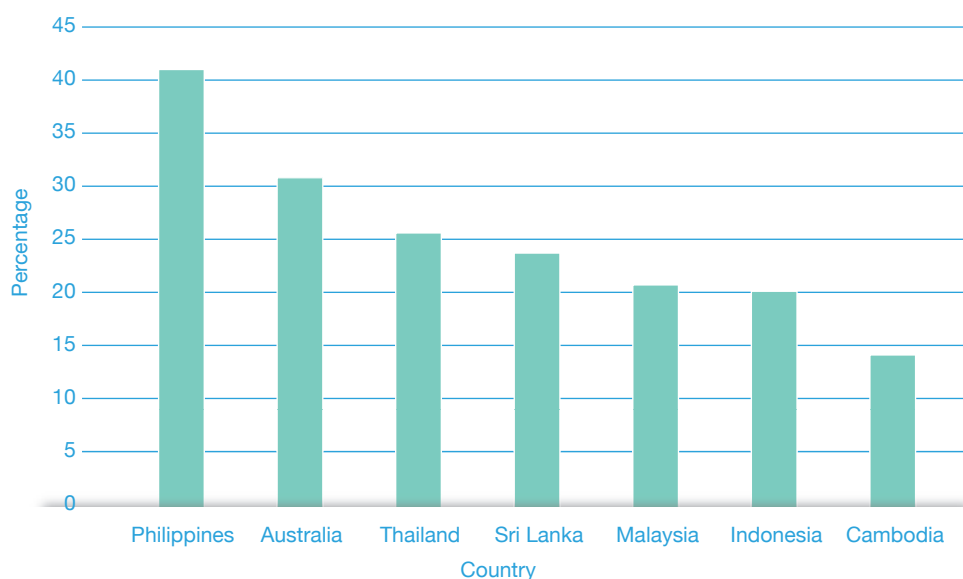
ILO data show women's labour market participation rates are generally still proportionally higher than their share of management jobs and in many countries

the gap is considerable. However, the number of female manager is gradually increasing. In 18 out of 22 countries for which data were available over time the percentage of women managers increased. For a good number of countries the increase was significant, for example in Mongolia which jumped over 12 percentage points, from 30.2 per cent in 2000 to 41.9 per cent in 2012. However, in four countries of the region (Islamic Republic of Iran, Malaysia, Maldives and the Philippines) women's share of management positions declined.

Women reaching senior management positions in greater numbers is critical for building a pool of potential candidates for the very top jobs such as CEO or company president. ILO data available for seven countries in Asia and the Pacific give an indication of the proportion of women in senior and middle management in the private and public sectors combined as shown in figure 7.

Asia-Pacific respondents to the ILO company survey provided information on the percentage of companies with women at different levels of management and the proportion of women managers at each level as shown in table 4. Companies reported that the higher the level of management positions, the fewer women were appointed.

Figure 7. Share of women in senior and middle management, selected countries, latest years



Source: ILO statistical database, Mar. 2015: Australia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand; 2012: Philippines; 2010: Cambodia, Sri Lanka.

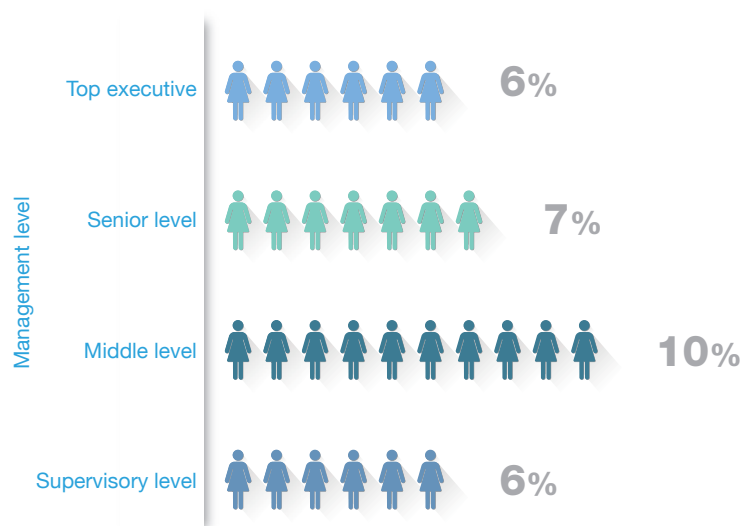
Table 4. Percentage of companies with proportion of women managers at junior, middle and senior levels

Share of women	Junior (%)	Middle (%)	Senior (%)	Executive (%)
No women	4	7	11	11
Less than 10% women	33	32	34	34
Less than 30% women	59	56	68	68
41-50% women	15	16	11	11
More than 50% women	18	13	13	13

Source: ILO company survey.

Figure 8 indicates the proportion of companies responding to the survey that reported gender balance (i.e. between 40–60 per cent of either sex) at different management levels. Overall, 9 per cent of companies responding had achieved gender balance at supervisory levels and 10 per cent at middle level management. Even fewer companies reported a gender balance at the senior and executive levels (7 and 6 per cent of companies respectively).

Figure 8. Percentage of gender-balance at different management levels in Asia and the Pacific



Source: ILO company survey.

5.3 Women catching up with men in education

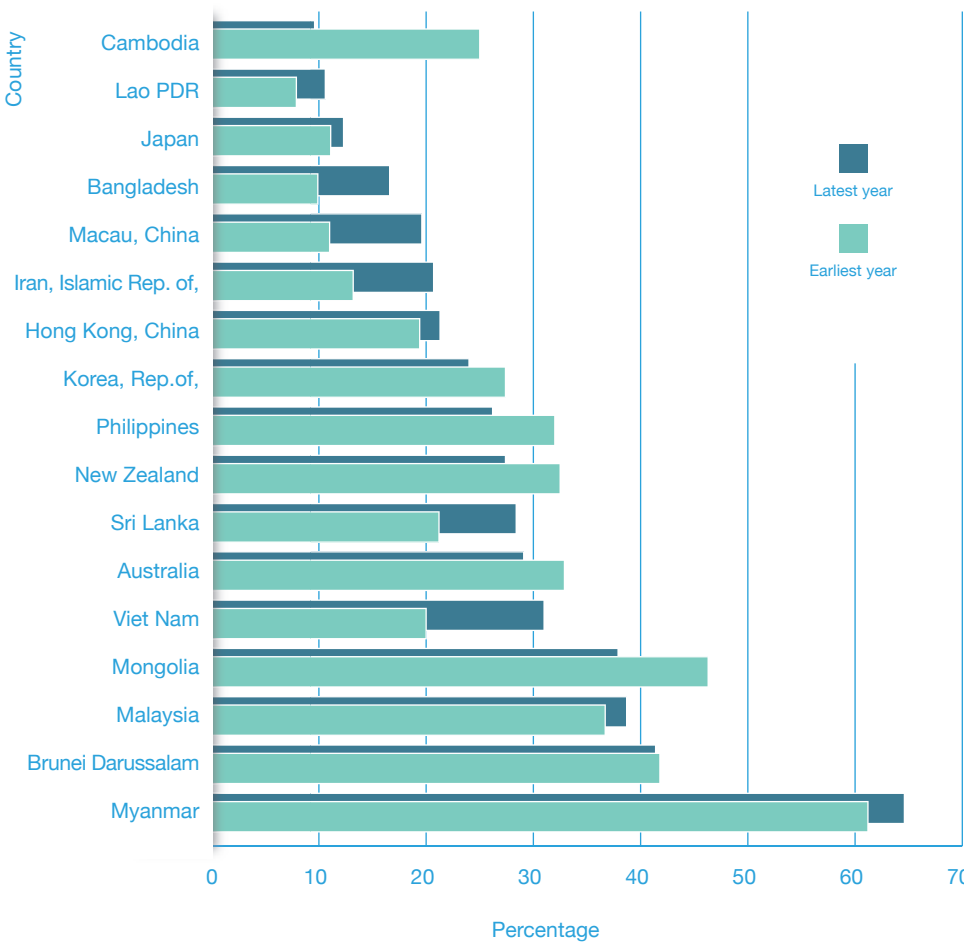
Women outnumbered men in tertiary enrolments in 13 out of 30 countries in Asia and the Pacific for which data were available in recent years. In addition, men and women were enrolled in equal numbers in China, Islamic Republic of Iran and Singapore. It is notable that in 11 of the 24 countries for which data were available, women were an even higher percentage of all tertiary graduates than enrolments. Overall, the percentage of women graduates tends to be higher than the percentage of men graduates in more countries in all areas except for sciences, engineering, manufacturing, construction and agriculture. These differences reflect labour markets segregated by sex, based on the traditional social and family roles of men and women. However, these roles are evolving and more women are accessing

the whole spectrum of educational options. The academic disciplines of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, or STEM, are increasingly addressing gender barriers in governments' education policy and curriculum choices in schools to improve female competitiveness. Stereotypes of women represent them as less interested or capable in certain subjects and this inevitably reduces their access to jobs with better pay. New studies²⁴ provide evidence that differences in mathematical ability between boys and girls has been strongly overstated. Variances in math skills have fluctuated widely over time, across countries, and across cultural groups. In Indonesia, for example, women outperform men in mathematical performance.

24:
S. Ceci, D. Ginter, S. Kahn, W. Williams: "Women in academic science: A changing landscape as cited in Are women worse at math? It's time to stop asking", in *Huffington Post Science* (2 Feb. 2015) http://www.huffingtonpost.com/callin-oconnor/women-math-and-science_b_6573074.html [accessed 26 May 2015].

Figure 9 illustrates the challenge for women to move into non-traditional areas of study for women such as engineering, science and technology. In six of the 17 Asia-Pacific countries for which data were available, the percentage of female graduates in engineering, manufacturing and construction decreased. Some countries, such as Mongolia, New Zealand and the Republic of Korea had achieved relatively high proportions of female graduates in these fields, only to slide back during the last decade. Similarly, nine out of 16 countries, for which data were available, actually decreased the percentage of science and technology graduates who were women over the last decade. Only in six did their proportion increase.

Figure 9. Percentage of female graduates in engineering, manufacturing and construction in selected Asian and Pacific countries, earliest and latest years



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015.

Table 5 shows the percentage of women enrolled in tertiary institutions in Asia-Pacific countries. Women outnumbered or were equal to men in 18 out of the 32 countries and territories for which data was available in recent years. It is also notable that 12 of the 25 countries for which data was available, women were an even higher percentage of all tertiary graduates than enrolments. This could reflect that investment in education is valued more by women than men and their motivation to succeed is therefore much stronger.

Table 5. Female enrolments as a percentage of all tertiary enrolments, percentage of tertiary graduates who are women, percentage of female graduates of advanced degrees – selected Asian and Pacific countries, latest years

Country	Female tertiary enrolments		Female tertiary graduates		Female graduates of advanced degrees ¹	
	Year	Percentage	Year	Percentage	Year	Percentage
Asia						
Afghanistan	2011	24	2009	19	n/a	
Bangladesh	2012	41	2012	42	2012	39
Bhutan	2012	40	n/a		n/a	
Brunei Darussalam	2012	62	2012	65	2011	60
Cambodia	2011	38	2011	42	2004	30
China	2012	50	2012	50	n/a	
Hong Kong, China	2013	52	2006	53	2006	42
Macau, China	2013	56	2013	60	2013	33
India	2011	42	n/a		n/a	
Indonesia	2012	51	2004 ²	48	2012	41
Iran, Islamic Rep. of	2012	50	2012	39	2012	33
Japan	2012	46	2012	48	2012	30
Korea, Rep. of	2012	40	2012	51	2012	33
Lao PDR	2013	46	2013	45	n/a	
Malaysia	2012	56	2012	57	2012	36
Maldives	2008	53	n/a		n/a	
Mongolia	2013	58	2013	65	2013	62
Myanmar	2012	55	2012	65	2011	87
Nepal	2011	42	n/a ³		2011	11
Pakistan	2013	48	n/a		n/a	
Philippines	2009	54	2009	57	2006	60
Singapore	2013	50	n/a		n/a	
Sri Lanka	2012	62	2012	57	2012	45
Thailand	2013	57	2012	57	2012	50
Timor-Leste	2010	41	2009	36	n/a	
Viet Nam	2013	46	2013	43	2013	39
Pacific						
Australia	2012	57	2011	57	2011	50
New Zealand	2012	58	2012	59	2012	51
Palau	2013	58	2013	57	n/a	
Samoa	2000	44	2000	43	n/a	
Tonga	2003	61	n/a		n/a	
Vanuatu	2000	36	2003	36	n/a	

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics [accessed Mar. 2015].

1 ISCED 8 – doctoral level.

2 Indonesia data for graduates available till 2010 but not disaggregated by sex after 2004. 3 Nepal 2011 data available for graduates but has never been disaggregated by sex.



06

| Gender pay gaps in the Asia-Pacific region

Pay equity can be a key driver of gender diversity in the workplace. Equitable pay systems make good business sense as they can improve the attraction and retention of women in the workforce and can help advance women up the corporate ladder. It is also an important reputational factor for companies, meaning they are able to attract the best talent. Ultimately, pay equity makes women more inclined to remain in the workforce, one reason being that they then are able to contribute to household income in the same manner as men. Yet, despite the clear benefit to business and some improvements, women continue to earn less than men for work of equal value and the existing gender pay gap threatens to slow down efforts to achieve gender equality in the workplace. The imbalance in pay can be traced back to gender biases against women that seep into human resource processes in organizations.

Gender inequalities in pay are often assessed through an indicator known as the gender pay gap. The gender pay gap measures the difference between male and female average earnings as a percentage of the male earnings. Overall features such

25:
ILO: *Global Wage Report 2014/15*
(Geneva, 2015).

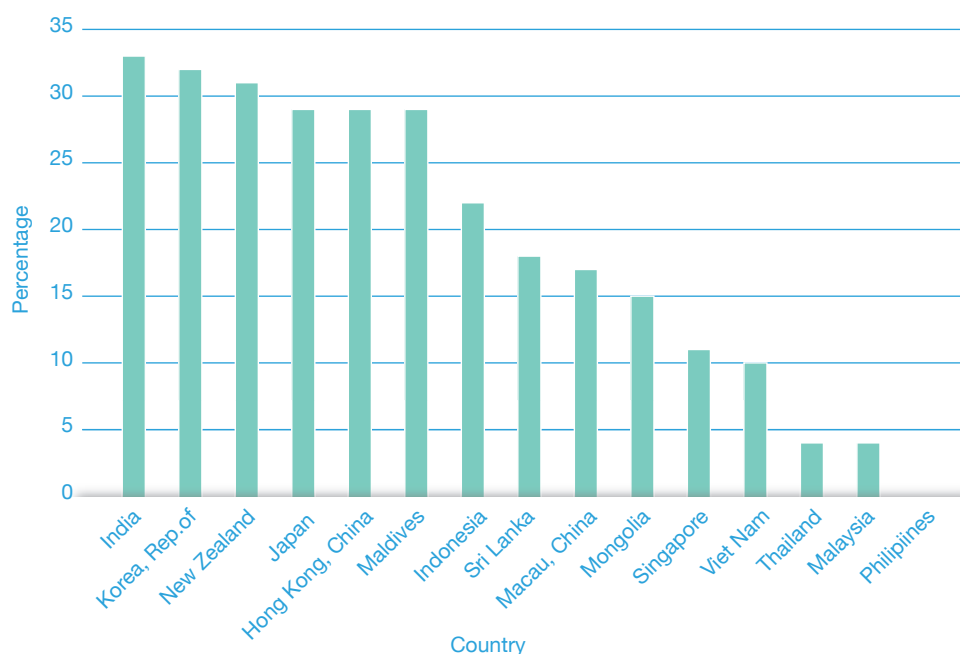
26:
ILO: *A new era of social justice*,
Report of the Director-General,
Report 1(A), International Labour
Conference, 100th Session,
Geneva, 2011.

as differences in educational levels, qualifications, work experience, occupational category and hours worked account for the “explained” part of the gender pay gap. The remaining and more significant part, or the “unexplained” portion of the pay gap is attributable to the discrimination – conscious or unconscious – that is pervasive in workplaces.²⁵ Globally gender pay gaps remain a glaring reality with women earning 22.9 per cent less than men.²⁶ At the current rate, it will take 70 years to bridge the global gender pay gap.

The ILO survey, which asked the employers about the remuneration packages they offer to men and women, found 82 per cent of the respondents indicated that female managers received the same salary as male managers. The corresponding figure for the Asia-Pacific region was higher, with 84 per cent of the employers indicating that male and female managers were equally well paid. Although it cannot be denied that there has been a marked improvement in the gender wage gap in this region, fuelled by women’s empowerment and economic progress, equal wages for men and women and transparent performance pay structures remain a challenge in some countries.

Figure 10 shows the extent of the gender pay gap for countries in Asia and the Pacific for which data were available for the most recent years. It ranged from zero in the Philippines to 33 per cent in India showing that there is significant variation across the region.

Figure 10: Gender pay gap in the Asia-Pacific region



Source: Mean nominal monthly earnings of employees by sex and total economic activity, ILO statistical database, Aug. 2014; 2013: Indonesia, Japan; 2012: Hong Kong (China), India, Republic of Korea, Macau (China), Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam; 2010: Maldives, Mongolia, New Zealand, Sri Lanka.

In the ILO company survey the most common reasons cited for unequal pay between men and women in Asia and the Pacific included qualifications, experience, performance, and occupational differences. Other explanations included women's inability to defend their rights for equal income and greater responsibilities shouldered by men to justify higher salaries.





07

The glass ceiling remains intact and female talent is underutilized

Even though women today are increasingly catching up and overtaking men in terms of academic attainment, companies continue to struggle to attract and retain talent, particularly female talent, while unemployment and skills mismatches remain of general economic concern in the Asia-Pacific region. In the ILO company survey 34 per cent of companies indicated that the retention of women in the workplace was a problem, with an additional 16 per cent indicating that it was a problem to some extent.

Employers often underestimate costs, both monetary and otherwise, associated with high staff turnover or low retention rates. Workplaces that offer opportunities to balance work and family life, such as childcare options or flexible working arrangements, can positively impact worker absenteeism and retention rates. While this can impact all workers it has particular bearing on women who are more likely to be absent in order to care for family members in the absence of reliable health care and childcare.²⁷

²⁷:
IFC: *Investing in women's employment: Good for business, good for development*, 2013, <http://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/5f6e5580416bb016bfb1bf9e78015671/InvestinginWomensEmployment.pdf?MOD=AJPERES> [accessed 25 May 2015].

The above data confirm that enhanced access to higher education by women does not always translate into enhanced career opportunities and women remain an under-represented talent pool.

Box 4

Flexible working options at Westpac

Westpac, a leading Australian bank and financial provider, aims to attract and retain talent by offering flexible working options and innovative policies and programmes that cater to employees with family responsibilities. It provides employees with flexible working options such as job-sharing, telecommuting, career breaks for up to twelve months, purchased leave for up to eight weeks, part-time employment, working from home and condensed hours. These options are attractive to its employees (both men and women) and have become key considerations for jobseekers. The success of the flexible working programme at Westpac is evident from the high take-up rates with about 43 per cent of respondents (48 per cent of women) having utilized one of Westpac's flexible working options.

Source: *Work-life/Flexibility - Leading practice case studies*. Diversity Council Australia (n.d.), www.dca.org.au/work-life-or-flexibility/leading-practice-case-studies.html#sthash.MhaAAuzn.dpuf [accessed 24 Feb. 2015].



08

| Getting rid of the glass ceiling and glass walls

For over a decade media, scholars and institutions have called for the dismantling of the glass ceiling that prevents women from attaining top positions. Occupational segregation also creates subtle barriers, making career pathways different for women and men. Certain jobs are deemed “suitable” for women while other jobs are considered to be better suited to men. Management and decision-making have historically been perceived as men’s jobs while service occupations mimicking women’s reproductive roles are considered feminine.

In spite of all the action, laws, initiatives and the sheer management capacity women have demonstrated, why is the glass ceiling still in place and how can it be eliminated? Will it take a quantum leap to dismantle the glass ceilings and walls?

The need for flexible solutions that allow women to manage work and family time commitments is often discussed. This is also increasingly true for men who want to spend more time with their families. Others point to the pressures

of social and cultural norms. Yet, again others call for a closer examination of “corporate culture” in terms of how inclusive it is of women. They also suggest an overhaul of internal processes, procedures and structures within companies as well as accountability to shareholders in relation to recruitment and promotion in order to eliminate subjective and gender biased appointments and decisions. For example, Japan aims to transform its business environment to become more inclusive of women:

*“...Japan’s corporate culture . . . is still one of pinstripes and button-downs. After all, the female labour force in Japan is the most underutilized resource. Japan must become a place where women shine. By 2020 we will make 30 per cent of leading positions to be occupied by women. In order to have a large number of women become leading players in the market we will need a diverse working environment.”*²⁸

Differences in generations play a significant role in addressing gender equality. Young men and women alike are often well prepared, ambitious and have higher expectations for work-life balance.

Networks of businesswomen and gender-related courses in management institutions and business schools are growing in the Asia-Pacific region. Companies, governments, organizations, academic institutions and non-governmental organizations are implementing programmes and initiatives to advance women in business and management.

Women’s entrepreneurship has attracted a great deal of attention and resources as part of a general effort to advance women’s economic status and the well-being of their families. This is particularly the case in the emerging markets of the region where the informal economy is the dominant form of economic activity and the existence of formal enterprises is limited.

What is important for companies of all types and sizes in Asia and the Pacific is how they can benefit from the growing talent pool and purchasing power that women represent today. National employers’ organizations, chambers of commerce and business organizations can provide advice and support in this regard.

Some 77 per cent of companies in Asia and the Pacific responding to the ILO company survey indicated that they had an equal opportunity employment policy in place (shown in table 6). Most companies indicated they had measures for maternity protection, which in most countries is a statutory requirement. More companies had measures in place for recruitment, retention and promotion

(87 per cent), access to skills training (86 per cent) and mentoring (76 per cent). Measures that were least implemented by respondent companies were breastfeeding breaks, reproductive health programmes and remote or telework.

Box 5

Childcare in the Philippines

Through an ILO project in the Philippines, Permex, one of the largest tuna and sardine canning companies in the country, set up an on-site breastfeeding station in 2011. This successful programme resulted in an award of recognition from the Philippines Department of Health.

Table 6. Companies implementing equal opportunity initiatives

Policy measures	Percentage of companies
1. Recruitment, retention and promotion	87
2. Mentoring	76
3. Sponsorship	.01
4. Access to skills training	86
5. Access to executive training	75
6. Executive training specifically for women	38
7. Work life balance	68
8. Flexible working hours	65
9. Part time working hours	41
10. Remote work or telework	25
11. Maternity leave	92
12. Paternity leave	54
13. Parental leave	45
14. Career breaks	39
15. Re-entry programmes	43
16. Childcare	33
17. Breastfeeding breaks	18
18. Elder care	20
19. Care for sick family members	42
20. Sexual harassment	64
21. Reproductive health programme	21
22. Targets for gender balance in recruitment	48
23. Targets for women in management	43

Source: ILO company survey.



09

What can companies do?

Top leadership commitment is critical in creating a sustainable and meaningful change towards increasing women's leadership. *Lessons from the leading edge of gender diversity*, published in 2013 by McKinsey & Company, observes that for top-diversity companies, the CEO's and executive teams "walk, talk, run and shout about gender diversity"²⁹.

Respondents to the ILO company survey indicated the kind of follow-up and practical support that would help their companies advance women in business and management. Table 7 indicates how the companies in Asia and the Pacific ranked the support mechanisms in order of priority.

29: J. Barsh, S. Nudelman, and L. Yee.: "Lessons from the leading edge of gender diversity" in *McKinsey Quarterly*, (Apr. 2013) http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/organization/lessons_from_the_leading_edge_of_gender_diversity [accessed 15 May 2015].

Table 7. Company expectations for support

Rank	Expectation
1	Evidence on the business case for more women in management
2	Networking with other companies on good practices
3	Strategy to promote more women in management
4	Designing an equal opportunity policy
5	Guides on measures and strategies to promote women in management
6	Networking with women's business associations
7	Good practice examples of measures & strategies to promote women in management
8	Introducing a mentoring scheme
9	Designing a sexual harassment policy
10	Introducing a sponsorship scheme
11	Guidelines on gender sensitive human resource management systems

Source: ILO company survey.

Companies were asked to rank in order of priority 16 measures they would consider implementing as a means to promote women into management roles. Table 8 provides the ranked outcome of respondents from Asia and the Pacific. These measures reflect what businesses in the region deem to be a necessary course of action for promoting women into management roles. It can be noted that the following measures were most highly ranked: assigning visible and challenging tasks to women managers; exposing women to all company operations and functions; and mentoring. This confirms many of the findings in the literature that women's career paths need to feed into top management in order to plug the "leaking pipeline" of women's talent.

Respondent companies assigned lower rankings to sponsorship schemes, results-based performance management and diversity training for advancing women in management. This could be partly explained by the lack of information about these approaches, which are more practiced in developed economies. Nevertheless, a number of respondents pointed out that all the measures are useful, especially if based on a proper assessment of the situation in individual companies and implemented in an integrated manner.

Average rankings may mask important differences between countries. Nevertheless, companies in all countries identified similar measures as the most useful and the least significant. Executive training for women was ranked fourth overall but companies in Cambodia and the Philippines ranked it tenth out of the 16 measures. This could reflect the fact that the Philippines, for example, has one of the highest proportions of women managers globally.

Table 8. Priority measures to promote women in management

Rank	Priority measure
1	Assigning women managers visible and challenging tasks
2	Exposing women to all company operations and functions
3	3a. Mentoring scheme 3b. Top level management support for a gender equality strategy
4	4a. Executive training for women 4b. Recognition and support for women 4c. Making corporate culture more inclusive of both women and men
5	Awareness training for senior managers on the business case for more women in management
6	Setting of targets and tracking progress
7	7a. Flexible working arrangements (time and place) 7b. Making promotion paths and career advancement prospects clear for women
8	Retention and re-entry schemes
9	Appointment of women to board of directors
10	Focus groups for senior and mid-level women
11	Appointing a woman as CEO
12	Appoint men who champion gender equality to senior management and company board positions
13	Sponsorship scheme
14	Diversity training for all managers
15	Results based rather than time based employee performance evaluation

Source: ILO company survey.

Companies and business organizations are realizing the advantages of promoting women in business and management and are promoting women's leadership in the Asia-Pacific region. Individual companies and especially multinational companies in the region are recruiting and promoting more women and some chambers of commerce and employers organizations are taking initiatives to promote women in business and management.

Taking into account the results of the ILO company survey as well as other literature, below are a number of overarching recommendations for closing the gap between men and women in the Asia-Pacific region.

9.1 Changing mindsets

The traditional roles of men and women and the gender stereotypes that have been woven into the very fabric of social, political and economic life in the region have become a "mindset" that many leaders in the region must overcome to recognize that women can be competent managers and leaders. Even when there is acceptance of women as decision-makers in economic life, women are still expected to continue to be the main carers for family and households. Claims that women can "have it all", or conversely that they cannot have it, are subjects of heated discussions. Research studies show that women managers seem to sacrifice personal life more than their male counterparts, as evidenced by their lesser likelihood of having a partner or children. Increasingly, the issue of work and family in many countries is becoming as much of a generational

30:
Centre for Women and Business,
Bentley University: *Millennials
in the workplace*, (Waltham,
Bentley University, 2012).

31:
World Bank: *Toward gender
equality in East Asia and the
Pacific: A companion to the
world development report—
conference edition*. (Washington,
DC, World Bank, 2012)

32:
J. Barsh and L. Yee:
"Changing companies'
minds about women", in
McKinsey Quarterly (Sep.
2011) http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/organization/changing_companies_minds_about_women [accessed 21
May 2015].

issue as a gender issue. In addition, women are bearing fewer children across most regions, while ageing of the population is a challenge for an increasing number of countries. Today, an increasing proportion of employees are faced with eldercare responsibilities as well. "Companies may well risk losing men as well as women by not facilitating employees to accommodate personal and family values as part of the way they accomplish their work."³⁰

Childcare is an enormous challenge for working parents everywhere, especially in countries where there is little public provision. Lack of affordable quality care is one of the primary reasons why women, more than men, drop out of the workforce. Taking a longer view, companies can make a positive difference by providing childcare assistance. For example, on-site childcare services, subsidies for childcare, disability support for dependents and other medical benefits are some ways in which companies can assist employees in balancing their responsibilities.

Gender equality needs to be addressed in the mindsets of companies and people, as "growth and economic development are not enough to attain gender equality in all its dimensions."³¹ Some developed economies, such as Japan and the Republic of Korea, are notable for the strong role that traditional gender norms play in limiting women's participation in the workforce and especially in decision-making. This has resulted in figures for women in management being among the lowest in the world. Efforts are being made to redress this, given the need for women's talent and skills to keep their economies growing, especially as recruiting migrant workers is still a limited option. However, there is still a way to go, as there are many structural barriers to overcome in relation to the traditional recruitment and promotion systems within companies and corporations.

Research by McKinsey and Company suggests that while many companies have put in place measures to facilitate women's careers through family friendly measures and networking, "the next frontier is toppling invisible barriers: mindsets widely held by managers, men and women alike, that are rarely acknowledged but block the way."³²

Companies can retain a talented, committed and productive female workforce by implementing maternity leave policies that provide necessary financial and organizational support to its employees around childbirth. Adequate paid maternity leave encourages women to return to their jobs feeling confident and ready, thereby increasing productivity, improving morale and reducing turnover. Offering paternity leave is good for companies too. It makes the company family friendly and helps companies by decreasing discrimination related to maternity.

9.2 Examining the business case for gender diversity

As outlined earlier, an increasing number of business case studies, including from the Asia-Pacific region, are drawing positive correlations between more women in management teams and improved business outcomes for companies. This is very much related to the benefits linked to including a woman's perspective on products and services that consumers (half of whom are women) are likely to be interested in. There is also a growing conviction among companies that greater diversity in work and management teams leads to more creativity and innovative approaches to problem solving and to enhancing business outcomes.

Despite the apparent benefits of tapping into a larger talent pool and the advantages of greater gender diversity in the workplace, a major challenge is how workplace practices can be modified to ensure a healthy balance between work and family responsibilities, not only for women, but also for men. Flexibility is a key factor with regard to work organization; schedules, working time and various types of leave, as well as childcare facilities. An inclusive corporate culture where women and men are able to realize their full potential is also fundamental. Thus, companies may have to consider the trade-offs and undertake a cost-benefit analysis of measures to harmonize work and family for their employees in order to reap the benefits of a more gender diverse and innovative workforce.

9.3 Adopting an equal employment opportunity policy

In order to ensure employees and prospective employees are aware that the company values diversity and equal opportunity, companies should adopt equal employment opportunity policies. All employees should be familiar with the policy and managers should enforce it in order to communicate that equality and gender diversity are company priorities.

Box 6

Employers' Federation of Ceylon promotion of gender equity

In Sri Lanka, the Employers' Federation of Ceylon (EFC) has partnered with the ILO for more than a decade in promoting gender equality in the workplace, through policy development, advocacy and training. The policies include ILO/EFC Guidelines for Company Policy on Gender Equity/Equality and the ILO/EFC Code of Conduct to Address Sexual Harassment in the Workplace. The EFC has also joined other Business Associations/Trade Chambers to disseminate these policy documents and has supported members of such organizations to train their staff in these areas as well develop company-specific policies.

This initiative included re-launching the ILO/EFC Code of Conduct and Procedures to Address Sexual Harassment at the Workplace by asking private sector companies to formally sign-up to this document and conduct internal training (by the EFC) for key members of their staff. For the last few years, EFC has served as the lead resource for the module on employment law at several post-graduate and diploma programmes of State and Private higher education institutions. Sub-modules (3-4 hours each) on preventing sexual harassment at work and also work-life balance have been integrated in these programmes, and have been very well received. The ILO/EFC guidelines on preventing sexual harassment is distributed among working professionals who participate in these academic courses, greatly increasing its outreach.

The EFC and the ILO also worked with the Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry to conduct a series of programmes for its membership on the prevention of gender-based violence. In the area of training and capacity building on gender, equality and the prevention of sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence, the EFC has adopted a two-pronged approach of integrating such issues in its on-going training, as well as conducting in-house programmes on request for both member and non-member companies, free of charge as a corporate social responsibility initiative. These programmes have reached large audiences. For example, a non-member information technology company ran the programme for its young professionals at two of its locations with a third in the pipeline, attracting an audience of approximately 300 people.

Advocacy for a more gender sensitive and inclusive workplace is also a continuing process – such as advice to individual companies/other entities on their membership, the free dissemination of information and documents, through occasional articles in the EFC newsletter and through EFC circulars (for example on International Women's Day).

The EFC is also represented at the Forum Against Gender Based Violence, a body of activists and professionals committed to reducing gender-based violence in the country set up under the aegis of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Sri Lanka.

9.4 Adopting a sexual harassment policy

Sexual harassment can undermine the harassed persons' performance and lead to loss of valuable employees and managers. Deterrents to sexual harassment include putting in place a clear sexual harassment policy, ensuring the policy is communicated to all employees, that managers enforce the policy and that perpetrators are held accountable.

33:
Employers worldwide lack a strategy for developing women leaders new mercer survey shows, Talent Management, 2011, http://www.talentmgmt.com/articles/employers_worldwide_lack_a_strategy_for_developing_women_leaders_new_mercer_survey_shows [accessed 12 Mar. 2015].

9.5 Reviewing human resource development practices

Reviewing human resource development policies to ensure that gender biases are not overtly or covertly slowing down the progress of women's careers, can be an important step to addressing gender equality in the workplace. A review of the policies would need to be systematic and include prospecting, recruitment, retention, promotion and succession planning procedures to ensure that women and men have equal opportunities.

According to a Women's Leadership Development Survey most employers in Asia and the Pacific lack a strategy for developing women leaders. The report of the survey states, "despite growing interest in workforce diversity among organizations in Asia-Pacific countries, the majority – 73 per cent – did not have a clearly defined strategy or philosophy for the development and promotion of women into leadership roles."³³ More broadly speaking, companies in the Asia-Pacific region do not have sufficient programmes to retain talented women in the leadership pipeline. This is confirmed by the ILO company survey. Even though the majority of companies surveyed in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Iran, the Philippines and Sri Lanka had equal opportunity policies and provided access to skills training and maternity leave, far fewer had targeted programmes to promote women in management and gender diversity.

Critical aspects to consider include job descriptions, first assignments, progression to middle and senior management, training, childcare, flexible work arrangements, mobility, transport, mentoring or sponsorship programmes and networking.

Box 7

Human resource management policies and glass walls in Viet Nam

It was found that one in five job postings included a gender requirement, of which 70 per cent were targeted toward men who were more often highly skilled or more technical jobs such as engineering or information technology related. This is compounded by evidence that women tend to cluster in certain occupations. Overall, including gender requirements in job postings creates unequal access of men and women to job opportunities and occupations and perpetuates the clustering of women in certain job fields such as office and support work. This in turn prevents women from acquiring the necessary breadth of management skills necessary for top management positions. In the case of Viet Nam, gender stereotypes continue to keep women in jobs traditionally associated with “feminine” skill sets. With gender diversity in jobs and occupations increasingly becoming linked to productivity and competitiveness, the root causes as well as the manifestations of gender bias need to be addressed, such as job advertisements with gender requirements.

Source: ILO: *Gender Equality in Recruitment and Promotion Practices in Viet Nam*, Policy Brief, 2015, pp 2–4.

9.6 Flexible work arrangements

Providing a good work-life balance for all employees is vital for women. This can be achieved by providing flexible working conditions and allowing for remote working, part-time work and flexi-time. Such arrangements could benefit not only female workers but also male workers. One worker expressed her thoughts about the relationship between work-life balance and flexible working conditions as follows:

“P&G also provides employees with some work flexibility so as to accommodate individual needs. These include flexi-hours and allowing employees to work from home. In fact, arrangements were made for me to spend two weeks every month in Seoul during my regional marketing director role that was officially based in Singapore. My family couldn’t move with me to Singapore, so this allowed me to spend some precious time with them.”

*Sue Kyung Lee,
CEO and General Manager of Proctor and Gamble Korea Office³⁴*

Box 8

Work-life balance at Nissan, Japan

Japan's Nissan Motor Corporation's corporate strategy includes the promotion of more women to lead specific projects and organizations. They believe that acknowledging gender differences is the first step toward embracing the idea that a diverse array of opinions should be leveraged as a competitive strength for their business.

One arm of their strategy is to support employees throughout their various life stages. They do this by enabling diverse working styles (flextime, work-from-home, shorter working hours, etc.), establishing in-house daycare centres, conducting "Back to Work Seminars" to support a work-life balance plan for working parents

This has meant that female participation in staff positions and functional areas has increased. The ratio of females among all managers went from 1.6 per cent (in 2004) to 7.1 per cent (as of 2014). In addition, the ratio of females among general managers increased from 2 per cent (in 2008) to 4 per cent (as of 2012). Improvements have been made but challenges still exist. The number of women in senior positions and maximizing the career potential of working mothers need to be addressed.

Box 9

Retaining women in the workplace in the Republic of Korea

The number of women in positions of management in the Republic of Korea is low. In 2013, on average only 19.2 per cent of domestic, private companies with 500 or more employees (in a survey undertaken with 1,614 companies) have women in managerial roles. This is largely due to a business culture dominated by and oriented toward men, and a low rate of return for women after childbirth, impacting the number of women progressing from middle to senior management (Ministry of Employment and Labour, enterprise survey on affirmative action: 2014).

A number of companies have undertaken initiatives to support women in the workplace and increase the rate of return and prevent the loss of talent. Three examples include that of the CJ Group, LOTTE CARD,

and Hyosung ITX. The CJ Group runs a *Returnship Programme* whereby women who left the workplace for more than 2 years due to family responsibilities are able to return and undertake an initial training (similar to that of an internship) after which their performance is evaluated and successful candidates are offered positions. Those recruited are then also able to choose their working time, with part-time options available to assist women in juggling work and family responsibilities.¹ The CJ Group has so far employed 116 women through this programme and aims to have a total of 2,000 women through the programme by 2017. LOTTE CARD boasts an impressive 80 per cent return rate after childbirth or maternity leave. This is largely due to their implementation of systems for shorter working days and flexible work hours. The company also runs an education programme (Lotte Way of Women) that assists women in moving up the management levels.² Hyosung ITX introduced flexibility by allowing its employees to choose the number of working hours and also their working days. Overall, they aim to create a work environment that supports women employees by offering maternity protection, family care leave and capacity building, among other things.

1 S. Gee-hyun: "Conglomerates to introduce flexible part-time hiring" in *Korea Herald* 21 Aug. 2013.

2 Starbucks stars South Korea aims boost jobs for women in *South China Morning Post*, 3 Sep. 2014.

9.7 Addressing gender pay gaps

Companies can identify gendered pay differences within the organization – at different levels and in different functions – by gathering comprehensive pay data and performing thorough pay equity analyses. Setting clear and objective criteria to determine reward systems helps companies check for bias in the pay and promotion process, resulting in greater pay transparency.

In many companies managers still use “face-time” as a measure for employee performance. There is widespread perception in workplaces that only those employees working traditional hours get promoted. This adversely affects women employees as women still undertake the bulk of home responsibilities and more often than men engage in flexible working arrangements to manage work and family responsibilities. Companies can minimize the impact of bias in pay decisions by educating supervisors about how to manage flexible work schedules and making flexible work a real option for both women and men. Flexibility allows women and men to balance their work and family responsibilities and remain productive in the workforce.



10

| Advocating for women in business and management

Sharing of experience, good practices as well as the level of interest in attracting and retaining female talent has increased in the past decade. This demonstrates the importance companies and economies place on tapping into the talent pool of women capable of making a significant contribution to the bottom line. As competition for skills and talent grows and more and more educated women enter the labour market, businesses need to attract and retain women workers with the talent and skills to avoid the challenges of talent shortages.

Business, governments, business representative organizations, and civil society still have important advocacy roles to play in overcoming gender stereotypes and the resulting glass walls and ceilings. Within society men and women are assuming broader and changing roles. A movement away from stereotypical gender roles plays an important role in supporting the shifting roles of men and women, particularly in the media. Messages are often subtle but certainly continue to perpetuate stereotypes that are not representative of men's and women's realities.

35:
*Diversity and Inclusion in Asia
Network*, Network news, 2015,
[http://www.communitybusiness.
org/DIAN/right-1.htm](http://www.communitybusiness.org/DIAN/right-1.htm) [accessed
12 May 2015].

There have been calls for data and more information and good practice sharing among a wider group of businesses. These stand to benefit small, medium and large companies as all continue to scramble to attract and retain female talent. Initiatives such as the Diversity Inclusion in Asia Network (DIAN) gathers private sector companies as members to share good practices and have practical discussions on diversity issues specific to key markets in Asia. Launched in 2008, DIAN has grown from 13 companies to 33 in 2013. Network members have regular face-to-face and virtual meetings and have discussions on diversity strategies and actions to address issues with input from subject experts and best practices examples inside and outside DIAN.³⁵ Employers' organizations also have a key role to play in promoting gender diversity both through advocacy and other practical support to business and the business environment.



11

Role of employers' organizations in Asia and the Pacific

Employers' organizations can play an important role in providing information and making the link between productivity and gender diversity policies. Employers' organizations throughout the Asia-Pacific region represent a powerful network and stand to gain positive visibility and membership value in promoting gender diversity as a strategic business concern. There is an opportunity for employers' organizations to be knowledge partners, provide access to information, and disseminate good practice on gender issues relevant to business and efficient labour markets. Employers' organizations could also negotiate with and support government-related agencies and organizations for gender inclusive business policies. Tables 9 and 10 summarize some of the actions employers' organizations can take to support women in business and management.

Table 9. Strategies to advance women entrepreneurs by employers' organizations

Number	Strategy
1	Implement cooperation agreements (MOUs) with women's organizations
2	Encourage tripartite and bilateral dialogues
3	Identify supply chain linkages with women's businesses
4	Conduct training on how to start a business, entrepreneurship and market linkages
5	Promote access to microfinance facilities for women owned businesses
6	Conduct research on quality improvements for women's businesses
7	Facilitate linkages with women's and other related organizations (trade bodies)
8	Facilitate linkages and exchange ideas between women-owned businesses, employer organization members and related organizations
9	Link women led and women managed organizations with larger organizations and firms
10	Showcase good practices
11	Implement leadership programmes for women to lead small and medium sized enterprises.

Source: ILO company survey.

Table 10. Strategies to advance women in business and management by employers' organizations

Number	Strategy
1	Conduct more research to collect statistical data on the number of women at various management levels to help build the business case
2	Build capacity of employers' organizations on fostering women's talent
3	Provide awareness raising at executive levels of employers' organizations and members
4	Training and development of member organizations and assistance on policy and measures
5	Give advice to members on career planning schemes to tap into women's talent
6	Engage in coaching, training, mentoring, capacity building to foster women's talent and ensure their effective participation in decision making
7	Reward or recognize best practices on gender diversity (through tripartite dialogue)
8	Encourage dialogue between organizations to share best practices and seek commitment of organizations.
9	An internal assessment and identification of good practices of staff and members of employers' organizations on gender issues in order to promote successful business managerial women as case studies and role models
10	Develop policy documents as well as practical tools for implementation
11	Prepare an advocacy strategy
12	Develop the internal capacity of employers' organizations to advise members on company measures for gender equality
13	Mainstream gender and empowerment into existing programmes as a more effective strategy compared to a standalone "do it all" programme
14	Change the marketing strategy and project an image of the employer organizations as a source of knowledge and tools on women and gender issues in the context of emerging workplace trends, talent shortages and opportunities.

Source: ILO company survey.

Business organizations in Asia and the Pacific can play a pivotal role in forging the link between more women in management and business competitiveness. This is a new and dynamic area for business organizations to assist their members with gender diversity tools and good practice examples that clearly demonstrate the benefits to be gained. Business organizations can also provide an important platform and voice for accelerating the efforts of women's business organizations

and in so doing support women to grow their own business. This kind of initiative can help business organizations to increase their own membership and enhance their influence in economic and business policymaking.

Enabling employers' organizations and chambers to carry out these roles is an essential goal of the ILO which includes gender equality as an integral part of its Decent Work Agenda, international labour standards and the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. These principles are part of the UN Global Compact, which, with over 10,000 corporate participants and other stakeholders from over 145 countries is the largest voluntary corporate responsibility initiative in the world. In addition to individual companies, business associations and national employers' organizations are participants in the Global Compact. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the Global Compact have also collaborated to draw up set of seven *Women's Empowerment Principles* for business, offering guidance on how to empower women in the workplace, marketplace and community.

Box 10

Equality means business: Women's empowerment principles

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

11.1 In their own voices: selected employers' organization experiences from the region

A number of employers' organizations in the region already undertake some initiatives to promote women in business and management, including women entrepreneurs. This section serves to highlight some of the undertakings from across the region.

Box 11

Role of employers' organizations in India

In India, there are three major employers' associations – All India Organisation of Employers founded by the Federation Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Employers Federation of India founded by the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India, and the Standing Conference of Public Enterprises. These three organizations have played an important role for the advancement of women in enterprises.

In 1990, the Forum of Women in Public Sector (WIPS) was set up under the aegis of the Standing Conference of Public Enterprises. The broad objective of WIPS was to create a national network and a support system that would help women employees to harness their full potential and to enhance their contribution in the national development process in general, and public enterprises in particular. WIPS has approximately 10,000 individual members across the country with 650 attending their annual national meet focused on leadership development, knowledge management and networking.

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) set up a National Committee on Women's Empowerment in the late 1990's. Following the study on Gender Equality at the Workplace, CII conducted interactive workshops in different regions/states to increase the capacity of human resources heads to fully engage with gender equality in the workplace; and to raise awareness and understanding of the ideas, assumptions, attitudes and behaviour which create an enabling environment. The Women Business Leaders Forum is also an active wing of CII.

NASSCOM (National Association of Software and Services Companies), a trade body and the chamber of commerce of the information technology and business process outsourcing industries in India, launched the Gender Inclusivity Initiative in 2006. It has also introduced NASSCOM gender awards to encourage companies to include gender inclusive policies and programmes. These awards create a platform for more than 200 companies to share their experience and practices related to gender diversity. The number of nominations for awards has increased from 23 in 2007 to 104 in 2011.¹

¹ PwC: *Diversity in action: NASSCOM corporate awards for excellence in diversity and inclusion*, 2011, https://www.pwc.in/assets/pdfs/industries/technology/Diversity_in_Action_2011.pdf [accessed 2 Jan. 2015].

Box 12

Singapore National Employers' Federation (SNEF) and national gender diversity

SNEF has supported the National Diversity Task Force (DTF) by conducting a survey in June 2013 on female representation and the key challenges facing women. The report was published and a press conference was held on 25 April 2014. Mr Koh Juan Kiat, the Executive Director of SNEF, forms part of the DTF.

SNEF also worked closely with the Ministry of Manpower on the WorkPro Programme aimed at creating flexible working practices at the workplace and support women back to work. Within the first nine months of the launch of the WorkPro programme launched in April 2013, 700 companies came on board. The focus is on getting the unemployed into employment and also for companies to adopt employment practices that are fair and progressive and age management. A revised version of WorkPro was launched in Feb 2015 incorporating workplace health and wellness pushing for total workplace safety and health.

Box 13

Fiji Women's Entrepreneurs and Business Council

The Women's Entrepreneurs and Business Council is the seventh member of the Fiji Commerce and Employer's Federation. In 2014, the Council held a strategic planning meeting to determine its key focus areas including legislation, financial literacy, training, business development and networking. The Council aims to influence policy in order to create a better business environment for women in the future. Since the inception of the strategic plan, the Council has held an informal networking event with approximately 40 women and held a financial training workshop for entrepreneurs. After ten months in operation, the Council has registered 60 members and hopes to register another 100. Connie Chew, an entrepreneur, founder and publisher of *Explore Fiji* attended a financial management course run by the Council, commented: "it's allowed me to have access and knowledge about certain financial systems, which I did not know about or knew very little about." ¹ This has helped her to raise the profile of her business.

1 See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8mU-hhs242Q&list=PL52393B3C2D2785CC> [accessed 16 May 2015].

Box 14

Role of the Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) in supporting women entrepreneurs

While Vietnamese women are becoming increasingly active in business, they still face significant obstacles in terms of work-family balance, leaving them with few spare hours compared to their male counterparts. A report issued by the VCCI, *Gender related obstacles to Vietnamese women entrepreneurs*, showed that there is significant demand for training in soft skills such as networking and new client acquisition. Furthermore, the report recommended that networks for women entrepreneurs be strengthened.¹ The VCCI Women Entrepreneurs Council (VWEC), created in 2001, aims to serve these needs. VWEC has initiated several activities supporting women entrepreneur members in their roles of managers in business. For example, an information campaign on how to combine work and family responsibilities in business and increasing the supply of training programmes to improve the skills and capabilities of entrepreneurs in running businesses as well as “soft skills”. For women these soft skills include how to effectively network, properly socialize and successfully negotiate with other business people, particularly with men, how to successfully acquire new clients and deals without the necessity of after-hours informal socialization and how to enter new business networks.

In addition to the above, VWEC supports the promotion of trade, investment and technology transfer domestically and internationally for business women as well as supports labour relationships to address gender equality in the workplace. Specifically, VWEC collects opinions of women-led enterprises concerning policymaking; for example, by conducting surveys on issues like the trans-pacific partnership agreement. The Council also designs and organizes a wide range of training courses for women entrepreneurs, including basic training such as business start-up and marketing to topics that relate to the ASEAN Economic Community 2015, HIV/AIDS, and sexual harassment. VWEC also organizes forums, conferences and award ceremonies like the “Golden Rose Award” and “Mekong Women Entrepreneurs Award” which provides recognition to outstanding businesswomen in Viet Nam.²

VWEC is also actively engaged in international initiatives. In 2012, Viet Nam signed up to the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs), a joint initiative of UN Women and the UN Global Compact. Connected to this, VWEC developed tools to facilitate the application of the set of principles under WEPs and collaborated with UN Women to disseminate the guiding manual in 2014.

1 UNIDO, VCCI, VWEC: *Gender related obstacles to Vietnamese women entrepreneurs*, 2010, https://www.unido.org/fileadmin/user_media_upgrade/What_we_do/Topics/Women_and_Youth/FMVIE09005_GOVERN_Report_final.pdf [accessed 15 May 2015].

2 *Heart and genius of Vietnamese businesswomen*, VCCI News, 2013, http://vccinews.com/news_detail.asp?news_id=28501 [accessed 15 Mar. 2015].



12

| Conclusion

As the Asia-Pacific region prepares for greater economic growth, finding and retaining the talent needed to sustain innovative companies and augment their competitiveness is already a challenge. Women in the region today represent half of the potential talent pool, yet paradoxically they are often overlooked, especially when it comes to their promotion to higher-level decision-making positions. Given the traditional roles of men and women and the gender stereotypes that have been woven into the very fabric of social, political and economic life in the region, recognizing that women can be competent managers and leaders has become a mindset issue for many. Even when there is acceptance of women as decision-makers in economic life, women are still expected to continue to be the main carers for the family and household.

An increasing number of business case studies, including from the Asia-Pacific region, are drawing positive correlations between more women in management teams and improved business outcomes for companies. There is also a growing conviction among companies that greater diversity in work and management

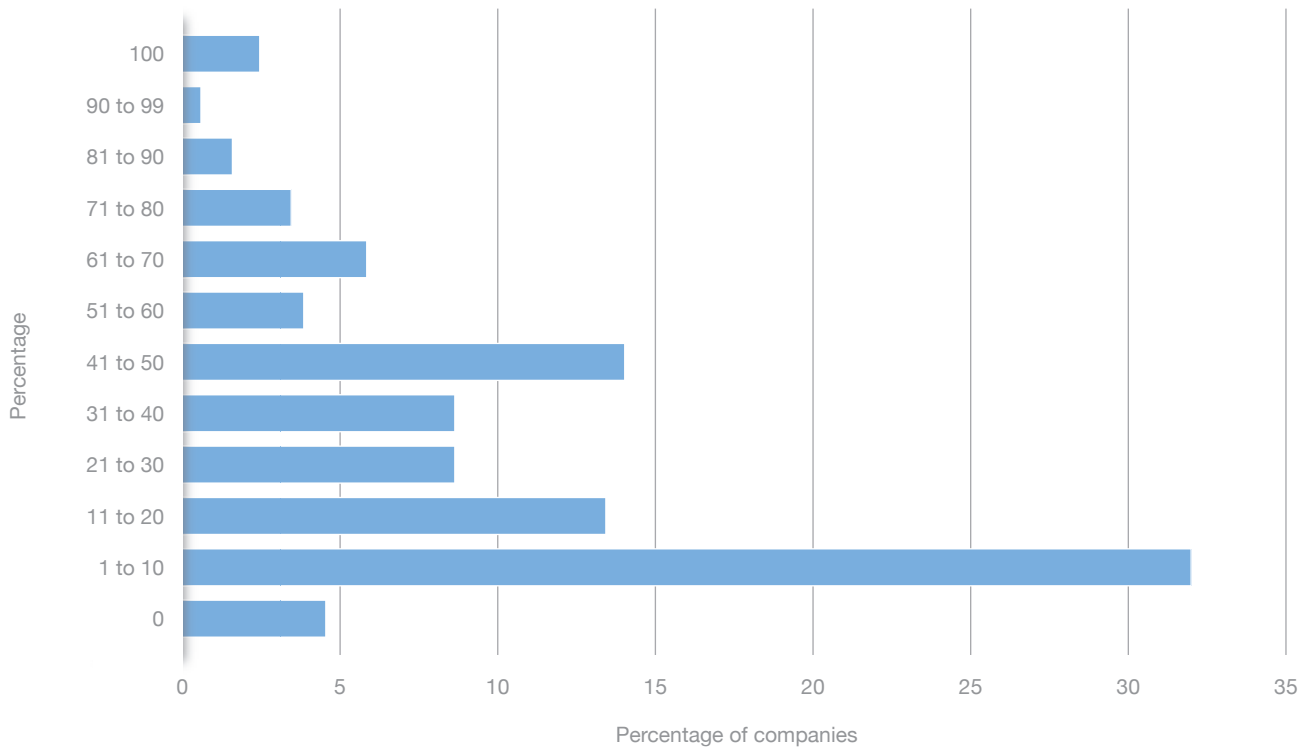
teams leads to more creativity and innovative approaches to problem solving and to enhanced business outcomes. Despite the apparent benefits of tapping into a larger talent pool and the advantages of greater gender diversity in the workplace, a major challenge is how workplace practices can be modified to ensure a healthy balance between work and family responsibilities, not only for women, but also for men. Flexibility is a key factor with regard to work organization, schedules, working time and various types of leave, as well as childcare facilities. An inclusive corporate culture where women and men are able to realize their full potential is also fundamental. Thus, companies may have to consider the trade-offs and undertake a cost-benefit analysis of measures to harmonize work and family for their employees in order to reap the benefits of a more gender diverse and innovative workforce. Employers' organizations have a key role to play in supporting business by providing gender diversity tools and good practice and continuing to build links between women in business and management in support of overall business competitiveness.

Women in the Asia-Pacific region are more than ready to assume senior roles and take on more responsibility within companies and organizations. Longstanding management traditions and cultures that have excluded women must give way and afford women and men the same opportunities so that women can reach top management positions. Giving women and men the same opportunities makes good business sense. Ultimately, there is a great deal that employers can do to address gender stereotypes and reap the benefits of gender-balanced workforces.

Annexes

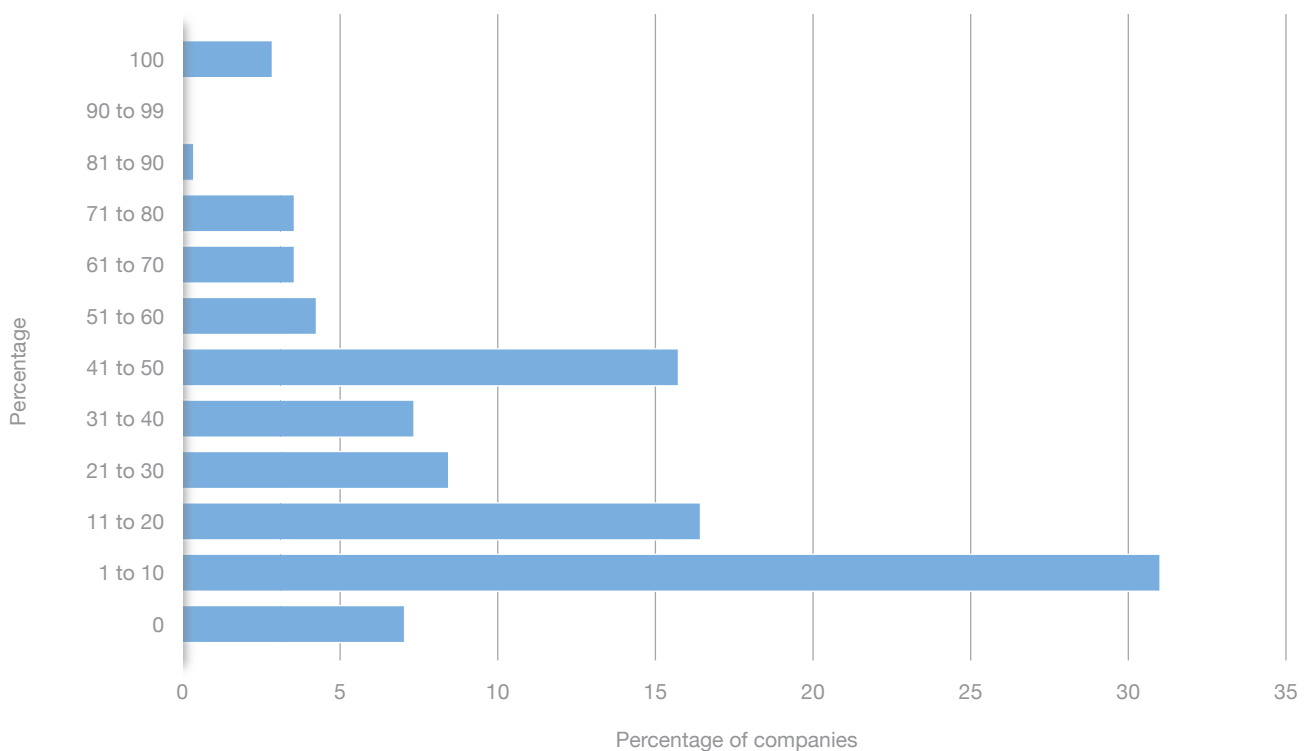
Annex A

Figure A1. Percentage of companies with women at the supervisory or junior level management in Asia and the Pacific



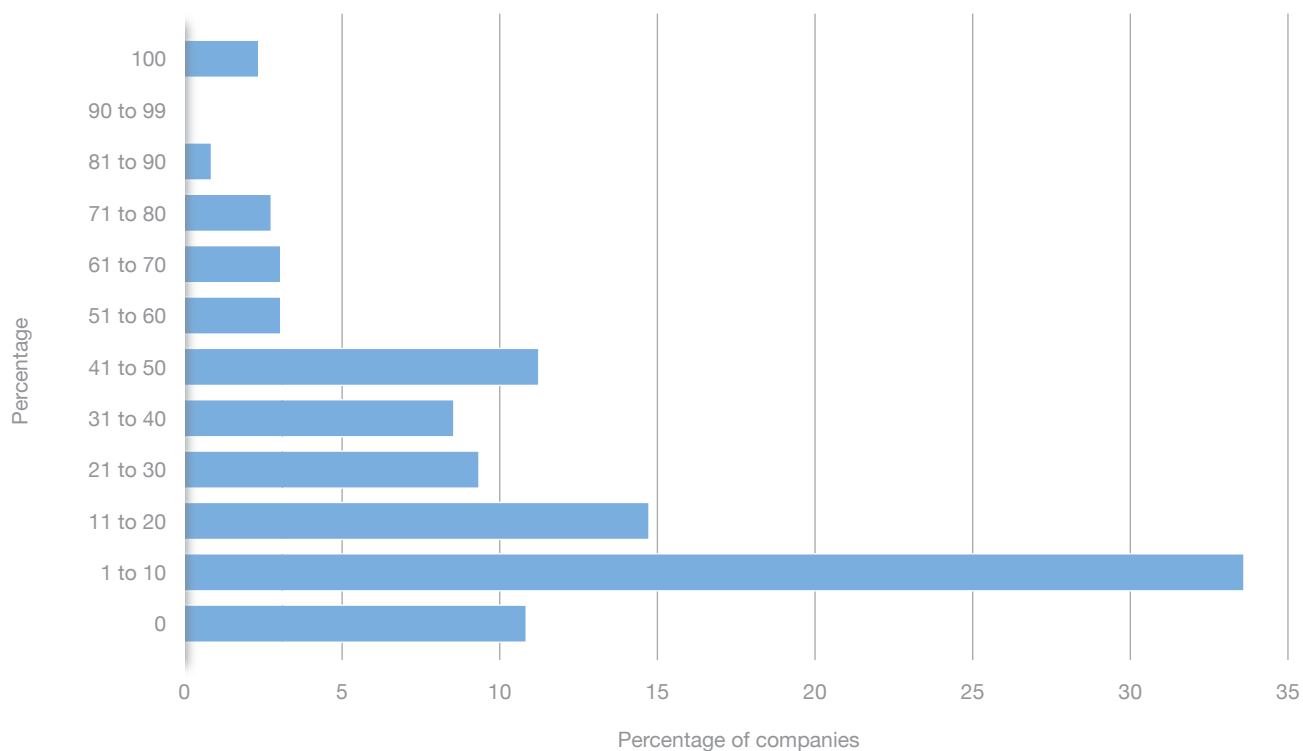
Source: ILO company survey.

Figure A2. Percentage of companies with women at middle level management in Asia and the Pacific



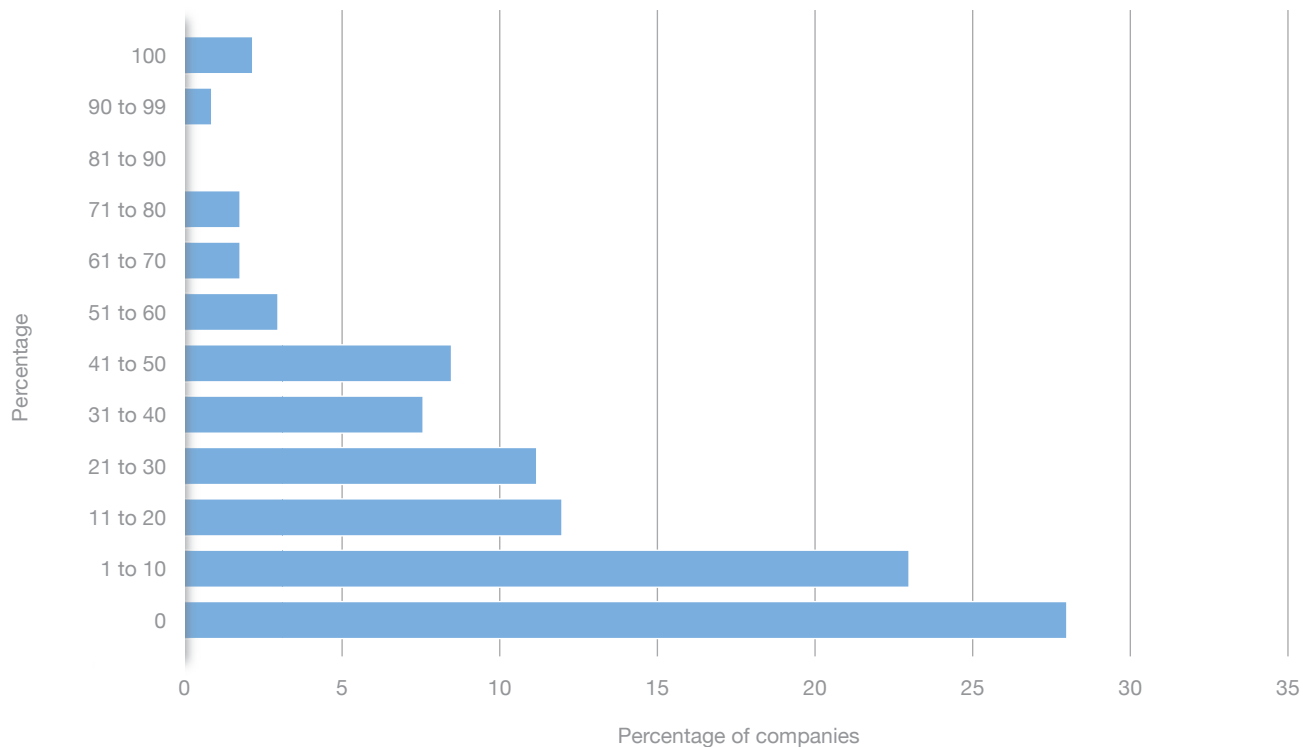
Source: ILO company survey.

Figure A3. Percentage of companies with women senior level managers in Asia and the Pacific



Source: ILO company survey.

Figure A4. Percentage of companies with women top executives in Asia and the Pacific



Source: ILO company survey.

Annex B

ILO company survey women in business and management

Please check the boxes in the survey. N/A can be checked if there is no information available.

Section A. General information

1. Please indicate whether your company is:

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| Small | ☐ |
| Medium-sized | ☐ |
| Large | ☐ |
| Multi-national | ☐ |

2. Is your company owned

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Locally | ☐ |
| By individual(s)/groups in another country in the region | ☐ |

Other, please specify _____

3. Please indicate if your company has any branch, subsidiary locations not in your country:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| One other country | ☐ |
| Two other countries | ☐ |
| More than two other countries | ☐ |
| No branch/subsidiary in any other country | ☐ |

Other, please specify _____

4. In which economic sector/s does your company operate? (e.g. manufacturing, wholesale, retail, finance & insurance, transportation, hospitality, real estate, etc.)

5. Please indicate whether your company is a women-owned business (check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Yes, it is at least 51% owned by women | ☐ |
| Yes, its management and daily business operations are controlled by one or more women | ☐ |
| Yes, it is publicly owned and has one or more women owning 51% (or controlling share) of the stock | ☐ |
| No, it is not a women-owned business | ☐ |

6. How many employees does your company have? _____
7. What is the percentage of women employees? _____ % N/A ☐
8. What proportion of female employees work part-time? _____ % N/A ☐
9. What proportion of male employees work part-time? _____ % N/A ☐

Section B. Policies and measures

10. Does your company have an equal opportunity policy? Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐

If your company has a written policy, could you please, if possible, provide a copy with the response to this survey.

11. Does your company implement initiatives to promote equality in any of the following areas:

Recruitment, retention and promotion	Yes ☐	No ☐	N/A ☐
Mentoring	Yes ☐	No ☐	N/A ☐
Access to skills training	Yes ☐	No ☐	N/A ☐
Access to executive training	Yes ☐	No ☐	N/A ☐
Top of Form	Yes ☐	No ☐	N/A ☐
Bottom of Form	Yes ☐	No ☐	N/A ☐
Executive training specifically for women	Yes ☐	No ☐	N/A ☐
Work-life balance	Yes ☐	No ☐	N/A ☐
Flexible working hours	Yes ☐	No ☐	N/A ☐
Part-time working hours	Yes ☐	No ☐	N/A ☐
Remote work or telework	Yes ☐	No ☐	N/A ☐
Maternity leave	Yes ☐	No ☐	N/A ☐
Paternity leave	Yes ☐	No ☐	N/A ☐
Parental leave	Yes ☐	No ☐	N/A ☐
Career breaks	Yes ☐	No ☐	N/A ☐
Re-entry programmes	Yes ☐	No ☐	N/A ☐
Child care	Yes ☐	No ☐	N/A ☐
Elder care	Yes ☐	No ☐	N/A ☐
Care for sick family members	Yes ☐	No ☐	N/A ☐
Sexual harassment	Yes ☐	No ☐	N/A ☐
Targets for gender balance in recruitment	Yes ☐	No ☐	N/A ☐
Targets for women in management	Yes ☐	No ☐	N/A ☐

Please indicate any other initiatives including those that may be specific to your country or region in relation to laws (labour, business, family, civil, etc.) and the cultural, social, political and social context.

Section C. Data and statistics

12. Does your company monitor and report on the proportion of women and men at different levels of the hierarchy? Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐

13. What is the proportion of women and men in managerial roles at different levels?

Supervisory/Junior	Women %	Men %	N/A ☐
Middle	Women %	Men %	N/A ☐
Senior	Women %	Men %	N/A ☐
Top executive	Women %	Men %	N/A ☐

14. Does your company have:

Human resources managers? Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐

If yes, how many and what % are women? _____

Finance and administration managers? Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐

If yes, how many and what % are women? _____

Communications and public relations managers? Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐

If yes, how many and what % are women? _____

Research and product development managers? Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐

If yes, how many and what % are women? _____

Operations and sales managers? Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐

If yes, how many and what % are women? _____

General managers? Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐

(i.e. overseeing implementation of operations and processes across multi-functional departments)

If yes, how many and what % are women? _____

Please indicate any other types of managers in your company, their number and the % women.

15. Does your company have a CEO? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, is the CEO a man or a woman? Man ☐ Woman ☐

If a man, has there ever been a woman CEO of the company? Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐

16. Does your company have a board of directors? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, what is the percentage of women board members? _____ % N/A ☐

17. If your company has a board, is there a Board President? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, is the President a man or a woman? Man ☐ Woman ☐

18. If your company has a board are there vice-presidents? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, how many are there and what is the % who are women? _____

19. Are there other company decision-making structures or key committees? Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐

If yes, are women present in these structures? Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐

If yes, please describe

20. Do female managers receive the same salary as male managers at the same level? Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐

If no, please explain

21. Are there differences for male and female managers in conditions for performance pay elements of the remuneration package?

To a great extent ☐ Somewhat ☐ To a small extent ☐ Not at all ☐ N/A ☐

If there are differences, please explain why

22. Do female managers receive the same benefits as male managers (travel allowance, vehicle, bonuses, pension contribution, etc.).

To a great extent ☐ Somewhat ☐ To a small extent ☐ Not at all ☐ N/A ☐

If there are differences, please explain why

23. Are managers involved in company or intra-company networking?

To a great extent ☐ Somewhat ☐ To a small extent ☐ Not at all ☐ N/A ☐

Are female managers as involved as male managers?

To a great extent ☐ Somewhat ☐ To a small extent ☐ Not at all ☐ N/A ☐

24. Are female managers involved in networking with professional women and business women associations?

To a great extent ☐ Somewhat ☐ To a small extent ☐ Not at all ☐ N/A ☐

25. Have women left your company to start their own businesses?

A few ☐ Many ☐ None ☐ N/A ☐

26. Does your company conduct exit interviews with employees who leave the company?

Some ☐ All ☐ None ☐ N/A ☐

If some, what is the criteria? _____

If exit interviews are conducted with some or all employees, have gender issues arisen?

Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐

If yes, please explain

27. Is retention of skilled women a challenge for your company?

To a great extent ☐ Somewhat ☐ To a small extent ☐ Not at all ☐ N/A ☐

Please indicate any other relevant data or information specific to your country.

Section D. Barriers to women's leadership

28. What are the barriers for women to rise to senior and top management in your company?

Please rank the 15 possible barriers listed below with 1 as the barrier you consider the most significant and 15 as the least significant barrier.

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Roles assigned by society to men and women | ☐ |
| Women with insufficient general or line management experience | ☐ |
| Few role models for women | ☐ |
| Masculine corporate culture | ☐ |
| Women have more family responsibilities than men | ☐ |
| Lack of company equality policy and programmes | ☐ |
| Gender equality policies in place but not implemented | ☐ |
| Men not encouraged to take leave for family responsibilities | ☐ |
| Inherent gender bias in recruitment and promotion | ☐ |
| No strategy for retention of skilled women | ☐ |
| Lack of leadership training for women | ☐ |
| Stereotypes against women | ☐ |
| Inadequate labour and non-discrimination laws | ☐ |
| Management generally viewed as a man's job | ☐ |
| Lack of flexible work solutions | ☐ |

Please indicate any other barriers including those which maybe specific to your country or region and related to laws and the cultural, social, political and economic context.

Section E. Measures to advance women in business and management

29. Please indicate from the list below those measures your company would consider implementing to advance women in business and management? Please rank the measures from 1 onwards in order of priority.

- Executive training for women ☐
- Mentoring scheme ☐
- Assigning women managers visible and challenging tasks ☐
- Exposing women to all company operations and functions ☐
- Making corporate culture to be more inclusive ☐
- Top level management support for a gender equality strategy ☐
- Awareness training for senior managers on the business case for more women in management ☐
- Flexible working arrangements ☐
- Recognition and support for women ☐
- Retention and re-entry schemes ☐
- Setting of targets and tracking progress ☐
- Appointing a woman as CEO ☐
- Appointment of women to board of directors ☐
- Focus groups for senior and mid-level women ☐
- Appointment of male gender champions in senior management and at board level ☐
- Making promotion paths and career advancement prospects clear for women ☐

Please indicate any other measures including those that may be specific to your country or region

Section F. Support mechanisms for companies to promote women in business and management

30. In what ways could your company most benefit from the support of your national employers' organization and the ILO to attract and retain skilled women and to promote more women as managers?

Please rank the 8 areas listed below with 1 being the area you consider the most beneficial for possible support and 8 as the least beneficial.

- Identifying the business case for women in management ☐
- Networking with other companies on good practices ☐
- Networking with women's business associations ☐
- Designing an equal opportunity policy ☐
- Developing a strategy to promote more women in management ☐
- Introducing a mentoring scheme ☐
- Designing a sexual harassment policy ☐
- Guides on measures and strategies to promote women in management ☐

Please indicate any other areas including those that may be specific to your country or region

Please email your responses to _____ with copy to _____

While the contents of your responses will be kept strictly confidential, please indicate if you would wish to have your company acknowledged or not in the global report as having responded to the survey.

Yes ☐ No ☐

THANK YOU!

Women in business and management: Gaining momentum in Asia and the Pacific

The International Labour Organization's Bureau for Employers' Activities conducted a global company survey in 2013 on gender diversity in the workplace. This report brings together data collected from this survey, specific to the Asia-Pacific region, and also incorporates other latest data to provide an overview of the status of women in business and management. While evidence is showing that gender diversity is good for business, and women increasingly represent an important source of talent, the data clearly illustrates a lack of women in top management positions and a concentration of women in certain types of management and occupations. Some progress has been made but much remains to be done in terms of gender equality in the workplace. The report serves to highlight the key role of employers' organizations in supporting business and advocating for gender equality and women's equal opportunity employment in the workplace and provides an overview of key actions for business.

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ISBN 978-92-2-129900-4