

## The SCORE Programme: Building the Capacity of Small and Medium Enterprises



**When:** 2009-2024



**Where:** Multiple regions



**Funding:** Multi-Bilateral Donors



**Website:** <https://www.ilo.org/empent/Projects/score/lang--en/index.htm>

Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises (SCORE) is an ILO programme seeking to improve the productivity and working conditions of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the manufacturing and service sectors through practical classroom training and in-factory consulting. It assists government agencies, training providers, industry associations and trade unions in Africa, Asia and the Pacific and the Americas,<sup>6</sup> by offering the SCORE Training to SMEs in order to help them develop cooperative working relations that can result in shared benefits for enterprise owners and workers. The training modules encompass workplace cooperation, quality improvement, resource efficiency, workforce management, safety and health at work, lean manufacturing, gender equality, responsible business, hospitality coaching and working time. The programme is supported by the Governments of Norway and Switzerland, among other donors in each country in which it operates, and managed by a team based in ILO country offices and headquarters.

The SCORE Programme fosters women's entrepreneurship in a twofold way, firstly by working with national implementing partners and building their capacity to become certified SCORE Trainers and provide training directly to women business owners in the manufacturing and service sectors with the soft and hard skills necessary to grow their business and, secondly, by fostering greater gender equality and women's economic empowerment in these sectors more broadly through a specific gender equality training module.

### The SCORE Gender Equality Training

The SCORE Training module 'Gender Equality - Boosting enterprise performance by advancing equal opportunities' helps SMEs to identify and address gender biases and support the implementation of measures to improve gender equality. Based on successful pilot training results, many implementing partners in other SCORE countries, including Ghana, Peru, and Indonesia included the training module in their training offering.

The Gender Equality module focuses on five key issues: voice equality, inclusive hiring, equal pay for work of equal value, work climate, and work-life harmony. It consists of an eight-month training and coaching process tailored to the specific needs of the SME and its workers. The four-step process includes a baseline assessment, manager-worker training, the development of an enterprise improvement plan and expert enterprise visits to provide support and advice.

<sup>6</sup> The specific countries in which SCORE is present are Bolivia, China, Colombia, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Peru, South Africa and Vietnam.

During its most recent phase (Phase III, 2017-2021), over 100 SCORE implementing partners across ten countries embedded and delivered SCORE Trainings, each adopting different business models tailored to the local political, economic, and social environment. The programme trained nearly 450 people (of whom about 40 percent women) on SCORE Training modules and methodology, benefiting over 2,150 SMEs across the world, and also actively advocated for the importance of SME support in improving productivity and working conditions, by engaging with over 3,500 policy makers and social partners, while at the same time ensuring gender parity in its training and advocacy efforts. The programme made significant strides toward fostering gender equality in SMEs. In Bolivia, for example, new training material on the SCORE services modality, which encourages representation of women in SCORE Training workshops as well as the inclusion of gender concerns in Enterprise Improvement Plans. In Colombia, the SCORE Programme implemented the Gender Equality module in several SMEs, including *Alqueria*, and *Constructora Colpatría*, as well as in the *Cámara de Comercio Hispano Colombiana* (the Spanish Chamber of Commerce), as shown in the box below. Moreover, as part of the Government's initiative to fight against gender-based violence during COVID-19 in Peru, the SCORE Programme presented the gender equality module, as a tool to implement public policies combatting gender-based violence in the workplace. Further, the SCORE Programme in Viet Nam presented the importance of gender equality at workplaces at the Viet Nam Human Resources Conference, which was attended by 700 participants and covered by over 25 mass media channels.

In Latin America and the South-East Asia sub-region, the Gender Equality module was delivered in the form of an online Masterclass, attracting lead buyers as well as trainers. The Spanish Masterclass in Latin America led to a Gender Improvement Plan in several companies. The Masterclass in Viet Nam also prompted SMEs to investigate preventative measures against violence and harassment, such as by installing closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras and establishing complaint procedures at the workplace. Further, the SME Technical Assistance Centre (SME TAC) also secured USD 45,000 from the Vietnamese national budget for 15 female-owned enterprises and/or enterprises with a high percentage of female employees to carry out training workshops using SCORE Training material and certified SCORE trainers. Experience from these Masterclasses identified interest from lead buyers on sustainability and gender equality, which should be tapped into to further raise awareness and make a business case for sustained gender equality.

### A Focus on Constructora Colpatría

Constructora Colpatría is a Colombian construction company with more than 40 years of operations in residential, commercial and infrastructure projects established in 1977 in Bogotá. Currently, it has a board of directors composed of 60 percent women (against an industry average of 40 percent) and employs about 600 direct employees in Colombia, 60 in Mexico and 100 in Peru.

The company took part in the Gender Equality module of the SCORE Training delivered by SCORE's implementing partner Equilatera and made significant contributions toward gender equality. A total of 392 employees from the company participated in the training, attending 2-hour workshops on inclusive hiring, transforming gender roles, inclusive communication, and unconscious biases. The training helped participants recognize deep-seated gender norms and biases within the company that limited equal opportunities and decent work for women. For instance, they identified roles in mid-level management and construction sites with significant gender imbalance in representation. To attract the best talent and reduce gendered inequalities in hiring, the company introduced gender-neutral job descriptions and anonymous CVs to their recruitment process. After a vacant position is advertised and CVs from applicants are received, this information is transferred to gender-neutral templates in order to eliminate any gender-specific information when shortlisting candidates.

Gender-disaggregated data from Constructora Colpatría (a new development for the company since participating in the SCORE Training intervention) shows that 7 percent more women than men reached the shortlisted top 3, and 16 percent more women than men were hired than baseline. Overall, the gender ratio in the company improved from 43 percent to 47 percent female workers during the 2019-21 period. Further, the progress of Constructora Colpatría encouraged the city of Bogotá and Colombia's Chamber of Construction (CAMACOL) alongside government institutions to implement surveys to diagnose the state of gender equality in the construction industry, thereby creating critical pathways to generate wider sector/policy level impact beyond the factory floor.

## Emerging Learnings

**Hold implementing partners accountable for gender inclusion.** The SCORE Programme has placed emphasis on identifying the right implementing partners and supporting them in becoming champions of gender equality. This entails holding them accountable for gender inclusion, not only in making sure that women are represented as beneficiaries but also in terms of gender awareness throughout the entire project cycle, among staff and trainers themselves.

**Move beyond mainstreaming by introducing gender-focused interventions.** SCORE's approach to gender equality evolved significantly over the years. From a gender-blind approach, to gender mainstreaming and, most recently, gender-focused interventions. In particular, the programme's experience demonstrates that gender mainstreaming is insufficient by itself to scale progress towards gender equality and that targeted interventions, such as the Gender Equality module, are equally important.

**Build momentum for gender equality by creating incentives for private companies.** As SCORE's experience demonstrates, combining training with some sort of incentives, such as an award that provides greater visibility with the government or investors, can be an effective strategy to help create momentum among private companies and push them to make commitments to promote gender equality.