



## Advancing gender equality in Colombia's dairy and construction industries



The SCORE module can be shaped to a company's business culture and implemented in incremental steps to connect gender equality with productivity, sustainability and progress.

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Over 450 workers across two enterprises were trained on concepts from the SCORE Training Gender Equality module - a simple, yet adaptable tool that helps enterprises to achieve their diversity, inclusion and equity goals.

COMPANY PROFILES	<b>Name</b>	Alquería	Constructora Colpatría
	<b>Location</b>	Colombia	Colombia, Mexico, Peru
	<b>Industry</b>	Dairy and food processing	Construction (residential, infrastructure and commercial)
	<b>Staff</b>	2,933 direct workers	Over 600 direct employees in Colombia, 60 in Mexico and over 100 in Peru
	<b>Established</b>	1959	1977
	<b>Owner</b>	Privately held	Grupo Colpatría

Operating for over 40 years, Constructora Colpatría is one of Colombia's oldest and largest construction companies, boasting an extensive portfolio of projects across Colombia and a growing number in Mexico and Peru. Alquería is Colombia's third-largest dairy company, which is no small feat in a country that is Latin America's second-largest dairy market.

In addition to being industry leaders, both companies aim to advance gender equality in their communities. Alquería has been working towards a gender equality strategy since 2019, while Constructora Colpatría's CEO, Andrés Lagarcha, has spearheaded gender equality initiatives since joining the company in 2018.

The ILO SCORE Training Gender Equality module (MIG SCORE in Spanish) was the perfect match. The module focuses on five spheres of action (shown in Figure 1): Voice equality, Inclusive hiring, Equal pay for work of equal value, Work climate, and Work-life harmony.

Equilatera, ILO SCORE's implementing partner in Colombia, advised the companies on how to get the most out of SCORE Training. Both established a baseline with the Gender Equality survey, "The Mirror", where they defined priorities and actions for change. Equilatera's experts visited the companies to offer advice, support, and follow-up as they implemented their Enterprise Improvement Plans (EIPs). Constructora Colpatria and Alquería made progress on all spheres of action, with notable advancements in three of those spheres.



Figure 1: SCORE Training Gender Equality module components

For Constructora Colpatria, the first step towards implementing SCORE Training was developing unbiased company policies and processes with the senior management. This included creating a gender equity team within their Human Resources division, training staff on multiple aspects of gender equality, and increasing female participation in their Board of Directors by 60 per cent. During this process, 392 employees participated in 2-hour workshops on inclusive hiring, transforming gender roles, inclusive communication and unconscious bias. All actions are outlined in Figure 2: Constructora Colpatria's EIP implementation timeline.

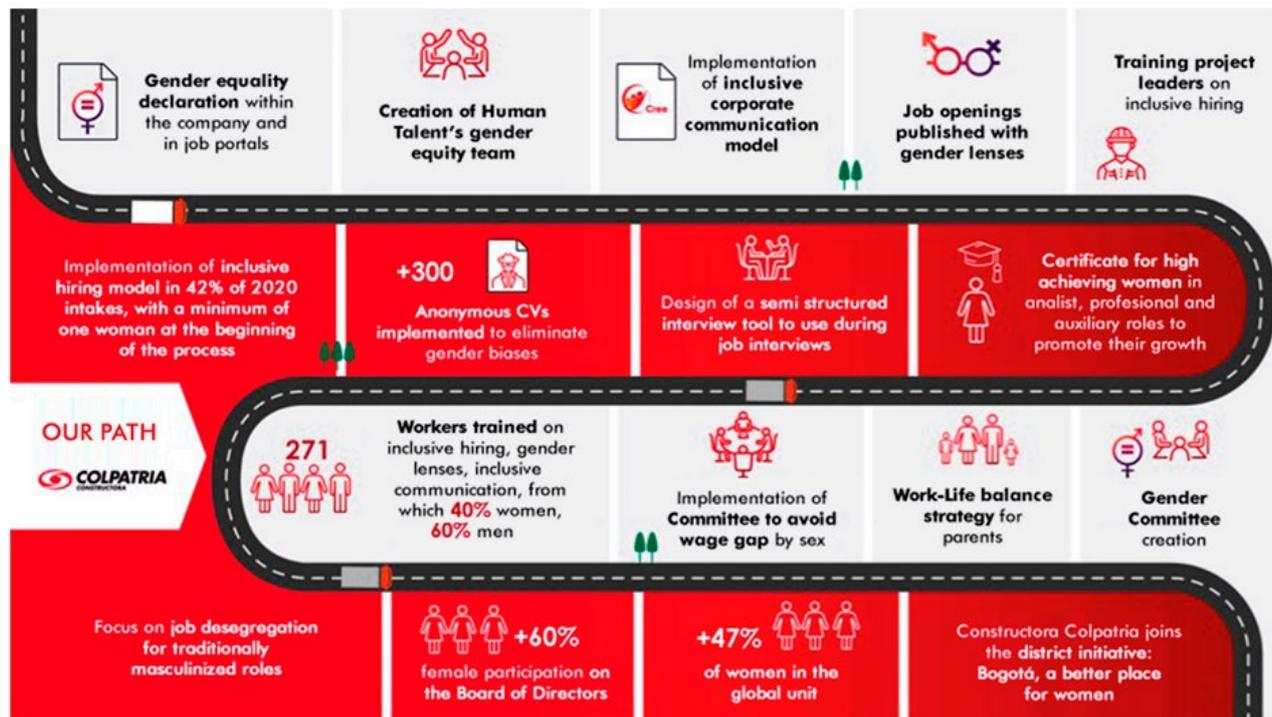


Figure 2: Constructora Colpatria's EIP implementation timeline



## Inclusive hiring

In an effort towards inclusive hiring practices, Constructora Colpatria adopted Anonymous CVs, which help companies to evaluate candidates regardless of gender, ethnicity, or other identifiable information. When Anonymous CVs were used in a sampled hiring process, data showed that 7 per cent more women than men make it to the top 3 finalists, and 16 per cent more women than men get hired. In hiring processes where Anonymous CVs were not used, the results were inverse with 28 per cent more men hired. While Anonymous CVs were slightly more labour-intensive to implement, Constructora Colpatria successfully used them for 43 per cent of total hires in 2020.

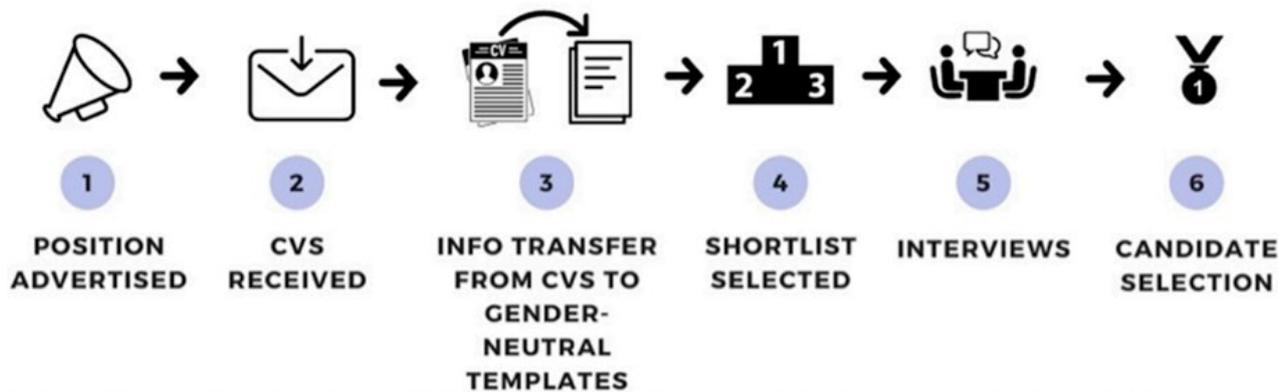


Figure 3: Anonymous CV implementation process

▶ An anonymous CV allows us to focus on the candidate's experience, skills, strengths, and weaknesses, omitting from this analysis factors that could hinder the decision-making process like origin, ethnicity, school or gender.

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## Equal pay for work of equal value

Alquería carried out a wage and occupational assessment which measured the company's progress towards equal pay. This led to a deeper understanding of glass ceilings and sticky floors that women in the company experience. Sticky floors refer to structural factors and social and cultural biases that limit women's advancement. For example, Alquería found that the Senior Logistics Assistant position was not an aspirational role for female employees, as it did not allow for adequate career advancement within the organization. This realization caused the company to redefine its plans and take steps to make this position more attractive to female employees.



## Work-life harmony

An employee survey at Constructora Colpatria revealed that the staff felt overwhelmed and overworked during the pandemic. In response, the company took steps to lift workers' spirits. They created committees to encourage team coffee breaks and remote leadership check-ins, and championed a "We are with you" program to stay close to the staff. At the same time, leaders listened to employee needs on work, family, and personal levels, recognizing that the latter two impact corporate life. To help employees balance work and family life, Alquería created a guide to help employees negotiate the disproportionate distribution of domestic work within families. This new style of "conscious leadership" helped workers to feel more comfortable raising sensitive issues both at work and at home.

## Outcomes

Constructora Colpatria and Alquería have shown remarkable progress since participating in SCORE Training Gender Equality module. Leaders expected diminished results in Constructora Colpatria's annual 2020 worker satisfaction survey due to the pandemic. Yet the opposite occurred where general satisfaction at the company increased by 2 per cent to 79 per cent, higher than their industry average. Constructora Colpatria's workforce is also more gender-balanced, increasing female workers from 43 to 47 per cent during 2019-2021.

Alquería's progress in gender equality has also inspired the company to make new forays on the sustainability front. They recently achieved B-Corporation status and now track social and environmental metrics alongside financial ones.

The effects of SCORE Training Gender Equality module haven't gone unnoticed by the Colombian government and the construction industry. Following Constructora Colpatria's leadership, the city of Bogotá and Colombia's Chamber of Construction (CAMACOL), alongside government institutions, are implementing surveys to diagnose the state of the industry in terms of gender equality.

## About SCORE Training

SCORE Training focuses on developing cooperative working relations resulting in shared benefits for enterprise owners and those who work there. The SCORE Training modules cover Workplace Cooperation, Quality Improvement, Resource Efficiency, Workforce Management, Safety and Health at Work, Lean Manufacturing, Gender Equality, Responsible Business, Hospitality Coaching and Working Time. Some modules also respond to crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Training formats vary, modules usually include a one/two-day classroom training for managers and workers, followed by on-site consultations with industry experts that help to put the training into action in the workplace, some are self-paced online.

### ► For more information on the SCORE Programme or SCORE Training, contact:

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