

Putting Gender Smart Commitments into Practice

SheWorks Year One Progress Report



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Putting gender smart commitments into practice

SheWorks year one progress report

SheWorks is the World Bank Group's global private sector partnership to improve employment opportunities and working conditions for more than 360,000 women by 2016 while also realizing business benefits. The partnership, launched by World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim at the 2014 Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) Annual Meetings and led by IFC's Gender Secretariat, includes 13 leading private sector companies. Three strategic partners, namely the EDGE Certified Foundation, the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the United Nations Global Compact, provide knowledge support and facilitate implementation of best practices.

Recognizing that investing in women's employment impacts the bottom line, many SheWorks members have been at the forefront of diversity and inclusion efforts. Through this partnership, members have pledged to share their experiences and do even more in their respective workplaces to advance women's employment. SheWorks focuses on learning, as well as leveraging the networks, expertise, and resources of its members and partners to share not only best practices but also what does *not* work while supporting women in the workplace. The goal is to serve as a catalyst to promote real change on the ground and help move the needle from "why" to "how." Members are engaging

TABLE 1. Summary of commitments made by SheWorks members

Commitment Category 1: Women in Leadership Set Targets & Increase Women in Leadership 5 companies Promotion at Parity / Mentorship / Sponsorship 6 companies	Commitment Category 2: Retention of Female Workforce (flexible work, childcare, and other policies) 5 companies	Commitment Category 3: Effective Anti-Sexual Harassment Mechanisms 3 companies
Commitment Category 4: Supporting Women-Owned Businesses in the Value Chain 2 companies	Commitment Category 5: Measuring and Reporting Conduct a Gender Assessment 5 companies Conduct an Employee Survey 4 companies Measure and report on progress 3 companies	Commitment Category 6: CEO Commits to Speak / WEPs Signature / Raise Awareness on the Business Case for Women's Employment as a Smart Business Strategy 10 companies



in peer learning and one-on-one discussions while widening the scope and depth of their women's employment and gender diversity initiatives. Members have also been actively implementing a variety of gender diversity and women's employment initiatives beyond their SheWorks commitments, which has enriched learning within SheWorks. Table 1 provides a snapshot of the commitments members have made as part of SheWorks.

As the partnership completes its first year in September 2015, this report captures aggregate progress towards realizing SheWorks commitments. It is exciting to note that **SheWorks** members are operating out of **nine countries** and in **almost 20 sectors**, including traditionally male-dominated industries such as real estate, telecom, construction, petrochemicals, energy, and information technology. SheWorks members have made 41 commitments, of which almost **90% have been realized or are ongoing**, with expected completion timeframes ranging from end of 2015 to mid-2016. **Women's employment numbers have gone up in almost half of all SheWorks member companies** since joining the partnership. **More than half of all members are also signatories of the UN Women and UN Global Compact's Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) CEO Statement of Support.** More detailed progress in each commitment category is as follows:

1: Women in leadership

OVERVIEW

- **Number of members that made this commitment:** 9 since inception, plus 1 additional member delivered on this commitment
- **Number of commitments made:** 18 out of which 10 achieved, 7 ongoing, and 1 not yet started.

THE BUSINESS CASE

Increasing the number of women in leadership has emerged as a critical topic for SheWorks members. This strong interest and commitment can be linked to the various business and social benefits of having a more gender diverse leadership. Latest research by SheWorks partner

ILO confirms that companies that have more women in top management perform better. Research shows that leadership teams that include more women are often more innovative and take more calculated risks.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND RESULTS

Ten members have implemented or are in the process of implementing a range of initiatives to realize this commitment, such as establishing sponsorship/mentorship programs, setting specific targets for increasing women in leadership, and promoting women at parity. Following a comprehensive gender assessment, which revealed that the company could further improve the recruitment and promotion of women managers, one member started developing more women leaders and promoting more women at parity.

To facilitate knowledge sharing and exchange of best practices within the group to help SheWorks members deliver on their commitments, IFC organized a learning event on sponsorship/mentorship programs to support women in leadership. SheWorks members valued learning from SheWorks member EY's extensive sponsorship/mentorship journey and lessons learned.

Various members in this category have stepped up efforts to implement leadership and career development programs in which more than 3,000 women employees on a leadership track have participated so far. Four members that made commitments in this category have reported an increase in the number of women in leadership, with one member reporting an increase in the proportion of women managers from 15% to 21%. Two members started sponsorship/mentorship programs and are currently monitoring results. One member plans to build its sponsorship program on the results of their ongoing firm-level gender assessment.

2: Retention of female workforce

OVERVIEW

- **Number of members that made this commitment:** 5
- **Number of commitments made:** 6, out of which 3 achieved and 3 ongoing with a long-term vision

THE BUSINESS CASE

Research suggests that companies that invest in women are likely to benefit from attracting and retaining the best talent, thereby also managing skill and talent shortages. Work-life balance policies can improve employee satisfaction and reduce costs by lowering absenteeism and increasing retention, thus enhancing productivity.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND RESULTS

SheWorks members in this category committed to implementing additional measures to retain women in their workforce, such as providing flexible work arrangements, child and elderly care, parental leave, and more broadly sharing best practices and policies to attract and retain female talent. One year into the SheWorks partnership, all five members have already improved their internal family and work-life balance policies. Members are continuously expanding family benefits and raising awareness about their policies.

Given the vast knowledge and experience of SheWorks members on this topic, IFC organized a series of learning events focused on different ways to attract, retain, and promote female talent. Topics included equal pay for equal work, effective parental leave and maternity return schemes, and successful women's networks and employee resource groups (ERGs). German software company and SheWorks member SAP's experience and lessons learned with respect to transforming their active women's network into a business resource group aligned with the company's business goals allowed SheWorks members to further reflect on and enhance their own networks and ERGs.

It was acknowledged that work-life balance policies are important for all employees, women and men. As a result of their efforts in this commitment category, members report an overall increase in employee self-esteem and sense of belonging. Members have also witnessed more diversity in the workforce as mothers who previously dropped out of the workforce or worked part-time now feel supported and return to the workplace due to flexible work arrangements. One member has become the only U.S. employer to offer a spectrum of child and elderly care support to its employees such as access to free tax and social worker services, online caregiver database, and

backup care. Another member has created online tools to effectively communicate about gender parity, diversity, and inclusion and position itself as a thought leader. One member is creating private sector and civil society partnerships to more effectively expand opportunities for women (and men) at work and has also developed a communications strategy to share best practices.

3: Effective anti-sexual harassment mechanisms

OVERVIEW

- Number of members that made this commitment: 3
- Number of commitments made: 3, out of which 2 achieved and 1 ongoing

THE BUSINESS CASE

Preventing and addressing sexual harassment in any context is the right thing to do. Sexual harassment can often result in high levels of stress and demotivation among employees, which leads to decreased productivity, compromised teamwork, increased absenteeism and turnover. It can result in costly litigation processes and hinder companies' access to a diverse talent pool if potential applicants fear harassment.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND RESULTS

SheWorks members in this category made a commitment to ensure that their anti-sexual harassment mechanisms are effective. Members highlight this as an ongoing effort, which they will continue to monitor this regularly. Members are also conducting trainings and awareness programs for employees to further strengthen their anti-sexual harassment policies and ensure their effectiveness. A SheWorks learning event on effective anti-sexual harassment mechanisms featured the lessons learned and impact of SheWorks member Gap Inc.'s "Zero Means Zero" policy on harassment.

Members that have further strengthened their anti-sexual harassment mechanisms as a result of this commitment have reported higher levels of awareness and sensitization amongst their employees. One member has fully

incorporated their anti-sexual harassment policy within their company code of conduct and as a result was able to better identify and address code of conduct violations. One member is currently undertaking extensive research to better understand the socio-cultural context and more effectively address sensitive and taboo issues.

4: Supporting women-owned businesses in the value chain

OVERVIEW

- Number of members that made this commitment: 2
- Number of commitments made: 2, both have been achieved with plans to further expand

THE BUSINESS CASE

Studies have shown that supporting women in the value chain results in stronger and larger supplier networks that contribute to higher input quality and more competitive prices over time. Additionally, supporting women entrepreneurs and enhancing their income generating capacity has wider socio-economic benefits at the employee, employer, community, and national levels as women often invest more in their families and communities.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND RESULTS

Two SheWorks members committed to sourcing from women entrepreneurs and/or supporting women-owned businesses and women's employment in their value chains. As a result, members are effectively linking policies targeting women employees in their workforce to investments in women's employment in the community. Both members have put in place innovative programs and strategies to realize their commitments. Training and capacity building have been the key focus of members in this category and they plan to continue scaling these efforts.

Initial results from the first few months of efforts made by the two members reveal that more than 200 women entrepreneurs have benefited from trainings in areas such as finance, marketing, business development, management, communication, as well as more technical skills related to

the specific needs of each business. Members report that supporting and training women entrepreneurs in the value chain has resulted in greater supply chain diversity, peer networks, and role models for other women to follow.

5: Measuring and reporting

OVERVIEW

- Number of members that made this commitment: 7 since inception, plus 1 additional member delivered on this commitment by fulfilling 2 commitments
- Number of commitments made: 12, out of which 5 achieved, 4 ongoing, and 3 not yet started

THE BUSINESS CASE

What gets measured gets done. Persistent gender gaps in recruitment or promotion are often the result of unconscious biases that lead employers to base their decisions on stereotypes rather than individual performance. This adversely impacts diversity, employee morale, and productivity. Gender assessments and employee surveys enable companies to identify, measure, and quickly address such gaps. Gender certifications, including the EDGE (Economic Dividends for Gender Equality) Certification provided by SheWorks partner EDGE Certified Foundation, enable companies to gain visible recognition and a competitive advantage.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND RESULTS

Commitments in this category include conducting a gender assessment and a workplace gender equality employee survey to measure whether policies and practices have the desired impact. Members also committed to measuring and reporting on progress. So far, two members have completed firm-level gender assessments and two have conducted employee surveys. Two gender assessments and an employee survey are ongoing. Having witnessed other members benefit from measuring and reporting on gender results, one member that had not previously made any commitments in this category conducted an employee survey and also

reported gender results using Global Reporting Initiative sustainability indicators.

Members have made great strides in not only identifying gaps but also addressing them. As a result of a gender assessment, one member took systematic steps to increase the number of women managers from 15% to 21% and achieve a high ratio of supervisors (42%). Another member made efforts to implement targeted recruitment and leadership development programs to increase the number of women being hired and promoted. A gender-specific employee survey prompted a SheWorks member to launch a flexible work policy for all employees. Recognizing the benefits of conducting such surveys, the member has decided to repeat this exercise annually.

6: CEO commits to speak / WEPs signature / raise awareness on the business case for women's employment as a smart business strategy

OVERVIEW

- Number of members that made this commitment: 9 since inception, plus 1 additional member delivered on this commitment
- Number of commitments made: 10, out of which 7 achieved and 3 ongoing

THE BUSINESS CASE

Leadership support and endorsement are critical to fostering gender diversity and equality in an organization, which impacts the bottom line. Leaders have the power to influence key decisions, ensure that gender smart policies are implemented throughout the organization, hold staff accountable, and pave the way for addressing corporate gender gaps in attracting and retaining the best talent. Leaders can also lead by example internally and externally and build partnerships. The UN WEPs, for example, seek to build on leaders as change agents and encourage CEOs to sign the WEPs CEO Statement of Support.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND RESULTS

This commitment to external outreach is an indication that members are not only dedicated to promoting gender equality within their workplaces but also in the larger community. All nine members in this category have surpassed expectations and engaged in various public awareness activities since joining SheWorks. Other members that did not specifically make this commitment also engaged in such efforts. For example, one member signed the UN WEPs even though they had not initially made a commitment to do so.

Members found it particularly valuable to communicate about the benefits of investing in women's employment around International Women's Day. Members celebrated the occasion with senior management interviews and print and social media campaigns and one member earned international recognition for its special press ads. Overall, senior management across all nine members in this commitment category participated in more than 50 national and international events and interviews to promote women's employment as a smart business strategy. SheWorks members shared their knowledge and experiences at international events and conferences organized by the ILO, the World Economic Forum, and the UN, such as the UN WEPs Annual Event and the UN 70th Anniversary, as well as other international, regional, and industry specific events such as the Mobile World Congress, the White House Summit for Working Families,



Photo 1 - Zulekha Hospital's senior management celebrated their SheWorks membership on International Women's Day.
Photo courtesy of Zulekha Hospitals 2015.

Ceres Conference, and CGI America, to influence policy-makers and private sector companies beyond SheWorks.

The efforts of SheWorks members were covered by renowned business magazines such as *Forbes* and various print and TV platforms from San Francisco to London and Dubai. More than half (eight out of 13) of SheWorks members are also signatories of the UN WEPs, further cementing their commitment to advancing women as employees.

Taking SheWorks to the next level

In this fast paced world, virtual communication becomes critical. SheWorks members made efforts to also come together face-to-face several times during the past year, which further enhanced the partnership and built trust and rapport. In many instances, SheWorks members are now in regular contact with each other beyond the SheWorks work program to benefit from each others' experiences. These face-to-face opportunities included a SheWorks panel at the 2015 UN WEPs Annual Event, where SheWorks members Care.com, Gap Inc., and SAP SE and partner EDGE Certified Foundation shared lessons learned while putting action into best practices.

SheWorks members and partners report that they found the SheWorks experience to be very rewarding.



Photo 2 - SheWorks panel at the 2015 UN WEPs Annual Event in New York City.

The SheWorks knowledge-sharing model is now being leveraged by the UN WEPs. With the establishment of the UN WEPs Leadership Group's first Community of Practice, SheWorks knowledge is already being shared with the group's 40 public and private sector members, with the goal to eventually reach more than 1,000 UN WEPs signatories. Moreover, in search of the best experts and knowledge, SheWorks collaborated with and benefited from leaders in their respective fields, such as the Center for Talent Innovation, Britain's Equality and Human Rights Commission, and Mercer. Such partnerships are continuing and will allow SheWorks to widen and deepen its impact.

IFC Gender Secretariat is now gearing toward the launch of the 2016 SheWorks Knowledge Report, which will consolidate the valuable learning and best practices generated from SheWorks so that they can be replicated in other companies, industries, and regions in the years to come. In response to childcare emerging as a priority issue for various SheWorks members, the World Bank Group has launched the *Tackling Childcare* project examining public and private sector models for supporting childcare. Future areas of collaboration with partners and members have also been identified, which will help SheWorks become bigger and better.

For more information, please visit the IFC Gender Secretariat website (www.ifc.org/gender)



Photo 3 - This illustration captures discussions during the ILO conference to identify steps to accelerate women's leadership in business and management.

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