

Entry for GIZ Gender Competition 2024

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Gender diversity management – how to pave the way for more diversity and gender equality within companies?

Context

Despite impressive economic growth in the past decade, over half of Mozambicans still live in poverty, and opportunities for formal employment are extremely limited; only 12% of the people working in Mozambique receive a regular salary. Moreover, formal employment is skewed towards men, while women disproportionately work in informal labour activities, without any form of insurance or formal social security. Increasing the participation of women in the formal private sector can transform Mozambique's human capital and dramatically increase prosperity.

At the same time, evidence is mounting on the business benefits of employing women, including having a wider, deeper swath of talent to solve problems, spark innovation and mirror a company's own customer base. But currently, in many workplaces in Mozambique, some gender inequality persists, including no mandate for equal pay, no law on non-discrimination in hiring, and weak machinery for implementing sexual harassment legislation.

Furthermore, business policies often disadvantage women by taking men as a norm and failing to accommodate women's particular situations and needs. To address these challenges, the E4D programme has launched a new project to break the barriers women face through awareness raising about the benefits of more gender equality as well as practical implementation of training and guidance for companies to transform their culture and become more gender equal. Making work environments more welcoming for women will contribute to inclusive and sustainable economic growth.



Strategy

This E4D project “Business for Equality” seeks to ignite behavioural change on learnt attitudes and societal norms relating to gender relations and women at work. One of the project’s main components is a media campaign for the broader audience. Utilising social media and other channels, this campaign creates awareness on gender diversity and inclusion among private sector actors in Mozambique. A second key component involves direct engagement with the private sector through workshops for executive leaders and employees. These workshops encourage personal reflection around gender diversity and inclusion, including themes such as existing gender norms and their impact on the corporate environment, unconscious gender bias related to women’s access and progression in the formal labour market, the benefits of diversity and the benefits of a favourable and empowering work environment. In addition to the workshops, two selected companies are supported through an entire journey of corporate transformation, building a more diverse and inclusive working environment.

Committed to “Gender Action Learning” the approach involves understanding how power imbalances affect corporate decision-making and a conscious reflection on formal and informal organizational rules to understand how a company’s culture can be strengthened to create an inclusive working environment for everyone. Informed by a diversity and inclusion diagnosis, using qualitative interviews with leadership and staff, training packages were tailored to different target groups performing different organizational roles including:

1. An induction week with a focus on soft skills development for all new joiners. The session focused on self-reflection, sharing emotions, collaboration, and self-confidence and was folded into the induction week carried out routinely by the private sector companies.
2. A training course targeting middle management, the people managers at the heart of the organization, to support them to become inclusive leaders.
3. A series of workshops with key decision-makers on inclusive policies, corporate change and the prioritization of projects and spending to achieve greater diversity and inclusion.
4. Specific activities, depending on the private sector partner’s needs, like for example a process of collaborative support to, the human resources department and the existing team of trainers of trainers to ensure sustainable change.

Partner

E4D’s is collaborating in this project with MUVA, a non-governmental organisation that works with the private sector, the public sector and civil society to identify and reduce the barriers that exclude women from access to decent work. MUVA has experience working with Mozambique’s private sector to facilitate a journey of corporate reflection on gender diversity and inclusion that, through increased awareness and changing attitudes, results in context-specific solutions to address barriers women face to access decent work and progress within the formal private sector.

As one of the key private sector partners E4D was able to win Electricidade de Moçambique (EDM). EDM is a public-private company, representing a mayor part of the formal employment in

Mozambique. Out of EDM's 3,700 employees 18 percent are female, with women largely occupying administrative and non-technical roles in business development, human resources and finance. Roughly 25 percent of middle management positions are occupied by women but only one out of seven Board members is female. As other companies operating in largely male-dominated sectors, EDM faces a range of challenges that limit the representation and professional advancement of women. Wide-spread gender stereotypes and unquestioned assumptions of what women can, cannot and should not do ("Women shouldn't climb utility poles.") push women into non-technical roles or hinder their career development. In particular pregnant women and mothers face discrimination due to norms and expectations, largely from their male colleagues, that care responsibilities negatively affect women's professional performance. When they return from maternity leave, women are often involuntarily transferred from technical to administrative positions. Throughout the organization, strong hierarchies and invisible power dynamics determine company culture and the relationship between staff.

Impact

This E4D project has raised awareness of the benefits of gender diversity within private sector companies in Mozambique. The project serves as proof of concept for the impact of tailored solutions that support women at work and create a more gender friendly work environment. Through a media campaign more than 100 companies were reached and participated actively as ambassadors of gender equality. Furthermore, 60 executive leaders from different companies have been trained. Two companies, one of them EDM, were selected for an in-depth transformative journey.

While EDM's 40 percent women by 2030 objective, the Gender Audit and Gender Strategy clearly showed the utility's willingness to drive gender equality, it was largely a theoretical commitment without concrete steps to pave the way for EDM to foster inclusion and reach its ambitious targets. Therefore, one of the key objectives of the MUVA training process was to initiate the implementation of the Gender Strategy. Specific initiatives, informed by the action plans have already started: EDM has made adjustments to the recruitment process (e.g., greater diversity on the interview panels and awareness raising among hiring managers), has integrated the diversity and inclusion training in an expanded induction process for all new joiners delivered by EDM trainers and has initiated scholarships for young women in technical fields. The individual action plans have in the meantime evolved into a costed operational plan, owned and driven by EDM's "Forum Mulher", which includes women from all parts of the organization including human resources which remains a powerful driver of change at EDM

Anecdotal impression

Organizational change and inclusion take time. In the words of one MUVA facilitator: "We cannot expect big changes straight away, but we want to see cracks." What are these cracks? It is a female employee taking the stage and talking to a large group of colleagues in Nampula despite being extremely nervous. Women starting to question if certain roles are indeed only for men. It is a male EDM manager explaining: "I pay much more attention to the progress of women within the company. I am mindful of this, particularly the disparities across sectors and activities." It is a director inviting a female colleague to work alongside him, to shadow him. Or more technicians accepting women to work in the field alongside them.

Next step: Scaling-up

With the experience gained via E4D in Mozambique, the GG-2 programme “Employment for Development Employment/Promotion for Women for the Green Transformation in Africa” is now preparing to scale up and introduce a regional project on gender diversity management into all of its partner countries (South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Mozambique and Malawi).



Why we believe we should win:

There are many great programs that train women in male-dominated professions. Training content is adapted and women are empowered with soft skills training. However, one component is missing: The preparation of future employers! Companies need to be aware of the change processes that a more diverse workforce entails. Workplaces must be adapted to different needs and workforces must be supported. Otherwise, there is a risk that well-trained women will not stay in the company for long or will not return to work if they take maternity leave. Especially in an LDC like Mozambique, there is still a long way to go to achieve a more gender-equitable distribution of opportunities in the future. The private sector must be a partner in this.

COMO A INCLUSÃO E IGUALDADE DE GÉNERO PODE IMPACTAR AS EMPRESAS E ORGANIZAÇÕES?



Aumenta a motivação numa cultura organizacional mais inclusiva com aprimoramento da ética, sem assédio ou micro agressões, aumentando o engajamento e a confiança da equipe ao apoiar acções para o aumento de consciência e mudanças de atitudes e comportamentos.



Contribui para uma **mentalidade de inovação** ao ter mecanismos internos para participação na tomada de decisões e informação sobre decisões tomadas e criar as condições para uma comunicação não violenta, com escuta e feedback.



Aumenta a capacidade de atrair e reter talentos ao remover barreiras e criar ambientes e contextos de oportunidades melhorando as qualificações profissionais das mulheres, projectando as suas carreiras, alavancando a sua liderança com protecções legais, políticas de benefícios e promoções, e procedimentos contra as violações baseados no género.



Possibilita o aumento de produtividade da empresa por ter estratégias e planos que priorizam as mudanças culturais. Desta forma tem uma equipe mais motivada e uma marca que agrega valor para inclusão e diversidade.



Dá suporte para o crescimento e confiança, posicionando as empresas mais perto dos seus clientes ao ter estratégias e planos operacionais que **posicionam a marca** em prol da inclusão e diversidade.