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für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Gender Competition 2023 Entry by GIZ TextILES Project

**Output 3 Sustainable Business development and output 4 Fostering employment &
Employability**

Submitted By:

Muhammad Ubaid (Component Manager)

Asma Rashid (Technical Advisor Business Development)

Saira Arshad (Technical Advisor HRM)

Umar Farooq (Technical Advisor Sustainability & Innovation)

30th November 2023

Gender Competition 2023

Context:

In the heart of Pakistan's vibrant economy, the textile and fashion industry serve as a crucial economic pillar, contributing 8.5% to the GDP and employing over 45% of the nation's workforce. Despite the challenges posed by a global pandemic, this sector has displayed resilience, underscoring its robust growth and vital role in sustaining livelihoods.

Our collaborative initiative is driven by a mission to bridge the gap between the flourishing industry and an often-overlooked sector, focusing on a vulnerable group that includes returning migrants, transgenders, COVID-affected individuals, religious minorities, differently abled individuals, and women having limited opportunities, widows and single mothers. Through a comprehensive strategy encompassing identification, engagement, skill development, and employment measures, we aim not only to address the pressing need for employment but also to become a beacon for diversity and inclusion within the textile and fashion landscape.

In the current social landscape, women face persistent challenges that impede their progress and well-being. The prevalence of patriarchy, coupled with limited access to resources, creates barriers hindering the advancement of women. Deep-seated stereotypes perpetuate perceptions of ongoing issues for females, contributing to a pervasive lack of confidence among women.

At the industry level, challenges persist with a lack of gender-inclusive measures, limited policy implementation, and insufficient support for women. Hostile working environments, the absence of anti-harassment policies, and a gender pay gap further compound difficulties. Addressing these requires collective efforts for a more equitable environment.

Our proactive approach starts with a detailed referral system in partner factories to identify the vulnerable group. Empowerment involves engagement events, psycho-social assessments, and skill evaluations, ensuring a smooth transition into the textile industry. Beyond engagement, our efforts focus on employability with skill assessments, training programs, and on-the-job assignments, guided by DFS principles and HR strategies. Advocating for diversity, we establish inclusive policies in partner factories, aiming to provide job placements and instill a sense of belonging, envisioning a future where diversity defines Pakistan's textile industry.

1- Promoting Gender Equality: (Interventions, Approaches, Result& Impact)

The GIZ TextILES Project implemented the following approaches and interventions to promote women's employment and gender equality in the textile sector of Pakistan, specifically targeting the Punjab region.

Interventions and Approaches:

Policy Development:

- ✓ Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
- ✓ Anti-harassment Policy.
- ✓ Gender inclusive Recruitment policy – we have included measures/provisions for providing equal employment opportunities,
- ✓ Grievance Redressal Policy (Grievance Committee formed, and females were part of the committee).
- ✓ Formulated talent development and turnover control strategies with a focus on women.

Approaches: Awareness Sessions and Workshops

- ✓ ToT (Training of Trainers) on Grievance Mechanism

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- ✓ Development of Change Management Teams (CMTs) and Mini CMTs at factory level to bring about change
- ✓ Seeds (Skill Enhancement and Employee Development training) VAT
- ✓ Psycho-Social Value-Added Training
- ✓ Gender Training and sensitization workshops for promoting gender equality.
- ✓ Value Added Sensitivity and Productivity Training Sessions
- ✓ Information Sessions/career counselling
- ✓ Information Sessions for Trans-genders
- ✓ Capacity development of HR staff for Gender Inclusive Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Development of Modules and Documentation of Success Stories:

- ✓ Developed and documented success stories of women employment and gender equality for learning and exchange of knowledge
- ✓ Development of ToT on new modules Participation of female and making them empower to become consultant.
- ✓ PIQC is going to launch pink batch of DfS diploma.
- ✓ Development of three complete modules along with ready-use-strategies to promote gender equality in the industry: 1- Advanced HR Strategies for business development, 2- Gender Equality, 3- Organizational development & organizational behaviour

Results:

Ten partner organizations have successfully increased the ratio of female workers in their factories. Additionally, local consulting firms have achieved a 5% increase in their female staff composition. A total of 4,901 females underwent technical skills training in areas like stitching, subsequently securing employment in factories.

Furthermore, four female trainers have been capacitated to lead on-the-job training centers, overseeing four dedicated centers. In a concerted effort to enhance female workers' skills, four partner factories have established female-oriented on-the-job training centers. These centers focus on specialized training programs exclusively designed for women.

Moreover, a diverse group of 2,370 participants, both male and female, engaged in sessions covering Skill Enhancement and Employee Development, Psycho-Social Support, Gender Equality, Value-added Sensitivity and Productivity Training, and Information Sessions/Career Counselling.

Inclusivity extends to special sessions designed for the transgender community, with 88 participants benefiting from tailored programs and support.

Impact:

These initiatives reflect a dedicated commitment to fostering inclusive workplaces. Adopting diversity and inclusion policies, implementing anti-harassment measures, and establishing grievance handling protocols showcase a proactive approach prioritizing the well-being of all employees such as Breast cancer awareness campaigns throughout partner factories. Notably, Crescent and Dekalb's special female production units, along with Crescent Textiles' unique all-female-operated factory, stand as remarkable endeavours promoting gender equality at the factory level, challenging traditional norms.

Active female participation in change management teams is pivotal, fostering diverse perspectives for effective organizational transformations. The integration of awareness sessions, key performance indicators (KPIs) for gender equality, and training workshops contributes to positive cultural change. Sustaining these efforts is paramount, advocating for advanced Human Resource Management (HRM) strategies and providing ongoing support. Documenting and sharing success stories with partners facing challenges will create a collaborative network, ensuring a transformative impact on workplace dynamics.

2- Gender as a Quality Feature of Our Work:

GIZ is deeply committed to gender equality in sustainable development, garnering recognition from stakeholders. A key partner aims for a 50% female workforce by 2030. Our collaboration with Crecent Textile Mills resulted in the introduction of a groundbreaking product line, proudly labelled as "Made by Women," emphasizing the empowerment and recognition of female contributions. In parallel, Dekalb has taken a pioneering step by establishing a dedicated female production unit within its facilities, exemplifying the proactive promotion of gender equality at the factory level. Nazran Pvt. Ltd. established a female training center, while four partner factories established on-the-job training for female workers. The impact of these efforts is evident in the substantial number of 4,901 females who underwent technical skills training, particularly in areas like stitching.

Collaborating with PIQC, a local service provider and GIZ partner, highlights our commitment to supporting initiatives that promote gender inclusivity. The upcoming launch of a pink batch for the DfS diploma signifies a concerted effort to address gender-specific needs and challenges. The partner factories, now actively championing gender equality, have also embraced and run breast cancer awareness campaigns contributing to the overall well-being of female employees.

3- Implementing Feminist Core Principles:

The Federal Government's feminist core principles drive our project, focusing on integrating human rights-based approaches and dismantling structural causes of inequality. We prioritize gender-transformative strategies and embrace intersectional, post-colonial, and power-critical perspectives.

Implementation:

To actualize these principles, our project team facilitated and capacitated the industry in policy development. This includes policies for Diversity and Inclusion, Anti-harassment, and Gender-inclusive Recruitment. Further, talent development and turnover control strategies with a specific focus on women have been formulated. Initiatives such as Awareness Sessions, Training of Trainers on Grievance Mechanism, and the establishment of Change Management Teams at the factory level aim to drive positive change. Skill Enhancement and Employee Development training (Seeds VAT), Psycho-Social Value-Added Training, and Gender Training sessions contribute to holistic employee development. Capacity development of HR staff for Gender Inclusive Key Performance Indicators is prioritized, ensuring a comprehensive approach to measuring and fostering gender equality. The project also focuses on promoting success stories, developing training modules, and empowering females for leadership.

4- Cooperation:

Cooperation has flourished through the adept use of a Community of Practices (COP) platform, fostering collaboration among various stakeholders, including partner factories and experts. This collaborative environment has extended beyond the immediate project scope, leading to the development of an HR COP within the broader Community of Practice. Additionally, using the Textile Industry Sustainability Forum (TISF) platform further amplifies the collaborative efforts, providing a dedicated space for dialogue, learning and exchange of knowledge and best practices. In the pursuit of promoting gender equality, key collaborators such as partner factories, experts, academia, the Ministry of Commerce, and textile associations have played instrumental roles. The

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shared goals and strategies are encapsulated in a meticulously developed action plan developed and implemented by the COP, ensuring a concerted effort towards achieving international obligations and requirements. The alignment with the Textile Policy of Pakistan 2025 further reinforces the commitment to overarching industry goals for gender equality.

Navigating challenges, the initiative encountered initial reluctance among partners to share their best practices. To overcome this hurdle, strategic engagement and transparent communication were employed, fostering an environment of trust and collaboration. The establishment of platforms like COP and TISF provided structured avenues for partners to comfortably share insights, contributing to a more cohesive and effective approach in advancing gender equality within the textile industry.

Below are the success factors of the project's achievements:

1. Shared vision and common goals
2. Capacity Development led to Empowerment & career growth.
3. Integrating Business Excellence with Gender Equality

Conclusion:

In summary, the integrated strategies, approaches, methodology and initiatives acted as transformative force in fostering gender equality within Pakistan's textile sector. Through collaborative and innovative initiatives, the project has succeeded in reshaping workplace dynamics and challenging entrenched gender norms. The integration of feminist core principles into policy development, coupled with a focus on capacity development and the synergy between business excellence and gender equality, has propelled meaningful change. The shared vision among collaborators, including partner factories, experts, academia, and government bodies, has been instrumental in driving this impactful journey towards a more inclusive and equitable industry.

Looking ahead, the enduring commitment to sustaining these efforts and upholding gender-related goals is paramount. The project's significance lies not only in the tangible results achieved but in the lasting impact on cultural and systemic shifts within the textile industry. By nurturing a collaborative environment, fostering empowerment, and continually integrating gender equality into business practices, the project sets a precedent for ongoing dedication to the cause. This journey underscores the importance of collective commitment to creating workplaces where diversity is celebrated, empowering individuals irrespective of gender, and contributing to a vibrant and equitable future for the textile sector in Pakistan.