

WEPS IN ACTION



PRINCIPLE 4

**Promote education,
training and professional
development for women**

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CASE STUDY: AMFORI EDUCATION ON GENDER EQUALITY IN BUSINESS

LESSONS LEARNED

- Signing the WEPs was a step towards gender equality and gender-inclusive practices, through implementing measures such as training for leadership and management.
- Establishing gender-responsive policies and approaches and pursue responsible business practices help both organizations and their stakeholders to advance gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Securing support for training at the highest level of an organization is key to ensuring staff awareness and education, helping them to transfer their learning into good practices.
- Developing and raising awareness around key performance indicators early on to ensure actions are measured and reward-ed helps to keep the training on track to achieve its goals.

CONTEXT

Amfori is a leading non-profit global business association that enables organizations to enhance prosperity, use natural resources responsibly and drive open trade. It has 61 employees and represents more than 2,400 business members with a combined turnover of EUR 1.5 trillion.

Based in Belgium, amfori has offices in Bangladesh, Germany, Hong Kong and India with representatives in 13 countries.

Amfori believes that a broad gender-responsive organizational approach help advance fair and sustainable supply chains. In 2018, amfori launched a Women's Empowerment Programme in Bangladesh, China and India to promote gender equality in supply chains and to raise awareness of the challenges women face at work.

In February 2020, amfori signed the WEPs and is encouraging its members to sign, too.

A spokesperson for the company said: "Signing the WEPs provides opportunities for us to address gender in our own operations and supply chains and in those of our members – from the C-Suite to the factory floor. This should not only help boost our credibility as a gender-responsive association but provide us with first-hand knowledge of the various issues that arise from empowering women in the workplace and in supply chains."

ACTIONS

In September 2019, amfori introduced a series of trainings for its staff and network representatives on gender equality and the power of inclusive organizations. The association wanted to enhance its ability to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and saw the trainings as a way of preparing for signing the WEPs.

Its trainings were rolled out for amfori leadership and staff on:

- Everyday gender equality issues
- Gender parity in leadership
- Gender pay gaps
- Internal corporate documents utilized gender-inclusive language.

The trainings were run by an external provider with the first training focusing on understanding diversity and inclusion, the business case for gender equality, unconscious bias, key skills of inclusive leaders and managers, and how to build an inclusive work culture. A more in-depth second training included practical exercises for incorporating gender equality into the association's mission, communications and action plan moving forward.

All staff were invited to the first training including the President and some members of the Executive Team. The second training included representatives from each Function (Department) who are represented on the cross-Function Gender Taskforce.

The trainings were supported at the highest level by amfori President Christian Ewert who also participated, thus reinforcing his commitment to gender equality. Vice-President for Public Affairs Stephanie Luong played a key role in arranging the trainings throughout the organization.

The targets for amfori's gender equality strategy run from 2020-2022, including additional training:

- All key staff trained on gender equality and gender bias by September 2020
- Anti-harassment officers trained by September 2021
- Human Resources department trained by September 2022.

By December 2022 amfori plans to be well positioned among other business associations with the expertise, tools, supportive stakeholders, and key support services for businesses to advance gender equality in both the workplace and supply chains.

The KPIs for amfori are the:

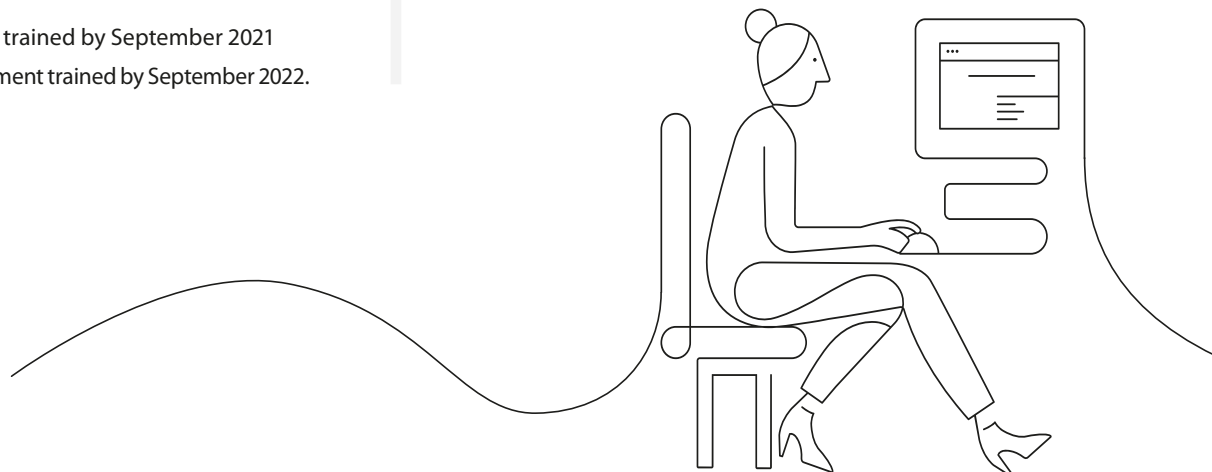
- Number of trainings
- Number of women senior level managers
- Average rating of trainings by participants.

The stakeholder engagement team oversees the implementation of this measure and monitors progress alongside the project management office manager.

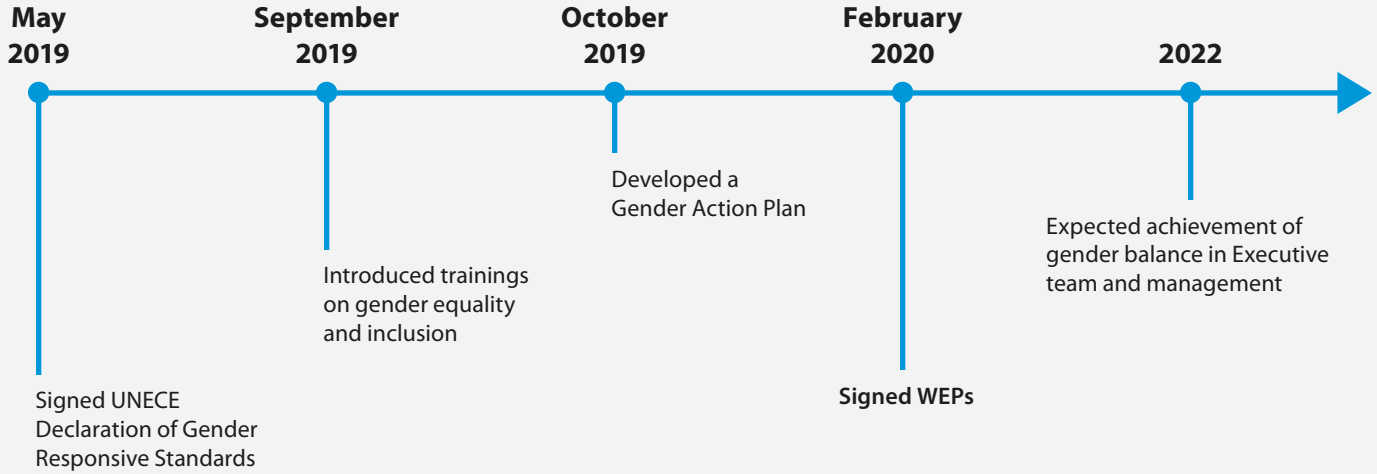
As of 2020, amfori has run two trainings related to gender equality and inclusion within the organization. As a result, all amfori's internal documents utilize gender inclusive terms and all major amfori position papers are subject to a gender lens. The organization has recruited gender experts in its Stakeholder Advisory Council and it will ensure gender balance among its plenary speakers at its UO 2020 Conference.

Amfori regularly shares progress updates through 'lunch and learn' meetings, project reports, Stakeholder Advisory Council meetings with staff, regular reports to UNECE and other key stakeholders.

Trainer Isabella Lenadurzzi said: "The business case for women maintains that companies that have diversity and manage it properly, make better decisions, produce better products, and retain several key business advantages over more homogeneous companies."



TIMELINE



CHALLENGES

Time was a major challenge for amfori in implementing effective trainings for busy leadership and management teams. Identifying which key staff to select for specialized trainings was an additional hurdle.

Advance notice of the trainings enabled the leadership team to re-define priorities in order to attend. The Stakeholder Engagement Team found that consulting with managers allowed them to identify the key staff for training.

CHALLENGE

Finding the time for busy leadership and management teams to attend trainings

Selecting and identifying staff for specialized trainings

Meeting with leadership teams to reprioritize tasks

Consulting with managers helped to determine which key staff would benefit and implement the outcomes when back at work

HOW IT WAS ADDRESSED

RESULTS

The most significant outcome of the amfori trainings is a remarkable understanding and awareness of gender equality, gender bias and the power of inclusion among amfori staff. As of September 2020, amfori has seen an improved performance in all staff, women and men, plus greater credibility, visibility and more opportunities for mobilizing resources.

After each training, staff were required to submit feedback through a survey. The trainings and survey results were then discussed at an amfori Gender taskforce meeting. Many of the elements from the training were included in amfori's current Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As a business association, amfori has a strong commitment on supporting gender equality and women's empowerment. This, in addition to support from the amfori's Executive Team, was key to the successful implementation of the training. The fact that staff were already interested in equality and diversity issues added to the momentum.

amfori recommends introducing KPIs early to ensure that actions are measured and rewarded throughout the training series. This helps the training to run smoothly.








A spokesperson for the company said: "Ensuring equality is like driving a car up the hill. You have to keep your foot on the accelerator otherwise you'll roll back down the hill really quickly."


Without securing support for this training at the leadership level, all the hard work and effort of implementing the training can spiral backward – amfori believes leadership support is critical to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment within the organization, to all member companies and throughout the supply chain.

THE ROLE OF WEPs


Signing the WEPs has galvanized amfori's work on sustainability and its work on gender equality. It has extended its focus from supply chains, to the office and broader workplace. amfori has developed a new service for its membership, supporting them to embrace the WEPs. Most importantly, the WEPs will support amfori in advancing the SDGs.



- Principle 1  Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality.
- Principle 2  Treat all women and men fairly at work- respect and support human rights and nondiscrimination.
- Principle 3  Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers.
- Principle 4  Promote education, training and professional development for women.
- Principle 5  Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women.
- Principle 6  Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy.
- Principle 7  Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality.

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Funded by:

Produced by:

In support of:



European Union



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