

# WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES

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2020 UN Women Asia-Pacific WEPs Awards Regional Awardee Profile



**Nguyen Thi Bich Van**  
Chairman

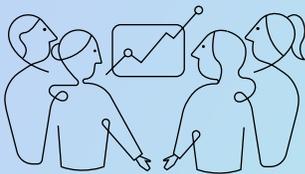
## Unilever Viet Nam

### Unilever

**Country:** Viet Nam  
(branches in 66 countries)

**Employees:** 1,001-5,000  
**Industry:** Consumer Goods

**Website**  
[www.unilever.com.vn](http://www.unilever.com.vn)



### Increasing Women in Leadership Positions

In its Global Gender Gap Report 2020, the World Economic Forum ranked Vietnam's gender equality at 87 out of 153 countries surveyed. However, Vietnam is one of the few countries in the world that boasts of the highest ratio of women participating in the labour force (around 72%). In its November 2020 report, the International Labour Organization noted that 63% of enterprises in Vietnam indicated that women were present at the supervisory management level, and 73% of businesses showed that they had women as middle managers. The Vietnamese government also recently updated their labor code, with additional stipulations to support women and mothers.

Long before these goals were achieved, Unilever Vietnam was already implementing its own program geared towards increasing women in leadership positions and building a gender inclusive workplace. The multidimensional program, launched in 2015, has three main objectives: break the glass ceiling for women, nominating more women into leadership positions; develop a gender-equitable social security policy for women employees, supporting them directly and indirectly through policies and infrastructure; and design and implement an unbiased recruitment process.

All these efforts funnel into balancing the ratio of men and women across all departments. Unilever Vietnam began by creating a target and tracking for gender-balance workplace roadmap which enabled them to monitor the gender

**“ We have implemented many initiatives both within our company and the community to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. ”**

**- Nguyen Thi Bich Van**





ratio at every function annually. Since the program implementation, women employees increased to 36.5% in June 2020. Increasing the number of women employees and achieving a balanced ratio is one of the mandatory KPIs at key functions. With this, they have slowly but surely moved towards a 50:50 ratio, aiming to achieve this balance within the next two years.



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*We are proud to be breaking the glass ceiling here at Unilever Vietnam by promoting women to top leadership positions and encouraging more to reach their fullest potential.*

*- Nguyen Thi Bich Van*

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To achieve this, Unilever Vietnam understood that they needed constant communication with the entire employee base, supported by leaders' commitment to build a culture of gender equality in the organization. To get the leaders' buy-in, regulations on gender equality were established based on the business ethics and values at Unilever, combined with the criteria and targets of equality in the workplace. The company also crafted training courses to raise awareness on the importance of gender equality, and released internal communications materials to popularize perspectives on gender equality and specific benefits in building a gender-equitable workplace.

### Policy Changes and Programmatic Shifts

The first objective of Unilever Vietnam's gender equitable workplace program is breaking the glass ceiling for women. To achieve this, the company developed specialized training for their leadership. With #Unstereotype: Leadership for Purpose and Performance, leaders learned about potential bias and how to unstereotype. Meanwhile, the Women Leaders Programme was done in partnership with INSEAD Business School, focused on providing women leaders with necessary leadership skills. Since then, the company has also shown success in training and nominating female leaders in all departments.

The second objective of Unilever Vietnam's gender equitable workplace program is developing a gender-equitable social security policy. To empower and support the women in the workplace, Unilever Vietnam actively assesses and redistributes work to create more job opportunities for women. The company also adjusted regulations on benefits particularly during maternity and childcare for work/life balance, augmented by the installation of lactation rooms and establishing the Young Mothers' Association for women to share experiences and skills about both work and family matters.

Unilever Vietnam also upgraded facilities in their offices with gender-inclusive restrooms, and also enhanced their policies on paternity leave. To retain and support employees, the company also set gender balance goals at each level of seniority, so that right talent can be identified, nurtured, and developed prior to promotion decisions. Moreover, Unilever Vietnam reviewed and set standards for salary and bonuses to ensure equal pay regardless of gender.





*Watch the testimonial video to learn more*

The third objective of Unilever Vietnam’s gender equitable workplace program is designing an unbiased recruitment process with the goal of balancing the number of applicants to provide an equal chance of employment. The execution of this program is specific enough that there must be at least one male and one female profile at each step of recruitment before recruitment can proceed to the next round of selection. The company has ensured that this requirement applies even to positions that are seen as predominantly male-dominated fields (such as factory work or sales staff).

### **Sustainable Gender-Inclusivity Through Continuous Training**

Unilever Vietnam also continuously trains the recruitment team and hiring managers on explicit and implicit bias and identifying stereotypes that may occur through their Breaking the Bias Program. The selection process has been reviewed and adjusted by using technology (such as HireVue) or providing the same set of interview questions to eliminate any potential gender bias.

Through Unilever Vietnam’s continued efforts in employee engagement, internal communication, training, and utilization of technology in work redistribution, the company is confident in achieving their desired ratio over the coming years. With the involvement of the company’s leadership and proactive planning of the Human Resources department, the promotion and execution of the equitable workplace program promises to be sustainable and scalable as well.

## **Women’s Empowerment Principles**



High-Level Corporate Leadership



Treat all Women and Men Fairly at Work without Discrimination



Employee Health, Well-Being and Safety



Education and Training for Career Advancement



Enterprise Development, Supply Chain and Marketing Practices



Community Initiatives and Advocacy



Measurement and Reporting

 [asiapacificwepsawards.org](http://asiapacificwepsawards.org)

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