



GENDER- RESPONSIVE CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Guidebook for the Private Sector on Gender
Responsive Crises Management via Implementing
Women's Empowerment Principles

UN Women Türkiye

In a world that is constantly shaken by turmoil, ongoing crises are becoming the new norm. From pandemics that are reshaping the world of work overnight, to climate crisis that is putting our very survival on this planet into question, to wars erupting in our region, we are dealing with a multitude of crises on a variety of fronts. As we try to settle into this new and unsettling world, we need to look for ways to crisis-proof our systems, organisations, and societies to the extent possible.

At the same time, global crises exacerbate gender inequalities and are jeopardizing the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). At the current rate of progress, SDG5 on achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will not be met by 2030. It may take close to 300 years to achieve full gender equality around the world, and 140 years for women to be represented equally in positions of power and leadership in the workplace. Globally, women lost an estimated USD 800 billion in income in 2020 due to the pandemic, and despite a rebound, their participation in labour markets is projected to be lower in 2022 than it was pre-pandemic. This is the sobering reality revealed by a recent report with the latest evidence on progress on gender equality across all 17 goals launched by UN Women and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

We need renewed commitment and swift action by all partners, including the private sector, to reverse these trends and live up to the promise of the SDGs in a turbulent world. The Gender Responsive Crisis Management Guide, along with its accompanying Monitoring Toolkit, developed by UN Women Türkiye Office, in partnership with TUSIAD and TURKONFED, provides a comprehensive and practical framework for businesses in Türkiye and beyond on how to navigate crises while advancing gender equality in the workplace, marketplace and community. It is based on the lessons learnt during the COVID-19 pandemic which brought unprecedented challenges and had disproportionately negative impacts on women. Studies conducted by UN Women, TUSIAD and TURKONFED in 2020-2021 showed companies with previous commitments on gender equality demonstrated higher gender-responsive adaptability to the challenges brought on by the pandemic, indicating the importance of following a framework on gender equality and women's empowerment, such as the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs).

As the most comprehensive framework informed by international labour and human rights standards to encourage action by businesses on gender equality, the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) can guide companies both in times of stability and in times of crisis. This Guide is based on the seven WEPs with the aim to move private sector companies towards a more gender responsive future. It not only shows companies how to use the learnings of COVID-19 going forward, but also highlights how gender equality supports crisis mitigation and response. It highlights the business imperative of becoming more gender responsive, alongside the indispensable human rights imperative. The Guide includes practical recommendations under five critical areas: 1) Promoting work-life balance and providing support for care responsibilities, 2) Prevention and elimination of sexual harassment at the workplace, 3) Supporting employees against domestic violence, 4) Protecting health, safety, and well-being of employees and finally, 5) Addressing Future of Work challenges, including the need for upskilling and reskilling.

As UN Women, we believe these recommendations will allow the private sector to plan equitable and transformative interventions that address gender gaps and challenges, while ensuring the survival and progress of companies in the new norm of ongoing crises.

I thank our valuable partners from TUSIAD and TURKONFED and their member companies who have shared information, good practices and recommendations on the basis of which this Guide and Monitoring Tool were developed. I thank the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), for its financial support to the "Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Leadership in Political and Business Life in Türkiye" project, under the framework of which this Guide was developed.

Gender equality is a foundation for achieving all SDGs and it should be at the heart of building back better and creating systems, organisations and societies that are well equipped to deal with crises. This Guide represents a step in this direction, and we hope it will be used as a resource for information and inspiration by many private sector companies in Türkiye and beyond.

Asya Varbanova
Country Director
UN Women Türkiye

TÜSİAD

TÜSİAD believes that the situation of women in any given country is the main indicator of its economic and social development and democracy. Gender equality has a multiplier effect across all development areas. As we have always emphasized, gender equality is an issue that needs to be addressed from multiple angles. From access to education to workforce participation, from sharing care responsibilities to being in decision-making positions in management, we must ensure gender equality. Last but not least, we must adopt and ensure "zero tolerance for violence against women" by enacting legislation and supporting public, private, and non-governmental organizations, not to mention society as a whole.

Since Covid-19 has had a dramatic impact on the lives of millions of people across the globe, we have also observed that the effects of the pandemic have been disproportionately felt by females only exacerbating global gender inequality. Due to the economic impacts of the pandemic and overrepresentation of women in the hardest-hit sectors and the informal economy, many women have lost their jobs. Micro, small and medium sized women-owned enterprises face significant challenges to their survival and growth. Due to the increase in the time spent at home, there has been an increase in unpaid domestic and care work at home for females. In addition, females are being forced to fight a new "shadow pandemic," that is, an increasing rate of domestic violence¹.

According to the WEF Global Gender Gap 2022 Report, gender gaps in the workforce continue to be an even more severe threat alongside long-standing structural barriers, socioeconomic and technological transformation and economic shocks.² In addition, geopolitical conflicts and the climate crisis, which are on the agenda of many countries, have disproportional effects on women. Research also shows that women are more negatively affected than men during and after crises, epidemics and natural disasters.³ Therefore, it is extremely critical to be prepared for the future with its all uncertainties and risks by prioritizing gender-responsive crisis management strategies.

Considering the gender specific impacts of such existing and possible crises, it is crucial for the public and private sectors and NGOs to take concerted actions to reduce the severe impacts on women, to support women's economic empowerment through employment, and to develop gender-sensitive plans, strategies and schemes. **We must act with the awareness that we cannot emerge from a crisis by leaving half of the society behind.**

Based on this necessity, TÜSİAD – TURKONFED and the UN Women Turkey Office conducted a survey to understand the possible effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the private sector from a gender perspective and the research report "COVID-19 Impacts on Women at Work" was published in November 2020. The results of the survey aimed to take a snapshot of the current situation and also feed into policies for developing gender-sensitive actions for companies as part of their resilience building strategies.

We believe that fostering a positive working environment is impossible unless specific measures are adopted to tackle the challenges threatening gender equality. As the business community, we need to ensure the peace of mind and efficiency of our employees with corporate policies as the most important values of our institutions, while adapting to the new normal. According to the research, companies that achieve gender diversity can improve their performances and contribute to economic development as well.⁴

Therefore, as partner organizations, we agreed to develop a practical guide framed by the 7 WEP principles to enable the private sector to plan equitable and transformative interventions that would not amplify gender inequalities in times of crisis.

We proudly support the "Gender-Responsive Crisis Management" and the Monitoring Toolkit developed together and prepared for publication with the efforts of the UN Women Turkey office. TÜSİAD and TURKONFED's member companies have provided invaluable input into the guidebook. We express our gratitude to UN Women and TURKONFED for this valuable partnership.

TÜSİAD will support the dissemination and implementation of the guidebook and the monitoring tool among the private sector and all other institutional structures.

Orhan Turan
President of Board
TÜSİAD

¹ <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/gender-equality-in-the-wake-of-covid-19-en.pdf?la=en&vs=5142>
² WEF Global Gender Gap Report 2022, <https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2022/>
³ <https://www.brinknews.com/gender-and-disasters/>
⁴ McKinsey, "Diversity Wins (2020)"
<https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-wins-how-inclusion-matters>

TÜRKONFED

An understanding of society in which women are empowered in business, social and economic life and can enjoy equal opportunities in all fields is critically important for Türkiye's sustainable development in socio-cultural aspect. As TÜRKONFED (Turkish Enterprise and Business Confederation) representing 30 federations and 300 hundred national and international associations constituted by more than 50 thousand companies of all scales from across Türkiye, we continue our activities with this consciousness and understanding. We represent Türkiye's most comprehensive women's power through the 47 women's associations under our roof, and we carry out our activities with this sense of responsibility.

As Türkiye has set out on its journey towards 2030, one of the target dates for change and transformation in the world, we have renewed our vision under the title "New Epoch, New Horizons", and now we are focusing on representing a shared image of Türkiye. The steps our country will take to remain strong in development and global competition in this age of great transformations the world is going through are defined as 3T. We will reach Digital Transformation by expanding our digital footprint, Green Transition by reducing our carbon footprint, and Social Transformation by improving women's footprint.

In OECD countries, women's employment rate is around 61% while in our country it is around 30%. This not only reveals where we are in terms of women's place in business and social life but also shows how much we need to prioritize women in our road map to our dream of becoming a developed and prosperous country. Especially Covid-19 pandemic has weakened women's power in economic life, which was hardly gained, while it has also proven that women are among the most vulnerable groups against climate, geopolitical and economic crises. At this point, ensuring and improving equal opportunities through social programs that promote women's employment and benefit households, children and disadvantaged groups will make economic growth more comprehensive. Women's empowerment in education and economy in particular will increase our country's welfare level and trigger our development dynamics.

On the other hand, in the light of the current developments, we can now foresee that humanity might face many health, environmental, climate and social crises. Therefore, we need to turn words into actions in all these fields without losing any time. In this process, public institutions, private sector, non-governmental organisations, that is all segments of the society, have important duties to fulfill.

As a leading organisation that represents the business world in our country, we think it is one of our fundamental responsibilities to introduce our private companies the best practices aimed at women's empowerment and share the intellectual capital created by the experts in this field as well as collective consciousness. In this context, "A Guide for the Private Sector to Manage Gender Responsive Crises through the Implementation of Women's Empowerment Principles", a joint initiative by TÜSİAD (Turkish Industry and Business Association) and UN Women, aims to help the business world take the best action and show an ethical attitude to secure gender equality in case of crises.

We believe that with an increased awareness about gender responsive crisis management, all the companies in our country will be able to address women's and men's differing needs and display a gender responsive attitude in case of developments that pose a threat to their shareholders, including a wide range of people from their employees to their customers, suppliers and the general public. We believe that this guide, prepared to this end, will increase the awareness of our business world about the gains that promote women's education, training and professional development, establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality, implement business practices which empower women and that publicly share with stakeholders the progress to achieve gender equality.

We have always stated that the way to a strong society, strong economy and strong democracy is women's active participation in all fields of life, and we firmly believe in this. Our "woman" centered approach involves not positive discrimination but women's active participation in all fields of life for the establishment of a fair system based on gender equality.

We have the power to achieve both an intellectual and systematic transformation as the women and men of this society!

Regards,

Süleyman Sönmez
President
TURKONFED

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Contents

Executive Summary

About UN Women, TUSIAD and TURKONFED

1. Why the Private Sector should address crises in a Gender-Responsive Way?

2. Impact of Covid-19 on Women in the Workplace – Key Issues

3. Impact of Covid-19 on women in the workplace in Türkiye

3.1 Gender Impact of the Covid-19 in the workplace

3.2 Measures implemented by the companies to mitigate the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic

4. Women’s Empowerment Principles in advancing gender equality

4.1 Brief summary of Women’s Empowerment Principles

4.2 Importance of Women’s Empowerment Principles in advancing gender equality

4.3 Practical aspects of Women’s Empowerment Principles’ implementation

5. Strategies for gender-responsive crisis management within the framework of Women’s Empowerment Principles

5.1 Promoting work-life balance and providing support for care responsibilities

5.1.1 Flexible working arrangements

5.1.2 Family-friendly workplace policies and culture

5.1.3 Promoting work-life balance and supporting care responsibilities: benefits and good practices

5.2 Prevention and elimination of sexual harassment at the workplace

5.2.1 Understanding and recognizing sexual harassment and its impact at the workplace

5.2.2 Why is preventing and eliminating sexual harassment relevant to companies?

5.2.3 Addressing sexual harassment at the workplace

5.3 Supporting employees against domestic violence

5.3.1 Understanding and recognizing domestic violence and its impact at the workplace

5.3.2 Actions to be taken by the companies to support employees against domestic violence

5.3.3 Good practices of the companies providing support to the employees against domestic violence

5.4 Protecting health, safety, and well-being of employees

5.4.1 Understanding and recognizing gender-specific health, safety, and well-being needs

5.4.2 Actions to be taken to address gender-specific health, safety, and well-being needs of employees

5.4.3 Actions to be taken to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 pandemic and future crises on health, safety and well-being of the employees

5.5. Addressing Future of Work challenges – the need for upskilling and reskilling

5.5.1 Recognizing and understanding gender challenges of the Future of Work

5.5.2 Adapting to the Future of Work by addressing the needs of upskilling and reskilling of employees

6. Conclusion

Bibliography

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Executive Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic affected all sectors of economy and provoked long-term changes in how the entire world population lives and does business. To address the challenges caused by the pandemic and to adapt to the new reality, private sector companies had to react in agile and decisive ways. At the same time, The COVID-19 pandemic reminded that a crisis can occur at any time. Moving forward, it appeared crucial for businesses to identify new opportunities, and to consider lessons learned from the pandemic in order to prioritize actions to enhance business today and build strategic resilience for potential next crises. Moreover, Covid-19 exacerbated existing gender inequalities, as women disproportionately experienced negative impact of the pandemic, thus, managing crisis in a gender-responsive way turned out to be an absolute necessity.

The objective of the gender-responsive crisis management guidebook is to develop practical and functional guidelines for private sector to address crisis in a gender responsive way. It is highly likely that future crises, whether it is another pandemic, natural disaster, mass migration, security or technology issue, will have their unique impact on gender equality. Therefore, the lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic should allow businesses and corporations to prepare better for next crises by adapting the learnings to the potential challenges.

The present guideline is precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the necessity of managing its effects in a gender-responsive way within the private sector, however crisis management tools designed in the guideline are intended to be informative for all future crises, especially for any future pandemics and/or health crises.

Approaches proposed in the guidebook are based on **Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs)** which aim to help businesses develop and share best practices for empowering women and promoting gender equality within the company, marketplace and community.

Strategies for gender responsive crisis management aim to enable private sector to plan equitable and transformative interventions which will effectively address gender challenges in times of crises. The guidebook:

- provides answers on *which areas* and *why* it is important to develop strategies to manage the crisis in a gender-responsive way.
- provides information on *how* companies can implement these strategies in practice by providing concrete and practical guidelines for their successful implementation
- provides a sample of *good practices* in each area in order to inform the companies on promising examples around the world.

Managing crisis in a gender-responsive way by the private companies requires the implementation of the strategies in the following areas:

• Promoting work-life balance and supporting care responsibilities

In order to create a healthy work-life balance, companies need to ensure conditions for their employees to enjoy work, spend quality time with family and friends, devote adequate time to sleep, exercise and nutrition, and devote time to things that promote overall well-being, especially of those with caring responsibilities. Companies should take several active measures, such as promoting **flexible working arrangements (FWAs)**, supporting **care responsibilities**, including availability and promotion of **parental leave for both women and men**, providing **childcare support options**, also supporting women in **transition to work after maternity leave**.

The document provides guidance for the successful implementation of **flexible working arrangements** by providing step-by-step instructions of the actions to be taken by senior executives and employees, and informing about the possible working designs of FWAs.

Moreover, in order to adopt **family-friendly workplace policies and culture**, a more detailed guidance is provided on how **inclusive parental leave**, also **transition to work** after parental or other extended leave can be supported by the companies, also how **support for childcare** can be ensured.

• Prevention and elimination of sexual harassment at the workplace

Sexual harassment at the workplace represents a risk to the safety and well-being of the employees and its implications have a far-reaching impact on employees' well-being, but also on their productivity, and the company's reputation. In times of crises, such as pandemics, gender-based violence increases as people feel more vulnerable to raise a concern or risk, or put themselves through a complaint process. During the Covid-19 pandemic, online sexual harassment has become more prevalent. Therefore, considering the new work arrangements, employers should be aware of the new ways in which it might appear, and the policy should be designed accordingly.

The document provides guidance for **understanding and recognizing sexual harassment and its impact on the workplace**, by informing on **common elements in its definition** and making a **non-exhaustive list to identify what constitutes sexual harassment**. The Guide also informs **why it is important for the companies to prevent and eliminate sexual harassment** and provides step-by-step guidance for **addressing** it, by providing a template **company policy on sexual harassment**, and **instructions for the development process** of such policy.

• Supporting employees against domestic violence

Domestic violence is a human rights issue and has a major impact on the victims and survivors of the violence and their families. Domestic violence affects the ability of victims and survivors to be **engaged at work, maintain employment stability** and **achieve occupational attainment**. Therefore, supporting employees who are victims and survivors of domestic violence is a workplace imperative as well as a human rights obligation.

The Guidebook provides information on the **impact of domestic violence on the businesses** and identifies the **actions to be taken by the companies in order to support their employees against domestic violence**, including **awareness raising** on the issue,

flexible arrangements and **protection from dismissal**, as well as **support and guidance for accessing the necessary services**, by respecting all along the process **the safety** of victims/survivors, their **autonomous decision-making** and **confidentiality**.

• Protecting health, safety and well-being of employees

Health is a basic human right and vital to the quality of life of communities. Employees are entitled to their own general health and well-being, and not simply to protection from hazards at the workplace. Mental, physical and psychosocial health is fundamental to employees' well-being and organizational success. Thus, a holistic approach to health should be an integral part of a company's business strategy and operations.

The Guidebook informs about the **Healthy Workplace Model** and provides instructions for **understanding and recognizing gender-specific health, safety and well-being needs** within a company. The document provides guidance about the **actions to be taken to address gender-specific health, safety and well-being needs of employees**, which include gender-specific **occupational hazards, physical and mental health and related services, facilities adapted to gender needs**, as well as **health and safety education**, and the promotion of **well-being and healthy lifestyle**. The Guide puts a special emphasis on the **actions to be taken to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 pandemic and future crises**.

• Future of Work challenges related to the need for upskilling and reskilling.

The technological progress, taken together with globalization and demographic changes, creates the need to equip people with the skills they need to participate in the economy, now and in the future. **The future of work** will be shaped by artificial intelligence, informed by big data and machine learning, information and communication technologies and robotics. **Covid-19 pandemic** accelerated automation and digitalization, so critical skills gaps in the workforce became even more obvious in many organizations. Therefore, it is important to identify and anticipate the skills needed for

recovery and future growth, and to identify practical actions that can be taken to reskill and upskill workers to meet these needs. A **focus on gender** is critical both in the context of recovery, and the future of work. Without a focus on gender, measures of recovery, as well as depictions of the future of work are incomplete and biased, and thus risk reproducing current inequalities.

The Guide informs about the approaches to be adopted by the companies for **adapting to the Future of Work** by **addressing the needs of upskilling and reskilling of employees** and details **the actions to be taken by the companies for addressing skills gaps**.

Each gender responsive crisis management strategy is linked to specific factor of Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs). For the holistic comprehension of WEPs, the Guidebook details the content and implications of **7 Women's Empowerment Principles** by informing the companies on:

- How each principle should be **reflected in WEPs Action Plan** of the company?
- What are the **main steps to be taken** for the implementation of each principle?
- How the successful implementation can be **measured** by providing detailed indicators?

Methodology of the Guidebook is based on the assessment of the impact of Covid-19 at the workplace from gender perspective in Türkiye via:

- **The qualitative research conducted during the consultancy in December 2021.** Qualitative research of the study consists of 6 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) conducted with 26 companies based in Türkiye/or having representation in Türkiye, including large-size (+250 employees), medium-size (50-249 employees), and small-size (less than 50 employees) companies operating in different sectors of the industry, some of which have already signed WEPs and/or have adopted gender equality strategies and/or action plans before the outbreak of Covid-19.

- **The 2020 assessment carried by TUSIAD, TURKONFED and UN Women and conducted with 241 companies (including 140 SMEs).** (TUSIAD, TURKONFED, UN Women, COVID-19 Impact on Women in the workplace: corporate responses, good practices and way forward, 2020).

- **UN Women's economic and social impact assessment of COVID-19 in Türkiye.** (UN Women, The economic and social impact of COVID-19 on women and men, Rapid Gender Assessment of COVID-19 implications in Türkiye, 2020)

The Guidebook is accompanied by a **Monitoring Tool** including 55 questions arranged in 9 sub-thematic areas and allowing to track the progress, and also facilitate the planning process. Namely, the Monitoring Tool allows to collect the information on the **implementation status** of an activity, and if the activity is not implemented, **when** it's implementation should be expected. Also, the Monitoring Tool allows to obtain the information about the availability of **internal resources** for the implementation of the planned activities, or if the activity required/will require the mobilization of the **external support**. The Monitoring Tool also allows to track the **budget spent** or planned to mobilize for the implementation of an activity.

About UN Women, TUSIAD and TURKONFED

UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls worldwide. It works globally to make the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and stands behind

women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on four strategic priorities: Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems; Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy; All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence; Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.

Founded in 1971, TUSIAD is a voluntary business organization consisting of the leading entrepreneurs and business executives in Türkiye. TUSIAD has a major representative power in manufacturing, added value, formal employment and foreign trade for the Turkish economy with the enterprises run by its members.

TUSIAD strives to contribute to the establishment and development of a social order where the universal principles of human rights, the liberties of thought, belief, and initiative, secular rule of law, participatory democracy, liberal economy, competitive market economy are adopted and sustainable environment is pursued. TUSIAD takes actions to achieve the aforementioned main objective with the view that it is a leading and entrepreneurial group of businesspersons looking out for gender equality in politics, economy, and education to help Türkiye achieve the modern level of civilization and go beyond it in line with the goals and principles set by Atatürk.

As a non-profit organization that represents the Turkish business world, TUSIAD strives to make sure that entrepreneurs act in line with the universal codes of business conduct, and pursues raising the level of the Turkish competitiveness, social well-being, employment, efficiency, innovative capacity and education by constantly growing their coverage and quality.

Serving as an umbrella organization for regional and sectoral business world communities, the Turkish Enterprise and Business Confederation (TURKONFED) is an independent non-governmental organization founded on the basis of voluntariness. TURKONFED is one of the largest business communities in Türkiye thanks to its influential group of members operating across the country. Billed as the largest non-governmental organization in Türkiye given its independent and voluntary nature, TURKONFED draws on the federations and associations that businesspersons are a member of, and embodies 30 federations (26 regional, 4 sectoral), 286 associations, and nearly 50,000 companies.

Having launched an office in Brussels on November 17, 2014 to operate in the heart of Europe, TURKONFED engages in global actions as a member of SMEunited, which is one of the largest business communities in Europe. SMEunited is a crucial international business organization that directly influences EU policies and decision-making authorities and represents 12 million companies and 55 million employees. With such a significant role to play, TURKONFED serves as a bridge between the Turkish business community and the European Union. It continues to grow its global presence under the umbrella of TURKONFED International that gathers the associations of businesspersons from Germany, Georgia, Northern Cyprus, Iraq, Ukraine, and Romania.

1. Why the Private Sector should address crises in a Gender-Responsive Way?

The COVID-19 pandemic affected all sectors of economy and provoked long-term changes in how the entire world population lives and does business. To address the challenges caused by the pandemic and to adapt to the new reality, private sector companies had to react in agile and decisive ways. At the same time, Covid-19 exacerbated the existing gender inequalities, as women disproportionately experienced negative impact of the pandemic. Gender equality is essential for achieving economic growth and prosperity, therefore sustainable strategies addressing challenges of the pandemic should encompass gender-responsive solutions.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a reminder that a crisis can occur at any time. Many companies and organizations worldwide were unprepared because few could expect a crisis on this scale, impacting all aspects of business operation. This unprecedented situation demonstrated that for the efficient management of the future crisis, whether it is another pandemic, natural disaster, mass migration, security or technology issue, it is crucial to be prepared for its effective management. Moving forward, it appeared crucial for businesses to identify new opportunities, also to consider lessons learned from the pandemic in order to prioritize actions to enhance business today and build strategic resilience for tomorrow for next crisis.

As women and men have been impacted differently and disproportionately by the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, managing crisis in a gender-responsive way became an absolute necessity. Gender-responsive crisis management is the process by which an organization deals with a disruptive, unpredictable, and unexpected event that threatens to harm the organization and/or all of its stakeholders - employees, customers, suppliers, and the general public - in a gender-responsive way, by addressing differentiated needs of women and men.

Crises can highlight existing challenges and vulnerabilities. As observed, Covid-19

pandemic has deepened the existing gender inequalities in the world of work and signaled that potential future crises will also have unique effects on gender equality. Therefore, even if all potential impacts cannot be fully anticipated, the lessons learnt from the Covid-19 pandemic should allow businesses and corporations to emerge stronger and to prepare better for next crisis by adapting their learnings to the potential challenges.

The present guideline is precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the necessity of managing its effects in a gender-responsive way within the private sector, however crisis management tools designed in the guideline are intended to be informative for all future crises, especially for any future pandemics and/or health crises.

The objective of the gender-responsive crisis management guidebook is to develop practical and functional guidelines for private sector to address crisis in a gender responsive way. Approaches proposed in the guidebook are based on *Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs)* which aim to help businesses in developing and sharing best practices for empowering women and promoting gender equality within the company, marketplace and community.¹ Indeed, WEPs is a framework for gender-inclusive, sustainable and resilient business, informed by international labor and human rights standards and grounded in the recognition that business has an interest in, and a responsibility for gender equality in the workplace, marketplace and community, regardless of their size, sector and geography.

Strategies for gender responsive crisis management are designed based on the challenges identified by various assessments of the Covid-19 impact, also by the qualitative research conducted within the present study. These strategies aim to enable private sector to plan equitable and transformative interventions which will effectively address gender challenges in times of crises, specifically they include strategies on (i) promoting work-life balance and support for care responsibilities; (ii) prevention and elimination of sexual harassment at the workplace; (iii) supporting employees against domestic

¹ For more information on Women's Empowerment Principles please see: <https://www.weps.org/>

violence; (iv) protecting health, safety and well-being of employees. Furthermore, the Covid-19 pandemic accelerated automation and digitalization, so critical skills gaps in the workforce has become even more visible in many organizations. Therefore, strategies designed within this guidebook also address (v) *Future of Work* challenges related to the need for upskilling and reskilling.

2. Impact of Covid-19 on Women at the Workplace - Key issues

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing gender inequalities exposed fundamental flaws in economic and social systems, and posed a serious threat to the gains made on gender equality. The pandemic has led to a **rise in unemployment**, **ore unpaid care work**, and unprecedented levels of **domestic violence**.

As a result of the pandemic, women have experienced disproportionate **job losses** and economic insecurity in some sectors, while many women working as front-line responders, health professionals, community volunteers, and employees in the food, retail, hygiene and sanitation industries have continued to make critical contributions to meet the needs of consumers and communities at the **direct risk of their own health and well-being**.

With school and care facility closures during the pandemic, women took on **additional care responsibilities**, which made the burden of unpaid work even heavier for them. Increased care impacts the time that female employees are able to dedicate to paid work and in some cases, will eventually leave female employees with no other option than to cut back their hours or quit entirely.

Covid-19 gender impact assessments around the world showed that everywhere the risks and the prevalence of **domestic violence** increased during the pandemic. Domestic violence is a violation of women's human rights. It can take various forms (physical, verbal, sexual, psychological, socio-economic violence), and has devastating effects on women, children, families and communities around the world. Denouncing violence in the family is difficult, and may affect the provision of help and support

services. As more private-sector companies are forced to halt operations or switch to working from home during the pandemic, risk of domestic violence poses an additional threat to business continuity and recovery and long-term economic growth, because, domestic violence hampers workplace productivity by increasing absenteeism, employee turnover and resignations without adequate notice.

Moreover, the risk of **accelerated reliance on technology-oriented jobs** is leaving women behind, thus, women's risk of being excluded from emerging opportunities is increasing. This will also harm long-term economic progress and recovery.

Therefore, a commitment to women's empowerment and gender-responsive Covid-19 approaches become fundamental for inclusive economic recovery. Indeed, it will be crucial to design gender-inclusive business environment through Women's Empowerment Principles across their-value chain from workplace, marketplace to community.

3. Impact of Covid-19 on women at the workplace in Türkiye

The assessment of the impact of Covid-19 at the workplace from gender perspective in Türkiye is based on the qualitative research conducted during the consultancy on the one hand, and, on the 2020 assessment conducted by TUSIAD, TURKONFED and UN Women on the other hand,² in addition on UN Women's economic and social impact assessment of COVID-19 in Türkiye.³

Qualitative research of the study consists of 6 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) conducted with 26 companies based in Türkiye/or having representation in Türkiye, including large-size (+250 employees), medium-size (50-249 employees), and small-size (less than 50 employees) companies operating in different sectors of the industry, some of which have

² TUSIAD, TURKONFED, UN Women, COVID-19 Impact on Women in the workplace: corporate responses, good practices and way forward, 2020

³ UN Women, The economic and social impact of COVID-19 on women and men, Rapid Gender Assessment of COVID-19 implications in Turkey, 2020

already signed WEPs and/or have adopted gender equality strategies and/or action plans before the outbreak of Covid-19. FGDs have been conducted in December 2021.

2020 assessment by TUSIAD, TURKONFED and UN Women is based on the findings of the survey conducted in March-June 2020 with the participation of 339 companies, including 7 cooperatives operating in a variety of industries in Türkiye. Survey participants included large-size companies, as well as small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), part of them having signed WEPs and/or having adopted gender equality strategies and/or action plans before the outbreak of Covid-19.

3.1 Gender Impact of the Covid-19 in the workplace

Economic and social impact of COVID-19 in Türkiye⁴ revealed that Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated **inequalities regarding women's and men's involvement in labour** market. Indeed, **women lost their jobs at a higher extent (18.8%) than men (14.2%)**. Moreover, **women took more leave** (paid, partially paid or unpaid) of absence from work compared to men. Also, for 15.7% of women who went on leave **was unpaid leave**, compared to 11.2% for men. Based on UN Women's assessment, women's status as "secondary" earners and being expected to perform the majority of unpaid domestic and care work, might be strongly influential in this regard. **More women (18%) compared to men (14.2%) changed their workplace and started to work from home**. Besides, **women have experienced an increase in domestic work more than men**. Women's workload especially increased in the categories of "cleaning the household and washing the clothes" and "cooking and serving meal" where 77.6% and 59.9% of women stated an increase respectively in these household chores comparing to 47% and 23.9% of the men. **More women than men have experienced negative effects of COVID-19 on their mental/emotional health**. Indeed, 54% women and 49% men experienced problems such as stress and anxiety as a result of the outbreak of the pandemic. Furthermore, more

⁴ Ibid.

women than men reported **increase in the prevalence of domestic violence**. At the same time, it's important to note that about 25% of women and men are not aware about available support for the victims of domestic violence. In summary, Covid-19 pandemic negatively affected both women and men, however women have been more affected than men.

2020 assessment by TUSIAD, TURKONFED and UN Women revealed two most frequent challenges for the employees: **work-life balance and domestic violence, which are** disproportionately affecting women. As a matter of fact, female employees in 89% of businesses reported that domestic violence increased during the Covid-19 period. Employees also reported challenges related to **increased working hours** due to remote work from home, **psychological stress** and **exhaustion**. The assessment showed that women have been disproportionately affected by the **increased care burden** as they are primary responsible for children and their education.

3.2 Measures implemented by the companies to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 pandemic⁵

Companies had to adapt the working settings to the new reality and introduce changes within the working environment. The most common change (84% of the companies) introduced during the Covid-19 pandemic has been **full or partial remote working** for white collar employees. Some of the enterprises have permanently adopted or discussed adopting remote working/ working from home for some operations. Another change is to allow more general use of paid or unpaid leave during the pandemic. Survey results show that more women than men have taken **leave** since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, and that women (15.7%) are more likely to take **unpaid leave** than men (11.2%). One of the reasons for women for taking leave is the burden of domestic work, causing not only the higher loss of income for them, but also a decrease of their retirement pension relying on their own **income**. Moreover, the unpaid leave affects

⁵ Information is based on TUSIAD, TURKONFED, UN Women, COVID-19 Impact on Women in the workplace: corporate responses, good practices and way forward, 2020

the access to retirement as the contract is suspended during such leave.

Companies used different types of incentives to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 at the workplace. The most common incentive during the Covid-19 pandemic is **the short-term employment allowance**, indeed, nearly 60% of the enterprises reported having provided it to their employees. However, less women than men benefitted from this allowance.⁶ **Deferral of SSI, VAT and withholding tax** payments are the second most commonly used incentives (51%), however their use rate is much lower in enterprises where women's employment rate is over 50%. **The minimum wage subsidy** is the third most commonly used incentive, used by 28% of the companies, however it is not commonly used among enterprises where women's employment rate is high.

Assessment by TUSIAD, TURKONFED and UN Women showed that the majority of the enterprises (76%) took special measures to reduce the stress of their employees and improve their overall well-being, whereas only 26% of them took measures specifically for women employees. Qualitative study conducted in December 2021 confirmed that the companies took indeed proactive measures for improving employees' well-being during the pandemic and addressing the new working settings, such as establishment of corporate well-being platforms providing psychological support, as well as access to online sports activities, online health and dietary consulting, online museum visits, book reading days, activities for children. Some companies invited various guest speakers for online meetings and discussions, etc.

Regarding the issue of **violence**, identified as one of the major problems among survey participants, only 10% of them consult with internal and external stakeholders to deal with the issue, and only 2% of the companies collected data on domestic violence during the pandemic.⁷ Qualitative study conducted

⁶ One of the barriers for women can be eligibility criteria, indeed, to be eligible for the allowance, employees must have met their employment term and premium payment requirements. (450 days of premium within the past 3 years)

⁷ Information is based on TUSIAD, TURKONFED, UN Women, COVID-19 Impact on Women in the workplace: corporate

in December 2021 revealed that several companies have already mechanisms in place for addressing the issue of domestic violence or sexual harassment, such as corporate policies on sexual harassment, ethics committees, and options for confidential internal complaints, however incidents of sexual harassment have not been reported during the focus group discussions.

Survey and the qualitative study demonstrated that companies took **additional special measures** such as offering their employees the freedom to choose the working mode and working hours, or providing additional leave for female employees whose domestic burden has increased because of child or elderly care. Besides, companies have also provided opportunities such as adjusted time of meetings, online psychological support to the employees including support to improve parent-child communication, shuttle to and from work for employees without a personal car, providing access to training courses for employees' children, as well. Qualitative study confirmed that the companies have adapted to the Covid-19 restrictions by making special arrangements widely available, such as flexible working hours, working from home or hybrid working. At the same time, some companies have made an effort to take into consideration employees' additional care responsibilities by adapting working hours to the needs of childcare or elderly care, which are especially burden for women employees.

In summary, the assessment demonstrated the adaptability of the companies to the challenges of the pandemic. However, gender-responsiveness in the measures introduced by the companies seem to be influenced by the previous commitments to the equality principles. Indeed, the strategies adopted and actions taken by the enterprises prior to the Covid-19 pandemic have played a role in gender responsive measures they have taken against the implications of the pandemic.

responses, good practices and way forward, 2020

4. Women's Empowerment Principles in advancing gender equality

4.1 Brief summary of Women's Empowerment Principles

A joint initiative –“Women's Economic Empowerment Principles” was launched in 2010 by UN Women and the UN Global Compact. The seven principles aim to help businesses develop and share examples of best practices for empowering women and promoting gender equality.

Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs)

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

Integrating the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) into company operations can contribute to enhancing gender equality in the **workplace, marketplace and community** through their own policies, practices, and products, also by enabling and influencing other industries to do so.

4.2 Importance of Women's Empowerment Principles in advancing gender equality

Business can play a critical role in advancing gender equality and empowering women,

and at the same time can benefit greatly from women's empowerment in terms of **innovation, productivity, competitiveness and market growth.**

Women's empowerment and gender equality has a multiplier effect on families, communities, businesses and sustainable economies. Women's Economic Empowerment means better business⁸ indeed it is:

- **Economic Imperative:** it builds healthy economies and drives greater investments in communities:
 - If women participated in the economy identically to men, it would add up to **28\$ trillion, or 26% to annual global GDP** in 2025 compared with a business-as-usual scenario.⁹
 - Women reinvest upward of **90%** of their income into their families' health, nutrition, and education – triple the value of men's investment.
- **Growth Imperative:** it unlocks new market opportunities and strengthens customer loyalty. Despite limited control over income and resources, women significantly influence consumption expenditures. By adding more women to the labour force, companies both increase their power to represent their customers within the companies and provide more information for the firm, including predictions, about customer choices.
- Women make more than **90%** of purchasing decisions for home furnishing, vacations, homes, and more than **50%** of purchasing decisions for automobiles and consumer electronics.
- **Financial Imperative:** it delivers better returns on equity and higher stock performance:

⁸ Based on the conclusions of BSR study: “Building effective women's economic empowerment strategies”, 2016, data and information gathered from the following sources: United Nations, World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization, McKinsey Global Institute, Boston Consulting Group, Catalyst, Center for talent and innovation, Deloitte.

⁹ McKinsey Global Institute, The power of parity: How advancing women's equality can add \$12 trillion to global growth, 2015

- Companies with the most women board directors outperformed those with the least in return on **sales by 16%** and return on **invested capital by 26%**.¹⁰
- Companies with high levels of diversity are **70%** more likely to capture new markets.¹¹
- **Operational Imperative:** it improves operational effectiveness, productivity, and employee engagement. Women's participation in companies at every level contributes significantly to business performance. Studies show that women's presence in business leads to an increase in financial performance and, more specifically, raises the return on investment, market share, capital, and stock.
- Removing discrimination against female staff and managers can increase productivity per employee by 25%-40%.¹²
- Companies with diverse workforces function better; they are shown to be **22%** more productive, have **27% higher profitability**, and **customer satisfaction is 39% higher**.¹³
- Companies with three or more women on the Board of Directors have a **60% higher return on investment**.¹⁴
- **Talent Imperative:** it drives innovation and ensures a strong and capable talent pipeline:
 - More than half a billion women have joined the world's labour force over the past 30 years,¹⁵ in most countries women represent a majority of all graduates from tertiary education.¹⁶
 - More than **70%** of millennials expect their employers to focus on societal or mission-driven problems.¹⁷

4.3 Practical aspects of Women's Empowerment Principles' implementation

The present chapter provides detailed information about the steps to be taken for the implementation of each Women's Empowerment Principle and for measuring the progress. Considering that there is no single method for a company to integrate WEPs into its operation, the chapter suggests the approaches on how each principle should be implemented (areas of implementation) and how the progress of the implementation of each principle should be measured (indicators of implementation). Companies can use the said suggestions as a framework assisting them in developing their specific model of WEPs implementation.

¹⁰ <https://www.shiftthework.com/blog/womenatwork>

¹¹ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbestechcouncil/2021/11/12/how-diversity-can-help-with-business-growth/?sh=587134f152ad>

¹² The World Bank, The World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development, 2012.

¹³ The Centre for Tomorrow's Company, Tomorrow's Global Leaders: How to build a culture that ensures women reach the top, 2014.

¹⁴ A report prepared by Catalyst on the top 500 companies in the USA, “The Bottom Line: Corporate Performance and Women's Representation on Boards,” indicates that companies with three or more women on the Board of Directors outperformed companies with all-male boards of directors by 60%

¹⁵ <https://2012-2017.usaid.gov/what-we-do/gender-equality-and-womens-empowerment/addressing-gender-programming/supporting-womens>

¹⁶ <https://www.oecd.org/gender/data/why-dont-more-girls-choose-stem-careers.html>

¹⁷ <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/careers/articles/tenacious-talent.html>



Principle 1.

Establish high-level Corporate Leadership for Gender Equality

Integrating the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) into company policies and operations should start with agreement on the importance of gender equality at the top executive level. After senior management reaches a consensus on the issue, company officials should develop a plan specifying how gender equality will be implemented, monitored, and measured.

WEPs Action Plan

- Enunciate a corporate approach that displays consensus on gender equality.
- Identify members of senior management as leaders of the relevant activities.
- Define the performance indicators for each activity leading to the achievement of gender equality.

Areas of implementation

The objective of establishing high-level leadership for gender equality has **three main dimensions**:

- It allows the management process to incorporate the gender equality imperative.
- It ensures stakeholder participation.
- It communicates gender equality messages internally and externally.

Management process	Stakeholder participation	Communication
Create a body to monitor the gender equality performance of the company or appoint a high-level corporate administrator to handle this issue.	Create mechanisms to receive feedback on policies and implementation from internal and external stakeholders.	Send gender equality messages to the external public. Communicate gender equality objectives and activities within the company.
Ensure senior corporate managers embrace monitoring and assessment of the implementation.	Identify opportunities for co-operation with stakeholders working on gender equality and the economic empowerment of women.	Emphasize an approach that highlights gender equality in the statements of corporate spokespersons, communication platforms and documents. Encourage corporate leaders to draw attention to gender equality through their behavior (such as pointing out the importance of women’s participation).

Indicators of implementation

The establishment of high-level corporate leadership for gender equality can be measured by the following **indicators**.

- ✓ Existence of corporate policies on gender equality integrated within the company’s mission, vision, and corporate values.
- ✓ Existence of the WEPs Action Plan with concrete activities, designated persons, timeframes, and resources.
- ✓ Public statements by the CEO on gender equality and women’s empowerment.
- ✓ Internal mechanisms that designate managers for implementing the WEPs agenda.
- ✓ Communication of the gender equality commitment and the WEPs agenda internally within the company.

- ✓ Obtaining feedback from the employees of different ranks on gender equality and the WEPs agenda.
- ✓ Engagement with various stakeholders, both internally and externally, with expertise in gender equality.



Principle 2.

Treat all women and men fairly at work - respect and support human rights and, non-discrimination

The second principle of the women’s empowerment principles (WEPs) calls for companies **to treat all women and men fairly at work with respect and support for human rights and non-discrimination**.

It is important to detect discrimination in order to establish and/or strengthen the policies and practices of equal treatment and to provide equal opportunities for everyone. Thus, it is crucial to understand the concepts of discrimination, equal treatment, equal opportunities and equal pay for equal value.

Areas of implementation

The company should focus on adopting gender-responsive approaches and human resources policies in order to achieve the objective of equal treatment, equal opportunity and non-discrimination.

For this purpose, it is essential to incorporate the following considerations.

Identify discriminatory practices

- Assess the rights of employees through a gender equality lens, including recruitment, leave, termination, distribution of positions and in-company training opportunities, as well as wages and additional benefits.
- Uncover gender-based differences and specific gender needs.

Design and adopt gender-responsive policies and practices

Shape policies and everyday measures in light of gender differences and gender needs and in order to eliminate discriminatory practices against women at all levels:

- **Adopt gender-responsive approaches** regarding recruitment, leave, termination, distribution of positions, in-company training opportunities, remuneration, and benefits.
- **Apply disciplinary actions** for non-compliance with gender-responsive policies and practices.
- **Adopt ethical behavioral codes.**

Indicators of implementation

The following indicators can be used to measure support for equal opportunities and non-discrimination at the workplace.

- ✓ Equal distribution of women and men in terms of recruitment, promotion and professional education.
- ✓ The ratio of female job applicants called for interview.
- ✓ The ratio of female managers among interviewers.
- ✓ A comparison of the length of time that women and men spend in the same post.
- ✓ A comparison of women and men’s distributions across and within occupations.
- ✓ Does equal pay for equal work applies.
- ✓ A comparison between the amount of maternity and paternity leave allocated to women and men.
- ✓ The number of employees returning to work after a maternal or paternal leave and the women-men ratio.
- ✓ The amount and the content of measures taken to support and ensure equal rights at the workplace and express appreciation to employees for their contribution to this process.



Principle 3. Ensure the health, safety, and well-being of all women and men workers

Work should take place in a safe and healthy environment, and working conditions should be consistent with the well-being and human dignity of workers and should offer real possibilities for personal achievement, self-fulfillment, and service to society. It is the employer's obligation to create a healthy and safe working environment that is free of violence. For women and men to fully benefit from these rights, different needs and demands must be considered. Gender inequality means that women face violence to a larger extent and therefore, distinct strategies that address the specific needs of women in terms of working conditions must be designed.

Areas of implementation

In order to ensure the well-being of all employees, the company should analyze and address such needs through three main directions: ensure a safe environment at the workplace, ensure an environment that is free of violence and harassment, and provide health services by also taking into consideration the specific needs of women.

Violence and harassment at the workplace	Work safety	Health services must take into account the specific needs of all employees
Develop "zero tolerance" policies and measures to identify violence and harassment at the workplace.	Analyze whether the specific needs of women are taken into consideration when developing work safety and environment policies.	Analyze whether the different needs of female and male employees are taken into account when developing health services.
Take precautions to avoid recurring negative behavioral patterns.	Take the specific needs of women into account when addressing the issue of work safety and the associated problems.	Implement a needs assessment of female and male employees on health and safety issues and analyze the results in a gender-segregated manner.
Develop problem solving mechanisms to address challenges within the process.		

Indicators of implementation

The health, safety and well-being of employees at the workplace can be measured by the following indicators.

- ✓ Whether the health and safety policy that is in place takes into consideration the specific needs of women and men.
- ✓ Prevention and response policies regarding violence and harassment at the workplace, including the internal complaints mechanism.
- ✓ Whether awareness raising training, workshops and material on sexual abuse and violence at the workplace are available.
- ✓ The number of sexual abuse and discrimination complaints and the measures taken in response.
- ✓ The number of employees benefiting from the company's health and safety services and the distribution of women and men within the company.



Principle 4. Promote Education, Training and Professional Development for Women

The provision of education, training and professional development opportunities are critical for the personal development of employees as well as for empowering the company. However, some inequalities may occur between women and men in terms of accessing and benefiting from these resources. Therefore, measures must be taken within the provision of training and professional development opportunities in order to guarantee access for women.

Areas of implementation

The company should analyze the number of women and men on the company's board of directors and in senior management and develop policies that foster the quantity and quality of women's participation in these areas. In order to achieve this objective, it is crucial to support the professional development and career advancement of women.

Support women's career advancement	Support women in accessing training and professional development opportunities
Develop strategies that prepare women for leadership roles.	Assess the level of access to training and professional development opportunities for each gender in terms of job categories and titles.
Ensure that the talents of every employee are identified and evaluated accordingly.	Assess the level of training and awareness raising opportunities on gender equality and women's empowerment and its role specific to the company's industry sector.

Indicators of implementation

The level of support for the education and professional development of women within the company can be measured by the following indicators.

- ✓ The duration of part-time and full-time training that is available to women and men each year.
- ✓ The ratio of female employees that participate in training.
- ✓ The number of women who are promoted.
- ✓ The number of women who reject senior management positions and the reasons behind their rejection.
- ✓ The amount of mentorship, coaching and networking opportunities that the company provides and their impact.
- ✓ The percentage of employees, both female and male, who regularly receive performance and career assessments.



Principle 5. Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women

Companies committed to gender equality and women's empowerment should not only implement WEPs internally but also through their external relations, which can have an impact on the marketplace

in which the company operates. To support women’s economic empowerment, companies can develop strategies involving their stakeholders, suppliers, and vendors by taking initiatives to involve female entrepreneurs, female managers, or women’s cooperatives in the supply chain. Such efforts to sustain gender equality would multiply the effects through the supply chain whilst promoting gender equality and women’s full economic empowerment more broadly.

Areas of implementation

Inside the company	Outside the company
Promote gender equality and women’s empowerment through marketing and advertisement activities.	Analyze the policies of potential suppliers and vendors in terms of gender equality and women’s empowerment.
Provide brands and products that strengthen women and respond to the specific needs of women.	Encourage suppliers and vendors to adopt gender-responsive policies and practices.
Design gender-responsive purchasing policies and practices.	Increase the number of supplier and vendor companies run by female entrepreneurs.
	Support solidarity networks between female entrepreneurs.

Indicators of implementation

Support for gender equality and women’s empowerment within the supply chain and marketing can be measured by the following **indicators**.

- ✓ Existence of gender-responsive marketing policies and mechanisms to eliminate discrimination in marketing and advertisement activities.
- ✓ The number of complaints about gender discrimination included in marketing and advertising activities.
- ✓ The existence of strategic approaches aimed at creating brands/products that empower women.
- ✓ The use of gender-responsive purchasing policies and processes within the company.
- ✓ The amount of female owned and male owned businesses in the supply and vendor chains.
- ✓ The number of suppliers and vendors that apply gender equality policies.
- ✓ The number of gender equality training/awareness-raising programmes for suppliers and vendors.
- ✓ Indicators in supplier and vendor companies related to the gender balance within the company, the working condition of women, health and safety measures provided for all employees, and special measures taken for women.

Principle 6. Promote Equality through Community Initiatives and Advocacy

A company’s commitment to gender equality can impact not only the company but also the wider community. It is critically important that the company shares its experiences, successes, and knowledge with the wider public and that it assumes a leading role in emphasizing the significance of gender equality. The company can play a crucial role in achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment through corporate social responsibility projects in various fields, such as health, sport, the arts, culture, and the environment, as well as through other initiatives such as grant programmes. Community initiatives not only allow the company to create opportunities to promote its activities for gender equality and the empowerment of women within its network of corporate representatives and business partners but also within the broader community.

Areas of implementation

Community projects and cooperation can be supported in several ways:

- Support community NGOs/organisations that advocate for gender equality and develop relationships and partnerships with such organisations.
- Support studies aimed at strengthening positive perceptions of women within society.
- Support the education of women and girls, especially in male-dominated fields.
- Enable all employees to volunteer and contribute to social development projects.
- Raise awareness by organizing events on important international days such as International Women’s Day (8 March) and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (25 November).
- Make efforts to raise awareness on the gender equality part of all communication material.
- Promote contributions made by women to society and women’s leadership by working with women on social initiatives.

Indicators of implementation

Company’s support for gender equality and women’s empowerment through community initiatives and advocacy can be measured through the following indicators:

- ✓ The existence of a company strategy on engagement in community initiatives and cooperation in support of gender equality.
- ✓ The number and extent of community programmes that a company runs in support of gender equality and women’s empowerment.
- ✓ The extent of a company’s relationship and cooperation with NGOs that advocate for gender equality and with educational institutions, etc.
- ✓ The number of employees involved in community work on gender equality.

Principle 7. Measure and publicly report on progress towards achieving Gender Equality

Measuring and reporting on progress in the implementation of the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) will provide opportunities to popularize effective initiatives. Collecting and analyzing sex-disaggregated data, setting targets, and tracking progress to reach goals can help companies identify gaps and positive results that can be scaled up, replicated, and communicated. Reporting on WEPs is important for accountability and transparency and has a positive effect on the image of the company. Indeed, communicating about the progress made towards achieving gender equality can positively affect the company’s public image and brand, build trust with stakeholders and customers, and make a company more attractive as an employer.

Areas of implementation

Measuring	Reporting
Compare the situation analyses and progress reports on Women’s Empowerment Principles, identify progress and challenges and reflect this assessment in future action plans.	Share progress through public reports and receive and evaluate feedback.
	Publish gender equality policies and measures implemented by the company.
Establish platforms within the company to monitor and analyze performance and discuss the outcomes through these platforms.	Demonstrate the company’s commitment to gender equality by publishing the outcomes, including the challenges and the successes.

Indicators of implementation

Measuring and publicly reporting on progress towards achieving gender equality can be assessed by the following **indicators**.

- ✓ Indicators for each WEPs objective of the company and the existence of corresponding monitoring and measurement mechanisms.
- ✓ Monitoring and assessment platforms to measure progress on the implementation and achievement of WEPs.
- ✓ Gathering and analyzing gender-disaggregated data.
- ✓ The regular performance of gender impact assessments.
- ✓ The integration of gender equality data and statistics into the company's annual reports.
- ✓ Publicly available WEPs reports.

5. Strategies for Managing the Crisis in an Equitable Way within the Framework of Women's Empowerment Principles

5.1 Promoting work-life balance and providing support for care responsibilities

 Based on Women's Empowerment Principle 2: Treat all Women and Men Fairly at Work without Discrimination

Work-life balance means enjoying work while balancing it with quality time with family and friends, time for adequate sleep, exercise and nutrition, and time to do things that promote overall well-being. In order to promote work-life balance and provide access to the workplace, **flexible working** can be an important measure.

Moreover, in order to support the care responsibilities of employees, it is crucial to create workplace policies and culture encouraging **support care responsibilities**, including availability and promotion of **parental**

leave for both women and men, providing **childcare support options**, also supporting women in **transition to work after maternity leave**.

5.1.1 Flexible Working Arrangements

Flexible working arrangements typically refer to flexibility on **how much, when, and where employees can work**¹⁸ and are viewed as a way to reduce tensions between the demands of work and private life. Historically, flexible working arrangements were introduced to facilitate women's greater participation in the labour market and are still closely associated with the need for more time for household work and family responsibilities, which disproportionately burdens women. It is ultimately about integrating effective ways of working which leverage employees' physiological and psychological energy to deliver sustainable performance and quality work output while also supporting the balance of private and personal life. Thus, the flexible working arrangement is seen as a tool for companies to boost productivity and attract and retain employees, presenting a win-win situation for both employees and employers.

The *Gender Equality Index* shows that **flexible working arrangements can increase gender-equal opportunities**.¹⁹ Indeed, the Index shows a significant correlation to the availability of flexible working schedules in European Union States. EU States with a higher share of employees with access to considerable flexibility in setting their own working hours displayed higher Gender Equality Index scores. Across the domains, the strongest linkage between the Gender Equality Index and the availability of flexible working arrangements for women is noted in the domain of time, followed by the domain of money and the domain of knowledge. This highlights the importance of flexible working arrangements on how women and men allocate their time for home and paid work activities, as well as for their education and training opportunities.

¹⁸ Eurofound, 2017; Laundon & Williams, 2018.

¹⁹ <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-equality-index-2019-report/flexible-working-arrangements>

In response to Covid-19 pandemic several companies established dedicated "crisis teams" analyzing the needs of the employees during the pandemic and supporting the company in designing the necessary measures. Because of the pandemic related restrictions, many companies transitioned to the flexible working arrangements, including remote working. At the same time, schools' and kindergartens' closure greatly increased the care burden for families, especially for women, as women carry out the majority of unpaid care work, including childcare, dependent adult care, and housework. Indeed, the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the private sector in Türkiye showed that remote working increased significantly, and even after lifting the restrictions related to the Covid-19 pandemic, remote work arrangements continued as they became more normalized. However, focus group discussions revealed that despite the possibility of remote working and several advantages resulting from it, **time-based flexibility worsened** as employees reported increased overtime work and decreased control over contracted hours and workload. Also, focus group discussions revealed that remote working **decreased employees' feelings of relatedness**, i.e., social interactions with colleagues and a sense of belonging at work. Therefore, flexible and remote working arrangements appear as a double-edged sword, as it can give employees with caring responsibilities more control over how they work, on one hand, but on the other hand, it can also disproportionately increase overtime, as well as a feeling of professional seclusion.

➤ Guidelines for successful implementation of flexible working arrangements (FWAs)

Making workplaces more flexible and responsive to the needs of employees is one of the elements that ensure gender equality. Flexible working drives employee engagement and productivity as well as boosting employee well-being and happiness. However, gender outcomes of flexible working arrangements depend on its implementation mechanisms. The implementation of flexible working can lead to poorer gender equality outcomes in companies with weaker **flexible working norms**. Flexible working norms include:

- **Flexibility stigma**, where people who work flexibly are seen as less committed;
- **Ideal worker norms**, where excessive hours and constant availability are common and disproportionately rewarded.

Actions should be taken:²⁰

- ✓ **By companies** - flexible working arrangements should not rely solely on the discretion of individual managers. Thus, companies should formalize standards and processes, and monitor their implementation. Also, companies should promote, by concrete actions, the integration of FWAs into workplace culture.
- ✓ **By senior executives and management** – being role models and supporting new ways of working, adapting leadership style, addressing existing concerns to find sustainable solutions that would be equally profitable for the employees and the company.
- ✓ **By the employees** – being transparent about the needs and working jointly with managers and colleagues to find the best solutions for optimal job outcomes.

²⁰ Some of the recommended actions are adapted from the *Enabling Environment Guidelines* developed for the United Nations System (2019).

For detailed actions, see the table below:

Actions to be taken by the company	Actions to be taken by senior executive staff and managers	Actions to be taken by employees
Promote the integration of FWAs within workplace culture by supporting managers and employees in gaining confidence with a new way of work.	Use FWAs when appropriate by modeling good practices and adapting to the company's working environment.	Be reachable and responsive when working remotely.
Speak positively about FWAs not only as a way to balance work and life, but as a way to be more effective and deliver better results.	Discuss the possibilities of using FWAs within the team in order to reach arrangements that work for the whole team.	Provide clear contact information for colleagues and managers.
Disseminate good practices widely to help guide others and showcase benefits.	Recognize good performance and productivity, not time spent in the office.	Provide clear information on work plans and availability.
Encourage senior managers to vocalize support to FWAs at all stages of planning and implementation.	Provide clear guidance on the rules and expectations of FWAs usage, as well as feedback on their effectiveness.	Strengthen communication and connection by updating managers/colleagues on progress and results achieved, as needed.
Indicate in the vacancy announcement, to the extent possible, required office presence time and/or possibility for FWAs.	Prevent overconnectivity by limiting calls after working hours to emergency situations only.	Use communication channels in a way that respects coworkers' flexible working arrangements.
Develop FWAs policy template and sample request form for employees and managers.	Allow time flexibility to staff by also taking into consideration the needs of the company.	
Stipulate into the company's policy that the response to the request of FWAs should, as default be positive, taking into consideration job requirements.	Make arrangements to make FWAs applicable (e.g. core working hours are established and no meetings can be held outside of core working time).	

➤ Working designs for flexible working arrangements

There are several work designs factors that are important for work to lead to success in terms of employee wellbeing and performance.

- **Employee autonomy** - having control over flexible working pattern;
- **Reward** - feeling valued at work;
- **Relatedness** - feeling connected to colleagues and a sense of belonging in the organization.

These work design factors are positively correlated with employee motivation, performance and wellbeing would make the experience of flexible working more positive in terms of reduced work-life conflict, and that they would predict sustained uptake of flexible working.

Different types of arrangement can be considered:

Type	Description
Flexible working hours	Employee may vary starting and finishing times.
Compressed working weeks	Employee may work the same number of weekly (or monthly) working hours, compressed into a shorter period. For example, a forty-hour week may be worked at the rate of ten hours per day for four days instead of eight hours a day for five days.
Distance working	Employee may work at a location other than the official place of work.
Part-time work	A regular work pattern where an employee works less than full-time and is paid on a pro-rata basis for that work.
Job sharing	A full-time job role is divided into multiple job roles to be undertaken by two or more employees who are paid on a pro-rata basis for the part of the job each completes.
Purchased leave	A period of leave without pay, usually available after annual leave allocation is finished. Employers typically deduct the amount of unpaid leave from the worker's salary either as a lump sum or averaged over the year.
Unplanned leave	Informal access to leave for unanticipated or unplanned events.
Flexible careers	Employee is able to enter, exit and re-enter employment with the same company, or to increase or decrease the workload or career pace to suit different life stages. This may be particularly relevant for employees transitioning to retirement or for the employees who would like to take a "gap year" in their careers and return to work for the same employer afterwards.

In order to successfully establish and implement FWAs, it is essential to adopt function-based approach, i.e., core principles should be designed based on the specificities of each function, which can be further adapted to different needs of employees.

Example: Adapting FWAs to manufacturing employees: It is challenging to implement FWAs to manufacturing employees who work in continuous shifts. Women working in shifts may have more difficulties than men due to their traditional care responsibilities. The following flexible working adaptations can be considered for shift work:

- Possibility to change the shift start times based on the needs of women.
- Establishing shift swapping procedure with clear instructions. Shift swaps can be used by employees when they have medical appointments, family care related responsibilities, etc.
- Compressed working weeks may also be adopted to manufacturing where appropriate.
- For the positions requiring full time presence, job sharing option can be proposed: one person might work from Monday to Wednesday and the other from Wednesday to Friday, with a handoff on the overlapping days.

Flexible Work Policy Template developed by WEPS platform and available at the following link can be used by the companies.

<https://www.weps.org/resource/flexible-work-policy-template>

It can also be customized based on the requirements of the company.

Check and monitor regularly:

At least one capacity building opportunity is provided during last 24 months to at least 80% of the managers and HR department's staff on the importance, the benefits and practical implementation of FWAs.
At least one awareness raising campaign is implemented within the company during last 24 months about the importance and the benefits of FWAs (including the dissemination of good practices), and the promotion of the working culture avoiding overconnectivity.
Company's internal policy on FWAs is adopted, including request forms developed for employees and managers, taking into consideration job requirements.
Tracking, monitoring and reporting mechanism to gather information annually about FWAs is in place, with disaggregation by sex, age, locality, type of FWA, contract type, grade, and national/international staff, including request monitoring and the obligation to develop annual reports on FWA usage. (Reports should also include the feedback on the effectiveness of FWAs).
Each entity/division within the company has issued internal communication to inform the employees about the possibility of FWAs.
At least one meeting per year is organized within each entity/division of the company to discuss options of using FWAs within the team.
Infrastructure and logistics are in place to allow the effective distance working, such as computers, internet connection, safe network connectivity, etc.
Performance assessments have integrated FWAs related considerations, such as valuing productivity and results, rather than time spent in the office.

5.1.2 Family friendly workplace policies and culture supporting care responsibilities

In addition to workplace flexibility, family-friendly policies enable employees to effectively balance personal, family and professional commitments. Family-friendly policies should include not only childcare, but a broader care issue such as elder or dependent care. Moreover, the supportive nature of these policies should not come at the expense of personnel who do not have children, elder or dependent care issues. Such policies have been shown to be strong drivers of employee engagement and often constitute a make-or-break point in terms of retention and career progression for staff, among them inclusive parental leave, childcare support options, and support in transition to work after parental leave are particularly important.

➤ **Inclusive parental leave**

Inclusive parental leave, encompassing all parents - mothers and fathers, biological, adoptive, and foster parents - is a key component of creating a more enabling environment. Establishing inclusive parental leave policy is a key measure to accelerate progress in gender parity. Indeed, encouraging fathers to share the responsibilities of parenthood in a more consistent way helps mitigate the "motherhood penalty", where women's career advancement is diminished by having children.

The purpose of parental leave is not solely to recover from the process of gestation and delivery. It is a critical time for parents to bond with and nurture their child and adjust to their new roles and responsibilities. Sufficient time for bonding is particularly important for adoptive and foster parents as it may take longer. This includes not just newborn adoptees but also children adopted or fostered at an older age who may need additional time to acclimate. It is crucial to offer a fully paid parental leave.

Nevertheless, the experience shows that simply having an inclusive parental leave policy is not enough. Steps will need to be taken to encourage parents to take the time available to them and to use this time with their children. Leaders and managers can act as role models to encourage working parents, both mothers and fathers, to spend their parental leave with their children. Male leaders, by giving examples, can change the cultural perception regarding paternity leave. HR managers can support creating the working environment encouraging parental leave by using various communication chains to portray men as active fathers and equal partners, incentivizing them to use available parental leave.

While adopting policies and establishing practices supporting employees as parents and caregivers, it is crucial to re-organize the work in order not to disadvantage other employees. Lack of replacement may cause resentment among colleagues who are asked to absorb the workload of the staff on leave. Therefore, allocated resources for temporary replacement and handover guidance should be in place.

Actions to be taken:

- ✓ Develop and adopt an inclusive leave policy in which leave allowances cannot be transferrable between parents and will not be reimbursed for monetary value if unused, by also applying it to adoption, foster care or elderly care.
- ✓ Avoid any minimum service requirement to be eligible for inclusive parental leave.
- ✓ Dedicate the budgetary sources to provide adequate resources for hiring replacement personnel for backstopping parental leaves and other extended staff leave periods.
- ✓ Establish the handover procedures to provide the necessary guidance for a temporary replacement.
- ✓ Establish/adapt internal procedures in order to include employees on the parental leave from performance evaluation, as well as for the consideration of salary increase.
- ✓ Ensure senior management express clear support to inclusive parental leave policy and acts as role models by taking/encouraging full parental leave.
- ✓ Design and disseminate communication materials portraying men as active fathers and equal partners incentivizing them to use available parental leave.

Check and monitor regularly:

The company has formulated an internal inclusive leave policy designed to support employees as parents and caregivers, including non-transferrable leave allowance also applying to adoption, foster care and elderly care, avoiding minimum service requirement to be eligible for parental and care leave.
The Company gathers and analyzes yearly gender-disaggregated data regarding the use of parental and care leave in the company.
The company established a reserve fund for temporary hiring to replace the staff on extended leave, if needed.
The company adopted the policy providing the necessary guidance for a temporary replacement .
The Company has implemented at least one awareness raising campaign during last 24 months encouraging all parents and caregivers, women and men, to take the leave time they are entitled to.
The majority of eligible senior leaders take maternity/paternity/care leave and show their support for the involvement of men in caring for their children.

➤ **Support employees' transition to work after parental or other extended leave**

Ensuring employees smooth transition back to work following parental or other extended leave is of major importance.

Actions to be taken:

- ✓ Adopt the company's policy on the transition to work after parental or other extended leave. (See main components of the policy in the box below)
- ✓ Provide training to the managers on the details of the transition to work after parental or any other extended leave;
- ✓ Designate a Focal Point within the HR department who can help guide staff and managers through the process. Optionally, a dedicated web page can be created for new parents which includes information on relevant policies, the contact information on Focal Points, experiences of other parents, and other relevant information.

Company policy on transition to work after parental or other extended leave (Main components)²¹

Prior to departure on [parental] leave

- At the latest, one month before the start of the [parental] leave, the supervisor and the staff member should have a meeting to discuss the staff member's current functions, responsibilities and ongoing projects and the measures that the supervisor will be putting in place to ensure the continuity of work during [their] absence. If the staff member's tasks are to be assigned to one staff member or divided among several, this should be clearly outlined for the purposes of ensuring a smooth transition.
- The supervisor is invited to outline in writing the measures that will be put in place during the staff member's absence with a clear indication of who will be responsible for what tasks. Any transfer of supervisory functions should also be clarified.
- The staff member is invited to provide [their] supervisor with a hand-over note that can be shared with the staff who will be assuming [their] functions during [their] absence on [parental] leave. The staff member is also encouraged to inform [their] regular interlocutors (clients, counterparts, etc.) of the dates of [their] absence and name(s) of colleague(s) who can be contacted in [their] absence to ensure continuity of service.
- The supervisor and the staff member are invited to discuss the possibility of keeping the staff member in copy in important email exchanges relating to [their] current functions, responsibilities and ongoing projects during the [parental] leave.
- The supervisor is invited to inform all relevant staff in the office of the measures put in place, including any modification of reporting lines and relevant dates.
- Moreover, the company develops a practical parental guide for parents/caregivers providing useful information about parenting, as well as about the rights of parents as employees, and awareness raising / training on equal parenting.

Upon return from [parental] leave

- The supervisor is responsible for facilitating the full reintegration of the staff member into the workplace upon their return.
- Relevant staff in the office should be informed in advance of the staff member's return and the supervisor should make all necessary arrangements to facilitate the resumption of the staff member's regular functions.
- The supervisor is invited to involve other team members in facilitating the staff member's return from [parental] leave.
- **Immediately after the staff member's return, the supervisor is invited to meet with the staff**

member and inform [the staff member] of any changes to the structure of the office, business processes, reporting lines or in [their] functions and responsibilities.

- Subject to the exigencies of service, the supervisor is invited to discuss the possibility of flexible working arrangements with the staff member and to support any such request.
- Should the staff member wish to breastfeed, the supervisor should support [their] request to identify a daily time for the purpose of breastfeeding or expressing milk. The timing of the daily absences is set by the needs of the staff member in consultation with the supervisor to achieve the optimal balance with the needs of the service.
- Supervisors shall ensure that the staff member maintains as much as possible of [their] previous portfolio to facilitate the smooth transition back to work.

Check and monitor regularly:

Has the company adopted the policy on transition to work after parental or other extended leave?
Are the managers of the company trained/informed on company's policy on transition to work after parental or other extended leave?
Is there a designated Focal Point within the HR department (i) guiding staff and managers through the process of transition after parental or other extended leave? (ii) monitoring the process on a regular basis?
Are the needs of training or re-training assessed by regular consultations with the employees returning from parental or other extended leave?
Does the company provide support on training for re-employment after parental or other extended leave, if needed?

➤ **Provide support for childcare**

Combining work and parenthood is challenging for all families and the availability of affordable, quality childcare services is a concern for many working parents. Reducing the financial burden of childcare can decrease stress, increase job satisfaction and retain staff with children.

Workplace support for childcare can assist employees, both women and men, with their childcare needs. It can be:

- Direct subsidies for parents.
- Support in reserving or covering the cost of spaces at local community childcare centers.
- Negotiating discounts for their workers with local providers.
- Development of a childcare facility in the premises of an actual workplace if the company has a large concentration of on-site workers.
- Development of an off-site facilities nearby the workplace.

Facility development can be sponsored by more than one employer, allowing several employers to share costs and achieve economies of scale, given that a lot of worker demand is needed to justify a company childcare center.

Check and monitor regularly:

Has the company assessed the needs of employees on childcare support?
Has company's management discussed the best ways of addressing needs of employees on childcare support and evaluated its impact on the company?
Has the company established a reserve fund for providing support for childcare?

²¹ Bases on UNOG's Policy: (Parental) leave: ensuring business continuity and reintegration (of parents) into the workplace.

5.1.3 Promoting work-life balance and supporting care responsibilities: benefits and good practices

For the successful implementation of FWAs, as well as of corporate support mechanisms for care responsibilities, benefits and good practices should be communicated to the management and executive staff and widely disseminated within the company.

➤ Benefits of flexible working arrangements

Reduced absenteeism and increased well-being

FWAs reduce unscheduled absences by providing the necessary time-off for staff to care for themselves and their families. In terms of psychological and physical well-being, reported benefits include reduced stress, a greater sense of control, a pleasant work environment and the ability to better integrate a healthy lifestyle into daily routine.

Attraction and retention of an engaged and diverse workforce

FWAs can increase recruitment and retention, including among personnel with disabilities, personnel with dependents with disabilities and personnel who are unable to commute to the office.

Business continuity

FWAs can support business continuity by allowing personnel to work remotely in certain situations that might otherwise preclude them from coming into work (e.g. pandemics, transport strikes, extreme weather conditions, unforeseeable events).

Increased productivity from a results-driven approach based on trust, empowerment and accountability

FWAs promote results-driven management in lieu of micro-management. Attitude, dedication and work ethic drive responsibility and productivity, regardless of physical location.

Decreased operating costs

By increasing employee productivity, reducing facility costs, lowering absenteeism and reducing turnover, organizations can save on multiple fronts. An analysis of over 250

case studies found that companies reduce operating costs by more than USD 10,000 per year for every person who telecommutes half time.²²

➤ Good practices of flexible working arrangements

Championing FWA usage

In 2018 the United Nations Office of Geneva (UNOG) released the video “Flexible Working Arrangements/Réaménagement des modalités de travail” to showcase the different FWAs being used by employees.²³

Use of internal platforms for requesting and tracking FWA usage

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has introduced a FWA policy that incorporates a *SharePoint* form and *workflow* for the review, approval and recording of FWA requests. The form is accessible on the IMO intranet page.

After-hours communication delays or bans

A 2014 study by the University of British Columbia found that checking emails less frequently significantly lowered daily stress compared to times of unrestricted use. Following this finding, German automaker Daimler implemented a “mail on holiday” policy, which deletes emails sent to employees on vacation, notifying the sender that they can email an alternate colleague if it is an emergency or resend the email once the employee has returned to work.

In France, a law adopted in 2017 require companies with more than 50 employees to establish hours when staff should not send or answer emails. Notably, this law was prompted by a study linking the excessive technology use to health problems, including sleeplessness.

Job-sharing programme

The International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) developed a job-sharing programme in which two staff members at the same grade level who hold the same type of contract may perform the same functions of a position on a 50:50 basis.

²² Catalyst (2013). Flex Works. July.
²³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KhtnwdNCDU>

➤ Benefits of family-friendly policies

Costs of employee turnover are significant for organizations, including replacement costs (hiring and training), as well as lost productivity costs. Strong family-friendly policies are central to an organizations’ competitiveness as an employer and its ability to function efficiently. Organizations that provide staff with sufficient support to balance their professional and personal lives are more likely to attract a wider range of quality candidates and have staff with higher levels of organizational commitment, job satisfaction and, on average, more productive and present work practices. **Google found that when it increased maternity leave by 33%, the rate at which mothers quit was reduced by 50%.**²⁴

There are several benefits linked to the concrete measures of family friendly policies. For example, **employer supported childcare** reduces absenteeism and improves the recruitment of employees. Workplace childcare programs are associated with improved job satisfaction and productivity, along with less intention to quit²⁵. Parents who have used an on-site child care service have reported that they appreciate commuting with their children, as well as the relief of knowing their children are close by. Another example is a gender-neutral inclusive parental leave, which breaks the social norm of the mother as the default *primary caregiver*. Gender-neutral inclusive parental leave describes common foundations in terms of primary caregivers and non-primary caregivers’ status regardless of gender and taking into account various family structures including biological parent, adoption, surrogacy, legal guardian etc. It has been shown that fathers who take paternity leave are more likely to be involved in childcare-related activities than fathers who do not do so. Evidence also suggests that children whose fathers are more involved perform better during

²⁴ Rodionova, Z. (2016). Google’s Paid Maternity Leave Halved the Number of New Mothers Quitting, Says YouTube CEO. Independent. 29 January. Available at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/google-s-paid-maternity-leave-halved-the-number-of-new-mothers-quitting-youtube-ceo-says-a6841326.html>.

²⁵ Child-Care Service Delivery Effect on Business Performance Female Nursery School Operators Meeting the Challenge in Nigeria, Maduenyoghasi, Oluchukwu Samson, Ezirim, Aloy Chinedu (Ph.D), Wonu, Nduka, 2015

their early years than their peers whose fathers are less involved. Inclusive parental leave also breaks stereotypes and mitigates potential managerial concerns of hiring women in their childbearing years as all staff in need will have equal access to extended leave.

➤ Good practices of family-friendly policies

Maternity protection and paid parental leave

L’Oréal offers a global minimum of 14 weeks paid maternity leave and six weeks paid paternity or co-parenting leave, with this standard often exceeded depending upon the country context. This benefit falls under one of four pillars of the L’Oréal ‘Share and Care’ Social Program, which integrates a suite of policies – including social benefits, flexible and telework opportunities, and physical and mental health care – to promote a responsible, global workplace.²⁶

Creating a reserve fund

Replacement funds, also referred to as corporate replacement funds, could be reserved at a percentage of staff costs. The World Food Programme (WFP) builds it in as a percentage of staff costs. The savings made as a result enables the organization to enhance its parental leave policy.

Transition guidance

In 2017, The United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) released transition/handover guidance for managers on facilitating the reintegration of staff following maternity leave. This follows feedback from staff members that their return to work has not always been well managed. A number of measures covering pre- and post-parental leave are provided.²⁷

²⁶ L’Oréal, ‘Key Figures: Diversity + Inclusion Driven’, 2020 <https://www.loreal.com/en/commitments-and-responsibilities/for-the-people/promoting-diversity-and-inclusion/key-figures/>
‘L’Oréal Share and Care’ Social Program’ <https://www.loreal.com/en/articles/loreal-share-and-care-social-program/>
²⁷ Policy is available on the following link: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5367af22e4b0915380a1eb0a/t/5c81924f4e17b6096710cdaf/1551995473476/Gender-parity-Enabling-environment-guidelines-Supplementary-guidance-en.pdf>

Workplace childcare facilities

In partnership with the Center for Child Rights and Corporate Social Responsibility (CCR CSR) the ICTI Ethical Toy Program (IETP) launched a programme in 2016 to provide safe spaces in factories for workers' children to learn and play over the summer. The programme has since grown across five provinces in China, providing childcare support for 1,100 children and supporting over 1,200 factory workers. IETP has noted that, following the implementation of these programmes, factories saw a 183% increase in employee satisfaction, 58% increase in worker trust in management and 13% increase in worker retention rate.²⁸

UNESCO's Day Nursery provides care for children between the ages of 12 months and 3 years of all personnel, including members of Permanent Delegations, consultants and other international agencies established in Paris. Additionally, the Children's Club provides care for children between the ages of 3 and 8 once a week and during the school holidays.

Support to migrant workers in distance parenting

Center for Child Rights and Corporate Social Responsibility (CCR CSR) has provided support to fashion retailer Inditex by equipping migrant employees with the tools and mechanisms to confront the challenges of parenting at a distance, including how to leverage technology to stay connected to families. Since starting in 2019, the programme has engaged four factories with approximately 2,000 workers (including 175 parents) across their supply chain.²⁹

Elderly and family care leave

Schneider Electric grants for 1 week for care for an immediate family member that either needs elder care or care for a serious health condition.³⁰

²⁸ IETI, Family-Friendly Spaces Activities (2020). Available at: <https://www.ethicaltoyprogram.org/en/our-program/worker-well-being/family-friendly-spaces-2020updates/>

²⁹ Inditex, Annual Report (2019). https://static.inditex.com/annual_report_2019/pdfs/en/memoria/2019-inditex-annual-report.pdf

³⁰ <https://www.se.com/in/en/about-us/press/press-release/2017/schneider-electric-launches-global-family.jsp#:~:text=The%20policy%20places%20Schneider%20as,be-reavement%20leave%20in%20all%20countries.&text=The%20policy%20demonstrates%20a%20commitment,greater%20>

Equal parental leave for primary and secondary caregivers

Vodafone Group implemented global parental leave policy across their markets, giving every parent the opportunity to take 16 weeks of fully paid leave.³¹

5.2 Prevention and elimination of sexual harassment at the workplace

 Based on Women's Empowerment Principle 3: Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers.

5.2.1 Understand and recognize sexual harassment and its impact on the workplace

Sexual harassment includes such unwelcome sexually determined behaviour as physical contact and advances, sexually colored remarks, showing pornography and sexual demand, whether by words or actions. Such conduct can be humiliating and may constitute a health and safety problem; it is discriminatory when the woman has reasonable grounds to believe that her objection would disadvantage her in connection with her employment, including recruitment or promotion, or when it creates a hostile working environment.³²

Sexual harassment is any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.³³

Also qualifies as sexual harassment: (i) quid pro quo behaviours occur when benefits, such as employment, promotion, salary increases, shift or additional work, performance expectations and other employment conditions, are made dependent on the provision of sexual favours, by an employer, supervisor or representative of the employer who has the authority to make decisions about employment. (ii) Hostile working environment where the behaviour creates intimidating or humiliating conditions

[engagement%2C%20performance%20and%20innovation.](https://www.se.com/in/en/about-us/press/press-release/2017/schneider-electric-launches-global-family.jsp#:~:text=The%20policy%20places%20Schneider%20as,be-reavement%20leave%20in%20all%20countries.&text=The%20policy%20demonstrates%20a%20commitment,greater%20)

³¹ <https://investors.vodafone.com/sites/vodafone-ir/files/2021-05/vodafone-annual-report-2021.pdf>

³² CEDAW General Recommendation No. 19.

³³ Article 40 of the Istanbul Convention

for the person exposed victim.³⁴

Sexual harassment also includes **online** forms, which can take place independently, or can also be an extension or a precursor of other forms of gender-based violence. By blurring professional and personal lives and merging workplaces with the home, remote work may exacerbate online harassment even further. Due in part to the growth of remote employment that followed the COVID-19 pandemic, online workplace harassment has become more common.

In summary, **common elements in the definitions of sexual harassment at the workplace** are as follows:

- It occurs in a place of work or a work-related environment, also beyond working hours and in places, which are not specifically linked to business operation.
- It relates to behaviour of a sexual nature.
- It is unwelcome, unwanted, uninvited, unreturned and is not mutual.
- It makes the victim feel humiliated, intimidated and offended.
- It affects the work environment itself (creating a hostile work environment) and the terms and conditions of employment (quid pro quo, sexual harassment).

Sexual harassment at the workplace can take **several forms**:

- explicitly sexual verbal or nonverbal behaviour;
- insulting verbal or nonverbal behaviour that is not sexual but draws on gender-based beliefs, including sexist hostility;
- unwanted sexual attention;
- sexual coercion (threats and requests for sexual cooperation in return for job security or benefits).

The following list is not exhaustive but helps to identify what can constitute sexual harassment:

- demanding hugs;
- invading personal space;
- unnecessary physical contact, including unwanted touching, etc.;
- derogatory language and/or comments directed towards women or men, depending on the circumstances;

³⁴ ILO, Sexual Harassment at Work, Fact Sheet.

- sexually specific derogatory names;
- leering or inappropriate staring;
- gender related comment about a person's physical characteristics or mannerisms;
- comments or conduct relating to a person's perceived non-conformity with a sexual role stereotype;
- displaying or circulating pornography, sexual pictures or cartoons, sexually explicit graffiti or other sexual images (including online);
- sexual jokes, including circulating written sexual jokes (e.g., by e-mail);
- rough and vulgar humour or language related to gender;
- sexual or gender related comments or conduct used to bully a person;
- spreading sexual rumours (including online);
- suggestive or offensive remarks or innuendo about members of a specific gender;
- propositions of physical intimacy;
- gender related verbal abuse, threats or taunting;
- bragging about sexual prowess;
- demanding dates or sexual favours;
- questions or discussions about sexual activities;
- requiring an employee to dress in a sexualized or gender-specific way;
- paternalistic behaviour based on gender, which the recipient feels undermines his or her status or position of responsibility;
- threats to penalize or otherwise punish a person who refuses to comply with sexual advances (known as reprisal).
- Sexual harassment can take place through online and digital means. Can be defined as **online harassment, including social media:**
- **non-consensual sharing of nude or sexual images** (photos or videos) including acts of image-based sexual abuse (also known as "revenge pornography");
- **non-consensual taking, producing or procuring of intimate images or videos** including acts of "upskirting" and taking "creepshots" as well as producing digitally altered imagery in which a person's face or body is superimposed or "stitched into" a pornographic photo or video, known as "fake pornography" (such as "deepfakes", when synthetic images are created using artificial intelligence);
- **exploitation, coercion and threats** including forms of violence such as forced sexting,

- sexual extortion, rape threats, sexualised/gendered doxing, impersonation and outing;
- **sexualised bullying** constituting behaviours such as circulating gossip or rumours about a victim’s alleged sexual behaviour, posting sexualised comments under the victim’s posts or photos, impersonating a victim and sharing sexual content or sexually harassing others, thus impacting their reputation and/or livelihood, or “outing” someone without their consent with the purpose of scaring, threatening and body shaming;
- **cyberflashing** consisting in sending unsolicited sexual images via dating or messaging applications, texts, or using Airdrop or Bluetooth technologies; persistent requests and messages from different fake social media accounts.

Research shows that gender-based violence increases during crisis, including pandemics.³⁵ As many workers shift to working from home, the boundary between work and personal lives may become blurred. Moreover, working in isolation increases a worker’s vulnerability to sexual harassment and can decrease the chances of reporting. In many companies, people feel more vulnerable during the pandemic, and that might make them less likely to raise a concern or risk, or put themselves through a complaint process.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, online sexual harassment has become more prevalent.³⁶ Some surveys showed that 15% of women who have experienced sexual harassment reported an increase in on-line harassment while working from home,³⁷ highlighting examples of online harassment including male managers telling women to attend video calls wearing more make-up and sexier clothing.

Therefore, considering the new work arrangements, employers should be aware of the potential for increased sexual harassment, and the new ways in which it might appear, and the policy should be designed accordingly.³⁸

³⁵ Ending Violence, Association of BC, Preventing and Responding to Workplace Sexual Harassment During COVID-19: https://endingviolence.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/EVA-BC_Preventing-and-Responding-to-Workplace-Sexual-Harassment-During-COVID-CLR.pdf

³⁶ UNISON, the Public Service Union, Covid-19 hasn’t killed sexual harassment, it’s just moved online

³⁷ Survey by the *Charity Rights of Women*: <https://www.unison.org.uk/motions/2021/local-government/covid-19-hasn%E2%80%99t-killed-sexual-harassment-at-work-%E2%80%99F%BD-it%E2%80%99s-just-moved-online/>

³⁸ As an example see the Policy Template of Gender-Based Violence and Harassment at Work: <https://www.weeps.org/resource/gender-based-violence-and-harassment-work-policy-template>

5.2.2 Why is preventing and eliminating sexual harassment relevant to companies?

Sexual harassment is a form of sex-based discrimination disproportionately affecting women. It can result in employees feeling unwelcome, uncomfortable, threatened at work or at worse forced to leave their job. Being subjected to sexual harassment can be extremely distressing for the victim and have negative consequences for the victim’s professional as well as private life.

Sexual harassment creates a hostile work environment for individuals and groups of employees who are the targets of such harassment and often for those who choose to report sexual harassment. Workplaces where sexist jokes and comments create and perpetuate a sexist organisational climate (sexist hostility) are not always viewed as sites of sexual violence. However, frequent but less intense workplace experiences such as sexist jokes and remarks or ignoring women during meetings can have an equally negative effect on occupational well-being as less frequent yet more intense forms of mistreatment at work such as sexual coercion or physical forms of sexual harassment. Over time, the impact of less intense experiences can have similar effects on individual employees as more serious but less frequent forms of sexual harassment.

Women who experience sexually harassing behaviour often do not label or name their experiences as sexual harassment *per se* and are often less able to recognize the broad spectrum of behaviour that constitutes sexual harassment, such as offensive jokes and unwelcome sexual advances.

For the companies, it is crucial to prevent and adequately react to sexual harassment, including online harassment. Harassers generally will not stop on their own. Ignoring such behaviour on the part of the employer may even be seen as a form of agreement or encouragement. If not dealt with, sexual harassment can diminish the quality of victim’s performance, create a bad working environment for women and men and impair gender equality as well as cause reputational damage to the company. Therefore, companies should take measures to make it clear that sexual harassment will not be tolerated and that victims will be supported.

5.2.3 Addressing sexual harassment at the workplace

Sexual harassment should be seen as an issue that needs to be addressed by the organization **explicitly** - through policy, and **implicitly** - through organizational culture. The intervention should take place at minimum **three different levels**³⁹ and should cover both – offline and online harassment.

Primary level	Secondary level	Tertiary level
Effective policies, including education about sexual harassment and policy to respond to it at the workplace.	Effective complaints procedures and employee support.	Rehabilitation and follow-up stage.
Primary interventions for prevention refer to activities that take place before sexual harassment occurs.	Secondary interventions are immediate responses after an incident of sexual harassment has occurred.	Tertiary level refers to long-term recovery responses .

The intervention takes place through three functional dimensions:

Message → Management → Monitoring

³⁹ The developed approach is based on the Organizational Intervention Model for workplaces to address sexual harassment. The model draws from their literature review on sexual harassment at the workplace, Fitzgerald et al. (1997), Hunt et al., (2010).

	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Message	A clear statement of intent in company policy to prevent sexual harassment. Communicate this intent to the employees. Challenge gendered culture through training .	Establishing an effective complaints mechanism . Communicate the complaints mechanism clearly to employees.	Establish support options for the victims of sexual harassment. Clearly communicate the existing support options available to victims of sexual harassment.
Management	Ensure that training on how to deal with sexual harassment is regular and inclusive . Include conflict management in the training module.	Ensure the timely and transparent handling of complaints . Apply commensurate sanctions .	Provide longer term support and assistance to the victims. Prevent and avoid longer term victimization of victims.
Monitoring	Assess the specific organizational risk factors .	Assist management in recognizing victimization . (Including training of managers, HR, security teams, etc.) Identify and reward managers who respond appropriately.	Monitor the organizational culture . Stay updated on the developments in anti-discrimination law and policy.

These interventions require holistic approaches involving leadership, effective policies, communication and capacities. The following components are paramount for successful workplace interventions aimed at preventing and responding to sexual harassment: (i) leadership commitment, (ii) company policies, (iii) workplace practices and culture.

✓ Leadership commitment

Effective workplace measures require a visible and proactive stance against sexual harassment by organizational leaders. Developing the right messages is critical and should articulate the following:

- the organization's objectives regarding sexual harassment,
- the company's commitment to zero tolerance for sexual harassment,
- the rationale and benefits of such an approach.

✓ Company policies

The sexual harassment policy is a core component of the explicit organizational environment and sends a clear message about what is expected in the organization. It affects the behaviour of both men and women.

Sexual harassment policies should focus on the response to sexual harassment and provide information to employees about what individuals should expect from their employer if they experience sexual harassment.

Content of the sexual harassment policy

- A company's policy on sexual harassment should include the following core elements:
- A statement of intent to enforce the policy seriously and promptly, specifying the penalties for the perpetrators of such behaviour.
- An unambiguous definition of sexual harassment, including both – offline and online sexual harassment.
- Provide examples of sexual harassment that could be relevant to the particular working environment.
- A statement that sexual harassment is against the law.
- An explanation of the circumstances through which sexual harassment can occur, including both – offline and online sexual harassment.
- The consequences/penalties for breaching policy.
- The responsibilities of management and staff.
- Information on where individuals can get help, advice or make a complaint.
- A summary of the options available for dealing with sexual harassment.
- An outline of the grievance mechanisms. These mechanisms should be perceived as accessible and give employees confidence that the potential targets of harassment have a choice and support. It is recommended to have both an informal complaints procedure and a formal complaints procedure.
- Offer multiple reporting channels such as, for example, a supervisor, another manager or a designated complaints officer.
- Outline the process that will take place following the submission of a report on harassment. This should be a safe and credible process that follows the principle of procedural fairness.
- Outline the support and follow-up measures that are available after a decision has been made on a complaint.

Policy Development

Developing workplace policies in consultation with employees is one opportunity for organisations to build workforce engagement within the policy. Consultative processes are considered to result in better policies.

Consultation enhances buy-in at all levels of an organisation. Sexual harassment is portrayed as a 'community concern' rather than an individual problem resulting in reactive disciplinary procedures. It can also be an opportunity to initiate a broader conversation about gender equality.

Communication, awareness raising and capacity building on the sexual harassment

Development and implementation of a sexual harassment policy is necessary but by itself it is not sufficient to embark on a broader effort to shift norms when it comes to violence against women at the workplace. Communication, awareness raising and capacity building are essential for its effective implementation. Communication is a key step in efforts to achieve overall change. It is essential to communicate the launch and the content of the policy clearly to the employees.

Moreover, it is paramount to provide the necessary training for the effective implementation of the policy, including a discussion about what constitutes sexually harassing behaviour, the expected standard of behaviour and what the organisation will do to prevent and how the organisation will respond to reports of sexual harassment.

Complaints management

Complaints management is the cornerstone of a sexual harassment policy. Those reporting sexual harassment face barriers such as the perception of an adversarial and hostile process, lack of confidentiality, the risks related to isolation and reprisal and concerns about the lack of a result once a complaint is made.

Appropriate transparent and fair systems are essential form of support for policy implementation. Systems to support the policy need to take barriers and sensitivities into account. The policy and process must be clearly articulating and supporting guidance material provided so that there is clarity for all staff.

Informal complaint	Formal complaint
<p>Informal complaint procedures emphasize resolution rather than sanctions.</p> <p>This method of resolution might be more suitable for less serious complaints and where the parties are likely to continue to come into contact with one another at work.</p> <p>Resolution can include a supervisor or another person of authority who can convey privately that sexual harassment is unacceptable and must stop.</p>	<p>Undertaking a formal investigation may be more appropriate if the allegations are serious, the power imbalance is great, there is fear of retaliation and/or informal procedures have not worked.</p> <p>A formal complaint should include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an investigation into the allegations, • a report with a recommended course of action for a decision maker, • implementation of the outcome.

Procedural fairness is a key component of an effective system and it includes the following elements:

- **Multiple reporting channels** involving, for example, a supervisor, another manager or a designated complaints officer.
- **Flexibility in terms of the formality of the procedure**, namely an informal complaints procedure or a formal complaint's procedure.
- **Investigations are to be conducted in a timely manner.**
- **The option to access mediation.**
- **The process must be safe and take into account the fear of potential retaliation**, given that retaliation is a factor that is regularly and reasonably feared. There is a correlation between greater fear of reporting harassment and a higher prevalence of harassment. Often, people who report sexual harassment are perceived as 'less feminine', 'not likable' and 'less trustworthy' than those who do not report such behaviour.
- **Commensurate sanctions** should apply, because weak sanctions indicate a climate of tolerance.
- **The evidence deficit should be acknowledged in formal investigations** because this form of behaviour often takes place in private and without witnesses. Even if evidence cannot substantiate a complaint, it does not mean that the harassment did not occur or that the person making the complaint is not telling the truth.

✓ Workplace practices and culture

Organizational culture is a set of shared assumptions that guide what happens in organizations by defining appropriate behaviour within a company. Organizational culture should empower individuals to speak out against harmful workplace behaviour and make them more gender aware.

Education and awareness raising activities, such as development and dissemination of educational resources on gender equality in general, on unconscious bias, etc., should be implemented. Awareness raising campaigns should target social norms and stereotypes and should be implemented via poster and/or website campaigns, staff newsletter articles, workplace forums, etc.

5.3 Supporting employees against domestic violence

-  Based on Women's Empowerment Principle 3:
 Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers.

5.3.1 Understand and recognize domestic violence and its impact to the workplace

Domestic violence constitutes acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit or between former or current spouses or partners, regardless of whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim.⁴⁰

Domestic Violence can be physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence.⁴¹

- **Physical violence** includes different acts of physical abuse (beating, shaking, shoving, pushing, throwing, twisting, slapping, punching, choking, burning, using weapons, etc.) and may or may not cause injury.
- **Sexual violence** can take many forms and takes place under very different circumstances. The perpetrator of a sexual assault can be a date, an acquaintance, a friend, a family member, an intimate partner or a former intimate partner or a complete stranger but more often it is someone known to the victim. Sexual harassment is one of the forms of sexual violence.
- **Psychological violence** includes threats, humiliation, mocking and controlling behaviour.
- **Economic violence** involves denying the victim access to financial resources (including seizing the salary), property, healthcare, education, the labour market and/or participation in economic decision-making.

Combating domestic violence is a **human rights imperative**. Indeed, the violence against women and girls is a violation of human rights and has a major impact on the survivors of the violence and their families. Businesses must stand with others to support violence free families and workplaces, especially when employees work from home. Businesses increasingly recognize their role in promoting human rights and in the implementation of global agreements and principles.

Domestic violence affects the ability of victims and survivors to be **engaged at work, maintain employment stability and achieve occupational attainment**.⁴² Supporting employees who are victims and survivors of domestic violence is a business imperative as well as human rights imperative.

Supporting employees - victims of domestic violence is also a **business imperative**. The social and economic cost of violence against women is substantial. Based on the USA data, the lifetime economic cost associated with medical services, lost productivity from paid work, criminal justice, and other costs, is \$3.6 trillion. The cost of domestic violence over a victim's lifetime is \$103,767 for women and \$23,414 for men.⁴³

Creating a safe and empowering workplace and addressing violence at home is critical in order for companies to function and prosper. Domestic violence experienced by employees is reflected within the company in a number of ways.

- **Productivity:** Women are less productive in the workplace when they suffer domestic violence. This will result in a significant loss of paid and unpaid work time and employee turnover, poor performance, safety hazards, negative effects on interpersonal relationships at the workplace and the likelihood of decreased concentration and job performance as a result of trauma and/or witnessing domestic violence.

⁴⁰ Council of Europe, Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention).

⁴¹ UNFPA, Strengthening Health System Responses to Gender-Based Violence in Eastern Europe and Central Asia: A Resource Package, WAVE.

⁴² The findings related to the link between violence and work instability are based on the World Bank study Intimate Partner Violence: Economic Cost and Implications for Growth and Economic Costs, 2013.

⁴³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Fast Facts: Preventing Intimate Partner Violence: <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/fastfact.html>

- **Absenteeism:** Domestic violence causes employees to miss work.
- **Presenteeism:** Presenteeism occurs when ongoing physical and/or mental health conditions prevent an employee from being fully productive at work. In short, when the employee arrives at work and work even when sick, it leads to productivity loss.
- **Cost Management:** Workplaces where any form of violence is prevalent experience a negative impact on average business profits. Domestic violence has direct costs for businesses due to its effects on personnel through absenteeism, turnover, layoffs, and reduced productivity during work hours, among other consequences. A study in Peru estimated this cost at 3.7% of the GDP due to the loss of labor days.⁴⁴
- Studies conducted in the USA show that 8.0 million of working days are lost each year due to the domestic violence.⁴⁵

Employed women experiencing domestic violence are often subject to a range of interference tactics by their partner, which **undercuts their ability to maintain regular employment**. Women in abusive relationships tend to experience high rates of job loss and turnover and are frequently forced to resign or are fired. **Women who experience domestic violence are employed in higher numbers in casual and part-time work, and their earnings are up to 60% lower**, compared to women who do not experience such violence.⁴⁶ Moreover, domestic violence has a **negative impact on women's ability to accept training opportunities or upgrade their skills**. Moreover, studies suggest that victims display significantly higher levels of **distraction at work** compared to non-victimized employees and that victims of domestic violence miss more hours of work. Studies have found that depression resulting from domestic violence has the strongest long-term

⁴⁴ VAWG, Finance and Enterprise Development Brief, 2015

⁴⁵ USA National Coalition against domestic violence: <https://ncadv.org/STATISTICS>

⁴⁶ Un Women, Domestic violence and its impact on the world of work, 2020
<https://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/1937-domestic-violence-and-its-impact-on-the-world-of-work-.html>

impact on employment instability and that psychological violence is a stronger predictor of unemployment than physical violence, largely through the effects that psychological violence has in terms of post-traumatic stress disorder.

Violence does not only have a negative effect on the individual but also has significant **implications for work colleagues** who may become involved in order to assist a colleague or by witnessing an act of violence if committed by a colleague. Therefore, the abused employee suffers directly but colleagues can also be affected either directly or indirectly. At the organizational level, the feeling of not being able to help can give rise to frustration within the organization. This can have a negative effect on motivation and commitment among staff, loyalty to the enterprise, the working environment and even affect openness to innovation and knowledge building as well as the public image of the company.

The social and economic cost of domestic violence is high, not only for the victims but also for society and the private sector through loss of economic output caused by absenteeism and the resulting economic cost. The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) estimates that the cost of gender-based violence to the EU Member States exceeds EUR 200 billion per year.⁴⁷ This includes lost economic output and the provision of services, such as health, legal, social and specialized support, and the personal (physical and emotional) impact on the victim.

It is therefore crucial that the private sector views domestic violence as serious, recognizable, preventable and plays a positive role in supporting employees who experience such violence.

5.3.2 Actions to be taken by the companies to support employees against domestic violence

The workplace itself is recognized as a relevant context for initiating a discussion on and addressing the issue of domestic violence. Article 17 of the Istanbul Convention requires that States parties encourage the private sector to set guidelines and self-regulatory standards

⁴⁷ European Institute for Gender Equality, 2014.

in order to strengthen respect for the dignity of women and girls and in this way contribute to the prevention of gender-based violence. Private companies are, for example, encouraged to establish protocols or guidelines on how to support victims. The Council of Europe has elaborated guidelines such for the private sector⁴⁸ based on a survivor centred approach.

A survivor centered approach puts the rights and needs of survivors at the centre of the actions to be taken:

- Treat victims with dignity and respect, rather than subjecting them to accusatory attitudes.
- Choose the course of action that the victim prefers when dealing with the violence in order to remove the sense of powerlessness.
- Ensure privacy and confidentiality and prevent exposure.
- Victims and survivors should experience non-discrimination as opposed to discrimination whether based on gender, age, race/ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, HIV status or any other characteristic.
- Victims and survivors should receive comprehensive information to help them make their own decision instead of being told what to do.

Three principles to remember when dealing with situations involving domestic violence

1. **Safety is paramount:** Actions or words can jeopardize the survivor's safety. Nothing should be disclosed and no action should be taken without the survivor's consent.
2. **Confidentiality:** Survivors often face safety issues and the issues of stigma, shame and victim-blame; thus it is critical that their experiences and identity remain confidential.
3. **Autonomous decision-making/consent:** Only the survivors know the risks they face with regard to their safety and thus they should drive any decision related to the abuse they are experiencing.

a. Increase awareness on the issue of domestic violence

A first step for employers who wish to participate in the prevention of violence against women and domestic violence can be to **raise awareness on this issue among their employees**. Yet because gender-based violence is often seen as a taboo topic, employees can find it difficult to talk about violence and they might not always know how to start a conversation on this subject. Therefore, employers should assist their staff by offering information that helps instigate a discussion about violence in the workplace. Education of staff should therefore include **training on how to have a conversation about gender-based violence, including domestic violence, both at the workplace and in the community**. The training should also include the interpretation of 'signs of trouble' as well as discussions on what to do and what not to do if there is reason to believe that a colleague is confronted with violence at home or at the workplace. **Appointing high level ambassadors within the organization** who should be selected among Chief Executives within the company to promote policy and raise awareness on domestic violence also highlights the fact that fighting violence against women is important to everyone.

Education about gender-based violence will give executives and the staff an understanding of why violence prevention and victim support might be important within the company. Once employees gain a better understanding of the issue, they will be more willing to help and contribute to the company's internal policies in this regard. Internal business support systems for employees at risk of violence can make a difference.

Yet they do not have to be expensive, because they can tap into resources already available within

⁴⁸ Council of Europe, Article 17 of the Istanbul Convention, 'Encouraging the Participation of the Private Sector and the Media in the Prevention of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence', 2016.

the organization. It is important to build a basis for trust between employees and the organization. Trusted managers and colleagues can help in this task, since those employees who are confronted with domestic violence might first open up about their situation to someone familiar to them rather than a complete stranger or an agent of law enforcement. The training should therefore also include preparing employees to give **‘psychological first-aid’ to the victims** of domestic violence within their own organization.

b. Provide flexible arrangements and protection from dismissal to the employees - victims and survivors of domestic violence

- **Allow for flexible working arrangements**, so that women can prioritize the safety and well-being of their children.
- **Allow ‘absences’ without penalty in order** to allow victims and survivors to access emergency shelter, support services or court proceedings.
- **Provide flexible leave** to enable victims to seek protection, attend court appointments or seek safe housing for their children.
- **Provide protection from dismissal** for a certain period of time in order to ensure that victims can maintain their source of income whilst leaving a violent situation.

c. Provide victims with support and guidance when accessing available support services

The organization can inform staff about available services and facilitate the dissemination of information.

- Consider establishing a **designated contact person** within human resources who can serve as the dedicated focal point for staff and be trained to support victims dealing with domestic violence.
- Provide **psychological support** for victims. This should include access to counselling and the ability to discuss options confidentially and non-judgmentally with a trusted person at the workplace.
- Provide **financial support** such as advance payment of salary or financial support for

moving, if possible.

- Provide **legal support** for court representation or other legal issues.
- Establish **disciplinary procedures** to deal with the perpetrator, if the perpetrator is the employee of the company, and set out relevant sanctions, such as dismissal.
- **Identify the relevant support services**, such as free legal aid, shelter and psychological counselling, and provide **information and guidance on how to access such services**.

d. Integrate support services into employee benefit schemes

The provision of support to the victims and survivors of domestic violence can also be **integrated into the employee benefits scheme**. The health and well-being of staff can be followed-up with **online surveys** and **health checks**. **Psychological, medical, legal and economic** support can be made available to victims of gender-based violence. It should be noted that internal support programmes can choose to focus not only on the victims and survivors of abuse but also on the perpetrators of violence who might be present within the organization.

NGOs, especially those working specifically on violence against women, have expertise that can be useful to the private sector in relation to raising awareness and creating local partnerships. **Private companies can partner with various NGOs** working on the issue of violence against women in the community. Based on this partnership, expertise and knowledge can be shared and the companies can obtain the necessary information in order to effectively support employees who are victims of domestic violence.⁴⁹

Together with the development of domestic violence related policies, companies should review and update other relevant policies for ensuring consistency. For example, Domestic Violence related provisions should be integrated within the Code of Ethics/Code of Conduct, as well as within the internal audit and risk management processes.

⁴⁹ See domestic violence Policy Template: <https://www.weeps.org/resource/domestic-violence-policy-template>

The company has increased awareness on the issue of domestic violence (DV) among its executives and employees via training and/or awareness raising campaign.
The company has appointed a representative/contact point within the company as high level ambassadors on Domestic Violence issue .
The company has developed internal guidelines on DV based on survivor centered approach, and including the considerations of safety, confidentiality and autonomous decision-making.
The company updated other relevant policies for ensuring consistency , included policy in the code of ethics, internal audit and risk management processes
The company established internal mechanism allowing flexible working arrangements (FWAs) and protection from dismissal to the employees - victims and survivors of domestic violence to enable them to prioritize the safety of their children, to seek and attend court appointments.. etc.
The company has developed internal information hub and guidance on how to access to / benefit from medical, pschological, financial and legal support services for DV victims and survivors
The company has integrated DV support services into employee benefit schemes, including medical, psychological, legal and economic support.
The company have a partnership / coopeartion with NGOs working on the issue of violence against women in the community for their expertise and knowledge sharing.

5.3.3 Good practices of the companies providing support to the employees Against domestic violence

The Corporate Alliance against Domestic Violence (UK) creates peer support schemes to prevent violence through targeted services and exchange of experience.

Intervention: The Corporate Alliance against Domestic Violence (CAADV) provides a network for those companies that wish to address the needs of employees who endure, perpetrate or witness domestic violence. The Alliance offers its members training programmes, services and support as well as business-to-business tools for developing domestic violence policies within organizations.

Results: CAADV assists member and non-member companies to act on disclosures of domestic violence made by employees. The Alliance provides accredited training on how to identify the warning signs and take direct action to assist employees.

Lessons learnt: The example of CAADV demonstrates the potential of offering targeted services and in building networks of employers and finding allies in order to share experiences and good practice in regard to the prevention of violence.

How the approach to preventing violence works: CAADV offers practical procedures and examples of best practice on policy development and implementation, research and knowledge on the issue to its members. CAADV works as a peer support scheme among businesses in order to allow them to contribute to the prevention of violence against women and domestic violence.

In the United Kingdom, the company **KPMG**, on order to support its employees - victims of domestic violence, has worked towards fostering a professional environment in which employees that are experiencing abuse can come forward.

- In order to make the company’s official position public, its internal support policy has been posted on the company’s intranet.
- The intranet also provides information about the support available and the procedure to apply.

- Line managers receive training in order to develop their confidence to deal with abusers as well as with the victims of domestic violence.

Sabancı University (Türkiye) Domestic Violence Prevention and Support

Sabancı University adopted a policy of Domestic Violence prevention and support. The University encourages all students and employees who are subject to domestic violence to take action to stop such behavior by established support mechanisms to enable its students and employees to recognize domestic violence, keep violence away from their lives, and overcome its negative effects. The University ensure the victim's safety on campus, and take the steps necessary to meet the psychological needs of individuals suffering from domestic violence, including making support mechanisms available.

Sabancı University established a Committee composed of 11 members (a member each from faculties and School of Languages, legal counsel, a psychologist from CIAD, one administrative employee representative, the directors of Human Resources, Procurement and Support Services, and Security divisions, and one student) that plans and monitors awareness campaigns against domestic violence, defines the framework for the measures and methods to be applied to cases, and follows cases through to completion.

The Spanish company **HC Energía** provides information about the services that are available to victims of gender-based violence on the company's intranet. This includes information on sexual harassment and stalking as well as the different ways to report such behaviour. Information on counselling and professional support for victims of gender-based violence is also available on the company's intranet.

The Spanish company **Red Eléctrica de España** covers the cost incurred by its employees who are victims of gender-based violence by up to EUR 600 per month for a period of up to six months.

Providing information on domestic violence: Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy LLP and Wragge & Co. LLP (United Kingdom/international)

Intervention: After becoming members of the Corporate Alliance against Domestic Violence, these two international law firms engaged in a number of initiatives to address domestic violence at the workplace. To raise awareness on domestic violence in the workplace, posters were put up in the toilets. This gives employees the possibility to read the information in a safe and private environment and allows potential victims of violence to understand that what is happening to them is unacceptable and that help is available. The posters have tear-off slips with a free 24-hour helpline number so that employees can discreetly take it with them. These firms' intranet sites offer links to websites that provide further practical help and support to victims.

The material on their intranet also addresses the issue of what to do if an employee thinks that he/she or someone they know might be an abuser. The human resources teams and key managers in the firms are trained in how to identify the signs that someone may be a victim of domestic violence and what to do and what not to do. Receptionists and security guards have also been trained in dealing with abusers who try to contact victims at work. Employees can be escorted to their cars, a taxi, bus or train if they are being stalked.

Results: The increased level of awareness of domestic violence in the workplace has led to increased readiness to discuss the problem. Since the managers have received training in how to address the issue, reports of gender-based violence of all kinds have increased within these firms. The posters in the toilets seem to have been particularly effective. The pages on domestic violence on the intranet get 20 to 25 visits per month from employees who stay longer than average on the page, which indicates that they are reading the information. Some cases of domestic violence have even been reported to the human resource departments of these firms.

5.4 Protect health, safety and well-being of the employees



Based on Women's Empowerment Principle 3: Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers.

Health has long been recognized as a basic human right and vital to the quality of life of communities. Employees are entitled to their own general health, and well-being and not simply to protection from hazards at the workplace. Mental, physical and psychosocial health is fundamental to the well-being of employees as well as for organizational success. Thus, a holistic approach to health should be an integral part of a company's business strategy and operations. The United Nations⁵⁰ calls on the private sector to, "promote and create an enabling environment for healthy behaviours among workers, including by establishing safe and healthy working environments through occupational safety and health measures, including, through good corporate practices, workplace wellness programmes and health insurance plans."

A healthy workplace is one which protects and promotes the health, safety and well-being of all workers and the sustainability of the workplace by considering health and safety concerns in the **physical working environment** as well concerns related to health, safety and well-being in the **psychosocial working environment**. This should include the organization of work and the workplace culture. Moreover, a healthy workplace should participate in **improving the health, safety and well-being of the employees and their families**.

The Healthy Workplace Model developed by the *World Health Organization*⁵¹ involves four elements.

<p>Occupational Health and Safety: Reduce work related injuries, illness and disability by identifying and controlling hazards within the physical environment and in work processes, such as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> air quality, injury and illness prevention, emergency response and pandemic preparedness, physical, ergonomic, chemical and biological hazards, disability management, workplace accommodation, ergonomics programmes, violence and harassment, use of personal protective equipment, noise control. 	<p>Healthy Lifestyle and Practices: Create an environment that is supportive of and encourages health enhancing personal lifestyle practices, such as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> physical activity, healthy eating, healthy weight, tobacco cessation, stress management, reduced drug and alcohol use, adequate sleep, immunization, reproductive health, sun safety.
<p>Organizational Culture: Focus on the psychosocial issues in the workplace that affect interaction between people, their work and their organization, such as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> values, beliefs and practices; psychological and social support; clear leadership and expectations; civility and respect; growth and development; recognition and reward; involvement and influence; workload management; engagement; balance; psychological protection; protection of physical safety. 	<p>Organizational Social Responsibility: Participate in the community in order to improve the health of workers, their families and other members of the community, such as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reducing the carbon footprint of business activities, forest stewardship and using less paper, fundraising for local charities, control of pollutants in the air and water in the community, opportunities to volunteer during work hours.

⁵⁰ High level meeting on non-communicable disease prevention and control held in 2011.

⁵¹ https://www.who.int/occupational_health/5_keys_EN_web.pdf?ua=1

COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in unprecedented challenges to workers' safety, health, and well-being. Companies faced additional challenges in this regard in order to slow the spread of the virus while keeping a supportive and productive work environment.

5.4.1 Understand and recognize gender-specific health, safety and well-being needs

A gender-responsive approach to employees' health management is key. Women and men have different experiences regarding health and safety. They face different risks and health problems, interact differently within their working environment and have different domestic unpaid responsibilities and therefore have different needs.

Women's Empowerment Principles holds companies accountable for ensuring the **health, safety and well-being of all female and male workers**. (Principle 3 ). Implementation of this principle involves the following:

- ✓ **Prevention and elimination of violence and abuse at the workplace** (discussed separately in the sub-chapter 5.2 of this guideline);
- ✓ **Ensuring safe and healthy working environment**, taking into consideration the specific needs of

women and men.

- ✓ Improving the **health and well-being of employees and their families** by providing **health services**, adapted to the needs of women and men.

Women have specific needs and the health and safety issues that they encounter are different from those faced by men.

- **Gender-specific occupational hazards:** Certain types of work and substances are suspected of having adverse effects, especially if women are pregnant or breastfeeding.
- **Health services:** Reproductive health services such as family planning and pregnancy, cancer screening and nutritional and breastfeeding counselling are particular to women.
- **Gender-specific needs related to workplace facilities:** Specific needs of women can be linked to specific security needs such as illuminated pathways, or provision of transportation services; they can also be linked to the specific conditions of women, such as pregnancy or breastfeeding
- **Working arrangements adapted to women's needs and family responsibilities**, such as flexible working arrangements. (Discussed separately in the sub-chapter 5.1 of this guideline)

5.4.2 Actions to be taken to address gender-specific health, safety and well-being needs of employees

Address gender-specific occupational hazards

- ✓ **Provide information:** male and female employees engaged in work that involves hazardous materials or activities should be informed about the potential risks to their health. Furthermore, some materials or activities deemed safe can still represent a **risk to pregnant or breastfeeding women** and therefore the **relevant information** should be provided in a **clear** and **timely** manner.
- ✓ **Ensure appropriate safety measures:** in order to prevent unsafe exposure to hazardous materials or activities, appropriate measures must be taken to ensure the safety of pregnant and breastfeeding women.

Provide health services based on the specific needs of women

- ✓ **Provide health services:** Reasonable actions should be taken to ensure that employees have access to health services and insurance that serve the **distinctive concerns and needs of women and men**. This should include access to family planning products and services and care related to pregnancy, maternity leave and childcare. These services should also address the needs of **dependents** (children).

- ✓ **Ensure access to quality health services:** Company should make sure that its employees have access to quality health services and guarantee reasonable **proximity** to these services as well as the **time** necessary to access them (long hours and overtime can prevent women from accessing health services).
- ✓ **Provide access to domestic violence support services:** (Discussed separately in the sub-chapter 5.3 of this guideline)

Provide workplace or work-related facilities that are adapted to the needs of women

- ✓ Create a **safe working environment** and provide protection from potential risk factors, which are different for women and men: this can be done, for example, by providing transportation services for female employees or illuminating pathways on company premises, if identified as security risks.
- ✓ **Toilets:** the number of toilets should be adequate for the number of employees and feminine hygiene products should also be available to female workers.
- ✓ **Nursing rooms** and associated flexible working arrangements (FWAs are discussed separately in the sub-chapter 5.2 of this guideline) for breastfeeding mothers: this would enable women to continue breastfeeding even after they return to work and also reduce stress for female workers.
- ✓ **Childcare facilities:** Such facilities, either on-site or external, help both female and male workers with family responsibilities to continue in the workforce without prejudice linked to their role as care givers. (Support for care responsibilities is discussed separately in the sub-chapter 5.2 of this guideline)

Health and safety education, including reproductive health

- ✓ Education and capacity building in health and safety can be implemented via several information channels, such as in-company training and workshops, online platforms, short films, leaflets, displays, etc.

Promoting well-being and healthy lifestyle

The company should not just focus on health and safety but also on employee well-being and implement various activities to promote healthy lifestyle, such as partnering with gyms, swimming pools, massage and well-being centres and provide company financed or affordable membership.

Worksite interventions targeting self-care can also have a positive impact on the health of men and women as well as on business performance (e.g., promotion of healthy eating, group sports activities, etc.)

Support employees' mental health

More than 10% of world population struggle with mental health issues⁵², however, it still remains a taboo subject, including at the workplace. Companies can play an important role in supporting their employees in managing mental health related issues, such as stress, anxiety, depression, etc. To do so, an open culture about mental health at work is crucial, as well as adoption of various measures proactively supporting employees:

- ✓ **Understand how mental health impacts company's employees.**
 - Make mental health training mandatory for company's leaders to help them be more aware of and invested in this aspect of their employees' well-being;
 - Train managers on what to do if they see signs of emotional distress or substance abuse;
 - Use surveys to measure how employees' health and stress levels affect their productivity.
- ✓ **Include mental health coverage as part of your health care plan.**
- ✓ **Establish an employee assistance program (EAP)** to support workplace mental health. Some employees may be reluctant to use this resource due to fear of stigma, shame, and lack of understanding about how these confidential programs work. But to encourage employees to use an EAP, the company can:
 - Provide direct access to mental health professionals via phone and/or in-person.
 - Offer this resource to employees as well as to their immediate family members.
 - Make it easy for employees to know who **to talk to** or where to go to access mental

⁵² <https://ourworldindata.org/mental-health>

health resources.

- Emphasize that EAP can be accessed confidentially and free of charge.
- ✓ **Use communication to reduce stigma and increase access to mental health resources.**
- Raise awareness about mental health benefits;
- Disseminate regularly information about existing support services, for example, in monthly newsletters.
- Offer workshops so employees can learn more about mental health and resilience.
- ✓ **Promote well-being.**
- Build as much flexibility as possible into all employees' schedules.
- Offer access to various apps that can help with stress reduction, sleep, etc.
- Consider offering a meditation room, mindfulness training, and/or yoga classes at work.
- Encourage employees to use their vacation time.
- Create opportunities for employees to build connections with each other, such as through social events, affinity groups, and electronic message boards.

Regular re-evaluation of the existing services

- ✓ Regularly **re-evaluate** health and security plans with regard to the different needs of employees and the specific needs of women through the regular collection of feedback from employees.
- ✓ Establish a **women's network** that reports directly to senior management on the issues of health, safety and well-being.
- ✓ Arrange contact meetings and information sessions in order to **inform employees** about existing services and also about their rights and responsibilities concerning the issues of health, safety and well-being.

5.4.3 Actions to be taken to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 pandemic and future crises on health, safety and well-being of the employees

In order to deal with additional in times of crisis, International Labour Organization (ILO) recommends to the companies to adopt **a business continuity plan**, developed with the full participation of workers, which will identify the risks that might affect a specific business in times of crisis and devise strategies to reduce

their impact.⁵³

In order to take appropriate measures to protect workers from the occupational risks of contagion to the infectious disease, employers should carry out a **risk assessment**. Generally, occupational risk is the combination of the probability of an occurrence of a hazardous event and the severity of injury or damage to the health of people caused by this event. The assessment of the risk of contagion at work will therefore consider:

- **Probability** of being exposed to contagion, taking into account the characteristic of the infectious disease (i.e., transmission patterns) and the possibility that workers may encounter infectious persons or may be exposed to contaminated environments or materials (e.g., laboratory samples, waste) in the course of their duties.
- **Severity** of the resulting health outcomes, taking into account individual affecting factors (including age, underlying diseases and health conditions), as well as the measures available to control the impact of the infection.

Business continuity plan should provide practical ways to reduce the risk of worker exposure to the disease in the workplace, and may include:

- ✓ medical care support mechanisms;
- ✓ promotion of personal hygiene habits;
- ✓ options of changing the work organization to minimize human-to-human contact;
- ✓ recommendations on social distancing;
- ✓ adapted work shifts;
- ✓ possibility of downsizing operations;
- ✓ telework and other exposure-reducing measures;
- ✓ options for conducting essential operations with a reduced workforce;
- ✓ support mechanisms to address possible mental health issues and social consequences that an epidemic may have on workers.

Targeted measures should be considered to assist women, which in addition to working are usually burdened with housekeeping and family care. Most probably, in the case of a pandemic outbreak they will be the ones who care for the

⁵³ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_115048.pdf

sick in the family, and will be grateful for your attentiveness towards them.

The plan **should be communicated to all workers, contractors and suppliers**. Everyone must be aware of what they should do - or not do - based on the plan, including their duties and responsibilities.

Prevention and Mitigation of Covid-19 and future health crises at work

Action Checklist ⁵⁴

The following checklist, based on the recommendations developed by ILO and WHO, offers a simple and collaborative approach to assess COVID-19 risks in order to take measures to protect the safety and health of workers. The checklist can also be used to take measures for future pandemics or other potential health crises. It addresses the following issues:

Physical distance

- ✓ assessing the risk of interactions between workers, contractors, customers and visitors and implementing measures to mitigate these risks;
- ✓ organizing work in a way that allows for physical distancing between people;
- ✓ using phone calls, emails or virtual meetings when feasible rather than face to face meetings;
- ✓ introducing working shifts to avoid large concentrations of workers in the facilities at any one time.

Hygiene

- ✓ providing disinfectant and regularly disinfecting common areas;
- ✓ promoting a culture of handwashing;
- ✓ promoting good respiratory hygiene at the workplace (e.g., covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze).

Cleaning

- ✓ promoting a culture of regular cleaning of the surfaces such as desks and workstations, doorknobs, telephones, keyboards and

working objects with disinfectant;

- ✓ ensure regular disinfection of common areas.

Training and Communication

- ✓ training management, workers and their representatives on the adopted measures to prevent risk of exposure to the virus and on how to act in case of COVID-19 infection;
- ✓ training on the correct use, maintenance and disposal of personal protective equipment;
- ✓ maintaining regular communication with workers to provide updates on the situation in the workplace, region or country;
- ✓ informing workers about their right to remove themselves from a work situation that poses an imminent and serious danger for life or health, in accordance with laid out procedures and immediately inform their immediate supervisor of the situation.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

- ✓ When necessary, providing adequate PPE along with closed bins for hygienically disposing of such materials.

Response

- ✓ in line with the guidance of local authorities, encouraging workers with suspected symptoms of COVID-19 to not come to the workplace and expanding access to paid sick leave, sickness benefits, and parental/care leave and informing all workers;
- ✓ arranging for isolation of any person who develops COVID-19 symptoms at the work site, while awaiting transfer to an appropriate health facility;
- ✓ adequately disinfecting the work site; providing health surveillance of persons who have been in close contact with the infected worker
- ✓ promote vaccination, by spreading the information/raising awareness about the benefits of vaccination, participating in vaccination campaigns, providing corporate incentives.

Managing ergonomic and physical OSH risks of working from home

People working from home may also face some risks related to the home setting which often does not meet the same health and safety standards as those available at the official worksites. The desk, chair and other accessories may not be of a comparable (equal) quality to that in the office. In addition, the physical environment (such as heat, cold, lighting, electrical safety, home hygiene and home renovations) may not be adequate.

Workers should receive adequate information on issues associated with the work to be undertaken at home, for example:

- ✓ varying work tasks to ensure that workers are not working in the same position for long periods of time;
- ✓ review where the screen is located e.g. situated away from window so as not to cause glare;
- ✓ placing equipment so as to minimize twisting or overreaching;
- ✓ having enough work space for the equipment and any other materials needed to carry out the work;
- ✓ encouraging workers to take regular breaks and to stand and move for one minute every hour.

Managing work-related stress and other mental health issues during the crisis situations⁵⁴

Psychological consequences of emergencies and crisis situations may include increased anxiety, low mood, low motivation or depression. Working from home can result in feeling isolated, working longer hours and blurring the lines between work and family life. If isolation can facilitate concentration, having no social interaction can become a strong stressor. Flexible work hours can become excessive working hours, without breaks and can continue through the night, resulting in associated risks of insomnia. Studies show that Covid-19 pandemic triggers 25% increase in prevalence of anxiety and depression worldwide.⁵⁵ Therefore, in addition to the

⁵⁴ Added from WHO, ILO, manual for protecting health workers and responders, 2018

⁵⁵ <https://www.who.int/news/item/02-03-2022-covid-19-pandemic-triggers-25-increase-in-prevalence-of-anxiety-and-de->

actions supporting employees' mental health in normal times (describes above) it is crucial to address specific mental health issues related to the pandemic. For this purpose, companies can implement the following measures:

- ✓ Good communication and up-to-date information to enable workers to feel informed and to give them a sense of control;
- ✓ A venue for workers to express concerns and ask questions about the health risks to themselves and colleagues;
- ✓ Multidisciplinary sessions to identify concerns, including around the well-being of staff, and to work together on strategies to solve problems;
- ✓ Reviewing the organizational culture and sensitivity to others, as families of local staff may be affected by the outbreak;
- ✓ A *buddy system* to provide psychological support and monitor stress and burnout;
- ✓ Opportunities to promote physical health, including exercise, and encouraging workers to maintain healthy eating habits;
- ✓ Psychological support for workers to share fears and worries confidentially;
- ✓ Campaigns to reduce stigma, addressing various issues, including gender stereotypes and unpaid care work, promoting equal involvement of women and men;
- ✓ Use of humour and participatory techniques which can promote dialogue, innovative solutions and positive changes in attitude.

5.5 Addressing Future of Work challenges – the need of upskilling and reskilling of employees

The future of work has emerged as an important policy topic in recent years and the discussions about it has mostly centered on the automation of jobs. Indeed, artificial intelligence, informed by big data and machine learning, information and communication technologies (ICTs) and robotics are changing the world of work. However, the future of work lacks currently gender perspective. Digitalization and the gig economy, and the demand of new skills will have a major impact on how we understand and carry out work. These trends will have specific implications for gender equality and

pression-worldwide

women's economic empowerment. Therefore, a focus on gender within the future of work is critical to ensure that recent progress toward gender equity is not undermined.



Based on Women's Empowerment

Principle 4:

Promote education, training and professional development for women.

5.5.1 Recognizing and understanding gender challenges of the Future of Work

The technological progress on the world economy, taken together with globalization and demographic change created the need to equip people with the skills they need to participate in the economy, now and in the future. Currently, there is already an evident **mismatch between people's current skills and the skills needed** for jobs⁵⁶ that will be created from and become more prevalent because of the changes brought about by the Fourth Industrial Revolution.⁵⁷ For companies, skills mismatch has negative consequences for productivity and competitiveness, affecting their ability to implement new products, services or technologies, and ultimately leads to the loss of profits and markets.

Skills gaps are likely to increase unless the next generation and those workers at most risk of losing their jobs to new technology acquire the skills required for the jobs of the future. Research from the World Economic Forum (WEF)⁵⁸ finds that half of all employees around the world need to upskill or reskill by 2025 to embrace new responsibilities **driven by automation and new technologies.**

⁵⁶ 2021 USA data shows that about 9.3 million people in the United States were unemployed, while 9.3 million jobs in the country were sitting open <https://www.forbes.com/sites/paulmcdonald/2021/06/09/as-businesses-prepare-for-the-future-of-work-the-need-to-upskill-and-reskill-workers-becomes-more-essential/?sh=5ad48b2e7a78>

⁵⁷ The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) is a term coined in 2016 by Klaus Schwab, Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum (WEF). It is characterized by the convergence and complementarity of emerging technology domains, including nanotechnology, biotechnology, new materials and advanced digital production (ADP) technologies. The latter includes 3D printing, human-machine interfaces (HMIs) and artificial intelligence, and is already transforming the global industrial landscape. Source: UNIDO <https://iap.unido.org/articles/what-fourth-industrial-revolution>

⁵⁸ https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Upskilling_for_Shared_Prosperty_2021.pdf

Upskilling is the process of enhancing or expanding an employee's skill set so that they can be a more productive contributor to the business. Upskilling usually involves continuous learning, and it's often vital to an employee's ability to advance in their career and take more responsibility. When workers upskill, they learn new abilities and grow their competency in areas that are important to their role or department, both immediately and over the long term. **Reskilling** is about equipping employees with new skills that will allow them to take on a new position in the company that's entirely different from what they're doing now.

Covid-19 pandemic accelerated automation and digitalization, so critical skills gaps in the workforce became even more obvious in many organizations. Many employees who lost their jobs during the pandemic because they lacked up-to-date skills are now among those facing challenges in the hiring market. But even before that, many workers had been struggling to stay relevant in a work environment that was becoming increasingly more automated.

The pandemic has had an immediate negative impact on numbers employed, and in many cases on quality of employment, across most economic sectors although some have been affected much more severely than others. Globally, the sectors most affected by the pandemic, in terms of loss of output have been wholesale and retail trade, manufacturing, real estate, business and administrative activities, and accommodation and food services⁵⁹. Women are overrepresented in the majority of these sectors, thus the impact of the pandemic particularly affected women. An effective skills development response may make an important impact on the speed at which sectors recover, and on the extent to which employment is restored. It is important to identify and anticipate the skills needed for recovery and future growth of the worst affected sectors, and to identify practical actions that can be taken to reskill and upskill workers to meet these needs.

⁵⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/system/files/economy-finance/eb069_en.pdf
<https://www.economicsobservatory.com/update-which-firms-and-industries-have-been-most-affected-by-covid-19>

A focus on gender is critical in the context of the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, also in the context of the future of work. Without a focus on gender, measures of recovery, as well as depictions of the future of work are incomplete and biased, and thus risk reproducing current inequalities. Today, women face more challenges than their male colleagues with regards to labor participation and access to decent jobs. Moreover, women have been disproportionately hit by the pandemic. This gap could widen in the verge of new labor market trends. Automation will probably have a differential impact on women and men, therefore skills gaps should be recognized and addressed, particularly those related to science, technology, engineering and math disciplines.

Women are disproportionately located in high-risk jobs, suffering from insufficient pay and high levels of insecurity. At the other end of the spectrum – high-value, high-growth jobs in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) have proven difficult for women to break into in large numbers due to persistent social norms that challenge their entry and success in these fields. Until such gender barriers are addressed, STEM is likely to remain male dominated.

The World Economic Forum’s Future of Jobs Report 2020⁶⁰ revealed that 84% of employers are accelerating their digitalization agenda and 50% of employers intend to accelerate the automation of jobs. The research⁶¹ identified 99 roles that are consistently growing in demand across 20 economies, grouped into eight distinctive job clusters on the basis of their unique skills profile. The data suggests significant challenges for the future of gender parity. Only two of the eight emerging job clusters tracked are at gender parity and many show a severe under-representation of women.

FIGURE 3.1 Female representation in emerging job clusters

B. Female representation in growing roles

Female Representation in Growing Roles				
25% and below	35% and below	45% and below	55% and below	more than 55%
Artificial Intelligence Specialist	Agile Coach	Analytics Specialist	Business Partner	Content Specialist
Back End Developer	Analytics Consultant	Business Development Representative	Customer Specialist	Content Writer
Big Data Developer	Business Intelligence Developer	Business Development Specialist	Customer Success Specialist	Creative Copywriter
Chief Commercial Officer	Chief Strategy Officer	Chief Marketing Officer	Digital Marketing Manager	Human Resources Business Partner
Cloud Consultant	Data Consultant	Commerce Manager	Digital Marketing Specialist	Human Resources Partner
Cloud Engineer	Data Scientist	Content Producer	Digital Product Manager	Social Media Assistant
Commercial Sales Representative	Growth Hacker	Data Analyst	Ecommerce Specialist	Social Media Coordinator
Data Engineer	Head Of Business Development	Digital Marketing Consultant	Insights Analyst	Talent Acquisition Specialist
DevOps Engineer	Head Of Digital	Digital Specialist	Partnerships Specialist	
DevOps Manager	Python Developer	Growth Manager	Product Analyst	
Enterprise Account Executive	Quality Assurance Engineer	Head Of Partnerships		
Frontend Engineer		Information Technology Recruiter		
Full Stack Engineer		Product Owner		
Javascript Developer		Quality Assurance Tester		
Platform Engineer		Sales Development Representative		
Site Reliability Engineer		Scrum Master		
		Software Quality Assurance Engineer		
		Technology Analyst		

Source
LinkedIn Economic Graph.

These emerging jobs clusters include roles that underscore the continuing importance of human interaction in the new economy, such as Marketing, Sales, People and Culture, and Content Production, as well as roles which support the development of emerging technologies such as Cloud Computing, Engineering, Data and AI. The data shows that gender gaps are more likely in fields that require disruptive technical skills, in particular, Cloud Computing, where women make up just 14% of the workforce; Engineering, where women make up 20% of the workforce; and Data and AI, where women make up 32% of the workforce. Representative examples of roles in those job clusters include Full Stack Developers, Data Engineers and Cloud Engineers.

Using individual-level data on task composition at work, this paper finds that women, on average, perform more routine tasks than men across all sectors and occupations—tasks that are most prone to automation. Given the current state of technology, we estimate that 26 million female jobs in 30 countries (28 OECD member countries, Cyprus, and Singapore) are at a high risk of being displaced by technology (i.e., facing higher than 70 percent likelihood of being automated) within the next

⁶⁰ <https://es.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2021/in-full/gggr2-gender-gaps-in-jobs-of-tomorrow/>

⁶¹ Over the course of 2019 and 2020, the World Economic Forum worked with the LinkedIn Economic Graph Team, using real-time labour market data to derive new insight into the jobs that are emerging in the labour market

two decades. Female workers face a higher risk of automation compared to male workers across all occupations, albeit with significant heterogeneity across sectors and countries.⁶²

Moving forward, upskilling and reskilling will be needed to address gaps between existing and required skills. However, when offered, capacity building opportunities tend to target only the most highly skilled workers to maximize returns. As a result, those most at risk of automation - precarious and low-skilled workers - are the least likely to access and participate in ongoing training. The training crisis is particularly acute for women. Women are more likely than men to be in low-skilled and precarious jobs that do not offer employer-funded training, and they are more likely to be time poor - and thus less able to pursue self-initiated training - due to their disproportionate burdens of unpaid work.

5.5.2 Adapting to the Future of Work by addressing the needs of upskilling and reskilling of employees

Understanding how current and future workforce architectures relate to each other is essential to building a tailored plan for closing skills gaps. Ultimately, such plans will likely involve a combination of reskilling, upskilling and hiring new talent. Such tailored plan will play in the immediate effort to lessen the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on one hand, and on the other hand, will respond to the new demands of the *Future of Work*.

Companies should take actions now to address changing world of work and skills gaps by investing in understanding the current state of their employees' skills, strengthening diversity, equity and inclusion, and identifying employees with the potential to move into future-focused roles and preparing them to do so.

Actions to be taken by the companies for addressing skills gaps

⁶² IMF, *Is Technology Widening the Gender Gap? Automation and the Future of Female Employment*, 2019

✓ *Situation Assessment*

Companies should build a data baseline to understand their skills prevalence and gaps, helping them develop a holistic reskilling strategy. The baseline should include data on future skills prevalence, automation risks and future skills pay gaps.

The scope of the Situation Assessment⁶³ should focus on:

- Company's activities on which Covid-19 pandemic had significantly negative impact. (Hence, the company can consider options of reskilling staff employed in the most affected sectors)
- Company's activities in which Covid-19 increases demand for skills or drive structural changes which can affect set of skills demanded in the future.
- Company's activities which technological progress and Future of Work will require upskilling and reskilling in short, medium, and long term.

✓ *Reskilling/upskilling strategy of the company*

The gathered data and defined models, combined with a workforce planning will help define the operative upskilling and reskilling strategy, resulting in provided learning as well as career opportunities to the employees.

Guidelines for Reskilling/upskilling Strategy⁶⁴

Designing reskilling and upskilling strategy should take into consideration situation assessment and develop tailored solutions for addressing identified skills gaps, namely:

- Situation analysis and outlook for company's target activities and employees
- What can be done to enable each set of activities and each group of employees to operate effectively in the pandemic or other crisis situation, to take advantage of opportunities, to speed and maximize recovery, and to build capabilities and

⁶³ Adapted from ILO guidelines of rapid assessment on reskilling and upskilling in response to the Covid-19 crisis, 2020

⁶⁴ Ibid.

market position for future growth

- Operating effectively while pandemic continues
- Taking advantage of opportunities during the time of the pandemic
- Speeding and maximizing recovery
- Addressing challenges of the Future of Work

- How skills development can contribute
 - Skills development for safe operation of firms during pandemic
 - Skills development for recovery
 - Skills development for opportunities presented by pandemic and for changes in industry structure resulting from the pandemic
 - Skills development for employability of workers affected adversely by pandemic
 - Skills development of emerging opportunities of technological progress and globalization of economy (Future of Work: AI, big data, robotics, machine learning, ICTs, etc.)

- Recommendations for action

✓ *Designing a skills framework defining future requirements*

Companies should assess, define and structure future skill requirements for the entire organization enabling a clear direction on reskilling/upskilling and tracking the progress.

Possible targets for skills development⁶⁵

- The skills priorities identified are likely to fit into the following categories:
- **Specific technical skills** needed by sectors in difficulty to help them adjust to the challenges created by the pandemic, and by sectors undergoing structural change to adjust to the new profile of skills needed;
- **Technical skills** that are in demand globally and transferable across many sectors and occupations, which could be targeted by initiatives to reskilling and upskill groups of individuals affected adversely by the pandemic, and which could help workers to change the sector of work. Technical

⁶⁵ Adapted from ILO guidelines of rapid assessment on reskilling and upskilling in response to the Covid-19 crisis, 2020

skills increasingly transferable across occupations and sectors include: digital skills; administrative, customer relations and related skills; people management skills; skills for green jobs and environmental sustainability; language skills. The pandemic seems to be especially driving growth in demand for the digital skills needed to work

remotely, to use online services, and to connect with suppliers and markets through online channels.

- **Core employability skills**, such as critical thinking, communication, foundation skills of literacy and numeracy, and resilience skills such as stress resistance, work-life balance, digital detox, time management, flexibility and adaptability, which are useful across all sectors and occupations. Workers in any occupation are more employable if core employability skills are strengthened, in areas such as team working, communication skills and problem solving. Foundation skills of literacy and numeracy, including environmental and digital literacy, are required for the majority of job categories.

✓ *Building skill requirements into job architecture*

Companies should define the skill requirements by role, building those requirements into the job architecture to provide a sound foundation for human resources solutions and interventions.

✓ *Ensure employees engagement and participatory process*

Engage employees during the build-out of career pathways and development. This ensures that the workforce understands required reskilling/upskilling areas and enables individual ownership of the reskilling/upskilling path.

✓ *Progress measurement*

Measure progress by analyzing data to stay abreast of, and adapt to, talent and workforce changes. Continuous benchmarking analysis based on key performance indicators is needed to track progress.

6. Conclusion

Emerging stronger from Covid-19 pandemic, being better prepared for potential crises and new challenges will be crucial for the private sector. The new reality will require the adaptation of the business to the post-pandemic world, by equally taking into consideration the needs of women and men.

The present guidebook demonstrates the importance of the new strategies to be adopted by the companies during the crises in order to allow effective and equitable interventions in times of crises.

Strategies related to the **promotion of work-life balance of the employees and provision of support for care responsibilities** revealed to be efficient for not only employees' improved job satisfaction and productivity, but also for business continuity and higher profit for the companies.

Another important aspect of a company's successful operation is to create gender-responsive workplace free of **sexual harassment** by putting in place relevant policies and practices, also by providing support to the employees against **domestic violence**. As gender-based violence increases during the crises, these strategies acquire particular importance.

Furthermore, Covid-19 pandemic demonstrated once again that **health, safety and well-being** of employees should be fully protected at the workplace, taking into account differentiated needs of women and men workers, considering both physical and psychological working environment.

Lastly, Covid-19 pandemic, having accelerated automation and digitalization, showed the **future of work** will be shaped by artificial intelligence, informed by big data and machine learning, information and communication technologies and robotics. Therefore, addressing skills gaps in the workforce, by also focusing on gender, became critical to ensure business continuity, inclusion and sustainable development.

As discussed in the present guidebook, Covid-19 Pandemic, as well as the Future of Work affect women and men differently, therefore it is essential to recognise these differences, to understand gender impact and to address effectively and equitably any future crises, as well as the challenges of the Future of Work. In this regard, private sector has a crucial role to design equitable solutions and to build back fairer. Without a gender-responsive approach, any crisis will have far-reaching implications, including a real risk of exacerbating gender inequalities and reversing the progress.

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