LIVE WEBINAR

The Business Case for Integrating a Gender Lens into Private Sector COVID-19 Recovery Plans

An interactive session providing practical guidance for businesses in the Asia-Pacific

MAY 19, 2020  1.30 PM BANGKOK TIME  [8.30 AM CET]
GUEST SPEAKERS:

Robert Candelino
Chief Executive Officer
Unilever Thailand

Anna-Karin Jatfors
Deputy Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific
UN Women

YOU’LL ALSO HEAR FROM:

Annelise Thim
Manager
Women's Empowerment
BSR

Katja Freiwald
Regional Head
WeEmpowerAsia
UN Women
Welcome Remarks

Anna-Karin Jatfors
Deputy Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific
UN Women
Voices from CEOs in Asia-Pacific

“Especially important in crisis like COVID-19 are the principles the company has and the purpose the company and its people are driven by. A crisis like this is magnifying who you really are.

Rob Candelino, CEO Unilever Thailand”

“Kiddocare’s positioning changed – before we were a more only for-profit model but now we move towards more into a social enterprise model triggered by the need of frontliners and to see how we can build subsidizing for people in need, how to make childcare more affordable for all.

Nadira Yusoff, CEO Kiddocare”

“We’re engaging small communities and women entrepreneurs to try to support them and raise awareness. Everyone from every income stream level is suffering – we are just trying to figure out how to support these business models, raise their profile [...] because we have the network to do so and the PR to do so.

Pranapda Phornprapha, Director Siam Motors Thailand”

“We are discussing about digital shops, WhatsApp Shops and virtual behavioral change campaigns. Our Entrepreneurs trained on digital media including WhatsApp and zoom. We are speaking very remote and deep rural India, so this is leapfrogging!

Gaurav Mehta, CEO Dharma Life”
Agenda

• Introduction
• The Impacts of COVID-19 on Business and Women in Asia-Pacific
• The Women’s Empowerment Principles
• How Companies Can Ensure a Gender-sensitive Response to COVID-19?
• Introducing the Self-assessment Tool and Action Planning
• What’s Next?
Introduction
COVID-19 will impact every part of a company’s value chain

Asia and the Pacific could experience a potential GDP loss as high as USD 800 billion with 195 million job losses globally.

The pandemic is disrupting the movement of labor and supply chains on which much of the region’s economic strength depends.

Supply chains are being forced to shut down or suddenly pivot their products (textiles etc.), while others struggle to keep operating and meet demand (agriculture, hygiene products etc.)

Women are present throughout the value chain as producers and business owners, executives, employees, distributors, and consumers.

Women face existing inequalities and discrimination making them more vulnerable to the socio-economic impacts of the virus.
Has your company considered the specific impacts of COVID-19 on women?

[Please private sector / entrepreneurs or similar organizations]
COVID-19 presents a crossroads for gender equality

Without a gender inclusive response, there a risk that gender equality in the region will slide back. However, an inclusive and gender-equal response provides opportunity to ‘Build back Better’.

**Challenges**

Declining female labor force participation rates in the region could be exacerbated by the current crisis.

Women’s representation in leadership in business has decreased in several Asia-Pacific and could continue to decline if adequate measures are not taken.

The current crisis is accelerating the use of technology for work and could widen the gender gap in IT skills and exclude women from emerging opportunities.

**Opportunities**

The increased acceptance of remote working across sectors could facilitate women’s participation in the workforce.

The growth in technology for work and the IT sector could provide new opportunities for women to join these industries.

Unpaid care work could be shared more equally as families adjust to confinement.

Post-COVID recovery is an opportunity to review brand-supplier relationships and procurement practices.
Gender-responsive recovery is good for both business and women

**Workplace**
Women represent ~90% of workers in some of the hardest hit sectors, such as apparel, tourism, health and the care economy. Ensuring their health, safety, and workplace equality is key to accelerate the economic recovery.

**Marketplace**
Women-led businesses are more vulnerable to shocks, but fill essential needs including agricultural production. Ensuring their livelihoods will have wider benefits for society.

**Community**
Women make the vast majority of consumer decisions for families. Getting women back into paid work can drive up consumer spending and economic growth.

**Gender equality can drive economic growth and improve business performance.**

**USD 3.2 trillion**
Could be added to Asia-Pacific economies by closing the gender gap.
The impacts of COVID-19 on business and women in Asia-Pacific
Unequal sharing of unpaid care work holds back women’s ability to pursue paid work

More than 700 million children are out of school in the region.

Women in Asia make 15% less than men on average, making women potentially more likely to sacrifice wages to care for children or sick.

Impact on business

The increase in women’s care burden as a result of COVID-19 could leave female employees and workers with no option other than to cut back their hours or quit entirely and could impact company productivity.

“Women are often the care providers, as well as financial providers. What do you do when you're expected to be working but also provide care for the sick? There is also an expected risk that this will be pushed down onto girls to be care providers.

Clare Fitton, Ethical Trade Initiative
Domestic violence rates are increasing

Enforced periods of isolation at home increases the risk of domestic or intimate partner violence. Financial insecurity due to lost wages may decrease victims’ ability to leave abusive relationships.

Support services for domestic violence victims are likely to be overwhelmed easily, including shelters, counselling, health services and hotlines.

44% increase in reported cases of domestic violence between February and March in Malaysia. - Women’s Aid Organisation

Impact on businesses

Domestic violence results in lost productivity, absenteeism, isolation from co-workers, slowed career progression, and increased training and recruitment costs for employers.

Some women have reported that they would prefer to put themselves at risk for COVID-19 in public, rather than stay at home isolated with a violent and abusive partner. - Report by women’s organization aiding survivors of violence in Viet Nam -
Female-dominated sectors are facing massive lay-offs throughout the supply chain

50 million jobs in the travel and tourism sector could be lost in the region where the majority of workers are women, many of whom are migrants returning home with no access to support.

In global supply chains, women represent between 60-90\% of labor intensive-jobs and 70-90\% of workers in the apparel industry – areas facing major factory closures and lay-offs.

Many regional supply chains rely on female migrant labor and/or informal workers who are facing increased socio-economic vulnerabilities.

**Impact on businesses**

Entire sectors dependent on women workers are being brought to a halt during the pandemic. If businesses do not support women during this time, they risk losing their workforce when economic activity resumes or finding their workers less productive due the hardships faced during the crisis.

I don’t think it can be overstated how big the impact [of COVID-19] has been particularly on the apparel and textiles industry.

*Global Ethical Supply Chain Organisation*
Women-led businesses, micro-entrepreneurs, informal businesses and SMEs’ are more vulnerable to shocks

Women-led SMEs and informal businesses in the region are **concentrated in more disadvantaged sectors**, such as small-scale agriculture or services including catering, tailoring beauty, and food processing.

Almost one third of women business owners cite **increased care demands** impacting the time they can spend on their business with 90% citing significant decrease in Q1 sales (WEConnect).

**Impact on businesses**

Businesses that depend on women-led SMEs in their supply chain will likely face **delays or business disruptions** as women face issues accessing credit, worker productivity and managing their own family care work.
Crossroads to ‘Building Back Better’ – More Inclusive and Gender-equal
The Women’s Empowerment Principles
A framework for business to promote women’s empowerment
How familiar are you with the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs)?
The Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) provide a framework for all businesses – regardless of size, sector or geography – on how to empower women in the workplace, marketplace and community.

1. Gender-equal corporate leadership
2. Gender equality in the workplace
3. Employee health and safety
4. Education and training for women
5. Enterprise and supply chain development
6. Equality through community advocacy
7. Measurement and reporting
Applying the Women’s Empowerment Principles to accelerate an inclusive COVID-19 recovery

Businesses have a unique responsibility and opportunity to empower women for a gender-sensitive COVID-19 response and an accelerated inclusive economic recovery. By using the WEPs to assess COVID-19 response and recovery plans, companies can identify entry points to address the specific challenges facing women, mitigate negative impacts, and promote greater resiliency and stability in the long term.

A gender-responsive action plan to address the impacts of COVID-19 and support women in your value chain.
WeEmpowerAsia Programme Overview

The WeEmpowerAsia (WEA) programme is a collaborative effort between UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and the European Union (EU), which is funding the programme under its Partnership Instrument.

Main objective: more women lead, participate and have access to enhanced business opportunities and leadership within the private sector to advance sustainable and inclusive growth across seven countries in Asia, including China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam.

VISIT US: http://weempowerasia.org
How Companies Can Ensure a Gender-Sensitive Response to COVID-19
Gender-Sensitive COVID-19 Responses: Leadership and Strategy

Integrate gender concerns into leadership commitments, strategy, and support for COVID-19.

Ensure business continuity and recovery plans are gender inclusive.

Engage local or national government to advocate for gender-responsive measures to COVID-19 in your community.

Become a signatory to the WEPs

2,900+

CEOs have signed the WEP’s CEO Statement of Support, joining a global network of companies and accessing guidance on advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Business Opportunity

Create enhanced trust and establish your company as a leader on women’s empowerment.
Perspectives from CEO in the region ...

Robert Candelino
CEO Unilever South East Asia
Are there any initiatives or actions businesses can take to support women during and after the crisis?

Share your ideas and experiences in the chat box.
Gender-Sensitive COVID-19 Responses: Workplace

Implement/reinforce a non-discrimination and equal opportunity policy.

Ensure an environment free of violence, harassment, and sexual exploitation and offer adequate support to victims.

Address the specific health, safety, and hygiene needs of women required to come into and commute to work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Support women and men as parents and caregivers and encourage shared care work.

The challenge is in retaining and promoting women as they go through major life stages like marriage and having babies. Some of the things we have done is providing for flexible work arrangements, active mentoring and leadership development.

Supriya Singh, Country Manager, L’Oréal Philippines

Business Opportunity

Ensure progress made on workplace equality is not lost, enhance long-term talent attraction and retention, reduce turnover and absenteeism, and increase productivity.
Gender-Sensitive COVID-19 Responses: Marketplace

Expand relationships with women-owned businesses during and after the pandemic.

Encourage suppliers/vendors to advance performance on gender equality and protect the health, safety and job security of women workers.

Support suppliers to provide training to workers on COVID-19 prevention.

Support reskilling and digital upskilling of women workers and women entrepreneurs.

Seek opportunities for collaboration and industry-wide solutions.

You need to deeply engage in communication with your supply chain how this can be overcome together. Assuming in four months we go to back to a new normal, you will still need to rely on your supply chain. If your producers have gone bankrupt, this is not going to help you in anyway. We need dialogue, solidarity and collaboration to overcome this.

amfori

Business Opportunity

Ensure a holistic recovery and enhanced resilience of supply chains going forward in the face of future crises.
Gender-Sensitive COVID-19 Responses: Community

Embed gender in COVID-19 community responses including corporate social responsibility activities, philanthropy, public advocacy, and partnership.

Provide support to local services focused on women’s needs such as domestic violence support, mental health support, and women’s rights organizations during and in the aftermath of COVID-19.

As the country moves forward to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak, whole-of-society approach is needed in medium- and long-term recovery efforts. Lessons from around the world show that women play a crucial role in recovery and resilience building for themselves, their families and communities at large.

Smriti Aryal, Head of the UN Women China

Business Opportunity

Enhance the resilience and health of communities' businesses rely on for greater resiliency.
The Avon Foundation has pledged $1 million to front-line services to support women and children at risk of domestic violence. In addition, they are using their social media to share guidance for survivors and businesses.

Visa committed $200 million over five years to assist small and micro businesses worldwide with a focus on cultivating the economic advancement of women. The Visa Foundation will distribute the $200 million in $60 million grants to NGOs that assist entrepreneurs in the regions where Visa operates.

An Indian Pharmaceutical manufacturing is working with the local administration and Red Cross Society to donate hand sanitizers to the community, including for 2,500 police officers.

Investments from Donors, Governments and Businesses need to have a gender-lens to them
Collect and publicly report on sex-disaggregated data on factors such as contract type, ethnicity, disability, age, nationality, and marginalized groups (i.e. migrant workers) of employees, impacts and measures taken during COVID-19.

**Business Opportunity**

Gender data enables companies to identify symptoms of potential gendered issues and understand the full impact of COVID-19 on women to design effective responses.

“COVID-19 has made us stronger. We are setting a new benchmark. We’re setting the lessons that people can learn from.”

CEO of a fast-moving retail company in India, who committed pre-COVID to enhance women’s empowerment by setting senior leadership targets, incorporating LGBTQ+ issues in their diversity initiatives, and reporting gender pay statistics in their biggest markets worldwide.
Introducing the Self-assessment Tool and Action Planning
COVID-19 and Gender Self-assessment Tool and Action Planning

An Excel-based Tool for companies’ COVID-19 Taskforce or Human Resources to:

- **Assess the gender-responsiveness of their COVID-19 response plan:** Companies answer a series of yes/no questions on leadership, workplace, marketplace, community and sex-disaggregated data, aligned to the WEPs.
  
- **Build an action plan to ensure a gender-responsive approach to COVID-19:** The Tool generates a list of corporate actions prioritized from high, medium and low for immediate and long-term consideration.

  - **Now available online** - [http://unwo.men/polz50zIK58](http://unwo.men/polz50zIK58)

  A simplified PDF checklist is also provided, this does not generate a personalized action plan.

The self-assessment tool is:

- Easy to use
- Covers the entire value chain
- Includes immediate and long-term actions
**Questionnaire**: Each area of the **value chain** has 2-5 questions across two levels of action – **beginner** and **achiever**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. LEADERSHIP</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Yes/No</th>
<th>Why does it matter?</th>
<th>Recommended approaches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Has your company integrated gender concerns into its leadership commitments, strategy, and support for COVID-19?</strong></td>
<td>Beginner</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Corporate leadership is a key and integral part of ensuring a company’s COVID-19 response is gender sensitive and ensuring previous efforts to aid gender equality and women’s empowerment are not lost during this time. Including a gender lens in a company’s leadership response to COVID-19 further demonstrates commitment to gender equality and women’s empowerment and an understanding of the unique positions women face in times of crisis. Integrate gender concerns into your company’s COVID-19 response and externally and internally acknowledge the relevance of gender equality and women’s empowerment issues during COVID-19 pandemic response.</td>
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<td><strong>Has your company established a COVID-19 task force team with women as part of this group?</strong></td>
<td>Beginner</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Women are often excluded from key decision-making groups resulting in solutions that are not gender-sensitive. Including women as part of your company’s COVID-19 task force is the first step to ensure that gender concerns are taken into account in finding new solutions. Ensure that women participate in COVID-19 leadership decisions and embed gender concerns and gender expertise within response plans and budget resources to build gender expertise into response teams.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Has your company engaged local or national government to advocate for gender responsive measures to COVID-19 management in your community?</strong></td>
<td>Achiever</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. WORKPLACE</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Yes/No</th>
<th>Why does it matter?</th>
<th>Recommended approaches</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Does your company have a non-discrimination and equal opportunity policy that can be implemented as part of a gender sensitive approach to the COVID-19 pandemic response as well as in the wake of the pandemic to ensure the continued professional development and the increased responsibility to care for children, the sick, and the elderly?</strong></td>
<td>Beginner</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2, 4</td>
<td>The increased responsibility to care for children, the sick, and the elderly imposes women at all levels, increasing the likelihood that women on a career path or in leadership positions will be among those giving up their jobs or scaling back their workload. Companies that have made commitments to promote women in leadership roles may find that many promising women candidates are forced to choose to step back from work during this time to care for their family. Those in charge of promotions and retention plans may privilege employees who continued working at full capacity during the pandemic. In the long-term, this may widen horizontal gender gaps as more women miss out on promotion or are forced out of the workforce. Acknowledge the increased care burden on women during this time and commit to non-discrimination and equal opportunity for women during COVID-19.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Does your company have a non-discrimination and equal opportunity policy that can be implemented as part of a gender sensitive approach to the COVID-19 pandemic response as well as in the wake of the pandemic to ensure the continued professional development and the increased responsibility to care for children, the sick, and the elderly?</strong></td>
<td>Beginner</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2, 4</td>
<td>Encourage male employees to take their share of the care burden during this time and communicate to all staff that the company stands with all staff acknowledging that men and women both have increased care responsibilities at this time. Commit to providing professional development opportunities for women to maintain or build a pipeline of qualified women for management and leadership level positions despite the enhanced burden of care work during COVID-19 on women.</td>
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**Scoresheet:** The number of *actions taken* and *actions not yet considered* will be tallied for each focus area and overall.
**Action-plan:** Based on the answers to the questionnaire, a personalised action-plan will be created that prioritizes immediate actions and provides long-term considerations for women’s economic empowerment.

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<tr>
<th>Marketplace</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Priority level</th>
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<tr>
<td>Does your company have a proactive procurement plan to expand relationships with women-owned businesses in the value chain and when contracting vendors during and after the COVID-19 pandemic?</td>
<td>Immediate next steps: Review your supply chain to identify where women-led SMEs are in your supply chain, and actively reach out to support them by guaranteeing payments and orders, providing advanced payments where possible, and supporting them to shift production to in-demand products. Partner with industry groups to identify larger scale efforts to support women-led SMEs, including efforts to address unpaid care and domestic work and access to credit and training.</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Long term considerations: Assess procurement practices to ensure a gender-responsive approach that actively reaches women-led SMEs, sets goals and targets to procure from them, and regularly report on progress. Partner with industry groups to identify larger scale efforts to support women-led SMEs, including efforts to address unpaid care and domestic work and access to credit and training.</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is your company encouraging suppliers and vendors to advance performance on gender equality and protect the health, safety and job security of women workers during the COVID-19 pandemic?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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In collaboration with BSR, Funded by the European Union, weempowerasia, and UN Women.
What’s Next?
Make use of our free available tools ...

- **Private Sector Assessment Tool**
- **Action Briefs for the Private Sector**
- Entrepreneurs / SMEs
- Bigger Companies
- Migrant Workers
Women’s Empowerment Principles in a post-COVID-19 world

A gender-sensitive response to COVID-19 is only part of the journey towards women’s empowerment in Asia Pacific. Beyond COVID-19, the WEPs can support companies to develop a long-term approach to women’s empowerment. This includes:

- Signing the WEPs CEO Statement of Support.
- Taking the WEPs Gender Gap Analysis Tool.
- Implementing policies and practices to support women in the workplace.
- Creating an inclusive workplace culture.
Reach out to UN Women to join other companies who rise for women and lead their business towards a more inclusive recovery.

Join leading companies

Address adverse impacts

Spur economic growth

2,900+

70-90%

USD 3.2 trillion

CEOs have signed the WEP’s CEO Statement of Support

of workers in the apparel industry are women, who currently face factory closures and layoffs.

could be added to Asia-Pacific economies by closing the gender gap
How do you plan to consider the specific impacts of COVID-19 on women after this presentation?
Your VOICE matters. Your ACTIONS make it real. Join the global movement for women’s economic empowerment!

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#WeEmpowerAsia