WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES

JUNE 2022

LEADERS IN ACTION



Ms. Thai Huong

Founder and Chairperson of TH Group's Strategic COUNCIL

A PIONEER FOR A HEALTHY VIETNAM

Ms. Thai Huong, Founder and Chairperson of TH Group's Strategic Council (TH) is one of the pioneers leading the clean fresh milk revolution in Viet Nam. Under her leadership, the TH true MILK project started in 2008. Just 2 years later, TH Group launched its products and quickly captured the dominant share of the milk market, contributing to a transformation of the dairy market in Viet Nam. Ms. Huong has, over many years, been successively voted one of Asia's Top 50 Power Businesswomen by Forbes magazine. In 2020, Ms. Thai Huong represented TH Group to sign the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs).

> "Advancing gender equality is one of the core commitments of TH group in order to contribute to building a society that is progressive, equal and sustainable."

Gender equality at TH Group: The golden key to success

Under the leadership of Ms. Thai Huong, the TH Group has developed, adopted and enforced policies to promote gender equality with the goal of creating the best working environment for all employees. These include an Anti-Discrimination policy, Code of Conduct and Equal Employment Opportunities policy. These policies regulate equal employment, training and career development opportunities for employees and candidates of all ethnicities, religion, gender, nationality, health condition and the prevention of discrimination and harassment in all its forms.

> "As a businesswoman, I understand that gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace make our labor force and business productive and sustainable."

As a senior leader of the Group and as a mother, Ms. Thai Huong understands the problems women face when entering the workforce and starting a family, such as the traditional expectations on, and burden of, domestic and family care responsibilities. Informed by these challenges, TH has implemented many gender-sensitive human resource policies such as: an enhanced maternity leave policy for female employees; allowing a reduction in the working day by one hour to take a rest or to express and store breastmilk without having their wages and benefits deducted for female employees from their 7th month of pregnancy until their child is one year old.

Under her leadership, TH Group has organized various social activities and events for female and male employees which provide opportunities for them to learn and share about gender equality and women's empowerment in life and in the workplace.

> "The more attention and care that is paid to gender equality and women's empowerment and favorable conditions created for women to work, the more commitment and better performance employees will have, which will increase work productivity and quality."

Carrying out workplace gender equality policies adopted by Ms.Thai Huong, at TH Group, the proportion of female employees currently accounts for 46% of the total workforce. About 30% of middle and higher management positions are held by women. This percentage of female leadership is nearly double the national average, which stands at 16%[1].

> "From a business perspective, gender equality not only creates a fair and competitive environment but also promotes growth. That is why TH Group is proud to implement the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs)"

Advancing gender equality in the workplace is one of the key criteria for which the TH group was awarded 'Top 6 Best Workplaces in Viet Nam 2020'[2] and 'Best Workplace in Asia 2021'[3].

Implementing the WEPs to promote sustainable social development

As a strong gender equality advocate, Ms. Thai Huong believes that women's empowerment is creating equal and fair opportunities for women to fully participate in all fields and at all levels of politics, economy, culture, education, science, technology and the family. Empowering women enhances not only the power and voice of women as half of humanity but also the power of society.

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[1] *"In Viet Nam,16% of women hold middle and senior management jobs in the private sector", ASEAN and UN Women, 2021. ASEAN Gender Outlook*

[2] *Anphabe Survey 2020*

[3] *HR Asia 2021*

As soon as she learned about the WEPs, Ms. Thai Huong advocated for TH to become a Signatory with the Board of Directors. In 2020, she represented the TH Group to sign the WEPs CEO Statement of Support, officially marking the commitment. Since becoming a signatory, Ms. Thai Huong has shared TH's practices to apply gender equality and women's empowerment in many workshops, conferences and forums, which has inspired many other businesses to join the WEPs community.

> "I had no hesitation in signing WEPs because I believe that implementing the WEPs will contribute to creating equality for women and promote social development in a civilized and sustainable direction."

Principle 1		Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality.
Principle 2		Treat all women and men fairly at work– respect and support human rights and nondiscrimination.
Principle 3		Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers.
Principle 4		Promote education, training and professional development for women.
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WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES

JUNE 2022

WEPs IN ACTION



PRINCIPLE 2

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

Contents

1. Context
2. Actions
3. Challenges
4. Results
5. Recommendations

Case Study:

UNILEVER VIET NAM

Lessons Learned:

- The use of quotas is important in order to achieve corporate gender equality goals, namely to reach the goal of a minimum percentile of women in middle and upper management.
- A quota was implemented, and this was the main motivation to ensure that the objective was met requiring a collective effort from the company.

CONTEXT

Established over 100 years ago, Unilever is one of the world's largest consumer goods companies. The company is divided into three large divisions: Beauty & Personal Care; Foods & Refreshment; and Home Care.

Unilever started operations in Viet Nam in 1995 and has continued to expand its business over the years. The company has two manufacturing sites, three distribution centres and a headquarters in Ho Chi Minh City, as well as an office in Ha Noi.

Despite Vietnamese women accounting for 47.3 per cent of the labour force, they do not experience equitable participation. There remains a clear difference, in terms of occupation, employment status, salary and leadership, between men and women. The gap women face with respect to employment quality and career development stems from the double burden they carry. The unequal share of unpaid family care responsibilities holds women back, at all levels, in terms of their equal participation in the labor market and this restricts women's career advancement compared to that of men[1].

In order to address this double burden to ensure women in Unilever Viet Nam could fully participate and thrive in their careers, the company decided to develop various initiatives within the company structure to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the company's policies and practices.

[1] *UN Women Viet Nam. 2021. Country Gender Equality Profile Viet Nam, 2021*

ACTIONS

Since 2015, Unilever Viet Nam has implemented an internal program called the Unilever Compass Sustainability Strategy which is part of its Sustainable Living Programme. This program is geared towards increasing women in leadership positions and building a gender-inclusive workplace. The multidimensional program has three main objectives: advancing more women into leadership positions; developing a gender-equitable social security policy for women employees, supporting them directly and indirectly[2] through policies and infrastructure; and designing and implementing an unbiased recruitment process.

Women in leadership

Unilever Viet Nam has adopted many initiatives under its "Break Through the Glass Ceiling" campaign, which references the difficulty women often experience in advancing their careers beyond a certain threshold. As a part of the campaign, a mentoring programme has been implemented for all female leaders, helping them to perform in their current job successfully and transition to a more significant role. At the same time, senior leaders participate in programmes such as "#Unstereotype" to remove unconscious bias while recruiting and developing talents, allowing all employees, including female leaders, to be assessed fairly and inclusively for management roles. Unilever Viet Nam has offered career development support for targeted female leaders by facilitating their participation in the 'Women Leadership Programme,' which helps prospective female leaders to prepare for challenging roles that have not been traditionally female e.g. Head of Customer Development (Sales). This has, for instance, proved invaluable to the female General Manager of Unilever Viet Nam, who is the first woman and the youngest General Manager ever in Viet Nam. This also helps pave the way for more women to assume leadership roles.

The company also developed specialized training for their leadership. With '#Unstereotype: Leadership for Purpose and Performance', leaders learned about potential bias and how to address it. Meanwhile, the Women Leaders Programme, undertaken in partnership with INSEAD (Institut Européen d'Administration des Affaires) Business School[3] , focuses on providing actual and potential women leaders with the necessary leadership skills. Since 2013, the company has also demonstrated its success in training and nominating female leaders across all departments.

Gender-equitable workplace policy and practice

To empower and support women in the workplace, Unilever Viet Nam has actively assessed and redistributed work to create more job opportunities for women. The company has adjusted regulations on benefits particularly related to maternity, paternity and childcare for work/life balance, strengthened by the installation of lactation rooms and establishing the Young Mothers' Association for women to share experiences and skills about both work and family matters. Unilever Viet Nam has also upgraded facilities in their offices with gender-inclusive restrooms and enhanced their policies on paternity leave.

To retain and support employees, the company also set goals for gender balance at each level of seniority, so that the right talent can be identified, nurtured, and developed prior to promotion decisions. Unilever Viet Nam also reviewed and set standards for salary and bonuses to ensure equal pay regardless of gender.

Moreover, a confidential hotline has been instituted to address issues of gender-based violence and all aspects of fairness in the workplace in order to support staff. The hotline was intended to provide concrete support to those who sought it for themselves or others, in case they felt uncomfortable themselves or had witnessed an incident, either at work or in their private life. This particular initiative is an important tool to support staff in need and to ensure their welfare.

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[2] *Directly – those employed by Unilever and/or receiving benefits directly from Unilever e.g. Sunlight brand sponsorship of capacity building and provide knowledge for women to set up their businesses. Indirectly – those who benefited from the Unilever marketing campaign which focused on increasing women's self-esteem and confidence, such as the Dove Real Beauty Campaign. Although an individual consumer might not use Dove products at all but their peers, colleagues, family are being exposed to a convincing Dove campaign, which subsequently may provide a more diverse and inclusive work-life environment for them.*

[3] *INSEAD is a business school in Fontianebleau, France, with subsidiaries in Singapore and Abu Dhabi.*

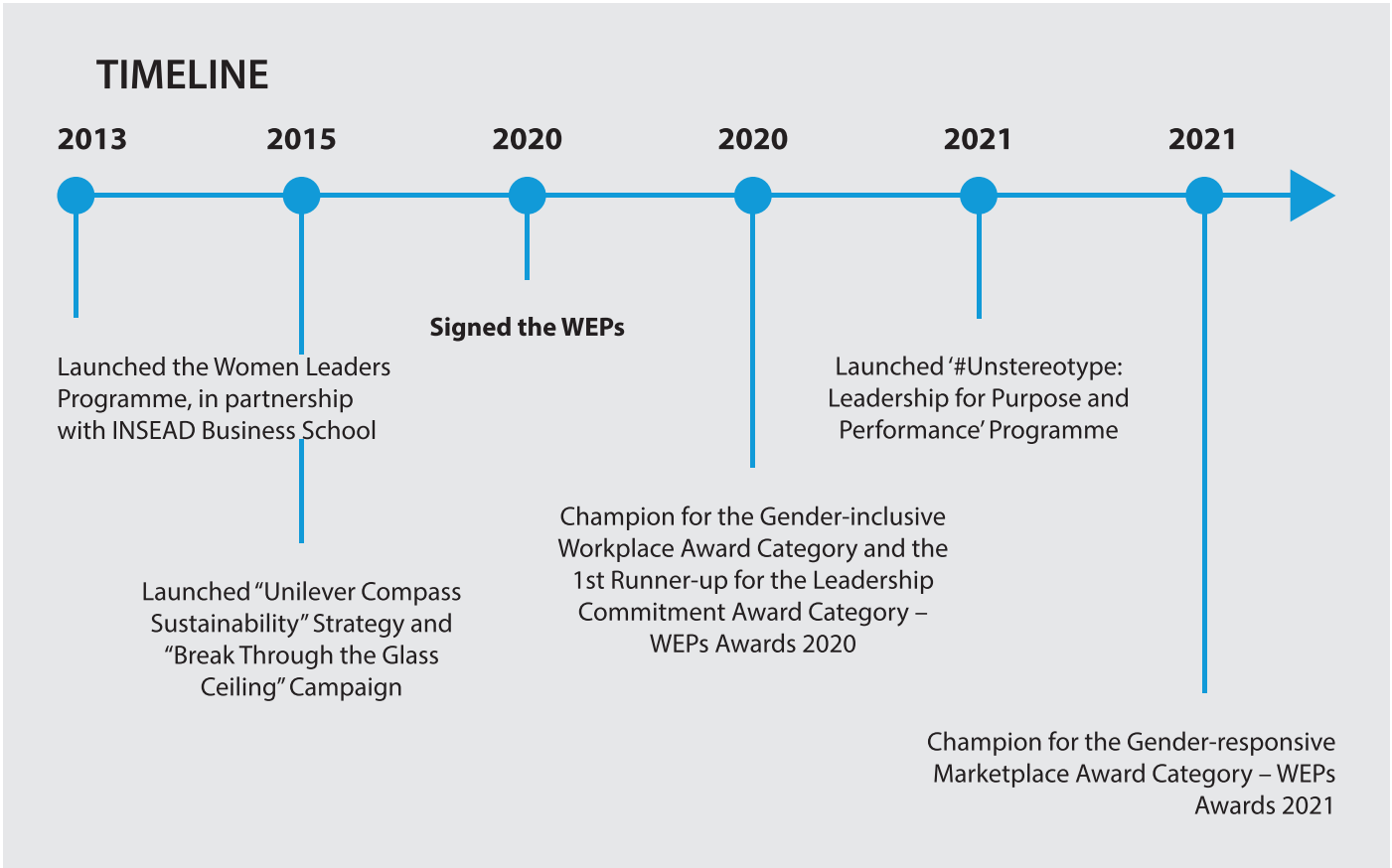
Unilever has also crafted training courses to raise awareness on the importance of gender equality and released internal communications materials to popularize perspectives on gender equality and specific benefits in building a gender-equitable workplace.

Unbiased recruitment

Unilever Human Resources (HR) ensures the company has access to a diverse talent pipeline. For recruitment, a diverse, gender-balanced pool of applicants for vacancies is required without compromising excellence. To increase the number of women applying for roles that have historically been dominated by male employees, a long-term plan has been set out that starts with branding Unilever as a company that fosters an inclusive corporate culture. Further, Unilever engages in active recruitment at tertiary education institutions such as universities, focusing especially on young women and girls enrolled in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education in order to expand the future applicant pool for technical positions. As a result, Unilever is able to secure a healthy and gender-balanced talent pool for any open positions.

Through their Breaking the Bias Program, Unilever Viet Nam regularly trains the recruitment team and hiring managers on explicit and implicit bias and how to identify stereotypes that may affect their decisions. The selection process has been reviewed and adjusted by providing the same set of interview questions to eliminate any potential gender bias.

All of these endeavours are channeled into balancing the ratio of men and women across all departments. Unilever Viet Nam began by creating a target and tracking it, using a gender-balance workplace roadmap, which enabled them to annually monitor the gender ratio at every occupation level. The ratio of female employees was 36.5% in June 2020. Increasing the number of women employees and achieving a balanced ratio is one of the mandatory Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in key functions. With this, they have purposefully moved towards a 50:50 ratio and aim to achieve a balance by 2025.



CHALLENGES

A shortage of female candidates in recruitment: expanding the pool of female candidates is extremely important because if there are simply not enough young women and girls in the relevant areas of work in the labour force, then they cannot be recruited, especially in areas related to STEM education. Unilever has initiated early recruitment at high school and university levels to encourage young women and girls to pursue a variety of studies and careers, making this approach highly beneficial.

RESULTS

- In 2021, 53% of middle and upper management of Unilever Viet Nam is female, while elsewhere in Viet Nam, the share of female managers in foreign-owned firms is 34.1% (2019)[4] and a mere 16% of women hold middle and senior management jobs in the private sector in Viet Nam[5]
- Unilever Viet Nam has facilitated a gender-equitable workplace policy and practice with protection and support for staff. This includes instances of (sexual) abuse in the private and workplace sphere, working from home flexibility and increasing the wellbeing of staff at home and at work. Annual Employee Survey at Unilever Viet Nam showed results that "Diversity & Inclusion: 86% (2019) – 88% (2020) – 91% (2021)"; "Well-being: 76% (2019) – 77% (2020) – 88% (2021)" (% is favourable score).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Gender-inclusive policy and practice should be advanced from the highest level of management down to the very first steps of recruitment. The starting point is to make sure the pool from which the company is hiring is sufficiently gender diverse. And the end of the chain needs to be an institutional commitment from the company's leaders to ensure all employees can explore their full potential and move up, facilitated by company-led initiatives that break down barriers which hold employees back.

THE ROLE OF WEPs

The WEPs are rooted in Unilever's mission of building sustainable development. The company is committed to creating an inclusive and diverse working environment with a labour force that is gender balanced and free from unconscious gender bias.

Signing the WEPs in 2020 has supported a framework of the principles to enhance Unilever's commitment to providing a gender-inclusive workplace in Viet Nam and supporting the wider women's empowerment agenda.

[4] *GSO. 2020. Viet Nam Labour Force Survey 2019. Hanoi: GSO. op.cit*

[5] *ASEAN and UN Women, 2021. ASEAN Gender Outlook.*

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WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES

JUNE 2022

WEPs IN ACTION

PRINCIPLE 5

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

Contents

1. Context
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4. Results
5. Recommendations

Case Study:

FRIESLANDCAMPINA VIET NAM

Lessons learned

Empowerment for women farmers in the dairy supply chain requires a holistic approach that includes technical training, nutrition education and health care training to ensure women and their families achieve sustainable incomes and improved nutritional and health outcomes.

CONTEXT

FrieslandCampina, or in Viet Nam better known as "Dutch Lady", is a global leading dairy company. Established in 1871 in the Netherlands, they have been operating in Viet Nam for the past 25 years. FrieslandCampina's purpose is to "nourish by nature": they aim to ensure better nutrition for the world and a good living for their farmers, both now and for generations to come. In Viet Nam, FrieslandCampina has factories in Binh Duong and Ha Nam, with 1,300 employees.

In Viet Nam, rural households rear cattle as a component of mixed farming for subsistence rather than on a truly commercial basis. These smallholder farmers, many of whom are women, produce nearly 80 percent of cow milk in rural Viet Nam. Most of them lack adequate knowledge, training, and money for rearing high-yielding breeds of dairy cows according to the dairy standards of the Netherlands. They also have little awareness of or the skills to access government livestock services that are available to dairy farmers at the district livestock office.

Rural women are the primary caretakers of their family's health and nutrition – however, they have a negligible say in family expenditure. Also, with limited educational backgrounds, rural women often lack adequate knowledge about nutrition, which impedes their ability to provide healthy food options for themselves and their families.

To address these issues holistically, FrieslandCampina supports smallholder farmers and women farmers who are part of the dairy supply chain in Viet Nam through sustainable income and an improved nutrition programme.

ACTIONS

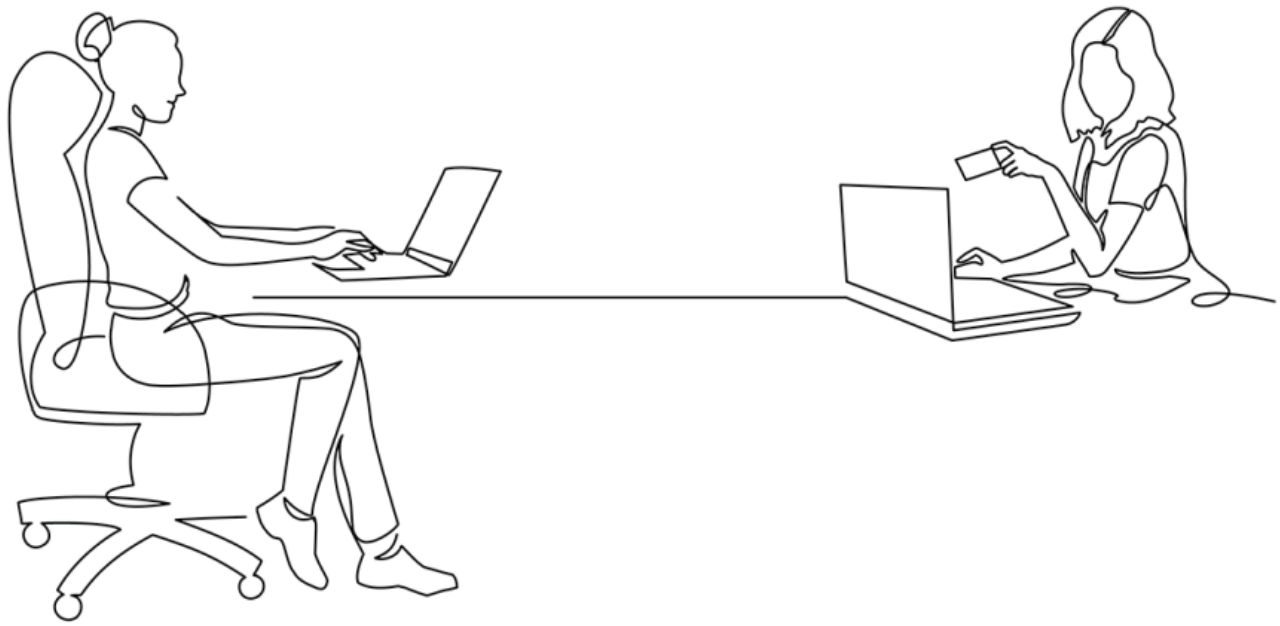
FrieslandCampina aims to share their knowledge in every country in which they do business. In Viet Nam, the company focuses on protecting the environment, promoting sustainable development for a green, clean and beautiful Viet Nam, and on improving the lives of Vietnamese farmers through their Dairy Development Program (DDP). Through the DDP program, they support smallholder farmers in their supply chain to improve the quality of the milk, increase the productivity of each dairy cow and gain access to markets. To achieve this, the DDP focuses on sharing knowledge and expertise through training, creating knowledge partnerships and initiating and supporting projects aimed at improving the dairy farming infrastructure.

One of the unique aspects of the dairy development activities is that knowledge sharing is often achieved with the help of international FrieslandCampina employees and member dairy farmers, which is arranged through expert missions and *Farmer2Farmer* missions. One of the most valuable parts of the missions is that local farmers can directly implement the knowledge they receive to optimize their business processes mostly in the context of technical and industrial experience under the supervision of FrieslandCampina's expert Dutch farmers.

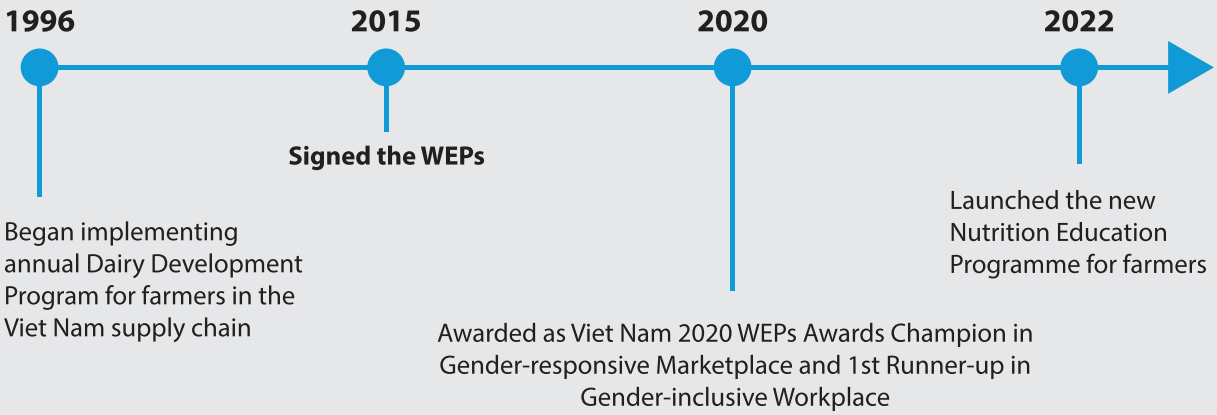
The DDP Program enhances livelihoods for the company's farmers in Viet Nam who provide almost 100 tons of milk daily. The program has been carried out in 9 provinces with 1,200 farmers, of which 400 were women, in the company's supply chain.

Conventional livestock extension services often undervalue the broader health and nutritional aspects related to raising cattle. Many rural farmers remain unaware of the nutritional value of their livestock products, as well as the quality standard which they should maintain while raising livestock. This can have critical health and nutritional consequences for the producers, their family members, and consumers.

To benefit community health outcomes, FrieslandCampina entered into a long-term partnership agreement with the Viet Nam Women's Union to initiate a nutrition education program. FrieslandCampina and Viet Nam Women's Union conducted a gender analysis to identify the different needs of women and men farmers because of their different role in the businesses and life when designing the programme. The pilot program was carried out in Lam Dong and Ha Nam province in 2022. The program aims to improve women's nutritional knowledge together with health and family management skills. The Nutrition education program is designed to support farmers to improve their overall quality of life. Firstly, they are provided knowledge on nutrition, health care, and other family management topics, then they are supported over time to become more confident in leading their lives as empowered women and farmers. Launched in 2022, the programme targeted a total of 1300 farmers of which 50% were women farmers in Lam Dong and Ha Nam.



TIMELINE



CHALLENGES

Most of the women farmers have little confidence in speaking and participating in groups, due to traditional gender relations and gender barriers. In rural areas, it is mostly men that attend technical training courses. Therefore, FrieslandCampina actively encouraged women farmers to participate in the DDP and nutrition education programme.

RESULTS

Every year 1,200 farmers, including 400 women, are impacted by the use of dairy farming technology and knowledge and experience exchange provided through the DDP. From naturally taught farmers, they have become members of FrieslandCampina's supply chain with full knowledge and qualifications in dairy farming according to the milk quality standards[1] of the Netherlands. The DDP has also helped women farmers to improve their role in daily life, increase their income and experience a better quality of life.

[1] *FCV operates business based on 7 golden rules which includes milk quality standard, therefore, milk supply is very well monitored and controlled to meet that quality requirement. Thanks to training and technology supported by FCV, milk quality meets all KPIs and requirements*

RECOMMENDATIONS

Before starting a community-based initiative, it is important to conduct a gender analysis based on sex-disaggregated data to plan and carry out the supporting programmes. For instance, the needs of women farmers differ from that of their male counterparts because of their differing roles in the business and the disproportionate burden of women's unpaid domestic and care work.

THE ROLE OF WEPs

The WEPs are instilled within FrieslandCampina's commitment and actions. Becoming a WEPs signatory in Viet Nam in 2015, the company is committed to offering equal opportunities for female and male employees and to empower women to make further progress at work. In the marketplace, the company empowers women farmers in the supply chain with nutritional expertise, family care, health and hygiene and technology exchange to strengthen women's bargaining position and input into decision making within households and with respect to other actors in the supply chain.

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WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES

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WEPs IN ACTION



PRINCIPLE 6

Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy.

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1. Context
2. Actions
3. Challenges
4. Results
5. Recommendations

Case Study: PHU NHUAN JEWELRY JOINT STOCK COMPANY (PNJ)

AN INITIATIVE TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Lessons learned

- Promoting equal and sustainable community development requires a holistic approach including actively connecting partners and authorities to support vulnerable groups in the community.
- Extending connections among women- owned businesses across the country facilitates the sharing of resources and management experience, which serves to strengthen business relations.

CONTEXT

For over 30 years, PNJ has been a major brand in Viet Nam in the field of manufacturing and retailing jewelry of gold, silver, and precious stones. PNJ has more than 6,000 employees of diverse age, gender, ethnicity, religion and professional qualifications. In PNJ, female employees account for more than 60% of the total workforce while the President and the Chief Executive Officer are women. PNJ has been consistently awarded "the best working environment" by the Anphabe Career Community Network and Nielsen Market Research.

In addition to encouraging diversity and equality in the working culture, PNJ also has many social programs and activities that promote gender equality in the community.

"PNJ believes that the company should promote gender equality not only in the workplace but also in the community to contribute to the sustainable growth of both the business and the wider community."

Ms Cao Thi Ngoc Dung, Chairwoman of Board of Directors of PNJ

ACTIONS

33 years of development with the philosophy "Always putting the interests of the community and customers alongside the company's interests"

PNJ has a long history of supporting vulnerable groups and low-income people through the activities of the PNJ Charity Fund. In 2005, PNJ established the Charity Fund to link various organizations, associations and local authorities to organize activities in support of vulnerable people across the country. In 16 years (2005-2021), the PNJ Charity Fund has taken a broad approach to social support and contributed more than VND 61 billion (~USD 2.6 million) to improve the lives of thousands of disadvantaged people across the country. The diverse activities of the Fund have been implemented through numerous largescale programs with practical and social significance, including improving infrastructure in rural areas, awarding scholarships to students living in difficult circumstances, providing free medical examination and treatment, and building housing for the poor. In addition, the PNJ Charity Fund also supports livelihood activities for people in craft villages and fishers in Truong Sa (Spratly Islands) and Hoang Sa (Paracel) archipelagos. Recently, the Fund also supported communities in the southwest region of Viet Nam who have experienced drought and saltwater intrusion; as well as those in the Central region who have been affected by floods. The Fund is also actively involved in COVID-19 prevention and control.

Choosing to focus on gender equality, PNJ cooperates regularly with organizations and associations of women entrepreneurs to launch and implement programs to support business start-up and capacity building for women. For example:

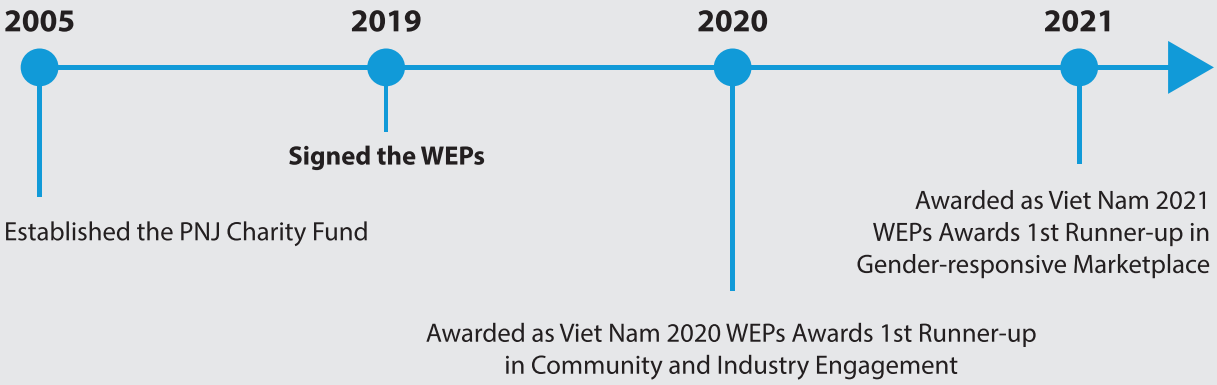
- PNJ has provided capital support to help rural women implement local business models such as pig raising and growing sweet potatoes in Cu Chi district, broom and fish sauce making in Quang Ngai province, coconut candy production in Ben Tre province, lotus growing in Tien Giang province and producing snakehead fish paste in Dong Thap province.
- PNJ has cooperated with the Ho Chi Minh City Association of Women Executives and Entrepreneurs (HAWEE) to develop and implement the HAWEE Mentorship Program to share experiences, guide, and mentor young female entrepreneurs in Ho Chi Minh City. Since 2016, three senior female leaders from PNJ - Ms Cao Thi Ngoc Dung, Chairperson of the Board of Directors, and Ms Huynh Thi Xuan Lien and Ms Tieu Yen Trinh, members of the Board of Directors - have actively participated in this program and facilitated the formation of more than 150 mentor-mentee pairs.

In collaboration with HAWEE, PNJ has also organized a series of conferences and forums to promote multilateral cooperation and build strategic and sustainable relationships with local women entrepreneurs:

- PNJ and HAWEE have organized 32 networking programs in cooperation with the Women Entrepreneurs' Associations and the Women's Unions of 20 provinces across Viet Nam in the spirit of 'women entrepreneurs supporting each other for development'.
- PNJ has organized multilateral conferences for the HAWEE network to provide knowledge, exchange experience and discuss solutions for women-owned enterprises and women entrepreneurs to cope with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on production and business activities in the short, medium, and long term.
- PNJ has cooperated with HAWEE to organize a series of six webinars for the first time in Ho Chi Minh City on response solutions to the COVID-19 pandemic: providing knowledge, exchanging experiences, and discussing short, medium and long-term solutions for SMEs including women owned SMEs.



TIMELINE



CHALLENGES

Inspiring and spreading gender equality values requires ample resources and can entail a long process of raising awareness to change social perceptions of gender equality.

PNJ has leveraged the reach and influence of the Charity Fund to link various organizations, associations and local authorities for promoting gender equality.

RESULTS

- In 16 years of operation, the PNJ Charity Fund has raised more than VND 61 billion (~USD 2.6 million) to support thousands of vulnerable people across the country.
- The Fund implemented programs to support rural women to start businesses via successful business models in the South and Central regions.
- The HAWEE Mentoring Program, facilitated by top management at PNJ, has established more than 150 mentor-mentee pairs who have shared experiences and provided seasoned expertise to young business-women in Ho Chi Minh City.
- Conferences and forums to promote multilateral cooperation and develop strategic relationships and business solutions to support SMEs and women owned businesses to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop community initiatives with key stakeholders, especially local government and associations, to ensures that activities are embedded in local context and more likely to create long-term impact.
- To deepen impact, extend support beyond monetary resources to provide in-kind resources, such as technical expertise for mentorship programs.

THE ROLE OF WEPs

Signing the WEPs in 2019 has enhanced PNJ's commitment to promoting gender equality in the workplace, marketplace and in the community to contribute to the sustainable growth of both the business and the wider community.

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