



Success Stories

How gender diversity management
change work and private lives

EconoWin is a project implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and commissioned by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

EconoWin is part of the Special Initiative on Stabilization and Development in the Middle East and North Africa of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The focus of the Special Initiative is on young people and employment, economic stabilization, democratization, and the stabilization of neighbouring countries experiencing crisis situations.

© Promoting Employment of Young Women through Applied Gender Diversity Management in Companies in the MENA Region (EconoWin) / GIZ

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Success stories:

How gender diversity management change work and private lives

Frontrunner companies from all over the MENA region go for Gender Diversity Management: a human resources policy to promote the economic integration of women and their long-term retention in companies.

In concrete projects, companies step in for a more family-friendly and socially acceptable working environment for both genders. Safe transport routes, promotion of career opportunities also for women, equal treatment in hiring, daycare centres as well as career orientation for female high school and university students are examples of company projects.

In cooperation with GIZ, 35 companies have implemented projects for diversity and inclusion of women. In the four countries, more than 35,000 employees, 13,000 of them women, have benefited from the better recruitment, retention and career advancement policies. Around 50 companies have delivered hands-on professional orientation for more than 1,000 girls and young women.

Behind all these numbers are remarkable stories of people whose work and private lives just got better thanks to the gender diversity projects; people committed to a better world for women and ready to take action.



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Stories from Egypt





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*Women create a more positive atmosphere
and support each other more than men
while encouraging others to work more.
This boosts spirits in the company.
The working environment just became better."*



Amal Khalifa

Raya IT, Egypt

When Amal first joined Raya IT one year ago, she didn't feel the environment was friendly or encouraging towards women. There used to be many more male employees than women.

Then things started to change. Now Amal's team is much more balanced: almost 50-50 women and men! She became more satisfied as the number of women increased. The mood in the company improved and the whole working environment got better.

Gender diversity projects will continue to help Raya IT to grow into an employer of choice. Although it might look challenging for women in the IT sector, Amal believes that it is achievable.



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This willingness to listen and act upon our recommendations was one of the positive changes in the last year since the cooperation with EconoWin.”



Christine Mounir

ACT, Egypt

Christine joined ACT (Advanced Computer Technology) one year before the coronavirus pandemic started. When she asked for 2-weeks unpaid leave due to family obligations, ACT proposed an output-based work measure instead – a win-win situation.

The management of ACT takes employee satisfaction and retention very seriously. The company conducts constant surveys and focus groups – carried out by external parties – to listen to employee demands. Also, there is constant communication as well as training and development programmes for colleagues.

At ACT, qualified candidates are now selected during the recruitment process irrelevant of gender and age, which led to an increase in the number of females hired in the company.



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It was also amazing to see my manager start really assessing my skills. I get an ability-based job placement now, instead of a placement that is based on gender stereotypes."



Hagar Abou El Hassan

Mercedes GAS, Egypt

Hagar Abou El Hassan has been working for Mercedes GAS for almost three years. In her eyes, GAS's efforts towards a more inclusive working environment have paid off. The sessions about Gender Diversity for all employees were the driving force of change.

All these changes encouraged Hagar to pursue her career and invest in her professional development. With the support of Mercedes GAS, she is currently finishing a course on Supply Chain at the Open University and feels more courageous.

Today, Hagar enjoys working at GAS and feels that her work and her capabilities are valued by her colleagues and managers.



© Sandra Wolf

“ I felt better about myself and more challenged. The new responsibilities showed recognition from the company towards me doing a good job.”



Hanaa Moustafa

Green Valley, Egypt

Hanaa has been working at Green Valley, a large agriculture & trade company, for three years. As the factory started undergoing changes, she was promoted and is now managing several women. Green Valley as a company, as well as other supervisors, encouraged and supported her in her new responsibilities.

Green Valley also made trainings available. Changes such as the provided literacy, health, and safety trainings attract more women and make them feel valued by the company.

Not only Hanaa acknowledges the success of the measures: 95% of women interviewed reported that they receive more recognition in their jobs and 90% of supervisors feel better qualified to guide employees.



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I feel that women have good communication with both women and men and this makes us good supervisors. Women have more patience. They have the capability to teach, listen and also learn from their colleagues."



Howaida Gouda

Marib Garments, Egypt

Howaida Gouda, a mother of two children, has been working at Marib Garments for the past seven years. She has been recently promoted to a new position where she is now head of her own department.

Her colleagues and the company were quick in helping her adjust to the new role: "They helped me a lot and I think this pushed me into becoming more confident, and proud of what I have become."

Howaida's success also goes back to how the company recruits and retains its female talent. Whenever female employees have a joint request, the company is quick to move forward with it. Howaida thinks that more women should be leading their departments.



© Emad Abdelrahman

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I never expected to work in a workshop side by side with engineers and technicians. People were very supportive. I wish to return as a professional later in my life.”



Omneya Kamel

Mercedes GAS, Egypt

Omneya is a 16-year-old Egyptian schoolgirl. Together with other girls in her class, she completed a summer internship at Mercedes GAS (German Auto Service) – an automotive company.

After ten days in the car workshop with engineers and technicians, Omneya discovered her interest for mechanical engineering and mechatronics. She decided that she wants to study engineering after school and to work in the automotive sector.

The internship opened the door to the working world for her. It enabled her to test her capabilities and gain new skills. Thanks to her training, she can now imagine her professional future more concretely.



© Juhayna

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I started to prioritise my work tasks better, learnt that I don't have to do everything myself, and to delegate more tasks, which eased my life a lot. My mentor also supported me to not always take the blame on myself!”



Salma Shaker

Juhayna, Egypt

Salma was Team Leader when she participated in the first in-company mentorship programme at Juhayna Food Industries.

Having a mentor who is in a similar life situation was very helpful for Salma. Her mentor helped her to improve her work-life balance and supported Salma's career path by giving advice and being a role model. After finalising the programme, Salma was promoted to Section Head straight away.

More than 75% of the active mentees at Juhayna see the mentoring programme as a tool for personal growth and empowerment. And that is showing: women in leadership positions increased from 16% to 28%!



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I don't really believe that there are jobs out there that men can do but women can't. Anyone is capable of doing any job provided if they are given enough training and space to learn



Shimaa El Ebiary

General Motors, Egypt

Shimaa was one of the very first female blue-collar technicians at General Motors – the large automobile manufacturer. Together with thirty other women, she went through a three-month technical and soft skills training.

Her onboarding program at General Motors included mentoring and monthly discussions with HR. The time management skills she developed at work help her as a working mother as well as in her personal life.

Shimaa experienced family pushback at first, but after seeing how well everything was going and how accommodating the working conditions were, this changed and turned into support.



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Stories from Jordan





© Estarta

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I felt empowered to establish better channels of communication on a management level to build more efficient work tactics.”



Bayan Jafar

Estarta, Jordan

Bayan joined Estarta, an engineering and IT solutions innovator, as a fresh graduate. She moved up the ladder from a Junior Engineer to a Technical Team Leader in a span of five years.

After the gender diversity projects, Bayan was selected to participate in the mentorship programme as a mentor. The programme included leadership training sessions and allowed participants to practice skills and implement them.

In terms of managing the customers, the programme enabled her to better adapt to the different requirements and situations. The gender diversity projects support Bayan in fulfilling her new role as team leader of one of the biggest teams at the company.



© Grand Hyatt Amman

“It made me feel very welcomed. I felt empowered and confident. I also found a colleague to answer my questions and help me notice the small details, which made it easier for me to adapt faster.”



Dina Omeish

Grand Hyatt Amman, Jordan

After graduating with a Bachelor’s degree of Business Administration in Hospitality Management, Dina was recruited by Grand Hyatt Amman Hotel as an Assistant Manager. She was excited to work for what she knew to be a “people-based company.”

Once hired, Dina was assigned a “Female Buddy”, an initiative for new female employees to feel comfortable and to introduce them to their new environment, tasks and challenges. This is part of the orientation process for new hires. They also get to know about the Grand Hyatt’s effort to promote more inclusion.

Having been a trainee in other workplaces before, she felt this effort by the hotel was unique.



I believe that the hotel management supports women not only to be successful as employees, but also to be successful as individuals! Gender diversity projects give confidence to any woman who is considering working somewhere, regardless of the position or role."



Marika Jresat

Landmark Amman Hotel, Jordan

Marika has been working for the Landmark Amman Hotel for three years. She started working as a Guest Relations Officer. Thanks to the flexible arrangements organised by the hotel, she graduated with a Bachelor's degree at the same time.

Due to her performance and after completing the Management Graduate Programme for senior graduates of hospitality universities, she got promoted to the position of Assistant Meetings & Events Manager at Landmark Amman Hotel.

Marika feels that the hotel's management has created an inviting, balanced, and family friendly work environment that treats women with great respect.



As a result of the GDM project, the company has initiated a flexible policy which aims to help female employees reach a more balanced, less stressful life and provide more for their work."



Rana Koro

Kawar Shipping, Jordan

Rana is Quality Manager at Amin Kawar & Sons shipping company. She has been with the company for 15 years. Rana is proof of how management support enables women to take on managerial roles in any field.

Upon request, Rana was given the flexibility option; she was able to take care of her daughter and focus on her work. This contributed to her work-life balance and was one of the reasons for her longevity at the company.

Rana is also the first manager in the company to supervise a “flexible contract” female employee for almost a year and is a convinced supporter of the concept.



Before the paternity leave, I used to take personal leaves in order to be with my wife and my newborn. But now I have the luxury to be the first father to whom this new system applies."



Sameer Hamideh

Dar Al Omran, Jordan

Sameer, proud father of three children, is Head of Accounting at Dar Al Omran – and the first man in the company to enjoy a paid paternity leave!

The architect and engineer's consultancy company employs 126 people, 47 of whom are women. Flexible working hours, new concepts for a better work-life balance, part-time work, and teleworking are now an integral part of Dar Al Omran's personnel policy.

Succeeding as a family-friendly employer looks like this: the number of women in each department has multiplied by three, women leaving the company decreased by 2%, while the return rate after maternity leave is 100%!



© Orange Morocco

Stories from Morocco





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The training courses taught me that communication is not just verbal. It is very important to maintain good relations with my colleagues. We work as a team and although there are conflicts, I know how to deal with them better now.”



Chaimaa Rharbaoui

Hyatt Regency, Morocco

Chaimaa has a degree in biology. After struggling to find a job in her sector, she completed vocational training in the hotel sector and joined the Hyatt Regency as an apprentice. At the end of her internship, she was recruited.

Thanks to the “Food & Beverage for Her” project, Chaimaa gained self-confidence. She was delighted to see Hyatt’s adapted harassment policy implemented: her colleagues pay more and more attention to what they say, and she does not hesitate to call them to order when necessary.

And she is not the only one: all women working at Food & Beverage Hyatt know the procedure to follow in case of harassment.



© SITI

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These courses have helped us to improve relations between colleagues. There were six of us at the beginning but now there are so many of us. Through these trainings, we felt valued by the company.”



Fatiha Raiss

SITI, Morocco

Fatiha has been part of SITI for 38 years and currently works as a Chain Manager. Many positive changes have occurred since the “We take care” project. Internal communication and relations among the colleagues improved and Fatiha has learned a lot about team management.

The initiative included numerous team building exercises, soft skills trainings, and sport activities facilitated by workers. Fatiha is even one of the facilitators of the newly introduced aerobics courses.

The new working environment keeps women at the company: the number of women leaving SITI dropped from 11.3% to 1.93% – and 90% of the workers see themselves at the company for at least five more years.



© GIZ



At the inspiration workshop, I really enjoyed seeing how married female managers and mothers reconcile these two areas of their lives. Their stories made me want to go further in my career and become a manager myself."



Houda El Khdime

Digital Works, Morocco

Just after graduating, Houda joined Digital Works as an Operator. The Morocco-based multinational company helps companies to engage with customers across all digital channels. Within eleven months, she pushed her career forward and was selected to move on to her current position as Delivery Lead.

As she recently got married, she had a lot of questions about how to balance private life with her professional career. The inspiration workshop that DigitalWorks organised helped her to find answers and inspiration.

She now aims at becoming a manager. Since then, she has received support from her manager who is giving her more responsibility and helping her to improve.



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Any initiative pushing managers to question themselves and adopt inclusive and participative management styles is highly welcome, especially for its employees, since it impacts their motivation and strengthens their performance."



Soumaya Abbadi

BMCI, Morocco

Soumaya joined the Moroccan Bank for Commerce and Industry (BMCI) two decades ago and now works as Head of Assets and Liabilities Management.

She benefited from an individual coaching and a series of manager trainings that were implemented as part of BMCI's gender diversity project. Mother of two daughters, Soumaya is happy to see many efforts put in place to support employees during and after maternity, in order to allow them to build a career at BMCI.

Indeed, the bank softened the "glass ceiling": the share of women at the group committee of high potential managers jumped from 23% to 53% and two female zone directors (out of four) were appointed for the first time.

Stories from Tunisia



© GIZ

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The workshops of the 'We Diversity' project have taught me a lot on a professional and personal level. The approach we followed is constructive, it allowed us to better choose our career path within Orange.”



Khaoula Riahi

Orange, Tunisia

Khaoula is 31 years old and had been working at the telecommunications operator Orange for eight years when she was selected as one of the women for the talent development programme. The programme is part of the “We Diversity” project the company implemented together with GIZ.

Khaoula subsequently benefited from a personalised development plan to ensure her promotion to a higher grade. As soon as she finished the programme, she applied for a higher position, accepting the new challenge. Khaoula is now a B-grade digital consultant.

Acknowledging her company’s initiative to ensure gender diversity, Khaoula really senses a change in the corporate culture.



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In the beginning it was difficult for me to assert myself as a female manager, but the gender diversity project has changed the perception of many employees.”



Senda Ben Ghachem

Amen Bank, Tunisia

Senda has worked at Amen Bank for 13 years. In 2016, she was appointed the first female Branch Manager. Things changed after the gender diversity project: Senda is no longer alone at the top. Four women were promoted to branch directors for the first time since the bank was founded in 1967!

The project aimed at combating gender stereotypes that hinder women from advancing their careers. Training for managers and recruiters positively changed their perceptions, as well as how they recruit and promote employees. Moreover, a quota for women for promotion shortlists complemented the mindset change.

By adapting its personnel policy, the company became more attractive for young talents: 80% of new recruits consider Amen Bank an employer of choice.



© Claudia Wiens



I am a mother of two children and for this reason I was often absent. I can now access the system via VPN and work from home. Thanks to flexible work arrangements, the work can be done very efficiently."



Sondes Jouini

Vermeg, Tunisia

Sondes has been with Vermeg, an IT company, for 14 years. Having started out as a Product Engineer, she has grown in her career and currently works as a Project Manager.

Vermeg's approach provided Sondes with the right environment and working conditions to encourage personal and professional development. She is a mother of two children, and thanks to the flexibility measures taken by Vermeg, she feels that she has an adequate work-life balance.

For Sondes, like many of her colleagues, a sense of trust in her employer has been strengthened by the measures taken by Vermeg. This feeling of trust has also been reflected in her personal development.

Imprint

The regional project Promoting Employment of Young Women through Gender Diversity Management in Companies in the MENA Region (EconoWin) supports private companies in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia in carrying out corporate gender diversity projects. Together with business associations, it promotes gender diversity management in the private sector in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). EconoWin is implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The project is part of BMZ's special initiative 'Stability and development in the MENA region'.

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