



**Building
Bridges** for
Women's Economic
Empowerment

Case Studies on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Response Mechanisms in the Tea Sector

October 2022

KTDA Foundation

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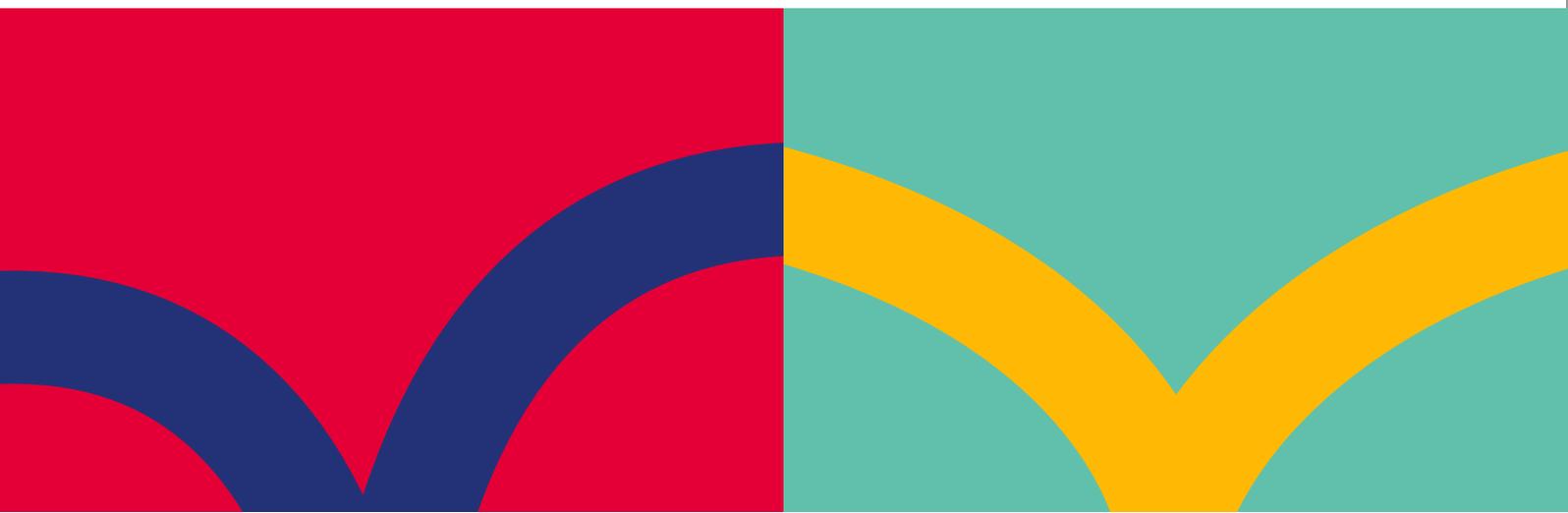
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Introduction

The case studies below include input from the KTDA head office, factory management and factory staff on the participatory role KTDA has played as an organization to advance gender equality in the tea sector. A total of six people were interviewed; one from the head office gender committee, and five from the factory level; two of whom are at management levels and three are factory workers who benefitted from the training conducted as part of the Building Bridges for Women's Economic Empowerment (BBWEE) Programme and facilitated by the Women's Rights Organizations, WROs. The input given was on the gender policies, the impact of the programme and recommendations for future engagement. The factory workers' case studies were captured on video while some of the interviews were conducted via phone conversations.

Case Study 1: Gender Responsive Due Diligence - Kenya Tea Development Agency, KTDA

Step 1:- Embed Gender In Policies

In 2022, a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Committee was constituted at the KTDA headquarters, with 7 committee members and 13 gender allies from across the different departments and subsidiaries in KTDA. The main aim of forming this committee was to help address any arising gender-based violence, including sexual harassment and exploitation in the work place. Initially, the whistle-blowing and helpline have not been effective so far as people were afraid to come forward with any issues or report on issues, thus the line became redundant, and KTDA hopes that this committee will succeed in addressing any emerging issues and escalating issues with more seriousness.

The GESI committee's main objective is to establish a good reporting framework for victims. Learnings will be made from the previous whistleblowing and helpline system and issues will be escalated more seriously.

By October 2022, the GESI committee was at the final stages of coming up with a gender policy, which would take into account emerging global gender issues such as the financial exploitation of women. KTDA collaborated with UN Women to draft a gender policy that is research-based and includes input from the staff at the factory level. One of the outputs of this collaboration was the formation of the GESI committee which had been tasked to develop a gender policy. Women Win has supported this component through capacity building of the head office GESI committee.

The new policy will cover all our stakeholders, such as Rainforest Alliance, which represents our buyers, to ensure that the requirements are as per global standards in regard to gender equality and inclusion. Other stakeholders that will be involved include factory staff, farmers and the tea pluckers. The policy is currently being drafted in partnership with UN Women. A work plan and input from the GESI committee will be availed for review and approval by senior management tentatively by January 2023.



KTDA has worked with several organizations in efforts to create a gender-friendly environment, these include Women Win, Ethical Tea Partnership, ETP and Women Rights Organizations, WROs including Women's Empowerment Link, WEL, Community Initiative for Change and Development, CIFCAD and Centre for Rights Education and Awareness, CREAM in Kenya. The creation of the gender-friendly environment in KTDA can be attributed to Women Win and other stakeholders such as UN Women and ETP. The senior management at KTDA has fully supported GESI committee in terms of sustainability, sponsorship and continuity, from approving the formation of a GESI committee, with human resource office staff heavily involved including the Head of KTDA Foundation.

Senior management has given their full commitment to promoting and supporting gender equality within the organization. Part of the committee's major agenda is to come up with a work plan to ensure that all stakeholders and partners are fully on-boarded.

Initially, the KTDA Human Resource policy includes clauses with general and sexual harassment policies, however, it is essential that there be a stand-alone gender policy document. The gender policy will be reviewed every 3-5 years, however, should there be a need to review the policy, the committee will be called upon to take lead in the review process. Further, KTDA has signed the UN women's commitment to be an organization that does not discriminate against women by 2030 and is committed to forming policies that help eliminate GBV in the place of work.



Step 2: Identify and Assess Adverse Impacts

Case study 2: Factory Management Case Studies

The drawing the Line (DTL) assessment and Collaborating for Impact (CFI) projects were implemented in 5 tea factories in 2022. Some of the feedback given by the factory management at one of the tea factories included; more meeting time with the WROs to be incorporated in the DTL and CFI project and a minimum of 3 days of training for management staff to be considered in future to enable the management team grasp the concepts covered in the training.

Impact of the CFI projects from the management perspective

1. The factory discovered that from the CFI training project, one of the issues that came up was a disconnect with information to do with employment opportunities between the staff and management upon announcing the same. The solution the factory came up with was to create more awareness once vacancies are advertised and to encourage the staff to frequently check the notice boards/platforms used to advertise to ensure they don't miss opportunities.
2. A lack of confidence was another issue the staff faced. The management resolved this by holding more meetings, where staff were engaged more and asked to share their views, which would be taken into consideration. For instance, the women workers who were initially not able to air out their concerns, but notably, after the gender training, they were confident enough to speak up for themselves. A good example is the expectant mothers who are now able to talk to their supervisors about moving departments during their pregnancy term.

3. As a result of implementing the CFI training project, there is an improved relationship between the management and workers, and the risks averted by the factory included the consequence of a bad relationship between management and staff, hence the factory will not face reputational risk and staff no longer feel 'caged' in the workplace. They feel freer and more confident.

4. The factory staff reported that after the training, the work environment became more gender friendly as the learnings really help with attitude changes and how staff interact with one another.

5. The aspect of incorporating men in gender training helped debunk the myth that gender is women-specific and made them more receptive to the learnings and the roles they can play in bringing change.

6. As a result of remuneration issues being brought about by the workers in one of the 5 factories that implemented the CFI project, the salaries are being reviewed by the body that deals with payment at the factory level.

7. Other training came about as a result of the CFI training such as first aid, agricultural tools and best practices and occupational health and safety which the foundation is planning to carry out in November 2023.

Recommendations

Due to the nature of activities at the factory level, and despite the notable strides made in the factories after the CFI training projects were completed, the commitment to follow through on the developed work plans has been slightly delayed, thus the need to follow up on the 5 factories in implementing their work plans with the support and collaboration of the WROs whom we shall engage. The factory management also recommended that the CFI training, if possible be rolled out to all KTDA factories as they were very beneficial.

Case study 3: Factory Workers Case Studies

Approximately 400 factory workers from the selected 5 tea factories benefitted from the DTL/CFI project and were trained on different topics, including financial literacy, labour laws and gender-based violence, and leadership. The case study focused on three workers who were trained on: - gender socialization, gender-based violence and discrimination, personal career growth strategies, effective leadership at the factory and in the community, culture and gender mainstreaming.

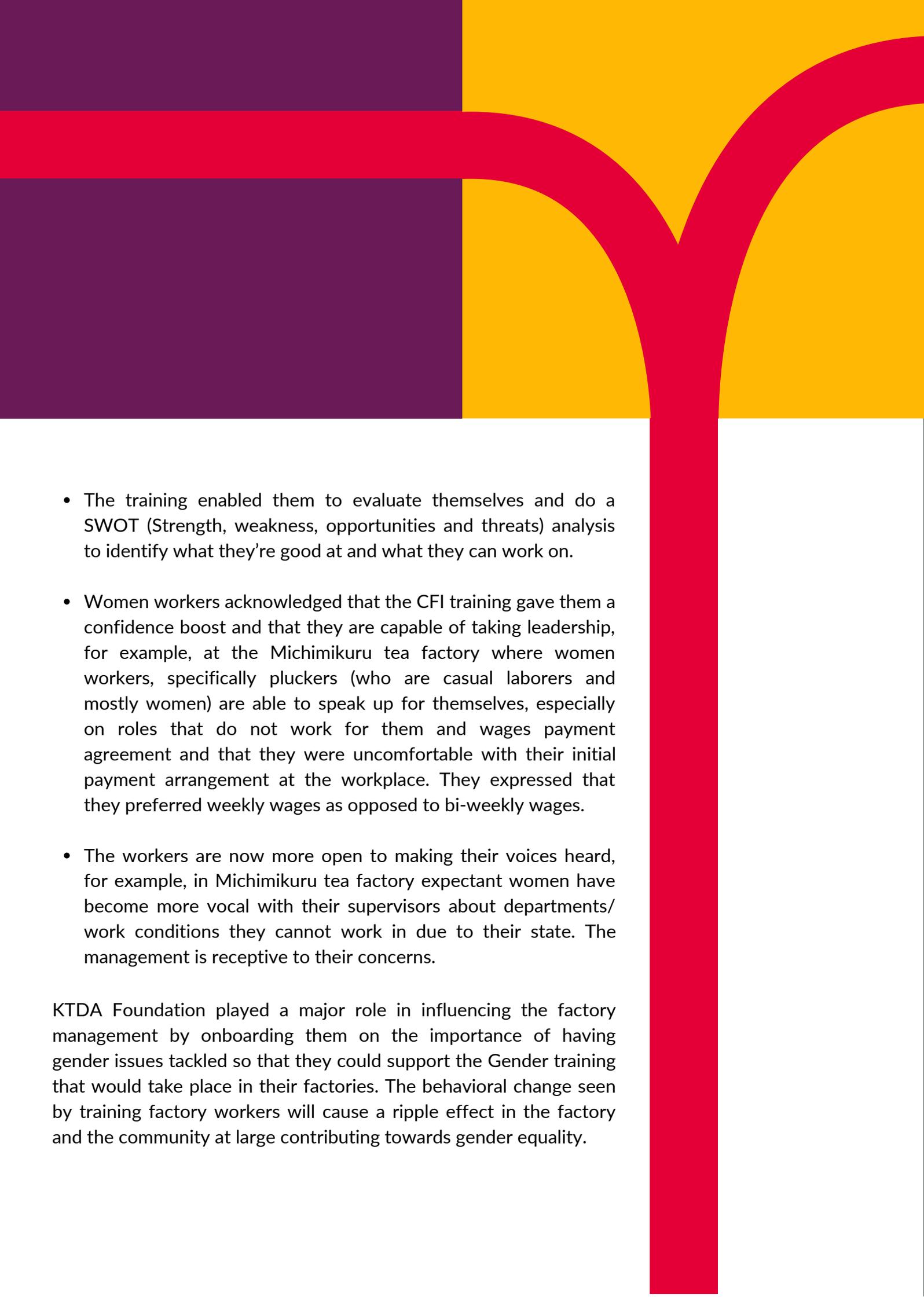
Stories of Change

- In Kangaita, a man reported that after learning about gender roles, he will change how roles are assigned in his household.
- In Michimikuru, the workers are now more open to voicing their complaints, for example, expectant women have become more vocal to their supervisors about departments they cannot work in due to their state. The management is receptive to their concerns.
- In Michimikuru, a group of pluckers voiced out that they were uncomfortable with their initial payment arrangement at the workplace, they preferred weekly wages as opposed to bi-weekly wages.

The impact of the training, according to the participants included:

- Increase knowledge: they were able to explain the difference between sex and gender, the qualities of a good leader, and effective communication in the workplace. The participants learnt that most gender roles are learned and are mostly imposed by society, for example, one man after going through the programme at the Kangaita tea factory, vowed to change how things are done in his household.



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- The training enabled them to evaluate themselves and do a SWOT (Strength, weakness, opportunities and threats) analysis to identify what they're good at and what they can work on.
 - Women workers acknowledged that the CFI training gave them a confidence boost and that they are capable of taking leadership, for example, at the Michimikuru tea factory where women workers, specifically pluckers (who are casual laborers and mostly women) are able to speak up for themselves, especially on roles that do not work for them and wages payment agreement and that they were uncomfortable with their initial payment arrangement at the workplace. They expressed that they preferred weekly wages as opposed to bi-weekly wages.
 - The workers are now more open to making their voices heard, for example, in Michimikuru tea factory expectant women have become more vocal with their supervisors about departments/ work conditions they cannot work in due to their state. The management is receptive to their concerns.

KTDA Foundation played a major role in influencing the factory management by onboarding them on the importance of having gender issues tackled so that they could support the Gender training that would take place in their factories. The behavioral change seen by training factory workers will cause a ripple effect in the factory and the community at large contributing towards gender equality.

Case study 4: Gender Audit in Tea Value Chains: Beyond the checkbox.

The KTDA is a company owned by around 650,000 smallholder tea farmers across 17 Kenyan tea-growing counties. The agency has invested in 8 subsidiaries supporting various components of the tea value chain including management services, microfinance services, tea machinery, insurance, tea blending and packaging, tea trading and warehousing and corporate social investments. This totals to direct employment of 10,000+ employees.

KTDA is compliant with several voluntary sustainability standards (VSS). VSS has been developed as a way of upholding and monitoring sustainability, human rights, and workers' rights within global value chains, however, the challenge with the compliance-based model of VSS when it comes to gender is that because gender norms and inequality are complex and intangible, and often involve sensitive issues and power relations that women either accept as normal or are unwilling to disclose, it is common that gender issues are not picked up during auditing processes as the compliance system is more of ticking checkboxes.

Actions Undertaken

Through the support of the Building Bridges for Women's Economic Empowerment, BBWEE project with Women Win, KTDA collaborated with a Women's Rights Organization and conducted gender audits in 6 factories using a participatory methodology. The audit evaluated KTDA factories to find out whether they have gender committees in place, if they are functional and if they have a current functional policy and in case there are any gender-based violence reporting mechanisms. This supported KTDA not only fulfilling Step 2: Identify and Assess Adverse Impacts of the Gender-Responsive Due Diligence process but will ensure the factories continue to be more compliant in VSS with actual impact on the worker's rights beyond the compliance check box.

This process helped assess the extent the factories implement gender mainstreaming effectively in their structures, processes, procedures, policies and services provided. It also assesses the extent gender mainstreaming is institutionalized in these areas. The key methodology used was in-person interviews with factory management and a collective session with factory gender committees.



Achievements

As part of the BBWEE programme, the gender audit process was conducted by Women's Empowerment Link (WEL) with the support of KTDA Head Office GESI committee members. In this collaboration, the GESI committee members were trained by WEL as Trainer of Trainers, (ToTs) and thereafter accompanied WEL to implement Gender Committee training at the 6 tea factories thus building their internal capacity to cascade the gender committee training across other 65 KTDA managed factories. In addition, WEL and KTDA Foundation have organizational history, as we have worked with them on other projects prior to the BBWEE programme.

- The participatory approach was well received by the factories as compared to other audits as everyone felt involved.
- The audits produced knowledge and information on the extent to which gender mainstreaming is institutionalized within the respective factories and provided recommendations to improve the performance of the factory in ensuring gender equality.
- The overall outcome of these audits will support KTDA in the development of the KTDA Gender Equality Social Inclusion Policy, programmes, projects, products and services for the Agency.

Application to other enterprises

Enterprises within the global value chains, need to go beyond the compliance-based model that is a requirement of VSS when conducting gender audits thus seeking buy-in from the enterprise's management to implement the audit is an important starting point to carry out and follow through with the audit's outcomes. The enterprise needs to create a shared understanding of the value of gender audits within senior and middle management and among staff. This will ensure there is a commitment by all to use the audit results to advance gender equality in the organization.

Case study 5

Capacity Strengthening of Gender Committees in Tea Factories

The promotion of gender equality is an integral part of the KTDA business and a lot of effort has gone into supporting KTDA Staff, smallholder tea farmers and other stakeholders in tea growing communities in Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI). KTDA continues to take a thoughtful approach to GESI integration by mainstreaming GESI throughout key spheres of the tea value chain. This has been in partnership with various stakeholders including UN Women. Towards these efforts, UN Women hosted the KTDA Head Office Gender Committee Members for a workshop where they were inaugurated and trained on gender mainstreaming.

The outcome of the workshop was the development of a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion action plan to guide KTDA subsidiaries and factories to mainstream GESI in the workplace. All KTDA Factories are expected to have Gender Committees as part of compliance with voluntary sustainability standards (VSS). One of the actions of the KTDA head office GESI committee was to strengthen the capacity of factory gender committees.



Achievements

The KTDA Head Office Gender Committee, in collaboration with a WRO, Women Empowerment Link (WEL) through the BBWEE programme, build the capacity of 6 factory gender committees as part of Step 2: Identify and Assess Adverse Impacts of the Gender-Responsive Due Diligence. The achievements so far include:

- Conducted gender audits in 6 tea factories as part of identifying ways of strengthening the capacity of the gender committee. The audits produced knowledge and information on the extent to which gender mainstreaming is institutionalized within the respective factories and provided recommendations to improve the mandate of the gender committees in advancing gender equality.
- WEL conducted a 3-day workshop with factory gender committee members in 6 tea factories to help them understand their role and mandate, they also developed action plans that will help them cascade the knowledge they learnt to other factory workers. The feedback from the training sessions also will help strengthen the gender committee training manual on relevant topics needed by the committees.
- The involvement of the management and the KTDA head office gender committee in this process will ensure the action plans are followed through and adequate resources are allocated to support the action plans.

Application to other enterprises

The major reflections are: the gender committees have the potential of bringing real change in factories, however, they could benefit from additional technical knowledge enabling them to lead gender mainstreaming activities in the KTDA factories. There is no need to reinvent the wheel in terms of content as various manuals have been done across different value chains, they can bring in technical experts seconded by the government or Women's Rights Organizations, WROs to help contextualize it for their particular value chain. While gender committees can catalyze change in organizations, GBV remains a complex issue and more stakeholders need to be incorporated to support the work of gender committees in addressing GBV.



Case study 6: Awareness raising and training towards building women workers' agency in creating safe work and community spaces.

Training and awareness-raising have been an approach that has worked well for KTDA's work in smallholder tea growing communities and learnings from this approach supported the implementation of a pilot project in Kangaita Tea Factory, one of the KTDA-managed factories. The aim was to deliver innovative solutions to address issues facing women workers in the tea sector. The program used a partnership approach where KTDA, Ethical Tea Partnership, and three women's rights organizations (WEL, CREAM, CIFCAD) under the Building Bridges for Women's Economic Empowerment, BBWEE programme collaboratively designed the project.

The design process included The Drawing the Line, DTL Assessment which was conducted by Haki Mashinani and Workers Rights Watch at the factory and the tool endeavoured to give women workers the opportunity to identify and prioritize the issues that they face at the workplace. Once three (3) priority issues are identified by the general workers via a focus group discussion, recommendations on how to tackle these issues are forwarded to the factory management via a report of the DTL assessment. For Kangaita Tea Factory, the top three (3) priority issues were based on the following statements:

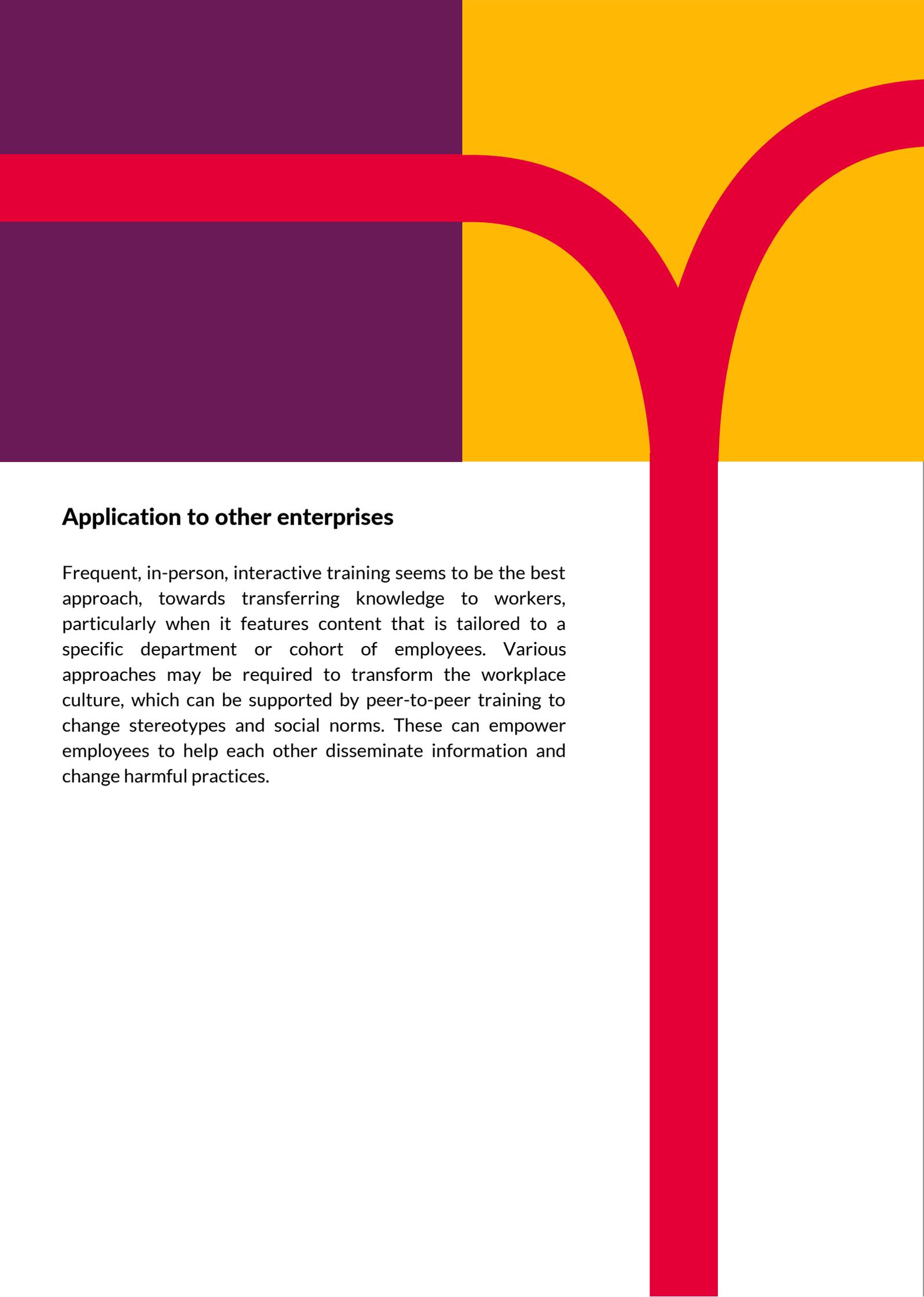
1. I am satisfied at work,
2. I can balance work responsibilities at home and in the community, and
3. I contribute to decision-making at work and in the community.

Under these three priority issues identified, the women worker's participants proposed recommendations on how the topics could be addressed. After discussions with the factory management, they chose the decision-making at work and in the community as the issue to be addressed in a Collaborating for Impact, CFI training project which was customized together with the WROs and the factory management to address the issue of decision-making. In addition, the factory management requested the WRO, CIFCAD who was to implement the project to include in the training agenda, the role of the gender committee.

Achievements

- CIFCAD developed a trainer of trainers' manual for all 5 tea factories trained under the BBWEE program to be used by the trainers of trainers' ToTs as they disseminate the information to their fellow colleagues in the tea factories. The manual has included all the topics covered in all 5 factories so that the information is available for each factory's TOTs to train and disseminate information to others.
- CIFCAD provided templates to guide action plan development and the participants developed an action plan which was to be implemented after the close of the program with stewardship from the TOTs that have received the training.
- All participants conducted personal SWOT analysis, each chose one strength to celebrate and one area to improve on. They shared with each other and agreed to hold one another accountable.
- The formation of the gender committee and training with most of the participants indicated that the training had come at the right time because there were upcoming audits that required factories to have a gender committee that is trained and functional hence the training was timely as it had helped them learn about their role and mandate as a gender committee member.





Application to other enterprises

Frequent, in-person, interactive training seems to be the best approach, towards transferring knowledge to workers, particularly when it features content that is tailored to a specific department or cohort of employees. Various approaches may be required to transform the workplace culture, which can be supported by peer-to-peer training to change stereotypes and social norms. These can empower employees to help each other disseminate information and change harmful practices.



Building Bridges for Women's Economic Empowerment

The Building Bridges for Women's Economic Empowerment programme builds links between women's rights organisations and companies with international supply chains. We do this to improve the economic empowerment and resilience for women working in those supply chains. The five year programme is funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and implemented by Win Win Strategies.

<https://www.womenwin.org/win-win-strategies/>