



Corporate Social Responsibility and Gender in the workplace: A study of selected Jordanian private sector companies

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GSF promotes increased, effective and equitable participation of women in public life

Disclaimer

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الآراء والتفسيرات والنتائج التي تحتويه هذه الدراسة تعبر عن وجهة نظر المؤلفين ولا تعبر بالضرورة عن رأي برنامج دعم مبادرات تكافؤ الفرص – الوكالة الكندية للتنمية الدولية

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I. Introduction

1. Objectives of this study

The Gender and Social Fund, which was established by the Canadian International Development Agency (“CIDA”), commissioned Schema to undertake a study that would analyze gender issues within the framework of corporate social responsibility (“CSR”). The study, which was to be conducted in a selected number of companies, aimed at highlighting key practices that promote or hinder women participation in the working environment.

CSR is a concept whereby organizations consider the interests of society by taking responsibility for the impact of their activities on customers, suppliers, shareholders, communities and the environment in all aspects of their operations. In other words, CSR focuses on main elements: the workplace, the community, the marketplace and the environment. Implementing CSR principles implies that the organization acts consciously and actively considers gender, amongst other topics, when taking business decisions that affect its employees and society.

The Gender and Social Fund (“GSF”), established in 2007, is an ongoing CIDA initiative to assist Jordan in achieving gender equality. The GSF works towards increasing the effective and equitable participation of Jordanian women in the development of their society, and as such commissioned Schema, a specialized Corporate Governance and Responsibility advisory firm, to undertake the research and implementation of this project.

Objective:

The objective of the study is to analyze the working environment of selected organizations from a CSR gender perspective. The final report will focus on presenting practices and perceptions that promote women participation in the working environment and ones that hinder it.

2. Scope - Case studies taken

i. Methodology

In this study we were interested in working with the private sector to evaluate current CSR trends, practices and initiatives that are gender related. There is increasing evidence that gender equality, diversity and sensitivity in the workplace leads to improved productivity of employees, and subsequently the company as a whole.

It was agreed to focus on sectors that are substantially male dominated to help us determine why such sectors are less likely to engage women from an organizational and not a societal perspective, and to help us understand what are some of the practices that have been and can be developed to facilitate women participation in such sectors, again from an organizational perspective.

The study was exploratory in nature and since it is one of few done in Jordan the approach and tools to collect and analyze data varied depending on the company studied and the areas of focus. It was acceptable to focus on different aspects of CSR and Gender for each company selected and it was understood that each sector may have different concerns and raise different issues. Accordingly, the case studies below are not a comparative analysis of CSR and Gender in Jordan, but a separate analysis of the

¹ Human Rights Dilemmas Forum. Dilemma: Gender and equality; Promoting Gender Equality in the workplace; Etta Olgiati and Gillian Shapiro; @European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2002; and <http://www.management-issues.com/2007/5/9/research/social-responsibility-boosts-employee-engagement.asp>

situation pertaining to the industry and company itself. The sectors selected were tourism, banking and food processing.

For each company selected we contacted the concerned persons and expressed an interest in engaging them for this study. We presented them with a letter of invitation (copy attached in Exhibit A) that reflected the scope of the project

After receiving an initial approval from the organizations, we communicated with the Human Resources (“HR”) Department to collect quantitative data and coordinate meetings with senior management, employees, and if applicable board members. For meetings attended we went through a prepared questionnaire (copy attached in Exhibit B) and focused on new issues as they arose in discussion and conversation.

Communication with the Human Resources Department was on-going for support, and when we required more information with respect to background, additional information or statistics.

ii. Companies selected

The companies were selected based on the sector in which they work in and as table 1 shows they vary not only in size but also in representation of women. The different characteristics of the company helped focus the case study on identifying the common gender issues across organizations.

Table 1: Characteristics of participating organizations

Name	Size	No. Of Employees		Sector
		Male	Female	
Company A	Small	65%	35%	Tourism
Company B	Large	76%	24%	Tourism
Company C	Large	67%	33%	Financial
Company D	Medium	93%	7%	Food Processing

iii. Writing the results of the study

In writing the report, the findings of the study are integrated throughout. Particular examples from the companies we engaged with are made available and represented in *Italicized and indented* form for easy reference.

iv. Limitations and challenges

In undertaking this study we were confronted by several challenges, some of which reflected the adversity towards the topic and others included concerns about confidentiality. It was important while engaging with the companies to emphasize two things: (i) that the name of the company will not be disclosed unless they specifically approve; and (ii) that the objective of this study is not focused on identifying flaws or reprimanding companies, but instead to ascertain the root of social issues that hinder the development and advancement of CSR and Gender in the workplace, and how this can affect social and national development.

We also faced some resistance, in acquiring information. Some companies were very resistant to us meeting with their staff independently of the HR Department; however, post several discussions, the companies approved and agreed that having an open and free environment for conversation was key to the success of this project.

Perhaps one of the main findings and challenges we encountered in this study is the fact that many private sector companies do not maintain an information system that will allow in depth analysis of data in a sex disaggregated manner. Obviously this affected some of the analysis the study was hoping to undertake.

II. Baseline Findings

1. Inequality of representation in the workplace

It is clear from our study that there is gender inequality in the workplace. There are approximately 600 women versus 1650 men employed in the companies sampled for this study. Based on national statistics, the male share in the labor force² in the first quarter of 2009 was 63.7% compared with 13.8% for females, reflecting that the sample selected is a fair representation of market dynamics in terms of employment ratios.

Based on the Gender Gap Index report issued by the World Economic Forum 2008 and 2007, the Labor Force Participation of women has increased by 1%. However, there is no change in the rate of female professional and technical workers; and there are no statistics for female legislators, senior officials and managers. However, the report shows the ability of women to rise to enterprise leadership had increased in 2008 to 5.22 (out of 7) from 4.97 (out of 7).³

In undertaking this study, we identified various factors that influence or drive gender inequality in the workplace. We also noted some practices and policies, within the workplace that reinforce such inequalities, or fall short from considering and addressing them.

Such gender inequality can be attributed to two main factors: (i) external factors such as the legal framework, social and cultural perceptions: and (ii) internal factors that reinforce gender inequalities such as corporate culture, values, human resources structure and CSR application.

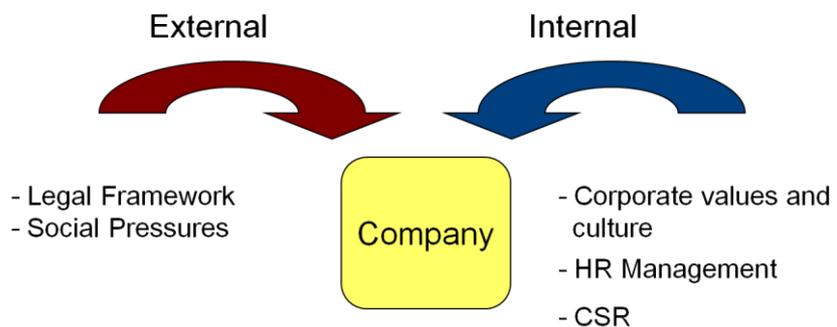


Figure 1: Factors influencing Gender equality in work place

2. External Factors

i. Legal Framework

The Jordanian constitution recognizes the basic principles of the right to work and equal opportunity for all its citizens in Articles 22 and 23. Workers and employees are described in gender-neutral ways in Article 2 of the Labor Law, which defines the worker as "each person, male or female, who performs a job in return for wages"; this definition is also found in the Civil Service Ordinance. However, no provisions specifically prohibit gender discrimination in labor opportunities or in the workplace, and no provisions stress equal salaries for men and women who hold the same positions.

While Jordan's laws are not overtly discriminatory, women are treated unequally in a number of statutes. Gender-discriminatory language can be found in provisions that regulate economic rights such as retirement and social security.

² The work force attributed to the population 15 years and over.

³ For 2008: <http://www.weforum.org/pdf/gendergap/report2008.pdf>. For 2007 <http://www.weforum.org/pdf/gendergap/report2007.pdf>

Furthermore, Jordan has “special benefit” laws intended to lessen the work burden for women and to keep them safe from dangerous jobs (Article 69 of the Labor Law), which sometimes works against equal access to job opportunities. There are certain conditions on the professions women can choose to pursue. As a result, women's economic participation is concentrated in the socially accepted professions for women. According to Article 23 of the Constitution and Article 69 of the Labor Law, the Minister of Labor issues decisions specifying the industries and economic activities that are prohibited for women workers, as well as the hours during which women are not allowed to work.

Work at night for women is limited to a maximum of 30 days a year and there is a 10-hour workday limit, thus depriving women from increased income through overtime work. In reality, these restrictions serve to limit the competition between men and women in favor of men.

On the other hand, the labor laws provide for a certain degree of protection for women's rights in the workplace i.e. maternity leave, childcare etc. However, these legislations are not sufficient to provide the adequate support or encouragement for women to enter the workplace. There are several loopholes that remain providing the private sector with an option or opportunity to discourage or limit the employment, opportunities and growth of women in the workplace.

For example, women have specific protections in the workplace, including the right to a 10-week maternity leave for the purpose of childcare, of which 6 weeks must be allowed immediately following the birth of the child.

We were unofficially advised by one of the interviewees that their companies will not employ married women or women likely to get pregnant to avoid providing the 10-week maternity leave.

An employer who employs 20 or more women must provide a childcare facility for working mothers with children under the age of four in cases in which at least 10 children need care.

We were unofficially advised by a number of the interviewees that their companies would avoid employing women with children that fall under this provision. i.e. women with children below the age of four.

Furthermore, the actual implementation of Jordan's laws is often negatively influenced by factors such as a lack of training, patriarchal cultural norms and customs, and male domination of the public sphere.

ii. Social perceptions and interference

Society, in addition to the legislative framework, directly and indirectly enforces certain practices and “acceptable” standards i.e. the role of women, the time women can work, priorities for women etc.

Social discrimination against women is common in the field of labor and stems from popular notions that women need to be protected. Another popular belief in Jordan is that women who enter the job market are doing so to supplement and increase their family's income rather than to become economically independent or to individually support their family. This notion is clearly reflected in the law as well.

Social perceptions of the role of women in the sectors we selected for this study have clearly affected them in the workplace. To elaborate, social perception affected the ability of women to:

(a) Work in certain departments;

In Company B it was perceived as socially unacceptable for women to work in the maintenance department where only men work.

(b) Work overtime; and

In Company D it was perceived that women cannot work late and hence have rigid policies on their overtime work – stricter than those in the labor law.

(c) Perform their duties effectively

In Company B it was perceived as socially unbecoming for women to work with governmental organizations although it is part of their job responsibilities.

On the other hand, women were perceived to be equally effective in performing the tasks delegated to them.

In all the companies we interviewed we were advised that women are equally competent in and capable of performing their work to great standards.

3. Internal Factors

In addition to the external factors that influence women in the workplace, there are internal factors that reinforce social perceptions and play on the gender inequalities, either by increasing them or marginalizing them.

Equality of women in the workplace in terms of their opportunities for promotion is important for business. Previous research undertaken by the “Human Rights Dilemmas Forum. Dilemma: Gender and equality” has showed that “obstacles to the equality of women pose significant risks to business, both operationally and strategically. For example, failure to counter discrimination may result in:

- Reputation damage affecting recruitment and retention, consumers, investors and suppliers
- Loss of employee talent
- Loss of potential markets for products targeting women”

Therefore, it is important for business to consider equality of women to minimize their potential social and business risks.

In Jordan and as part of the study it became evident that there are a number of internal elements that affect the situation of women in the workplace and indeed the overall dynamics from a gender perspective. The study identified a number of such factors: corporate culture and values; human resource management and CSR.

i. Corporate culture and values

The corporate culture and values influence the overall situation of women and gender dynamics in a direct way; namely through the mental models, informal culture, recruitment policy and promotion policy of the organization.

Mental Models

Social perception and interference create or reinforce within companies certain mental models that dictate the role of women in the workplace. In our study we witnessed a variety of mental models that dictate the role of women in the workplace and these are:

The “traditional” role of women:

In Company D, we observed that the mental model was of a very patriarchal nature; it was out of social consideration for the “traditional” role of women, as the housekeepers and child bearers. In that company women should not take on late night shifts so they can be home for their husbands when they return from their work and have the opportunity to look after their children before or as they come back from school.

The “appropriate” role of women:

In Company D and Company B, we observed that the informal culture within the organizations was that women could take on certain posts whilst other posts were inaccessible to them. In principle this was related to the physical nature of the job or post; however, the physical labor required by these posts today has been substantially reduced enabling women to perform such tasks. Regardless, the “traditional” stereotype remains.

The “priority” for women:

In Company B and Company C, we observed that women were clearly tagged as individuals with a social role to play i.e. housewife, child bearer, and that a job in essence may not be acceptable - but if necessary the job is a secondary role. Also, there was clear skepticism of women’s commitment to their jobs because of the social role they play or are expected to play. This skepticism resulted in the perception that to women the job will never be their priority (and should not be), and as such they are temporarily in the workplace making focus or attention on their role in the workplace unnecessary.

Policy versus Practice

Some of the companies in this study were multinational chains that have strict policies aligned with international standards with respect to women in the workplace.. However, it was clear in many cases that such policies, although well written and in some cases even effectively communicated, were not necessarily translated into practice or embedded within the company culture.

It appears that the cause of such disparity between policies and practices stems from the mental models that in turn create an informal culture within which companies operate, creating practices that are misaligned with policies. The hierarchy of influence is represented in Figure 2: Hierarchy of Behavior Influence.

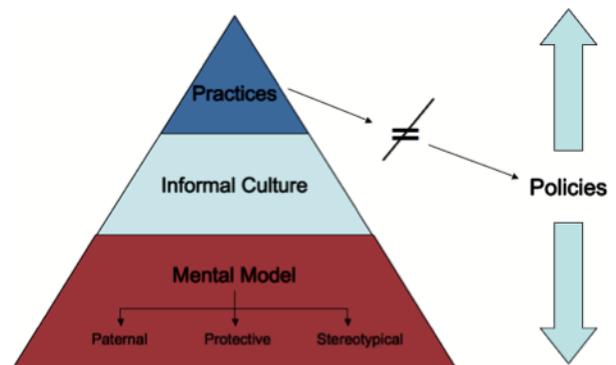


Figure 2: Hierarchy of Behavior Influence

Recruitment policy

For example, recruitment policy at best is gender blind i.e. criteria for employment is a set qualification without consideration of social, culture or gender issues. In implementation, this leaves much room for an informal culture to dictate the applicability of social, cultural or gender norms, making the recruitment policy a mere guideline but not a process or practice.

In Company B if a woman wanted to work as a technician, whose job description is gender neutral, the application may not be considered because of the stereotypical mental model and the resulting informal culture and perception that it is inappropriate for a woman to work as a technician.

It appears that a recruitment policy that was gender blind is disadvantageous to women because it enables an informal culture to dictate their inappropriateness for particular posts. Although there is no data to show that women have applied for such a post (because of the lack of data available), some organizations said they would consider women for such a post but have undertaken no positive action to encourage women to apply for such posts.

Furthermore, there is no audit of process and practice to monitor how mental models and informal culture affect the interview and recruitment process.

Job Description Policy

Men and women performing the same jobs don't in actual fact have the same responsibilities. For example, men and women with the same job title and position will perform different responsibilities because of stereotypes and gender differentiation.

In Company B, male accountants are expected to perform out of office work whilst female accountants are not. By policy their job descriptions are identical; yet in practice they are not because of the informal culture that dictates it is inappropriate for women to undertake out of office work since it entails dealing with governmental officials that are usually men.

This informal culture may be a result of a mental model that implies the need to protect women in the workplace. Such actions are often perceived and expressed as positive discrimination in favor of women. However, in its entirety this protective mental model results in limiting the potential performance of women and in turn their opportunities for promotion in the workplace.

Promotion Policy

Policies and practices, as they relate to promotion, are difficult to ascertain since they reflect on a conglomerate set of actions.

For example, all companies were clear in that promotions are directly tied to defined criteria based on performance. However, performance is based on being able to effectively perform ones responsibilities. This may require out of office work for the female accountant, late night shifts for the female manager or experience and know-how in non-traditional female posts, all of which are activities women have limited access to because of the informal cultures.

Therefore, although policy and practice may be aligned in the technical sense, it is unjust to base the same performance criteria on men and women without taking into account factors that have a direct impact on women's ability to perform effectively.

ii. Human Resource Management

A key asset to any business is their human asset. It would be difficult to ascertain growth, success or sustainability without good human resources and effective human resource management. Accordingly, it is important to review human resource management as it may influence gender roles, rights and opportunities in the workplace.

CSR

CSR is a valuable tool to create gender equality in the workplace. Key pillars of CSR are diversity and equality in the workplace.

Companies in Jordan, including those that took part in this study, perceive CSR as a stand-alone independent act to facilitate better marketing, increase exposure or channel their philanthropic investment in the country.

CSR is **not** synonymous to philanthropy or charitable contributions. CSR is strategic and must be integrated with the business and not be considered as an independent component.

CSR is a business tool to ensure sustainability of business, maximize on social opportunities and align social, community and market needs with the business to ensure regular and continued success.

The general benefits of CSR are summarized in Figure 3: General Benefits of CSR.

Unfortunately some of the companies taking part in this study perceive CSR as a non-valuable and in some cases inapplicable practice.

In Company D and Company C, CSR activities consist of charitable donations and on occasion an invitation for employees to attend a dinner of some sort for recognition.



Figure 3: General Benefits of CSR

Even such donations and corporate invitations are not gender sensitive.

In Company B we were advised that often spouses are not invited; therefore, female employees do not attend such corporate events as often as they would like.

On the other hand, some companies leverage certain CSR activities to engage their communities and stakeholders and support or encourage women.

In Company B, CSR consists of engaging families of female employees and potential female employees to attend an on-site open day to see first hand the working environment. This approach generates an open relationship with the stakeholders and builds a positive relationship with the community.

However, none of the companies engaged in this study have a strategic CSR policy or approach that provides direction or ensures commitment.

CSR can play an active role in gender equality in the workplace through activities, initiatives, strategies and policies that:

- (i) Encourage female applicants;
- (ii) Provide for equality of the treatment of women in the workplace; and
- (iii) Equal access to job opportunities.

Human Resources, Gender and CSR

Today, businesses succeed based on engagement of their employees. By engagement of employees we mean the two-way conversation with employees addressing their needs and the needs of the business. CSR is a key tool to facilitate such engagement.

HR has a key role in making CSR work, and CSR without HR runs the risk of being dismissed as PR or shallow 'window-dressing'. As such CSR is an opportunity for HR to demonstrate a strategic focus and act as a business-focused department as opposed to simply managing human resources.

CSR needs to be embedded in an organization's culture to change behaviors and attitudes, and the support of the top team is critical to success. To be effective CSR should be integrated into processes such as recruitment, appraisal, retention, motivation, reward, internal communications, diversity, coaching and training.

Placing an increased value on CSR internally and externally will result in a competitive advantage for the recruitment and retention of employees. Based on a survey by Sirota Survey Intelligence, a strong commitment to CSR yields positive HR management results.

“When employees are positive about their organization’s CSR commitment, employee engagement rises to 86 per cent. When employees are negative about their employer's CSR activities, only 37 per cent are highly engaged.

And unsurprisingly, twice as many employees in the former group (82 per cent) feel their organization is highly competitive in the marketplace as those in the latter.”⁴

Lack of Data

Based on our study, there is a clear and vivid lack of data to determine matters related to CSR and Gender in the workplace. Without clear gender disaggregated data and CSR related data, it is difficult to ascertain the value of certain actions and the positive or negative impact of policies and practices. Although the companies that are part of this study have advanced HR systems, and in some cases advanced policies and procedures, they **appear** not to collect, maintain or collate employment data in terms of gender. This point is difficult to confirm, but based on information provided to us such information does not seem to exist, and if it does it was withheld from our review.

Examples of gender based employment data include:

- Applicants per post by sex
- Interviewed applicants by sex
- Number of female employees per position
- Turn-over rate by sex
- Reporting on CSR activities and impact on gender in the workplace
- Review of impact of policies or practices on gender in the workplace

Without essential gender-based data on employment, position, pay scale, performance review or other employment related matters, a lot of our research points towards generic social stereotypes and mental models that dictate the role of women and men in the workplace. However, we have tried to overcome this challenge by interviewing a series of people and collecting first hand information from the companies we worked with for this study.

III. Detailed Findings

Each company case study was unique and had a different approach to CSR and Gender in the workplace. However, to present the analysis and assessment of the case studies, material and examples are grouped and presented through four dimensions of the workplace:

- Recruitment and selection
- Professional development
- Work organization
- Work environment

The detailed findings can be found in Exhibit C.

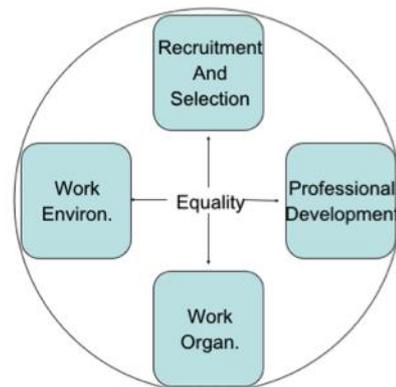


Figure 4: Dimensions of the Workplace

IV. Summary Recommendations

⁴ <http://www.management-issues.com/2007/5/9/research/social-responsibility-boosts-employee-engagement.asp>

There were repeated observations that were consistent in the companies interviewed. These observations provided a overall view of issues reflecting the status of CSR and gender in the workplace, and in some cases highlighting the root cause of gender inequality.

Based on our work with the companies engaged in this study, although size, scope and extent vary, it appears that there are common outcomes and limitations that affect CSR and Gender in the workplace.

These findings may be summarized as follows:

- Social perceptions and interference
- Nature of Mental models
- Policy versus practice
- Lack of data on Human resources
- Level of CSR awareness

1. Actions recommended

It is clear from the findings in general that many actions are necessary and critical if gender equality is to be achieved and if CSR is to play a part in affecting gender equality in the workplace. In addition to the key findings, common and key recommended actions to be taken are:

- Undertake action to change and or affect the existing mental models and informal cultures that are bias against women;
- Overcome job segregation and stereotyping
- Establish and implement policies and practices that are aligned to each other
- Invest in strategic CSR that will promote gender equality in the organizational and community
- Collect and analyze human resource data in sex-disaggregated manner in order to inform HR policies and regulations.

i. Undertake action to affect and influence mental models and informal cultures

Mental models within management create an informal culture of operation in the workplace. Such mental models and informal cultures are a double-edged sword. Although the informal culture may, in the opinion of management, be (i) positively discriminating towards encouraging women in the workplace, (ii) protecting women in the workplace, or (iii) protecting or ensuring the performance of the workplace as a whole, it may actually be creating limitation and different type challenges for women in the workplace.

Key actions that were identified to affect and influence mental models and informal cultures were:

- Encourage more women in the workplace through:
 - Participation in job fairs
 - Facilitating easier shifts for women
- Training: Training is key to influence, raise awareness and provide employees with the tools to manage the necessary change. Training can take many different formats as follows:
 - Diversity training
 - Training of managers on how to deal with gender diversity and encourage and support gender equality in the workplace
 - Training of women on how to be more proactive in the workplace
 - Raising awareness on employees rights
 - Employee training on handling conflict, sexual harassment and complaints
 - Training of men to raise their awareness on the importance of diversity
 - Equality training for recruitment and selection staff to ensure the incoming employees can neutralize or create a more balanced workplace
 - Training on gender sensitivity and the importance of women in the workplace

- Culture shift: The organization needs to invest in a culture shift to value women's skills and contributions in the workplace more. This shift may be accomplished through actions to influence or re-direct informal cultures that negatively affect the role of women in the workplace.
- Current Balance: Gradually increase the number of female decision makers within an organization to potentially affect the corporate culture, mindsets and informal models.

ii. Overcome job segregation and stereotyping

It was clear from all the companies engaged in this study that employees, and in many cases management, undertake some form of informal job segregation and stereotyping based on the informal culture.

For example, jobs that require:

- Difficult long hours are for men
- Hard labor are for men
- Interaction with public institutions are for men
- Considerable dealing with men are for men
- Purely desk based focus are for women

Such job segregation and stereotyping affect the organization as a whole, feeding into the limitations of women in the workplace and should be amended to achieve gender equality in the workplace.

Key actions that were identified to overcoming job segregation and stereotyping were:

- Create an equal playing field by providing support for women entering the workplace, taking into consideration their social responsibilities of childcare by providing childcare facilities.
- Actively advocate and encourage female applicants to non-traditional posts by:
 - Supporting them and enabling them to work in groups to overcome the traditional mindset and stereotypical mental models; or
 - Amending job descriptions to encourage female applicants to non-traditional posts.
 - Recruiting more than one women in a male dominated department to avoid isolation
- Encourage increased female executive training and non-traditional training for women i.e.:
 - Mentoring of women to prepare them for senior posts, more responsibilities etc.
 - Accelerated training techniques that provide women with the option to grow within an organization quickly.
 - Career development guidance for women to help them identify their needs, their skills (strengths and weaknesses) and how to maximize on them.
 - Designed and focused training initiatives that help women in lower level blue collar positions to move into non-traditional jobs.
- Make already available training more accessible by providing transportation or making it possible for training to be undertaken online etc.
- More pro-active actions to reflect the senior buy-in for more women in the workplace i.e.
 - Actively pursue applications of women
 - Provide the necessary support structure for women in the workplace
 - Create a welcoming environment for women by eliminating the notion of departments exclusively for men

iii. Establish and implement policies and practices

As briefly mentioned above, policies do not seem to effectively translate into practices, making it difficult to monitor and review the added value of policies in place or the effect they may have on the business. In order to align policies and practices, the following key actions were identified:

- Ensure that practices are more transparent. This can be achieved by ensuring (i) there are at least two people managing or handling the process; (ii) a balanced gender representation on selection committees; and (iii) practices and processes are reviewed and audited regularly.
- Establish a structured interview process that is consistent regardless of the sex of the applicant or the committee reviewing the application.
- Create gender conscious and sensitive pay scales. i.e. pay scales that are subject to performance:
 - Take into consideration the inability of women to work extended over time or additional shifts; and
 - Create an incentive or belief system that if performance is adequate, the company will invest in employee growth.
- Create a form of accountability for decisions made within the organizations by department heads i.e. who they choose for training and why?
- Integrate gender sensitivity and consciousness in performance criteria for promotion i.e. overtime work is not part of the evaluation criteria and is rewarded separately.
- Impose stricter supervision of how women are treated to monitor and provide guidance on how to improve.
- Invest in strategic CSR that will promote gender equality in the organization and community

CSR as a business tool does not seem to have been used to create the strategic advantage that it is intended to create i.e. long term value, sustainability etc. Furthermore, with respect to gender equality, strategic CSR as it relates within the workplace does not seem to be leveraged.

Key actions that were identified to enable a more strategic investment in CSR towards gender equality were:

- For CSR to be strategic and of substantial added value it must be documented. This documentation can take the form of a strategy, a policy, a commitment or more specifically a written code of practice as regards equal opportunity. To ensure such policy is actually put into practice, it should be followed with regular reporting that can uncover the impact and value of work undertaken and/or direction and focus areas to address shortcomings.
- Engagement is at the heart of CSR and is key to achieve success. Therefore, to address CSR strategically to achieve the goal of gender equality, it is of great value to engage with families, societies and communities to encourage them to support female employment.
- A strategic approach to CSR to address gender in the workplace would include:
 - A committee on how to attract and retain more women
 - Partnerships with local communities
 - Monitoring the impact of policies, procedures and activities on male and female actions
- Set goals for gender equality using gender sensitive targets and indicators whereby senior personnel and management are accountable for achieving such targets.
- Take advantage of the potential social and economical impact of female employment and empowerment as part of the CSR strategy.

- Collect and analyze human resource data in sex disaggregated manner in order to inform HR policies and regulations

The above practices and suggested recommendations for action can only be monitored or assessed if there is sufficient data collected to show and reflect the value of work undertaken. To do so, companies would need to invest in collecting and maintaining more information in a sex disaggregated manner.

Key data that was identified as important to collect and monitor were:

- HR data that reflects number of applicants per post by sex, number of interviews per post by sex etc. including employment, promotion, training, termination etc. to ensure accountability for the process.
- Gender disaggregated data in terms of performance, training and promotions to show return on investment for men and women and avoid basing conclusions and decisions on stereotypes or informal cultures.
- Data to facilitate a deeper understanding on the retention, growth and HR development needs.

2. Advantages to change

For companies to invest in undertaking any of the above actions or to invest in gender equality in the workplace through effective CSR strategies, it is crucial to highlight the many advantages that can come out of such investments. Some of these advantages are:

- Creating a larger and greater pool talent.

The largest and most indispensable assets of businesses today are not tangible assets but their employees. Companies today struggle to identify, recruit and retain talent. Therefore, by investing in internal talent, gender equality and effective internal CSR, the right talent is more likely to be attracted to work with and stay with the company.

- More innovation, loyalty and sustainability

Employees today are required to be more innovative and aspire to a high degree of loyalty and sustainability. Companies can encourage this attitude by ensuring employees are comfortable in their workplace through equal and fair treatment.

Research has shown that the increased involvement of women in the workplace, equality and diversity in the workplace has proved to be valuable in encouraging innovation and loyalty, creating a sustainable workforce that can focus on and invest in excellent performance.

Responsible business now widely accepts that women's rights in the workplace encompass not only the prevention of discriminatory practices, but also positive action, both in the workplace and more broadly, to ensure that women are unequivocally equal. This is in part as a result of recognition of the contribution women provide to business innovation and evidence that reducing gender inequality enhances productivity and economic growth.⁵ Diverse environments foster new ideas while lack of representation of women in the workplace risks a large-scale loss of talent. Where this has been recognized, benefits to corporate culture include a better understanding of female markets in order to tailor product design and marketing with women in mind.

- Improved public and brand image

Today's consumers and employees are demanding more accountability and transparency from companies. With the right CSR strategy and gender balance in the workplace, companies can

⁵ World Economic Forum, 2008, The Global Gender Gap Report; <http://www.weforum.org/pdf/gendergap/report2008.pdf>

reflect a better public and brand image. With a well-perceived brand and public image, consumers are likely to invest a premium in the organization and the organization will be in a key position to generate long-term value from its relationship with the employees.

V. CONCLUSIONS

This study addresses gender and CSR in Jordan through an evaluation of three to four different companies across various sectors. Key trends were identified as being consistent across all sectors, emphasizing three specific issues with respect to gender and CSR in Jordan.

These key issues are summarized as follows:

1. Existing gender blind policies are often neither effective nor sufficient to ensure gender equality in the workplace.

Without an accountability structure and effective supervision to avoid gender biases gender blind policies, in general are not effective in promoting women advancement and gender equality. The existing mental models within the companies tend to play a role in the application of such policies, rendering them subject to personal stereotyping, perceptions and biases.

2. Positive discrimination towards female empowerment needs to be revisited.

Initiatives and practices in place to support female empowerment or employment often hinder the development, growth and advancement of women as they are often based on positive discrimination; such initiatives and practices need to be revisited to ensure they are in fact supportive and are without any negative impact on women's career choice and development.

3. Education, training and awareness are required to effectively implement gender equality in the workplace.
 - Education is key to creating a balanced workplace in terms of gender equality, and to build awareness of its importance and value to the companies and society.
 - In general, the understanding of gender equality in the workplace is limited to female employment; education is required to enhance companies' understanding of gender equality and broaden the scope and effectiveness of related policies.
 - Enhancing gender equality within the work place requires a practical approach from management that indeed requires executive training on how to identify issues and address them.

More awareness is needed for both men and women, especially in manual and blue – collar jobs, on the value of women's participation in the workplace and in some cases their ability and capacity to engage effectively.

The above key findings of this study demonstrate that although female employment may be increasing in Jordan, female empowerment and the role of women in the workplace remains limited as a result of gender stereotyping, mental models and social conditioning.

Exhibit A – Letter of Invitation

[Attached separately]

Exhibit B - Questionnaire

[Attached separately]

Exhibit C – Detailed Findings

[Attached separately]