



Ethical
Trading
Initiative

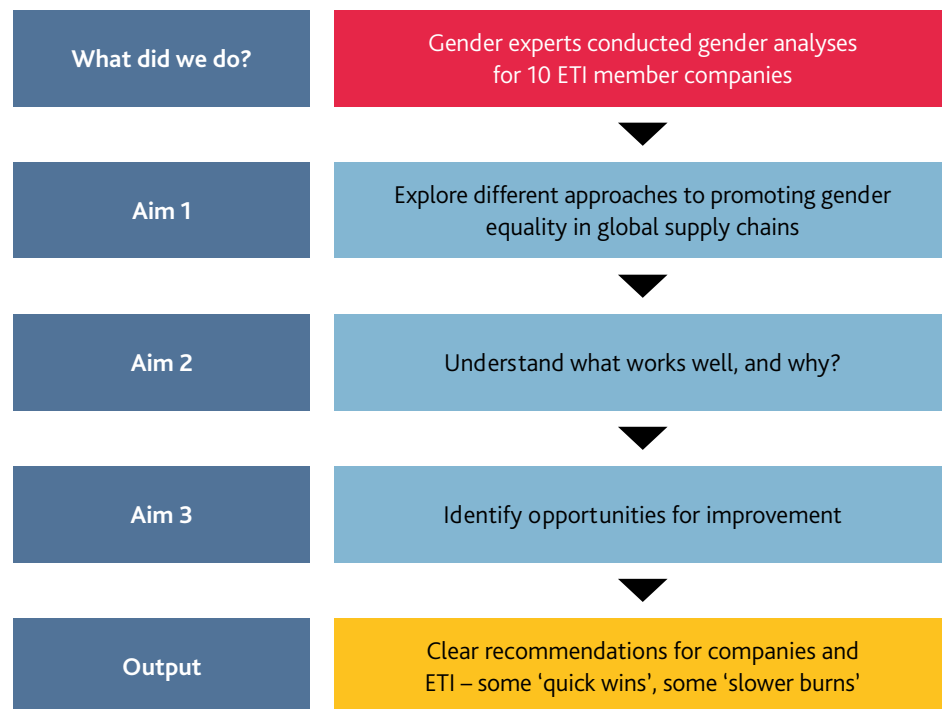
For workers' rights. For better business. For 20 years.

A photograph of two women in white polo shirts with green collars and white caps. The woman in the foreground is speaking into a blue handheld microphone, while the woman behind her is also smiling and looking in the same direction.

GENDER INEQUALITY IN INTERNATIONAL SUPPLY CHAINS: SNAPSHOT ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

ETI conducted a gender analysis* as part of its ongoing focus on gender equality within workplaces and global supply chains, women workers' rights and the issues they face in the world of work.



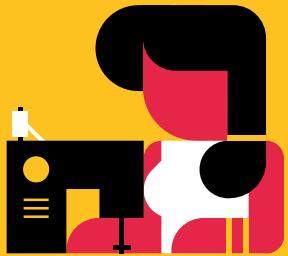
* In collaboration with Prof Stephanie Barrientos and Dr Lara Bianchi, The University of Manchester, supported by an ESRC Impact Acceleration Award, and with valued inputs from Ergon Associates and independent gender experts Barbara Evers, Caroline Downey, Elaine Jones, Linda Shaw, Lucy Brill and Sally Smith.

KEY FINDINGS

- 1 Gender equality is now firmly on the agenda – it's good for workers and good for business – don't miss the boat!
- 2 Many ETI companies are taking action. Activity is currently fragmented and needs a more strategic and rights-based approach.
- 3 Companies can't tackle gender inequality alone – it is deeply entrenched. There are multiple drivers of change (commercial, social, legal, political etc.).
- 4 Building alliances between companies, trade unions, NGOs, governments and international organisations is key.
- 5 ETI is developing tools to address discrimination across the Base Code, and promote gender equality in global supply chains.

GENDER INEQUALITY IS ENTRENCHED...

Violence against women garment workers in Bangalore*



45m

people are employed in India's textiles and clothing sectors – 60% are women



1 in 7

women garment workers has been raped or forced to commit a sexual act



1 in 14

women garment workers has experienced physical violence



3.6%

of reported action resulted in action by factory or police



0

criminal charges were brought against perpetrators

Social norms need to be tackled:

- Traditional attitudes, patriarchal norms and gender-stereotyped roles of women
- Lack of social recognition of equal rights in both private and public spheres
- Underlying structural factors: poverty, unpaid care work, lack of effective community structures, discriminatory and ineffective allocation of resources

Legal framework – good laws make a big difference:

- Strong legislation on gender equality
- Robust implementation and enforcement

**...BUT COMPANIES
ARE TAKING ACTION**

* Source: Eliminating Violence Against Women At Work"
– Sisters for Change / Munnade p2

GENDER EQUALITY IS GOOD FOR BUSINESS

There are multiple drivers for action:

Presence of a large number of women workers

Women make up 70% of workers in garment and many agricultural sectors, but are concentrated in insecure and vulnerable work.

Campaigns & media attention

Eg following the Rana Plaza disaster or media exposés on sexual harassment in the agriculture sector.

Alignment with companies' core values

Desire to enhance wellbeing and rights of potentially vulnerable workers.

Addressing business risk

Eg to future sustainability, stability or reputational risk due to rising public concern and commercial pressures.

Product sourcing and supply chain resilience

Eg sourcing artisanal products with an ageing workforce, ensuring worker retention in factories, supporting workers and marginal producers in the face of climate change.

Beyond compliance and transparency

Eg implementing Indian 2013 Prevention of Sexual Harassment in the workplace (POSH) Act; Company reporting under UK Modern Slavery Act reporting given women account for 58% of forced exploited labour.

Commercial benefits

Improved productivity, better workplace management with lower turnover, higher skilled, more content workforce.

Company commitments under external frameworks

Eg ETI Base Code, UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, Sustainable Development Goals.

GENDER INITIATIVES: SNAPSHOT



10 ETI companies



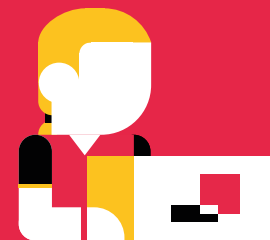
32 initiatives



>12 countries



>115 workplaces



>170,000 workers



>£50m invested

* Likely to be under-reported. Full Information not available for every initiative.

**GENDER INITIATIVES OF
10 ETI MEMBERS**



We found a variety of country-specific gender projects taking place (see map). These range from strategic interventions to secure living wages in garment factories, to improving health services for workers. In addition, we identified 4 broad types of initiatives that are also taking place across multiple countries.



Types of gender initiatives being implemented across multiple countries



ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED

Training & capacity building

- Leadership training
- Skills training
- Peer training on health & wellbeing

Research

- Internal surveys and studies on issues eg absence, wages, retention
- Understanding context

Philanthropic activities

- Eg donating free products for sale by women to raise money for health and wellbeing

Improving auditing skills & processes

- Working with small, high quality auditing firms
- Addressing skills, working with suppliers

Needs assessments

- Participatory tools to gather qualitative information on workers' needs and priorities

Partnerships & collaboration

- Eg cooperatives on costing women's unpaid labour; local NGOs on training development; local unions through formal collaboration agreements

Sourcing from social enterprises

- Participatory tools to gather qualitative information on workers' needs and priorities

Positive recruitment policies

- Promoting recruitment through quotas
- Fair & transparent recruitment
- Highlighting equal opportunity in adverts

IMPACTS ACHIEVED

Improved gender ratios

- Increase in women in senior positions
- 1.5% increase in female managers

Increased empowerment

- Young women workers able to articulate needs
- Improved self-esteem & confidence

Improved gender relations

- Positive effect on gender relations between men & women
- Better interpersonal relationships

Improved quality & productivity

- Women workers using less water and improving yields
- Factories improving efficiency

Positive effects on health & wellbeing

- Indications of improved household wellbeing
- Reduction in anaemia

Improved retention

- Reduced staff turnover – improved policies for parents
- Reduced absenteeism

Addressing wage issues

- Increases in number of women in higher paid jobs
- Women's unpaid labour costed

Enhanced understanding

- Improved gender sensitivity of Tier 1 managers
- Understanding of barriers at workplace



IMPACTS ACROSS ETI'S BASE CODE



Number of initiatives:

20

No discrimination

7

Living wages

7

Freedom of association
and collective bargaining
are respected

4

No harsh or inhumane
treatment

3

Safe and hygienic
working conditions

1

Child labour

1

Employment is freely
chosen

0

Working hours not
excessive, regular
employment



LESSONS FROM ETI MEMBERS' GENDER INITIATIVES



Project management and data collection

- Use needs assessments and map situations before starting gender-related work
- Collect broader data and triangulate – single parents, widowed women, older women, partner status, dependents
- Set SMART targets to help demonstrate progress and ensure data is gender disaggregated
- For major change programmes, consider appointing a dedicated expert or nominated champion

Worksite training and development

- Work with and do not undermine any existing worker organisation or representation
- Work with partners who have institutional links (municipal/ national authorities; trade unions)
- Manage expectations honestly from the beginning - "We can't all be managers"
- Ensure non-dominant women included (contract, migrant, younger, lower socio-economic status)
- Integrate learning from training into staff development plans
- Refresher or new training – otherwise gains can be lost in high turnover environments



Working with cooperatives

- Inclusive methodologies are available (eg Gender action learning system, Draw the Line tool)
- Ensure fair payments to all relevant parties (eg paying women and men working a plot, Fairtrade guidance)
- Take steps to avoid dependency on buyers

Performance and productivity programmes

- If factories alone choose auditors/ external support, they risk choosing the cheapest/ those without correct skills
- All women on shop floor ≠ no discrimination

- Relying on productivity/performance may have different implications for women and men, eg on transport to work, hours of work
- Detailed, gendered analysis of pay gaps can reveal indirect discrimination

The 'softer stuff' matters: tone and framing

- Recognise that farms/factories have a primary commitment to production
- Frame issues in a way business understands
- Recognise, collect and use existing knowledge and practice
- Try to show commercial benefits of gender equality where relevant
- Where programmes work, celebrate progress and use demonstration effect
- Use hooks such as SDGs, International Women's Day as mandate and opportunity



Social auditing: gender

- Social audits failing to highlight gender discrimination
- Reduce audits in exchange for participation, reinvest costs into improvements
- More time for worker interviews, ensure female-only focus group discussions with a range of women, and same for men
- Gender and equal opportunities training for social auditors (eg gender profiling of workers and management; gender relevant across base code)
- Use gender sensitive participatory auditing methods
- See audits as information channel for increasing women's voice rather than compliance exercise.





STEPS TO SUSTAINABILITY

Generate an enabling policy environment first

- But remember those below the policy line & lower tiers

Link to social protection

- Health insurance schemes
- Pensions
- Visibility to the state

Collaborate broadly

- Eg on endemic issues (GBV, sexual harassment)
- Co-owned factories
- Neighbouring farms

Lead by example! Continued demonstration of support for gender work

- Resources
- Local and international staff
- Stated commitments

Work with institutions or partners with links

- Municipal, regional, national govt (eg skills programmes)
- Workers' organisations
- Local health networks
- Local institutes/training
- Local trade unions

Ensure skills and capacity to operate

- Cooperatives
- Committees
- Management support
- Support for workers

Think about gender implications of commercial actions and materials across supply chain!

Positive outcomes for businesses

- Awareness of male dominated culture
- Integrate women's own perceptions
- Management support

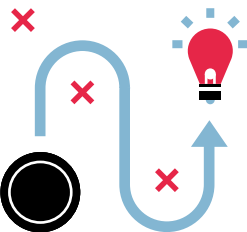
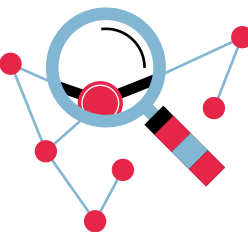

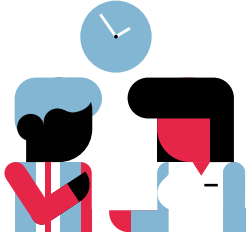

SCALE + SUSTAINABILITY

RECOMMENDATIONS

For ETI

ETI to raise gender visibility, collecting practical tools and foster more direct, active, innovative collaboration across members.

For companies

Take a strategic, rights-based approach throughout	Improve data collection, tracking, reporting and social audits	Involve women, range of women and men	Collaborate, work with structures and institutions	Remember reality and celebrate progress
				
Consider overall company approach and alignment on gender across values, supply chain, ethical trade, raw materials.	<p>Ensure supply chain mapping and social audits collect gender data, as detailed as possible.</p> <p>Ensure suppliers use auditors qualified on gender.</p>	<p>Involve a range of women at all stages of conceiving, designing, planning, implementing, M&E.</p> <p>Involve and support men too.</p>	<p>Partner and collaborate with workers organisations, women's organisations, government at all levels.</p> <p>Embed change over time.</p>	<p>Be conscious of local norms, culture and practices for women and men – learn from others how to address and overcome.</p> <p>Celebrate progress and raise visibility of women's work and good gender practice.</p>

NEXT STEPS FOR ETI AND GENDER EQUALITY

- 1 ETI sees gender equality as a powerful driver for positive change across the Base Code.
ethicaltrade.org/eti-base-code
- 2 This is part of ETI's ongoing work on gender inequality, which is embedded in the ETI Perspective 2020 strategy.
ethicaltrade.org/about-eti/our-strategy
- 3 We'll be driving development of tools and resources for promoting gender equality and achieving progress. Specific Base Code guidance on gender, coming soon – watch this space!

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