

GEDSI and the workplace

In brief



SURGE

EQUITY ECONOMICS

Investing in inclusion: A smart business decision

US\$28
trillion

Additional global GDP each year from women playing an identical role to men in labour markets¹

-7%

The estimate cost to a country's GDP from excluding people with a disability from the formal economy²

Companies that lead on diversity, equality and inclusion have...³

20%

Higher rate of innovation

30%

Greater ability to reduce business risks

25%

more likely to outperform on profitability

What is Diversity, Equity and Inclusion?

Diversity is about inviting everyone to the table, inclusion is making sure all perspectives have the opportunity to be valued and heard.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are distinct concepts. While diversity refers to the presence of differences, inclusion ensures everyone is valued and empowered. Equity recognises the need for tailored support to achieve equal outcomes.



5x Mechanisms: How inclusivity drives positive workplace outcomes

- 1. Diversity increases creativity and innovation.* Diverse teams approach problems from multiple angles and unique viewpoints, leading to more innovative solutions.
- 2. Workplaces that embrace diversity have greater access to talented employees.* Workplaces with an inclusive culture have a greater pool of talent to choose from and are more likely to attract and retain top talent. A survey of 6,000 employees in Southeast Asia found that more than half would be willing to leave their current employer for a more inclusive culture.⁴
- 3. Inclusive workplaces boost employee engagement, satisfaction and productivity.* When employees feel valued and respected for who they are, they are more likely to go the extra mile. ILO research shows that diversity and inclusion initiatives can boost employee feelings of support by 21%.⁵
- 4. Inclusive workplaces can mitigate risk and reduce groupthink.* A lack of diversity can lead to groupthink, where a homogeneous group prioritises conformity over critical thinking, resulting in suboptimal decisions. For example, research has found that gender diversity on boards can help overcome groupthink.⁶
- 5. Diversity gives greater market power – allowing for better understanding of diverse markets and communities.* Diverse teams are better positioned to understand and address the needs of diverse customers, markets and communities. For example, it is estimated that women control \$20 billion in global consumer spending, and 70% of global household spending.⁷ It is estimated that there are over 1 billion individuals with disabilities with US\$8 trillion in disposable income, giving them more economic power than Japan, Germany and the United Kingdom.⁸

What are some examples of best practice for achieving change?



Drive change at a strategic and organisational culture level



Make diversity and inclusion a shared responsibility where everyone is accountable



Model expected behaviours (e.g. demonstrate diversity and inclusion at top levels of management)



Collect and analyse diversity and inclusion data to make informed decisions



Integrate diversity and inclusion into all aspects of the employee journey and organisational operations



Expand diversity and inclusion efforts beyond employees (e.g. to customers and suppliers)

Case study examples from DFAT supported work



Investing in Women (IW) is driving transformative change in Southeast Asia with a AU\$102 million investment by partnering with businesses and coalitions to challenge workplace cultures, eliminate barriers, and advance women's economic empowerment through investments in women-led SMEs.

Women in Inclusive Sustainable Economic Recovery (WISER). Building on the success of the Investing in Women program, DFAT is currently designing a future women's economic empowerment program in Southeast Asia anticipated to be up to AUD80 million in value, initially for four years.

The Women Leading and Influencing program (WLI) is a 4-year AU\$8 million Pacific-led initiative to support Pacific Australia Award's students and alumni build skills and networks to exercise leadership in their communities.

Papua New Guinea Coalition for Women (BCFW). With 76 members and a reach of 40,000 employees, BCFW advocates for women's leadership, economic participation, and the elimination of gender-based violence. Through training, advocacy, and strategic partnerships, BCFW has successfully influenced policy changes, resulting in more women securing leadership roles

Katalis the economic cooperation program under the Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (IA-CEPA), is advancing inclusive workplaces in Indonesia by connecting women to non-traditional industries and supporting female entrepreneurs.

The Business Partnerships Platform's (BPP) disability inclusion guide. In 2024, BPP launched its disability inclusion guide to help businesses integrate disability inclusion into their operations.