



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

FUTURE OF LEADERSHIP IS GENDER EQUAL

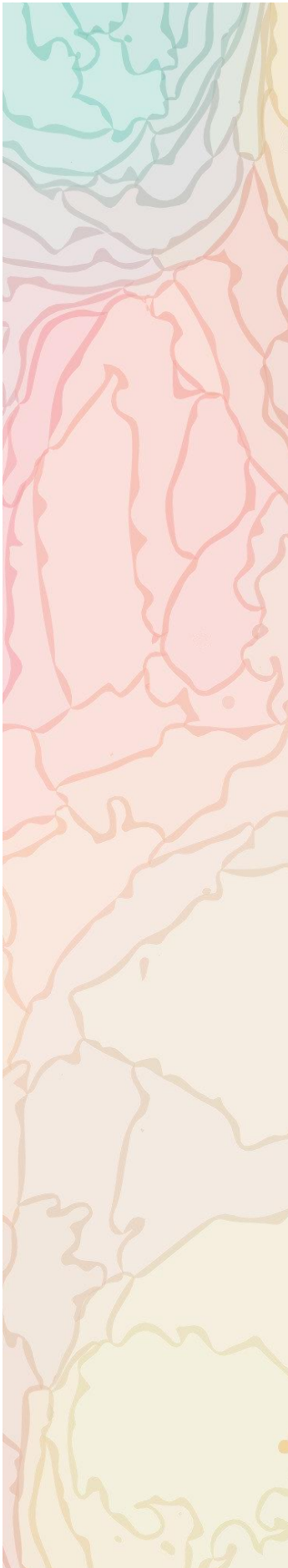
**REGIONAL
DIALOGUE**

**29-30
AUG 2019**

**BANGKOK,
THAILAND**

SUMMARY REPORT

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BACKGROUND

Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. Sustainable Development cannot be achieved until women have equal access to decent work opportunities and are able to reach senior management and leadership positions.

The case for gender diversity in businesses and organizations has gained momentum across the globe. Board diversity initiatives are a growing area within good corporate governance practices, globally and in the Asia-Pacific region. There are several imperatives for ensuring greater diversity in leadership positions of small, medium and large companies.

The benefits of more gender equality in leadership positions are considerable not only for women, but for companies' reputation, performance and countries' economic growth¹.

economic growth¹.

The linkages between women representation in managerial positions and boards and stronger corporate governance reinforces the need for gender diversity as part of greater transparency and promotion of integrity and accountability in business practices.

In Asia-Pacific, gender diversity on boards increased from 6% in 2011 to 13% in 2016, reflective of regulations and corporate policies instituted during this period. However, this is still low compared with the average share in advanced global economies which is at 28%². Despite these statistics, it is encouraging to note that all-male boards are no longer a majority in the region, with a significant drop from 53.2% in 2012 to 39% in 2014, indicating the recognition for gender diversity at the board level.

1 OMFIF (2018). Gender Balance Index.

2 McKinsey Global Institute (2018). The Power of Parity: Advancing Women's Equality in Asia Pacific.

ABOUT THE REGIONAL DIALOGUE

As part of the Regional Project on "Promoting a fair business environment in ASEAN" (2018-2021), which aims at nurturing a culture of integrity in ASEAN public and private sectors for sustainable development, UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub organized a regional dialogue titled, [The Future of Leadership is Gender Equal](#). A two-day event (Aug 29-30th, 2019) in Bangkok, Thailand, consisted of one day of sessions and discussions, followed by a day of Design Thinking Lab. The event hosted 75 participants from Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam.



OBJECTIVES

UNDP is committed to promoting gender equality, as part of its efforts to promote business integrity and sustainable practices in private and state-owned enterprises. UNDP will work with several stakeholders, from government and regulators, to industry and investors, as well as advocacy groups that are part of making the change towards greater gender diversity in the boardroom and in senior executive leadership of companies.

To this end, UNDP hosted its first private sector meeting focused on this critical issue, with the aim to:

- deliberate on existing challenges, potential solutions and share good practices
- identify tools that UNDP can offer to support the gender diversity agenda

PARTICIPANT PROFILE

- CEOs and Heads of HR/diversity leads from key companies
- UNDP colleagues from Bangkok Regional Hub and Country Offices
- Key government representatives and regulators to share good practices
- Advocacy organizations working on gender diversity in leadership
- Recruitment agencies working for C-suite and board recruitment

DAY ONE – SESSIONS & DISCUSSIONS

This multi-stakeholder dialogue brought together key leaders from the private sector, practitioners working on diversity and inclusion issues and government to share good practice and discuss ways forward to make the future of leadership more gender equal. [Day One](#) was also consisted of engaging discussions among participants about the “why’s”- from the economic imperative to the business case; from how women bring in a diversity of ideas and solutions to business problems; and how there is growing evidence to show more women in boards lean towards greener, more sustainable choices along with business growth. See photo album [here](#).

AGENDA OF DAY ONE

- Welcome Remarks
- Session 1 - Overview of UNDP’s work on addressing gender inequality
- Session 2 - Regional trends on gender diversity in senior leadership: key trends, challenges, opportunities
- Session 3 - Fireside chat: Accelerating Gender Equality- Role of different actors as levers of change.
- Session 4 - Game changers and innovations to create gender equality in the workplace.
- Session 5 - Round Table: Perspectives on challenges and approaches to creating an enabling environment for gender diversity
- Session 6 - Tackling unconscious bias and un-stereotyping the workplace
- Session 7 – CEO Circle
- Session 8 – Keynote Speaker
- Reflections from Day 1

For more information on the sessions and speakers, click [here](#).

PARTICIPANT EVALUATION

- Almost 70% of the respondents said their comfort level in having a dialogue with their counterparts has somewhat improved compared to before attending the workshop, while 12% answered that their comfort level has significantly improved and for 18% of the respondents have average improved.
- More than 70% of the respondents expressed that they are satisfied with the event while 20% answered they were very satisfied with the event in terms of collectively deliberating on existing challenges, potential solutions and sharing good practices to support the gender diversity agenda.
- 50% of the respondents answered that they feel they have absolutely discovered something useful that they may not have learned of otherwise while 40% answered they moderately feel they have discovered something useful.



DAY TWO – DESIGN THINKING LAB

Facilitators: Kal Joffres & Stephanie Choo, Directors & Co-Founders of Tandemic

This section provides an overview of the initiative, the Lab methodology, and key results.

GENDER EQUALITY IN LEADERSHIP

The Lab was designed around a key question: how might we bring gender equality in leadership to our workplaces?

It engaged both private sector and government participants in identifying opportunities and exploring potential solutions.

The Lab applied a human-centred design lens to the challenge, focusing on developing empathy for different stakeholders facing the challenge of increasing gender equality in leadership roles. From there, the approach identified areas of opportunity and specific solutions that might be tested.

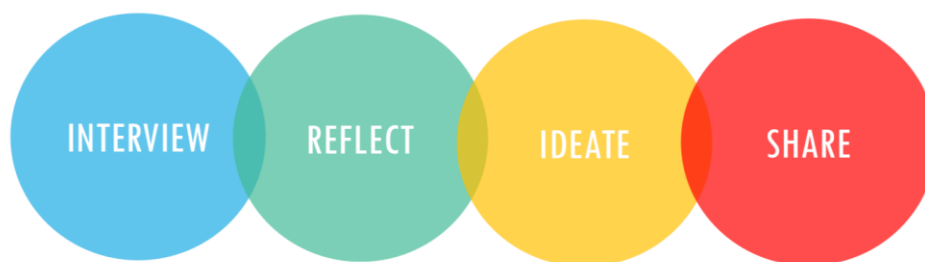
LAB GOALS

The Lab had three goals:

1. Identify a set of common opportunities for accelerating the work of creating gender equality in corporate leadership amongst Lab participants.
2. Articulate ideas for projects around which participants might collaborate, either by sharing lessons learned or through more involved relationships.
3. Launch a network of people and organisations sharing knowledge about their work in improving gender equality in leadership.



HOW THE LAB WORKED



These phases were broken down into key activities:

Topic	Description
Insights from the previous day	A facilitator reviewed quotes from the previous day's dialogue and facilitated a discussion reflecting on key topics that had been brought up in the discussion.
Interview	Participants interviewed each other on three topics: (a) a personal story of how they or a woman they know got into a leadership role and what support or obstacles they encountered, (b) an intentional shift in any area of company culture that worked and why it worked, and (c) programmes, policies, or activities their organisation is pursuing to address gender equality in leadership.
Reflect	In teams grouped by country, participants reviewed the material from the interviews and synthesised it into a series of patterns and insights about how to advance gender equity in their organisations. Pattern and insights from each team were shared with the broader group.
Opportunities	Facilitators translated the patterns and insights into a series of opportunities for advancing gender equality in participants' organisations. Participants also added several opportunities in discussion. Participants regrouped into teams around the opportunity they were most interested in.
Ideate	In teams, participants developed a variety of ideas about how to better address their chosen opportunity. These ideas were prioritised and consolidated into a concept poster that showed what a future where their concept was implemented might look like.
Sharing	Participants shared their concepts in plenary.
Network launch	UNDP introduced the gender equality in leadership network. Participants were engaged in a conversation about how UNDP might support them in championing gender equality in leadership in their organisations.
Insights from the Lab	Facilitators engaged participants in a discussion about whether and how the Lab had moved forward their thinking and ability to act on gender equality in leadership.



Lab facilitators and participants identified a series of opportunities for strengthening gender equality in leadership based on the patterns and insights drawn from their interviews:

1. How might we engage managers in helping women recognise their own leadership potential even if not officially designed a leader?
2. How might we establish more role models and mentors for younger women?
3. How might we make the rules for advancement more clear and transparent?
4. How might we develop women to better manage authority?
5. How might we make women in leadership roles more visible?

6. How might we make leadership development happen at recruitment?
7. How might we affirm and recognise women's unique leadership styles?
8. How might we have a conversation with senior leadership about their commitment?
9. How might we better engage men in supporting the development of female leaders?
10. How might we work on fixing the system?



CONCEPTS

A) *A new performance evaluation system that promotes diversity and inclusion behaviour*

The challenge. Despite the existence of diversity and inclusion initiatives, many organisations fail to make progress in inclusion of women.

Target group. All managers.

How it works. This initiative impacts the performance evaluation system for managers. Each manager receives a training package on gender equality and inclusion, including unconscious bias. Managers performance plans must include targets around inclusion. One requirement is that managers must lead a training on unconscious bias somewhere in the organisation. A manager can ask for a personal coach that shadows him to identify unconscious biases. He can also join a manager peer group to discuss challenges. After the first year, managers receive a 360-degree review. There are suggestions for improvement in the following year as well as consequences outlined. The performance on gender equality becomes a key criterion for promotion. Managers with negative reviews are withheld from progressing.

B) *A mentorship programme that bridges the generational gap and helps people recognise themselves as leaders*

The challenge. Women are hesitant to take up management roles. Managers are unsure about how to encourage career development and growth amongst their team members because of generational gaps.

Target participants. All staff in middle management and above.

How it works. The programme helps young people align their work with their values. Managers commit to participating in mentoring and attending circles of sharing for 6-8 people each. Participants eventually lead their own circle of sharing. As part of the programme, managers are required to lead a project in the organisation. Within the circles, participants discuss what leadership means to different members and what leadership behaviour can look like. Mentors discuss both career and life goals with managers as the definition of success for mentors and mentees might be different.

C) A membership programme for businesses that helps connect gender equity programmes to their core strategic priorities

The challenge. Encouraging businesses to see gender equality as a strategically valuable business priority.

Target participants. Leadership in mid-sized businesses.

How it works. A membership organisation operating this programme studies the market situation of prospective members. To attract potential senior leaders members, the membership organization must meet with them and discuss how their respective company's situation in the market and its strategic goals can be better achieved through gender equality initiatives. As organisations become members, their managers receive training around implementing gender equality plans.



PARTICIPANT EVALUATION

What's an "aha" moment or something you took away from this Lab?

- "The way UNDP guides us to brainstorming/the concept poster is a very good idea,"
- "Gender equality versus Inclusion as the ultimate agenda—would Inclusion further the gender equality agenda more because resistance coming from the 'sense of loss' for men will be less (change management perspective)?"
- "I was able to generate loads of ideas & contribute to the conversation on gender equality."
- "Many cases happened in our workplace that may be conscious or unconscious. From this workshop I am aware that we have to take action and create policies to consider gender equality and women's involvement in Leadership roles."

What do you think we could have done differently?

- "Involve more men."
- "Invite different stakeholders to join."
- "More focus on structural barriers and other barriers within organisation."
- "Include successful companies from non-MNCs in Asia (or Asian-owned MNCs). Today I sometimes hear that diversity and inclusion is a very Western agenda."

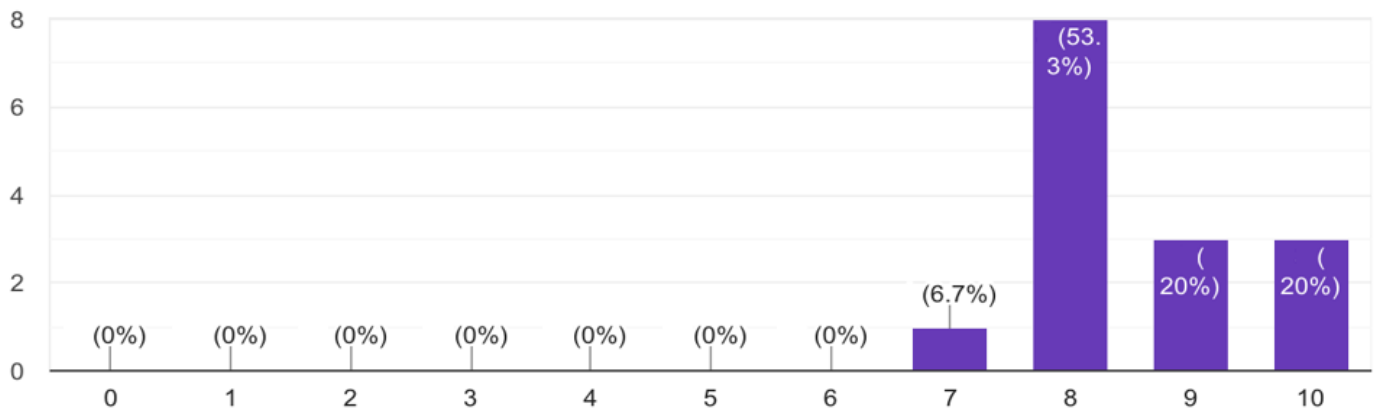
What did you learn that advances your ability to take action on making gender equality a reality in your organization?

- "That executing ideas should not be as burdensome or lengthy as one might believe. Small wins are also important."
- "Every woman has the power of making some change and taking active steps."
- "Opportunities that might be addressed such as making men an ally and to recognize women's unique leadership styles."
- "Challenges of women gender equality in other countries and success of other businesses."
- "I need to help my staffs to make a goal and help them to get it."
- "Diversity and Inclusion concepts, success stories of all types of companies and the initiatives they have."
- "As a HR, we can take action on recruiting process by focusing on what the responsibilities are. Create an atmosphere of transparency."

Other comments:

- "Thank you for facilitating such interesting session."
- "It was a great opportunity me to join a fantastic team to get some new ideas to apply at this point in my career life."
- "Truly appreciate the opportunity to learn and be reminded of the need to support other women, and happy to have a network to help me achieve this."

On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all and 10 is absolutely yes, how likely would you be to recommend a Lab like this to colleagues?



LAB MATERIALS

- [Photos](#)
- [Concept posters](#)

NEXT STEPS - UNDP SUPPORT ON GENDER EQUAL LEADERSHIP

• Knowledge and Advocacy

Develop a repository of Asian case studies.

Develop country level evidence and data to promote gender equal leadership in ASEAN countries.

Develop Good Practice Standards by 2020.

Provide "Tackling Unconscious Bias" training for senior leaders.

• Regional action platform

Organize second regional dialogue in 2020: for sharing and learning & reflecting on private sector contributions to SDG 5, 8, 16, 17.

Organize Learning Webinars - regional and country levels.

Create a group for networking on a social media platform (e.g. WhatsApp or LinkedIn).

UNDP's Role: Advocate for gender diversity to be more central for good corporate governance.

• Assessment and diagnostics of company specific challenges and barriers on gender equality in the workplace.





FOR MORE INFO

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