



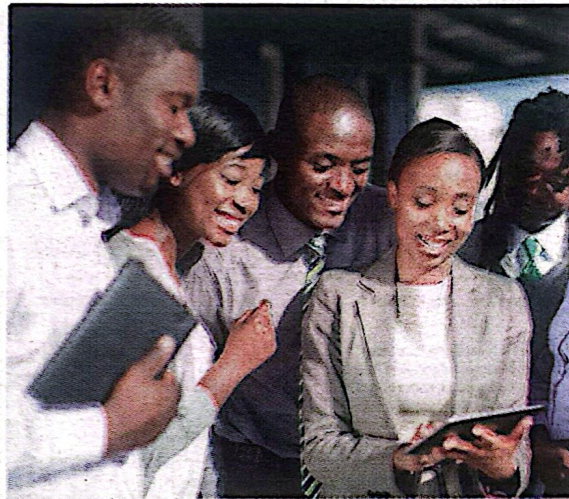
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The Federation of Uganda Employers (FUE) is the host of the UN Global Compact Local Network in Uganda, which is meant to promote responsible business. In partnership with the UN Women, we recently conducted a study to establish the level of implementation of the Women Empowerment Principles (WEPs) among Ugandan organisations. The WEPs are a joint initiative of UN Women and the Global Compact that was launched in 2010.

The WEPs comprise seven principles for organisations on how to empower women and achieve gender equality in the workplace, marketplace and community. The principles are:

- Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality; treat all women and men fairly at work — respect and support human rights and non-discrimination.

Does your organisation follow UN women empowerment principles?



Women Empowerment Principles are all about empowering women and achieving gender equality

- Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers; promote education, training and professional development for women.
- Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women.
- Promote equality through

community initiatives and advocacy.

- Ensure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality.

The study established that although most companies implemented some policies and practices that conformed to the seven WEPs, they did it mostly as an obligation towards

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Greater corporate transparency in terms of gender diversity
- Integrate gender diversity in the human resource policies and practices of the organisation
- Introduce a system of gender representativeness in top management and on the board
- Work with

organisations such as the Federation of Uganda Employers that have databases of board-ready women for consideration

- Continuously review your policies and practices in order to ensure that your organisation is gender responsive
- Adopt best practices from other organisations on gender responsiveness

fulfilling the requirements of Uganda's labour laws and also because they made business sense.

In addition, specific knowledge about the WEPs was limited among the companies and organisations; the respondents were mostly aware of the gender empowerment initiatives by the Government and other NGOs.

Some of the best practices that were identified include; high-level support and direct top-level policies for gender equality and human rights;

gender-sensitive recruitment and retention practices and proactively recruit and appoint women to managerial and executive positions and to the corporate board of directors.

At the Federation of Uganda Employers, we are implementing a number of programmes aimed at promoting gender responsiveness. In particular, we have been implementing the female future programme, which is the first of its kind in Africa having been adapted from the Confederation

of Norwegian Enterprise to promote women in top leadership positions and on boards. We also have a comprehensive workplace gender policy, which provides for a number of initiatives and guidelines.

Inclusion of women in leadership positions has been shown to be rewarding. Evidence from a global survey of 21,980 firms from 91 countries suggest that the presence of women in corporate leadership positions may improve performance.

In fact, according to an index provided by MSCI, companies with strong female leadership deliver a 36% higher return on equity. This means that it is not just a matter of promoting gender equality, but corporate progress and sustainability.

Research has also shown that companies with more women on their boards are less likely to be caught up in corporate scandals.

The writer is the executive director of Federation of Uganda Employers