



Global Compact Network Japan

Gender Equality Initiatives in Japan

Interviews with 24 Companies on Diversity & Inclusion



Supporting Companies and Organisations

The Asahi Shimbun Company
Ajinomoto Co., Inc.
ANA Holdings, Inc.
Ezaki Glico Co., Ltd.
EBARA CORPORATION
Olympus Corporation
KOSÉ Corporation
Kokusai Kogyo Co., Ltd.
Shimizu Corporation
Shinsei Bank, Limited
Sumitomo Riko Co. Ltd.
Sekisui House, Ltd.
Seven & i Holdings Co.
Softbank Corporation
Daiichi Sankyo Company, Limited
Dai Nippon Printing Co., Ltd.
Daiwa House Industry Co.
Daily Advertising Co., Ltd.
Tobu Top Tours Co., Ltd.
BIPROGY Inc. (former Nihon Unisys, Ltd.)
Fujitsu Limited
Mitsubishi Chemical Corporation
Yamaha Corporation
ROHM Co., Ltd.

December 2021

Authors:

Mari Iizuka, Professor, Doshisha University Graduate School of Business
GCNJ Secretariat

Acknowledgement:

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to Professor Mari Iizuka of the Doshisha University Graduate School of Business for her valuable cooperation in the planning, editing, and writing of this volume, and to the GCNJ member companies and organizations who cooperated with interviews and provided materials for this publication.

In addition, a portion of funding was provided by Doshisha University.

Foreword

On the publication of “Gender Equality Initiatives in Japan: Interviews with 24 Companies on Diversity & Inclusion”

The United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) is the world’s largest sustainability initiative, bringing together the United Nations and private companies and organizations in an aim to build a healthy global society. The UNGC works with more than 18,000 companies and organizations in approximately 160 countries around the world to achieve a sustainable society based on its 10 principles in the four areas of human rights, labour, environment, and anti-corruption.

An important key to achieving these aims is gender equality.

Gender equality is a fundamental human right. If women, who make up half of the world’s population, could participate in society without gender discrimination, we could solve many of the world’s various social problems related to economic growth, poverty, and education. In particular, the full participation of women in the workforce has been estimated to lead to as high as double-digit economic growth rates and social development.

It is against this backdrop that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by the United Nations in 2015, designate the promotion of gender equality as both a core principle and a goal.

In 2010, the United Nations Global Compact, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM, now UN Women), developed the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) to encourage companies to voluntarily address gender equality as a core management issue.

In 2020, the Global Compact Network Japan (GCNJ), the local network of the UN Global Compact, in collaboration with WE EMPOWER Japan*, released the “WEPs Handbook” to introduce the WEPs in Japanese.

When we put out a call for examples of initiatives from our members, we received a far greater response than we expected. We therefore decided to produce this collection of case studies that explores the initiatives of 24 different companies in more depth, to serve as a practical version of the WEPs Handbook. I would like to thank Professor Mari Iizuka of Doshisha University Graduate School of Business, a member of GCNJ’s SDG Task Force, for her cooperation in conducting interviews and preparing this report.

All of the companies showcased in this volume, when hit with the COVID-19 pandemic, had no choice but to respond. They were able to flexibly change their mindsets and adopt new perspectives, leading to diversity and inclusion in their companies and, ultimately, initiatives that contribute to gender equality in society.

This volume and the strategic measures of the 24 companies highlighted within, as well as the tireless efforts of their staff and the successes they achieved, are meant to serve as a practical guide.

I sincerely hope that this collection of case studies, which brings together the wisdom of each company showcased within, will be a tool for all companies and organizations committed to gender equality to promote and strengthen their actions.

Hidetaka Yabe, Executive Director
Global Compact Network Japan

* The WE EMPOWER Project was launched to promote women’s economic empowerment aimed at disseminating the Responsible Business Principles in G7 member states, with activities taking place over a three-year period from 2018 to 2020.

1. Foreword		3
2. Company Initiatives		
The Asahi Shimbun Company	Promoting gender equality within the company and in the society through “The Asahi Shimbun Gender Equality Declaration”	5
Ajinomoto Co., Inc.	Continuing to evolve as a company where everyone is equal and plays an active role, regardless of attributes, in line with the Ajinomoto Group Way’s stance to “Value People”	7
ANA Holdings, Inc.	Realising genuine inclusion by recognising unconscious bias. Innovation arising from changing attitudes.	9
Ezaki Glico Co., Ltd.	Promoting “Co-parenting” both inside and outside our company to support child-rearing in Japan towards a healthier and more abundant future for our children	11
EBARA CORPORATION	Communication as the key to promoting women’s empowerment in our company. Aiming for true diversity.	13
Olympus Corporation	Aiming to be a global MedTech company that contributes to a sustainable society through innovation born out of diversity	15
KOSÉ Corporation	Towards a gender-neutral society. Achieving diversity as the leader of a new beauty culture.	17
Kokusai Kogyo Co., Ltd.	Promoting diversity to strengthen technological capabilities across the company under the leadership of a female CEO	19
Shimizu Corporation	Reimagining and improving our work styles as key to the future of the construction industry. Commitment from the top promotes diversity and drives the industry forward.	21
Shinsei Bank, Limited	Activities led by the Group Women’s Activity Promotion Committee. Developing leaders who incorporate diverse perspectives into management decision-making	23
Sumitomo Riko Co. Ltd.	Expanding the scope of women’s activities through ongoing training for engineers, and building a gender neutral corporate culture that supports Japanese “ <i>monozukuri</i> ” (“manufacturing”).	25
Sekisui House, Ltd.	Creating a climate conducive to innovation by promoting diversity through active dialogue to discover “happiness” in the workplace	27
Seven & i Holdings Co.	Diversity and women’s empowerment create new value in consumer-oriented business.	29
Softbank Corporation	Expanding the circle of awareness and building a corporate culture of diversity, regardless of age, gender, or nationality.	31
Daiichi Sankyo Company, Limited	Actively incorporating the perspectives of diverse individuals to generate innovation and realize our Group’s Purpose	33
Dai Nippon Printing Co., Ltd.	Promotion of diversity and inclusion by each and every one of us with a sense of ownership, as a source of value creation	35
Daiwa House Industry Co., Ltd.	Expanding opportunities for women to play active roles with measures geared to worksites and the “Jutaku Komachi” organization. Evolving as a company where everyone can play an active role, regardless of age or gender.	37
Daily Advertising Co., Ltd.	Becoming the “Best Place to Work in the World” based on a culture of mutual respect and growth for each and every employee through the promotion of women’s advancement	39
Tobu Top Tours Co., Ltd.	Diversifying and developing the detail-oriented hospitality that only a travel agency can offer, while providing new value to society.	41
BIPROGY Inc. (former Nihon Unisys, Ltd.)	Aiming to make diversity promotion self-driven in our workplaces and widen the circle for creating change as a part of major reforms to our corporate culture	43
Fujitsu Limited	Creation of the “Global D&I Vision & Inclusion Wheel”. “Awareness and understanding” as the primary focus to achieve true diversity.	45
Mitsubishi Chemical Corporation	Turning diversity into strength! Creating a culture of innovation through bold HR reforms and carefully-planned internal proliferation measures	47
Yamaha Corporation	Aiming to create new value by fostering conviction and a sense of ownership among employees, and promoting diversification linked to our management strategy.	49
ROHM Co., Ltd.	Overcoming the “positive action” dilemma through ongoing discussions and strong promotion of women’s participation	51
3. The UN Global Compact’s Initiatives in Gender Equality		53

Promoting gender equality within the company and in the society through “The Asahi Shimbun Gender Equality Declaration”

The Asahi Shimbun Company

- Aim: To communicate messages as a media outlet to promote gender equality in the society as well as within the company, to create a society in which everyone can live comfortably.
- Approach: Release of “The Asahi Shimbun Gender Equality Declaration”, aiming to achieve its goals by 2030.
- Conclusion: We can be a force for social change when we take on a sense of ownership over events happening both within and outside our company.

Please tell me about the “Asahi Shimbun Gender Equality Declaration”.

The Gender Equality Declaration, released by our company President in April 2020, sets out four indicators. The first two indicators are to achieve gender equality in our morning edition’s “Hito” (“Person”) column, which showcases talented people working in a wide range of fields, and in speakers at the Asahi World Forum, a symposium organised by our company. The other two indicators are to double the ratio of women managers in the company, and increase the percentage of male employees taking childcare leave. We have set numerical targets so that we can verify our level of achievement every year.

We drafted this declaration based on the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030, and we are committed to achieving our own goals by 2030 as well.

What made you decide to start with these four indicators?

As a media company, we wanted to ensure consistency between the messages we send out on gender equality through our news and business activities and the current situation in our

workplace, and we chose these indicators from that perspective. The people we introduce in our “Hito” column have a great deal of influence. Likewise, the Asahi World Forum that we hold every autumn has addressed topics such as environmental issues and the SDGs. We feel that the ratio of men and women who appear in the “Hito” column and who speak at the Asahi World Forum is a good indicator of the performance our initiatives.

Doubling the ratio of women in management positions is at the core of our efforts in gender equality, and we have set a target of 25%. We also determined that increasing the percentage of men taking childcare leave is essential to rethinking our ways of working and creating a comfortable workplace for all.

What was the motivation to make this kind of declaration?

It was our journalists in the field who always had the feeling that women in our country are too underrated in many parts of the society. In 2015-16, our paper was running a series of feature articles on gender equality. Then, Japan’s ranking in the Gender Gap Index, released in autumn 2016, was so low, the worst among the most developed countries. That was when a group of volunteer journalists from various departments got together and started a reporting campaign called “Dear Girls” on 8 March 2017, International Women’s Day. As we continued our reporting, we were increasingly asked by those we interviewed, “What is the gender equality situation at the Asahi Shimbun itself?” We realized that it was necessary to make further efforts as a company, and this led us to draft the declaration.

So, you are driven by the voices on the ground.

Yes, and as we continued with our “Dear Girls” campaign, gender issues came to be known as an important theme among our journalists, including

those who weren’t directly involved in the campaign.

Actually, our paper was one of the first to report on the derogatory remarks on women by Yoshiro Mori, who was then the head of the Tokyo Organising Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Two of our male reporters were there when he made that remark. The male journalist in his 30s as the first to speak up, saying “Mori’s remarks were awful.” He had been writing articles for some time pointing out the lack of female participation in the world of sports.

Also, nowadays, men as well as women in their 20s and 30s have a keen eye on gender topics as well as issues regarding LGBTQ people.

Since we have announced the Gender Equality Declaration, the level of awareness on increasing the number of women in the decision-making process in the company is certainly changing.

Please tell me about your efforts related to international symposiums.

At international symposiums abroad, the awareness of the gender balance of panellists is always palpable. We felt that it was essential for us to do the same. The percentage of women speakers at The Asahi World Forum was 41.8% in 2020 following the declaration, and 49.5% in 2021, achieving the target. Everyone’s awareness has changed.

In addition to striking a balance between male and female speakers, the proportion of women attending the symposium also increased because we held it online. We have also had requests from local schools to use the symposium in their classes.

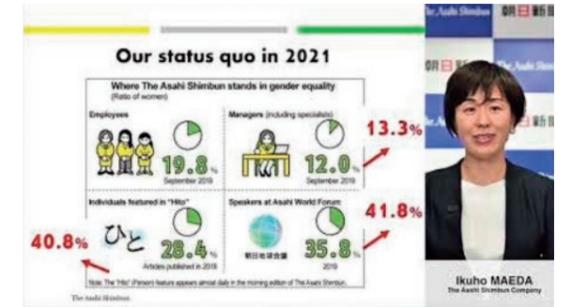
For these goals and the “Hito” column as well, we do not plan to stop as soon as we achieve our targets. We intend to keep moving forward towards higher ones.

What is the ratio of men to women in management positions?

The ratio of men to women for all employees is approximately 8:2. Management-level positions in our company include not only managers with subordinates, but also specialists such as editorial board members, editorial writers, engineers in information technology, and marketing personnel.

In the past, it was difficult for women to get into management positions, but since initiatives were begun in 2015, the ratio has increased to around 13% at present.

Our goal of doubling the number of women in management positions by 2030 is based on the idea that staff in their 40s or older are ready for management and professional positions, and on an estimate of the number of women in our company who will be in their 40s or older as of 2030, which we believe will be about 25%. We are currently about halfway to achieving this target and will continue to work with those in charge of various divisions to achieve it.



The report on The Asahi Shimbun Gender Equality Declaration at the UN Global Compact Leaders Summit in 2021.

In addition to reporting, we are also involved in a variety of other businesses, including art exhibitions, sporting events, online shopping, and real estate. We believe that having more women in decision-making settings will stimulate discussions based on differing perspectives, enabling us to make better decisions. We will continue to actively promote women in the company.

What are your hopes and expectations for the promotion of gender equality?

The SDGs that were finalised at the UN General Assembly in 2015, and the fact that gender equality was incorporated into them, have played a big role. The Asahi World Forum, which began the following year in 2016, took the SDGs as a standard, instilling in us the awareness that the gender balance of our speakers should be a given.

We have been hoping for an improvement in Japan’s score on the Gender Gap Index, but unfortunately the ranking remains low. This is why the staff in charge in all of our divisions believe that it is more important than ever to get actively involved.

One example of our workplace initiatives is to eliminate or reduce the number of night shifts, so that the employees taking care of young children can still take on management-level jobs in the various departments. At the same time, we are trying to make our work more efficient, so we can have more free time to either spend with our family, learning new ideas, or meeting with other people.

In some workplaces, we have started to offer remote management positions to persons whose family commitments make it difficult for them to relocate. We believe that as these initiatives spread from within our company to society as a whole, we can change the world. As a media organization, we will continue to re-examine our approach from the ground up.

*See the following site for details.
Global Compact Network Japan’s YouTube Site.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llq8_j92JKk&list=PLV2sXkwrLUcNmhd4nIxyEH0E-p842suW&index=2



Our articles on gender issues can be found on our digital site, on a page entitled “Think Gender”.

Continuing to evolve as a company where everyone is equal and plays an active role, regardless of attributes, in line with the Ajinomoto Group Way's stance to "Value People"

Ajinomoto Co., Inc.

- Aim: To provide equal opportunities tailored to the individual, regardless of gender, generation or other attributes.
- Approach: We have completely stopped writing goals specifically for "women" in our Diversity & Inclusion goals.
- Conclusion: To become a company based on mutual respect between each and every employee in an environment of growth.

Please tell me about your unconscious bias training for all employees.

The e-learning course begins with a review of our Group's diversity and inclusion (D&I) objectives, followed by use of concrete examples to learn about the nature of unconscious bias. Participants are then asked to write down on a post-it note one unconscious bias that actually exists in their workplace and why they feel it exists. Then, participants separate into groups with persons in the same organization and take turns sharing these unconscious biases and the reasons they wrote them down. They then deliberate on how to address the biases that are thought to be the most problematic.

First, we started in 2018 with our executives involved in management and invited external lecturers. It was a very lively workshop with data showing, for example, that there is gender bias even in the US. At the end of the workshop, we filmed a video of each person sharing their feelings about the training and a message on diversity, and sent it out to all employees via the intranet. It was a great opportunity to see the real-life side of executives, some of whom had actually suffered as minorities



Training for the HR division in 2018

living abroad during their childhoods, and led to a deeper understanding among employees.

We are in the process of rolling out the training company-wide as some employees expressed an interest in taking the course themselves. We have received mostly positive feedback, with about 80% of employees sharing the opinion that, "I thought I didn't have any biases, but I have so many. It's good to find out about them." On the other hand, some found it difficult to share examples of biases that hit so close to home. We realized that this is an issue we need to clear up.

How did you go about solving this problem?

After the executives, we conducted the training for our HR department and found that the number of perceived biases in the workplace varied considerably from team to team. There were particularly few biases among members of teams made up only of men in management positions. Perhaps some feared being viewed by others as a biased person. They also seemed to come to fewer realizations when listening to other team members voice their biases.

Meanwhile, teams put together with a 50/50 mix of men and women at various levels, from general staff to managers and executives, gathered the most examples. We put together one team expecting that it would be difficult for women in general staff positions to speak up in the presence of executives and senior managers. However, their understanding of the purpose of the training exceeded our expectations, and they were more interested in wanting people from various standpoints to know about it. This team produced 18-20 biases per person, compared to around 5 biases per person in the male managers-only group, so there was a marked difference.

As a result of this experience, we requested that subsequent trainings in various organizations be conducted in mixed teams of both men and women whenever possible, and that every person

be given the opportunity to speak. In order to roll out the training company-wide, we trained facilitators in each organization to facilitate the workshops, so that trainings could be arranged and carried out in each organization. We felt that it was important for people on the frontline to understand and accept the significance of the training, and that the initiative itself would not take root unless it was conducted by members who understood the issues in the workplace.

What is the ratio of women in management positions?

Since 2008, we have made work-life balance a part of our management strategy. The ratio of women in management positions across the Group, including overseas workplaces, is 26%, and this percentage becomes 35% when Japan is excluded. The ratio of male to female employees is approximately 7:3 for both Japan and global operations, with the 3 representing women. This shows that the low percentage of female managers is limited to Japan. In the 2020 Mid-Term Management Plan we announced last year, we released the message that by 2030 we will close the gender gap and equalise the ratio of men to women in our workforce. We have also set ourselves the goal of increasing the ratio of women in decision-making positions, such as directors and line managers, to 30% without increasing the number of positions themselves.

Tell me about any specific efforts you have made to achieve this 30% target.

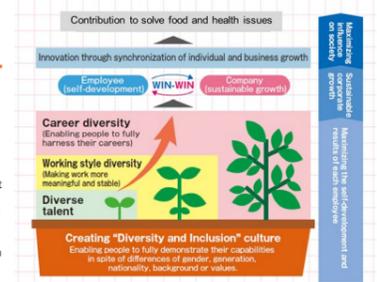
When the D&I initiative was first launched, we sensed that suddenly putting only "women" at the forefront might cause some negative reactions. The Ajinomoto Group Way sets forth the idea to "Value People", and this is a key pillar of our operations. In 2017, we intentionally did not include the word "women" in our targets. Rather, our stated goal was that "every employee is respected and able to participate fully" in order to create a work environment where employees, regardless of gender or age, are given opportunities that they may lack individually and are equally engaged in their work.

The first thing we did was to proactively communicate this message for six months. Then we introduced unconscious bias training to change attitudes within the company, and finally, in 2020, we launched the much-awaited initiative to support women's careers.

Firstly, we held a career workshop in which female employees in general positions participated in pairs with their supervisors. The aim was to deepen their understanding of what we were trying to achieve with D&I promotion and why women in particular needed career support opportunities. The workshop gave rise to a common language and made it easier for supervisors to encourage the

The ultimate aim of diversity promotion

Aiming to create a society and company where all employees are engaged and respect each other regardless of gender, age, nationality or background, the Ajinomoto Group provides a system to support individual careers (work style diversity) and bring out the best in employees (career diversity), and encourages the growth of an inclusive organizational culture.



Ultimate of Diversity & Inclusion promotion

women in their careers. We then started training for selected persons.

Next, we invited external lecturers and expanded the programme into a "mini-MBA", a training for women in general positions one step away from becoming managers who were selected based on submission of essays. At the end of the training, the women presented their suggestions to the President and other members of management. The programme consisted of six sessions over a six-month period, with 25 participants.

What are your company's aspirations for the future?

Basing our initiatives on the opinions of team members within the HR department alone tends to make them biased in terms of values, so we want to ensure that many employees from different organizations and with different backgrounds are involved in planning measures. As demonstrated by our unconscious bias training, it is only when people with different values can come together and exchange opinions in a safe environment that we are able to spot problems early on. Three and a half years into our D&I initiative, we are beginning to see younger staff members who are eager to get involved. If we can nurture such talent in each of our organizations, we can achieve the diversity and inclusion that will allow us to quickly create a better environment for both employees and the company to grow.

*See the following site for details.

[Diverse talent | Sustainability | Ajinomoto Group Global Website - Eat Well, Live Well.](#)

Realising genuine inclusion by recognising unconscious bias. Innovation arising from changing attitudes.

ANA Holdings, Inc.

- Aim: To make Group employees aware of the existence of unconscious bias, an impediment to promoting diversity and inclusion, and to make our Group a stronger organisation by focusing on achieving inclusion.
- Approach: Introduction of unconscious bias training, strategic use of diverse talent, and sharing of examples at Group company meetings.
- Conclusion: Changing employee attitudes will accelerate the promotion of diversity and inclusion, and ultimately lead to innovation as a company.

Please tell me about your initiatives in diversity.

Our Group has various operating companies, including aircraft maintenance, trading companies, and building maintenance companies. Since 2020, we have appointed about 70 persons to be in charge of promoting Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) at these companies. These people are at the helm of D&I promotion in our workplaces.

Several times a year, we hold a meeting of D&I promotion staff to share information and discuss related issues, and we also arrange time for companies to introduce their D&I initiatives. Each company then gets to take home the best practices shared across the entire Group and can reflect them on its own measures, leading to the promotion of D&I throughout our Group.

The aviation industry is currently in a very difficult predicament due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet, it is precisely in this environment that we believe it is essential to intensify our D&I promotion while keeping abreast of accelerating social changes. We aim to create an environment

where employees with differing backgrounds and expertise can demonstrate their capabilities beyond the boundaries of their attributes and affiliations, which will lead to the creation of new value and sustainable growth through innovation.

Would you share with me a real-life example that led to innovation?

By thinking beyond conventional wisdom, we can re-envision our work and business models, leading to innovations such as new service models that respond to our customers' expectations.

When you hear the word "innovation", you may think of something major, such as AI or robots, but there are also smaller innovations that arise out of person-to-person interactions. Since April 2020, our Group has drastically reduced international flights due to restrictions on movement caused by the pandemic. Our domestic operations are also less than half the scale we had planned. In the midst of this situation, we have had our Group employees think about and discuss the question "what can we do now?". We have made some adjustments. For

example, in the absence of actual travel, we have taken on challenges that we had never tried before. One was to create a video introducing the work of pilots to children to make them more familiar with the profession.

I think this is an example of innovation born out of diversity in the sense that employees from different departments shared their ideas to create something new.

Can you tell me about the impetus for starting unconscious bias training?

Rigid ideas about gender roles, such as "men work and women stay at home" still



Videos from presidents of Group companies on "What does D&I mean to you?", created in collaboration with D&I promotion staff

persist in Japan due to historical and social reasons. We believe this is one of the factors that hinders the promotion of diversity in the workplace. Why, for example, do bosses and colleagues react differently about childcare leave when a female employee reports her pregnancy and a male employee reports his partner's pregnancy? Likewise, why is it that a woman talking on the phone in the corridor is often perceived as having a private conversation, but the same does not hold true for a man? Both of these examples arose in conversations with employees, and we realised that there were likely other instances where people were unconsciously holding biases, which is why we started the training.

I heard that you made the training videos yourselves!

The unconscious biases we hold are inherently unconscious, making it difficult to notice how they affect our casual, everyday language and actions without seeing specific examples. That is why we wanted to use easy-to-understand videos to introduce some common examples from real workplaces to help people become more aware of these biases.

We held a lot of discussions to decide on which examples we would include. We created scenarios based on specific images of people, such as those who are hesitant to talk about their sexuality, and those who are worried that people around them would act overly cautious about their disability.

The videos were very well received by the employees who watched them, with many saying that the videos made them more aware. We plan to continue this initiative with more content in the future.

Please tell me about your company's future plans.

We are an airline group with aviation as our core business. It takes many Group employees, all

playing their respective parts, to fly a single aircraft. It is very important for our Group's operations that employees with diverse perspectives respect each other's strengths and work together to make the most of them. Our top management continuously communicates the need to further accelerate the promotion of D&I and its connection to innovation, as we aim to firmly root these ideas in our company.

Based on this approach, a diverse group of 12 persons currently staff the D&I promotion department. In addition to having different genders, nationalities and ages, our department includes employees with young children and those who have cared for elderly family members, those in the pilot and cabin attendant profession, and many others. Because of our differing backgrounds, a variety of opinions come up when we discuss issues.

Sometimes it is hard to bring all of these ideas together in our work, but new ideas can be generated and risks can be reduced when we discuss issues from a diverse range of perspectives. Over the past year, we have come to realise that this is exactly why we should promote D&I. We will continue our efforts to ensure that D&I concepts become thoroughly entrenched in our Group.



D&I training videos

*See the following site for details.

[Diversity & Inclusion \(D&I\) | Sustainability | ANA Group Corp.'s Information](#)

Promoting “Co-parenting” both inside and outside our company to support child-rearing in Japan towards a healthier and more abundant future for our children

Ezaki Glico Co., Ltd.

- Aim: To improve childcare environments for children’s physical and mental health, and to promote solutions to Japan’s childcare challenges
- Approach: Promoting good family relationships by encouraging communication and cooperation in parenting among family members (using a parenting app) based on the “Co-parenting” child-rearing concept.
- Conclusion: Ensuring a healthier and more abundant future for children is the mission of our business activities.

Can you tell me about the origins of Glico?

Our corporate purpose is “Healthier days, Wellbeing for Life”, and our mission is to contribute to society through our business. Our starting point was a nutritious caramel called “Glico”.

For the two most important missions for children: “eating and playing,” our company was founded about 100 years ago to support the healthy growth of children, and we now promote the “Co-Parenting Project”* in order to improve child-rearing in Japan. This project takes into consideration the environment not only for children, but also for their parents towards the next 100 years.

Our company founders set up a public interest organization called The Mother and Child Health Foundation in 1934, less than ten years after the company’s foundation. The aim of this foundation is to promote the health of mothers and children. Since its establishment, the foundation has screened and awarded children with the excellent health award, organized symposiums, and produced and distributed newsletters. Today, the foundation focuses on research grants in pediatric medicine, and Ezaki Glico will continue to support the foundation’s activities going forward.

Where did the idea of Co-parenting come from?

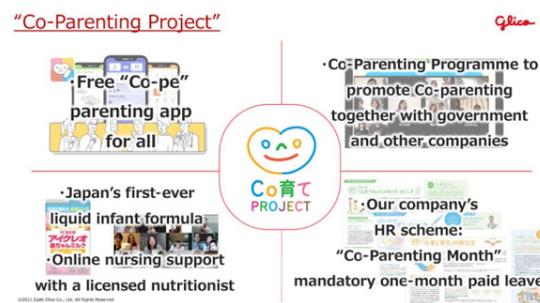
We began deliberations on the “Co-Parenting Project” around 2017. It was around this time that a whole range of issues concerning children and parents came to the fore, including solo-parenting, “paternity harassment” (harassment of fathers for taking childcare leave or raising children), and childcare and postpartum depression. With the declining birth rate, we felt that in order to create a better future for our children, we must first improve the childcare environment for parents. Discussions were held with top executives on supporting child-rearing as a community activity, and the Co-

Parenting Project was launched with the aim of creating a “Co-parenting society” where families work together.

However, because we are a company, we must operate as a business, so the project had to be rolled out on a company-wide basis. Within the larger framework of child-rearing, each division has been carrying out activities in cooperation with others. The reason why activities at our head office have been so readily accepted internally is due to our deep-rooted desire to contribute to the physical and mental health of children.

Please tell me about the specific initiatives of the “Co-Parenting Project”.

Although the project is aimed at children, we wanted to start by taking another look at the environment for parents. Viewing the first 1,000



Various initiatives of the Co-Parenting Project

*The “Co” in “Co-Parenting” is intended to encompass the three concepts of harmonious “Communication”, good “Cooperation”, and of course “Co-parenting”, or raising children together, and is the concept of child-rearing advocated by our company.

days starting before the birth of a child at pregnancy as an important time to build the foundations of the child’s mind and body, we launched the project to help address child-rearing issues that arise during this period.

We also develop products that support Co-parenting. In March 2019, we launched the first liquid infant formula in Japan, Icreo Baby Formula. The advantage of this product is that it can be poured into a bottle and fed to infants anytime, anywhere and by anyone. As well as helping to reduce the burden of everyday childcare, it is also expected to encourage men to take an active role in childcare, as it allows anyone to easily feed a baby. Also, because it requires no preparation, it can be easily used at evacuation shelters in the event of a disaster, making it very useful for society in Japan, which is a disaster-prone country.

We also developed a parenting app called “Co-pe” as a service to support Co-parenting. This app helps to relieve the burden and worries about childcare and housework. We surveyed many fathers during the development of the app in order to make it something that family members could use to cooperate with each other from the early stages of pregnancy. We have taken into account not only mothers’ but also fathers’ thoughts, behaviours and concerns about childcare and housework to develop an app that makes it easier for fathers to get involved in childcare. In addition to the basic functions of a parenting app, the app promotes Co-parenting through features such as childcare task-sharing among family members, a wealth of articles compiled under the supervision of doctors, and a support feature for one of the biggest concerns related to childcare—sleep.

What are the childcare leave options for male employees?

In 2017, the rate of male employees in our company taking childcare leave was around 4%. We knew that if we wanted to communicate a message on men’s participation in childcare outside our company, we first had to re-examine ourselves. So, from April 2019, we made it mandatory for employees to take five days of childcare leave.

However, many male employees who took this childcare leave reported back that it was not much different from ordinary paid leave, and that although they were able to spend time with their children, it was far from full-fledged participation in childcare. For some, five days was too short a time period to result in any change in awareness and behaviour. As a company, we want our employees to engage in child-rearing, and we want to create an organizational culture in which each employee can design his or her own life, engage in highly productive ways of working to achieve this life, and in which diverse human resources play an active role. Thus, in January 2020, we established a new



“Co-pe” Co-parenting app to support collaborative parenting by all

programme called the “Co-Parenting Month”, a system for one month of paid leave for employees who are eligible for childcare leave.

You received a national award. What was the reaction from inside and outside the company?

We received the “Understanding Promotion Award” of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare’s “Ikumen Company Awards 2020”, which has led to a greater understanding of Co-parenting within our company. We have also received a number of inquiries from outside the company, which has provided us with the opportunity to learn from the examples of other companies. We hope that, even in small ways, our efforts can serve as a reference to other companies in Japan and beyond, and that they will be a catalyst for change in the world.

Finally, what are your company’s plans for the future?

Changes in the child-rearing and social environment happen very quickly, making it difficult to always react in a timely fashion. With the diversification of family types and lifestyles, we changed our “Co-pe” app from one for only moms and dads to one that can be used by grandparents and everyone else involved in child-rearing. We believe that constantly resetting our agenda, and taking the time to learn, think and act, moving forward every day, is the way we will get closer to our goal.

Our mission will continue to contribute to the mental and physical well-being of people, and this will always remain part of our DNA.

*See the following site for details.

<https://www.glico.com/global/about/csr/report/>

Communication as the key to promoting women's empowerment in our company. Aiming for true diversity.

EBARA CORPORATION

- Aim: To raise awareness on the need for employees to fulfil their potential and develop their careers.
- Approach: Diversity training and leadership development for female employees at different levels.
- Outlook: Promotion of true diversity regardless of gender, age or nationality

What kinds of work are your women employees in charge of?

EBARA CORPORATION (EBARA) is a manufacturer of industrial machinery that was founded in 1912 as a pump manufacturer. We have since produced a range of products that support social infrastructure, including our fluid machinery & systems business, our environmental engineering business, and our precision machinery business. In fiscal 2018, we abolished our system of support staff positions, and female employees are now engaged as either career-track employees or core staff (management positions) in a wide range of fields, including management, sales, research, development, design, and manufacturing.

In this context, what kind of activities do you carry out in diversity promotion?

Set up in 2015, our Diversity Promotion Department reports directly to the company President. In order to promote the empowerment of women, some women were selected to be the founding members of this department. After conducting employee awareness surveys on diversity and gathering feedback from employees to identify and analyse issues, the department has planned and proposed future measures and



projects.

One of the key measures we put in place through 2020 was training for female employees at different levels. Based on results of awareness surveys, we first conducted career design training for young women employees and their immediate supervisors. Next, we added two more levels—pre-management and management positions—to divide the trainings into three tiers. The trainings consisted of four workshop sessions with external lecturers focused on the main objective of fostering awareness on diversity.

Has there been any opposition from female employees?

In fact, there was. Some asked, "Why are you only including women?" People have diverse backgrounds and ways of thinking, so we have tried to maintain a stance whereby we provide support while letting people come to their own conclusions.

Since then, we have seen a change in the awareness of these employees, and the fact that more women employees are passing the examination year by year is an achievement.

What factors do you work to stay aware of when promoting initiatives?

We consciously promote initiatives that involve our workplaces (factories). When we work hard together on a project, afterwards we have found that those employees begin to understand us and more readily accept our diversity measures. It's all about the importance of communication.

What at first might seem like only small measures, when carried out steadily at the grassroots level, slowly take root in our workplaces.

Can you give me some specific examples?

I will give an example of a female employee who was promoted to a manager position. There are very few women in the logistics department of our factory, so I went to talk to a woman who worked there about



Training session

addressing any problems in her department. At first, she was reluctant to talk about problem solving, thinking it was meaningless.

But we convinced her that it would be worth a try. We reasoned with her, "We don't know what's going on in your department from the outside. But as someone on-site, you can come up with some challenges that we can work to solve together." As we talked, she became more positive and agreed to work with us.



Our company holds an annual production innovation conference, where employees give presentations on on-site improvement activities to the company President and directors. We asked this woman to present on these improvement activities in problem solving. As there had never been a presentation by a woman at a production innovation conference before, it attracted a lot of attention and received high praise from everyone in attendance, including the directors. This motivated the woman and raised awareness throughout the plant, which led to improvements in operations.

In 2019, that woman was promoted to manager. We were also able to have her make regular appearances in a programme broadcast on our company intranet about women in management positions, allowing us to distribute content on the activities of female employees in the form of a genuine example in our company. We feel that this grassroots initiative has been successful.

Please tell me about childcare leave for men.

Nowadays, even though more and more couples both work, our male employees have very little

understanding of the need and significance of men taking childcare leave. So we communicate clearly with our younger employees and foreign nationals to make it easier for them to take leave.

We now have set up opportunities to encourage our younger employees to take childcare leave. We tell them, "If you are reluctant, your family will have to bear the burden (of housework and childcare) alone. So you can take it." We believe that diversity and women's empowerment will not be realised unless childcare leave for men becomes established.

What are your company's future plans?

In fiscal 2021, the Diversity Promotion Department was integrated into the Human Resources Development Division. From now on, the Human Resources Development Division will work as a whole to create a movement to promote diversity from a broader perspective, regardless of gender, age, or nationality.

At this stage, we would like to advance initiatives in promoting the active roles of women. To do so, we would like our female employees to change their perspective from conventional ideas about work to career development based on strong self-awareness. We strongly believe in creating an environment in which this can be achieved.

*See the following site for details.

<https://www.ebara.co.jp/en/sustainability/social/information/promote-diversity.html>

Aiming to be a global MedTech company that contributes to a sustainable society through innovation born out of diversity

Olympus Corporation

- Aim: To become a global MedTech company toward the sustainable growth of our business and the realisation of a sustainable society
- Approach: Establish a network between management and employees for the realization of our new management strategy and a training programme for the women's empowerment along three axes.
- Conclusion: Diversity builds the strength of a company and gives rise to innovation.

I understand that you have made diversity and inclusion part of your new management strategy.

Since the announcement of our management strategy in November 2019, we have been striving to become a global MedTech* company and to achieve the sustainable growth of our business and a sustainable society. In accordance with our management philosophy, we also aim to strengthen our ESG initiatives.

Among these aims is strengthening diversity and inclusion. Our efforts focus not only on differences in nationality, gender, age, and various other background attributes, but also on the participation of seniors, especially in Japan, where there are many caregivers and elderly people. We are also working on LGBT issues, with the aim of becoming a company where everyone can achieve their full potential.

Please tell me about your measures to promote the women's empowerment.

To promote the women's empowerment, we have a three-axis training programme. The first axis aims to foster career awareness among women themselves, the second fosters women who aim for management positions, and the third aims to create a conducive culture within our company.

To create this culture, we have been holding unconscious bias trainings since 2015. To date, approximately 1,100 people have undergone this training, which targets all levels of management that serve as key players in the career development of women.

Can you tell me more detail about trainings that support women's careers?

One problem we face is the extremely low ratio of women in management positions, and we are currently running two training courses to improve this.

The first is a training course for employees at the rank of sub-section manager, with the aim of improving their skills to become section managers or higher. About 15 persons are selected from among eligible female employees to attend a three-day training. This year, the first and third days were conducted online, and the second day was conducted face-to-face. The reason day two is conducted in person is due to the content. Participants had to role play in various scenarios of challenging situations prepared in advance, putting them in the thick of the battle, so to speak. The purpose of this training is to give female employees, who have not had to deal with such work situations because they have been given special consideration as women, the opportunity to learn how to deal with them.

The other is a training course for female employees already in management positions who want to move up to even higher positions. We invite external instructors to conduct training once a month for six months. The training starts with a SWOT analysis and ends with a presentation to company directors. Participants experience the same atmosphere as a board of directors meeting, which is usually attended only by department heads and above. Having them present proposals related to their own work later brings about positive impacts on their jobs. Employees who make it to the presentation stage are then mentored by a member of the board of directors from the following year. In this way, the management itself takes an active part in networking and strengthening the development of women in management positions.

In order to maintain and develop this initiative, boosting our recruitment of women is essential. At present, women make up 16% of our workforce, which does not provide a large pool of women who

*MedTech: a combination of "Medical" and "Technology", i.e. the use of IoT and other technologies in medicine.

aspire to management positions. We have set a target for 25% of new graduate hires to be women, and we are working to strengthen recruitment.

Is mentoring going well?

I think that our mentoring scheme functions quite well. There are two types of mentoring: mentoring for women in management who want to become directors or senior managers, and mentoring for those at the pre-management level who want to advance their careers. Both are well received. Mentoring for women in management has led to direct communication of management's thinking, which has helped the women to clarify points of focus in their work, resulting in quicker promotions. In post-training questionnaires for trainings for pre-management employees, most reported that the training helped them to organize their ideas about their careers and to become more proactive.

Does your company have any other measures to support women?

We offer opportunities for female employees who have temporarily left the workplace due to life events such as childbirth or child-rearing to come together to think about their future careers. Many employees are anxious about returning to work, so we share information with them on what happened while they were away from the workplace and invite senior employees who can serve as role models. Of course, employees can bring their children to these events. It has been five or six years since we started to focus on supporting employees' work-life balance, and we now have a 100% return-to-work rate after childcare leave.

We also reach out to our female employees after they return to work. We provide an opportunity for everyone to come together and change their mindsets as they think about their future careers.

Another initiative that we launched in 2014 is one we call "Tsunagaru (means connecting) -Meetings", and the "Gerbera Smile Project" that arose out of it. This project is mainly aimed at women working in technical development positions, a field where there are few women. Thus, the aim is to strengthen horizontal connections through exchanges between women managers and women employees in other departments, and to provide opportunities for them to think about their careers.

We also have company-wide initiatives related to harassment. Aside from, of course, having consultation services related to harassment, this year we delivered e-learning to all 16,000 employees in Japan, including those at Group companies. We have also conducted online training for the approximate 800 employees in management positions, and intend to continue this work in a steady manner.



Director presentations

I heard that you are working on an interesting initiative in the United States!

We have an internal networking initiative called "Colleague Affinity Networks" (CANs). It is an initiative run by the Olympus Corporation of the Americas, and apart from one or two managers, all of the other employees in general positions have come together on their own for this initiative. For example, the employees themselves organize lectures by experts to pave new paths for women's empowerment, or they serve each other home-made food from their home countries as they celebrate each other's differences. These activities are considered part of their work and take place during working hours.

While it is also related to features of the USA as a country, these activities help to further understanding on diversity and the way companies are made up of a variety of cultures, people and circumstances. They also promote contentment among employees.

Please tell me about your company's future plans.

In carrying out various activities, we have come to understand that diversity initiatives help employees to feel more secure and improve their physical and mental health. Research has also shown that they also lead to a reduction in employee turnover rates, making these initiatives an essential element in creating a greater sense of unity within a company. We will continue to work hard going forward to ensure that our employees can continue to work in a stable environment, both physically and mentally, where they are motivated to do their best.

*See the following site for details.

[Diversity and Equal Opportunity : Social : Sustainability : OLYMPUS \(olympus-global.com\)](#)

Towards a gender-neutral society. Achieving diversity as the leader of a new beauty culture.

KOSÉ Corporation

- Aim: To be a company where all employees can shine by doing away with stereotypical gender roles
- Approach: Initiatives to change employees' attitudes through the launch of an organization for company-wide promotion of diversity
- Outlook: Sparking a new make-up culture in a gender-free world

How would you describe the gender balance of your employees?

More than 80% of all group employees are women, including our Beauty Consultants (BC) in sales positions. Accordingly, men and women work together as a matter of course in our corporate culture. Yet, considering that the ratio of women in career-track positions, such as head office staff, R&D, and sales, is just under 50%, while the ratio of women in managerial positions is around 30%, the majority of decision-making positions are held by men. For this reason, a company-wide project was launched in 2017 aimed at encouraging all employees to play an active role and enhance their job satisfaction, regardless of gender or job title.

What prompted you to launch activities in 2017?

As a forerunner to this project, we had been carrying out initiatives to run our operations more efficiently and improve productivity. When we had achieved a certain level of success, our company CEO & president, Kazutoshi Kobayashi, decided that in order for us to grow into a company with a global presence, we needed not only to empower women, but also ensure that all of our employees, regardless of gender, experience, or age, were able to play an active and rewarding role in the company. That is how this project came about. Because our president and other members of management encourage employees to take on new challenges, our company has always had a culture in which everyone, not just women, can take on new challenges. The project was launched with a message from management that the power of women is necessary for the growth of the company.

Please tell me about the status of women's advancement activities.

In order to support women's advancement, it is necessary to go through the following stages: institutional improvements, creation of a conducive culture, and development and strengthening.

Women employees, including one of our leading women executives and women in BC positions, take part in a team in charge of promoting diversity within the project. This team carries out activities that would be impossible for any single department to accomplish alone. These activities have provided a chance for female members to speak up and communicate the message that the success of the company as a whole is dependent on two points—that we promote a culture where both women and men can play active roles in career-track positions, and that we expand career opportunities beyond the shop floor for BC positions. As the project has only been in existence for a few years, it is in a sense a simple grassroots activity, but team members are very passionate about leading the company's diversity and inclusion activities.

At the end of last year, this team hosted a lecture by Yukino Kikuma, a lawyer and one of our external directors, on the topic of "How to build a happy career". Ms. Kikuma delivered a strong message on the need for women to give 150% of themselves and to clearly visualise their career plans and invest in their careers themselves. In a follow-up survey after the lecture, many positive comments were received, for instance, "I realized that it is okay to be more proactive". The lecture thus served as



Seminar on career mindsets by one of our women external directors

an opportunity for mid-level women employees and above to change their mindsets. A video of the lecture was subsequently shared with male employees, thereby helping all employees to build a mindset that allows them to create careers suited to themselves, regardless of gender.

When we talk about women's advancement, we generally tend to focus on institutions for supporting women, but it is also important to support men. One example is providing opportunities for equal division of labour within the household. To this end, we have set up a unique system called the "KOSÉ IKUPAPA Support System", which is a system to support fathers of newborn babies, to encourage men to take childcare leave. In fiscal 2020, the rate of men taking childcare leave exceeded 50%, a significant increase from the previous year. In this way, we are working to create an environment in which employees can work without having to be conscious of their gender.

How have you tackled unconscious bias?

We provide training for managers. When there were fewer female employees in career-track positions, there were some well-meaning male supervisors who assigned women with young children to mainly support staff positions with less responsibility, without confirming the intentions of these female employees. However, as this kind of unconscious bias caused by excessive awareness of gender differences can happen regardless of gender, going forward, we must first accumulate more knowledge and then work to create a more favorable environment.

In the past, there was a clear division of roles between men and women, with men working the business side of sales and women working the sales floor. Today, things are different. Yet questions still arise, such as how a male boss should treat a female subordinate who is newly assigned to an all-male environment. We believe that an understanding of our unconscious biases can facilitate better communication.

Do you have an anti-harassment policy?

We not only provide training for managers, but have also set up a hotline to support any affected persons. We also use e-learning and internal newsletters to raise awareness of the need to prevent harassment between employees. As a business-to-consumer (B2C) company, we have a strong awareness within our company that enhancing ethics in the workplace is also related to the quality of service we provide to our customers.

Has the pandemic resulted in any changes?

Even prior to the pandemic, we had been experimenting with telecommuting for those engaged in childcare and elderly care. With the pandemic, our system for telecommuting was



Company-wide meeting of diversity team

applied company-wide, and it very quickly became widely accepted. Some women employees who had been experimenting by trial and error in balancing work and child-rearing found that they were able to free up time by using their commuting time as time for work, making them feel even more engaged. We have come to realize that employees can perform well even when working from home, and now view telecommuting as an opportunity to reform our ways of working.

What are your company's future plans?

Historically, women have been at the forefront of beauty culture. However, as our society becomes more gender-neutral, men have also come to enjoy wearing make-up and caring about the condition of their skin. We believe that we need to be conscious of this change.

We have very close interactions with our customers through our cosmetic products. The messages we send out to the world as a company are a clear indication of how we intend to interact with society going forward, and these messages are immediately conveyed to our customers. We will continue to utilise the diverse strengths of our employees to contribute to society as the leader of a new gender-neutral beauty culture.

*See the following site for details.

<https://www.kose.co.jp/company/en/sustainability/diversity/>

Promoting diversity to strengthen technological capabilities across the company under the leadership of a female CEO

Kokusai Kogyo Co., Ltd.

- Aim: To come out on top in the engineering consulting industry, where people are the most important asset
- Approach: Through certification schemes that add value for client-facing operations together with promotion and leadership by our female CEO
- Conclusion: Increase the number of female employees by creating a workplace where women want to work over the long term, and strengthen the company's technological capabilities

Please tell me about your company's business activities.

We have two main businesses. The first is the geospatial information business, where we acquire and analyse a wide variety of digitalized spatial information from aircraft and satellites, as well as analogue location information such as maps to provide value-added solutions. The second is our engineering consulting business, which encompasses urban development, infrastructure planning, environmental management, and disaster risk management.

One of our strengths is that, while we are an engineering consulting company, we can acquire nearly all of the data we use in our work ourselves. Few companies in the industry are able to do this, and it is a feature that sets us apart. As of March 2021, we have 1,940 employees, the majority of whom are engineers, as we provide technical services.

Please tell me about your initiatives in gender equality.

In 2007, we developed a compliance manual. The 12th topic in the human rights section stated our policy related to gender, and this marked the start of our activities to promote gender equality. Then in 2013, we received Kurumin certification as a "Childcare Support Company", and in 2019, we received a Grade 2 certification under the Eruboshi certification system based on the Act on Promotion of Women's Participation and Advancement in the Workplace. These certifications are renewed annually.

Most of the engineers in our company are men, and the older the generation the more this holds true. At one time, civil engineering was seen as men's work. Nowadays, with the improvement of technology, the way we work has changed dramatically, with less on-site survey work and

more indoor work. Such changes made the work environment easier for women to work in, and gave little reason to prefer men over women, and the number of female engineers has increased.

For quite some time now, we have been recruiting on the basis of ability, irrespective of gender. An increase in female graduates in the sciences has helped us to increase the proportion of overall female employees from around 10% in March 2015 to around 20% as of March 2020. We are currently working to create a workplace where women will choose to work over the long term, even after marriage or childbirth.

Was there an impetus for these changes?

Government incentives for companies with Kurumin certification in the public procurement process has had a major impact, not only on our company, but on the industry as a whole.

Eighty per cent of our company's sales come from public works, which are tendered using a Request for Proposal system. The proposal with the highest score is awarded the contract, and scores not only take into account price and technical content, but also Kurumin and Eruboshi certification. In many cases, the difference between first and second place bidders is less than one point, which means that a very small difference can be the deciding



All-company network meeting of female employees

factor in winning a contract. For this reason, not only our human resources development department but also our sales department is very supportive of initiatives to promote gender equality.

In addition, as society has come to place greater emphasis on diversity considerations, diversity-conscious planning has become an essential part of urban planning and other consulting work. The bottom line is that the inclusion of female engineers has become indispensable for us to reflect diverse viewpoints in our work products.

The appointment of Sandra Wu, Wen-Hsiu as the first female Chairperson and CEO was also a major turning point for our company. Under her leadership, our human resources development department established a network for female employees and held an all-company network meeting of female employees, as well as male employees with female subordinates. At this meeting, ways to make corporate regulations more women-friendly and how to create more comfortable work environments for women were discussed. Such initiatives made it easier for female employees to share their concerns and issues, and for the company to grasp the problems they face; these efforts not only influenced our HR department, but also worked towards changing our male employees' ways of thinking. At the same time, I think our mandatory employee training on power harassment and sexual harassment have accelerated our efforts to promote gender equality and women's advancement.

The percentage of female employees in management positions was around 2% in 2014, but has risen to 5.3% in 2019 following the all-company network meeting.

Has the industry itself changed since the start of Kurumin and Eruboshi certification?

I can say for sure that it has. We meet each other and work together as the Japan Civil Engineering Consultants Association; with the increase in women engineers, work groups for female engineers in construction-related industries have appeared within the Association. I think such groups will become increasingly active in the future.

What is the situation regarding the recruitment and promotion of female employees?

We have not made a distinction between men and women in our recruitment for over 10 years. We focus on people who are highly qualified and who will fit in at our company. For some years, the percentage of women among new graduate hires has exceeded 50%, and the ratio of female employees has been steadily increasing.

In our company, it takes about ten years to move from a general position to a management-level position. Although we have more women employees, the number of women in management positions is still small due to the small number



All-company network meeting of female employees

of women employees in the age group that are becoming managers. The proportion is certain to increase in the future.

Our business divisions actually wield the strongest influence over human resources, as they are the profit-generating engines of the company. As such, the persons in charge of business divisions and teams need to understand company policy and what makes a workplace friendly to women engineers, and take action. We believe it is important for us in management to clearly explain where things stand and make sure that they are on board.

To this end, we launched a comprehensive training programme that is not limited to managers. For example, as soon as new hires join the company, they undergo a number of training courses to learn about women-friendly work environments and gender balance.

Please tell me about your company's future plans.

Our human resources development department, human resources department and corporate planning department are jointly formulating a mid-term plan and general action plan related to the Act on Promotion of Women's Participation and Advancement in the Workplace, in consultation with our directors. Our action plan will include activities to increase the ratio of women in management positions within five years, starting from fiscal year 2021. Although we are still in the early stages, we are determined to make steady progress in promoting the gender diversity through the advancement of women.

Reimagining and improving our work styles as key to the future of the construction industry. Commitment from the top promotes diversity and drives the industry forward.

Shimizu Corporation

- Aim: To promote diversity as necessary for the transformation of our business model from a long-term perspective.
- Approach: Commitment from top management for opportunities for all and gender equality in evaluation, and the elimination of unconscious biases held by men and women.
- Conclusion: The gender equality perspective can also lead to work style reforms for male employees, improving the overall work-life balance of the workforce.

When did your company start working on diversity issues?

In 2009, we set up our Diversity Promotion Office. The construction industry developed in a male-dominated society. When we looked at the long-term future of our company, we concluded that we could not expect sustainable growth if we continued to operate our construction business as we had in the past. We announced a long-term vision in 2010. In the process of formulating this vision, we decided to make a course correction based on the belief that we must create a place where a diverse range of talent can play an active role if we are to evolve as a smart innovation company that creates new value beyond the construction business.

Our activities were also motivated by the fact that the President of our company at the time, Yoichi Miyamoto (now Chairman of the Board), had been very vocal since around 2013 about the need for equal opportunities and evaluation for senior management.

Originally, the Diversity Promotion Office was working on the three pillars of promoting the engagement of women, foreign nationals, and people with disabilities. While striving to create a better working environment and provide equal



Diversity forum on the topic of unconscious bias

opportunities for women and other minorities, we soon realized that we needed to make our company a place where all employees can play an active role. It was important to start by changing the mindset of management, and from there we have continued to expand the scope of our work.

How many female employees do you have?

Although the ratio of women in our workforce is just under 20%, the ratio of women in management positions is only 3.1%. We have been focused on recruiting more women since 2008, and expect the ratio of women among our employees and in management positions to increase in the future. In recent years, we have seen an increase in the number of young people applying for positions at our company, both male and female, who are looking to find fulfillment both in their work and personal lives.

There is an organization called the Japan Federation of Construction Contractors, which is made up of general contractors from all over the country. They set up an organization called the “Kensetsu-Komachi Committee” to support women working in the construction industry. Initiatives in the industry as a whole have become more active, and we believe that the number of women working in the construction industry will increase going forward.

What about childcare leave for men?

Since 2017, we have pursued initiatives to increase the number of men who take childcare leave. We were making efforts, such as distributing an e-learning course to all employees and posting testimonials on our intranet. Then, at the beginning of last year, our company President, Kazuyuki Inoue, proposed doing more to increase the number of men taking childcare leave, volunteering his assistance. Since then, things have progressed more quickly.

In fact, it all started at a meeting with women employees who had returned to work after taking

childcare leave. One woman employee voiced the opinion that men must also take childcare leave and participate in housework and child-rearing after returning to work, otherwise they could never understand the position of women or promote their advancement. Our company President was 100% convinced. We began an initiative whereby letters signed by the President are sent to male employees, not only congratulate them on the birth of their children, but also to encourage them to take childcare leave. Letters are also sent to their superiors asking for their understanding for childcare leave of their subordinates.

After starting, we received a letter of thanks from a male employee who had taken childcare leave and his partner, addressed to our company President, who then asked us to make new efforts to increase the rate of employees taking childcare leave. Top-down actions have made these initiatives much easier to implement. (From October 2021, we introduced a “Paternity Leave System”, which allows employees to take four weeks of paid leave during the first eight weeks of a child’s life.)

Do you have any initiatives to address unconscious bias?

We believe that unconscious bias is the biggest obstacle we face in furthering our aims. When bias is unconscious, it is hard to recognize. For example, when deciding whether a person is capable of doing a certain job or not, we might hear someone kindheartedly say, “It would be a pity to make a woman do that work”. They do not realize that their well-meaning comments are actually depriving a person of an opportunity. On the other hand, someone might lose an opportunity by stepping back from a job saying, “I might inconvenience others at work if my child suddenly has a fever”. We should be aware that unconscious bias is at play in these situations.

In our company, there was an implicit division of labour roles, with the site supervisors always being men who were expected to work 24-hour shifts. From 2008, women finally began to join this workforce. We have also seen a similar situation in sales and marketing, and we hope to expand the range of positions in the future. Our immediate priority is to have a woman construction manager (management level position).

What are some of your challenges and how will you address them?

We are doing everything we can to ensure a good balance between work and child-rearing, but we still face some challenges in the area of balancing work and elderly care. We will continue to work to improve the work-life balance of all of our employees and create an environment where they can enjoy both their work and personal lives.

We also need to make sure that the criteria for evaluation are clear and that employees understand



“Kawanishi Komachi ICT” team at a construction site

that everyone is given equal opportunities and evaluated on the basis of their performance. We imagine a variety of situations—such as a person in a senior position imposing old values or trying to teach younger employees in the same way they were brought up, and we organize trainings to deal with them. Training is vitally important, which is also why we provide communication training for management.

What are your company’s goals for the future?

We do not want to increase the number of women in our company just because women’s advancement is being promoted. Rather, we want to make our company a place where people with dreams join our company and can realize their dreams. For example, if a person who dreams of building a dam joins our company, we would like them to believe that if they continue to work hard, one day they will have the opportunity to actually build it. We are highly conscious of the fact that the changes we are making to provide equal job opportunities are a matter of course, and we want to make sure that the advancement of women also becomes more the norm.

We hope that when a company like ours, which has a long history and is relatively large in the construction industry, makes efforts such as these, we can have a positive impact on the whole construction industry as well as on society.

*See the following site for details.

[Promoting Diversity/Corporate Information/Shimizu Corporation \(shimz.co.jp\)](https://www.shimz.co.jp/Promoting-Diversity/Corporate-Information/Shimizu-Corporation)

Activities led by the Group Women's Activity Promotion Committee. Developing leaders who incorporate diverse perspectives into management decision-making

Shinsei Bank, Limited

- Aim: To embrace diverse values and incorporate diverse perspectives into decision-making settings.
- Approach: Taking a macro and micro view of women's empowerment.
- Conclusion: Removing biases, such as "women should do women's work", and focusing on the unique characteristics of each individual allows people to achieve success in their respective fields of expertise, creating a diverse group of leaders.

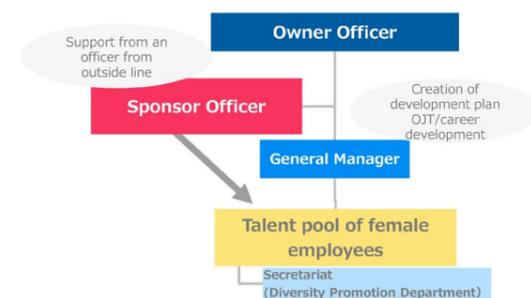
What circumstances led to the creation of the "Group Women's Activity Promotion Committee"?

It started with the participation of top management in the "Male Leaders Coalition for Empowerment of Women" organized by the Cabinet Office and the launch of an initiative to advance radical projects to address various human resource challenges. The Group Women's Activity Promotion Committee comprises the influential heads of business units and group company officers, leads our Group's efforts to promote the empowerment of women.

The Group Women's Activity Promotion Committee launched a women's development programme to select and foster potential women leaders, and we have come through a trial and error process in implementing this programme.

General managers, as the supervisors of selected participants, created individual development plans, which were then reviewed by the secretariat and the HR director. Early on in the programme, development plans were limited to certain skills and areas, with goals such as "to become a specialist in this area of work" or "to improve skills in this area". It took two to three months just to create development plans that served our original purpose of creating leaders for the organization.

In addition to line supervisors and officers, we



Sponsor Officer Scheme

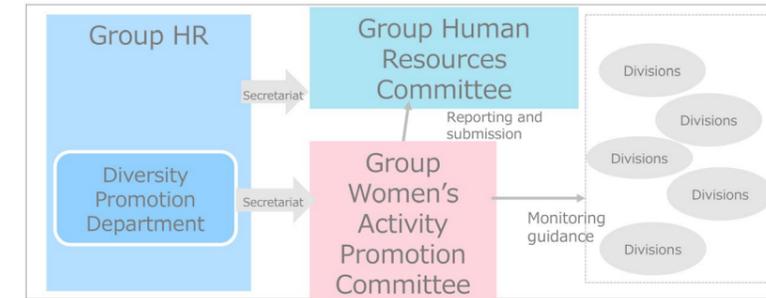
matched each participant with a "sponsor officer" from outside their line to provide support from a position outside the chain of command.

We started off the programme with training sessions for officers. External lecturers were brought in to conduct training on the obstacles women face in their careers and the ways women can be supported to foster women's empowerment and development.

What is the status of other initiatives to promote women's empowerment?

There was one incident that made top management think very seriously about the need to promote women's empowerment. Every year, our company makes two lists to recommend promotions for executive officers and general managers. One is "those likely to be promoted this year" and the other is "those likely to be promoted in two to three years". Even when women were put on the list of those likely to be promoted in two to three years, they never made it to the list for the current year promotion, even after several years had passed. We wondered whether the problem was with the women who were likely to be promoted, or was on the organization. Even when a uniform evaluation system is in place, there are various biases in the viewpoints of those who actually administer the system.

There are certain people who argue that the promotion of women's empowerment should be about evaluating men and women equally, not about showing favouritism to women. They claim that selecting women for training programmes or conducting trainings only for women amount to reverse discrimination. However, it is undeniable that who evaluates whom and by what measure, have an impact on job assignments, evaluations and recommendations for promotion. Biases can arise in evaluations when only a single measurement is used. So, we believe that those conducting evaluations need to be diverse and use a variety of measurements.



Organizational chart of the Group Women's Activity Promotion Committee

There are also challenges on the women's side. The secretariat met for about an hour with each of the 60 participants in the initial session of the first stage of the programme. In the course of these interviews, we often heard these women comment that they did not want to be treated differently only on the basis of being women. Meanwhile, when discussing the issues in depth, some women revealed that, in their hearts, they still believed that it should be men in management positions.

Were there any reasons that they might think this way?

In the past, in the name of promoting women's activities, we appointed many women to management positions at a stage when the system was not ready for career women, and their own strengths and mindsets were not sufficiently developed. We made mistakes that made things difficult for both the women involved and those around them. Many women who had witnessed such examples did not want to end up in a similar situation.

Each one of us holds some kind of bias, and it is quite difficult to recognize them and change our attitudes, but we believe in the necessity of working to unravel these sorts of complexities.

Does this mean that it's important to change our attitudes?

We once gave programme participants and their supervisors a simple survey asking whether they thought various words sounded masculine or feminine. There were about 30 words and phrases including, for example, "in charge of big projects", "ambitious", "competitive" and "sensitive". The results showed that most people felt that "in charge of big projects" and "ambitious" sounded masculine. In the end, we believe that the most important thing when thinking about diversity and inclusion is changing attitudes, but this is rarely a straightforward or easy task.

What are your company's future plans?

For one project, we selected a team of people to come up with good ideas for the project, and we ended up with a team of only women. It was more

about putting the right people in the right place, and less about them being women. It is important for people to make the most of their skills in the areas in which they excel. We also believe that when selecting women, it is important not to confuse macro effects with micro effects. From a macro perspective, it is already clear that companies committed to the advancement of women and gender equality tend to perform better and have higher share prices.

On the other hand, from a micro perspective, it is not appropriate to evaluate the effectiveness of initiatives to promote women's advancement based on the example of one female leader. Because women leaders are still in the minority, they tend to attract a lot of attention, and sometimes one woman is seen as representative of all women leaders, even though she is only one of the examples. We believe that we should not refer to individual cases to argue that women leaders are inferior or superior, and that individual cases cannot be used to make such judgments.

In order for our company to make great strides in the future, it is important to have diverse perspectives in decision-making settings. We believe that this will lead to diversity in the true sense of the word.

*See the following site for details.

[Initiatives for Employees | Sustainability | Management Policy | Corporate/IR | Shinsei Bank \(https://www.shinseibank.com/corporate/en/policy/esg/employee.html\)](https://www.shinseibank.com/corporate/en/policy/esg/employee.html)

Expanding the scope of women's activities through ongoing training for engineers, and building a gender neutral corporate culture that supports Japanese "monozukuri" ("manufacturing").

Sumitomo Riko Co. Ltd.

- Aim: To solve the problem of predicted labour shortages at construction sites by creating sites where women can play an active role.
- Approach: Expanding the scope of women's activities through training for engineers, which has been going on for 45 years, and promoting childcare leave for men.
- Conclusion: We can create a culture that supports Japan's strength in manufacturing as corporate citizens that work together regardless of gender.

Manufacturers' factories are often thought of as men's workplaces. What initiatives do you have in place to increase the number of women hires?

Of the approximately 4,500 employees we directly employ, not only in our factories, about 18% are women. The largest proportion of these are in administrative positions, and there are not many women in technical positions working in our factories.

However, as part of our efforts to achieve an equal gender balance, we now want to recruit women in the same way as men when it comes to new graduate hires. For this reason, we have steadily continued to take a focused approach, for example by informing high school teachers that we would like female students who are interested in the manufacturing industry to join our company. As a result, the number of women working in our factories has increased year by year, doubling compared to five years ago.

For women employed in technical positions, in what areas are they engaged?

Of the products made at our plant in Komaki City, Aichi Prefecture, 70-80% are automotive products. Among these, the main products we manufacture are anti-vibration rubber that reduces vibration in cars, and rubber and resin hoses for cars, and women are mainly engaged in our hose manufacturing division. We also manufacture the same products at our plant in Matsusaka City, Mie Prefecture, where many women also are actively engaged.

Another major site where women are active is our factory in Ageo City, Saitama Prefecture. There, we mainly manufacture rubber seals, which are used on the ends of automobile harnesses. Over 90% of our inspectors are women. Women serve in

important roles such as the head of the inspectors' organization and in a wide range of other jobs including supervisors.

Many women also work as operators, monitoring and controlling machines. Women are also actively engaged in the inspection process in factories that produce roller parts for printers and multifunction printers.

Are there any initiatives to increase the number of women in management positions?

We run a training course called "F-Training" which is the gateway to becoming a site supervisor. The training lasts four months and is designed to help the trainees learn about real problems and challenges in the manufacturing process. Learning opportunities maintain a balance between study and practice, and are aimed at improving the company and developing the skills of individuals. The training is conducted non-stop three times a year, with only



Presentation of insights and learning in front of board members at end of the F-Training

the participants changing. In 2021, we celebrated its 45th anniversary. Employees from all factories, including group companies, are invited to apply. Of the roughly 75 employees who undergo the training every year, the number of female participants has gradually increased over the past ten years, and now almost every session has women participants.

More than half of the women who have taken part in the F-Training have been appointed to the position of team leader, which is an on-site supervisory position. This is a high percentage, and we believe that this training has given them the self-awareness to play active roles as team leaders.

During the training, employees work in groups of three or four people from different workplaces and various fields, so even women with no experience in manufacturing can participate in the training without any problems. It also helps them to build connections within the company.

What factors influenced the increase in women participants in the F-Training?

We have repeatedly sent out information to all divisions recommending the training for women. We have also devised ways to make women want to take part in the training, such as introducing women who have played active roles in the past, and improving the content of the training, taking into account the opinions of previous women participants.

For example, one of the things we try to do is create an environment where women who want to leave work on time to pick up their children can do so without worrying about others. Many women feel guilty about being the only ones that leave work early, so we try to increase communication on a daily basis to deepen understanding among trainees.

I heard that you have set up an additional childcare encouragement leave scheme in addition to childcare leave. What kind of system is it?

The system allows male employees to take five consecutive days off with pay when a child is born. We thought that although it may be difficult for most men to take months off for childcare, they would be able to take one week, including the weekends, so we implemented this system.

In fiscal year 2019, 50 employees took advantage of this scheme. This is about 30% of those who were entitled to take the leave, and we think the scheme has been effective on a certain level. To date, we have made continuous efforts to improve the working environment for employees raising children, for example by building day-care centres on company premises and expanding childcare leave. In the process, we feel that male employees' awareness on childcare leave has also changed.

In addition, because our childcare



"Koala Pokke" onsite childcare centre at the Komaki plant. The centre was established in 2009, the same year childcare encouragement leave was introduced. About 30 children are regularly cared for there.

encouragement leave is limited to the period up to a child's first birthday, some employees have said that it was easy for them to tell their colleagues, "I have to take some time off because the system only lasts one year".

As is the case throughout the Japanese manufacturing industry, the shortage of labour is expected to become even more acute in the future.

It will continue to be important for us to prove to women that our company is a good place to work, but we must not let this stop at the level of performance. Ultimately, our aim is to create a working environment where all employees alike, regardless of gender, can support Japan's manufacturing industry as corporate citizens.

*See the following site for details.

<https://www.sumitomoriko.co.jp/english/csr/portal/>

Creating a climate conducive to innovation by promoting diversity through active dialogue to discover “happiness” in the workplace

Sekisui House, Ltd.

- Aim: To pursue happiness in the 100-year-life by “making homes the happiest places in the world”.
- Approach: In order for our employees to pursue happy lives, we as a company must first discover our own happiness and the happiness in our workplaces. We will engage in-depth dialogue on this topic.
- Conclusion: Initiatives to create a workplace climate conducive to innovation.

What was the impetus for your company to promote childcare leave?

After our CEO, Yoshihiro Nakai, was appointed President in 2018, his first overseas investor relations visit was to Stockholm. He was shocked to see so many men pushing prams, a sight completely different from Japan. We began operation of our childcare leave scheme for men just four or five months after his return.

In July of that year, we declared publicly that our company would aim for all male employees with children age three and under to take a full month or more of childcare leave. We believed it to be meaningful to have all eligible employees be asked to take childcare leave.

In Japan, the image of a man as the breadwinner and the mainstay of the family remains strong. Even when we told them that childcare leave benefits were available, it was difficult to find people who were willing to take extended leave. It seems they were worried that they would lose their wages and bonuses if they took a month off, or that they would not be able to pay their mortgage or make ends meet. So we decided to offer them full pay starting from the first day of their leave for up to one month, along the same lines that annual leave is offered. We told them that the company would be responsible for paying their basic salary and all other benefits, so they could take leave without worry.

Even so, many voiced anxiety about taking a whole month off work. Thinking it would be easier for people to return to work after childcare leave if they took only a week off, we made it possible for employees to divide childcare leave into a maximum of four separate periods, depending on their family circumstances and work commitments. We believed that if we could ensure flexibility, it would be easier for everyone to take their leave.

Did you face any difficulties in implementing the system?

The most important thing was changing the mindsets of employees, and that was the hardest part. Previously, employees had only taken one or two days of childcare leave and that was it. It was hard for many to imagine taking a month off all of a sudden. So we organized an internal event called the “Ikumen (‘Good Papa’) Forum”, where President Nakai talked about his experiences in Stockholm, why men should take childcare leave, and the benefits of doing so. We connected about 1,900 employees, including the target group and their bosses, and streamed the event live. We were also joined by the Chairperson of Fathering Japan, Tetsuya Ando, who spent about an hour and a half giving us a good overview of the benefits of men taking childcare leave.

We created a portal site on our intranet where we showcase examples of employees who took their leave. For example, some thought it would be impossible for employees in customer-focused sales and design positions at a housing manufacturer to take leave, but by showing an example of an employee who took a month’s childcare leave but still produced results at work, we were able to change both the motivation and mindset of our employees.

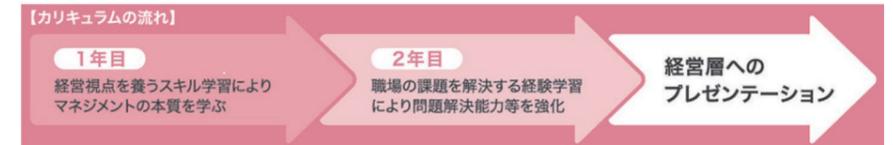
I heard that your company has its own guidebook and white paper on men’s childcare leave.

From the early period after the system was launched, we used a questionnaire to carefully survey employees who took the leave. We used this feedback to compile our “Guidebook for Men on Childcare Leave” containing first-hand accounts of experiences and failures, comments from spouses, and a Q&A section that gives advice on what to do in various situations.

In 2019, we also began holding forums open to people outside the company. As a part of this



“Men’s Childcare Leave White Paper”, published in September 2021.



The 6th graduating class and training curriculum flowchart of the Sekisui House Women’s College Curriculum Outline

First Year: Learning about the essence of management by acquiring the skills to develop a management perspective→Second Year: Strengthening problem-solving skills and other abilities through experiential learning to resolve workplace issues→Presentations to top management

initiative, we conducted a questionnaire survey of a total of 9,400 people—100 men and 100 women from each of Japan’s 47 prefectures—to ask about the actual state of men’s engagement in childcare and housework, as well as the thoughts of their spouses. The results were compiled into the “Ikumen White Paper”. Researching and analysing the actual state of childcare leave for men revealed a difference between our company and Japan as a whole. We published this white paper twice, in 2019 and 2020. Then in 2021, we changed the name to “Men’s Childcare Leave White Paper,” which we published in two volumes, the main volume and a special edition.

Please tell me about your policies on telecommuting and well-being.

We are working to improve our systems and facilities to promote new ways of working, such as telecommuting, without compromising productivity. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have encouraged working from home and staggered working hours. Telecommuting allows for more efficient use of time and has the advantage of making it easier to balance work with childcare and elderly care. Even if the pandemic tapers off in the future, we intend to continue to practice a balance between in-person work and telecommuting.

What measures do you have concerning women in management positions?

Since 2005, we have been actively recruiting women, especially in sales and marketing, based on the concept, “without women, there will be no growth for our company”. We began by training women salespeople and technical staff to work on the front lines. In 2006, we established our policy on diversity promotion, and since 2007 we have held events for women salespersons to interact. This year marked the 14th time we have held this event.

Starting in 2014, we began a training programme

for prospective female managers called the “Sekisui House Women’s College”. Each year, we select approximately 20 participants and focus on efficiently and effectively developing suitable personnel for management positions based on a curriculum lasting approximately two years.

In the past, site supervisors were all men. In an aim to expand work opportunities for women, our national headquarters and head offices teamed up on the “Women Site Supervisors Support Programme” to support the development of female site supervisors. After making upgrades to workplaces including toilets, we are now seeing more female site supervisors. Half of our customers are women, and we often hear that women have decision-making power when building homes. We believe that we need women’s perspectives to develop products that meet the needs of our customers, and to generate diverse ideas from the standpoint of real-life situations.

Please tell me about your company’s future outlook.

We also believe that men wield considerable influence in promoting women’s empowerment. In the construction industry in particular, 80% of the workforce is men, so we are very supportive of UN Women’s “He for She” concept, which advocates partnering for gender equality. We are taking on many challenges, including childcare leave for men and the promotion of women’s empowerment. We believe that the best way to come closer to gender equality is for men to take childcare leave, not only at our company, but throughout Japan. Going forward, we hope to make contributions to society by communicating our efforts to the world at large.

*See the following site for details.

https://www.sekisuihouse.co.jp/english/diversity_inclusion/

Diversity and women's empowerment create new value in consumer-oriented business.

Seven & i Holdings Co.

- Aim: To directly link diversity and women's empowerment to our business while maintaining a consumer-oriented perspective.
- Approach: Encouraging a transformation in awareness that allows all people to promote diversity.
- Conclusion: Creating innovation through the active promotion of women

How long has your company been promoting the active role of women?

Our Diversity Promotion Project was launched in 2012. Our Group was ahead of the times with our first woman director in 1993, so we have long had a good foundation for women to play active roles. We had difficulties to increase the number of women in executive positions at that time, and we launched this project in response to the growing focus on diversity. The commitment of our top management, even from the early stages, has been a major driving force to this day.

Was there any particular impetus for launching this initiative?

In 2006, Toshifumi Suzuki, who was CEO at the time, declared to the Group's executives at the management policy briefing for that year that our Group would actively promote women and increase the ratio of women executives to 20 or 25 percent. These goals were also communicated externally. This declaration was based on an unshakeable belief that the first step to bring about the innovation necessary for the sustainable growth of our company was to actively promote women.

Are there any innovations that have actually been made possible by women playing an active role?

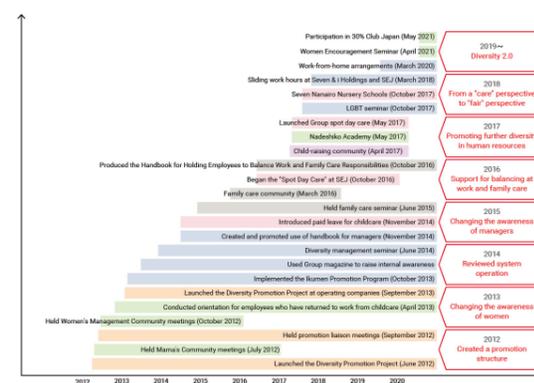
In 2012, we implemented an initiative in our department stores and supermarkets to have women employees lead in managing the stores. All store managers and floor managers are women. It was Suzuki's idea, and it created a good chemistry. Women are good at creating flat organizations. First of all, this makes it easier for opinions to come from the bottom up. Previously, documents were often prepared in order to convey opinions to the store manager. However, the women managers immediately took action on opinions that were exchanged verbally, which was reflected in the creation of a sales floor and product assortment

geared to the customer's point of view. The motivation of the employees making the suggestions also increased. As the working environment was improving rapidly, the data showed that time spent in meetings was reduced and overtime was halved. These achievements boosted women's confidence.

How did this lead to subsequent promotion of women's activities?

Although there was no immediate increase in the number of women in management positions, we did see a transformation in the attitudes of men, especially those in management positions. As more women were actively promoted, management positions with shortened working hours were created. The number of women in management positions has without a doubt gradually increased.

Every year since around 2014, we have also invited a variety of external speakers to conduct awareness-raising seminars aimed at a deeper understanding of diversity in terms of reforming ways of working, leadership and other issues. This year the seminar was conducted on the topics of



Initiatives to promote Diversity & Inclusion

unconscious bias and psychological safety. To date, more than 5,000 employees in management positions have participated. Messages to management on the importance of diversity and inclusion that come from within the company often go unheeded. We have found that when these messages come from outside the company, our managers perk up their ears, leading to new awareness.

What sort of results have you seen?

When the project was launched, we conducted interviews with female employees about the issues they were facing. Results showed that although many of them enjoyed their current jobs and found them rewarding, they were worried about what would happen after they had children. This led to the creation of our "Mama's Community", an activity for women who are raising children. The community made some institutional changes. For example, we set up temporary childcare facilities called "Spot Day Care" for employees who work on public holidays, both in the company and in regional offices (currently closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic). Mothers and fathers can bring their children to work and leave them at the day care, then go about their normal day at work, pick up their children and go home. This has had the added benefit of increasing the understanding of bosses and colleagues who actually see the children. We also have day care centres for our merchants and plan to continue these initiatives. Employees can also use a system for shortened working hours until their children start junior high school, so the systems we have in place do serve as a safety net.

It sounds like things are going well, but do you have any challenges?

One challenge is that we do not have a large pool of women candidates for management positions. In recent years, the ratio of male to female new graduate hires has become more equal, but in terms of the Group as a whole, the percentage of female employees is around 30%. Also, when it comes to work-life balance, the retail industry operates on weekends and evenings. We have always felt that, compared to other industries, this causes some difficulties for employees with young children or those caring for the elderly.

What efforts are you making to improve the situation?

At Ito-Yokado, about 70% of all employees are part-time workers. This is why we have a system that allows part-time employees to play an active role. Last year, we even had a store manager who was first hired as a part-time employee.

Each of our companies has been implementing measures to foster women candidates for managerial positions, and from this year we have gone one step further and increased opportunities for development



Women's Encouragement Seminar

as a Group. About 60 women candidates with high potential for growth were selected from each company in the Group to take part in the Women's Encouragement Seminar, a group-wide training programme.

Because we held the seminar online, employees could participate from their respective locations around the country, including those who work shorter hours. After hearing about our Group's management policy and philosophy, product strategies and SDGs initiatives from the President and other senior management, participants engaged in discussions. The seminar not only provided an opportunity for participants to cultivate an interest in management by listening to stories told from different perspectives than those they usually come across at work, but also increased their motivation through discussions with other participants from diverse backgrounds and occupations. Many reported that they were encouraged and inspired by the comments of women working in the same Group.

What is your vision for the Diversity and Inclusion Promotion Project?

One of the key features of our work is that we do not focus only on a specific target group, but on everyone. We have tried to raise awareness among managers and non-managers, men and women, and among everyone. There are still some people who do not feel a personal connection to this issue, but we have seen definite changes in the awareness of managers, male employees and female employees. We will continue our steady efforts to promote diversity and inclusion going forward.

*See the following site for details.

<https://www.7andi.com/en/sustainability/theme/theme4/humanresource.html>

Expanding the circle of awareness and building a corporate culture of diversity, regardless of age, gender, or nationality.

Softbank Corporation

- Aim: To increase the ratio of active women in our company, regardless of age, gender or nationality.
- Approach: Conduct trainings that can be attended voluntarily at the participant's own time and pace.
- Conclusion: Expanding the circle of awareness within the company creates an environment that embraces diversity and different perspectives.



Training session

Please tell me how diversity promotion is organized at your company.

We are committed to providing opportunities and a conducive environment for diverse talent, irrespective of age, gender, nationality, or disability, to demonstrate their individuality and strengths. Positions and benefits are determined on the basis of fair evaluation according to role, performance, and ability.

We aim to create an organization in which each and every employee is united in our ambition to realize our management philosophy, and in which we can freely exchange ideas and generate innovation while making the most of each other's strengths.

Promotion of diversity within our company is the responsibility of the executive director in charge of human resources (Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO)), under whose supervision it is carried out. In order to address issues faced by each organization, the Diversity Promotion Section, a dedicated unit within the Human Resources Division, is responsible for implementing initiatives such as our e-learning course on unconscious bias for all employees and diversity management training for managers.

Our Diversity Promotion Section was set up in 2017 within the Human Resources Division. It consists of seven employees, each of whom is responsible for diversity promotion in addition to their other duties, and is set up in a way that allows each of them to demonstrate their respective expertise.

What percentage of your employees are women?

As of April 2021, the ratio of women among our employees is approximately 26.9%. While we believe that our company provides an environment in which all ages, genders, and nationalities can play an active role, the percentage of women in management positions is 7.1%.

Why are there so few women in management positions?

We conducted a survey to understand attitudes towards female management within the company. The results showed that, compared to men, women were less likely to want to become managers.

There were two main reasons for this. The first is concern over working hours. Many felt they would be willing if they could fulfil their role without working overtime, if they could fulfil their role with shorter hours, and if they had the understanding and support of others. Yet, they felt that environment was not yet available to them. The other reason was a lack of confidence. One of the survey questions was "Do you think men are more likely to be given jobs that lead to promotions?" A certain percentage of both men and women said that men were more likely to be entrusted with such jobs. We believe that having opportunities to achieve results in challenging work is a good way to build confidence, so we need to work on the way work is assigned.



Training session

Is there anything you are doing to increase the number of women in management positions?

We provide career training for women employees. We ask senior female managers to be on a panel for this training, and it has been very well received. After the training, the number of women interested in taking on leadership and management roles most definitely increases. This is a great thing for our company. When employees have the opportunity to put their careers in perspective and gain confidence, they have a change of heart. We are aware of the importance of continuing to support women in our future efforts—helping them to flick that switch by reminding them that they originally entered the workforce with a career in mind, and of the joy of a challenge.

We also ran a training course for female employees on the subject of becoming aware of the biases that women have about female employees and the biases that women have about themselves. This training was designed to help them realize that in some cases, giving up on work because of a lack of confidence can turn into a loss for the team, thereby encouraging them to take a step forward.

Please tell me more specifically about your work on unconscious bias.

We are running an e-learning course for managers and general staff. We developed it based on the advice of experts, and the content is focused on examples of work assignments.

For managers, we do another practical training to go along with the e-learning course that helps them reflect on their own biases and how to overcome them. For example, we have them brainstorm and write down what kind of bias is lurking in the word "normally", a term that is often used casually. We invite external lecturers and share real examples of what happens in the workplace, using discussion and group work to promote learning. We also have them engage in role-playing sessions simulating

one-on-one interactions with subordinates. By also taking on the role of different subordinates, participants can relate better to the feelings of subordinates and become more aware of the biases held by supervisors.

Please tell me about the future outlook for your company.

We have set a target to have 20% women in management positions by 2035. In order to achieve this goal, we have set up the "Committee for the Promotion of Women in the Workforce", which includes external experts as advisors, to identify issues and promote further initiatives.

*See the following site for details.

<https://www.softbank.jp/en/corp/philosophy/human-resource/diversity/>

Actively incorporating the perspectives of diverse individuals to generate innovation and realize our Group's Purpose

Daiichi Sankyo Company, Limited

- Aim: To promote inclusion and diversity to accomplish our Group's Purpose "to contribute to the enrichment of quality of life around the world" by expanding our global business and creating innovation.
- Approach: Our Group has implemented a wide range of initiatives in response to the issues of (1) motivating women employees, (2) supporting work-life balance, and (3) fostering a good workplace culture, including various training programmes and the enhancement of institutions to support a balance between work and family life.
- Conclusion: We can accomplish our Group's Purpose by valuing each person as an individual and actively embracing diverse perspectives in the course of our work.

Please tell me about your company's commitment to inclusion and diversity.

Our Group defines diversity in the broad sense as encompassing a range of attributes, including nationality, gender, and age, as well as the differing specialties, attitudes, values, and lifestyles of different jobs. We believe that when all of our Group employees actively embrace the diversity of each individual, we are able to maximize each person's potential, leading to expansion of our global business and the creation of innovation.

Why are inclusion and diversity necessary?

Our Group's mission is "the creation of innovative pharmaceuticals and the provision of pharmaceuticals addressing diverse medical needs". In order to achieve this mission, we believe it is essential to create a culture of mutual respect among our employees from a global perspective.

On a global basis, we are promoting the practice of core behaviours to foster a "One DS Culture" as one of the strategic pillars of our Fifth Mid-Term Business Plan.

One of our Group's three Core Behaviors is "Be Inclusive & Embrace Diversity", which is defined as "valuing people for who they are as individuals and welcoming diverse perspectives which enables us to achieve more". As part of our efforts to put this Core Behavior into practice, we launched the Global I&D Project to promote inclusion and diversity through regular information sharing and collaboration between personnel from the Group's various global locations.

In Japan, we have a variety of measures underway to promote inclusion and diversity, including measures to improve productivity based on various kinds of support and to assist employees in

realizing a work life cycle. These include promoting women's advancement and initiatives for sexual minorities such as LGBT, support for balancing work and life events such as childbirth, childcare and elderly care, support for activities of the elderly, and employment of people with disabilities.

Can you tell me about the context in which women's advancement is promoted?

In 2016, when we were formulating our General Business Owner Action Plan based on the Act on Promotion of Women's Participation and Advancement in the Workplace we conducted an assessment of our current situation and an analysis of challenges faced, focusing on the evaluation criteria used to certify companies that excel in this area. As a result, we identified the following issues: "the percentage of female employees still employed at our company approximately 10 years after being hired as new graduates is lower than that of male employees" and "the percentage of female workers in the executive ranks is lower than the industry standard".

Please also tell me about your efforts to correct this gender ratio.

Our Group is implementing a wide range of measures, including various training programmes and upgrades of institutions to support a balance between work and family life, based on the following issues: (1) motivating women employees, (2) supporting work-life balance, and (3) fostering a good workplace culture. The ratio of women employees is now increasing. In addition, the ratio of new graduates hires is roughly the same for men and women.

Do you have any initiatives to increase the number of women in management positions?

In 2016, we set up the Shining Women's Advancement Network (SWAN), a network of women in management, and activities are ongoing. SWAN's activities play an important role in creating a place where women managers can share their concerns and encourage each other to improve, where women managers can support the next generation of even more active women, and where women managers can receive support from management to further advance their careers. In 2016, only 12 women (women employee ratio of 2.4%) held management level positions, but by 2020, this number had risen to 40 (women employee ratio of 7.3%). Fostering the development of the next generation of women is an issue shared by all divisions. A greater number of women managers enables business decisions to be based on diverse perspectives and viewpoints, which we believe will lead to sustainable growth as a global company over the medium and long term.



Pride

and received a bronze award in recognition of our efforts.

In what ways do you support your employees in developing their future careers?

Our initiatives include provision of career path models, publication of job and organizational information, and professional training programmes for all employees.

From fiscal year 2019, we began offering a Career Design Seminar in the form of an online webinar for women whose work is more likely to be affected by life events. This event was designed to provide enhanced career support by bringing in external speakers to give lectures and including panel discussions by senior women employees within the company. In 2020, the webinar was opened up to all employees, not only women, to provide them with an opportunity to consider how they can take advantage of change to develop careers well-suited to themselves.

Please tell me about your company's future outlook.

Our mission is to research and develop medicines and create new medicines that contribute to society by fulfilling the unmet medical needs of a wide range of patients. We believe that we can achieve greater goals by valuing each person as an individual and actively embracing diverse perspectives in the course of our work.

*See the following site for details.

[Inclusion & Diversity - Our Workplace - Sustainability - Daiichi Sankyo](#)



Trend in women managers at Daiichi Sankyo

Blue: Number of women managers (persons)
Green: Ratio of women managers (%)

What are some of your initiatives to address LGBT issues?

To date, our Group in Japan has held LGBT seminars for human resources professionals to promote understanding and awareness on LGBT issues. We have also incorporated precautions related to outing into the content of trainings for new managers and implemented an e-learning course for all employees. Likewise, we introduced an LGBT support system and set up an external consultation service aimed at creating workplaces that are comfortable for members of the LGBT community and those around them. In terms of LGBT support, in October 2020, we revised our company system to allow same-sex partners to receive the same support as legal spouses. For the first time, we entered the PRIDE Index 2020, developed by a volunteer organization called "work with Pride",

Promotion of diversity and inclusion by each and every one of us with a sense of ownership, as a source of value creation

Dai Nippon Printing Co., Ltd.

- Aim: To implement our Diversity Declaration as part of our mid-term plan and management strategy and strengthening of non-financial capital.
- Approach: Visualizing diversity and inclusion activities based on easy-to-understand and thorough methods, utilising data.
- Conclusion and Goals: To become a company that creates innovation and value, where each and every employee is a party to the promotion of diversity.

Please tell me about the Diversity Promotion Department.

In 2016, we established the Diversity Promotion Department to accelerate our efforts to create value by leveraging diversity. In order to promote the independent activities of our business units, we also placed a Diversity Promotion Committee in each business unit, which is chaired by the head of the business unit. The three basic principles are: (1) to develop a diverse workforce, (2) to foster a culture in which diverse talent can play an active role, and (3) to realize diverse ways of working.

In promoting activities, members of the Diversity Promotion Department are particularly conscious of the following four points: visualization of diversity & inclusion (D&I) activities, information dissemination based on facts and data, company-wide partnerships, and maintaining psychological safety in the workplace. While we have many ideas, we have opted to make activities to promote diversity as visual as possible and to put out information based on facts and data, avoiding sensationalism.

In addition, our policy on diversity states that “each and every employee is a member of our diverse community”. By making it clear that diversity includes everyone, not only certain groups such as women or people with disabilities, we hope that employees will take an active role in addressing the issue, rather than thinking it has nothing to do with them.

Please tell me about the initiatives and systems you have in place to promote diversity.

In our mid-term management plan released in June 2020, we set out to “strengthen our non-financial capital”. Diversity is a key element of this effort. In July of the same year, alongside a “Diversity Declaration” issued by our President, we formulated a mid-term vision for diversity management.

One of our efforts is in promoting childcare leave for male employees. In December 2020, our

President endorsed the “100% Paternity Leave Declaration”, run by Work-Life Balance, Co., Ltd. Companies declare their aim to have 100% of male employees take childcare leave, and this declaration is shared on Work-Life Balance’s website. Thus, companies’ declarations are publicized both internally and externally, leading to greater promotion of childcare leave for men.

Our system for childcare leave is unique in that it can be taken multiple times until the child turns two years old, and the first five days are paid. In addition, we have been running our “Kangaroo Club”, a seminar to support employees in balancing work and child-rearing, for over 10 years. The seminar places emphasis on three points: (1) discussing childcare and careers as a couple, (2) allowing non-employee partners to participate, and (3) division of participants into two groups: (a) prospective parents and (b) parents returning to work. We have received positive feedback from participants. Some commented that they had never had the opportunity to discuss their careers together as a couple before, and that the seminar gave them a chance to plan their careers together. Others noted that the seminar gave them peace of mind regarding what to expect after returning to work.

How many people actually take part?

In the seminar held in February of this year, participants for both the morning and afternoon sessions totalled around 90 people, including employees and partners from other companies. In a post-seminar questionnaire, 20 of the 25 male respondents, or 80%, said they would like to take childcare leave. For those who did not plan to take leave, we asked them about their reasons, allowing us to ascertain the factors making it difficult for them to take childcare leave, such as a lack of awareness of the system and the individualization of their work. We are now working on measures to address these.



(Left) Next generation women leaders training
(Right) Internal web page for our first Diversity Week

What is the current status of women’s advancement?

The ratio of women in our workforce is around 20%, and about 7% for management positions. In recent years, women have accounted for around 40% of new recruits. Thanks in part to our D&I promotion activities and systematic training programmes, the number of employees who are one step closer to management positions has increased, and the percentage of women among employees promoted to section manager has risen to a certain level. Ultimately, we aim to create an environment in which women can aim for higher management positions, from section manager to department manager or general manager.*

Mentoring is used in trainings for the next generation of women leaders. Women are paired with mentors who are general managers from different divisions. This is designed to give both sides the opportunity to broaden their horizons. Female employees have the chance to discuss their careers without worrying about hierarchical relationships, and the mentors have the chance to learn about the ideas and abilities of female employees.

Please tell me about any concrete efforts to address unconscious bias.

We implemented an e-learning course along with a “follow-up worksheet”. Because the e-learning course is done individually, it is easy to see the unconscious biases that affect oneself, but difficult to figure out what unconscious biases are reflected in one’s own behaviour. Accordingly, we set up workshop sessions for section and team members to discuss the unconscious biases they have been exposed to in an aim to promote deeper awareness.

In February 2021, we organized an internal company event called “Diversity Week”. More than 15 different kinds of programmes were offered on topics including “fostering a sense of ownership” and “making D&I easy to understand”. By clearly communicating the ideas of management with

*In July 2021, we launched a sponsorship programme to promote the appointment of women to senior management positions, with the aim of fostering an organizational culture that makes the most of individual strengths and creating new value by enhancing diversity in decision-making settings.

a message from the President and a round-table discussion among the heads of the various business units, we were able to promote the psychological safety of our employees. To create a sense of unity among employees, we made sure to include programmes in which employees could easily participate. For example, we held a “diversity lunch” simultaneously with company cafeterias in all our locations across the country. What many at first thought was Japanese food was actually international cuisine prepared innovatively in a Japanese style, and the lunch included an explanation of these dishes. We also held a diversity poetry contest on topics such as telecommuting, which provided an opportunity to experience the funny side of our diverse workforce.

Do you have any other unique initiatives?

In cooperation with one of our publishing company clients, we created a picture e-book on D&I that we made available to employees and their families free of charge for a period of time. This initiative aimed to give employees the opportunity to think about D&I with their families. For example, employees who are parents might gain new insights from the honest and straightforward opinions voiced by their children when they read the book together. It was also intended to help employees understand that it is normal for employees to differ from each other, just as family members are all people with different ideas.

Please tell me about your company’s future goals.

As stated in our mid-term vision, we aim for each and every one of our employees to have a “sense of ownership”. We can create new value by understanding that we are all part of diversity and by promoting dialogue and collaboration based on our company’s guiding principles. We will continue to make every effort to promote diversity and inclusion going forward.

*See the following site for details.

[Diversity & Inclusion/DNP Group](#)

Expanding opportunities for women to play active roles with measures geared to worksites and the “Jutaku Komachi” organization. Evolving as a company where everyone can play an active role, regardless of age or gender.

Daiwa House Industry Co., Ltd.

- Aim: To increase the ratio of women in management positions by reforming our personnel system, creating more comfortable work environments, and promoting standardization of work.
- Approach: Implemented through training, internal anti-harassment code, external guidebooks, and the “Jutaku Komachi” network of home builders, with “Increase, Maintain, and Utilize” as a key words.
- Conclusion: We want to increase the number of women in management positions, allowing both men and women to balance their active work and personal lives.

What was the impetus for your project to promote women’s advancement?

In 2005, we launched a project within the Human Resources Department and began to explore for ourselves what we could do to promote more active roles for women. Then, after interviewing office workers and other women employees, we came to the conclusion that we were in a vicious cycle where we had only a small number of female employees that we were having trouble maintaining, making them unable to play active roles. We then began to think about measures to deal with each of these issues based on the keywords “increase, maintain, and utilize”. Bosses in our various departments also sensed a pending crisis if women continued to be unable to play active roles, realizing that our company would fall into decline. In the beginning, because we had many women working in administration, the aim was to make use of their abilities in some way, not only in support positions.

In 2006, when former Chairman Takeo Higuchi went overseas on an investor relations trip, he was very surprised when told by investors that he needed to increase the ratio of female directors to 50%. This was one of the reasons why promotion of women’s advancement accelerated.

What is the current status of women in hiring?

We have always aimed to recruit a ratio of 30% women. We hire about 150 new female employees at a time, and we get recommendations from universities all over the country. We also visit schools to advertise ourselves as a company where women play active roles. In terms of job types, we have a large number of women who want to work in design, perhaps because general housing and shopping malls appeal to them. For the last five years or so, half of our design staff has been women.

I heard that you are actively increasing the number of female site supervisors.

A site supervisor’s job is to ensure the safety of the site, to foresee hazards, to supervise workers, to ensure that design plans are communicated to workers accurately, and to check the quality of the work. The job does not require any physical strength or muscle power. The job can be adequately carried out with a good knowledge of architecture and the ability to manage people. The number of female site supervisors has been increasing because we realized that they can do the job well.

When women are active on sites, we gain new perspectives and ideas on how to make the environment more friendly for everyone. For example, we made improvements to toilets for the women, which ended up also being greatly appreciated by the men. We switched from heavy helmets to more lightweight ones, which was also appreciated by our aging site supervisors and workers.



Woman employee supervising construction work at a building site

In addition, alongside nationwide work-style reform, there has been a trend towards a five-day work week on construction sites. Likewise, some employees with small children are leaving the site at exactly 5 o’clock in order to pick up their children. Having consulted closely with female site supervisors, the industry now has an organisation called the “Jutaku Komachi”, in which women themselves are discussing what changes need to be made.

Also, it is not only women site supervisors that are on the increase. We have also increased the number of women in after-sales service positions, a specialized position in housing inspections. Originally there were only men, but now there are between 60 and 80 women working in this position. Having men and women work in pairs has contributed to levelling out of the workload and also enhanced customer satisfaction by making female customers feel more at ease when asking questions.

Please tell me about the number of women in management positions and your approach to career development.

The number of women in management positions has doubled in the past four to five years, from around 80 in 2015 to 160 at present. From the beginning of our initiatives, we intended to increase the number of women in management positions, thereby bringing more diversity into decision-making settings. For this reason, we have continued to provide training for management position candidates.

The training is open to all employees, regardless of job category or business type, and is conducted over two days with a break in between. There were some employees who felt uncomfortable and resisted the idea of holding the training only for women. However, we told them that the training was not being held because they were lacking in some way, but to provide a learning opportunity. We also made sure not to use words like “feminine” or “female perspective”. We have continually worked to send out a message that women can aim for management positions while maintaining their own personal work style, and little by little, we are seeing results.

How did you roll out your diversity initiatives across the country?

Originally, we evaluated our company’s performance on an office-by-office basis. We later decided to include criteria that could be objectively and quantitatively measured in an aim to achieve diversity at all of our offices, not just in terms of sales and other figures. From the perspective of diversity, we incorporated criteria not only concerning women, but also the employment rate of people with disabilities, turnover rate among young employees, and the percentage of men taking childcare leave. In addition, we included items related to the



Training of women candidates for management positions (currently conducted online)

improvements in work style we wanted our offices to implement, such as reduction in overtime hours and percentage of paid leave taken. We also provide a company-wide training to deepen understanding of LGBT issues.

What is the rate of men taking childcare leave?

At present the rate stands around 42%. This is only for short-term childcare leave, so we consider this to be challenge we face going forward. As mentioned earlier, we incorporated the rate of male employees taking childcare leave into evaluations of our offices, which has increased the rate by about 10 percent in just one year. Of course, taking leave is not the only objective. We intend to set up other systems and frameworks to create working environments where employees can be involved in child-rearing not only during their leave, but also on a daily basis.

Please tell me about the future outlook for your company.

We have implemented a variety of measures, but there are still employees who struggle to balance their work and personal lives. Going forward, we want to involve more men in the process. While setting up systems and frameworks is a given, we also want to develop internal networks and employee groups in which the voices of individual employees can be heard. We are working to build on our achievements one by one to become a company where all can play active roles, regardless of gender or age.

*See the following site for details.

[Diversity and Inclusion | Commitment to Society | For a Sustainable Future | Daiwa House Group](#)

Becoming the “Best Place to Work in the World” based on a culture of mutual respect and growth for each and every employee through the promotion of women’s advancement

Daily Advertising Co., Ltd.

- Aim: To become the “best place to work in the world” based on the steadfast belief that our company cannot grow and develop without the active contribution of women.
- Approach: Using knowledge gained on tours of Scandinavian countries that lead in gender issues and in trainings for women in management to continue to build new frameworks.
- Conclusion and Goals: To create a culture based on the mutual respect and growth of each and every employee. Ultimately, we will contribute to society by sharing our know-how on promoting women’s empowerment with those outside our company.

I have heard that your company is very forward-thinking when it comes to women’s empowerment.

Our company will be celebrating its 60th anniversary in 2022. For the past 30 years, our CEO, Kazunori Ishikawa, has been saying that the active participation of women is essential for the development of our company. We have always had a global perspective and focused on employee training. We spend a lot of money on training for each of our employees based on the idea of “earmarking all profits for the training of employees”.

We currently have about 800 employees in our Group as a whole, and more than half of them are women. The ratio of men to women in our company is also around fifty-fifty.

It is often said that awareness at the top is important for the success of women.

When our CEO was general manager of sales, he offered to take over the company that his predecessor was trying to shut down. About 45 years have passed since then. He is a visionary with a keen business sense. Some 30-40 years ago, our employees were mostly men, but we have completely changed. He believed in the power of women.

Ishikawa often tells the story of how, when he was young and visiting New York on a tour of the advertising industry, he saw a woman in red high heels walking briskly across an office floor and thought, “This is the way it has to be from now on”. In an age when men were the main workers in Japan, seeing women who were just as active as men made a big impression on him and became a symbol that he always kept in mind.

Since the 1990s, he has also made frequent visits to Europe. In many European countries,

women have been quite active in the working world for some time. These visits were also a major influence in forming his global perspective.

This is one of the reasons why, for three years starting in 2012, Group employees were sent on study tours of Scandinavian companies.

Then in 2019, we sent ten women executives to the United States, mainly New York, to visit companies and gain knowledge by interviewing active women and top management. Although currently interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, we have a three-year plan to carry out this project again.

Have your systems and initiatives for women’s empowerment run smoothly from the beginning?

In the beginning, during an age when there was little understanding of women’s advancement in the workplace, we naturally faced a great deal of opposition from male executives. Even though they might verbally agree that we needed to bring in more



Company tour in the US: We were inspired and learned through interviews and discussions about the mindset and spirit of working women leaders.

women, changes in attitudes lagged behind, making it hard to get rid of the male-dominated mindset. Of course, there were no female executives in those days, so there was no one in a position to voice any counter opinions. Even so, after 30 years of work, we feel that we have finally cast off this old mindset. Today, the percentage of female managers at the general manager level and above for all Group companies has exceeded 30%. However, Ishikawa is still not satisfied. We are currently in the process of drawing up a plan to increase female directors.

Please tell me about your tours in Scandinavia.

For three years, starting in 2012, we sent about 10 people each year on a 14-day tour of Scandinavia. I myself participated for two consecutive years, visiting local companies and interviewing women leaders. Looking back, I think that these trips to Scandinavia represented a major turning point for our company.

What concrete changes happened at this point?

Through our visits to Scandinavia, we learned that the most important thing for women’s empowerment is the establishment of systems. Listening to women’s stories, we realized that the situation in Europe 30 years ago was similar to Japan’s at the present time. The women in Europe had had a really hard time, but they managed to change the system in 30 years. All the women discussed together what we could learn from them and what we could take back and apply to our own company. That was the first year. Yet it was not so easy to get male leaders to accept the proposals that we had worked so hard to put together. We realized that changing only women’s attitudes is not very meaningful.

So, for the second year, two male leaders were invited to participate in the tour along with the women. In the third year, we increased the number of men to four. The attitudes of these male leaders did change, but it took some time for these ideas to sink in. Involving male leaders and having them experience first-hand the importance of the initiative, led to a shift in awareness—from women’s empowerment being “something promoted by women” to it becoming “a strategy that should be implemented by all employees”.

We now have a 100% return-to-work rate after maternity and childcare leave. Before we put systems in place, many women’s only option was to quit. The visits to Scandinavia provided the impetus to revise our existing systems and create new ones. We have repeatedly updated our systems, and I believe that they now support a work-life balance.

We have also made it easier to take time off by giving various names to different types of leave, such as Birthday Holiday, Refresh Leave, Family Support Days, and Health Holidays. Employees can take leave to look after themselves and their



A voluntary-participation based “New Shirayuri Club” training course on product development from a woman’s perspective at our Hokkaido training centre and winery, NIKI Hills. Products are actually commercialized and sold.

families.

What have you been working on recently?

We also have our “New Shirayuri Club”, in which female employees from all Group companies can connect. Only women can join, so from a gender perspective it may not be equal, but it is an important forum for communication as well as for promoting women’s empowerment. Since the COVID-19 pandemic has made it harder to get together in person, we began releasing videos in 2020. Topics are wide-ranging, from how to write a thank you letter to fashion and make-up. The videos are only 5-10 minutes long, but everyone seems to enjoy watching them. From 2022, a male advisor was added to the group in an effort to make it more active.

What are your ambitions for the future?

Over the past few years, an increasing number of people have suggested that we use the training programmes we have developed over the years to create a curriculum to use in seminars for our clients and other external parties. We would be delighted if the know-how we have accumulated could be of use in promoting women’s empowerment.

For us, an ideal world is one in which there is no distinction between men and women, where individuals are respected and everyone can grow together. We believe that creating environments where women can be more active and genuine to themselves, and where their opinions are reflected in their companies, will absolutely bring about innovative changes and developments for companies.

Diversifying and developing the detail-oriented hospitality that only a travel agency can offer, while providing new value to society.

Tobu Top Tours Co., Ltd.

- Aim: To take advantage of corporate consolidation to promote diversity
- Approach: Childcare leave for men, manager training, and unconscious bias training.
- Conclusion: We want to deepen our understanding of diversity to further diversify the detail-oriented hospitality we have cultivated over the years to create new value for travel agencies.

What was the impetus for your company to start working on diversity?

We were influenced in part by the Act on Promotion of Women's Participation and Advancement in the Workplace, but the major turning point was the merger of Tobu Travel Company and Top Tour that established our company in April 2015. Top Tour, which specialized in corporate clients, had a large number of male employees, while Tobu Travel, which handled mostly individual clients, was mostly female employees. With the merger, it became necessary to create a work environment where both men and women could work equally in order to bring out the best in each other.

Is your company doing anything in particular to create a better working environment for women?

As we have offices in all prefectures from Okinawa to Hokkaido, it is easier for us to accommodate employee requests to move within Japan, for example, due to lifestyle changes such as marriage, childbirth, or a spouse's work transfer. As a result, the number of women employees who leave the company after getting married has been decreasing over the years.

In some workplaces, employees with young children can take advantage of shortened work hours and shift work options, but unfortunately there are some jobs for which this system is not applicable, such as tour conductors. For this reason, we also use tour conductors provided by a staffing agency that is one of our subsidiaries. This allows employees who are unable to work full-time, for example due to child-rearing commitments, to choose a work style that is suited to their lifestyle.

Please tell me about your childcare leave system for men.

We started a full-scale initiative on childcare leave for men from January 2020. First of all, to raise awareness of this system, we began by

simply approaching male employees who submitted applications for new dependents after a child was born. We believe that increasing the percentage of men who take childcare leave will reduce the burden on women, making it easier for them to work. In order to make use of this system a more regular occurrence, we also make sure to explain it during trainings for management.

What challenges have you faced in increasing the ratio of women in management positions?

The travel industry has long been popular with female students as a place to seek employment. Although roughly 80% of new graduate hires are women, a high turnover rate has meant we have always ended up with more male employees. For this reason, the ratio of women in management positions is inevitably low. Also, when women take extended time off for childbirth or childcare, the progression of their careers comes to a halt, so they fall about two or three years behind men. However, we do not make any distinction between men and women in the selection process for management positions.

I have also heard that your unconscious bias training was very well received!

We have been conducting this training since the year before last as part of our diversity training programme, mainly for managers. It has been well received by participants. Some were made aware of discriminatory behaviours they had not realized they had, and others came to see unconscious biases in ways of thinking and points of view that they had always taken for granted. We also introduced an online training last year, which seems to have made communication more lively. Reducing the physical distance between people in this way gave participants the opportunity to communicate with a new generation of employees, with whom they had had little contact before. Because younger employees are predominantly female, some male

managers voiced concerns over how to treat female employees who were around the same ages as their daughters. But we believe that a better understanding of the unconscious biases that arise from differences in age, gender, and position has led to smoother communication.

Do you have any other initiatives to improve communication within your company?

The size of our offices varies from region to region, with the number of employees ranging from 10 to 100. We often hear from employees at small offices that they feel they do not have anyone close to their age to talk to about work issues. So, we now use online meetings to strengthen horizontal links between our employees.

For example, at a meeting for all employees, we created 10 workshops on different topics, such as "career advancement" or "support group for working mothers", asking employees to choose the workshop they wanted to join. Many unexpected connections were made. For example, a young women employee who had just joined the company and was looking to plan her future had the chance to communicate with women employees who already had two or three children. Also, several male employees participated in the working mothers workshop because they wanted to learn more about the worries and concerns of their subordinates who have children. The event has been well received by participants, and we plan to make it a regular event in the future.

A programme for students to learn about the SDGs is a unique initiative of yours.

We are also a signatory to the UN Global Compact because we believe that tourism is an industry relevant to all of the goals of the SDGs. There are networks led by local authorities in various regions to promote the SDGs. Our offices participate in the programme by creating opportunities for junior high and high school students to learn about the SDGs. Because the aim is to make students familiar with the SDGs, rather than a difficult approach, we use board games and other activities to help the children understand the SDGs in a programme that lasts



SDGs Board Game Facilitator Training

about 1-2 hours.

What are your company's ambitions for the future?

Beginning in January 2021, we formulated a Women's Empowerment Action Plan, and we have been conducting training to raise awareness on our aim for gender equality, in addition to setting up a system to support employees in acquiring various qualifications.

We have also set two specific targets: to increase participation in career development training for both men and women in career-track positions to 80%; and to reduce overtime for all employees to an average of 20 hours or less per month. We will continue to work on these targets.

The COVID-19 pandemic came at a time when it had become easy for anyone to book a hotel or a flight, and the very existence of travel agencies was being called into question. We are under pressure to make big changes. In order to keep up with these changing times, we need to understand diversity. We want to further diversify the detail-oriented hospitality we have cultivated over the years and create a new value that only we can provide as a travel agency of the future.



Working mothers workshop on Zoom

*See the following site for details.

<https://www.tobutoptours.co.jp/society/people/>
https://www.tobutoptours.co.jp/common/pdf/plan_of_woman.pdf?202101

Aiming to make diversity promotion self-driven in our workplaces and widen the circle for creating change as a part of major reforms to our corporate culture

BIPROGY Inc.
(former Nihon Unisys, Ltd.)

- Aim: To renew our corporate mission statement based on a strong sense of urgency in the fast-changing IT industry and to expand diversity in the context of a major reform of our corporate culture.
- Approach: Putting emphasis on “face-to-face dialogue” in unison with frontline workers. Aiming for self-driven promotion of diversity in our workplaces, not only from the top down.
- Conclusion and Goals: Each and every employee takes on a sense of ownership to generate change themselves, further expanding the circle and virtuous cycle.

What is your approach to diversity?

Our Diversity Promotion Office was established in 2013, and we launched training and other concrete initiatives in 2016. For those first three years, we mainly worked on promoting work-life balance and focused on developing systems and frameworks to create a workplace environment that facilitates balancing work and child-rearing.

Since 2016, we have been working on three initiatives: proactively communicating top management’s commitment; setting up company-wide systems and frameworks to improve working environments for employees; and coming up with measures that encourage awareness and behavioural change in line with our targets. Measures have been carried out to address various issues, for example, a management development programme for female employees and measures to support employees balancing work with life events such as childcare and elderly care.

Until now, our promotion department has led these initiatives, but we felt that there was a limit to fully understanding the true essence of diversity with a top-down approach. We believe that it is necessary to move to a phase in which workers on the frontline take the initiative in promoting diversity. So, this year we are working on a dialogue-based approach in unison with our frontline workers.

How does this approach play out in practice?

We selected eight executives and top-class managers from frontline departments who were willing to take a progressive approach, and formed a team to develop an image of what we want “to be” (our “to be” image) when it comes to diversity and inclusion for the BIPROGY Group.

We invited an external facilitator and held more than a dozen meetings, both regular and ad-hoc, over a period of six months, totalling about 30 hours.

At first, members tended to be a bit reticent, making discussion slow. So, for the first two meetings, we asked each person to talk about themselves, their thoughts on diversity, and what they thought the company should do in the future—focusing on options for what our company “will” do in the future. In the third meeting, the discussion evolved from “will” to “must”, and what we needed to achieve and communicate became clear. We also discussed details on the number of women in management positions.

The rest of the meetings went smoothly, and at the end, we came up with a single statement on what diversity and inclusion looks like based on “to be” images in various categories. A heated debate took place before the statement was finalized, with many disagreeing on the right words to use. Having a facilitator from outside the company enabled us to take a new approach that we could not have done on our own. Now, diversity promotion is beginning to change from what we “must” do to something we “want” to do.



The BIPROGY Group's “to be” image for diversity and inclusion

Have you faced any difficulties in promoting diversity?

The commitment of our top management makes it much easier to get things done. However, not everyone, including some in management, feels positively about the effort. Thus, the most difficult aspect of our work has been to get these people to understand and cooperate with our efforts. We have invited experts from outside the company to give lectures and held seminars attended by all employees, including representatives and directors. We have collected information, including academic studies, on why diversity promotion is necessary and what is needed to achieve it, trying to get as much convincing material as we can.

Please tell me about the ratio of female employees and your development programme for women.

About 20% of all employees are women. The ratio of women in the IT industry is low overall. The number of female employees who leave our company due to childbirth or childcare is low, and it is normal for women to take maternity and childcare leave. For more than 10 years, we have maintained a return-to-work rate close to 100%.

Regarding the development of women, we provide training for employees who are one step away from becoming managers, and for mid-level employees right below them. Perhaps it is because men outnumber women, but when men and women are working together, women sometimes lack confidence or become withdrawn. This training is designed to encourage them in these situations. Once trainees pass the exam for the first half of the training, they move on to the second half, with the entire training lasting one year. The trainees’ supervisors are also invited to take part in the training, not only to develop their coaching skills, but also to provide a forum for trainees to discuss their careers with their supervisors. We support them in gaining both the awareness and skills to take on management roles in the future.

Meanwhile, training of female employees alone will not lead to promotions unless their supervisors also have a certain level of understanding. So, we also mandate training for supervisors. They learn about ideas on developing women employees and how to manage employees who are constrained by childcare or elderly care. We also talk about unconscious bias and how understanding the life events characteristic of women can lead to advancing their development at the right time.

Have you faced any challenges in conducting training?

Of course, some of our women employees are not quite ready to take on a managerial role when approached about taking part in the training. It is difficult to make sure that these women and their



Development training for women (held online from FY2020)

supervisors are thinking along the same lines. However, as the training progresses, we can see their awareness about their own careers gradually change. It also provides a good opportunity for supervisors to get to know the true feelings of the employees, which are not always heard in regular interactions, thereby improving mutual understanding.

Please tell me about your company’s future outlook and challenges.

There are still a number of people among the management who are resistant to promoting women’s advancement. A future challenge for us is to reach the middle management level, where unconscious bias can be deeply rooted. I honestly feel that we have yet to reach a place of true understanding of diversity.

In order to deepen understanding through dialogue, our future goal is to train people in the field who can coordinate this dialogue.

We believe that if we can create coordinators in all parts of our company, our company culture will improve and the frontline departments will become more self-driven in promoting diversity. We would also like to develop more and more people who will take on sponsorship roles beyond their own organizations.

*See the following site for details.

Integrated Report 2021

https://pr.biprogy.com/invest-e/ir/pdf/ir2021_e.pdf

BIPROGY Inc.

<https://www.biprogy.com/e/>

Creation of the “Global D&I Vision & Inclusion Wheel”. “Awareness and understanding” as the primary focus to achieve true diversity.

Fujitsu Limited

- Aim: To engage in responsible business activities that respect diversity and foster a corporate culture where everyone can be themselves as they play active roles. To encourage everyone to embrace differences and play active roles, regardless of personal identity, particularly gender, age, SOGI, ethnicity & race, and health & disability.
- Approach: Sharing a vision to be realized throughout the Group, and rolling out measures to foster an inclusive organizational culture, led by a dedicated department.
- Conclusion: We are making progress on implementing measures and creating frameworks that take diversity and inclusion into consideration in a variety of areas.

Please tell me about your initiatives in promoting diversity.

We have formulated the “Global D&I (Diversity & Inclusion) Vision & Inclusion Wheel” to serve as a guideline for accelerating our efforts, not only in terms of superficial attributes such as gender, disability and race, but also making the most of the diversity of individuals to achieve “inclusion”. To achieve the goal of enabling everyone to “Be Completely You”, our Global D&I Vision sets out five key areas of focus: gender, health & disability, ethnicity & race, sexual orientation & gender identity (SOGI), and age.

Can you tell me the background for launching this initiative?

In 2008, we set up a Diversity Promotion Office. At that time, many Japanese companies were setting up organizations to promote the activities of women. There were growing calls for our company to set up a dedicated organization. Based on management’s decision at the time, a project team was set up in

late 2006 to start the process of setting it up.

Our Diversity Promotion Office was set up as an organization separate from the Human Resources Department, with the aim of first raising awareness on the term “diversity” within the company. The main focus of activities was “awareness and understanding” of diversity in the workplace, including promoting the active participation of individuals with certain attributes, such as understanding and support for women and people with disabilities, and promoting understanding of diverse work styles. Since then, we have accelerated our efforts linked to “practice and contributing to business” by supporting diversity-related activities in the workplace.

What initiatives do you have underway to increase the number of women in management positions?

One of our KPIs in relation to D&I is to increase the ratio of women in management positions. In fiscal year 2020, we introduced a new HR scheme called the “Posting System”. In the past, promotion



Global D&I Vision&Inclusion Wheel



Career workshop online seminar

to management positions was based on a process of recommendation by superiors, followed by an interview. We changed to a system where employees aim for management positions based on their own choices and self-directed career planning. In line with this change, we hold career workshops for women employees in non-managerial roles one step before management positions. These workshops are designed to dispel any anxiety about becoming a manager and to enable them to take ownership of their careers. This initiative is carried out in unison with our domestic Group companies.

The content of the career workshop includes opinion exchange with senior management, interaction with senior employee role models, and learning about leadership from external speakers.

We recruit participants for this initiative by inviting employees to apply. The programme was launched in 2016 and, with more than 250 graduates, has already produced several female managers.

What are you doing to change your organizational culture?

We believe that in order to support and promote the activities of persons in the focus areas we have defined, it is essential for us to develop and reform our organizational culture, and we placed “inclusive culture” at the centre of our Inclusion Wheel. Since 2008 when the Diversity Promotion Office was first established, we have held an annual Diversity Company-wide Promotion Forum (now called the Diversity & Inclusion Session) to facilitate the development of mindsets necessary to foster an inclusive organizational culture. At these sessions, top management delivers a message on D&I, and external experts give lectures on a variety of D&I-related topics, leading to the introduction of new knowledge into the company.

We also use an internal newsletter, internal social media, and our office’s e-mail magazine as means of disseminating information and to promote awareness on diversity among each and every employee.

How about work-life balance?

In fiscal year 2017, we introduced telecommuting to support the autonomous work style of each of our employees. In 2020, in the context of the “new normal” brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, we announced the promotion of “Work Life Shift”, a new way of working that will enable us to accelerate our transformation into a DX (digital transformation) company, and allow our employees to be even more productive and continue to create innovations.

Although we have seen a trend toward improved job satisfaction related to work-life balance with this initiative, it has also led to some problems related to time management and communication with managers and colleagues. There is also a debate related to detecting health-related changes in employees. To address this issue, we have introduced a system of 1-on-1 meetings where employees can talk freely and honestly to their managers not only about their careers, but also about various growth issues they are facing.

Please tell me about the future outlook for your company.

Simply having a diverse workforce, including women employees and foreign nationals, within an organization or project does not mean that diversity has been truly realized. We believe that only by creating an environment in which each and every employee can play an active role will we be able to engage in responsible business activities that respect diversity and eventually foster a corporate culture in which everyone can play an active role as their true selves. We are committed to contributing to the creation of a society where people appreciate each other’s differences, regardless of personal identity.

*See the following site for details.

<https://www.fujitsu.com/global/about/csr/diversity/>

Turning diversity into strength! Creating a culture of innovation through bold HR reforms and carefully-planned internal proliferation measures

Mitsubishi Chemical Corporation

- Aim: To promote diversity and convert it into strength in order to survive in radically changing times.
- Approach: Making bold reforms in our human resources systems implemented through multifaceted and carefully-planned measures to promote internal understanding and proliferation.
- Conclusion: When diverse talent plays a lively and active role, innovation arises, leading to growth of the company.

I heard that you have made some major changes to your HR system. Was there any impetus or reason for this?

We, the Mitsubishi Chemical Group, with “KAITEKI Health and Productivity Management” as our Group Vision, are very conscious of the fact that changes in the environment around us mean that we, as a company, must also change in order to survive.

Why are initiatives to promote diversity necessary?

The idea is that an actively-engaged diverse workforce leads to innovation and the development of the company. The time-consuming nature of decision-making in our company and our vertical organizational structure have come up from time to time as issues. Younger employees were dissatisfied because their opinions were rarely heard and old ideas persisted, leading to a loss of motivation. Thus, we made major changes in our HR system and introduced a system of internal recruitment.



Career workshop

Until recently, personnel relocation decided by the company created an environment in which mainly men, with no restrictions, were able to develop their careers, while women had no choice but to continue in the same job after marriage and childbirth, which tended to prevent the development of their careers. By using internal recruitment for job transfers, employees can apply for the jobs they want, and the host workplace can bring in good talent, regardless of working style or gender.

It is also relevant in terms of embracing diversity, including in ways of working, in order for employees to take charge of their own careers. Diversity is closely connected to our HR policies.

Have you encountered any difficulties in promoting diversity?

There have been times when we focused on “women” rather than on diversity. When people in their late twenties who grew up with little difference between men and women enter our company to find that we are “promoting the advancement of women”, they wonder why we are only focusing on women. Yet, the reality is that in many cases they run up against a wall for the first time when they have children and work while raising them. It is very difficult to tell young women about the current status of internal initiatives regarding women’s advancement, gender, and diversity.

Do you have any initiatives targeting supervisors?

Although held online due to the pandemic, we invited a speaker to give a lecture on unconscious bias for about 1,200 people, and we held group discussions.

We rolled out the initiative by first conducting training for executives, followed by supervisors.

What made this training possible?

In 2018, a major point of change was the arrival of a diversity promotion officer from a foreign-owned

company. This officer took the lead in visiting all of our workplaces and interviewing approximately 600 employees at all levels. A number of issues were raised, and to address one of them we launched a “Women’s Council” as a forum to discuss issues related to women’s empowerment. The Council was made up of management and the heads of each division. Discussions were held and measures deliberated, leading to a variety of actions over a two-year period. Currently, the Women’s Council is not only targeting women, but is working to expand to also involve supervisors and male colleagues. In order to send out a message on diversity, one of the concepts of our recent HR reform, we held a live online event on 8 March, International Women’s Day, where the President and members of the Women’s Council gave talks about the top management’s ideas on gender and diversity.

Please tell me about your specific policies on diversity.

A prerequisite of diversity is respect for the human rights of all employees. We have long been committed to respecting human rights.

Along these lines, we have held lectures on LGBTQ issues to further understanding of what LGBTQ means and what constitutes discrimination. We have started to apply the same benefit programs to same-sex partners as legal marriage. In addition, as part of our “Sokai Project”, we are refurbishing old restrooms in our offices and factories in a gender- and LGBTQ-friendly manner.

In addition, COVID-19 has led to advances in remote work. For personnel transfers based on internal recruitment as well, employees can utilize our remote work system, enabling them to balance work and family life from remote locations.

We are also working to provide more information on childcare facilities, including information on company-run nurseries. One of our current efforts is in promoting understanding of men’s participation in childcare. We are producing videos and handbooks, and holding events where we ask men who have actually taken childcare leave to speak. We have been able to increase the number of male employees taking childcare leave by keeping them informed and making the system more flexible by allowing a portion of unused lapsed paid leave to be used for childcare leave through the end of the following year.

We conducted a survey on the state of nursing care and found that a large number of management-level employees will be faced with nursing care in five to ten years’ time. We produced a handbook to promote understanding of how to prepare for nursing care, and have held seminars. We have also made efforts to provide information by setting up a consultation service.

A key point has been interaction between caregivers within the company. While the numbers



Conceptual diagram of Diversity & Inclusion according to Mitsubishi Chemical

are small, we have brought in a nursing care manager and are working on exchange and sharing of information.

Do you have any initiatives in diversity for your manufacturing division?

In terms of women in manufacturing sites, we have just started to recruit female staff and operators in earnest, as there are not many female employees in the manufacturing division to begin with. We also keep in touch with employees after they have already joined our company. We have heard that the atmosphere in the workplace has become more cheerful and that a culture of care and concern has been fostered.

We are prepared to accept that it will take time for these reforms to produce results. By implementing a range of carefully-planned follow-up measures, we hope that the reforms will take root in our company. We aim to be a company where the diverse members of our workforce play lively and active roles, leading to speedy innovations and the growth of the company.

*See the following site for details.

[Together with Stakeholders: Together with Employees: Respect for Human Rights and Promoting Diversity/ Sustainability/Mitsubishi Chemical Corporation \(m-chemical.co.jp\)](https://www.m-chemical.co.jp/en/employees/respect-for-human-rights-and-promoting-diversity/sustainability/)

Aiming to create new value by fostering conviction and a sense of ownership among employees, and promoting diversification linked to our management strategy.

Yamaha Corporation

- Aim: To create frameworks linked to our management strategy and a favorable climate. We value the conviction and sense of ownership of each individual.
- Approach: Commitment from top management and intensive training of women leaders + training and problem-solving projects for bottom-up awareness-raising.
- Conclusion and Goals: Our promotion of women's advancement is not limited to making it easier for women to work, but also aims to create new value by diversifying management decision-making. To this end, we will create a climate in which everyone understands diversity and values differences.

Please tell me about your efforts to date in promoting active roles for women.

In 2004, a group of volunteers came together to launch the "Positive Action Project", which made a number of recommendations. The following year, in 2006, an independent organization for the promotion of women's activities was established, which marked the beginning of our company's efforts. We were quick to set up systems that made it easier for employees to work, even before related laws were enacted, including a system for supporting employees balancing work and childcare. For example, special leave can be taken in one-hour increments for personal illness or injury, nursing or care of a family member, or childcare. We also have a system of shortened working hours for employees with children in the third year of primary school and younger, as well as a system for rehiring employees who have been posted overseas as trailing spouses. As a result, there is now no difference in the average length of service for men and women, and our return-to-work rate for those who have taken childcare leave has remained at 100%.

What about the diversity and inclusion policy you launched in 2019?

Yes, this was a turning point in our work. In this policy, we clearly positioned diversity as a source of value creation. Then, we had to consider how to link gender differences, a universal theme within diversity, to value creation. First of all, it was important to increase women leaders in decision-making settings and to reflect diversity at the core of our management. Despite the fact that 20% of our workforce is made up of women, the ratio of women in management positions is only 7.1%, and we have only a very small number of women directors. We

discovered a renewed awareness of the need for a systematic approach to developing and creating women leaders, while at the same time seeking to make it easier for women to work.

Please tell me about your specific efforts to develop and create women leaders.

In January 2021, we established the Working Group for Gender Equality under the Human Resource Development Committee as an advisory body to the president, and declared our commitment to the strategic, intensive, and ongoing development and creation of women leaders. Since then, we have carried out a variety of initiatives, including a factor analysis based on surveys and interviews with the heads of all divisions, as well as the provision of career development tools to support the individual development of female employees. In September 2021, we joined the "30% Club Japan", endorsing the aims of the "30% Club", a global campaign aimed



International Women's Day initiative: Women Leaders' Dialogue

at achieving a proper gender balance in corporate decision-making bodies. We are committed to ensuring that each and every one of our employees can achieve their full potential based on the firm commitment of our top management.

Please tell me about any difficulties you have faced in implementing measures to support women's careers.

For many years, we have continued to develop initiatives to increase the number of women in management positions, including selective training and development programmes for female employees. However, there have been some within the company who have raised questions about why the trainings are targeting only women, or some participants asked why they had to accept. How should we get through these psychological division or apathy? Therefore, we realize that it is important to ensure women-specific development measures are not designed for women but organization, and let them understand the significance of "WHY" they are chosen rather than "WHAT" to do. From this point of view, we believe that our initiatives must take into account not only the sense of conviction of the women concerned, but also awareness and acceptance throughout our organization for all people involved.

What approaches have you taken to promote conviction throughout your whole organisation?

I will give you two examples. The first is a training for employees taking childcare leave and their bosses.

We offer a return-to-work seminar for concerned employees to help break down the prejudice that maternity leave is a "career gap", and to help them plan their careers making the most of their maternity leave experience. We also provide information on how to achieve success at work efficiently and in a short period of time. Meanwhile, supervisors are given a test prior to trainings using a tool called "ANGLE" to measure their level of unconscious bias, and also undergo an e-learning course on ways to control their biases.

Then, participants share learning and insights in a group training session. Here, we focused on ensuring that the "real voices of subordinates" were heard during the training. Put simply, the values of people who take childcare leave are diverse. Some want to work at full capacity, and some would rather put off work for a year and then prioritize a balance between work and child-rearing. When we visualised this in a graph, we got a lot of different responses from the bosses. By having them exchange opinions on how they felt about the questionnaire results, we were able to get them to see the issue as a means of revitalizing our organization.

The other example is a bottom-up, problem-



Intranet for disseminating information on diversity and work-life balance

solving project called "LADY Go!", that was created by our marketing division in 2016 with the aim of "helping all women working in the Yamaha Group to become brighter, smarter and more powerful than ever". This project has led to the revitalization of our organization as a whole, using the unique insights and questions raised by women as a springboard for activities that transcend the boundaries of our organization and workplaces. These include an in-house live show called "Mix Juice Night", lectures by external speakers, and the production of hospitality goods for visitors to corporate museums.

So, inclusion of individual differences has led to the growth of your company.

We have focused our discussion on women, but our company's idea of diversity and inclusion involves embracing individual differences, including values, and expanding our imaginations to see the unseen, leading to innovation and the growth of our organization. The unprecedented events of the COVID-19 pandemic have changed the values of our society. We have developed a service that allows people to enjoy ensembles online, and we have provided a free system that allows people to cheer on a football match remotely. Every day, we work through trial-and-error to provide new value to society. We will continue to make further efforts to evolve as a company and a society in which diversity is a source of value.

*See the following site for details.

[Promotion of Diversity and Inclusion - Sustainability - Yamaha Corporation](#)

Overcoming the “positive action” dilemma through ongoing discussions and strong promotion of women’s participation

ROHM Co., Ltd.

- Aim: To increase the number of women in career-track positions by having employees in general office positions switch over.
- Approach: Volunteer participation in leadership training for women and unconscious bias training for supervisors.
- Conclusion: Overcoming the dilemma of whether positive action is “good for the company” or “good for the individual”.

What was the impetus for starting initiatives on women’s active participation and what were your objectives?

Our initiatives did not arise out of any issues or problems, but were more about going with the flow of social trends. At the time, many women were leaving the workforce after taking maternity and childcare leave, so we started by supporting them in keeping their jobs. It has been more than ten years since we started with this small initiative.

Seven years ago, we set up a committee on work style reform aimed at promoting women’s active participation, but in the end accomplished only information gathering. We were able to make contacts by attending workshops with people actively involved in the promotion of women’s active participation, but came to the conclusion that our company was not yet ready to embrace reforms at that time.

Our initiatives started in earnest in April 2019, when we submitted our General Business Owner

Action Plan to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. We set goals such as increasing the number of women candidates for management positions and re-envisioning new institutions that enable women to continue to work and play an active role in the company. At the same time the action plan was submitted, the committee resumed its activities and the human resources department began to roll out measures in earnest. Another way we worked to achieve these goals was by setting up a training course on unconscious bias.

What is the content of the training?

In order to promote awareness of our unconscious biases, we held a training course for division heads and women in career-track positions. An external lecturer was invited to give a training on future career planning for career-track women employees.

Actually, We had the impression that many had negative feelings about the training, probably because we had not done much training for division heads before. For example, when we talked about management of female subordinates and unconscious bias, we had them discuss what kind of comments actually constitute unconscious bias. Perhaps we did not find any answers right away, but one outcome of the training was the sharing of good practices—participants realised that the people around them were having the same problems and were addressing them in creative ways.

Is it difficult to reconcile the world of Kyoto dialect and unconscious bias?

It is true that here in Kyoto, both men and women may read too much into each other’s comments. Also, rather than unconscious biases, there may be a problem with the communication style itself, and people may be quick to think, “no matter what I do, he won’t change” or “I’m not saying anything anymore”.

In fact, we now have a training program designed

to make improvements in this area. Originally we had a system for learning the basics of management, but there was no opportunity to learn the skills beyond that. We decided to improve upon this by having people learn how to develop their communication as a business skill, rather than relying solely on the skills of individuals.

Last year, we began a training on facilitation as a way of getting people warmed up to this idea. We introduced a framework that enables employees to learn skills on consensus-building in meetings and other situations where there are people with diverse ideas.

How many women are in management positions?

We have nearly 4,000 employees at our head office alone, but there are only 70 women in career-track positions, including those at foreman and assistant manager levels. Due to this small number, it has been difficult to create horizontal connections in our work environment. The main purpose of the training was to bring together the 70 women in career-track positions to promote networking.

There was some controversy as we had never had a women-only meeting before, but it was a good opportunity for the company representatives to communicate their views on women’s active participation to employees.

What are you doing to increase the number of women in management positions?

We ran a three-month training course to develop female leaders. For the first time, instead of selecting participants ourselves, we invited interested women employees to participate. We reached out to people who were aiming to take on management positions with subordinates in the future, and about 10 people took part. While this is not a large number, from the perspective of the organizers, we were surprised that people actually raised their hands.

While some of the participants were young people who wanted to challenge themselves in the future, most were veteran employees in their late 30s to early 40s. We also had some participants in general positions, not only those on the career track. Many of the participants had not had the chance to participate in this sort of learning opportunity when they were younger, and they wanted to absorb as much as they could to improve their careers now that they had gotten through the busiest years of child-rearing.

Have you faced any difficulties in promoting women’s active participation?

There are not many female engineers, not only in our company, but in the industry as a whole. So, when we try to increase the number of women career-track employees, we inevitably end up competing with other companies for talent. From



Leadership training for female employees

the employment perspective, gender has nothing to do with the competence of an employee. We hope that the population of women engineers and female students in the sciences will increase.

Please tell me about your company’s future outlook.

In order to increase the number of women in managerial positions, we are actively encouraging employees to switch from general to career-track positions, but inevitably there is a gap between them and male employees who have already gained experience in career-track positions. We must ensure to not focus on increasing women in number only. In addition, as we have a high percentage of non-Japanese shareholders, the management understands the need to set up indicators and send out messages on the active participation of women. Discussions are ongoing on this issue.

For some time to come, we will continue to face the dilemma of whether it is really in the best interests of the individual or of the company to support female employees who wish to take on the challenge of a career-track position. We hope to overcome this by continuing to discuss and implement initiatives to steadfastly promote the advancement of women.



Promotion of Diversity & Inclusion

*See the following site for details.

[Diversity & Inclusion | Human Capital Management | ROHM Corporate Social Responsibility](#)

The UN Global Compact's Initiatives in Gender Equality

Initiatives of the UN Global Compact

Building a sustainable society is the vision of the United Nations.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015, as goals to be achieved by 2030 based on partnerships and cooperation among all stakeholders in the world.

The promotion of gender equality is key to achievement of the SDGs, and the preamble to the Resolution on the SDGs^{*1} clearly designates gender equality as an overall objective of the SDGs.



Formulation of the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs)

In 2009, the UN Global Compact and UN Women (previously known as the United Nations Development Fund for Women) developed the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs), a comprehensive international framework for promoting gender equality that predates the SDGs.

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES

Established by UN Women and the UN Global Compact Office

WEPs are a set of action principles for companies that are actively involved in promoting the advancement of women. They are made up of seven principles, including promoting gender equality based on "high-level corporate leadership". The WEPs emphasize inclusion and the need to involve business partners, investors, local communities, NGOs, governments, and other stakeholders in business activities and marketing strategies aimed at promoting inclusion.

As of December 2021, more than 5,700 companies and organizations worldwide have signed the WEPs to show their commitment to promoting gender equality.

The following are five benefits for companies and organizations that sign the WEPs:

- (1) By positioning the promotion of gender equality as a management priority, companies can enhance their corporate value;
- (2) As a response to the SDGs and ESG investment, companies can implement initiatives in accordance with global standards and disseminate them both domestically and internationally;
- (3) Companies can build the necessary foundations to promote the advancement of women, as well as diversity and inclusion;
- (4) Companies can build a foundation for responding appropriately to Business and Human Rights, as well as Human Rights Due Diligence;
- (5) Companies are able to implement a comprehensive approach that encompasses management strategy, workplaces, marketplaces (including supply chains), communities, and information disclosure.

WEPs is also becoming increasingly important for investment institutions in the context of recent trends in ESG investment and financing. If you are interested in signing WEPs, please see below.

- ◆ [WEPs official website](#)
- ◆ The Japanese version can be found in the WEPs Handbook.

*1 Document No. A/RES/70/1

Initiatives of the Global Compact Network Japan (GCNJ)

The Global Compact Network Japan (GCNJ) works together with its many member companies and organisations to promote women's empowerment.

Publication of the WEPs Handbook

The GCNJ, in collaboration with WE EMPOWER Japan^{*2}, produced the WEPs Handbook, which provides detailed information on the WEPs, how to proceed with becoming a signatory, and a collection of corporate case studies. It is designed to provide practical information and tools to help companies and organizations integrate gender equality into management strategies and achieve concrete results through their business, human resources, collaboration with diverse stakeholders, work style reform, new value creation, and information disclosure.



The handbook includes a "WEPs Gender Gap Analysis Tool" to help companies and organizations measure their level of acceptance and level of progress on the WEPs, as well as to promote the WEPs.

WEPs Gender Gap Analysis Tool

By logging in to the WEPs Gender Gap Analysis Tool and answering each question, a score can be calculated and data registered with the UN Global Compact/UN Women WEPs Secretariat. Please note that neither the names of individual companies or organizations, nor their scores, are made public.

This tool also helps companies and organizations to determine what indicators are important for them

*For more information, please see the following website. Please also refer to the links in each illustration.

[Global Compact Network Japan \(ungcnj.org\)](http://ungcnj.org)



when communicating and disclosing their efforts to promote gender equality externally.

WEPs Subcommittee Meetings

In GCNJ, member companies and organizations take the initiative in organizing topic-based subcommittees. The subcommittees have become a central part of GCNJ's activities as a forum for "open social innovation", where members actively participate, learn, collaborate, and communicate beyond the realm of companies and organizations.

One of the subcommittees, [the WEPs Subcommittee](#), was launched in 2016. In its first year, the subcommittee aimed to provide a forum for Japanese companies to become aware of the real challenges in promoting women's empowerment in Japanese companies in order to link their initiatives to enhancing their international competitiveness.

From fiscal year 2017 onwards, the GCNJ has aimed to contribute to improving the international competitiveness of GCNJ signatory companies and, by extension, to raising the level of gender equality in Japanese society by referring to the seven WEPs principles to address the real challenges of promoting women's empowerment and by carrying out activities and communications that are useful for each participating company in implementing its own concrete initiatives.

As of the end of 2021, approximately 200 companies have gathered regularly to share their knowledge and experience on gender equality.

*2 The WE EMPOWER Project was launched to promote women's economic empowerment aimed at disseminating the Responsible Business Principles in G7 member states, with activities taking place over a three-year period from 2018 to 2020.



About the front and back covers.

In the preamble to the SDGs, gender equality is described as an objective of the SDGs as a whole. This is because gender inequality is at the root of many problems in our societies.

In this context, the promotion of gender equality must incorporate a wide range of initiatives from diverse perspectives.

Companies have a part to play in this effort.

Much like a complex jigsaw puzzle, it will require persistent effort and wisdom to figure out.

However, if the efforts and wisdom that each company accumulates are combined, an image of gender equality can be completed as if the pieces were put together one by one. That is the image of the future depicted on the front and back covers.