



Quick Brief

A news update from the NBI on its programmes, business leadership and issues on sustainable development.

8 March 2018

International Women's Day | Transforming Lives

Today marks International Women's Day, commemorated globally to recognize the significant strides taken to achieve gender equality and to address the challenges that remain. Issues of gender have dominated headlines and social media around the world, highlighting the need for quicker and lasting societal changes to transform the lives of women and to create more equal societies.

Addressing gender equality has far-reaching consequences that positively impact society and the economy. Achieving equality requires bold action and a commitment from everyone to do their part, with the understanding that gender equality is not a women's issue; it's a human rights issue, a leadership issue, a social and economic transformation issue that benefits us all.

According to UN Women:

- An increase in women's participation in the economy leads to faster economic growth.
- Increasing women and girls' education has a significantly positive impact on the economy.
- It is calculated that women could increase their income globally by up to 76% if the employment participation gap and the wage gap between women and men were closed.
- Companies greatly benefit from increasing leadership opportunities for women, which is shown to increase organizational effectiveness.

Business plays an important role in addressing gender inequality. According to the Commission on Employment Equity's Annual Report for 2017, women made up only 33% of senior management and 22% of top management. When broken down further, the data shows that African women make up 7.8% of senior management and 2.8% of top management revealing staggering under-representation.

Representation is a key focus for business, however business can go beyond this to facilitate equality in workplaces, in the marketplace and communities in which they operate. There are numerous ways and opportunities for business to play its part:

- Create organizational cultures that nurture and support representation and inclusion;
- Provide safe working environments and protect women from harassment and discrimination;
- Have equal representation of men and women at senior leadership and decision-making positions;
- Pay men and women equally for equal work;
- Support women-owned SME's through procurement and supply chains;
- Design products and services that address the needs of women; and
- Eliminate gender stereotyping in marketing and advertisements.

Gender forms an important part of the National Business Initiative's (NBI's) transformation programme and we look forward to working with you to transform lives.

Please get in touch with any thoughts and comments you may have by emailing: GuguM@nbi.org.za.

Business Action for Sustainable Growth

www.nbi.org.za

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