



INTERNATIONAL WEBINARS AND LIVE EVENTS

Web seminar: Business, non-discrimination and gender equality in the time of COVID-19

International Labour Organization (ILO) – 29 Avril 2020

Discrimination in the workplace remains a key challenge to achieving gender equality at work, and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, for businesses and economies around the globe to be able to effectively respond to the crisis while “leaving no one behind” will be crucial.

It is therefore necessary to implement policies and practices that promote non-discrimination and gender equality in the workplace, taking into consideration the challenges that businesses around the world may be facing once the current pandemic subsides.

Moderator : Karl Pfeffer, Senior Specialist, Multinational Enterprises and Global Supply Chains, ILO International Training Centre:

This Covid-19 crisis is leading to both an economic and labor crisis: decrease of working hours and increase of lost jobs.

Women are often affected first, staying home to take care of children, having insecure jobs or being in the front line sectors risking their own life.

The general policy framework is based on 4 pillars:

- 1) Stimulating the economy and employment;
- 2) Supporting enterprises;
- 3) Relying on social dialogue;
- 4) Protecting workers.

Emily Sims – Helpdesk Coordinator, ILO:

The **ILO helpdesk for business**, based on the general guidance with special considerations during Covid-19, can help company managers to implement policies in accordance with Equality and Non-discrimination recalling the main principles for the:

- Recruitment phase: job offer criteria;
- Remuneration: equal pay for work of equal value;
- Working conditions: hours of work and rest, protection material;
- Dismissal criteria;
- Employment reduction, suspension or termination to face the economic impact of the Covid-19 crisis;

The Helpdesk also focuses on:

- **What is discrimination:** *Any distinction, exclusion or preference on a designated ground with the effect of excluding individuals or groups from enjoying opportunities and benefits arising out of employment or occupation.* Convention N° 111 (1958)
- The forms of discrimination: **Direct discrimination** and Indirect discrimination
- The **prohibited grounds** and those which **relate to gender discrimination**

Companies thus identify actions they can take:

- Make a strong commitment to gender equality (HR policies, workplace responses to Covid-19);
- Pay attention to language;
- Integrate gender issue;
- Ensure all men and women workers are aware of the protections and requirements of the HR policies;
- Collect gender disaggregated data: “If you can’t measure it, you can’t manage it”;
- Maintain gender-sensitive grievance procedures for both the company and its supply chain;
- Provide support to workers in the context of Covid-19.

Maria Therese Miller Brask – Global Labour Rights Compliance Manager, Global People & Organisation Novo Nordisk A/S (Global healthcare company)

The NOVO NORDISK company is committed in Human Resources management based on equality and non-discrimination through:

- An assessment of **Global Labour Standards** which fits with ILO standards;
- A **Labour Code of Conduct** to ensure labour rights;
- A **Special section on equality and non-discrimination**: Offer equal treatment and opportunities for all employees, and a working environment free of discrimination and harassment;
- A Business Ethic Risks Process which allows employees to raise concerns and complaints with total confidentiality

Silvia Cerri – Senior tech Recruiter, Bending Spoons (High Tech company)

“People are our bigger asset and Bending Spoons is the best place to work for women”.
The non-discrimination policy of the company is the main focus **based on free communication**.

Human Resources management is based on:

1) Talent attraction

- Gender neutral communication;
- Process of recruitment non gender focused;
- Dedicated promotion channels;
- Training on bias and social constructs;

2) People management

- Tier-based salary and welfare policy;
- Feedback system for career progression;
- Remote work and flexible schedule;
- Unlimited days off;

Benedetta Magri, Programme Manager Int Labour Standards ILO

ILO provides companies a free tool to learn avoiding gender discrimination. They can monitor themselves doing a we-test and can thus become aware of the actions to be implemented to get gender equality at work. Free modules are available to them for implementing these measures at their own pace.

Main question:

How can we move forward to help workers with family responsibilities in the context of Covid-19?

Both women and men can have. One of a big issue is to be able to be flexible at work. Managers have to trust their employees even if they don’t work with fix schedules,
Be gentle with employees, accepting that they cannot attend specific meetings.