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The Business of a Better World

Working with Business to Create Policy Solutions

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Summary

- Business can be a partner in creating policies that benefit their female workers
- The workplace can be used as a point for information and services delivery traditionally provided by the public sector
- Policy incentives can support successful collaboration
- The business case can be used as a powerful incentive to support policy implementation



Example: HERproject



Project Scope and Partners

- Programs in 30 factories have impacted 50,000+ women
- **Active or Completed Projects in 6 countries**
China, Egypt, India, Mexico, Pakistan, and Vietnam
- **9 Company partners**
Abercrombie & Fitch, Clarks, Columbia, Hewlett Packard, Levi Strauss, Nordstrom, Timberland, and Williams Sonoma
- **Funders**



What is HERproject?

A Factory-based, peer education training program

- Health Needs Assessment
- Peer Education training program
- Factory-based and community-based outreach activities
- Links to services in factory clinic and outside
- Impact Measurement
- Demonstrating the business case to factories



Business Relevant Women's Health Risks

Health Risks

- Anemia and poor nutrition
- Reproductive tract infections
- Low access to family planning
- Poor maternal health
- Sexually Transmitted Infections
- Diabetes

Business Impacts

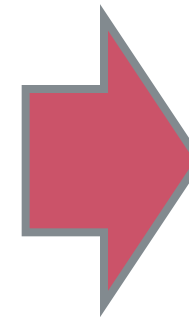
- Absenteeism
- Attrition
- Reduced concentration
- Exhaustion
- Decreased productivity

Premise: Healthy Workers = Healthy Business

Demonstrating Business Impact

Return-on-Investment studies underway in Pakistan, Egypt, and Vietnam

Quantitative Data	Qualitative Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Absenteeism• Turnover• Attendance Bonuses• Productivity (including production bonuses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health needs assessment pre/post survey• Focus groups• Interviews with management and workers



Health and Business Indicators

Preliminary ROI Results: Pakistan Factory

Peer education focus on menstrual hygiene + introduction of subsidized sanitary napkins in factory clinic produced the following results:

Reported results from female workers

- 18% a reduction of pain
- 11% reduction of infections
- 25% reduction in poor concentration
- 33% less difficulty meeting production targets
- 11% reduction in overall absenteeism
- 24% reduction in mean number of days absent

Preliminary quantitative results

Reduced absenteeism



2.5 additional hours worked per month



615 days of work saved during the project year

Observations

Consider the Context of Target Beneficiary

- Pre & Post Natal Care Leave and Health Services
 - **Policy:** EPZ Law requires pregnant women to be excused from work to receive pre-natal check-ups.
 - **Practice:** Women don't tell supervisors they are pregnant, because they don't want to lose their job or to lose wage payment for the hours they lose.
 - **Solution:** Provide the services within the factory to minimize negative consequences.
- Mandatory Child Care Centres
 - **Policy:** National law requires factories to provide child care centres for their workers
 - **Practice:** Women do not use centres because of cultural tradition to leave children with relatives, they don't trust the care provider, they cannot transport their children to their workplace safely, or the factory places limits on use of centre

Identify the Problem Correctly to Create the Right Solution

- Policies that address the problem in the wrong way are bad for both women and business
- Example: Paid Menstrual Leave (ex. Indonesia, Turkey)
 - **Problem:** Female factory workers miss work due to painful menstruation or infections.
 - **Policy Solution:** Require paid leave as sick leave would be paid.
 - **Negative Policy Consequences:** Business has to plan for and pay additional leave and hiring women is disincentivized
 - **What's Really Needed:** Educate women on basic feminine hygiene and provide sanitary napkins at reduced cost to reduce incidence of menstrual leave.

Policy Incentives

- Fiscal and other incentives can be used to promote the delivery of information and services in the workplace
 - Tax breaks for providing women’s health services in the factory clinic
 - In-factory training and education services
 - Encourage gender equality in collective bargaining agreements