



# GENDER DIVERSITY WITHIN AFI MEMBERS INSTITUTIONS



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## INTRODUCTION

In April 2018, AFI published its first Gender Diversity within AFI Member Institutions report. The report assessed institutional gender diversity (IGD), including practices, barriers, gaps, and progress among selected AFI member institutions, and made recommendations for gender mainstreaming to achieve institutional gender parity. Five years later, AFI would like to highlight and share the progress members have made, with increasing institutional gender diversity and support for women's leadership.

The members of the AFI network have long been committed to women's financial inclusion. In 2016, they formalized this commitment by adopting the ten-point Denarau Action Plan (DAP). The DAP was updated to acknowledge the developments in Gender Inclusive Finance (GIF) during the AFI Global Policy Forum in Jordan in September 2022. Point 10 of the DAP focuses on women's leadership and institutional diversity. The DAP is supported by members who made a public commitment to GIF on the Maya Declaration platform. There are now 42 member institutions, up from 27 in 2018, that have publicly committed and collectively set over 80 targets for increased gender diversity and leadership.

The survey administered for this report shows that while some AFI members have made notable advancements, the overall progress is slow. There is a limited representation of women in key leadership roles across the network. However, more than 30 percent of reporting AFI member institutions now have an institutional diversity strategy, and 95 percent of reporting institutions have more than 30 percent of their staff cohort represented by women. All the regions have seen an increase in the number of women employed since 2020, which presents a positive opportunity to develop a strong pipeline of future women leaders.

The special report takes stock of progress accomplished on the six key findings and three recommendations that the 2018 Report identified and it explores the persistent barriers and key enabling factors for the successful implementation of women's financial inclusion and IGD. Recommendations are

provided for regulators to deepen gender diversity further and build women's leadership at the institutional level. It is complemented by a toolkit on Mainstreaming and Implementing Institutional Gender Diversity and Inclusion within AFI Member Institutions.



A Toolkit for Increasing Gender Diversity and Women's Leadership in Financial Regulatory Institutions  
> View [here](#)

# OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

This report aims to identify progress made by members since 2018 and share the latest policy initiatives and best practices that other AFI members could replicate and amplify the positive developments across the network.

A comprehensive literature review has been undertaken. It was complemented by an online survey conducted with 38 member institutions in the first semester of 2022 and in-depth telephone interviews with ten member institutions.<sup>1</sup> The data was collated, validated, cross-checked, and analyzed after completing the survey and interviews. All the findings are incorporated in this report.

<sup>1</sup> AFI members interviewed were the National Bank of Cambodia, SEPS, Ecuador, Central Bank of Egypt, Centre For Financial Inclusion of the Ministry of Finance Eswatini, Bank of Ghana, Comisión

# GENDER DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY: WHY IT MATTERS

Gender equality is a United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number five.<sup>2</sup> SDG 5 focuses on women's leadership. It reads: "Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life."

There is a growing recognition that any effort to close the gender gap in financial inclusion and to support the creation of gender equitable financial systems requires the greater participation of women at all levels: from more female clients to more women leading financial institutions to heading policy and decision-making bodies at national and global levels.<sup>3</sup>

In 2018, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) surveyed 12,940 enterprises in more than 70 countries. The results showed 48 percent of companies had women in senior management, but only 31 percent had women in top executive positions.<sup>4</sup>

In 2021 women comprised 39.7 percent of the global workforce<sup>5</sup> and only 31 percent of managerial positions.<sup>6</sup> In some countries in Northern Africa, Western, Central, and Southern Asia, the proportion barely reached 13 percent, a statistic that has not changed significantly over the past 20 years.<sup>7</sup>

The OMFIF Gender Balance Index 2022, which assesses women's leadership in global finance, showed comparable results: the percentage of women leaders decreased as they moved up the organizational ladder, and no organizations (of the 335 analyzed for 2022) achieved a gender balance.<sup>8</sup> In 2022, only 14 percent (46 individuals) of the 335 leading global financial institutions were headed by women, and 10 percent of these institutions had no women at all in their senior management. Some progress, however, is seen in central bank leadership, where more women are heading 16 national central banks in 2022 compared to 13 in 2018.<sup>9</sup>

The European Institute for Gender Equality states, "binding quotas (for women's representation on boards) have proven more effective at country level in improving balance on boards compared to countries legislating softer measures, or none at all."<sup>10</sup> Several African countries are now working towards achieving greater gender equality in the boardroom and elective institutions.

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**25%** A 2020 study from PricewaterhouseCoopers found that "South Africa has the highest percentage of women on its board of directors, 25 percent, due to policies in place for companies to achieve a certain target of women on boards."<sup>11</sup>

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Senegal has risen to the seventh position in the world regarding women's representation in the Parliament, largely thanks to the 2010 gender parity law requiring "absolute gender parity" in all elective institutions.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Available at: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/>

<sup>3</sup> W20. 2018. Gender Economic Equity. Financial Inclusion for Women: A Way Forward. Available at: <https://www.global-solutions-initiative.org/policy-brief/financial-inclusion-for-women-a-way-forward/>

<sup>4</sup> ILO. 2019. Women in Business and Management: A global survey of enterprises. Available at: [https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/WCMS\\_702196/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/WCMS_702196/lang--en/index.htm)

<sup>5</sup> WB. 2021. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.TOTL.FE.ZS>

<sup>6</sup> Grant Thornton. 2021. Women in business 2021, A window of opportunity. Available at: <https://www.grantthornton.global/en/insights/women-in-business-2021/>

<sup>7</sup> UNDESA. 2020. Women in managerial positions. Available at: <https://worlds-women-2020-data-undesa.hub.arcgis.com/apps/women-in-managerial-positions-1/explore>

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<sup>8</sup> OMFIF. 2022. Gender Balance Index 2022. Available at: <https://www.omfif.org/gbi22/>

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Reuters. 8 June 2022. EU sets board quotas for women by mid-2026, lawmakers say. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/eu-set-introduce-quota-women-company-boards-boost-equality-2022-06-07/>

<sup>11</sup> PWC. 2020. Impact of Women on Nigeria's Economy. Available at: <https://www.pwc.com/ng/en/assets/pdf/impact-of-women-nigeria-economy.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> IDEA. 2022. Senegal leads in Women's Political Participation. Available at: <https://www.idea.int/es/news-media/news/senegal-leads-womens-political-participation>

In other countries, policies promoting gender equality have also led to clear improvements.

80%

After enacting legislation and policies to encourage gender equality, such as investing in kindergartens to provide affordable and universal childcare and ensuring equal parental leave, Iceland boosted women's job participation to 80 percent.

In countries such as Rwanda, improved land tenure security led women owners to increase their investments in land by 18 percentage points, twice the level observed for men.<sup>13</sup> Liberian President, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, has helped to develop policies that support women and girls. Since leaving office she continues advocating for greater job opportunities, education, and health services that support women.

Studies consistently show that having institutional diversity benefits businesses. In addition to doubling an organization's talent pool, recruiting women increases financial performance. Fortune 500 companies with the highest representation of women financially outperform those with the fewest female board members.<sup>14</sup> Women leaders bring in a higher return on equity.<sup>15</sup> Organizations with larger shares of women directors had higher capital buffers, a lower proportion of non-performing loans, and greater resistance to organizational stress.<sup>16</sup> Studies have shown that gender diverse organizations also lead to innovative ideas and increase productivity.<sup>17</sup> Nonetheless, despite all the organizational benefits of boosting the presence and power of women, women still face difficulties getting equal access to executive leadership positions.

Beyond workplace benefits, having more women in senior leadership positions has been found to affect organizational climate change mitigation

<sup>13</sup> World Bank Blogs. 2015. How Empowering Women Can Help End Poverty in Africa. Available at: <https://blogs.worldbank.org/nasilikiza/how-empowering-women-can-help-end-poverty-africa>

<sup>14</sup> Catalyst. 2020. Why diversity and inclusion matter. Available at: <https://www.catalyst.org/research/why-diversity-and-inclusion-matter/>

<sup>15</sup> MSCI. 2015. Women on boards. Global trends in gender diversity on corporate boards. Available at: <https://www.msci.com/documents/10199/04b6f646-d638-4878-9c61-4eb91748a82b>

<sup>16</sup> Fortune. 2019. Wall Street has never had a woman CEO. Why not? Available at: <https://fortune.com/longform/banking-finance-women-ceos-wall-street/>

<sup>17</sup> HBR. 2019. Research: When Gender Diversity Makes Firms More Productive. Available at: <https://hbr.org/2019/02/research-when-gender-diversity-makes-firms-more-productive>

efforts positively. For example, a study by the UN Women revealed that “higher percentages of women on corporate boards positively correlate with the disclosure of carbon emissions information.”<sup>18</sup> One of the reasons for this is that women, because of their heightened social sensitivity, are more inclined than men to make choices that are in the best interest of the environment and the way of life of future generations.<sup>19</sup>

Efforts to drive IGD should be seen as an opportunity that benefits everybody. Women's equality in the workplace is not only about social justice, but it also has a direct and positive benefit on communities, economies, and the environment at the local, regional, and global levels. All of these are crucial to achieving the SDG objectives.

“Furthermore, if action is made to advance gender equality, the global GDP may increase by USD12 trillion in 2030 compared to the baseline; this represents a USD13 trillion potential compared to the gender regressive scenario in which the global GDP falls by USD1 trillion in 2030.”<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> UN Women. 2022. Explainer: Why women need to be at the heart of climate action. Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/explainer/2022/03/explainer-why-women-need-to-be-at-the-heart-of-climate-action>

<sup>19</sup> ICAEW. 2021. BIS: Women in senior management will help climate change. Available at: <https://www.icaew.com/insights/viewpoints-on-the-news/2021/nov-2021/bis-women-in-senior-management-will-help-climate-change>

<sup>20</sup> McKinsey. 2020. Ten things to know about gender equality. Available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/ten-things-to-know-about-gender-equality>

## KEY BARRIERS AND THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON GENDER DIVERSITY IN THE WORKFORCE

The Center for Creative Leadership identified three main challenges women reported when discussing leadership, such as asking for money (e.g., in a sales role or negotiating for salary), dealing with perfectionism and self-criticism.<sup>21</sup>

Women reported hesitating to take challenging assignments, doubting their abilities, or being concerned about seeming overly ambitious because it appears acceptable for men but much less so for women. These pull factors can be understood better when considering the push factors women face. The same study reported the limitations placed on women by others in their network, their organization, and the society or culture include:

- ✓ “women are emotional/weak/not ambitious”
- ✓ “women prioritize family”
- ✓ “society expects women to behave in a certain way”
- ✓ “organizations do not support women’s leadership development”
- ✓ “the organizational culture is male-centric.”

Women’s slow journey to equality suffered another setback in 2020 with the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. “The social and economic consequences of the pandemic have fallen disproportionately on women”<sup>22</sup> leading to a ‘she-cession’<sup>23</sup> and an increase in the rates of gender-based violence targeting women. This has resulted in a ‘shadow pandemic’ where women’s social and economic potential is unrealized.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Center for Creative Leadership. 2020. Overcoming Barriers to Women’s Leadership and Unlocking the Power of Diversity. Available at: <https://cclinnovation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/overcoming-barriers-womens-leadership-center-for-creative-leadership.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> OMFIF. 2021. Gender Balance Index 2021. Available at: <https://www.omfif.org/gbi2021/>

<sup>23</sup> Term coined by C. Nicole Mason, a women’s policy researcher and economist, to describe the disproportionate impacts the pandemic had on working women’s careers

<sup>24</sup> UN Foundation. 2020. The Shadow Pandemic: How the Covid-19 Crisis Is Exacerbating Gender Inequality. Available at: <https://unfoundation.org/blog/post/shadow-pandemic-how-covid19-crisis-exacerbating-gender-inequality/>

There are multiple reasons for this, including loss of employment, especially for women working in sectors vulnerable to closure during lockdown periods. Some had to move from full-time to part-time employment because of increased domestic care responsibilities and the requirement to undertake even more roles, including full-time mother, unpaid domestic carer and housekeeper, wife, employee, and teacher of children confined to home. This frequently resulted in reduced household incomes when household expenditure was increasing. At the same time, it demonstrated a clear need and opportunity to make people’s working conditions more flexible and increase men’s involvement in domestic work and family care responsibilities.

The pandemic accelerated questions about whether a “female leadership style” is more effective than the stereotypically autocratic style regularly associated with men. When a crisis hits, research shows that the preference for command-and-control leadership wanes, and a need for relational leadership increases. Several countries led by women during the COVID-19 pandemic, like New Zealand, Germany, Finland, Iceland, Denmark, Norway and Taiwan, have fared better in this regard than those with overly ‘macho’ male leaders, such as Brazil, the United States of America, and Britain.<sup>25</sup> In the workplace, women are rising to the occasion and proving to be strong leaders “and taking on the extra work that comes with this: compared with men at the same level, women are doing more to support their teams and advance diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.”<sup>26</sup> Policymakers will need a holistic and intersectional approach to mitigation and recovery measures to use the lessons learned from the pandemic and take active steps to mainstream gender in public policies.

The perception in AFI member institutions was that the COVID-19 pandemic did not have a negative impact on workplace diversity and inclusion in their institutions. Moreover, many members even mentioned positive outcomes thanks to adopting policies supporting a better work-life balance, such as more remote jobs and flexible work arrangements, with equal access to technology.

<sup>25</sup> Bloomberg. 2021. 2021 Is a Tipping Point for Female Leaders. Available at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2021-01-31/women-leaders-are-doing-better-during-the-pandemic>

<sup>26</sup> McKinsey and Company. 2022. Women in the Workplace 2022. Available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/women-in-the-workplace>

# GENDER DIVERSITY AND WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN AFI





In 2016, recognizing the importance of GIF, the AFI network adopted the ten-point DAP to drive forward women’s financial inclusion and close the gender gap in access to finance. In September 2022, the DAP was updated during the AFI Global Policy Forum in Jordan to acknowledge the developments in GIF since its adoption.

The DAP Action Point #10 encourages AFI member institutions to promote greater gender diversity in their institution and support women’s leadership in their initiatives and their strategies. In 2017, AFI members established the high-level Gender Inclusive Finance Committee (GIFC) of the Board to facilitate the implementation of the DAP. The GIFC consists of seven members from across the network. As of November 2022, the GIFC had four men and three women, a female Chair and a male Vice Chair. The role of the GIFC is to provide strategic leadership and guidance on advancing and promoting women’s financial inclusion in the AFI network and the implementation of the DAP.

In 2017, only two of the AFI Working Groups had appointed Gender Focal Persons (GFPs) to ensure gender is a key consideration in their activities. By 2020, all seven AFI Working Groups institutionalized



Gender Inclusive Finance Committee (GIFC)  
 > View [here](#)



Denarau Action Plan  
 > View [here](#)

“ Gender equality is central to the Bangladesh Bank’s own goal of ensuring access to finance for all. Making digital finance work for women is key to reducing the gender gap. ”

Md. Anwarul Islam, General Manager, Bangladesh Bank Vice Chair, AFI GIF Committee

“ Financial inclusion empowers women to participate in meaningful economic and social activities. Women leaders bring to an organization many unique qualities, which include the fact that they are good teambuilders, resilient and innovative in the face of adversity. ”

Dr. Jesimen T. Chipika, Deputy Governor, Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe

the role of the GFPs, with the primary mandate to drive the DAP commitments. Currently, there are nine GFPs, of which six (67 percent) are female. Similarly, 11 of the 20 Working Group Leaders are women (55 percent).<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> See Appendix 3 for the composition of the working group leadership.

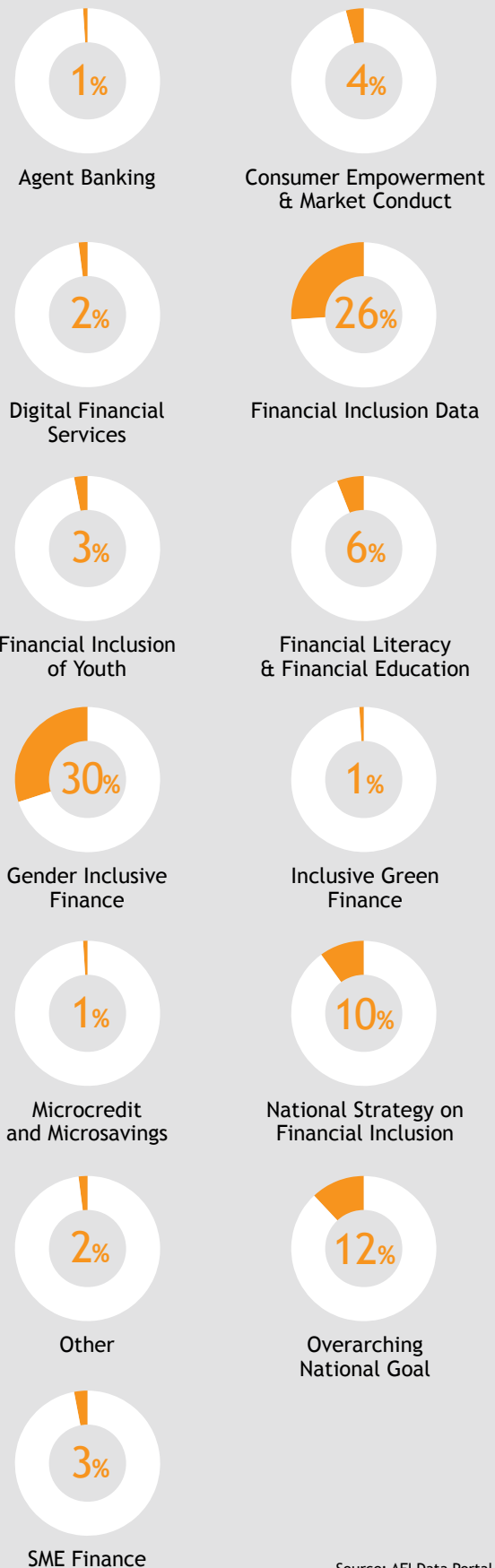
The DAP is an ideal approach to accelerating GIF, contributing to the United Nations SDG-1 (No Poverty) and SDG-5 (Gender Equality). Since DAP’s adoption in 2016, various milestones have been achieved by AFI member institutions. For example, by December 2022 25 members were reporting sex-disaggregated data on the AFI Data Portal, 27 knowledge products on women’s financial inclusion have been published, 36 member institutions have reported 59 GIF policy interventions,<sup>28</sup> and 46 members have committed to at least one of 90 active gender focused Maya Declaration targets on GIF.<sup>29</sup> Approximately one-third of the active targets have identified GIF as the primary thematic area. The remaining active targets have incorporated other thematic areas with GIF considerations. This demonstrates the cross-cutting nature of GIF and may also suggest that GIF has been mainstreamed across numerous policy departments within central banks and regulatory institutions.

Furthermore, as of 2022, 37 members have gender and women’s financial inclusion objectives in their National Financial Inclusion Strategies (NFIS), where 81 percent (30 members) have women-focused action plans or roadmaps. Appendices 2 and 3 provide AFI members with financial inclusion strategies or gender diversity policies related to DAP 10.

At AFI’s Annual General Meeting of 2020, AFI’s Membership Council amended AFI’s Articles of Association, requiring a minimum of three women to sit on its nine-member Board of Directors. The amendment also allows a principal member institution to nominate a deputy head as a principal representative to AFI’s Board of Directors to broaden the pool of women leaders in the AFI network who can serve on the Board. Following the adoption of this provision, AFI’s Membership Council at the Annual General Meeting of 2021 admitted two new women directors to AFI’s Board of Directors. In addition, the Board has three alternate delegates to the principal Board members who are women.

Between 2019 and 2022, 32 member institutions were recognized for their work on GIF and women’s leadership and were appointed [AFI GIF Ambassadors](#) institutions. Ten of the first 11 GIF ambassador institutions graduated from the Leadership and Diversity Program for Regulators (LDR) led by Women’s World Banking (WWB) and supported by AFI.

FIGURE 1. MAYA DECLARATION GIF TARGETS



<sup>28</sup> AFI. Gender inclusive finance. Available at: <https://www.afi-global.org/thematic-areas/gender-inclusive-finance/>

<sup>29</sup> AFI. 2022. 2021 Maya Declaration Progress report. Available at: [https://www.afi-global.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Maya-2021\\_Progress\\_Report\\_v2.pdf](https://www.afi-global.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Maya-2021_Progress_Report_v2.pdf)

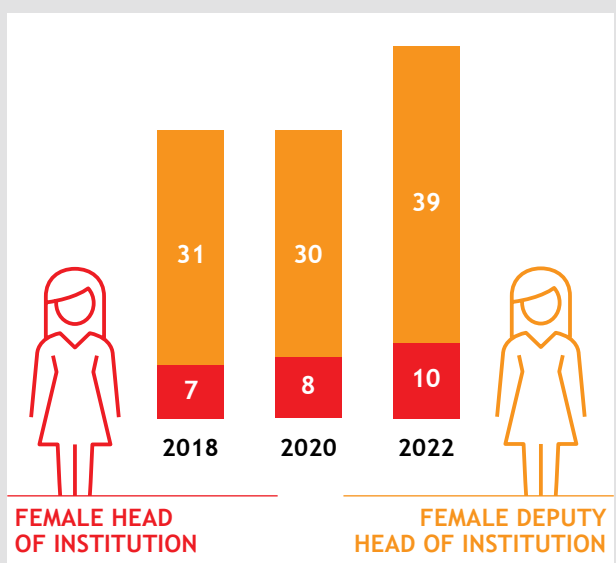
Source: AFI Data Portal

# CURRENT STATE OF GENDER DIVERSITY AND WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP WITHIN AFI MEMBER INSTITUTIONS

Despite the challenges, members' ambitious commitments and policy initiatives have brought considerable progress through advocating for greater institutional diversity supported by positive peer pressure and peer learning in a culturally diverse and inclusive environment within the AFI network.

Figure 2 shows that, in terms of senior leadership, there are ten women heads and 39 deputy heads of institutions in 74 AFI member institutions in 2022 compared to seven heads and 31 deputy heads in 2018 (an increase of 36 percent and 22 percent, respectively). Although there is still a long way to go to achieve parity, this shows the increasing importance of women's representation at the top of financial regulatory institutions.

FIGURE 2. WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS AMONG AFI MEMBER INSTITUTIONS (AS OF 2018, 2020 AND 2022)

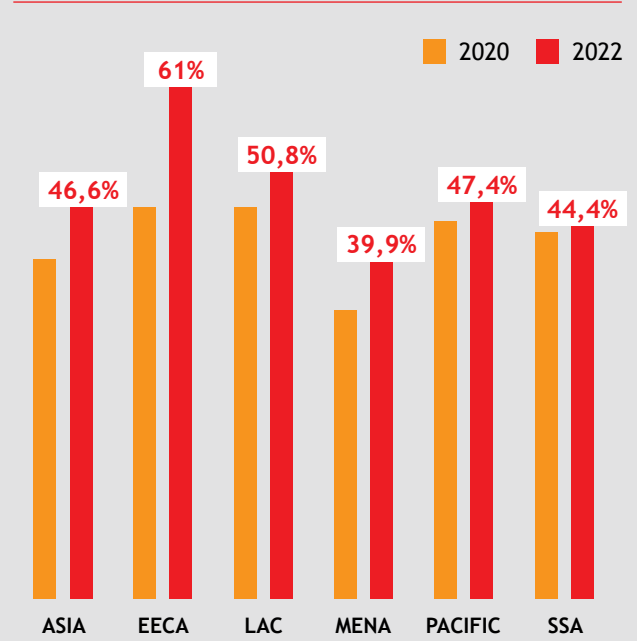


Source: AFI 2022 List of Female Leaders/AFI GIF Mapping Exercise Master Sheet 24 July 2020/AFI Gender Diversity Survey 2018

Table 1 (page 12) shows that, in terms of regional representation, as of 2022, Latin America and the Caribbean has the highest number of women in leadership positions (14), followed closely by Sub-Saharan Africa (13 each), East and Southeast Asia (5), the Middle East and North Africa and the Pacific region (4 each), South Asia (3), and Eastern Europe and Central Asia (1).

Over the past two years, progress could also be seen in the increasing percentage of women employed in AFI member institutions. According to the AFI 2022 gender diversity and leadership survey, female employees constitute an average of 47 percent of the total member workforce,<sup>30</sup> compared to 43 percent in 2020.<sup>31</sup> Eastern Europe and Central Asia registered the highest growth of 14.3 percentage points, followed by Asia with 6.1 percentage points, and Middle East and North Africa with three percentage points. There has been growth in the number of female employees against the institution's total workforce in all regions. This is commendable and reflects the effectiveness of the institutions' gender mainstreaming initiatives.

FIGURE 3. FEMALE EMPLOYEES AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL WORKFORCE



Source: AFI Gender Diversity Survey 2022

<sup>30</sup> The AFI gender diversity and leadership survey received responses from thirty-eight member institutions in 2022, 57 in the 2020 survey, and 19 in the 2018 survey.

<sup>31</sup> AFI. 2020. Gender Inclusive Finance Toolkit Survey.

TABLE 1: WOMEN AT THE LEADERSHIP LEVEL ACROSS THE AFI NETWORK (AS OF OCTOBER 2022)

REGION	HEAD	MEMBER INSTITUTION	DEPUTY HEAD OF INSTITUTION	MEMBER INSTITUTION
EAST AND SOUTHEAST ASIA	1	Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM)	4	BNM, Bank of Thailand, and Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) (2)
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA	2	Banque Centrale du Congo, Central Bank of Seychelles	11	Banque de la République du Burundi, Bank of Namibia, Central Bank of Eswatini, Bank of Ghana, Central Bank of Kenya, Central Bank of Nigeria, National Bank of Rwanda, Central Bank of Seychelles, Bank of Tanzania, Bank of Zambia, Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe
EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA	-		1	National Bank of Tajikistan
MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA	1	Ministère des Finances de la République Tunisienne	3	Central Bank of Egypt (2), Banque Centrale de Tunisie
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN	5	Superintendencia de Bancos del Ecuador (2), SEPS, Ecuador, Superintendencia de Banca, Seguros y AFP del Peru, Superintendencia General de Entidades Financieras de Costa Rica	9	Superintendencia General de Entidades Financieras de Costa Rica, Comisión Nacional de Bancos y Seguros de Honduras, Comisión Nacional Bancaria y de Valores de México (CNBV) (4), Banco Central del Paraguay, Superintendencia de Banca, Seguros y AFP del Peru, Centrale Bank van Suriname
PACIFIC ISLANDS	1	Central Bank of Samoa	3	Banco Central de Timor-Leste and National Reserve Bank of Tonga (2)
SOUTH ASIA	-		3	Maldives Monetary Authority, Nepal Rastra Bank and Royal Monetary Authority of Bhutan
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>		<b>39</b>	

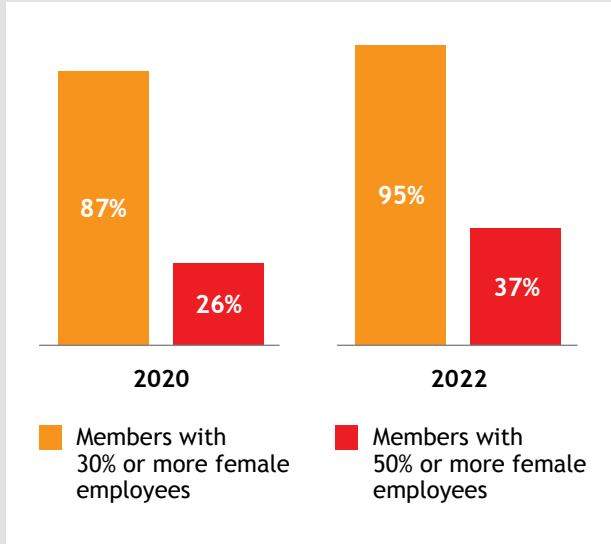
Superintendencia de la Economía Popular y Solidaria (SEPS), Ecuador, for example, has a higher female representation across all levels of the workforce in 2022: 55 percent (52 percent in 2020) female workforce, 51 percent women senior managers, and 67 percent (51 percent in 2020) women Board directors. SEPS has a gender diversity policy, has participated in AFI workshops on GIF and has attended the [LDR](#) for four consecutive years. All these could have contributed to such an outcome.

Members with 50 percent or more female employees increased from 26 percent in 2020 to 37 percent in 2022, while members with 30 percent or more female employees increased from 87 percent in 2020 to 95

percent in 2022.<sup>32</sup> However, women's representation tends to decrease in higher leadership positions. This could be due to job instability associated with leadership positions, the political nature of some appointments, lack of experience, inadequate career progression opportunities, and lack of mentorship programs for women. For example, female staff in the CNBV, Mexico, comprise 50 percent of the workforce but only 25 percent in senior management positions, despite receiving equal benefits. This shows that having similar benefits is not enough to close the gap and that other initiatives must be implemented to create a level playing field.

<sup>32</sup> It is important to remember that we are not comparing the same number of responses and not necessarily from the same AFI member institutions: 54 responses for the 2020 survey and 38 for the 2022 survey.

**FIGURE 4. PERCENTAGE OF MEMBERS WITH 30 PERCENT AND 50 PERCENT, OR MORE, OF FEMALE EMPLOYEES**



Source: AFI Gender Diversity Survey 2022

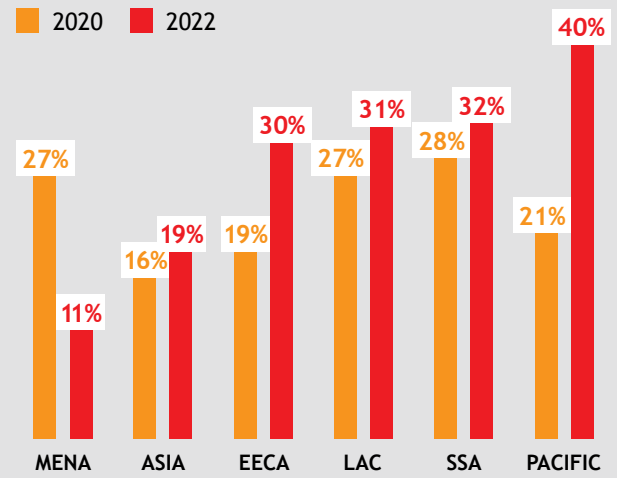
Regarding the female representation on the Board of directors, on average, women board directors increased from 25 percent in 2020 to 28 percent in 2022.<sup>33</sup> This is now over the accepted 25 percent threshold, where the smaller group starts being able to wield influence on the larger group.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, 42 percent (14 out of 33) of the members that responded to the 2022 survey indicated women comprise 30 percent or more of their boards, an increase of 2 percentage points since 2020. Except for the Middle East and North Africa, all regions experienced growth. The Pacific region is leading and nearly doubling its percentage (19 percentage point increase), followed by Eastern Europe and Central Asia (11 percentage points), and Latin America and the Caribbean (5 percentage point increase).

Building gender diverse organizations can be a long and challenging process. However, it is impactful, particularly in promoting women’s financial inclusion. Ninety-four percent of AFI members surveyed agree or strongly agree that gender commitments drive women’s financial inclusion, contributing to the DAP.

<sup>33</sup> It is important to remember that we are not comparing the same number of responses and not necessarily from the same institutions.

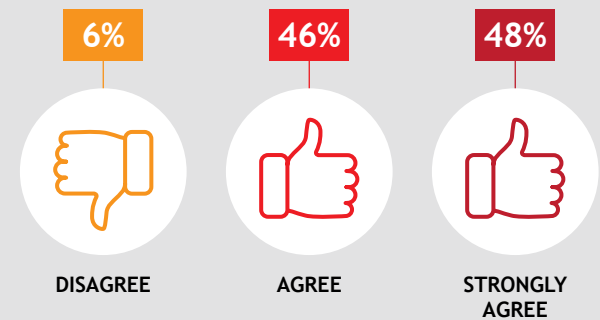
<sup>34</sup> Damon Centola, Joshua Becker, Devon Brackbill, and Andrea Baronchelli. 2018. Experimental Evidence for Tipping Points in Social Convention. *Science* 360 (6393): 1116-19. Available at: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325639714\\_Experimental\\_evidence\\_for\\_tipping\\_points\\_in\\_social\\_convention](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325639714_Experimental_evidence_for_tipping_points_in_social_convention)

**FIGURE 5. PERCENTAGE OF FEMALE BOARD MEMBERS**



Source: AFI Gender Diversity Survey 2022

**FIGURE 6. DO GENDER DIVERSE FINANCIAL ORGANIZATIONS DRIVE WOMEN’S FINANCIAL INCLUSION?**



“Gender diversity brings about various skills, abilities and experiences which promotes multifaceted views to develop well-balanced and effective financial inclusion policies.”

Liza Mohamed Noor, BNM, 2022

“Gender diverse institution drive women’s financial inclusion. As women, we understand women’s financial needs better, which serves as the foundation to develop women-responsive policies and ensure their effective implementation for maximum impact.”

Mak Reaksmy Mak, National Bank of Cambodia (NBC), 2022

A SNAPSHOT OF  
THE CURRENT  
LANDSCAPE ACROSS  
THE AFI NETWORK  
AND FACTORS  
PROMOTING  
GREATER  
INSTITUTIONAL  
DIVERSITY AND  
INCLUSION



Notwithstanding the results shown in the previous chapter, while some AFI members have made notable progress, the overall progress in gender diversity and women’s leadership is slow. There is a relatively limited representation of women in key leadership roles globally.

Women need strong leaders, mentors, and support systems to climb the ladder toward leadership while balancing their personal and professional lives. The actions taken by various AFI members to address gender diversity and leadership within their institutions are illustrated in the series of examples provided below.

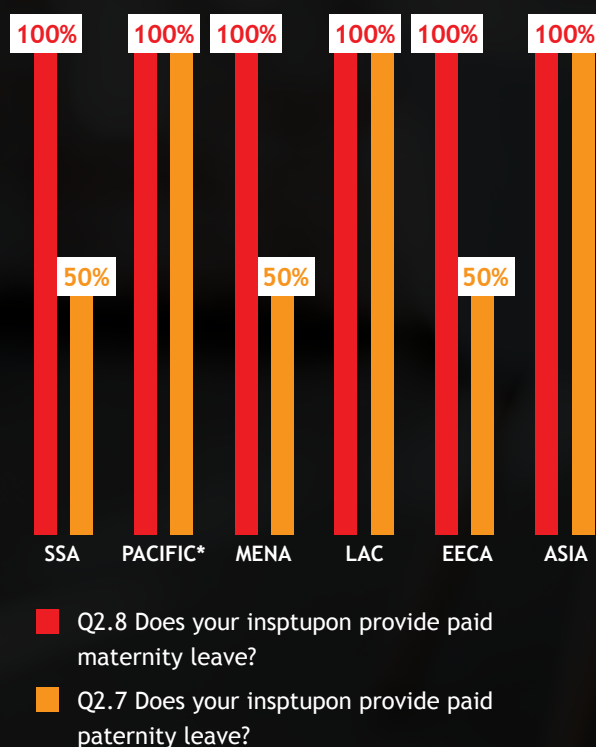
**BALANCING PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE: HOW TO ENSURE THE BURDEN DOESN’T FALL ONLY ON WOMEN**

All AFI members provide paid maternity leave for an average of 100 days, while roughly 80 percent of AFI members offer paid paternity leave for an average of 6,4 days. Many interviewed members explained that their institutions are trying to implement policies that support parents and help retain their staff; it is a way to let the staff know they are valued. However, the big imbalance between paid maternity and paternity leave may lead to continued discrimination by employers who fear hiring women. In the case of the Palestinian Monetary Authority (PMA), “the old mentality used to think that women can’t handle working under stress or they take maternity leave. However, the PMA has worked on changing this stereotype.” Until 2019, the National Commission of Banks and Insurance of Honduras used to ask women whom they were hiring for a pregnancy test; a single, unmarried woman was considered to be more efficient at work than a married woman or a woman with children (given domestic responsibilities).

If institutions and the government incorporate paid paternity leave, this will allow fathers to be more involved in their children’s lives and remove the expectation the mother will remain at home as the main caretaker.<sup>35</sup>

Institutions can help address the needs of women by offering incentives to attract and retain women professionals at different levels, especially as they become mothers, and to offer them a smooth transition back to work to continue their careers. Starting a family shouldn’t be a blocking point

**FIGURE 6. PAID MATERNITY LEAVE VS. PAID PATERNITY IN AFI MEMBER INSTITUTIONS**



Source: AFI survey with 38 members, 2022  
 \* Data from the Pacific is only from one country.

or an obstacle should a professional woman want to achieve her ambitions or leadership goals. For example, the human resources policies in the BNM support women with a high-quality and professionally run subsidized childcare facility and good maternity, paternity, and medical benefits which extend to employees’ children. All this has facilitated and helped build and sustain diverse talent pipelines. As a result, BNM has not only achieved gender equal workforce (50 percent women), but women also represent 44 percent of senior leadership positions and 51 percent of the bank’s identified pipeline.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> CNN. 2019. Gender inequality is one of the most persistent evils of our times. Available at: <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/09/17/opinions/katrn-jakobsdttir-gender-inequality-intl/index.html>

<sup>36</sup> Senior leadership positions cover management committee, department heads, and deputy heads.

Balancing personal and professional life goes beyond maternity. It requires flexibility options for many parents. Several institutions placed a greater emphasis on flexible work arrangements during the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, in consideration of their staff’s differing personal situations CNBV issued provisions for work at home and flexible and staggered hours.

**THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR AS A ROLE MODEL**

It is important to differentiate between private and public sectors as there are big differences between the two, which affect gender diversity. Private sector companies are competitive and have the incentive to generate profit efficiently. Therefore, they may not prioritize solutions supporting a gender inclusive and diverse workplace, as there is a perceived notion that it will cost them more (e.g., parental leave policies). It is difficult to strike the right balance between welfare for staff and women and productivity.

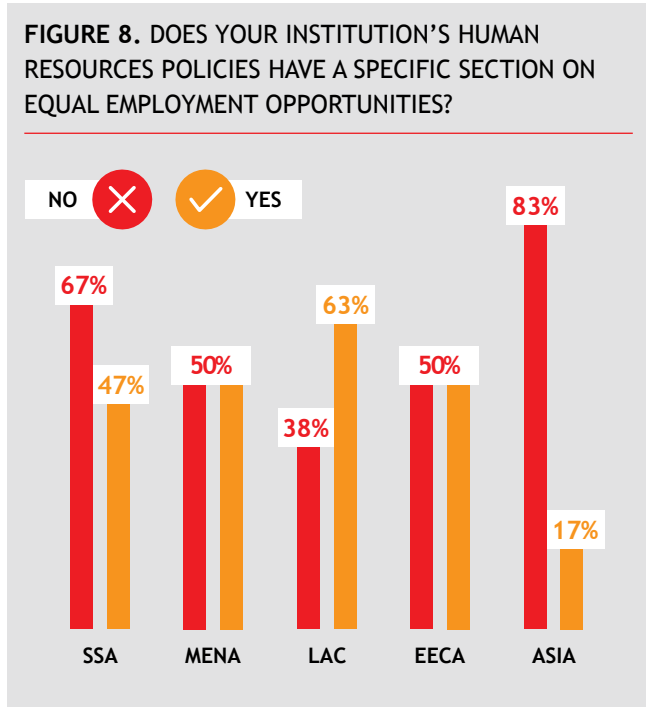
Therefore, it is important that the public sector act as a role model. As an extension of the government, the public sector follows the rules and regulations that stem from the country’s Constitution. Hence, there are often policies on equal pay per job level and those against discrimination on the grounds of gender. Generally, there is a much higher proportion of women in management and leadership than in the private sector.

“ The Governor of the Central Bank of Seychelles is a woman who attaches great importance to gender equality and women’s access to equal opportunities. Inclusivity is also one of the values upheld by the institution as a whole. The public values and pays attention to the messages echoed by the Governor as the leader of a well-respected institution. Other organizations also see the bank’s emphasis on diversity and equality as benchmarks. ”

Liz Julienne, Director, Central Bank of Seychelles

56%

Notwithstanding, only an average 56 percent of AFI members surveyed in 2022 responded that their institution’s human resources policies have a specific section on equal employment opportunities; there are some notable differences by region (Figure 8).



Some examples of central banks that have enshrined equal employment opportunities in their human resources or recruitment policies include:

- ✓ The Bank of Sierra Leone’s Handbook, Article 113, states that “the Bank is an equal opportunity employer and provides the platform for all to participate irrespective of race, gender etc.”
- ✓ The National Bank of Rwanda has a human resources policy with a specific section on equal employment opportunities. However, when the bank started collecting data from the recruitment department, they saw a tendency for men to get promoted more often than women due to their ambitions and ability to negotiate. Women self-limited themselves as they are trying to balance professional and personal responsibilities. The bank is now aware that more education on female empowerment is needed to change traditional gender roles, understand why



men are promoted over women, and how one can react to this pattern to break the cycle.

- ✓ The PMA clearly states in its job announcements that they have equal opportunities regardless of gender.

**THE IMPORTANCE OF CAPACITY-BUILDING/TRAINING FOR FOSTERING GREATER GENDER DIVERSITY AND LEADERSHIP**

Most institutions recognize the importance of continuous education to promote the development of their staff and improve their skillset. In turn, employees appreciate these opportunities, which often create a sense of loyalty to their institutions and an improvement in the performance of their duties. Many institutions, however, consider themselves gender neutral and do not recognize inherent gender biases in the organization. Nonetheless, as women take on more domestic responsibilities (generally once they get married and/or have children), they curtail their professional aspirations and, therefore, the necessary education to climb the career ladder. For institutions to effect long-term change, they must commit to educating their staff (both men and women) and ensure women are promoted to leadership positions.

Despite the importance of offering leadership- and gender diversity-related training or skills development programs (e.g., unconscious bias training, women in the leadership program, etc.), 66 percent of AFI members that responded to the 2022 survey are still not offering it.

To support its members, AFI and WWB signed a memorandum of understanding in 2018 to collaborate in delivering an LDR to advance women’s financial inclusion and build a gender diverse workforce in AFI member institutions.

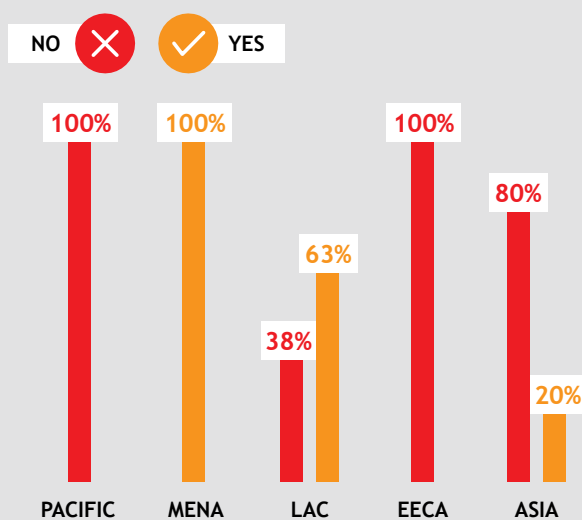
**LEADERSHIP AND DIVERSITY PROGRAM FOR REGULATORS: AN OVERVIEW**

Set up in 2018 by the WWB in partnership with Oxford University and supported by AFI, this 12-week training program aims to promote women’s leadership in member institutions to reduce the gender gap in financial institutions, build a pipeline of future women leaders, and develop gender transformative policy responses. The course strongly emphasizes emotional intelligence, communication, sharing knowledge, changing attitudes, and putting into practice policies that are gender transformative. The program has a mentor/mentee component, where the senior leader mentors the high-potential woman.

As of 2022, four cohorts (2019-2022) totaling 149 participants comprising senior executives (both men and women) and high-potential women leaders have completed the LDR program. They are active gender champions, mentors, and role models.

Many of the policy initiatives developed on the program are now being implemented across the network. Over 80 percent of the high-potential women who participated have seen their scope of responsibility increase since completing the program, and over 40 percent have received a promotion.

**FIGURE 9. DOES YOUR INSTITUTION OFFER LEADERSHIP- AND GENDER DIVERSITY-RELATED TRAINING OR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS?**



“ Even though women are not marginalized in any way in my bank, I certainly believe that there should be a direct effort to make them more aware of the role they can play in maintaining diversity and thus leading to higher performance of the Bank. ”

2019 LDR participant

“ I learned the importance of increasing women’s participation in senior positions at any organization, financial or otherwise, as a way to develop gender sensitive products and services, generate role models, and bring a diversity of ideas that reflect the public organizations are serving. ”

2019 LDR participant

“ The LDR made me realize the importance of creating an enabling environment to incorporate more women in leadership positions on the conceptual side. I hadn’t realized the importance of this before the LDR and that’s something we will put as the first pillar of the strategy. ”

2019 LDR participant

### THE IMPACT OF PARTICIPATING IN THE LDR COURSE

The LDR course equips participants with the knowledge, skills, and tools to develop and implement gender action plans or strategies to promote IGD and build women’s leadership pipeline. All interviewed AFI members shared that initiatives like the LDR program make significant positive changes. LDR participants valued the policy component of the LDR program and cited the impact of the program on their initiatives. A total of 87.5 percent of senior executives from the 2020 cohort reported positive outcomes with more GIF policies. Fourteen AFI members with LDR participants have developed or implemented gender focus financial inclusion policies, action plans, or strategies. The regulators reported the following impact from the LDR:

- ✓ personal and professional development with increased responsibilities and career growth
- ✓ enhanced leadership competencies (negotiation and communication skills, managing work/life balance, listening skills)
- ✓ increased gender focused policies
- ✓ improved scenario planning
- ✓ increased opportunity for peer learning.

Another positive trend is the enhanced roles and responsibilities the LDR participants and alums take in their institutions and within AFI to promote greater IGD, build a female leadership pipeline, and advance women’s financial inclusion. According to the 2022 AFI data,<sup>37</sup> LDR participating institutions represent 91 percent of AFI Gender Inclusive Ambassador institutions, 60 percent of the AFI Working Group leaders, and 78 percent of the Gender Focal Points composition. Ghana leads the group with seven gender champions, followed by Namibia and Zimbabwe with three each.

“ The LDR training has equipped us with the necessary tools and confidence to deliver and effect visible and measurable gender inclusion and diversity within our organization. ”

2019 LDR participant

1

### THE BANK OF RWANDA, LDR PARTICIPANT 2020: APPLYING A DATA-DRIVEN APPROACH TO INFORM THE DESIGN OF FINANCIAL INCLUSION INITIATIVES

The Bank of Rwanda saw an opportunity in the COVID-19 pandemic to use digital financial products to bridge the financial gap and provide women access to mobile financial services. Before the pandemic, women were blocked from the formal economy. After participating in the LDR program in 2020, the bank shifted its approach and started a policy initiative that collects and processes sex-disaggregated data to inform its decision-making. They are monitoring the data quality and will start producing a report that will be shared nationwide by June 2022.

“ Before, we were just collecting data, but now we have gender issues in mind. Participating in the LDR program made us more gender sensitive. ”

LDR participant from Rwanda

<sup>37</sup> AFI. 2022. Board of Directors and Working Group composition list.

2

## THE BANK OF GHANA, LDR PARTICIPANT 2021: INCREASE LENDING TO WOMEN-OWNED MICRO, SMALL, AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES

Women-owned micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are critical for economic growth and job creation but face multifaceted challenges in accessing credit from banks. The policy created under the LDR program aims to encourage banks to increase lending to women-owned MSMEs by dedicating them at least 30 percent of their MSME loan portfolio. A baseline survey of their supervised banks was conducted, and the following expected outcomes were identified:

- ✓ identification of barriers to lending to women-owned MSMEs (demand-side/supply-side) - through stakeholder interactions
- ✓ establishment of a standard definition of MSME for use by the banking industry - in consultation with relevant stakeholders
- ✓ improved data collection from banks to assess the state of financial inclusion of women, particularly credit to women-owned businesses
- ✓ enhanced financial literacy of women-owned enterprises
- ✓ increased lending to women-owned MSMEs.

The baseline survey of the banks revealed, among other things, that there is no standard definition of MSME and women-owned MSME within the banking sector. However, properly identifying the target group is important for the policy initiative to be effective.

The next steps in implementing this initiative are to:

- ✓ establish a standard definition for “MSME” and “women-owned MSME” in consultation with the relevant stakeholders
- ✓ develop a reporting template for data collection
- ✓ identify demand/supply-side constraints to access finance for women-owned MSMEs
- ✓ share insights on the business sense for lending to women-owned MSMEs
- ✓ identify financial literacy needs of women-owned MSMEs for training.

Another survey of the banks will be conducted to assess the true state of credit extension to women-owned MSMEs.

Overall, several AFI members participating in the WWB’s LDR have developed either women’s leadership programs or career development initiatives. In some cases, they have developed both, showing the LDR’s meaningful outcome in promoting a gender-diverse workforce.

**TABLE 2: MEMBERS WHO ATTENDED THE LDR FOR TWO OR THREE CONSECUTIVE YEARS AND MEMBERS WHO ESTABLISHED POLICY INITIATIVES TO ADDRESS GENDER DIVERSITY AND WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP DUE TO THEIR ATTENDANCE OF THE LDR COURSE (2019-2021)**

MEMBERS WHO ATTENDED THE LDR FOR TWO/THREE CONSECUTIVE YEARS (12)	MEMBERS WHO ESTABLISHED POLICY INITIATIVES TO ADDRESS GENDER DIVERSITY AND WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP DUE TO THEIR ATTENDANCE OF THE LDR COURSE (see Appendix 3)
BSP	Banco de Moçambique
BANK OF GHANA	BSP
BANK OF ZAMBIA	Bank Indonesia
CENTRAL BANK OF EGYPT	Bank of Ghana
CENTRAL BANK OF ESOWATINI	Bank of Papua New Guinea
CENTRAL BANK OF LESOTHO	Bank of the Republic of Haiti
CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA	Bank of Zambia
CNBV, MEXICO	Central Bank of Bahamas
NBC	Central Bank of Egypt
NATIONAL BANK OF RWANDA	Central Bank of Lesotho
NATIONAL BANK OF TAJIKISTAN	Central Bank of Nigeria
SEPS, ECUADOR	CNBV, Mexico
	Ministry of Finance and Budget, Madagascar
	Ministry of Finance, Eswatini
	NBC
	National Bank of Rwanda
	PMA
	Superintendencia de Economía Popular y Solidaria, Ecuador
	Supervisor of Insurance, Belize

Sources: AFI Depository country Analysis 2020; LDR Participants list and 2022 Gender Diversity Survey; NFIS from different countries

## THE IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN LEADERS AS ROLE MODELS AND MENTORS

Women have started breaking the glass ceiling to the top leadership positions in politics, the workplace, sports, etc., only in the past few decades and in a few countries. In some cases, the additional challenges women face in climbing the professional ladder, particularly past a certain point, do not warrant the sacrifices needed to progress. Moreover, there is an expectation not to break cultural norms of a “woman’s place.” In others, resistant mindsets have burdened women to work two or three times harder than men to prove their competency for a leadership position and

climb the professional ladder. Some women leaders spearheading gender equity initiatives today are paving the way for the younger generation to enjoy the full benefits of a gender equitable and diverse workplace.

“ I wish and hope for a level playing field during my daughter’s generation where women can thrive equally as men, irrespective of their gender. ”

Key informant interviewee, the National Bank of Cambodia

Women need to have women role models and mentors to enhance their career paths and feel confident and supported in their career development. At NBC, two out of three deputy governors and two out of five director generals, are female. There is an equally good representation of middle-level female managers, which is a testimony to NBC's success in promoting women to leadership roles. NBC has supported women's participation in leadership courses like the LDR. They do not have mentors and sponsors as such. Instead, they look to female leaders as role models in climbing the professional ladder.

### CREATING AWARENESS IS KEY TO PROMOTING GENDER DIVERSITY

“Initiatives for gender diversity are important to have and should be in training programs to create awareness on gender topics (i.e., triggers to look out for) to ensure the past doesn't resurface again. Future generations need to know that just because it is not here right now doesn't mean we shouldn't talk about it. We need to avoid taking a step back and rather build forward in our strengths, so these problems don't surface back in the country.”

Liz Julienne, Central Bank of Seychelles

The NBC has a Women's Committee consisting of 11 members, all female, and chaired by the Deputy Governor of the NBC, H.E. Ms. Ouk Maly. The Women's Committee is primarily responsible for overseeing and furthering the women's agenda in NBC. Its terms of reference include: representing the NBC, participating in events organized by local and international organizations, organizing International Women's Day activities in the NBC, arranging awards or recognition for women officials, and preparing reports and required documents about the women-related agenda for submission to the top management. The Women's Committee has successfully organized the International Women's Day celebrations on 8 March 2022.

The role of men in supporting gender diversity and women's leadership within an organization is also crucial. Both genders should receive training and gender sensitization courses to ensure they see each other as members of the same team, not as rivals. As the Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Ghana mentioned, “The role of men is very important in the bank's scheme of things. The ladies have an association formed to fulfill, protect, and

champion their needs in the Bank. It was established as an internal women's network to create connectivity between women at all staff levels, which could lead to mentoring relationships and greater visibility of role models. The men, however, form the backbone of the association and are rightly recognized as the 'iron rods' or the 'ladies' pillars of strength.' There is a lot of cooperation and collaboration between the men and women.”



### GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND THE IMPORTANCE OF INCORPORATING MEN: AN EXAMPLE OF MEXICO

In Mexico, the CNBV's annual training program includes specific topics on identification, prevention, and attention to cases of discrimination, human rights, equality, workplace inclusion and labor inclusion. In 2021, 442 public servants (including 66 percent of women) participated in courses related to equality and non-discrimination (gender equality, gender violence, harassment and sexual harassment, and prevention of discrimination); 67 percent of participants were women.

However, an emphasis on the important role men play in the transition toward gender equality has also been presented. In 2021, CNBV staff were invited to participate in a forum entitled “Deepening the understanding of co-responsibility to pave the way towards conciliation,” and an online symposium, “Resignifying masculinities and fatherhood.” The forum dealt with topics such as Hegemonic masculinity as a risk factor; Privileges of masculinity in the exercise of human rights; Self-care is also a men's issue; Parenthood in times of COVID-19; The right to exercise co-responsible and affective parenthood; and Men as potential allies in public policies for gender equality. The Gender Equality Unit of the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit of the Republic of Mexico organized this.

These provisions and the policies that are implemented as part of gender mainstreaming at the federal level seek to ensure greater equality of employment opportunities and eradicate gender violence in Mexico. It is understood in Mexico that there may be gender biases in work environments, which could be due to affinity, overvaluing men's performance over that of women, or because women are associated with domestic and reproductive roles.

# THE STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2018 REPORT'S FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



The 2018 Special Report Gender Diversity within AFI Members indicated the level of gender diversity at the institutional level within selected AFI member institutions, including the status of the representation of women in leadership positions. Six key findings were identified. Four years later, the status of these findings is as follows:<sup>38</sup>

TABLE 3: COLLATERAL REQUIREMENTS IN LAC

KEY FINDINGS OF THE 2018 SPECIAL REPORT	STATUS IN 2022
<b>KEY FINDING 1:</b> IGD IS GIVEN A LOW PRIORITY	Improved
<b>KEY FINDING 2:</b> PRESENCE OF NATIONAL-LEVEL GENDER DIVERSITY POLICIES FOR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	Improved
<b>KEY FINDING 3:</b> A “GENDER NEUTRAL” POLICY DOES NOT GUARANTEE GENDER DIVERSITY	Still holding true
<b>KEY FINDING 4:</b> HIGH-LEVEL COMMITMENT TO THE CAUSE IS IMPERATIVE	Higher commitment observed, however, full commitment is still needed
<b>KEY FINDING 5:</b> GENDER DIVERSITY DECREASES IN HIGHER POSITIONS	Still true despite improvements
<b>KEY FINDING 6:</b> GENDER DIVERSITY IS PERCEIVED TO DRIVE MORE EFFECTIVE POLICYMAKING, INCLUDING ADVANCING WOMEN’S FINANCIAL INCLUSION	Still applicable, numerous policies approved since 2018

Given the different levels of institutional diversity and women’s leadership in member institutions and their unique challenges, the Report provided three key

<sup>38</sup> As per the views of the consultants.

recommendations to help members develop and implement effective gender responsive policies and programs:

- 1 | Generation of high-level commitment and advocacy
- 2 | Development of guidelines to increase IGD
- 3 | Implementation of sensitization and capacity-building programs

**1 | GENERATION OF HIGH-LEVEL COMMITMENT AND ADVOCACY**

Given the multiple challenges that exist and how they are unique to each institution, building gender-diverse institutions is a collective process that requires conscious efforts and a strong institutional commitment.

“ Commitment must come from above, from the senior management. If the commitment comes from above, from the different headquarters and management, it will go down to the different levels. There has to be commitment and support, if not, not much progress is made in building gender diverse institutions. ”

Key informant interviewee, National Banking and Insurance Commission, Honduras

Gender change processes normally receive a low priority over others (being both sensitive and dynamic), and face barriers or resistance manifested at individual, institutional, and societal levels. Nonetheless, 96 percent<sup>39</sup> of AFI member institutions (mostly with male heads) adopted the DAP in 2016 and updated in 2022, which has gained momentum, both in terms of promoting gender diverse organizations and gender mainstreaming initiatives. For example, the Central Banks of El Salvador, Ecuador, Ghana, Jordan, Mexico, Philippines, and Zambia, headed by male Governor(s), are leading the gender mainstreaming agenda, with over 40 percent female employees, IGD policies, and an NFIS with a GIF focus, which is commendable.

<sup>39</sup> AFI. 2017. Bridging the Gender Gap. Available at: [https://www.afi-global.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/2017-11/AFI2017\\_Gender\\_full\\_AW\\_ISBN\\_digital.pdf](https://www.afi-global.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/2017-11/AFI2017_Gender_full_AW_ISBN_digital.pdf)

While female leaders have played a key role in promoting the IGD agenda, securing the buy-in and commitment from (senior) male leadership is imperative to closing the gap between gender inclusive policies and practice. Gender-inclusive and equitable policies benefit both women and men, given the bi-directional relationship between the two. As of 2020,<sup>40</sup> six AFI member institutions<sup>41</sup> reported having their country leader as a [HeForShe champion](#) committed to advancing gender equality.<sup>42</sup>

“ To initiate and drive gender change across all levels, male leaders need to listen to their female employees and their needs as women. If the voice of women is heard and taken seriously, it will help male leaders understand the root causes of women sacrificing career advancement. Leaders can then work their way towards incorporating the best solution to build a woman’s pipeline of leaders by understanding and translating these challenges into transformative changes at the workplace (children-friendly, women-friendly, and inclusive) such as creche facilities, children’s library, longer leave for women, and flexi work schedule. ”

Key informant interviewee, National Bank of Cambodia

The role of male allies at all levels (national, sectoral, and institutional) in supporting policies and initiatives that promote gender diversity and women’s leadership is very important, as sociocultural norms often manifest in deep structures that perpetuate institutional inequalities. By bringing male allies on Board and effectively engaging them in the discussion, institutions can fast-track the agenda of gender diversity sustainably and consciously. Male allies need to understand that advocating for gender sensitive policies or promoting women’s leadership does not translate to men losing power and privileges but raising others to the same level. For example, the National Bank of Rwanda, recognized as one of the most gender inclusive institutions by AFI, has 60 percent male members in their Senior Committee who support gender sensitive initiatives. This underscores the need for balanced

views on gender issues through participation. Such collaboration can also help men understand the gender issue through a gender equity lens, which, in turn, helps holistically address their biases and fears.



## COUNTRY HIGHLIGHT / MEXICO

**MARCH 2021:** In its circular letter SRCI/UPRH/0003/2021, the Ministry of Public Administration invited public institutions to develop strategies to reduce the labor inequality gap, generate inclusion, and counter discrimination. This was an affirmative action to promote greater access for women in professional career service positions.

**DECEMBER 2021:** The CNBV, Mexico, published the CNBV-014-2021, a public announcement targeting women to enter the professional career service, in 25 operational and deputy director positions, to increase women’s representation and bring them on par with men in the CNBV.

**IN 2021:** The Ministry of Finance and Public Credit and the financial unions made a call to action to take concrete actions to promote greater inclusion of women in the sector and greater representation of women in decision-making positions.

**MARCH 2022:** The financial regulators in Mexico, including the CNBV and private institutions, established the Inter-institutional Committee for Gender Equality in Financial Entities with the objective to promote the right to equality across the board, non-discrimination in the workplace, and equal access to quality financial products and services for all Mexicans, irrespective of their gender.

<sup>40</sup> AFI. July 2020. GIF Mapping Exercise Master Sheet.

<sup>41</sup> Egypt, Ghana, Malawi, Rwanda, Tunisia, and Zimbabwe.

<sup>42</sup> HeforShe. 2020. HeforShe champions. Available at: <https://www.heforshe.org/en/heforshe-champions>



## 2 | DEVELOPMENT OF GUIDELINES TO INCREASE IGD

There is a correlation between women’s leadership and gender transformative policies, as evident from AFI member institutions such as BSP, Bank of Zambia, CNBV Mexico, NBC, National Bank of Rwanda, Superintendencia de Bancos del Ecuador, and Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe. These institutions have women in senior leadership positions (either at the head or deputy head level), and they have made significant strides in accelerating GIF in their respective jurisdictions.

“ I think our world now recognizes that we need to have inclusive policies and women at the forefront to make sure that these policies are actually implemented. And I’ve seen a lot of countries, especially in Africa, where women are at the very forefront of getting inclusive policies implemented.”<sup>43</sup>

Caroline Abel, Governor, Central Bank of Seychelles

### AFI’S POLICY GUIDELINES ON GENDER DIVERSITY AND LEADERSHIP

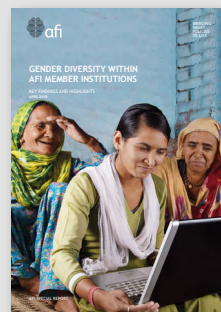
One of the recommendations identified in the 2018 Special Report on Gender Diversity within AFI Members was to help members develop and implement gender-inclusive internal guidelines or toolkits to address the gaps and challenges. Several evidence-based and data-driven policy knowledge products from the AFI network assist members in building gender inclusive institutions and promoting women’s leadership.

- ✓ In April 2018, AFI published a Special Report on **Gender Diversity within AFI Members**, which served as a stocktaking exercise to understand the practices, barriers, gaps, and progress on IGD among selected AFI member institutions; recommendations for gender mainstreaming towards achieving institutional gender parity were made.

<sup>43</sup> WWB. 2022. In Conversation with Caroline Abel, Catia Tomasetti, Jorgovanka Tabaković, and Nor Shamsiah Mohd Yunus: Reflections on a Successful Career in Central Banking. Available at: <https://www.womensworldbanking.org/insights/in-conversation-with-caroline-abel-catia-tomasetti-jorgovanka-tabakovic-and-nor-shamsiah-mohd-yunus-reflections-on-a-successful-career-in-central-banking/>

- ✓ The 2019 AFI **Policy Framework for Women’s Financial Inclusion using Digital Financial Services**, which provides guidance in developing women’s financial inclusion using DFS, emphasizes the need to increase IGD through women’s leadership programs under the “Gender Sensitive Policy and DFS Legislation” pillar.
- ✓ In September 2020, AFI published the Special Report on **Why the Economic response to COVID-19 needs to be financially inclusive and gender sensitive**, underscoring the importance of developing guidelines and policies that advocate for women’s leadership and gender diversity.
- ✓ At the end of 2022, AFI developed a toolkit called **Mainstreaming and Implementing Institutional Gender Diversity and Inclusion within AFI Member Institutions** to support members in their journey.

These knowledge products have facilitated AFI members with their gender mainstreaming initiatives through the development of gender responsive policies, GIF, and women’s leadership.



Gender Diversity within AFI Member Institutions  
> View [here](#)



Gender sensitive policy response to COVID-19  
> View [here](#)



Framework to promote women’s financial inclusion using DFS  
> View [here](#)

“ Gender diversity brings about various skills, abilities and experiences which promotes diverse views to develop well-balanced and effective financial inclusion policies. ”

Key informant interviewee, BNM

Table 4 shows progress in developing and implementing formal and purposeful internal gender diversity and inclusive policies. However, much remains to be done. The report’s survey findings indicate that 30.3 percent (10 out of 33) of member institutions reported having an internal action plan or strategy to promote gender diversity, up from 25 percent in 2020. Similarly, 37 percent (13 out of 35) of members have initiatives/ programs/policy reforms that encourage IGD or promote women in leadership positions.

TABLE 4: MEMBER GENDER DIVERSITY POLICY INITIATIVES IN 2022



30% (10)

# MEMBERS WITH AN INTERNAL GENDER DIVERSITY STRATEGY OR ACTION PLAN



37% (13)

# MEMBERS WITH PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT WOMEN’S LEADERSHIP PIPELINE



61% (19)

# MEMBERS WITH NON-DISCRIMINATION AND ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY



44% (15)

# MEMBERS WITH EQUAL EMPLOYMENT HUMAN RESOURCE POLICIES

Source: AFI GD Survey 2022

The general view of members on the role of quotas in fostering greater gender diversity is that gender diversity should be part of the institution’s culture and not an imposition. As mentioned during an interview with the National Banking and Insurance Commission in Honduras, “having quotas as an imposition can lead to a backlash/negative effect.”

Some countries such as Rwanda, however, have quotas (50/50) for women in leadership positions. Ecuador, for example, requires that the Board of directors of its savings and credit cooperatives have the same gender proportionality as its assembly (i.e., if its assembly has 40 percent women, the Board must have 40 percent of women).

“ One of our core organizational values is respect for diversity. In our experience, a policy of respect for diversity, meritocracy, and transparency works best to alleviate concerns across genders. ”

Nor Shamsiah, BNM

Most AFI members are working actively of their gender mainstreaming initiatives either by conducting gender audits such as those conducted by the CNBV Mexico, Bank of Jordan and the Centre for Financial Inclusion Eswatini; identifying key priority area (KPAs) and interventions to address the identified gender gaps and discriminatory practices obtained from the gender audit, or providing capacity building and training to support the implementation of the gender mainstreaming initiatives.



COUNTRY HIGHLIGHT / EGYPT

- ✓ Has a [National Strategy for the Empowerment of Women 2030](#) launched by President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi in March 2017.
- ✓ Has an Egyptian [Gender Equity Seal Certification](#) for the private sector.
- ✓ First country in Africa, and the Middle East and North Africa region to launch the [Closing the Gender Gap Accelerator](#) action plan, a public-private collaboration model supported by the World Economic Forum.



#### COUNTRY HIGHLIGHT / BANK OF GHANA

- ✓ The Bank of Ghana has an internal policy that prohibits discrimination in any form. The policy states specifically that the Bank recruits, hires, develops, promotes, manages, and provides conditions of employment without regard to gender or gender identity, marriage, pregnancy or paternity, race, religion, belief, or disability.
- ✓ Principle 4 of the Ghana Sustainable Banking Principles directs financial institutions to, and encourages awareness of, and initiation of actions to promote gender equality with clients and within the business operations.



#### COUNTRY HIGHLIGHT / BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS, PHILIPPINES

BSP strongly promotes inclusivity and diversity in the workplace through various avenues, where employees can freely express their identities and/or share gender and development-related concerns. These initiatives include briefings on gender and development-related laws, peer support group sessions spearheaded by the Health and Wellness Department, counseling services, capacity-building seminars, and gender sensitivity training that help empower employees of all genders. BSP has also installed 33 gender neutral restrooms in its head office in Manila.

### 3 | IMPLEMENTATION OF SENSITIZATION AND CAPACITY-BUILDING PROGRAMS

The 2018 special report underlined the need to strengthen the capacity-building of members to accelerate the IGD agenda consciously and collaboratively, primarily starting with a set of well-trained and committed gender champions. To this end, AFI and WWB collaborated in delivering the LDR to advance women's financial inclusion and build a gender diverse workforce in AFI member institutions, as seen above. In addition, varying levels of gender sensitive interventions to develop a pipeline of women leaders and support institutional diversity and internal policies to support these aims are observed across AFI member institutions. Thirty-four percent of AFI members surveyed (11 out of 32) provide training programs to support women's leadership and gender diversity, while 65 percent of members (21 out of 32) facilitate women employees to access career learning and development tools (mentoring, leadership, etc.) to support their professional advancement.

These programs have helped build participants' personal and professional development, including a catalytic role in undertaking institutional reforms, translating into career growth, a gender diverse workforce, improved female leadership pipeline, and GIF policies. According to AFI findings,<sup>44</sup> 75 percent of the 2020 LDR cohort of women leaders (82 percent in 2019) reported increased responsibilities in strategically relevant work, including projects.

#### HERE ARE A FEW GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES OF CAPACITY-BUILDING PROGRAMS FROM AFI MEMBERS:

- ✓ BSP's Capacity Development Department provides career development opportunities for all employees through online lectures/seminars, face-to-face training, local and international scholarship programs, and mentorship programs, among other workplace development interventions. Furthermore, leadership and career growth opportunities are presented and available to all BSP employees regardless of gender.

<sup>44</sup> AFI. July 2021. Leadership and Diversity Program for Regulators: Headline Findings

However, gender-related sensitivity training and similar learnings are held to strengthen employees' awareness and knowledge of gender issues and concerns in the workplace and community.

- ✓ **PMA** has a course to enhance the skills of their female staff so they can be qualified for a promotion.
- ✓ The **Bank of Ghana** are committed to promoting and empowering women for, and at, leadership levels. Various courses are held locally and internationally for women from the middle to the top management level. Currently, the capacity of women at the middle management level is built through the Female Future Program, a flagship training program. It has been established in four key countries in Africa, including now Ghana, and organized by the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise in collaboration with the Ghana Employers Association. The outcomes are yet to be realized as the first cohort of five middle-level female staff completed practical leadership, board competence, and rhetoric training in December 2021.
- ✓ The **Egyptian government** is committed to achieving gender equality and strongly emphasizes empowering women and women's leadership. With this guidance, the Central Bank of Egypt has been promoting women across different leadership levels by proactively supporting their participation in women's leadership courses, such as:
  - Women in leadership program conducted by the Egyptian Banking Institution
  - Empowering Egyptian women in banking and finance conducted by the American Embassy
  - LDR by the WWB and AFI, including an additional in-house version of the global course
  - German-Arab women business leaders initiative for MSMEs
  - AFI workshop on communicating gender and women's financial inclusion.

As of April 2022, 62 women from the Central Bank of Egypt participated in these courses.

- ✓ The **Bank of Zambia** has a diversity training program for gender focal points and a mentorship and coaching framework for all female employees.

There also appears to be a relationship between participation in gender leadership programs and a reduction in the gender gap in financial inclusion.

Between 2014 and 2020, six AFI member countries with gender leadership programs (Congo, Fiji, Nigeria, Philippines, Rwanda, and South Africa) decreased their gender gap in financial inclusion. In 2021 South Africa recorded no gender gap<sup>45</sup> and the Philippines a reverse gender gap of 3 percent.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>45</sup> World Bank. 2021. The Global index database Women and Financial Inclusion. 2021. Available at: <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/45619be5de8592403df8558559627234-0050062022/original/Findex-GenderBrief.pdf>

<sup>46</sup> BSP. 2021 Financial Inclusion Survey. Available at: <https://www.bsp.gov.ph/Inclusive%20Finance/Financial%20Inclusion%20Reports%20and%20Publications/2021/2021FISToplineReport.pdf>

## CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

It is worth noting that AFI is at the forefront of championing GIF and gender diversity and leadership across financial regulatory institutions. Since the launch of the Maya Declaration in 2011 and the DAP in 2016, AFI has supported dozens of central banks/regulators in implementing and mainstreaming gender financial inclusion policies and regulations, as well as supporting the ascension of women in their careers.

# 13%

There is a growing number of women now leading financial institutions. Of the 85 paying principal members in AFI, 11 are led by women, and there are 40 female deputy heads. That equals 13 percent, which is higher than the global average and indicates progress, with more likely to follow.

Despite being at varying levels of development and implementation, AFI members have made progress and implemented policies, programs, and training/mentoring schemes to support greater gender diversity and women's leadership. These can be reference points for other AFI members and even regulatory institutions beyond the network. Most notably, they have sought to address the underlying social and cultural structures that perpetuate low levels of gender diversity and impede progress in advancing women's financial inclusion.

Given the different levels of institutional diversity, women's leadership in member institutions, and their unique challenges, the 2018 special report [Gender Diversity within AFI Members](#) provided three key recommendations to help members develop and implement effective gender sensitive policies and programs.

Implementation of these recommendations is well advanced:

- 1 Sensitization and capacity-building are addressed through developing the WWB and AFI's LDR and gender sensitive coaching/training/mentoring programs at the members' level.
- 2 Developing guidelines or toolkits to increase gender diversity is also underway and has positively affected members. Thirty percent of members now have an internal gender diversity policy (up from 25 percent in 2020), 37 percent have women's leadership programs, 61 percent have non-discrimination and non-harassment policies, and 44 percent have equal employment policies.
- 3 Finally, members are working towards ensuring high-level commitment and support trickling down from the top management and advocacy at all levels to support the gender mainstreaming effort, including six member institutions who have national leaders who are HeForShe champions and are committed towards the advancement of gender equality.

These efforts need to be continued, and results achieved in promoting greater gender diversity and women's leadership reassessed in a few years.

### Recommendations to address persistent barriers to greater gender diversity

Despite the progress achieved by AFI members with initiatives and policies taken to foster greater gender diversity and women's leadership, some **persistent gaps, barriers, and challenges remain to be tackled.**

### OUTSIDE OF THE MANDATE OF THE FINANCIAL REGULATOR

A few barriers will require a broader commitment beyond AFI members to address the **cultural and social norms deeply embedded in the existing inequalities.** It is required to continue addressing the underlying social and cultural structures that perpetuate low levels of gender diversity and impede progress in advancing women's financial inclusion through a holistic approach. Sensitizing both men and women, from an early age and throughout their education and professional life, to work as a team rather than rivals can be a way to address it. Such an approach requires forging strategic alliances and engaging both male and female leaders at all levels (national, sectoral, and institutional) in gender mainstreaming initiatives.

However, policymakers and regulators should be aware of how fragile the headway made for gender diversity and leadership. The COVID-19 pandemic risks derailing the gender diversity progress made so far, with women being disproportionately affected compared to men due to **gender differences** in household work and childcare. Frequent lockdowns coupled with ‘work from home’ practices and the loss of jobs have saddled women with an even greater workload of unpaid work, increased gender-based violence, and loss of income. This calls for new ways to deal with these challenges.

On the other hand, opportunities exist through institutional partnerships and collaborations, peer learning, and initiatives that incorporate women’s emotional and functional needs (hybrid work coupled with access to resources, childcare facilities, Ethics, and Integrity office to promote fair treatment across the Board).

### **WITHIN THE MANDATE OF THE FINANCIAL REGULATOR**

Based on the findings from the study, the Special Report recommends the following way forward to foster greater gender diversity and women’s leadership:

#### **RECOGNIZING THE NEED FOR GENDER AWARENESS TO ADDRESS GENDER BLINDNESS OR NEUTRALITY**

The issue of gender neutral policies not guaranteeing gender diversity identified in 2018 still holds among AFI members in 2022. Recognizing the need to go further than being “gender neutral” towards “gender inclusive” to achieve gender diversity and equality requires awareness at individual, institutional, and country levels, which often requires sensitization on the topic.

#### **DEEPENED CAPACITY-BUILDING, ROLE MODELING, AND MENTORSHIPS**

Raising awareness and building capacities on issues of gender diversity, women’s leadership, and the importance of women’s financial inclusion is especially important. The WWB’s LDR program, supported by AFI, is contributing towards that and should be further supported and enhanced by local training at the members’ level trickling down to all staff and spreading the message and learnings from the LDR training to increase its outreach to all people within AFI member institutions.

Encouraging AFI members to have a budget line for awareness-raising, training, or other activities to promote gender diversity and financial inclusion of women is also equally important and should be prioritized.

Continuing to build and foster a sustainable female talent pipeline requires women role models and mentors to support. The LDR program established a mentor/mentee pathway that needs to be further leveraged and expanded. Women in leadership positions also have a role in empowering and encouraging gender diversity and women’s leadership within and outside their organizations.

#### **FURTHER COMMITMENT AND ADVOCACY THROUGH CHAMPIONING GENDER FOCAL POINTS TO COMPLEMENT THE WORK OF HIGH-LEVEL ADVOCATES**

Gender focal points provide visibility and support greater gender diversity within an organization, while ambassadors, such as HeForShe champions, provide visibility and support to advancing gender equality and diversity at country and international levels. Leveraging both levels of commitment and advocacy creates the needed traction for greater gender diversity.

Several members that were addressing gender diversity within their institutions and/or more broadly within the financial sector mentioned they had a woman champion gender focal point to promote institutional change, which required convincing staff that the issue is a shared responsibility with mutually beneficial outcomes.

#### **THE ASSISTANCE OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, WHICH ARE EXPERTS ON THE SUBJECT OF GENDER DIVERSITY, CAN BE CRUCIAL FOR EFFICIENT INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE CHANGE**

The assistance of international organizations that are experts on the subject, such as the Toronto Center or AFI, is particularly important, as is the support of other institutions within the country and peer learning from champion AFI member institutions. Including international organizations and AFI Gender Inclusive Finance Ambassadors in the gender change process also helps get the required buy-in from men, as the recommendations are coming from external experts.

#### **LEVERAGING THE INFLUENCE AND POWER OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR FOR GREATER GENDER DIVERSITY AND WOMEN’S LEADERSHIP**

Policymakers and regulatory bodies play a vital role and have the level of respect and hierarchy that others do not have and can use this to influence the private sector. The regulator can be seen as a role model and exemplary when it comes to gender

diversity and equality and women's leadership. Furthermore, they can help make what is being done visible through sensitization and awareness campaigns, helping influence other institutions and society.

### **ENSURING GENDER MAINSTREAMING POLICIES AND INITIATIVES ARE DEVELOPED AND IMPLEMENTED AT DIFFERENT LEVELS OF THE INTERNAL CULTURE**

Ensuring an equal playing field for all genders in terms of power and opportunities through creating a culture of inclusion is the responsibility of each institution/country. The internal culture of an organization has an important role, as an external culture often hinders gender diversity. Developing gender mainstreaming initiatives at different levels of the culture supports gender diversity and equality. Developing non-discrimination, non-harassment, and equal employment opportunities policies is often a first step in the gender diversity path. Having internal gender diversity policies/strategies is often a second step (achieved by 30 percent of AFI members so far). Implementing them in practice through concrete initiatives (gender mainstreaming) is the next step that requires focus and attention from AFI members.

### **BEING MINDFUL OF NOT DISCRIMINATING AGAINST MEN AND BEING CONSCIOUS OF THE LANGUAGE USED**

Quotas to foster greater gender diversity are largely used at the level of the boards, especially in Europe. However, this may create unwanted male discrimination and the perception of unfair treatment. In consultation with the private sector, regulators and policymakers are responsible for assessing whether quotas would benefit their respective countries. Beyond quotas, being mindful of the language is important to avoid unwanted discrimination.

This Special Report demonstrates that a growing number of AFI members have engaged in tackling the barriers to foster greater gender diversity and have leadership that actively advocates and asserts the importance of gender diversity and gender sensitive financial inclusion policymaking. Building on this report, AFI has released a complementary toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Institutional Gender Diversity and Inclusion Within AFI Member Institutions to provide practical insights and recommendations AFI can take to strengthen IGD and build a diverse pipeline of senior women leaders.

## APPENDIX 1: GLOSSARY CONTAINING GENDER TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

COMMONLY USED TERM/CONCEPT	DEFINITION
<b>GENDER</b>	The role, behavior, activities, and attributes that society, at a particular time, regards as appropriate for men and women. These socially constructed attributes, opportunities, and relationships tend to be transmitted the socialization. The gender categories are feminine and masculine.
<b>GENDER ANALYSIS</b>	A systematic examination of differences in opportunities and constraints an individual or a group faces based on their sex and gender identity. Gender analysis explores social relationships and gender differences across domains, including gendered division of labor, access to and control over resources, and decision-making power, along with the opportunities for advancing gender equality. This approach to analysis helps to establish a fuller and relatively unbiased perspective for understanding the context of an investment or project. A gender analysis enables the design of gender positive activities and facilitates the identification of who can and cannot be included or excluded based on their sex or gender identity.
<b>GENDER AUDIT</b>	A process based on a participatory methodology to promote learning at the individual, work unit and organizational levels on mainstreaming gender practically and effectively. This is, essentially, a “social audit,” similar to “quality audits” as opposed to “financial audits.”
<b>GENDER BALANCE OR EQUAL REPRESENTATION/ PARTICIPATION</b>	Gender balance requires the equal participation of people in all areas of work (international and national) at all levels, including senior positions. It also covers programs agencies initiate or support (e.g., food distribution programs). It is aimed at achieving a balance in staffing patterns and creating a conducive work environment for a diverse workforce. It improves the overall effectiveness of policies and programs, boosting organizational capacity to serve entire populations.
<b>GENDER BIAS</b>	Prejudiced actions or thoughts that affect a person or a group based on their perceived gender. Such bias results in unequal and/or unfair treatment, including gender-based discrimination in the workplace or gender stereotyping in the media. It also leads to unequal and unfair access to resources such as income, food, health care, land ownership, and education. Gender bias can be conscious or unconscious, explicit or implicit. It can occur in the public sphere, such as in access to financial services or documentation required for bank accounts, and in the private sphere within households.
<b>GENDER BLIND</b>	Failure to recognize that gender is a determinant of social outcomes that result from the implementation of projects and policies.
<b>GENDER DIFFERENCES</b>	A social and cultural approach to understanding the differences in attributes of men, women, girls, and boys, and roles and responsibilities of men and women. Gender-based roles and other attributes can change over time and in different cultural contexts. Expectations about the characteristics, aptitudes, and behaviors of people (femininity and masculinity) also vary. These differences can be used to understand how varying practices appear to legitimize the discrepancies between sexes.



<b>GENDER DISCRIMINATION</b>	A distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of a person's sex and/or gender identity rather than on their merit or skills. This type of inequality in treatment can be direct (when a difference in treatment is based explicitly on gender) or indirect (when an apparently neutral law, policy, program, or practice has a discriminatory effect in practice). Gender discrimination can result from individual perception and application or be systemic. Systemic gender discrimination consists of behaviors, policies, or practices that are part of the structures or culture of an institution and that create or perpetuate disadvantages for women and girls and for those who do not conform to the male/female binary.
<b>GENDER DIVERSITY</b>	In this document, gender diversity refers to a working environment where females have equal opportunities as males in recruitment, promotion, leadership, training, and retirement.
<b>GENDER EQUALITY</b>	This is about equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for women and men, girls and boys. Rather than requiring people to become the same, it ensures that women's and men's rights, responsibilities, and opportunities do not depend on their gender.
<b>GENDER EQUITY</b>	Fairness in the treatment of all people regardless of sex or gender identity or expression. The concept recognizes that individuals have diverse needs, abilities and powers based on their sex or gender identity, with the differences being identified and addressed to rectify inequities. To ensure fairness, affirmative action is used to remedy gaps and compensate for historical and social disadvantages that prevent individuals from operating as equals. Gender equity is a strategy that can lead to gender equality using targeted time-bound actions.
<b>GENDER FOCAL POINTS</b>	The Gender Focal Point is an organization's member of staff responsible for addressing issues of gender mainstreaming and capacity-building among colleagues to incorporate gender in their work both in principle and in content. This task could include advocating, advising, and supporting professional staff and monitoring and reporting on progress to enable mainstreaming, including, if necessary, with the support of consultants. The task could include disseminating information and training workshops/seminars to develop an understanding of the issues to be addressed.
<b>GENDER GAP</b>	The difference between women and men, boys, and girls, in society based on gendered norms and expectations. Gender gaps represent the unequal distribution of resources, opportunities, and outcomes and usually become apparent through the analysis of gender data that reveals the extent of inequalities.
<b>GENDER IDENTITY</b>	A person's own sense of being male, female, or another identity beyond this binary and how they choose to manifest this externally.
<b>GENDER INCLUSIVE</b>	Open and inclusive to everyone regardless of their gender identity and/or expression.
<b>GENDER LENS</b>	A perspective on issues with particular attention to how gender differences and relations can impact investments and project actions. It can be used to analyze power structures and roles in various contexts where it can provide insights into the effect of action (investment or project) on imbalances in gender power relations.
<b>GENDER MAINSTREAMING</b>	An approach for incorporating the needs and interests of all genders into the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of programs, policies, and organizational processes to ensure that everyone can benefit equally and that actions do not perpetuate inequality.
<b>GENDER NEUTRAL</b>	A concept, an entity, or a language style not associated with the male or female genders. A gender neutral policy or regulation does not consider the needs of different genders. In practice, it is frequently gender blind as it does not account for systematic, embedded, or internalized bias.

<b>GENDER PARITY</b>	A numerical concept used to determine relative equality in numbers and proportions of men and women, girls, and boys. Gender parity addresses the ratio of female-to-male performance or values (or male-to-female) of an indicator under consideration.
<b>GENDER RESPONSIVE</b>	Being aware of how gender identities and roles influence the opportunities of people in society and designing activities and policies that are structured and operate to demonstrate commitment to gender equality. Ensuring that women are participants and beneficiaries at all levels of programs, including management, and ensuring that they and men have the training and skills necessary to contribute to the development of activities in all spheres of life.
<b>GENDER ROLES</b>	These are the expected roles, including behaviors, activities, and responsibilities, associated with each sex. The socially defined tasks, responsibilities, and behaviors that are considered culturally appropriate for men and women. These are context-specific and can change over time through individual choices or as a result of social and/or political changes emerging from changed opportunities (more education, different economic environment) or times of social upheaval (during disasters, in war, and post-conflict situations). For example, the introduction of modern technology or services can alter the on-farm division of labor, shifting some tasks from women to men or vice-versa.
<b>GENDER SENSITIVITY</b>	Ability to understand and acknowledge prevailing gender differences, issues, and inequalities and to use these to design and undertake appropriate strategies and actions.
<b>GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE OR TRANSFORMATION</b>	An approach that identifies the root causes of gender inequality in the field of financial inclusion before analyzing and transforming inequitable gender norms and power dynamics into positive outcomes that directly enhance gender equity.
<b>ECONOMIC GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE</b>	Gender-based violence encompasses any harmful act that occurs against a person's will, and that is based on socially determined (gender) differences between females and males. Examples include sexual violence, domestic violence, trafficking, forced/early marriage, and harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation.
<b>INTERSECTIONALITY</b>	A framework to understand how race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, and other aspects of individual identity might combine and exacerbate the exclusion or discrimination of particular groups. It refers to the overlapping of disadvantages and is critical in understanding the challenges experienced by sexual and gender minorities in socially unstable, fragile, and conflict-affected areas. An intersectional approach is critical to understanding additional barriers to accessing basic services, extra protection challenges in situations of forced displacement, and vulnerability to sexual and gender-based violence.
<b>MALE ALLY</b>	Male allies are men who associate with, cooperate with and support women, deliberately engaging in and avidly supporting gender inclusion programs.
<b>PATRIARCHY</b>	A system of society or government that allows and justifies men holding the greater balance of power and economic and societal benefit and resources. This power is often used to marginalize and oppress others.
<b>WOMEN AND GIRLS' ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT</b>	Reinforcing the economic strength of women and girls to enhance their ability to earn an income to expand their choices for gaining power and control over their own lives. This also involves transforming the structures and institutions which otherwise reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and inequality. The core of empowerment lies in the ability of a person to control their own destiny for earning and spending to enhance their well-being.

## APPENDIX 2: POLICY INITIATIVES FROM MEMBERS TO ADDRESS GENDER DIVERSITY AND WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND WOMEN'S FINANCIAL INCLUSION

COHORT	INSTITUTION	POLICY INITIATIVE
2019	Central Bank of Bahamas	Women's representation on Central Bank Board
		New digital currency to expand access to the underserved
2019/2021	Central Bank of Lesotho	Sex-disaggregated data from banks and insurance companies
2019	Bank of the Republic of Haiti	Loan facility and education for women-led MSMEs
2019	Bank of the Republic of Haiti	Monitoring/formalizing savings groups
		Women-focused M&E framework is embedded in the NFIS
2019/2021	Bank of Ghana	Consolidated women-led microfinance institutions to expand women's financial inclusion
		Design and implement a national financial capability campaign that targets excluded groups, including women. It aims to increase the level of financial inclusion of women from 57 percent in 2017 to 70 percent in 2020 and 85 percent in 2023.
2019	Bank Indonesia	Digital social assistance payments (incl. digital and financial literacy)
2019	Supervisor of Insurance, Belize	Enabling environment for agricultural microinsurance
2019/2021	CNBV, Mexico	Women's financial inclusion strategy
		Studies aimed at promoting formal savings among rural women
		Women-focused action plan embedded in the NFIS
2019/2020	National Bank of Cambodia	National financial literacy curriculum
		Training women entrepreneurs
		Financial literacy for female university students
		Reduce the financial exclusion of women by half, from 27 percent to 13 percent. Recognizes the need to promote a gender responsive strategy. The gender sensitive action plan is embedded in the NFIS.

COHORT	INSTITUTION	POLICY INITIATIVE
2019/2020	National Bank of Rwanda	Smart savings groups
		Sex-disaggregated data
		Program to support women's leadership at the institutional level
		Reduce the gender gap from 11 to 2 percent. Specific measures to cover high-priority segments (including women). Gender sensitive high-level indicators are included in the NFIS.
2020	Bank of Zambia	Gender sensitive DFS products
		Women-focused results framework is embedded in the NFIS
		Zambia's National Strategy on Financial Education identifies women as target beneficiaries of the country's financial education efforts
		Program to support women's leadership at the institutional level
2020	Banco de Moçambique	Financial education for savings groups
2020	Insurance Commission, Philippines	Microinsurance product (and financial literacy) for single women
2021	Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas	Program to support women's leadership at the institutional level
2020/2021	SEPS, Ecuador	Simplified Know-Your-Customer
		Women-focused results framework is embedded in the NFIS
2021	Central Bank of Nigeria	Highlighted the opportunity to capitalize on the potential of microfinance to serve women especially. Promoted the development of specialized products (e.g., non-interest financial services for the excluded groups).
		The women-focused roadmap is embedded in the NFIS. A women's financial inclusion framework was launched in 2020.
		Program to support women's leadership at the institutional level
2021	Bank of Papua New Guinea	Gender representation in NFIS working groups, greater gender balance in financial sector intermediaries, enabling policies to catalyze GIF
		To reach two million more unbanked low-income people, 50 percent will be women. FinEd initiatives will focus on key target groups (e.g., women).
		Action plan with targets for financial inclusion of women
		Program to support women's leadership at the institutional level

COHORT	INSTITUTION	POLICY INITIATIVE
2020/2021	SEPS, Ecuador	Simplified Know-Your-Customer
		Women-focused results framework is embedded in the NFIS
2021	Palestine Monetary Authority	Promoting women's financial capabilities and GIF with a specific emphasis on women-operated MSMEs
2021	Central Bank of Egypt	Program to support women's leadership at the institutional level
		The Egyptian Banking Institute, the training arm of the Central Bank of Egypt, has been assigned by them to lead the efforts to draft the National Financial Literacy Strategy in Egypt, where a main pillar is dedicated to women's economic empowerment.

Source: AFI Depository country Analysis 2020; LDR Participants list and 2022 Gender Diversity Survey; NFIS from different countries

## APPENDIX 3: AFI WORKING GROUP LEADERSHIP COMPOSITION (SEPTEMBER 2022)

WG	WG CHAIR/ CO-CHAIR	SALUTATION	NAME	ORGANIZATION
CEMCWG	Chair	Ms.	Wati Seeto	Reserve Bank of Fiji
	Co-Chair	Mr.	Madalitso Mwanza	Ministry of Finance, Zambia
	Co-Chair	Mr.	Flávio Viegas Pinto	Banco Central de São Tomé e Príncipe
DFSWG	Chair	Ms.	Candy Ngula	Bank of Namibia
	Co-Chair	Dr.	Stephen Ambore	Central Bank of Nigeria
	Co-Chair	Dr.	Josephat Mutepfa	Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe
FIDWG	Chair	Dr.	Settor Amediku	Bank of Ghana
	Co-Chair	Ms.	Mary Musombo Katepa	Bank of Zambia
	Co-Chair	Mme.	Chahrazade El Alaoui	Bank Al-Maghrib
FISPLG	Chair	Mr.	Mohanad Salous	Palestine Monetary Authority
	Co-Chair	Mrs.	Teresa Pascoal	Banco Nacional de Angola
	Co-Chair	Ms.	Aishath Asna Hamdi	Maldives Monetary Authority
GSPWG	Chair	Ms.	Florabelle M. Santos-Madrid	Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
	Co-Chair	Ms.	Jacinta Anyinge	Bank of Uganda
	Co-Chair		vacant	
SMEFWG	Chair	Dr.	Emma Haiyambo	Bank of Namibia
	Co-Chair	Mr.	Ismail Adam	Bank of Ghana
	Co-Chair	Mrs.	Saba Assaf	Palestine Monetary Authority
IGFWG	Chair	Mr.	Sonam Rinzin	Royal Monetary Authority of Bhutan
	Co-Chair	Dr.	Paul Oluikpe	Central Bank of Nigeria
	Co-Chair	Mrs.	Kabinda Kawesha	Bank of Zambia

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## ACRONYMS

<b>BoD</b>	Board of Directors
<b>BNM</b>	Bank Negara Malaysia
<b>BSP</b>	Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
<b>CNBV</b>	Comisión Nacional Bancaria y de Valores de México
<b>DAP</b>	Denarau Action Plan
<b>GFP</b>	Gender Focal Persons (AFI)
<b>GIF</b>	Gender Inclusive Finance
<b>GIFC</b>	Gender Inclusive Finance Committee (AFI)
<b>IGD</b>	Institutional Gender Diversity
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organisation
<b>LDR</b>	Leadership and Diversity Program for Regulators
<b>MSME</b>	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise
<b>NBC</b>	National Bank of Cambodia
<b>NFIS</b>	National Financial Inclusion Strategies
<b>PMA</b>	Palestinian Monetary Authority
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SEPS</b>	Superintendencia de la Economía Popular y Solidaria de Ecuador
<b>UNDESA</b>	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
<b>WG</b>	Working Group
<b>WWB</b>	Women's World Banking





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