

FNET's Empowering Work Working Group

Notes and Actions of the meeting- Gender Due Diligence

22nd January, 10.00 – 4.00pm – In Person at Fullers Foods, Leeds

Attendees:

Name - Business		Name - Business	
1. Andrew Nicholson – 2sfg		3. Louise Nicholls – FNET	
2. Fiona McKerrow – Dole Foods		4. Linda Beresford FNET	
3. Angela Posey – AM Fresh		10. Anna Pike – Worldwide Fruit	
4. Clare Donovan – Worldwide Fruits (L)		11. Alison Walker – Fullers	
5. Lydia Tunnard – Keelings		12. Gabriella Partner – Fullers	
6. Jo Speed – PDM Produce (L)		13. Bruno De Sousa Carvalho – Driscolls	
7. Shane Taylor - Fresca		14. Julia Widz – Zertus UK	
Online			
15. Megan Bailey – AM Fresh		18. Jim Swan – EFC Ltd	
16. Lucy Oldershaw – Oldershaw Group		19. Emma Henry – Berryworld	
17. Holly Soar – Morrisons		20.	
External Speakers			
Caroline Downey – Women Working Worldwide			
Dr. Felicity Butler - BSR			
Rachel Mostyn – Women's Work Lab and Sanantha			

Agenda for the day:

Agenda – Gender Due Diligence	
Est. time	Item
09.30-10.00	Coffee and networking
10.00 - 10.15	Introductions and competition statement - Objectives for the day – Clare Donovan
10.15 - 10.45	Worker Engagement Maturity Framework Update – Fiona McKerrow, Anna Pike, Jo Speed
10.45 - 11.15	The Why? - Gender Equity - Clause 7- e SMETA 7 CAR's – Louise Nicholls General Discussion- Members share their business position on Gender Equity and what they want to get from the day
11.15 - 11.30	Coffee and Break
11.30 - 12.00	The Approach ? Sowing the change: Gender in Food Supply chains– Caroline Downey – Women Working Worldwide
12.00 -12.30	Case Study – How Worldwide Fruit have Tackled Gender Issues, Improve safeguarding & Women in Management Roles – Anna Pike
12.30 - 13.00	The What? – Monitoring – Use of the WEP Gap Tool From Principles to Practice – Dr. Felicity Butler, BSR Consultancy
13.00 - 13.45	Networking Lunch
13.45-14.30	The How? Table Work – Discussion facilitated by Jo Speed Share FNET survey results, how that shapes culture and facilitate discussion on barriers. How have FNET businesses improved their gender DD. Are the blockers the same for all levels? If no, what are the differences? What are you doing to advance gender equity in your business?
14.30 - 15.00	How to build skills and resilience in women to help them in the workplace – Women's Work Lab – Rachel Mostyn
15.00 – 16.00	Conclude actions and Next Steps. Any Resources and commitment to change or implement one thing learnt today

Presentations

The Slides can be accessed [HERE](#). NB. No recording was made of this workshop, these detailed notes can be used to cover the topic fully.

Discussion

A. Worker Engagement Maturity Model – Fiona McKerrow/Anna Pile/Lydia Tunnard

- a. The draft slides of the worker engagement maturity model for review are [here](#)
- b. The team shared the latest version of the maturity model from Tokenistic to Engaged/Integrated and asked for feedback on the question sets.
- c. The framework is stretching and it is developed that way, no one is at stage 6.
- d. Questions raised about where collective bargaining site in the model were asked to be considered. - **FMc**
- e. The the tool is for people to interpret and use within their organisational structure, and it is designed to be used in different parts of the business. At a site level one business may be a 2 another may be a 4 – the tool can be used to identify areas for improvements
- f. Made the questions multiple choice – we will do a scoring system – way you can set up a quiz . A similar system has been used in a customer inclusion forum and can be done as a cumulative score - **FMc**

ACTION:

- g. Members are asked to feedback on the questions back to Fiona McKerrow- **ALL**
 - i. Can you determine using the questions where you sit in the framework?
 - ii. Do you think anything is missing from the question set ?
 - iii. Is there anything else missing in terms of engagement elements ?
- h. Group are Looking for volunteers to test the model – middle of March realistically, let LB or FMc know if you can pilot - **ALL**
- i. Finally if anyone has any thoughts on tech to do the questions, please let the team know - **ALL**

B. Setting The Scene – The Why? - Louise Nicholls, FNET

- a. Lousie shared the SMETA 7 CAR linking GENDER EQUITY to help members frame today's session and why it matters to business as this will be reported on audits starting in 2025.
- b. The anchor is covered in the FNET Theory of Change and Improving livelihoods of peoples working within own operations and supply chains
- c. The second requirement is in businesses adopting responsible business practices
- d. The 3rd part is for businesses to focus on where issues are systemic and how we as FNET members can change that.
- e. In the Inaugural FNET benchmark released in 2024,;-
 - i. business provided a various response to the gender equity question with the response showing about 1/3 had a strategy, a 1/3 putting something in place, and another 1/3 nothing was happening. This workshop is a timely reminder to all members to start the gender discussions internally.
 - ii. Commitment was in place in own operations with reasonable progress – in supply chains, however it was more problematic
 - iii. Where Gender DD exists typically the business had had an issue with regards to gender and had therefore come up with a position
- f. ETI have spoken on the topic regularly and lots of information is available.

ACTION:

- g. Currently there is a team writing the survey for this year – if members think there are questions as a result of today's workshop, then let Louise know - **ALL**
- h. CAR's - Not seeing any CAR's in this are presently – despite audits done in Egypt and Marocco – despite the gender norms there around women in Egypt not being taught to

read and write so not being able to be supervisors – Morocco women not coming back to work after marriage – but they are not appearing in audits yet.

- i. Here are some questions to ask to overcome the barriers – some of the work that the IOM are going to bring up in the seasonal worker roadshows may be able to be brought up as a starting point.
- j. Where it says a site must assess – is there a standard that we should be looking at as a starting point? A - BSR have a framework (see speaker and resources later in the session) - **ALL**

C. The Approach – Sowing the Seeds of Change – Caroline Downey, Women Working Worldwide

- a. Carolines [presentation can be found here](#)
- b. CD was interested to hear the issues members are facing; but suggested it is important to get the workers perspective – as they may not have the same view – working out where you are at is a good grounding to make a start.
- c. CD recommended members to just start asking and finding out – we get immobilised because it is so big – but if we just start asking – CD organisation has been doing – some of the reports in the 1980's are exactly the same as those seen now
- d. Gender Equity can be a disempowerment of men, so we need to bear that in mind in our discussions
- e. As it becomes more unacceptable to treat women in this way – gender based violence is at the top of the list for prioritisation
- f. A lot of the programs they have looked at (suppliers or brands) can be tokenistic – no one is denying it is complex and complicated – **but just start.**
- g. Due diligence is critical – forward thinking looking at all of the issues and assessing the ones that women are facing
- h. Gender in food supply chains
- i. As people get rid of their supply chains in larger plantations – they are going to the small holders – there are more women in the workforce but the men hold the power
- j. Fishing and aquaculture don't normally get looked at – 90% of post-production is done by women.
- k. Gender data – what gets measured gets managed
 - i. Really important to get data – huge lack of gender data – internationally only 26% of data for 54 gender indicators in 17 SDG's
 - ii. Understanding issues that disproportionately effect women is crucial –
 - iii. Making the invisible visible – evidence that we have can shape the actions that we take
 - iv. Looking at risk and where women are in danger. Sources
 - 1. Understand the risks Human rights and environmental – SEDEX a guide to risk assessment and supply chains
 - 2. Human rights watch – our world in data
 - 3. Open supply hub (trying to map supply chains on an open source)
 - 4. SEDEX Radar and Gender data report BSR gender
- l. The 6 – Step Process is a fundamental approach to change – Details in slide dec

D. A Member Case Study, WoldWide Fruit – Anna Pike

- a. [See Case Study from Anna Pike](#) for how World Fruit have looked at gender split across employment forums, and management structure

E. The Importance of Monitoring – The WEP Gap Tool – Dr Felicity Butler, BSR

- a. [Felicity's presentation is here](#)
- b. BSR is a mission drive – Publicly available resources on mission hub
- c. Practical tools – integrate gender into due diligence process
- d. BSR and UNGC WEP partnered to respond to the global call for action for companies to promote Gender Equity (GE) and women's empowerment principles (WEP)
- e. WEPS can help us respond to the global call for action for companies to promote gender equality and women's empowerment
- f. WEP's gender gap analysis tool is an easily accessible global framework
 - i. Online resource – for companies to anonymously assess gender equality = performance across the workplace marketplace and community
 - ii. It is structured with 18 multiple choice questions and provides 4 management stages
 - iii. Being used by over 2500 companies supported by 4 business partners
- g. The tool outputs and results – given a maturity level and overall score and output level .
 - i. It provides a summary of areas for improvement etc
 - ii. Action planning tool for treating all employees fairly at work – aligns with IHR principles
 - iii. Applying insights into strategy
- h. BSR's role is to help support business to implement the WEP
 - i. How to transition your results to strategy
 - ii. Benchmarking tool – allows business to anonymously compare against the sample pool
 - iii. Case study on website – available to show how business made progress
- i. Reference guide is your manual – get access to key indicators and resources – giving a summary of how the principles can help you – how the summary can help – continued monitoring and next steps.
- j. See Appendix A for further resources from BSR.

F. What does the FNET Survey tell us and what can businesses do? - Jo Speed

- a. See slide deck for the results of the FNET WG member survey results
 - i. All CEO were males
 - ii. Most directors were males
 - iii. With other layers in the structure from managers, supervisors there was a more balanced split across the Males and females
 - iv. The question was debated about how do we get more females in senior roles and why do we think we are getting the results ,
- b. Table Discussions covered the questions on how to get more equity in gender roles in the leadership structure, some useful outputs to be considered were in three areas of recruitment, promotions and exit interviews:-
 - i. Recruitment -
 1. Gender neutral panel
 2. blind sifting,
 3. Offering flexible working
 4. Gender neutral job adverts
 5. AI to check language in legal jobs - is a useful tool some members are using
 - ii. Promotion

1. Women are found to be less resilience and confident about their skills
 2. Women must be encouraged to self-promote more
 3. Confidence boosting skills development for women
 4. Offering more flexible working for care providers without losing the skills at the senior team eg part time hours, WFH days etc
- iii. Conducting Effective Exit interviews
1. Is gender sensitive information captured at exit interviews?
 2. Women are less likely to be honest about the blockers to promotion and career paths

G. Looking at Solutions – How to build skills and resilience – Rachel Mostyn, Women's Work Lab (WWL)

- a. Rachel's slides are to be found [here](#).
- b. Women's work labs is an organisation that aims to support women and especially mums back into the workplace specifically into “meaningful employment”.
- c. They build skills and resilience in the women we work with and have successfully helped over 500 mums back into work.
- d. The secret is to have an enabling environment that helps keep women at work when they have had families. We heard from Samantha one of the programmes many successes who gave a powerful testimony of how WWL helped her back to work after 11 years out of work being a mum.
 - i. As a mum – you feel so grateful that you have support in ‘a role’ that you reject roles that you may prefer – it shouldn’t be a compromise
 - ii. Confidence – how do I sell myself – how do I have difficult conversations
 - iii. Lack of recent work experience – even though there are a million transferable skills – how do we get employers to work with those women to make work ‘work’
 - iv. How do we support to get businesses to be much more supportive of flexible working hours – as no nursery spaces, or nursery spaces are expensive - women want to work – but there needs to be more trust
 - v. Being adaptable with hours of work to get a richer talent pool,
 1. A large commerce business in Bristol – capable people coming into call centres – 9-5 hours – but this is problematic for mums – so worked with them to provide an entry level returnship – 9:30 -2:30 – took a lot of work to get HL to understand – but then they discovered that this is when the call centre is more busy – also had a challenge understanding that the women couldn’t do a 6 week full time course – now many have moved into
- e. Some thoughts from the group about how businesses could do more to encourage women into work and into supervisory & leadership roles
 - i. Inclusive place – being invited into places =
 - ii. Work placements – huge thing – inviting women into experience a workplace
 - iii. Recruitment practices – language in job adds can alienate women
 - iv. Job adds we read that we are impenetrable – don't use acronyms that implies pre-knowledge.
 - v. Share questions for interviews before hand – women do not statistically perform as well in job interviews; we don’t want it to be a task – want to create an environment that people feel included

- vi. Job shares – we talk a lot about job shares – redesign jobs so they are less hours two people 9:30 to 1:30 and split the work a unique way
- vii. Remote working – can this be an option?
- viii. Soft landing - return for women coming back from maternity leave
- ix. Mentoring or buddying - can help women feel supported in the workplace
- x. Coaching sessions – how to manage difficult conversations
- xi. Trust and creating a culture of trust – won't happen overnight not specific to mums or women but can reap rewards to retain skills in the business
- f. WWL Work in the southwest at the moment – looking at Birmingham – the thing that is important is the cohort of mums – they are their own support network –
- g. Next plan is west midlands – the work we do with businesses in terms of how the cohorts work could be anywhere. They are looking for business to offer work placements to help women back to work, its a pay it forward model

H. Next steps

- a. Members discussed the topics of the day and COMMITTED to take one learning or action back to the business and report back to this group about its success at the end of the year

Member	Commitment or Key Learning	Member	Commitment or Key Learning
Angela	Take the learnings back to board for capacity building	Jo	Raise awareness in the business and use the data to start action
Claire	Apply the gender Lense across all of the work we do	Julie	Taking the men on the journey with us
Bruno	lot of take home from group meeting – where are we with gender gaps and what procedures we have in place and bring in more balance in strategic positions – learning exercise	Andrew	Get the chance to speak to Sam and Rachel has been inspiring. How do we advertise jobs better for women – looking at it internally and externally
Shayne	46.4% of businesses do not have a gender strategy. Smeta 7 – didnt know about CAR's Maturity engagement debate. Look at the 8 Enablers from Rachel	Lydia	Gender split data is the first small step – so many nuances rather than just the gender split -speaking to workers, ask their views does it align with ours? – the context
Fiona	in some ways quite reassured – look at age as well – look at the reasons why people leave – ages when people are leaving Risk assessments, need to do more Interest in the BSR framework. CAR's in SMETA7	Megan	Work with Angle for own operations – from supply chain – what can we pull out for suppliers that goes beyond gender split – challenge we will have will be issues around culture and background of countries we are working in
Lucy	– do some training at board level and link to our values – look at gaps - might be fun based on response on topic	Anna	– share the slide deck across the exec just to remind them we are doing a great job but there is still more to do

	-worker voice and demographics add into gender strategy - Look at how we work our job adverts		– frameworks are really useful – and across supply chain. -use a gender lens for what we do
Alison	– we have done nothing on gender we need to include in our plans – finalised strategy and gender doesn't feature – lets talk about empowering the women – and see what value that brings	Gabriella	insightful from first exercise we did – given us a foot in the door to realise what others are doing – daunting but we need to make a start as Caroline said
Caroline	hope from what she's heard round the table – finding those nuggets on where it is changing rather than looking at what has failed –	Rachel	encouraging to hear the appetite for the change – so many small things – appreciation of bigger piece –

b. Output from Todays Session

- i. Add or develop a reading list including. *"The fish rots from the head."*
- ii. Develop guidance for board discussion with decisions been made on a risk basis at board level. Ie The Business Case for Gender Equity
- iii. Develop a Training Pack for Recruitment and recruiters, showing with a Gender lens how to write more suitable Job Descriptions by working on inclusive language. Can do this as a subgroup to pull this together.

- End -

UNGC Women's Empowerment Principles Resources

- [Women's Empowerment Principles](#)
- [WEPs Brochure](#)
- [WEPs Gender Action Plan Template](#)
- [WEPS Creating a Gender Action Plan Module](#)
- [WEPs Transparency and Accountability Framework](#)
- [WEPs Resources](#)
- [WJI Emerging Practices Advancing Gender Equality In The Watch & Jewelry Industry](#)
- [Gender Responsive Procurement In The Watch And Jewelry Industry](#)