Diesel & Motor Engineering PLC

Breaking gender-stereotypes in the Automobile Sector

Commitment to action
About IFC
IFC—a member of the World Bank Group—is the largest global development institution focused on the private sector in emerging markets. We work in more than 100 countries, using our capital, expertise, and influence to create markets and opportunities in developing countries. In fiscal year 2020, we invested $22 billion in private companies and financial institutions in developing countries, leveraging the power of the private sector to end extreme poverty and boost shared prosperity. For more information, visit www.ifc.org.

About IFC’s Women in Work Program in Sri Lanka
Women in Work (WiW) is a five-year, $9.5 million initiative launched in partnership with the Australian government in April 2017. It is IFC’s largest, standalone country-based gender program designed to close gender gaps in the private sector while improving business performance. The program, which benefits from multisector program design and works closely with the World Bank on research, tackles women’s access to jobs and assets at the same time. It aims to increase women’s workforce participation in Sri Lanka’s private sector, create more and better jobs for women, and has the potential to increase profits and drive overall economic growth. WiW also contributes to the vision of the government of Sri Lanka where all citizens can achieve higher incomes and better standards of living by 2025.

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DIMO is a diversified organization engaged in automobile sales, automobile solutions vehicles, construction, marine engineering, retail, healthcare solutions etc. The company has over 1,800 employees, of which 10 percent are women.

**ZERO-TOLERANCE POLICY FOR ANY HARM OF HARASSMENT AT THE WORKPLACE**

DIMO operates a zero-tolerance policy for any form of harassment, sexual harassment, bullying or retaliation in the workplace and treats all incidents seriously and promptly by investigating all allegations. Awareness around accepted behavior, gender sensitization, and mutual respect is communicated to encourage employees report grievances. The company has a formal grievance handling process in place where disciplinary actions can include suspension or dismissal from employment. All management personnel, including the Chairman, remain accessible to every employee, in order to encourage reporting and to support the prompt resolution of problems. In addition, DIMO’s whistle blowing policy encourages and enables employees to raise serious concerns within the company without fear of retaliation.

"Attending the training on anti-bullying and sexual harassment has helped me to understand what behavior is acceptable and what is not acceptable; and by knowing my boundaries I lead by example and demonstrate my commitment to create a respectful workplaces culture."

Yohan Thilakaratne
Deputy General Manager – Corporate Communications

A campaign named ‘How Does it Make You Feel’ was launched in 2019, creating a platform for employees to express thoughts on how workplace harassment and bullying can make them feel. This was carried out among the Women’s Network members to increase their understanding of the depth of workplace harassment and its impacts.

In 2018, IFC conducted a survey for 200 DIMO employees, which found that almost 9 out of 10 staff (male and female alike) believe the company has an effective anti-sexual harassment policy; and 95 percent of women and 87 percent of men feel safe getting to and from work. Transportation is offered to employees traveling from Colombo to TATA Service location in Siyambalape and from workshops to the Head Office.

"If you treat someone differently, then you are creating inequality,” there is no room for discrimination here! As a tribe we value our company history, culture, ensure equal pay for equal work, and everyone gets to work in a respectful and safe environment."

Madurika Samarasekera
Assistant General Manager - Business Support & Controls, – TATA Cluster

**BUSINESS RESULTS:**

- **Increase of women in male dominant roles**
  - 13 WOMEN
  - in engineering
  - 5 WOMEN
  - in vehicle service
  - 4 WOMEN
  - in warranty & tendering

- **Increase in share of women in leadership roles by 5%**

- **Increase in Employment Satisfaction score from 3.89/5 to 4.11/5 within a year**

- **Zero sexual harassment cases reported**
DIMO’s TripleE (Educate, Empower, Employ) program is designed for undergraduate students to collaborate with DIMO’s professional staff to gain expertise and experience with current trends, technology and techniques, to help create a pathway for a career in the auto industry. Due to COVID-19 the workshop did not commence as planned, however, through this program DIMO aims to educate and motivate young women to ‘power-up’ in the STEM field and encouraging them to break gender stereotypes. In partnership with the Women in Engineering Sri Lanka (IEEE) a talent database has been created, to help provide a pipeline of female engineers for job openings at DIMO.

In partnership with the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission, DIMO is working on amendments and additions to the current curriculum of Automobile Vocational Education which will pave the way for more women to enter the industry, while also ensuring the training more directly meets the needs of industry. To date 15 women have completed the automobile courses offered by DIMO Academy for Technical Skills and have embarked on career journey, within and outside of Sri Lanka.

DIMO’s leadership development programs such as Centurion’s League and D Talent comprise of 360° appraisal, residential workshops and management skills projects which focuses on developing a wide spectrum of leadership competencies necessary to create competent senior leaders. As a result, within a span of two years the number of women in the leadership talent pool grew from 13 percent to 36 percent.

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being a part of the ‘Centurion League’ was a turning point in my career. Through an outbound training approach, I was able to build my confidence, team building and leadership skills. DIMO heavily invests in technical and leadership trainings for its employees, and I've had the opportunity to be a part of a few international and on-the-job trainings which have helped me with my recent promotion.”

Raehana Raban
Senior Engineer Lighting Designs and Sayuri Sumithrarachchi, Senior Electrical Engineer – Building Technologies Department
The women’s network was launched in 2018 with the objective to drive meritocracy and create a conducive work environment for men and women at DIMO. The network has four male sponsors and a mix of women and men as a part of the committee. During monthly meetings addressing employees on respectful workplace practices and equality at work both men and women are encouraged to participate. Male participation has increased from 35 percent to 50 percent over the years. Senior leaders also highlight the importance of having men as allies in this initiative.

Being such a male-dominated company, with women comprising only one in ten workers, presented a series of challenges for the company in terms of ensuring women’s concerns were being heard. In response DIMO’s women’s network, encouraged female workers to voice their opinions within a closed and trusted network.

**DIMO WOMEN’S NETWORK ALSO INCLUDES MALE PARTICIPATION**

The Women’s Network has multiple cluster meetings and forums, which has made our tribe members aware of bullying, parental leave and other support available at DIMO. It helps enrich the culture that is being promoted within DIMO. I am proud to be a male ally and to be advocating for more women in the automobile industry.”

*Bhathiya Jayawardhana*
Assistant Manager - Employee Engagement & Transformation

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Thilini’s Story

Thilini Gunasekara
Technician

Role models, mentoring, and leadership development programs can all play a critical role in building a women’s career, especially in a non-traditional job or industry. Thilini is a role model to many who aspire to be an engineer. Thilini Gunasekara is the only woman working in the automobile service workshops as an Assistant Tyre Technician for the Mercedes-Benz Service. There are five women with similar qualifications working in the vehicle service and warranty sections, one in automobile vocational training and another nine-female staff as engineers. Having more women in engineering and automotive fields has resulted in an increase of customer retention, improved efficiency and better compliance.

“My father owned an automobile repair shop and I knew my way around it, as I grew up in a garage since I was a little girl. When I saw a post on Facebook, I immediately enrolled into DIMO Academy for Technical Skills (DATS). I underwent a two-year training and graduated last year. Now I’m living my dream role.”

She feels that men in the workplace adapt as they get used to having female colleagues. I learn and grow with my peers as every day is a new challenge and an opportunity.
The IFC-DFAT Woman in Work program in Sri Lanka, partnering with leading private sector companies, aims to demonstrate that corporate performances can improve from closing gaps between women and men in the private sector.