

Tackling Childcare Pakistan: Creating Family-Friendly Workplaces

Insights from an IFC-PBC
Peer-Learning Collaboration

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Peer-Learning Collaboration Participating Companies:



Peer-Learning Collaboration Childcare Provider Partners:





Abbreviations and Acronyms

AM	Artistic Milliners
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
DHC	Dawood Hercules Corporation Limited
EBM	English Biscuit Manufacturers
ECD	Early Childhood Development
FFPs	Family-Friendly Policies
HBL	Habib Bank Limited
IFC	International Finance Corporation
ILO	International Labour Organization
NFL	National Foods Limited
PAFEC	Pakistan Alliance for Early Childhood
PBC	Pakistan Business Council
PLC	Peer-Learning Collaboration
PTCL	Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited
SCB	Standard Chartered Bank Pakistan
WEPs	UN's Women's Empowerment Principles
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund



Overview of the IFC-PBC Peer-Learning Collaboration on Family-Friendly Workplaces

Context

Throughout the world, the economic success and well-being of communities and countries depend heavily on their ability to make good use of all their resources. When a significant portion of a nation's workforce sits on the economic sidelines, societies, businesses, families, and individuals lose. According to the International Labor Organization,¹ in Pakistan, fewer than 23 percent of women of working age, versus nearly 82 percent of men, are part of the labor force, one of the lowest rates in the world and the lowest in South Asia. Lack of access to family-friendly workplace policies for parents as well as limited access to good-quality, affordable childcare are barriers to women joining and remaining in the workforce.

Recognizing the importance of family-friendly workplaces and the availability of quality childcare to Pakistani families, as well as their impact on employers and the country's economy, IFC and PBC came together in June 2019 to form a partnership on family-friendly workplaces, Tackling Childcare Pakistan: Creating Family-Friendly Workplaces. The initiative builds on [IFC and PBC's 2018 partnership](#) on enhancing women's employment opportunities in Pakistan, which focused on the business case for investing in women's employment, tackling childcare, and establishing anti-sexual harassment mechanisms. The current IFC-PBC partnership encompasses a peer-learning collaboration (PLC) among 13 companies² in Pakistan who made commitments to strengthen family-friendly policies in their workplace, as well as research on the current state of family-friendly workplaces and policies in the country, with an emphasis on employer-supported childcare, leading to recommendations for public and private sector action, as well as opportunities for multi-stakeholder dialogue to accelerate progress in these areas.

This Note and the Peer-Learning Collaboration

This note presents aggregate results on the IFC-PBC peer-learning collaboration, focusing on the commitments made by participating companies and highlighting the lessons learned during their journey towards stronger family-friendly workplaces. Companies' commitments, made at the beginning of the PLC, were grouped into five categories, which are discussed in different sections of this note. Each section lists the business case, offers highlights of actions taken by companies, lists lessons learned, and presents a call to action to inspire other organizations. This note also contains insights from webinars and other knowledge sharing activities offered during the collaboration on topics such as flexible work arrangements, the role of men in childcare, working parent groups and workshops, and preventing and addressing gender-based violence in the workplace. It also calls attention to the impact already experienced by some companies and their employees.

As a key element of the PLC, these 13 Pakistani companies and Pakistan-based multinational companies employing more than 85,000 employees in various sectors are committed to supporting parents in finding greater integration between work and family responsibilities and to implementing family-friendly policies such as paternity leave, flexible work, and employer-supported childcare. The companies participating in the initiative, which took place between June 2019 and October 2020, are denim manufacturer Artistic Milliners, direct investment firm Dawood Hercules Corporation Limited; food manufacturers English Biscuit Manufacturers and National Foods Limited; agri-solutions, energy, petrochemicals and telecom infrastructure conglomerate Engro Corporation Limited; hosiery manufacturer Interloop Limited; banking and financial institutions HBL, JS Bank, and Standard Chartered Bank Pakistan; information and communication technology providers Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited and Telenor Pakistan; technology and industrial manufacturer Siemens Pakistan; and hospitality group Serena Hotels.



Courtesy of Catco Kids and Pakistan State Oil

Under this initiative, IFC and PBC, with support from six strategic partners – Pakistan’s National Commission on the Status of Women, UN Women Pakistan, UNICEF, the World Bank, and care providers Catco Kids and Ubuntu Care – offered guidance to participating companies on childcare and family-friendly solutions as well as conducted a series of events to share good practices. Companies had a chance to attend webinars on different subjects, participated in monthly group calls, and had access to various resources, such as a monthly bulletin on family-friendly policies and childcare prepared specifically for the group. Above all, the partnership, the first of its kind on family-friendly workplaces in Pakistan, served as a safe forum for employers from different industries to learn from each other, share resources, and advance their programs and policies in this space in a supportive environment.

Commitments and Results

At the beginning of the collaboration, all participating companies made two (or more) commitments in the areas of family-friendly policies and programs, with several related to childcare support to employees. During the PLC, companies worked on their commitments individually and shared challenges and developments with fellow organizations. Participating companies developed a series of policies, programs and practices to support their employees through greater workplace flexibility, childcare assistance, paid paternity leave, enriching learning opportunities, and greater work-life integration. These companies have made real progress that benefits both their employees and their operations, as there is a strong business case for family-friendly workplaces and employer-supported childcare.

From their point of view, employers reported a stronger pipeline of female candidates, better motivated and more productive employees, lower absenteeism, higher retention, and greater employee satisfaction associated with their family-friendly policies. Because much remains to be done, participating companies emphasize the importance of other organizations in Pakistan to place greater emphasis on the needs of their employees and on how they align with their organizations’ own needs. According to one of the participants, “this is now a critical prerequisite for a workplace that wants to bring out the best in its people,” while for another, “a family-friendly workplace and a childcare center is a win-win situation for both employee and employer.”

COVID-19 and the Timing of the Initiative

Although this peer-learning collaboration started before the onset of COVID-19 and the pandemic caused delays in the implementation of some companies’ commitments, it could not have been better timed as childcare has been a key challenge to women’s continued labor force participation during this global health crisis. Having a family-friendly workplace and culture has been critical for employers to protect the well-being of workers and allow for greater flexibility in the delivery of work, positively impacting business continuity during the pandemic. To provide additional support to companies during this difficult period, IFC and PBC, in consultation with PLC members, extended the collaboration from 9 months to 16 months.

By offering concrete examples of actions that promote employee well-being and advance business interests, peer-learning collaboration participants show it is possible to make a difference, despite – and sometimes even more so – in the midst of a pandemic.

Companies' commitments, grouped into five categories:

Commitment 1:



Assess demand for childcare and other family-friendly policies

5 commitments made by 4 companies

- Conduct childcare needs assessment
- Conduct primary and secondary research on childcare allowance options

Achieved: 60% (3 out of 5)
In progress: 20% (1 out of 5)

Commitment 2:



Implement childcare solutions and support for school-aged children

8 commitments made by 8 companies

- Launch, expand or improve childcare support to employees, including on-site facilities and childcare allowance
- Offer education assistance/scholarships or other programming such as summer camps to employees' children

Achieved: 50% (4 out of 8)
In progress: 38% (3 out of 8)

Commitment 3:



Document the business case and advocate for childcare and other family-friendly policies

4 commitments made by 3 companies

- Develop a case study on employer-supported childcare and other family-friendly policies
- Advocate publicly for childcare and other family-friendly policies based on results experienced

Achieved: 75% (3 out of 4)
In progress: 25% (1 out of 4)

Commitment 4:



Run work-life integration workshops and parent support programs

6 commitments made by 6 companies

- Offer workshops on topics such as life skills, stress management, parenting and others
- Offer support programs for working mothers and women

Achieved: 83% (5 out of 6)
In progress: 17% (1 out of 6)

Commitment 5:



Offer flexible work arrangements and other family-friendly policies

6 commitments made by 6 companies

- Offer and promote uptake of flexible work arrangements
- Roll out specific family-friendly policies such as paternity leave, institutionalize informal policies, run internal campaigns on respectful workplaces and similar topics

Achieved: 67% (4 out of 6)
In progress: 33% (2 out of 6)



Courtesy of Interloop Limited

Total:

65%
(19 out of 29)

**Commitments
achieved**

28%
(8 out of 29)

**Commitments in
progress**

7%
(2 out of 29)

**Commitments
not started**

93%
(27 out of 29)

**Commitments achieved
or in progress**

Commitment 1:

Assess demand for childcare and other family-friendly policies



5 commitments made by **4** companies

Achieved:
60% (3 commitments)

In progress:
20% (1 commitment)

Not started:
20% (1 commitment)

Results Snapshot:
3 needs assessments conducted,
1 research on childcare allowances completed

The Business Case

In Pakistan, where women do more than 90 percent of unpaid care work,³ good quality, affordable childcare and support to working mothers are clearly important to the country's socio-economic development as well as to business productivity. One of the first steps for most companies interested in fostering a family-friendly workplace is to assess whether existing policies and practices are having the desired impact. This allows companies to gauge whether additional policies and programs are required to better meet the needs of employees. To this end, companies often conduct a thorough assessment of their HR data, organizational policies and practices, and employee survey results. Following an internal assessment, companies can better understand what works and what can be improved in their talent management and family-friendly policies and adjust programs and policies accordingly. Through assessments and certifications such as the EDGE gender certification,⁴ companies can benchmark themselves against other companies in the sector and region to further improve and identify new approaches that benefit employees and the business.⁵

Assessments reveal the goals, preferences, and needs of employers and their workforce. For example, while for some companies an on-site childcare center could be relevant and feasible, for others different solutions such as childcare subsidies, allowances, or back-up care could be more appropriate. According to a 2020 IFC-PBC survey of 140 employers in Pakistan, the majority of respondents who provide childcare support listed on-site childcare arrangements as the preferred choice by employees but 29 percent of respondents said a near-site daycare center, a daycare located near the employee's home, or a partnership with an external daycare provider would be among employees' top childcare choices. Assessments can help identify the best approach to offering family-friendly policies such as childcare and as a result enhance productivity and well-being.



Action Taken by PLC Companies

One of the first steps for employers interested in implementing family-friendly policies and offering employer-supported childcare is to assess their employees' needs and preferences in terms of childcare availability, quality, affordability, and access to ensure that the family-friendly policies, programs or services to be offered meet the demand. Becoming more familiar with existing legal requirements, local childcare options, and additional resources and incentives available to employers could also be part of this initial step. Conducting a childcare and family-friendly policies needs assessment in a company often involves surveying employees (anonymously), holding focus group discussions with employees, clearly communicating and managing expectations, and analyzing the data against the employer's priorities and possibilities. IFC's [Global Guide for Employer-Supported Childcare](#)⁶ offers specific guidance to help employers conduct a childcare needs assessment.

During the PLC, three companies conducted needs assessments with their employees to identify their requirements and preferences for childcare arrangements. Some of the assessments were conducted for the entire company, while others targeted specific facilities. While some were stand-alone exercises, others were part of broader gender assessments, such as those to obtain EDGE gender certification. For one company, after a needs assessment was conducted and an on-site childcare center was ruled out, the company decided to conduct research on childcare allowances. Assessments often include questions on number of employees with children in the pre-school age group, current childcare arrangements being used by employees, challenges faced by working parents, including those affecting work performance, and preferred childcare options and complementary family-friendly policies.

Lessons Learned

- Conducting a childcare needs assessment can save employers' time, money, and effort and increase the chance that the solutions proposed will maximize scarce resources and meet the needs of employees and the business.
- Even when companies already offer childcare support in one location and have experience navigating the childcare context, expansion of childcare support to a different location (for example, a different plant or an office in another city) might require a separate needs assessment, as employees' demographics, preferences, cultural norms, and the local childcare supply and policy context could vary, requiring different solutions.
- Childcare needs assessments can take different forms (for example, online, printed, short, in-depth, for a unit or the entire company) and can be included in existing data collection efforts, such as the EDGE gender certification process.
- Planning assessments carefully is important to avoid survey fatigue and to manage employee expectations.
- Following assessments with concrete action can set a precedent, create trust, and encourage employees to continue to share their feedback and ideas.

A Call to Action

- Allow enough time to conduct a thorough childcare and family-friendly needs assessment, analyze results, and develop an action plan.
- Conduct anonymous surveys so employees feel comfortable sharing their views.
- Conduct focus group discussions to understand in more depth key points raised in the survey or to test hypotheses.
- Communicate with employees throughout the assessment process to manage expectations.
- Keep assumptions and pre-determined solutions in check and go into the assessment with an open mind, analyze data carefully, and take actions based on the data.
- Consider repeating the needs assessment every few years as needs, preferences, and expectations change.



Courtesy of Serena Hotels

A Company's Story

Dawood Hercules Corporation Limited: A Valuable Childcare Assessment



Dawood Hercules Corporation Limited, a publicly listed company that deploys and manages investments across its subsidiaries and associated companies, is committed to ensuring a productive, family-oriented workplace for its employees in Pakistan. In late 2019, Dawood Hercules Corporation Limited conducted a childcare needs assessment to better understand the role childcare played in the lives of its employees and to assess the options that would be available to support their needs. Given the small number of employees with childcare needs, Dawood Hercules Corporation Limited decided to extend the childcare assessment exercise to approximately 10 other companies that share its building, The Dawood Centre, in Karachi. Dawood Hercules also contacted a childcare service provider to discuss feasibility for an on-site daycare center and other options.

The results of its childcare assessment showed low demand for an on-site day care facility. Based on these conversations, as well as discussions with its top leadership, Dawood Hercules decided the best approach in its case, at the time, was to support employees by providing a childcare allowance. The company is currently working on designing the policy for employees with young children and has reached out to other PLC companies that already offer similar benefits to learn good practices.

A Company's Story

Serena Hotels: Assessing Childcare Needs through the EDGE Gender Certification Process



SERENA HOTELS

In 2020, Serena Hotels became the first company in Pakistan and the second company in the global hospitality industry to be awarded the EDGE Gender Certification. This global certification measures and benchmarks where organizations stand in terms of gender balance, pay equity, and other issues related to inclusion, such as workplace flexibility and childcare support. Through this assessment, Serena Hotels learned that a lack of affordable and convenient childcare options and transportation services for staff disadvantaged women and hindered their professional growth.

In addition to measuring the gender gap in its hotels using the EDGE methodology, Serena Hotels Pakistan has committed to fostering gender equality in its workforce through an EDGE action plan to create more gender-sensitive policies. These measures include developing a leadership program for high-potential women, assigning key projects to female staff, and developing a flexible-work model that includes rotating shifts and a five-day workweek so that employees can spend more time with their families. The company also plans to introduce work culture ambassadors to promote respectful workplace behaviors, among other actions.



Courtesy of Artistic Milliners

A Company's Story



JS Bank: Different options for supporting the childcare needs of its working mothers

JS Bank prioritizes employee well-being and invests in creating an inclusive workplace where employees can feel empowered, comfortable, and productive, contributing to a better employee experience. The bank wanted to create a benefit for working mothers because of the challenges they often face to manage work and children and integrate their personal and professional lives.

Because of its high number of branches spread across the country, building an in-house daycare was not an option for JS Bank. JS Bank eventually decided on a two-pronged strategy to put its plan into action. The first is to introduce a monthly childcare allowance for female employees to use at their convenience to manage childcare, which the company is actively working on. The second is to liaise with high-quality private daycare providers in order to adequately meet the childcare needs of employees who want to make use of it.

JS Bank is in discussions with renowned childcare centers across Karachi. These providers have been selected from different locations in the city to ensure their childcare centers are accessible to employees residing in different areas. The company hopes to negotiate a corporate package for its employees with some of these local childcare providers. JS Bank aims to become an employer of choice known for supporting employee well-being and engagement.

Commitment 2: Implement childcare solutions and support for school-aged children



8 commitments made by **8** companies

Achieved:
50% (4 commitments)

In progress:
38% (3 commitment)

Not started:
12% (1 commitment)

Results Snapshot:
1 on-site childcare and **1** child support allowance provided, improvements to childcare infrastructure and policy made

The Business Case

Women are often locked out of paid and full-time employment because they perform a major share of unpaid care work. Offering childcare support can enable companies to tap into a more diverse and skilled talent pool and meet skill shortages in an increasingly competitive talent market. A growing number of employers around the world are playing an important role in meeting the childcare needs of their employees. IFC's 2017 global report [Tackling Childcare: The Business Case for Employer-Supported Childcare](#) and subsequent reports in several countries such as [Bangladesh](#), [Cambodia](#), [Fiji](#), [Myanmar](#), [Sri Lanka](#) and [Vietnam](#), show how investments in childcare and family-friendly policies can help employers achieve better business outcomes.

Among the top results cited by companies are reduced employee turnover and absenteeism; increased employee productivity, well-being, satisfaction, and loyalty; improved employer's ability to attract top talent, investors, and buyers; enhanced corporate reputation as a family-friendly company and employer of choice; and boosted profits and productivity. According to IFC and PBC's landscape analysis of family-friendly workplaces in Pakistan conducted in 2020, out of a sample of 38 employers providing childcare support, 92 percent cited increased employee retention as a result of offering childcare support. Similarly, the majority of employers also cited other benefits of providing such support, including better employee work-life integration (91 percent), better workplace culture (89 percent), branding as employer of choice (81 percent), improved employee morale/motivation (78 percent), increased employee productivity (78 percent), and better talent acquisition (69 percent). One quarter of employers also associated provision of childcare solutions to increased profitability in their organizations.

Action Taken by PLC Companies

PLC companies considered several options for supporting the childcare needs of their employees. While one of the first steps in providing this support is understanding the needs and preferences of one's workforce, actually deciding on the type of support to be provided, adequately planning and budgeting for it, and implementing it are essential next steps. Among the childcare options that PLC companies explored are allowances, reserved spaces in private childcare centers near the work site and/or in employees' communities, on-site childcare centers run by a third-party, near-site childcare centers sometimes in partnership with other companies (consortium), public-private partnerships, back-up/emergency childcare support, and aftercare and/or summer camps for school-aged children. The decision companies make depends on several factors, including local regulations, the needs and preferences of employees, what is financially and operationally feasible for the company, what resources already exist in the community (for example, community supply of childcare, potential partners), among others.

During the PLC, one company launched an on-site childcare center, another put in place a child support allowance, and two others made improvements to childcare infrastructure and/or childcare policy (for example, revised daycare age limits and number of slots available).

Independent of the type of support an employer decides to offer its employees, a few elements remain important across solutions: the regulatory environment, the health, safety, and quality of services, and the affordability and accessibility of services. Employers planning to offer childcare support need to understand any legal requirements associated with childcare to adequately assess potential partners and the possibility of in-house solutions. The health, safety and quality of childcare is essential to ensure desired outcomes for children, families, and the business. Childcare that is not affordable nor accessible (for example, located in an inconvenient location to users, not opened during employees' work hours, non-inclusive towards children with disabilities, not available to all workers) is unlikely to meet the needs of employees and their families. More detailed guidance on these and similar issues is available to employers in IFC's [Global Guide for Employer-Supported Childcare](#).

Lessons Learned

- There is always room to tweak childcare offerings and make them better (for example, adjust hours of operation, age limits, expand eligibility criteria, improve physical space and access). Continue checking in with employees and get their feedback to ensure solutions are having the desired impact.
- Temporary childcare solutions are OK and welcome by employees (for example, a company may plan to build an on-site childcare facility in a few years, but in the meantime, starts offering a childcare allowance; a company may establish a childcare center, but because of COVID-19 or another emergency, may have to temporarily close it down, so it offers a childcare allowance for in-home nanny care in the interim).
- It is important for employers to visit and meet with childcare providers to discuss objectives, requirements, and costs to make informed decisions about the best childcare solution they can offer their employees.
- Piloting a childcare support option at headquarters or at another unit could be an appropriate decision to test and refine approaches, but identifying the needs of a broader set of employees, including those in lower-paying positions and on the field, and crafting solutions that meet their needs is important.

A Call to Action

- Consider all options available to meet the childcare needs of employees. While an on-site childcare center can work for some employers and employees, in many cases it is not the only and/or best option.
- Consider back-up or emergency childcare solutions (for example, agreement with a childcare center that accepts drop-ins or with a vetted nanny service that offers last-minute coverage) as a way of supporting the childcare needs of employees that already have other arrangements in place.
- Offer childcare for older children, especially after school (to bridge the gap between the time children leave school and parents leave work) and during school holidays.
- Prioritize childcare quality, health and safety when crafting an employer-supported childcare solution.



Courtesy of Interloop Limited

A Company's Story

Interloop Limited: Expanding Quality Childcare Support to More Employees



Hosiery manufacturer and multi-category full-family clothing company Interloop strongly believes diversity holds the key to a vibrant and sustainable economy. Hiring, training, and promoting more women are important aspects of achieving gender parity at the Interloop workplace. Recognizing that women are less likely to enter and more likely to leave manufacturing-based careers, Interloop has prioritized their well-being by instituting a family-friendly workplace, making it easier for women to stay in the workforce and relish a better employee experience.

The requirement for on-site day care centers at Interloop arose when analytics showed that a significant number of women leave their jobs or are reluctant to join due to inadequate childcare support facilities. This insight motivated the company to start offering on-site daycare facilities at its factories.

During the PLC, the company revamped the childcare facility at its Lahore Plant. The facility is now complete with modern infrastructure and equipment, following international standards and providing a healthy, progressive, and welcoming environment to the children of female employees. When making the decision about extending childcare support to its Lahore Plant, Interloop leadership considered the benefits it would bring to the company and its employees and allocated a dedicated budget and team to the task.

Interloop seeks feedback from its employees regularly to improve its facilities and make them comfortable and safer for children and working mothers. According to Urva Til Wusqa, Sr. Officer, Corporate HR, "Investing in childcare certainly has a positive impact on employees' motivation, engagement, and retention, further improving our workplace culture. We often seek feedback from our working mothers, who feel motivated at work and satisfied that their children are at a safe and secure facility, that their development needs are taken care of, and that they can interact with their children during the day."

Interloop's Love and Learn Day Cares focus on stimulating children's abilities and follow a curriculum implemented by teachers trained in the Montessori methodology. Children at the Day Cares also benefit from monthly health check-ups by the company's medical officer. The three Love and Learn Day Cares at Interloop can host 200 children aged two months to 6 years and are also equipped with breastfeeding facilities.

In addition to childcare support, Interloop provides various complementary policies, including a reconnect program for rejoining services with the company for female employees who left their job after 3 years due to family requirements (such as marriage, care and upbringing of infants/toddlers, relocation of family, etc.), safe transport for all employees, four-month paid maternity leave, flexible working options for new mothers, on-site family accommodation, a scholarship program for employees' children, house-building finance support, opportunities for family visits to the workplace, and welfare assistance schemes.

According to Sabra Kanwal, Deputy Manager Interloop Way – People, "I was five months pregnant when I joined Interloop in 2013 as it had a Day Care facility and that made the decision to be a part of this company easier. My son was raised under the expert attention of the Day Care team for three years. I was working with peace of mind that he was in good hands, and so was my daughter born after him. A company that maintained an international standard Day Care with professional staff is a blessed dream for a working mother."



Courtesy of Engro Corporation

An Employee's Perspective

Engro Corporation: A high-quality childcare center appreciated by parents that is part of a comprehensive family-friendly program for employees



Nida Hashmi has worked for almost nine years at Engro Corporation, an agri-solutions, energy, petrochemicals, and telecom infrastructure conglomerate. For more than three of those years, her son Zidane has attended the company's childcare center (until it temporarily closed because of COVID-19). "I was able to continue to work as I was provided with a proper support system for my child," said the Engro Finance & Planning employee, while emphasizing that her son really enjoys being at the daycare center with all his friends. "What I liked the most was that the staff was always very helpful and developed a great routine for Zidane. Zidane's time at the daycare helped me even at home as his learning really picked up at the daycare. I would recommend the daycare to other parents, especially to working mothers," Hashmi said.

Started in 2013, Engro's Daycare Facility in Karachi follows a teaching philosophy based on the Finnish early childcare and developmental learning system, where there is a strong focus on child-led learning and early child development approaches emphasizing children's fun, play and happiness. The center, which is run in partnership with childcare provider and PLC partner Ubuntu Care, is led by a professional trained in the Montessori method, and includes staff with experience in international and local childcare programs. Fees are subsidized by Engro for its employees and the center is open for 9.5 hours per day, 5 days per week. With the COVID-19 pandemic, a virtual daycare program was instituted so children could keep learning and stay engaged, and parents could rest assured the company was still available to support them.

Engro's childcare center is part of a suite of family-friendly policies offered by the company to its employees, including six months of maternity leave, 15 days of paternity leave, flexible work arrangements, a wellness program for all employees offering emotional counselling, workshops and an in-house nutritionist, as well as the Thrive initiative, which is a capability development and networking platform for women at the workplace.

An Employee's Perspective

EBM: On-site childcare a “sigh of relief” for working mothers



My name is Maria Karim. When I was due with my second child, I joined English Biscuit Manufacturers (EBM), a food manufacturer, as a Customer Service Manager - Supply Chain. After I returned to work from my maternity leave, EBM's daycare was only a couple of months away from being operational. I have two children - a daughter who is now four and a half and a son who is one and a half years old. I used the daycare for 6 months, which was then closed by the onslaught of COVID-19 in March 2020. My son's first birthday was celebrated at the daycare.

For a working mother, an on-site daycare is a huge sigh of relief. Not having access to a daycare can be nerve-wracking as it's incredibly tough for a mother to be separated from her children, and only rely on paid house-help to look after them. Then there is also the issue of safety. I have been much more comfortable ever since I could avail the services of an on-site daycare facility. One of the major reasons why I chose to work at EBM was that they provided an on-site daycare facility. The company's leadership has completely endorsed this, and they understand that childcare is not a luxury anymore – it's a necessity. And that it is equally important for both mothers and fathers to have access to daycare facilities at the workplace.

My earlier employer didn't have a daycare facility. They didn't offer a subsidized package either. I was on my own and managing everything on my own. My kids were at a private daycare and as a regular parent in a commercial establishment, my suggestions weren't welcomed. Here, no matter how long you are working, the daycare staff will take care of your children.

I can tell that my daughter really misses the daycare and the activity-based exposure that she got there. I have come to realize that learning is much faster at a daycare. With my limited time with her, I am unable to give her that exposure to activities. What I really like about the daycare is that the children are in front of my eyes. I can watch them on CCTV and I can visit them during the day. I feel connected to my children. I work peacefully and I'm also just a call away. It's a sigh of relief for me.

A Company's Story

HBL: Supporting the Care and Education Needs of Its Employees and their Families



At HBL, according to Jamal Nasir, the bank's Chief Human Resources Officer, “Support for education remains one of the key focus areas for the bank as part of its desire to develop employees, their families and its CSR program. Our education assistance program is designed to encourage both the employees as well as their children to continue their education and enhance their qualifications.”

HBL offers education financial support to the children of clerical and management employees in the form of education and child support allowances. Children at different levels of education and up to 18 years of age qualify for the program. Additionally, the company offers scholarships for employees and their children to continue their education.

“The focus of the children education assistance program is to provide a higher level of assistance to the children of employees in more junior grades to support them financially and to ensure that they do not discontinue their education due to financial constraints. We also encourage our employees to continue their education in the current times when it is imperative that they learn new skills and knowledge to stay relevant. This also allows them to reskill themselves. Through this program, we invest in our employees for mutual benefit,” says Nasir.

Commitment 3:

Document the business case and advocate for childcare and other family-friendly policies



4 commitments made by **3** companies

Achieved:
75% (3 commitments)

In progress:
25% (1 commitment)

Results Snapshot:

Corporate advocacy and public sharing of experiences on family-friendly workplaces

The Business Case

Companies that invest in childcare support and other family-friendly policies obtain results in different ways. Measuring and evaluating initiatives and making adjustments for higher gains is an important part of being a family-friendly employer. Documenting and quantifying results is important to ensure investments in the area are maintained by the company. For example, the Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ, Ltd. in Japan measured more than a four-fold increase in the retention of new mothers and saved an estimated 5,000 million Japanese yen (\$45 million) in employee-turnover related costs by offering childcare subsidies and extended maternity leave, and retaining over 1,000 mothers.⁷ Similarly, MAS KREEDA Al Safi-Madaba, a garment manufacturer in Jordan, saw a reduction of 9 percent in absenteeism in the first few months following the opening of its childcare center.⁸ National Foods Limited in Pakistan saw a 65 percent increase in the number of women in its workforce, a 117 percent increase in the number of women in management, and recorded a 100 percent maternity return rate after it started offering an on-site daycare center, flexible work arrangements, and pick and drop services for women.⁹ Documenting the business case can help companies justify their investments in family-friendly policies and serve as examples for other businesses interested in understanding potential savings associated with these measures.

Business leaders of companies with strong family-friendly workplaces are well-positioned to speak up on the importance of work-life integration and the benefits it brings to families, children, the business and society. A strong tone at the top about gender equality and the importance of a family-friendly workplace can have positive effects inside and outside firms. From board directors to CEOs and senior management, everyone has a critical role to play. Many business leaders are dedicated to promoting family-friendly workplaces and cultivating them in the larger business community. Leaders often encourage and inspire their peers, stakeholders, and partners to join the effort and raise awareness about these issues through national and international platforms. Such platforms give business leaders the opportunities to gain recognition and support for their ongoing efforts, realizing additional benefits such as good reputation and desirability in the eyes of customers, clients, investors, and potential employees.¹⁰

This effort includes speaking on public forums such as industry association events, Sustainable Development Goals or similar platforms, writing blog posts or op-eds, leading tours of childcare centers, partnering with other business leaders, endorsing childcare and family-friendly policies as a smart business strategy in media interviews and other channels. Given that in many parts of Pakistan business leaders are unaware of the benefits of family-friendly workplaces (as reported by IFC and PBC in their 2020 landscape analysis of employer-supported childcare), and that spending in these areas is often viewed as a cost rather than an investment opportunity, leaders advocating for these topics can help shape the discourse and inspire action. Companies like MAS KREEDA, Patagonia, Unilever, and others around the world that often speak up for family-friendly policies both gain from and contribute to the expansion of healthier, more productive workplaces.

Engaging male leaders and employees in advocacy efforts can lead to a more balanced distribution of domestic and care work, which can lead to greater female labor force participation. Employers can make an important contribution to society by breaking down gender stereotypes with knowledge and support to men (for example, through paid paternity leave, greater work-life integration and flexibility, eligibility for childcare support, role models, respectful work environments, and training).

Action Taken by PLC Companies

During the PLC, companies opened up their childcare centers to outside organizations and engaged with them about their programs and policies, as well as advocated for more family-friendly workplaces. Some companies participated in international events as speakers on the business case for employer-supported childcare, others shared their experience in forums in Pakistan such as Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) workshops, and others started documenting their initiatives in publicly shared case studies.

IFC and PBC joined forces with private sector employers and with Promundo, a non-profit organization that works to advance gender equality by engaging men and boys, to offer a webinar on Men's Role in Caregiving during the PLC. Companies were inspired to reconsider their policies to be inclusive of their male employees and to play a role in educating their workforce on the benefits of more egalitarian parental duties.

Lessons Learned

- Companies do not have to wait until they have all their family-friendly solutions in place, or the perfect childcare set up to start publicly engaging about the importance of work-life integration and actions employers can take to make this possible.
- There are many different ways of advocating for family-friendly policies and employer-supported childcare, such as a message from the company's leadership on its website, newsletters, presentations during industry forums or to professional associations, conversations with government officials on what is needed for more companies to offer such policies, messages on social media, and on global platforms like the WEPs.
- More in-depth conversations between the company's department(s) responsible for family-friendly policies and other employers interested in similar policies and programs can also be a way of sharing information and indirectly – but often very effectively – advocating for a family-friendly workplace.

A Call to Action

- Consider expanding the reach of the company's solutions beyond the organization by having senior leadership encourage other business leaders to take similar actions.
- Consult multiple stakeholders when documenting the business case for specific family-friendly policies to obtain a broader picture of the impact generated.
- Offer guided tours of a company's childcare center to inspire others to action and to share specific learnings.
- Share the company's successes but also its challenges, concerns and lessons learned in candid ways with those interested in learning more and in implementing similar solutions – this is how this issue is advanced.



Courtesy of Artistic Milliners

A Company's Story

Artistic Milliners: Action, Monitoring and Advocacy for Childcare Support



Artistic Milliners, a denim and garment manufacturer, believes women have a major role in shaping the company's workforce, which presents a clear business case for corporate investments in family-friendly policies. In line with this reasoning, Artistic Milliners has launched a series of policies and programs to help attract and retain female employees in its factories and offices. For example, as part of a drive to improve female participation in its workforce, between January and November 2019 the number of female workers at the Artistic Milliners unit served by its new daycare center increased by 67 percent.

Little Milliners, Artistic Milliners' new daycare center in the Korangi District of Karachi, was designed, created and launched in 2019 in partnership with childcare provider Catco Kids. It currently serves 20 children aged 3 months to 6 years. The center, housed in a purpose-built space, has separate rooms for sleeping, dining, Montessori learning, and an additional garden space for playing and outdoor activities. The daycare staff includes a certified nurse, center-aids, and teachers who have been trained in fields like Developmentally Appropriate Practices and Basic Life Support. Interactive activities are organized for parents and children to celebrate special days, such as Women's and Mothers' days, and regular sessions are offered to parents on health awareness, hand washing, balanced nutrition, how to manage children at home, and the importance of distance learning. During COVID-19, families were provided with homework sheets and distance learning modules to help parents teach their kids at home.

The company is in the process of assessing the needs for additional childcare centers and identifying opportunities to serve a large portion of its workforce through alternative childcare support approaches.

Artistic Milliners documents results associated with implementation of family-friendly policies, such as its new daycare center and family health insurance, and publicly speaks about them. According to Faiza Jamil, Artistic Milliners' Corporate Responsibility and Communications General Manager, "The daycare facility has contributed significantly to maintain the overall gender equity of our organization. The facility created a positive impact on our employer's branding, recruitment, training and development, and, especially, female employee's retention and engagement on the floors." Artistic Milliners reports that the retention rate of female employees using its daycare center is 95 percent, compared to the company average of 92 percent.

The company uses participation in public platforms and initiatives such as the UN Global Compact and the WEPs to speak up on the business case for family-friendly approaches in the workplace. Currently Artistic Milliners is preparing a case study on its childcare support and family-friendly policies, which is expected to contain lessons learned to help other companies interested in making their workplaces more friendly towards women and families.



Courtesy of PBC

Peer-Learning Collaboration Event



How employers can support men in their caregiving role and positively affect women's employment

During the peer-learning collaboration, IFC and PBC conducted a webinar on the role of men in caregiving and its impact on the workforce. Key takeaways from the session include:

- Traditional gender roles often confine men to earning money and women to providing care. In Pakistan, women are 10 times more involved in household chores, child and elderly care than men.
- Employers can create a culture that encourages the participation of men in non-traditional roles.
- Similar to Pakistan, fewer than half of all countries in the world mandate paternity leave, or if they do, most offer less than 3 weeks of leave. This further emphasizes traditional roles that have existed in our society and adds further hurdles to redefining gender roles in the 21st century. But employers can be a positive force for change on this topic.
- Companies such as S&P Global Pakistan, which offers four-week paternity leave, often observe increases in employee productivity and a higher number of male employees using the benefit.
- Other benefits that encourage fathers to contribute more to caregiving and domestic tasks, such as those offered by Telenor Pakistan, include flex work and daycare services.
- Senior management involvement, including role modeling behavior and sending messages of support to working parents, can help support men as caregivers.

IFC and PBC are grateful for the participation and materials of webinar presenters Gary Barker, President and CEO of Promundo, a non-profit organization that works to advance gender equality by engaging men and boys, Mujeeb Zahur, Managing Director of S&P Global Pakistan, a financial information and analytics company, and Beenish Mahmood, (former) Talent & Culture Executive at Telenor Pakistan, an information and communication technology provider. The webinar was also enriched by the participation of the U.S. Embassy in Pakistan, the U.S. Consulate in Karachi, and member companies of the U.S.-Pakistan Women's Council, a public-private partnership that seeks to increase women's economic participation in Pakistan.

Commitment 4: Run work-life integration workshops and parent support programs



6 commitments made by **6** companies

Achieved:
83% (5 commitments)

In progress:
17% (1 commitment)

Results Snapshot:
4 companies delivering workshops on family-friendly topics, **1** series of life skills training delivered to working mothers, **1** virtual club for female employees launched

The Business Case

Work-life integration is at the center of family-friendly policies. Companies with strong, positive cultures often have a suite of policies and implicit norms that promote this integration. Thoughtful policies and practices (discussed in more detail in the next section) and the setting of examples by senior leadership are important factors contributing to work-life integration in a corporate setting. Among the complementary initiatives that employers might also offer as part of a strong family-friendly workplace are workshops and other resources to encourage and enable this balance and promote employee learning. Workshops or other learning methodologies that focus on topics such as stress and time management, health and wellness, division of domestic and care responsibilities, sexual harassment, domestic violence, parenting skills, among many others, both signal to employees that these are important topics worth addressing at the workplace as well as present an opportunity for awareness-raising and skills-building. These learning series are usually relatively easy to plan for and implement and can reach a large audience with small costs. Workshops as part of a larger family-friendly workplace strategy can be effective tools to impart knowledge and share values.

Enabling working parents, especially working mothers, to remain engaged and motivated also brings financial benefits to companies, as high attrition rates are costly (for example, according to Forbes magazine, Employee Benefits News reported in 2017 that turnover can cost employers 33 percent of an employee's annual salary¹¹). Corporate parent support groups, a type of employee resource group (ERG), offer an opportunity for working parents to come together to discuss strategies, share knowledge and learn, help the company strengthen its policies and procedures, and provide support to each other. As with other ERGs, companies gain through higher employee morale, connectedness and retention, an additional communication channel about other family-friendly policies, and early insight into the challenges employees sometimes face.¹² While employee networks or resource groups have become fairly common, how they are structured and sponsored vary. These groups are often organic, peer-to-peer, and with low budgets, but frequently HR can have a steward role and provide support.



Action Taken by PLC Companies

During the PLC, companies delivered workshops to employees on a variety of family-friendly topics, such as parenting, childcare, health and hygiene, time management, stress management, anger management, sexual harassment, among others. One company, for example, created an online group (“club”) for its female employees to connect, learn, and support each other. While several PLC companies already planned to offer these learning opportunities before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, once the crisis developed, many others opted to support employees through webinars and other online resources.

In addition to training and awareness-raising sessions on COVID-19 protective measures, PLC participating companies offered employees sessions on healthy eating, promotion of early learning (for children staying home from childcare and school), mental health, recreational and exercising sessions, among others.

Lessons Learned

- Setting up and running/sponsoring working parent support groups can be an effective way of supporting employees with children in the workplace. While relatively low-cost and easy to launch, sustaining interest and ensuring its relevance to parents require attention to proven strategies and good practices (see PLC event box below).
- Webinars and online sessions on various topics offered by companies during the pandemic, in addition to the content shared with participants, brought employees working remotely closer together, serving as informal check-ins and calibration moments for different teams.
- Companies had to adapt existing materials and create new content for virtual delivery of webinars and trainings. Not every activity that works well in-person is adequate for an online format, therefore, testing different approaches and obtaining rapid feedback on what worked or didn’t was key to ensuring these events were engaging and relevant.
- Companies have expanded existing awareness sessions and workshop programs on common topics such as sexual harassment and discrimination to include other topics on work-life integration and life skills. Taking advantage of an existing training structure and building on lessons learned could save companies time and resources.

A Call to Action

- Offer workshops or learning events on topics of interest to employees. Brown-bag lunches or similar arrangements often work well and do not interfere with the work or care schedule.
- Conduct quick feedback surveys to obtain employee feedback on workshops offered and themes of interest for future events.
- Sponsor a working-parent employee group.
- Consider launching and supporting other ERGs that promote diversity and inclusion of the workforce, such as women’s networks, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBTQ) employee groups, mental health advocacy groups, networks for people with disabilities, among others.
- Use the expertise of ERG members to help raise awareness among the broader workforce about the challenges and opportunities often associated with a particular group of employees.



Courtesy of Interloop Limited

Peer-Learning Collaboration Event



How employers and employees can gain from working parent support groups and learning series

During the peer-learning collaboration, IFC and PBC conducted a webinar on working parent support groups and workshops. Key takeaways from the session include:

- Working parent support groups, which bring together employees who are also parents to exchange information and resources and support each other informally, can be a relatively easy and low-cost way for employers to support the needs of working parents.
- These groups, as other ERGs, can be created organically (peer-to-peer) and further supported by the company or initiated by the employer with support from a core group of employees.
- They can help employers improve retention, satisfaction and provide a channel of communication with and a window into the challenges faced by working parents.
- Inclusion of fathers and other caregivers is important and should be well-communicated.
- Other good practices include:
 - Work up from what is already working (in cases where such groups have popped-up spontaneously, perhaps from an email group list of company parents).
 - Begin small, with a core group of employees and expand the support group.
 - Align to the organization's culture and business strategy.
 - Be intentional about programming: plan for topics that are relevant for employees (for example, gauged through a short survey) and the company.
 - Use existing resources (for example, take advantage of in-house expertise and focus).
 - Stay in the solutions mind frame.
 - Use it as an opportunity to communicate other existing programs and benefits.
 - Vary events and timing so different participants can join.
- Potential topics should be discussed with members of the group and could include, among others, managing time and commitments, finding high-quality childcare, coming back from parental leave, thinking through career plans as an active parent, and working parenthood in two-career families.
- Workshops can target specific subgroups of employees, such as working parents with children in the employer's childcare center or be open to a wider group of employees.
- Parent advisory boards for childcare centers supported by employers were also discussed in the webinar and were highlighted as a structured way for employers, employees, and childcare providers to communicate and make decisions about childcare issues on a regular basis.

IFC and PBC are grateful for the participation and materials of webinar presenters Daisy Dowling, founder and CEO of Workparent, a research, consulting, training and coaching firm that supports working parents and their employers; Dennis Bours, a World Bank Group employee and chair of the WBG Parent Advisory Board; and Khadija Khan, CEO of the Pakistan Alliance for Early Childhood (PAFEC), a registered national alliance of Early Childhood Development (ECD) stakeholders in Pakistan.



A Company's Story

Pakistan Telecommunication Company Ltd.: Supporting employees through work-life balance initiatives and clear communication



When it entered the IFC-PBC Peer-Learning Collaboration, Pakistan Telecommunication Company Ltd. (PTCL) already offered its employees a series of family-friendly workplace policies, such as working from home options for mothers, paid maternity/paternity leave, childcare for its headquarters employees, and safe transportation, among others. Recently, PTCL started offering workshops and support programs to women and men on a variety of work-life issues.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, PTCL started conducting a series of webinars for all employees on stress management, mental health awareness, and similar topics to keep employees engaged during remote work and address stressors that may have been affecting their physical and mental health. The Pink Club, a virtual club for all female staff, ran a digital campaign on setting up a suitable Work-From-Home space in order to help separate office and home life for female staff.

When the company collected information from employees on these actions through a feedback survey, it learned of reduced stress levels among staff and noticed higher employee engagement and productivity, which was consistent with feedback from Line Managers.

During the pandemic, PTCL also initiated an e-Bulletin for its staff. The bulletin served as a single stop for information regarding employee benefits, revised policies, and revised procedures after digitization. It also served as a useful tool to gather employee feedback via polls and pulse surveys. After running the bulletin daily for over six months, PTCL has now moved towards a weekly roll-out.

Going forward, the company is considering a hybrid model of remote and physical work, as it noticed that its work-from-home arrangements during the pandemic positively impacted the work-life balance of female staff as well as their productivity.

Commitment 5: Offer flexible work arrangements and other family-friendly policies



6 commitments made by **6** companies

Achieved:
67% (4 commitments)

In progress:
33% (2 commitment)

Results Snapshot:
1 paternity leave policy implemented, **1** formalization of company benefits,
2 efforts launched to encourage greater uptake of company benefits by employees

The Business Case

In the COVID-19 era, the importance of flexible work arrangements has become undeniable. Work from home, with greater flexibility in terms of schedule, and in some cases roles, became essential for many organizations around the world for business continuity. Flexible work arrangements include flex time, flex time off, and flex location. Flexible roles include job-sharing arrangements, moving workers from front office to back office during pregnancy or another event (for example, high risk for COVID-19 because of pre-existing conditions), or moving from production to administrative support upon return to work. These are all policies that remove impediments to work through flexibility.

Before the recent health crisis, employers who offered flexible arrangements to their employees were at an advantage since they were likely to more easily attract and maintain a diverse workforce, allowing employees to better juggle home and professional responsibilities while increasing employee satisfaction. According to consulting firm PwC, the International Workplace Groups' 2019 Workplace survey found that, faced with two similar job offers, 80 percent of candidates would favor a role offering flexible working over another which did not. The same survey confirmed that flexible working was helping increase diversity in the workplace.¹³ According to LinkedIn's Global Talent Trends 2019, which surveyed 5,000 talent acquisition and HR professionals around the world, a third (31 percent) of LinkedIn users said flexible work arrangements are a very important consideration when choosing a job.¹⁴ After the pandemic, the expectation is that a high number of employers will consider maintaining at least part of their flexible work arrangements that were shown to work well and bring benefits for all.

McKinsey research indicates that office-space decision makers in the United States expect the percentage of time worked in main and satellite offices to decline by 12 and 9 percent, respectively, after COVID-19, while the expectation is that work from home will increase to 27 percent of work time, from 20 percent,¹⁵ bringing potential savings to employers through lower rent, for example. In the case of computer technology company Dell, which formalized its flexibility policy to provide a support structure for all employees, the company saved \$12 million annually in this process since 2014.¹⁶



Family-friendly policies also mean policies that support caregivers and other employees in fulfilling their work, family and personal needs. These policies may include but are not limited to paid leave (maternity, paternity, parental, childcare, family, sick, and emergency leaves, for example), breastfeeding and lactation facilities and support, employee resource groups, learning series for working parents and other employees, safe transport, and childcare and other care support (for example, eldercare, care of the sick).

Paid parental leave, for example, generates substantial economic benefits that accrue to families, businesses, and countries. According to UNICEF, families benefit by not losing income at a critical time when their infants are born or adopted and families' needs increase, generating short- and long-term positive effects on family income. In high-income countries, each additional week of paid parental leave is associated with a 4.2 percent lower chance of single mothers living in poverty. Paid maternity leave can increase women's wages from 1 to 5 years after the birth of a child. Paid parental leave is associated with lower turnover rates among new parents that benefit business through lower recruitment and training costs, and retention of the higher productivity of experienced employees. For countries that have had these policies in place for over several decades, increases in female employment have boosted GDP per capita growth by between 10 percent and 20 percent.¹⁷

Action Taken by PLC Companies

During the PLC, companies delivered workshops to employees on a variety of family-friendly topics, such as parenting, childcare, health and hygiene, time management, stress management, anger management, sexual harassment, among others. One company, for example, created an online group ("club") for its female employees to connect, learn, and support each other. While several PLC companies already planned to offer these learning opportunities before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, once the crisis developed, many others opted to support employees through webinars and other online resources.

During the PLC, one company launched an on-site childcare center, another put in place a child support allowance, and two others made improvements to childcare infrastructure and/or childcare policy (for example, revised daycare age limits and number of slots available).

Lessons Learned

- Companies offer flexibility to employees in many different ways and often do so informally, only institutionalizing certain policies over time. While this helps companies meet the needs of particular employees at certain points in time, it is also important for employees to feel that the rules are transparently applied to all employees according to company policies.
- Women and working parents often are the target audience for flexible work arrangement policies and can greatly benefit from them. However, non-parent employees also see value in these policies and their needs should be considered in the program planning stage.
- Giving employees a chance to identify and confront their (often unknown) biases in a safe and supportive environment can be a good way to foster conversations about gender, race, socio-economic status, and other topics that will ultimately help employers improve their workplace for all. Workshops with qualified professionals can be an effective way to start addressing these issues.

A Call to Action

- Communicate widely and wisely about the company's family-friendly policies so all employees, including men, feel assured that they will not be penalized for taking advantage of its offerings. Messages from company leaders, as well as senior role models, can help reassure employees it is OK to use the company's benefits, such as paternity and other leaves.
- Offer paid parental leave to employees and breastfeeding facilities to new mothers.
- Revise family-friendly offerings periodically to consolidate programs, adjust participation criteria, discontinue offerings that might no longer be relevant, and focus attention on what matters most for employees and the business.
- Don't forget the basics, such as inclusion, freedom from harassment and discrimination (in all its forms, such as gender, age, race, sexual orientation, disability, socio-economic status) by implementing clear policies, a code of conduct, and raising awareness through trainings and institutional messaging.
- Provide detailed information about available legal, psychological, social and medical services for survivors of violence, including state and non-governmental organization services.
- Engage senior leaders in setting the tone for respectful workplaces free from harassment and abuse.

An Employee's Perspective

Standard Chartered Bank Pakistan: Flexibility on return to work after maternity leave



I am Nida Jivani and I work as the Head of Assurance for Retail Banking at Standard Chartered Bank Pakistan (SBC). At SCB, maternity leave is for 5 months and to opt for this benefit you only need your line manager's approval. The plan also allows flexibility on timings as well as location/remote working.

Initially, when opting for a flexible arrangement, I had my own set of fears including but not limited to "out of sight, out of mind," management's perception of my commitment to work, losing out on important assignments, etc. However, to my surprise, besides all the technical support I was getting to be able to operate from home, I was also getting a lot of appreciation and support from management.

I was not being judged for not being present physically and was assigned critical deliverables. This did boost my confidence a lot and I found myself more engaged, dedicated, and happy.

One very important thing which I have learned over the years and would like to share is to never be afraid of asking for support. Asking for support/help doesn't reflect negatively on you – instead, it helps you strengthen your support system which is crucial for success in any field.



Courtesy of Standard Chartered Bank Pakistan

Peer-Learning Collaboration Event



How employers can introduce and strengthen flexible work arrangement policies

During the COVID-19 pandemic, a large number of employers around the world had to quickly switch to remote work to ensure business continuity and to safeguard the health of employees. Even before the pandemic, flexible work arrangements were a topic of interest to PLC companies, so a webinar was organized by IFC and PBC for companies in Pakistan to learn more and discuss the topic. Key takeaways from the session include:

- Important steps for employers interested in setting up flex work are knowing its business benefits, considering which flexible work arrangement to offer, understanding management and employee concerns, designing a flexible work program and policy, and communicating the flexible work program
- Among the top benefits of flex work for employers are employee recruitment and retention, enhancing employee morale, managing employee attendance and reducing absenteeism, and boosting productivity
- Flex work can take many forms, such as changes in start and finish times, change to work location, flexible work hours, part time work, split shifts, shift swaps, compressed work week and job sharing
- Effective flex work policies often cover principles, purposes and definitions, eligibility and exclusions, consultation about flex work arrangements, how to apply for flex work (employees), how to consider a request for flex work (managers), employee appeal process, and monitoring and evaluation

IFC and PBC are grateful for the participation and materials of webinar presenter Ellen Maynes, Operations Officer with IFC's Gender and Economic Inclusion Group, and panelists Fraz Aslam, (Former) Head of HR at Siemens Pakistan, Saniha Jafri, (Former) Head of Diversity & Inclusion at HBL, and Yasir Khuwaja, Head of People Capability & HR at Standard Chartered Bank in Pakistan. The webinar was also enriched by the participation of other PBC member companies.



Courtesy of Engro Corporation



A Company's Story

Telenor Pakistan: flexibility and childcare support make a difference in employees' lives

At Telenor Pakistan, flexibility is key to how employees work and a way for the company to acknowledge the needs of different talents. Telenor's desire to become a truly digital and innovative organization has led to the creation of Go-Beyond, a policy to offer flexibility to employees in the way they work, aiming to enable them to enjoy higher work-life balance, and at the same time enhance employee productivity and collaboration.

In practice, Go-Beyond allows employees to choose reasonable start and end times, develop predictable work routines, and exercise work from home on a need basis, in accordance with front-line managers' approval. With the exception of employees who are part of teams that operate on a roster/shift-based schedule, all other employees are eligible to participate, including permanent, direct, fixed-term contractual, trainees, and interns.

In addition to its flexible work arrangement policy, Telenor offers a suite of family-friendly policies, with a focus on female workers. The company offers 6-month paid maternity leave, pick-up and drop-off policy for all female employees (and an allowance in place if pick-up is unavailable), sabbatical leave of up to two years allowing female/male employees to take leave for development (e.g., education) and/or personal reasons (e.g., spend more time with family), as well as childcare support.

Telenor's in-house daycare center is available to all female employees for one child at a time up to the age of four. Alternatively, the company also offers reimbursement for external daycare and because of COVID-19 and the temporary closure of its childcare center, Telenor shifted to a nanny allowance to support working mothers.

"There has been no turning back," says Aleena Tanvir, Global Learning & Development Partner, who has worked at Telenor for more than 5 years. "The way the organization has supported me with various opportunities for learning and growth alongside the personal support to ensure work-life balance is commendable. I'm a mother of two and having a company-maintained daycare within the premises seemed unreal – to top it all, having the flexibility to bring the children to the workstation during breaks was great also. Not only was I satisfied with sending both my children to the daycare, now I have the option for Go-Beyond and I can work from anywhere I'm comfortable. I can now strike the perfect balance between professional and personal life, thus enjoying motherhood whilst working to achieve my ambitions. I have been empowered by Telenor to do more in the true sense."

Peer-Learning Collaboration Event



How employers can prevent and address gender-based violence (GBV) in the workplace

During the peer-learning collaboration, IFC and PBC conducted a webinar on COVID-19 and GBV risks and responses. Key takeaways from the session include:

- Employees of all genders can be victims of gender-based violence.
- Bullying and sexual harassment cost businesses 14 percent in lost labour annually in Myanmar.
- GBV in the workplace can involve customer and client aggression, workplace bullying, and sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse connected to the workplace, and domestic violence.
- Organizational benefits of addressing workplace GBV risks include improving staff health, safety and well-being, increasing staff engagement and loyalty, positioning the organization as an employer of choice, demonstrating corporate social responsibility, driving financial performance, and helping to fulfill employers' duty of care.
- Key elements of GBV workplace responses involve senior leaders' engagement in creating a respectful workplace, policies and procedures that support respectful workplaces, effective reporting mechanisms, prompt investigation and disciplinary action, and employee awareness, among others.
- Many bystanders and survivors of GBV do not report incidences of violence. Barriers to reporting are always present but during crises these barriers can be heightened, therefore, it is extremely important that bystanders to violence, those who are not directly involved but witness or hear about the violence, take action by using the appropriate mechanisms put in place by employers or publicly available to report instances of violence for further investigation.

IFC and PBC are grateful for the participation and materials of webinar presenters Shabnam Hameed, IFC's Global Lead, Workplace Responses to Gender-Based Violence, Anika Effendi, Consultant on Sustainability at TPL Corp., and Mahnaz Rahman, Resident Director at Aurat Foundation's Karachi regional office.

A Company's Story

National Foods Limited: Recognizing the importance of fathers when a new child arrives



At food manufacturer NFL, the team believes that paternity leave is a simple benefit that employers can offer to their employees that gives them a chance to be present with their families, taking care of them during a time of need. "After the NFL Paternity Leave policy was launched," said Sana Abbas, CSR, Communications & HRBP Shared Services Lead, "our employees were really happy and it has set an example for us to be more flexible in terms of giving back to the employees and it has resulted in more family-friendly policies being incorporated." By November 2020, just in the first few months since policy roll-out, more than 50 employees had already benefited from it.

NFL's new paternity leave policy offers 10 days of paid time off to male employees, from the date of their wives' admittance to the hospital for labor. The paternity leave complements other leaves offered by the company annually, such as 15 days of annual leave, 10 days of casual leave, and 10 days of sick leave. Male employees qualify for the benefit once per year for the duration of their employment at NFL. According to Abbas, NFL encourages its employees to take all leaves available to them and in the case of the new paternity leave, the policy has been beneficial to both management and non-management employees. "Be it monetary or non-monetary benefits, we at NFL believe that these small things add up and ease the burden on our employees," she said, adding that "this initiative should be applicable to all companies working in Pakistan. This actually creates a very high level of productivity. When employees have a better work-life balance, they actually are more productive than others."



Family-Friendly Workplaces in the COVID-19 Era

Globally, businesses across industries, regions, and sizes have been severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Because the onset of the health crisis took place during the IFC-PBC peer learning collaboration, some company commitments were affected by it. According to a COVID-19 survey and an end-line survey carried out with PLC member companies, out of the 29 commitments made by PLC participants in the beginning of the collaboration in June 2019, companies reported that eight of them were still underway or had not started because of the pandemic.

The PLC took place between June 2019 and October 2020. As of November 2020, seven companies rated the impact that COVID-19 has had in their operations as low, meaning operations were maintained with limited disruptions. Two companies said certain areas of their business had been moderately impacted, while another two rated the pandemic's impact on their operations as high, reporting significantly disrupted and/or interrupted operations. One company said that certain areas of the business, such as support functions (for example, HR, Finance, IT) saw a lower impact than others, such as Commercial and Contact Centers. Field operations in areas with a high number of cases were particularly affected.

The factors that PLC companies cited in the collaboration's end-line survey as being most helpful in overcoming the effects of the pandemic in their businesses included:

Safety-conscious leadership	Quick action by emergency response teams	Strict adherence to standard operating procedures (SOPs)	Covid-19 awareness sessions
The nature and sector of business which allowed for remote work	Timely assessment of organizational exposure	Adaptability of workforce	Pre-existing automation and investment in technology
Motivated employees	Ability to digitalize operations quickly	Focus on employee communication	Existing flex work policies to help with transition to remote work



During crises, corporate measures focused on ensuring the well-being of employees are critical for the workforce and for the resilience of the business. Companies in the PLC built on a series of family-friendly policies and procedures they already offered by introducing additional initiatives to ensure the safety and well-being of their employees. Below is a list of some of the policies and procedures this group of companies rolled out in Pakistan during the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to direct COVID safety and hygiene measures in the workplace.

Health-related support

- Extensive polymerase chain reaction (PCR) and rapid COVID tests (free for employees and families or at subsidized rates for employees' family and friends)
- Cross-country contact tracing to ensure employees' safety
- Fully paid COVID-19 medical treatment for employees
- Work from home options; hybrid work from home and office options
- Paid quarantine leave; an additional paid day of leave per month beyond annual/sick leave; additional paid leave for employees with pre-existing health conditions, those over 50 years of age, and expectant mothers; additional paid sick leave for employees with COVID-19
- Awareness sessions and training on COVID-19 procedures
- Employee health check-in app
- Dedicated helpline to answer employees' questions on COVID-19 and HR issues, some open 24/7
- Mental health awareness sessions and counseling services
- Life insurance pay-out for death in the event of COVID-19 (same treatment as in case of an accidental death)

Childcare and family support

- Nanny allowance to support childcare during daycare center closures
- Awareness sessions with parents of children in the company's childcare center on how to use learning materials at home during childcare center closure (parents with low literacy levels)
- Provision of learning materials for children at home (phonetic tabs, magical alphabets, white boards, stationery packs)
- Provision of distance childcare services (audio and video learning modules)
- Session on healthy eating habits for children and provision of healthy food baskets for employees with children in the corporate childcare center closed during the pandemic



Courtesy of EBM

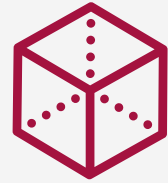
Additional support

- Flexible work hours and agile work programs
- Monthly ration/care packs for non-management and management staff affected by COVID-19
- Meal vouchers for employees no longer able to enjoy company-provided meals in the workplace
- Financial support for employees to set up a home office (for example, furniture, computer refurbishment, Internet)
- Frequent check-ins at professional and personal levels to ensure well-being, motivation, and to share stories
- Online exercise sessions to maintain employee well-being
- Online recreational sessions (for example, ludo, bingo, tambola, Scavenger hunt) to maintain well-being, morale, and to promote interaction among employees

While most of the measures above are expected to be in effect for the duration of the pandemic only, some organizations plan to maintain other policies, such as health clinics for employees, mental health sessions, and flexible work arrangement options indefinitely, as part of their regular family-friendly offerings.

Maintaining the level of employee engagement and company culture is a concern highlighted by some companies going forward, with several organizations planning to focus on employee motivation by offering assistance going forward, especially in the case of women and working parents. One company is concerned that employees who were able to work from home during the pandemic might find it difficult to return to a six-day work week solely from an office location, so they are considering flexible work arrangements for an extended period of time, including a hybrid model of office and home-based work. Another company mentioned it had not witnessed an increase in the attrition rate for female employees compared to the previous year's attrition rate, noticing COVID-19 has accelerated efforts on flexible work policies, which might have had a positive effect on attrition. This company, as others in the group, expects that some of its workers will not return to the office and will remain working from a virtual setting in the future.

The Providers' Perspectives



Catco Kids and Ubuntu Care: Karachi childcare providers share thoughts on helpful actions during the COVID-19 pandemic and lessons learned for companies considering a high-quality on-site childcare center

How did you support children and families enrolled in your childcare centers during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Ubuntu Care: The team realizes the additional stress the current work-from-home requirements can have on families. This is why we have been reaching out to the children, three times per week, for each age group, with our virtual Circle Times. This allows parents some breathing space and support. We have learned that it is imperative to stay in touch with the children with opportunities to play, develop and learn while not being physically present. It is possible to engage remotely even for the little ones so long as the sessions are short but regular.

Catco Kids: Catco Kids has been providing online childcare support and live sessions since the beginning of the crisis. Online live sessions include group circle time, arts & crafts activity time, music time, and online story time. Activities are theme-based and followed up with materials for parental guidance. The online sessions are accessible for all through Zoom. Both parents and children have been participating in these sessions and in general, the sessions have been going well. Additional activity videos have also been made available for parents who cannot join due to their work schedules.

What message do you have for companies that are considering offering childcare support to their employees? From the perspective of a childcare provider, what are your recommendations to them?

Ubuntu Care: With the current pandemic situation, physical childcare services have become a challenge. We at Ubuntu Care have developed a program offering Virtual Learning to engage with children ensuring their social and educational development is supported, with some available expertise for parents to turn to when required. We recommend companies to facilitate such programs for work-from-home parents. We are living through such stressful times that a parent/employee does not have to feel alone but reassured that they are supported by the company. Our programs are designed to be age appropriate, intentionally short but educational and interactive so that children open up and learn.

Catco Kids: Childcare setup requires extensive planning and availability of physical infrastructure and financial and technical resources with achievable timelines. Companies often adopt an ad-hoc approach for establishing childcare that may not successfully work in the long-term, therefore the focus should be on clear planning, accessibility of required resources preferably with advice from childcare experts to establish the center per international standards and systems. We strongly recommend employers not to compromise on the quality of the center. There should be strong implementation of international systems and standards, a quality control assurance mechanism, qualified trained staff with continuous training program, health and hygiene, safety and security along with a focus on the curriculum. It is important to manage the daycare professionally rather than just to run it as a formality.

Taking Family-Friendly Workplaces in Pakistan to the Next Level

The IFC-PBC peer-learning collaboration was reported in internal surveys as a valuable experience by participating companies, with all members stating increased knowledge and understanding of employer-supported childcare and other family-friendly policies as a result of the collaboration. However, the main legacy of the initiative would be companies' continuous, increased commitment to family-friendly workplaces and the example they set for other Pakistani businesses.

Various PLC companies have already observed positive results for employees and their organizations associated with the introduction and/or expansion of particular family-friendly policies implemented during the collaboration.



On childcare support provision

"It certainly has a positive impact on employees' motivation, engagement, and retention, further improving our workplace culture. We often seek feedback from our people and many working mothers now feel a lot more motivated at work as they know their children are at a safe and secure facility that is looking after their development needs and they are able to interact with their children during the day."

Urva Til Wusqa, Sr. Officer - Corporate HR, Interloop Limited

"[The] daycare reimbursement benefit has helped us in attracting and creating a female pipeline. It has become an important component of our "Employee Value Proposition."

Farheen Irshad, Team Leader - Talent Acquisition, Standard Chartered Bank Pakistan

"Employees were more productive, stress-free and less distracted since they had their children at work and they could physically meet them during small breaks instead of video calls, etc. Our attendance records improved, and we were able to retain as well as attract new talent from the industry."

Zahid Iqbal, Director – Commercial & HR, EBM

"Both [revised daycare] interventions were aimed at improvement of existing policies and infrastructure, and were initiated through feedback from employees, specifically mothers already using the facilities. Therefore, the changes have been well received by the employees."

Telenor Pakistan

On life-skills training to workers, especially working mothers



"The exercise has proved to be really fruitful. Mothers feel more engaged and feel that they and their children are still connected with the daycare [despite it being closed because of COVID-19]."

Asma Omar, Corporate Responsibility and Communication Assistant Manager, Artistic Milliners

On paternity leave



"The employees are very happy and motivated. Some of them are availing this policy as we speak. The number of Paternity Leaves availed in the company depict how much this initiative is valued!"

Sana Abbas, CSR, Communications & HRBP Shared Services Lead, National Foods Limited

On workshops and support programs for women



"Improved employee engagement. Reduced stress levels. Higher productivity. All gauged through feedback forms after webinar sessions and consistent feedback by Line Managers. Also reflected by improved business results despite adverse circumstances."

Umber Shakeel, Senior Manager, HR Strategy and Special Projects, PTCL

On family-friendly workplaces advocacy by senior corporate leaders



"It helps create goodwill with our partners and encourages other organizations to adopt family-friendly policies."

Sarah Tahir, Corporate Responsibility and Communications Manager, Artistic Milliners

On formalization of agile, work-from-home and flexi-hours policies, especially for working mothers



"We were able to retain and attract top talent from the industry. Employees were able to focus and deliver on their KPIs. Employees are now more engaged and motivated at work. There has been significant impact on employee satisfaction and overall productivity."

Zahid Iqbal, Director - Commercial & HR, EBM

During the peer-learning collaboration, participating companies were exposed to a variety of ideas, good practices, and innovative approaches related to family-friendly workplaces. Among the ones that inspired companies the most were the flexible work options offered by a member company, the concept of a daycare consortium used by another, a helpline for parents on handling stressful situations, a member company's anti-harassment policies and childcare facilities, the importance of including men in childcare policies, the exceptional way in which certain companies supported their employees during COVID-19, and the realization that a lot of good work is happening in the industry and in the country and could be replicated.

Companies participating in the PLC have made important enhancements to their workplaces, but much remains to be done. Among the topics that companies plan to address in the next three years are:

Introduction of a childcare allowance	Focus on good practices in recruitment and anti-harassment policies	Paternity leave	Promotion of women in non-traditional roles	More flexible work options
Continuation of work-from-home options	Creation of an anti-harassment committee	Inclusion of men in childcare policies	Inclusion of workers with disabilities	Expansion of daycare services
Provision of groceries and medical coverage for employees' families	Training on work-life balance to all employees	An initiative to empower the workforce and increase gender diversity ratios	A program to facilitate female workers who had taken a career break to return to work	

In the landscape analysis of employer-supported childcare and family-friendly policies in Pakistan conducted in parallel to this peer-learning collaboration by IFC and PBC, surveyed employers highlighted the importance of learning from other companies already doing some of this work. The organizations that joined this PLC understand that their initiatives are not only beneficial to their own employees, their families and the company, but also serve to inspire other organizations to act. At the conclusion of the PLC, they shared words of encouragement with other business leaders considering investing in employer-supported childcare and family-friendly policies:



A family-friendly workplace and a childcare center is a win-win situation for both employee and employer. We strongly advocate the provision of both at the workplace. An on-site daycare can have many benefits for companies, including improving employee morale, lowering turnover, and attracting a wider variety of applicants. Yes, it can be expensive, however it actually saves you money in decreasing employee absenteeism and turnover."

Urva Til Wusqa, Sr. Officer - Corporate HR, Interloop Limited

"Prioritize and implement [employer-supported childcare and other family-friendly policies] in close collaboration with all employees as their needs are important to consider when planning such policies."

Jahan Ara Saleem, Deputy Manager, Diversity & Engagement, Engro



"Companies should focus on the well-being of employees alongside their families to ensure higher productivity, employee satisfaction, retention, engagement and motivation at work."

Zahid Iqbal, Director - Commercial & HR, EBM



"[Employer-supported childcare] is an initiative which would bring out amazing short- and long-term benefits. Go for it!"

Saher Dharani, People Engagement Partner - HR Centre of Expertise, JS Bank



"We understand why diversity is important for organizations and the competitive edge females bring to the table. To support them to continue and keep a healthy balance between personal and professional life, companies must do everything they possibly can to create a conducive environment for them to keep a balance and add value."

Telenor Pakistan



"[Family-friendly policies] are now a critical pre-requisite for a workplace that wants to bring out the best in its people."

Umber Shakeel, Senior Manager, HR Strategy and Special Projects, PTCL





Annex:

Additional Resources per Commitment Category

Commitment 1: Assess demand for childcare and other family-friendly policies

- Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment and EPIC – Executives Partnering to Invest in Children. n.d. Family-Friendly Workplace Toolkit. Retrieved from https://www.healthlinkscertified.org/uploads/files/2017_11_28_16_25_46_FF%20Toolkit_Final%202017.pdf

Step-by-step guidance on creating family-friendly workplaces, including evaluation of employees' needs and company offerings; also provides examples; most guidance applicable beyond the U.S.

- IFC. 2019. Guide for Employer-Supported Childcare. Retrieved from <https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/da7bf72-e4d9-4334-955f-671a104877a7/201911-A-guide-for-employer-supported-childcare.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=mVHadh3#page=83>

Annex A2, Understanding Employee Childcare Needs: Conducting a Needs Analysis, offers an example of a very simple needs assessment questionnaire that employers can adapt and use

- IFC. 2017. Tackling Childcare: The Business Case for Employer-Supported Childcare. Retrieved from https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/topics_ext_content/ifc_external_corporate_site/gender+at+ifc/priorities/employment/tackling_childcare_the_business_case_for_employer_supported_childcare

Exploring options for childcare solutions (pages 10, 250); overview of the process used by IFC to collect information from employers for case studies on tackling childcare (useful for companies interested in collecting their own information)

Commitment 2: Implement childcare solutions and support for school-aged children

- Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2015. Caring for Our Children Basics: Health and Safety Foundations for Early Care and Education. Retrieved from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/eecd/caring-our-children-basics>

Minimum health and safety standards experts believe should be in place in childcare centers

- Center for American Progress. 2017. Quality 101: Identifying the Core Components of a High-Quality Early Childhood Program. Retrieved from <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/reports/2017/02/13/414939/quality-101-identifying-the-core-components-of-a-high-quality-early-childhood-program/>

A quick, accessible read on what high-quality childcare and early learning programs look like in practice. Although written with parents in mind, also useful for employers

- Harvard Center on the Developing Child. n.d. Activities Guide: Enhancing and Practicing Executive Function Skills with Children from Infancy to Adolescence. Retrieved from <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/activities-guide-enhancing-and-practicing-executive-function-skills-with-children-from-infancy-to-adolescence/>

Developing executive function is critical for young children and a core capability for life. Good childcare programs help children develop those skills. This guide provides activity ideas for children by age group

- IFC. 2020. Childcare in the COVID-19 Era: A Guide for Employers. Retrieved from https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/topics_ext_content/ifc_external_corporate_site/gender+at+ifc/resources/childcare+and+covid+guidance+for+employers

Outlines ways in which employers can support the care and family needs of their employees during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

- IFC. 2019. Guide for Employer-Supported Childcare. Retrieved from https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/topics_ext_content/ifc_external_corporate_site/gender+at+ifc/resources/guide+for+employer-supported+childcare
A practical guide for private sector companies addressing various aspects of employer-supported childcare, including quality, financial sustainability, and results measurement
- Hendricks, Charlotte. n.d. How Safe Is Your Classroom? Identifying Hazards Before Accidents Happen. Early Childhood News. Retrieved from http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com/earlychildhood/article_view.aspx?ArticleID=273
Lists important safety features of key elements in a childcare center, such as entrance and exits, windows, furniture, bathrooms, etc.
- World Health Organization. 2019. Guidelines on physical activity, sedentary behavior and sleep for children under 5 years of age. Retrieved from <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/311664>
Important information to ensure service providers offer an adequate balance of the different types of activities to young children
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). 2018. NAEYC Early Learning Program Standards. Retrieved from https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/accrreditation/early-learning/overview_of_the_standards.pdf
Summary of key characteristics that should be evaluated by employers when assessing quality of childcare services

Commitment 3: Document the business case and advocate for childcare and other family-friendly policies

- International Center for Research on Women. 2019. The Compounding Benefits of Investing in Care. Sarah Gammage, Naziha Sultana & Asli Kes. Retrieved from <https://www.icrw.org/publications/the-compounding-benefits-of-investing-in-care/>
A series of briefs and case studies highlighting the benefits to employers of investing in care of different types
- IFC. 2018. Tackling Childcare: The Business Case for Employer-Supported Childcare in Sri-Lanka. Case Study: Unilever Sri Lanka Limited. Retrieved from <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/401101549016702279/pdf/134216-WP-LK-Tackling-Childcare-CS-Unilever-PUBLIC.pdf>
Example of initiatives and approaches by a large fast-moving consumer goods company in Sri Lanka committed to family-friendly policies and to supporting the childcare needs of its employees
- IFC. 2017. Tackling Childcare: The Business Case for Employer-Supported Childcare. Retrieved from https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/topics_ext_content/ifc_external_corporate_site/gender+at+ifc/priorities/employment/tackling_childcare_the_business_case_for_employer_supported_childcare
The business case clearly laid out, with company examples, tools and resources for a private sector audience
- Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and OXFAM. 2016. Addressing Unpaid Care for Economic Empowerment of Women and Girls. Retrieved from <https://idl-bnc-idrc.dspacedirect.org/bitstream/handle/10625/55634/IDL-55634.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
Presents the findings, the business case and recommendations on how different stakeholders can address unpaid care work, from a broad-based consultation on the care economy
- ReadyNation. 2015. Business Leader Actions to Support Early Childhood: A Global Imperative; A Local Opportunity. Sara Watson, Daniel Frank and Kalli Krumpas, with research assistance from Jeffrey Woolston. Retrieved from <https://www.readynationinternational.org/documents/5>
A series of actions that business leaders can take to advance early childhood education and care, including actions to benefit communities, employees, to educate decision makers and influence public policy
- Society for Human Resource Management. 2008. Investing in People: Financial Impact of Human Resources Initiatives. Retrieved from <http://www.hrcosting.com/hr/>
Free online software (sign up required) to calculate hidden costs associated with absenteeism, turnover, work-life programs, etc.
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation. 2018. Leading the Way: A Guide for Business Engagement in Early Education. Retrieved from https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/sites/default/files/Childcare%20Workforce%20Toolkit_April%202018.pdf
Resource focused on the business case for early education and care and how employers can get involved, with a list of practical actions

Commitment 4: Run work-life balance workshops and parent support programs

- Dowling, Daisy. 2018. How to Launch a Working Parents' Support Group in Your Organization. Harvard Business Review. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2018/11/how-to-launch-a-working-parents-support-group-in-your-organization>
Advice on how to ensure a company's working parent group is meaningful and sustainable, with practical advice to employers
- Gassam, Janice. 2018. How to Start an Employee Resource Group at your Organization. Forbes. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/janicegassam/2018/10/22/how-to-start-an-employee-resource-group-at-your-organization/#4fd0281b1756>
Article on what employers could do to implement employee resource groups in their organizations
- Mihalich-Levin, Lori. 2018. 5 Lessons for Launching a Successful (Gender Neutral) Working Parent Group at Your Office. Mindful Return. Retrieved from <https://www.mindfulreturn.com/working-parent-group/>
A series of recommendations on how to get a working parent group started and running. Although written from the perspective of an employee interested in creating such a group, the lessons are also valid for employers

Commitment 5: Offer flexible work arrangements and other family-friendly policies

- Boston College Center for Work & Family. n.d. The New Dad Research Series. Retrieved from <https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/schools/carroll-school/sites/center-for-work-family/research/work-life-flexibility1.html>
A series of resources for employers, employees and policy makers focused on supporting working fathers, from 2009 to 2019
- Harvard Business Review. Multiple dates. Work life balance. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/topic/work-life-balance>
A series of columns on a variety of work-life balance issues by multiple columnists. Among titles that could be of interest to companies (for example, supporting employees through a speaker series in these topics) are how being a working parent changes as children grow up, how to return to work after parental leave, finding balance as a dual career couple, and a working parent survival guide
- IFC. 2020. Addressing Gender-Based Violence and Harassment: Emerging Good Practice for the Private Sector. Retrieved from https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/topics_ext_content/ifc_external_corporate_site/sustainability-at-ifc/publications/publications_gpn_addressinggbvh
Jointly commissioned by IFC, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), and CDC Group, this report outlines emerging practices in addressing gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH) in operations and investments. In addition to this note, sector-specific associated briefs provide targeted guidance on addressing GBVH risks in key sectors, including transport, construction and manufacturing
- IFC. 2020. COVID-19 and Gender-Based Violence: Workplace Risks and Responses – A Guidance Note for Employers. Retrieved from https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/topics_ext_content/ifc_external_corporate_site/gender+at+ifc/resources/covid19+and+gender+based+violence+workplace+risks+and+responses
This guidance note seeks to inform employers about the heightened risks of GBV as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and outline ways in which employers can address these risks, improve employee and community well-being, and create a safe and resilient workplace
- Koslowski, Alison. 2018. When Workplace Cultures Support Paternity Leave, All Employees Benefit. Harvard Business Review. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2018/06/when-workplace-cultures-support-paternity-leave-all-employees-benefit>
The article lists several policies that can help working fathers to feel they can take paternity leave without harming their career prospects, including making sure fathers have adequate coverage of their job responsibilities, and ensuring that individual line managers support a father's efforts to combine work and family life

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- Office on Women's Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. n.d. Business Case for Breastfeeding. Retrieved from <https://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/breastfeeding-home-work-and-public/breastfeeding-and-going-back-work/business-case>

A comprehensive resource to educate employers about the value of supporting breastfeeding employees in the workplace, with guides for managers, employees and for building a lactation support program

- Society for Human Resource Management. 2020. Managing Flexible Work Arrangements. Retrieved from <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/toolkits/pages/managingflexibleworkarrangements.aspx>

Overview of practices related to the use of flexible work arrangements as a strategic staffing management solution. The article addresses opportunities and challenges associated with adopting and managing flexible work arrangements, the types of flexible work arrangements, and potential legal issues associated with such arrangements

- When Work Works. 2016. Workflex in Retail, Service and Hospitality Guide: Cooperative Scheduling Beyond Bias. Jaime Leick, of Life Meets Work and Kenneth Matos, of Families and Work Institute. Retrieved from <https://humanix.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/workflex-in-retail-service-hospitality-guide.pdf>

Practical solutions for employers in these industries to offer greater flexibility to their workers

Endnotes

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