



## Investing in Women: Promoting gender equality in the revised Labour Code

**THE LABOUR CODE** is Vietnam's overarching legal framework for labour rights and social protection, including those for women workers. Last updated in 2012, the Code is being revised in 2016-2019 by a drafting team headed by the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs. The draft was scheduled to be presented to the National Assembly for discussion and approval during May and October 2019 sessions.

Whether through unequal pay, sexual harassment at the workplace, outdated stereotypes, or forced early retirement, gender inequality has significant impacts on the productivity and well-being of women workers and consequently on the productivity of employers and the economy overall.

With women making up nearly half of the total workforce in Vietnam, the Labour Code plays a central role in achieving greater gender equality. Yet, the development of the 2012 Code was based on the approach of protecting women instead of promoting gender equality, causing unnecessary barriers and forms of discrimination for women at work.

**Through Promoting Gender Equality in the revised Labour Code project, CARE works to increase public awareness and support for gender equitable provisions in the Labour Code, with a focus on:**

- equal employment opportunities & sharing of family responsibilities
- workplaces free of sexual harassment
- equal retirement age
- equal pay

**Participants**  
Garment workers  
National Assembly delegates  
Trade union at different levels

**Locations**  
All over Vietnam

**Partners**  
Oxfam in Vietnam  
Vietnam General Confederation of Labour (VGCL)  
Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI)  
Institute for Studies of Society, Economics and Environment (iSEE)

**Timeframe and donor**  
April 2018 - May 2019  
Investing in Women Initiative by the Australian Government

INVESTING IN WOMEN  
SMART ECONOMICS  
AN INITIATIVE OF THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

**Australian  
Aid** 

**500,000+** ... reached via the '8 hours of fulfilment' film competition  
people

**500+** ... workers and their families attended events that aimed at raising awareness and support to challenge harmful gender norms at work and at home through games, role plays, etc.

**5** ... for National Assembly delegates, VGCL representatives, and the media to 5 field trips... provinces with high concentration of industrial zones to promote workplace gender equality and the inclusion of gender equality articles to the revised Labour Code

**11** ... in industrial zones and on mainstream media channels on the 4 main workplace policy dialogues gender equality topics to raise public awareness and support for the Labour Code revision towards greater gender equality

## HOW DOES THE PROJECT WORK?



- The project focuses on bringing the voice of urban workers who are directly affected by the revision of the Labour Code. This is achieved by a photovoice activity where garment workers take photos that tell their daily struggle, a film competition where young filmmakers present the various sides of gender inequality in the workplace by both fiction and nonfiction films, and policy dialogues where factory workers tell policy makers what their problems are, including gender inequality issues.
- In communication with business leaders, the project promotes the constructive and positive message that women's economic empowerment is vital for fulfilling women's rights, and helps businesses to remain competitive in global supply chains and ultimately for inclusive economic growth.
- By collaborating with like-minded organisations, the project uses direct and indirect strategy of influencing National Assembly members to adopt gender equitable changes.

## PARTICIPANTS' TESTIMONIES

*"Until now, it is common for male workers to be considered for further trainings for promotion at the age of 50. But for female workers, there is no such consideration. That is a serious question in terms of gender equality."*

Mr. Bui Sy Loi, Vice Chair of the Social Affairs Committee, National Assembly

Recordie team  
Best Short Fiction Award  
'The Intern'

*"Everyday each office staff has 8 hours of work, but many women can not enjoy it to the full. Instead of focusing on their job, they also have to deal with sexual harassment behaviours. This does not only affect their performance but also psychology and private life."*

*"As we are transitioning toward less state intervention and more negotiation between employers and employees in pay rate, addressing the gender pay gap is both a policy matter and an awareness matter. There are cases when workers, including female workers, who believe that they are not as good as male workers, and thus are hesitant to ask for a pay rate they deserve. This is a new gender equality challenge in the new context, requiring both workers and workers' representative organisation to put themselves in an equal position when negotiating pay."*

Mr. Le Dinh Quang,  
Deputy Director of Labour Relations Department,  
VGCL

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