

# WOMEN ON BOARDS AND IN BUSINESS LEADERSHIP



## IFC TRAINING PROGRAM

Canada



**IFC**

International  
Finance Corporation  
WORLD BANK GROUP

*Creating Markets, Creating Opportunities*

In a rapidly changing and competitive world, companies need to look to the future and build a pipeline of leadership talent that features the full range of complementary skills, expertise, and perspectives.

The push toward greater diversity—and specifically, gender diversity at the top—is already happening. It's driven by a growing number of qualified women, male champions, investors and shareholders, legislation and governance codes, and an overall awareness that companies must better reflect the markets they serve. Organizations that fail to address these culture shifts risk getting left behind.

IFC's Women on Boards and in Business Leadership (WBBL) training program meets the needs of companies as they look toward this changed paradigm. It responds to the growing demand from organizations, so they can build their pipeline of female talent, creating a new generation of women leaders. The program energizes and empowers women on boards and in leadership positions, accelerating competitive advantages. It also helps companies maximize the benefits from a board and senior leadership team that reflects a diversity of thought, skills, and experience.



## THE PROGRAM

The four-module WBBL training program is backed by the latest research. It is grounded in IFC's focus on creating markets and our understanding of the realities of emerging and developing economies. In addition, the program is informed by extensive consultations with women business leaders around the world. The program:

**Positions** gender diversity as a strategic tool to leverage talent, stimulate innovation, and spur business growth

**Navigates** unconscious biases that block the advancement of talented leaders

**Leverages** the effective leadership skills of emotional intelligence

**Elevates** the efforts of male champions to reap the benefits of diversity

**Enhances** financial, environmental, social, and governance performance

## WHO SHOULD TAKE THIS COURSE

The program is designed for IFC partners, business and academic institutions, and individual male and female business leaders looking to invest in the future by building their female leadership pipeline. They can enroll as individuals or as trainers to train others to deliver the WBBL program.

The push toward greater diversity—and specifically, gender diversity at the top—is already happening.



**“The workshop helped to improve my communications and negotiations skills, which, in turn, will help me add value to board discussions.”**

Julia Velarde Sussoni  
Professor  
University of Lima



*Participants in the program will return to their companies equipped with the skills to:*

- Champion gender equality in the boardroom and management as a strategy to enhance operations and capitalize on business opportunities
- Challenge the status quo and conduct granular, systematic analysis of the talent pipeline to understand and address critical barriers to gender equality
- Adopt strategies used by successful companies worldwide to boost and benefit from women's participation at senior levels of business

## THE APPROACH

In lively and engaging sessions, participants engage with the trainer and with each other. They share their knowledge, skills, and experiences—a proven motivator for adult learners. Modules move beyond traditional content delivery approaches and give participants practical problem-solving tools and techniques to reduce bias organizations and create a workplace environment that responds to societal and market change.

## THE MODULES

Each of the four modules is a full-day event featuring seven hours of training. Modules can stand alone as separate training events, or they can become two-day or four-day programs, as desired. Modules 1 and 2 are for women only, providing them with the safe space to enhance their brand of leadership and increase their visibility as competent and emotionally intelligent business leaders. Modules 3 and 4 are for mixed audiences. They invite male and female participants to work together, redefining men's roles for action to reduce gender inequality. Modules encourage collaboration to establish policies and implement strategies that will lead to increased gender diversity in the private sector, civil society, and government

### **MODULE 1. Accelerating Gender Diversity on Boards and in Business Leadership**

How can organizations uncover and break down the hidden barriers for women seeking positions on boards or executive teams? What hidden leadership assets do women bring to organizations?

This module explores unconscious bias and stereotyping, offering clues to unmask subtle and not-so-subtle discrimination. Participants develop a "language of competence" and build their emotional intelligence while learning how to bring these skills to the boardroom and leadership team as evidence of their effectiveness.

### **MODULE 2. Gender Dynamics**

How do women communicate? In what ways do women communicate differently from their male colleagues? What's the impact of these differences on women's performance as business leaders? How can the skills of emotional intelligence be used to influence and change mind sets and organizational behavior?

This module offers insights into the behaviors and communication patterns that impact women's

performance and contributions to the board and leadership teams. Participants gain insights into better decision-making approaches including use of both emotional intelligence and hard data. Participants build their influencing skills to broaden organizational understanding of the benefits of inclusion and gender diversity.

### **MODULE 3. Strategies for Igniting Change**

What are the forces driving gender equality? Why does gender diversity matter to boards and executive teams? What is the role of male champions? What strategies empower women leaders and build a robust pipeline of female talent?

This module examines strategies for setting diversity targets, implementing policies, and cultivating female talent, to ensure a more gender-equitable balance of qualified candidates for board and other leadership positions. It explores non-traditional career paths that women sometimes choose. It details strategies such as using data to elevate the visibility of female candidates and approaches to reduce bias. It also looks at the role of networking and training, as well as family-friendly policies, in promoting greater gender diversity in leadership.

### **MODULE 4. Closing the Deal**

What is the business case for gender-diverse boards? How does gender diversity contribute to better business outcomes? How does increased gender diversity at the top result in competitive advantages? How does gender diversity improve ESG standards?

This module offers skills in presenting the case for increased women's participation on boards and in executive leadership teams. It provides statistical and narrative evidence of increased financial, environmental, social, and governance performance on gender-diverse boards and in management. It also offers techniques to present gender diversity as a strategic tool to leverage talent, elevate reputation, stimulate innovation, and enhance organizational governance.

“The workshop was a total success. Our learnings were not only high level and immediately applicable, but the methods used to deliver them were highly effective and left a strong imprint. The experienced board member participants appreciated the new tools to increase their effectiveness during board meetings.”

*Sigrid Simons Muller, Chair  
WomenCorporateDirectors  
Panama*

“The feeling of sisterhood was wonderful. We all have had similar experiences, so we now have each other to turn to. And we also can help guide the next generation together.”

*Thiri Thant Mon, Managing Partner  
Sandanila  
Myanmar*

The training was a profoundly eye-opening experience. It helped me understand more about the differences in women’s and men’s leadership styles—and about the added value that female leaders bring to the table.”

*Wambui Mbesa, CEO  
Intrasoft  
Kenya*

## **For more information:**

Loty Salazar  
Corporate Governance Officer  
email: [lsalazar@worldbank.org](mailto:lsalazar@worldbank.org)  
IFC  
2121 Pennsylvania Av., NW  
Washington, DC 20433  
USA  
[ifc.org/corporategovernance/gender](http://ifc.org/corporategovernance/gender)