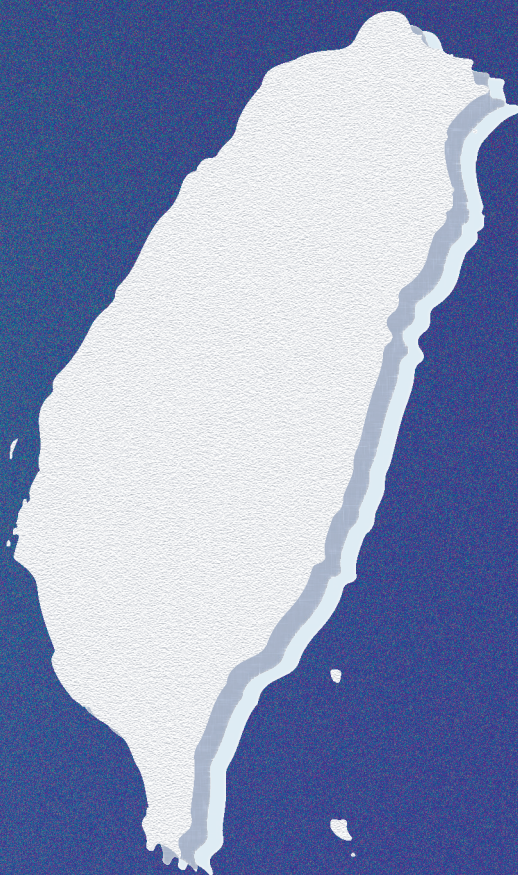


British Chamber of Commerce in Taipei

WOMEN IN THE TAIWAN OFFSHORE WIND INDUSTRY



British Chamber
of Commerce in Taipei



BCCT
WOMEN
IN
BUSINESS.



BCCT
RENEWABLES.



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PREFACE

Gender inequality is a deep-rooted problem globally, running through all strata of society. In the workplace, it is increasingly recognised that women are grossly under-represented, or remunerated unequally, especially in heavy industry sectors and in positions of authority. Taiwan stands out as being more advanced than most countries, ranking first in Asia and sixth worldwide in terms of gender equality, according to the Executive Yuan's Gender Equality Committee.

The energy industry worldwide remains dominated by men, but, anecdotally, it has been observed that there are more women in senior positions in Taiwan's offshore wind industry compared with other markets.

The British Chamber of Commerce in Taipei's Women in Business Network and the UK Renewables Committee - an initiative jointly developed by the BCCT and the British Office Taipei, sponsored by Taylor Hopkinson, have undertaken a study to investigate the representation of women in the Taiwan offshore wind industry, and to gain insights into why Taiwan is a leader in gender equality. The key findings are set out in this report.

"I have a vivid memory of a meeting between a Taiwan government agency and offshore wind developers, where more than half the room were women, and most presenters were women. It struck me that you would never see this in Europe – something special is happening in Taiwan."

Maya Malik, Offshore wind project director & BCCT Women in Business Advisor



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



British Chamber
of Commerce in Taipei

The British Chamber of Commerce in Taipei (BCCT) acts as a key resource for business by ensuring that its members have a direct line to assistance and networks, as well as providing a united but unbiased commercial perspective on all issues affecting British business interests in Taiwan, and Taiwan business interests in the UK. In conjunction with membership activities, the BCCT is also active in the community in Taiwan and has donated over NT\$15 million to charities.

The BCCT would also like to express their sincere thanks to all members of the offshore wind industry who participated in the survey and the nine industry leaders who readily took part in the one-on-one in-depth interviews.

We are also extremely grateful to our committee members and to members of the BCCT secretariat for managing the industry survey and realizing this report.



The Women in Business Programme aims to raise awareness of the importance of gender diversity in the workplace in Taiwan through events and activities under three main themes: Share, Connect, Support and Celebrate. The BCCT Women in Business Committee aims to become a resource for the support, sharing, education, and research of issues for Women in Business in Taiwan. We strive to engage our members and the greater community in activities that will facilitate opportunities for women, highlight issues important to the community, and actively improve the position for women in the workplace.



The BCCT UK Renewables Committee (UKRC) is a renewable energy industry representation body established to support the growth and proliferation of renewables in Taiwan. The UKRC is jointly supported by the BCCT and the British Office Taipei. The UKRC is a platform for networking and collaboration among its members to build relationships across the supply chain of renewables between Taiwan and the UK; facilitate exchange, lessons learned and experiences among its members, the Taiwanese industry, and the general public; and represent its members to raise issues towards the Taiwanese government and create awareness for renewables towards industry, academia and the public.



British Office

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to our partner of Women in the Taiwan Offshore Wind Industry Report



Taylor Hopkinson is a trusted recruitment partner to renewable energy leaders, delivering permanent and contract recruitment, retained search and business intelligence solutions to enable our clients to develop, finance, construct and operate renewable energy projects globally. Our multilingual teams specialise in the offshore and onshore wind, solar and energy storage sectors, placing talent across Europe, Iberia & LATAM, APAC and North America. We were awarded Recruiter of the Year 2021 and 2019/20 at the Wind Investment Awards, based on our deep industry knowledge, extensive network, commitment to diversity, and our honest and transparent approach to doing business.





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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gender inequality in the workforce is a problem around the world. Sadly, despite a lot of talk, not much progress has been made – at the current rate of progress it will take 136 years to achieve global gender equality. Globally, women represent only 22% of the traditional oil, gas, and energy workforce. Despite being a newer industry, the global ratio for wind energy is similar at 21%.

Taiwan is a pioneer of the offshore wind industry within Asia and stands out in terms of gender equality progress. Anecdotally, it has been observed that female representation is much higher in Taiwan's offshore wind sector than in other countries, especially at senior levels. Based on these observations BCCT launched a study to investigate if and why this was the case. A survey was conducted amongst 38 companies active in the Taiwan offshore wind industry (including developers, turbine suppliers, installation companies, foundation manufacturers and major engineering firms) and nine in-depth interviews were held with women at senior leadership level.

The results show that there are indeed more women working in offshore wind in Taiwan (26% women) compared with the global wind average (21% women) and the Asia Pacific wind average (15% women). The survey also revealed that Taiwan's offshore wind industry has a high level of female representation at management level; 95% of offshore wind companies have women line managers and 60% have female directors, many of whom are right at the top and exercising significant influence over their companies and the industry.

The insight interviews indicate that Taiwan offshore wind's progressive status is due to high levels of social acceptance of women in leadership positions, a pool of strong female talent and the motivation of these women to work in a sector that does good for society.

Although there is a higher proportion of women in offshore wind in Taiwan than in other countries, it is still some way behind most other industries in Taiwan. Two significant barriers need to be addressed for the Taiwan offshore wind sector to achieve true gender equality:

- Limited female enrolment in technical and engineering education
- Cultural norms that handicap women who wish to pursue a career and have a family

The education of women in technology and engineering subjects, promotion of careers in offshore wind for women, as well as policies to support women with families are key areas for the industry to address going forward.

THE STATUS OF GENDER EQUALITY GLOBALLY AND IN TAIWAN



Why Gender Equality Matters

"The empowerment of the world's women is a global imperative. Yet despite important progress in promoting gender equality, there remains an urgent need to address structural barriers to women's economic empowerment and full inclusion in economic activity."

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon, January 2016

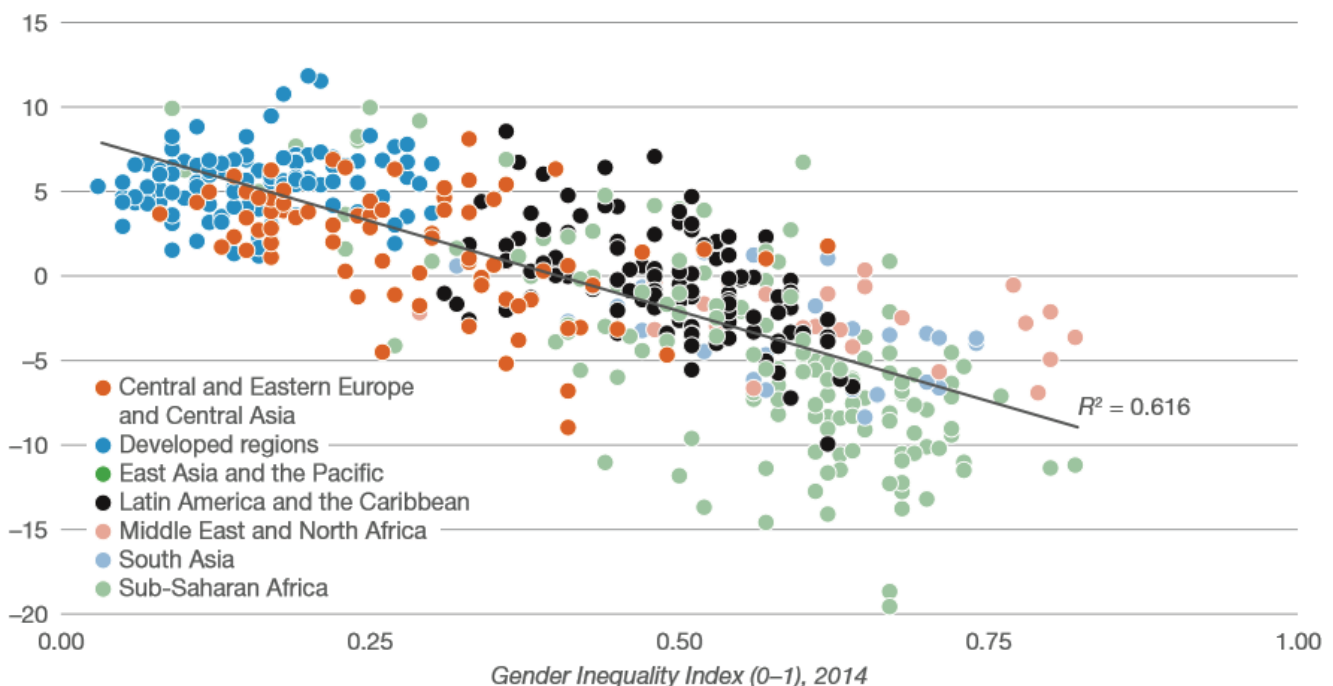
Gender inequality and prejudice runs deep through societies. Even though it is a cause that has been taken up by the United Nations as part of the Sustainable Development Goals and progress is being made, the world is still a long way from achieving anything even close to gender parity and meeting the UN General Assembly's agreed target of eliminating gender inequality by 2030.

Leaving aside the moral issue of discriminating against 50% of the global population, there is a wealth of evidence that indicates that full participation from women is good for business and good for society. An increasing number of studies illustrate the links between women's presence in top management and on company boards, and company results, while advocates for greater inclusion of women in decision-making point to the benefits of the broader talent pool and the consumer power women represent.

The chart below, from a 2016 report by the UN Secretary General's High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment [1], shows the correlation between increasing gender equality and growth in GDP per capita.

Gender equality is associated with faster economic growth

GDP per capita average growth (%), 1990–2010



Why Gender Equality Matters

McKinsey Global Institute [2] estimates that advancing women's equality could add US\$12 trillion to the world's yearly gross domestic product over the next decade alone.

Furthermore, the report also points out that with the projected sharp slowdown in the growth of the global labour supply as a result of demographic trends, reducing gender gaps in

the labour market will become increasingly important to economic growth in the coming decades.

Studies have been carried out, mainly in the west, looking at the performance of companies with higher proportions of women in senior positions, compared with companies with fewer women.

Research on Fortune 500 companies by global non-profit Catalyst [3] has found:

Companies with the most women on their boards outperformed those with the least by

26%

on return on invested capital

Companies with the most women board directors outperformed those with the least by

16%

on return on sales

Companies with three or more women on their boards outperformed those with lower representation over at least 4-5 years

by **84%**

on return on sales

by **60%**

on return on invested capital

by **46%**

on return on equity

Why Gender Equality Matters

While these results do not prove conclusively that gender diversity causes better financial performance, they do show a clear pattern of stronger performance from companies with higher levels of female participation at senior levels.

It is also beyond question that organisations that do not embrace gender equality are limiting themselves in three important ways.

1

These firms have a smaller number of highly qualified candidates to choose from when filling positions, especially in the middle and higher ranks, because many talented women either never join or drop out prematurely.



2

These companies miss out on the higher quality of teamwork, diversity of perspectives, and creativity in the solving of technical and business problems that characterise those with larger percentages of female employees.



3

A company's relative lack of gender diversity, particularly in the senior ranks, hurts its reputation among women as a career choice and creates a vicious circle, in which it is progressively more difficult to recruit high quality female talent.



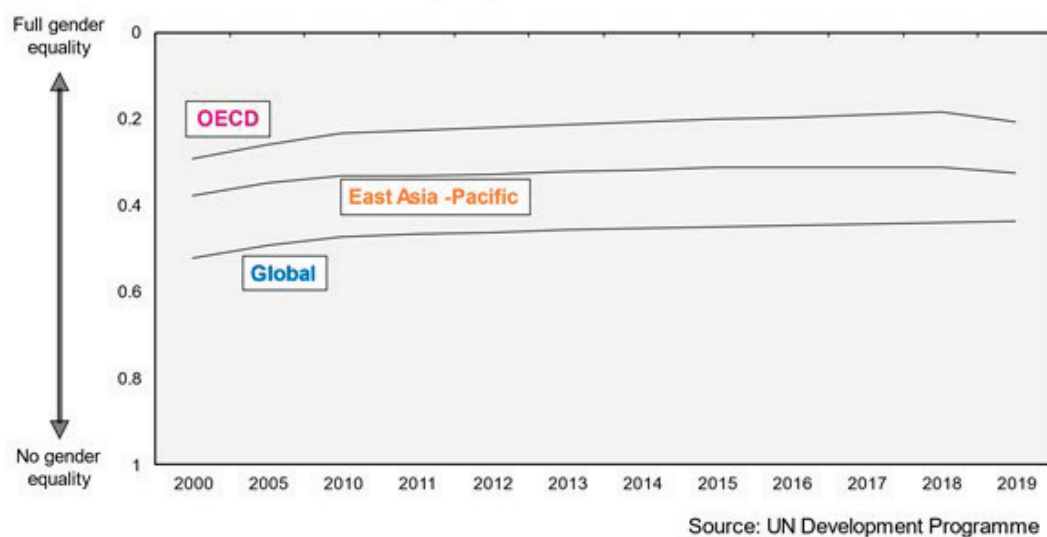
Where Are We Now?

"Anyone who has been to an energy industry conference can clearly see the gender equality gap, especially when you see CEO round tables or a group of experts sitting on stage. The gap is very wide."

BCCT WiB insight interviews, 2021

Analysis of the current situation around the world shows that there is still considerable lack of equality, even in the developed countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation & Development (OECD).

Gender inequality index 2000 - 2019



The UN Development Programme's Gender Inequality Index [4] does show gradual improvement year-on-year from the turn of the millennium, but even across the OECD countries, the most developed nations, inequality is still above 0.2. In East Asia/Pacific, the picture is not so bright (0.324), while the global figure (0.436) shows how much needs to be done everywhere to reach a state of true equality.

Key points from UN Women and from the UNHP report [1]

Globally, only 50% of women aged 15+ are in paid employment, compared with 75% of men. Among 25-54 year-olds, the proportion of women working rises to 63%, but is still far below the 94% of working men.

Over 2.7 billion women are legally restricted from having the same choice of jobs as men. Of 189 economies assessed in 2018, 104 economies still have laws preventing women from working in specific jobs, 59 economies have no laws on sexual harassment in the workplace, and, in 18 economies, husbands can legally prevent their wives from working.

Women undertake three times as much unpaid work as men.

Many women are in jobs, sectors and occupations reflecting gender stereotypes and characterised by low earnings, poor working conditions, and minimal career-advancement opportunities.

Even in the same or similar roles, women are paid less on average than male counterparts. The gender wage gap is estimated to be 23%, i.e. women earn 77% of what men earn.

Where Are We Now?

Meanwhile, Credit Suisse data [5] show that the share of women in senior management has slowly increased to about 21% today, but their share in top leadership positions remains small: only 1 in 7 chief financial officers and 1 in 25 chief executive officers are women. Many women in management positions in large companies are siloed into back-office functions such as human resources, public relations, and finance rather than product development, operations, or sales. Across sectors, women had higher shares of top management and board positions in nonmanual/service sectors like health care and travel and leisure, and in new economy sectors like media.

McKinsey noted that the situation in Asia Pacific is particularly unbalanced. Worldwide, slightly less than 4 in 10 roles in business and politics are filled by women. In Asia Pacific, the ratio is 2.5 in 10.. In some East Asian countries, it is even lower.

On average across the Asia Pacific region, women's representation on boards increased from 6% to 13% between 2011 and 2016, partly due to regulations and corporate policies instituted during this period. However, women's representation on boards in Asia Pacific is still low compared with the average share in advanced economies of 28%.

While progress is being made towards eliminating gender inequality, it is painfully slow. The World Economic Forum [6] estimates that, rather than hitting the UN's goal of 2030, at the current rate of progress, it will take a further 136 years to achieve gender equality in the workplace.

The Development of Gender Equality in Taiwan

Each year the government measures Taiwan's performance on the UNDP's Gender Inequality Index and the latest assessment [7] ranked Taiwan sixth of 190 countries and territories and first in Asia, behind only Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, The Netherlands, and Belgium.

There are two key positive indicators of Taiwan's drive towards gender equality:

42%

elected representatives in the Legislative Yuan are women, partly as a result of mandatory quotas, but still one of the highest ratios to be found anywhere.

1.4
million

SMEs are the backbone of Taiwan's economy and 37% are headed by women, again showing a high level of female involvement.

To achieve full equality, two high profile issues need addressing – the gender pay gap and the imbalance in the composition of the workforce.



The Development of Gender Equality in Taiwan

"We are not totally equal yet, but we are moving ahead."

Connie Chang, Director General, National Development Council, 2019

The Gender Pay Gap

The Ministry of Labor symbolically set February 20, 2021, as 'Equal Pay Day', based on estimates of how far women needed to work into this year to match the earnings of men in calendar year 2020. Average hourly pay rates for women are 14% lower than for men. This is an improvement from 30 years ago, when the differential was over 30% and from ten years ago, when the gap was 17%, but it is still a visible symbol of inequality and a source of frustration for women.

Imbalance In The Workforce Composition

At 51%, the proportion of women in some form of employment has grown considerably over the last two generations, but it is 16 percentage points behind men and no better than the global average. Employment peaks among 25-29 year olds, at which point the rate is higher than in the US, Japan, or Korea, but, while the levels in those countries remain reasonably constant until the age of 55, Taiwan's rate declines and falls away sharply after women reach 50.

The consensus is that many leave the workforce to get married and have children, and do not return. Strong government action is required to encourage more women to remain employed despite starting families, or to return to work once their children go to school.

Taiwan is making good progress towards gender equality, and the offshore wind industry is a good example of how things are developing, but more remains to be done, especially in terms of meshing gender equality with the conflicting values of an Asian culture.

THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN TAIWAN'S OFFSHORE WIND INDUSTRY



The Offshore Wind Industry In Taiwan

“There is a huge appetite to pursue offshore wind projects in Asia. Taiwan has shown that it is possible to succeed. I think that’s why countries like Japan, Korea and Vietnam will mature quite quickly, building on the confidence from what’s happened in Taiwan.”

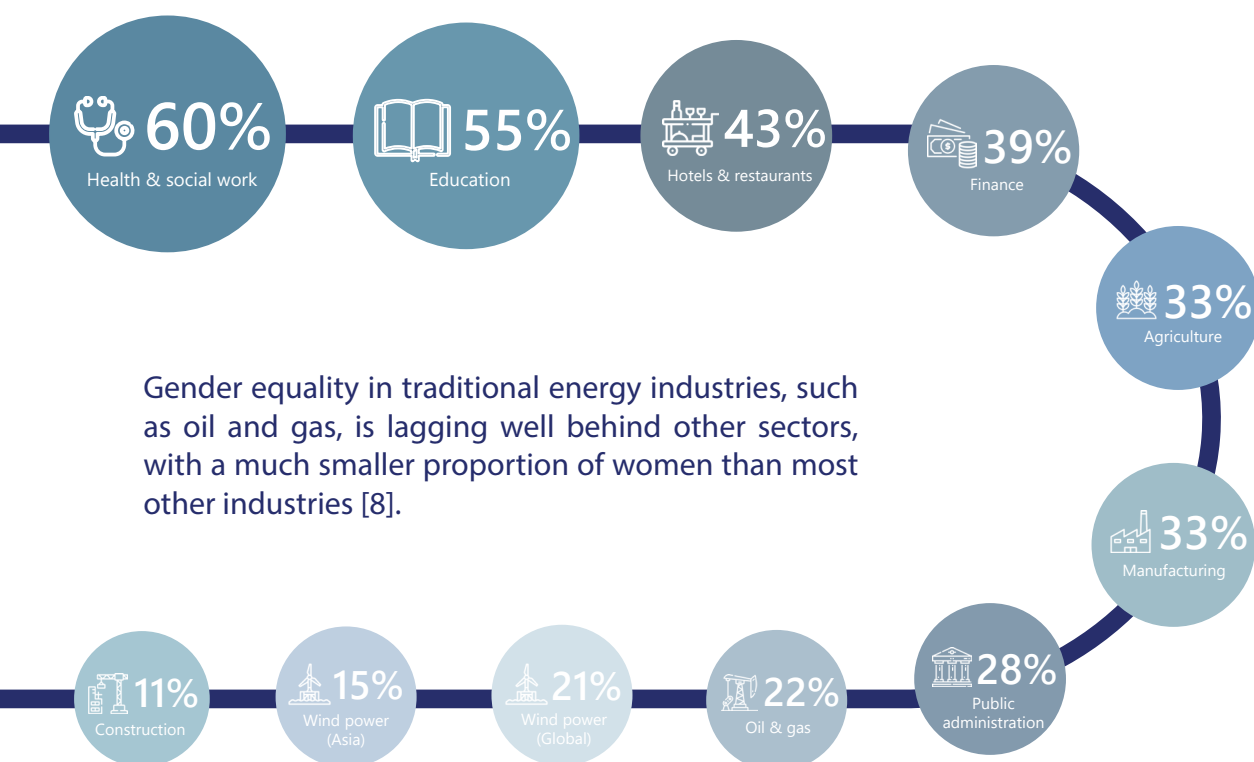
BCCT WiB insight interviews, 2021

Taiwan is the leading offshore wind market in the Asia Pacific region. The first demonstration project went into operation in 2017. By 2025, Taiwan plans to have 5.5GW up and running. Recently, the government announced a further 15GW of offshore wind capacity to be added from 2026 to 2035, keeping Taiwan ahead of competing markets in the region.

Several international players are using Taiwan as their hub for activities across the region. The industry’s emergence from nothing, over very few years, in an open society is providing a good opportunity for companies to embrace gender equality.

Global ratio of women in different industries:

Source: BCG & WPC 2017, IRENA 2019



Gender equality in traditional energy industries, such as oil and gas, is lagging well behind other sectors, with a much smaller proportion of women than most other industries [8].

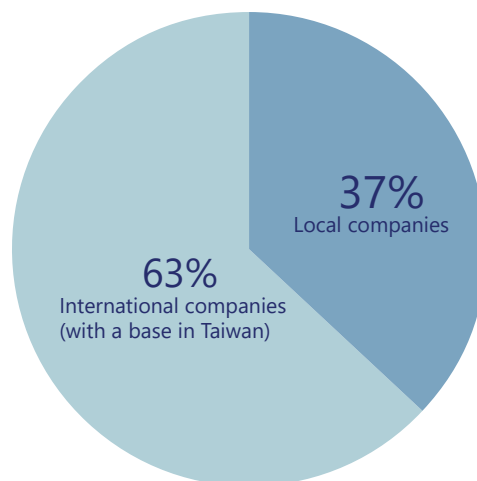
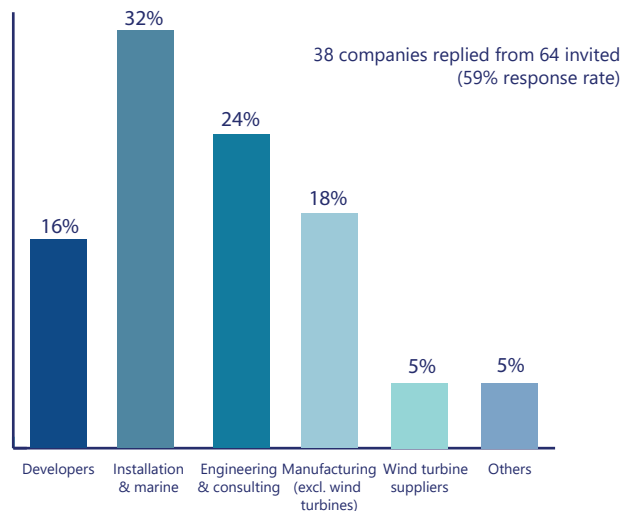
It might be expected that a newer, dynamic, fast-growing sector like wind energy would present a totally different profile. However, a global survey by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), the Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC) and the Global Women's Network for the Energy Transition (GWNENET) [9] found the situation is much the same. The proportion of women in the wind energy industry is just 21% globally, even lower in Asia Pacific, at 15%, and there are few women in leadership roles.

In May 2021 the BCCT's Women in Business Network carried out an online survey of offshore wind companies active in Taiwan, to determine the proportion of

women working in the sector and the level of participation in management. In addition, nine in-depth interviews were completed with prominent industry figures to supplement the numbers with qualitative insights on the current state of gender equality in offshore wind in Taiwan. 64 organisations, local and international (with a base in Taiwan), were invited to participate in the online survey, covering the full spectrum of industry stakeholders. 38 responses were received, an impressive response rate of 59%. It is worth noting that 100% of active offshore wind developers, wind turbine suppliers, foundation manufacturers and major engineering firms, invited to participate, duly replied.

Women In Offshore Wind

Breakdown of companies participating in the BCCT survey

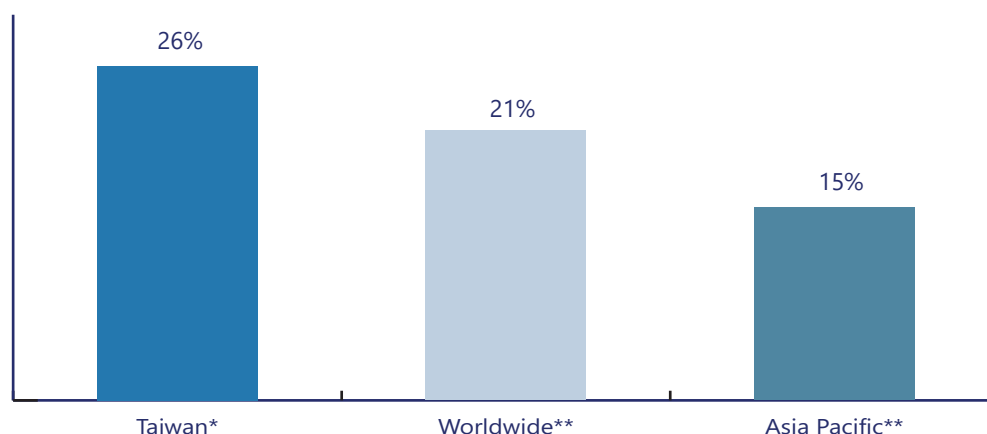


Source: BCCT WIB survey, 2021

The results show that there are indeed more women working in offshore wind in Taiwan (26% women) compared with the global wind average (21% women) and the Asia Pacific wind average (15% women). This is encouraging, but still leaves offshore wind some way behind most other industries within Taiwan.

Proportion of women in the offshore wind energy workforce

Taiwan offshore wind vs Asia pacific and Global wind



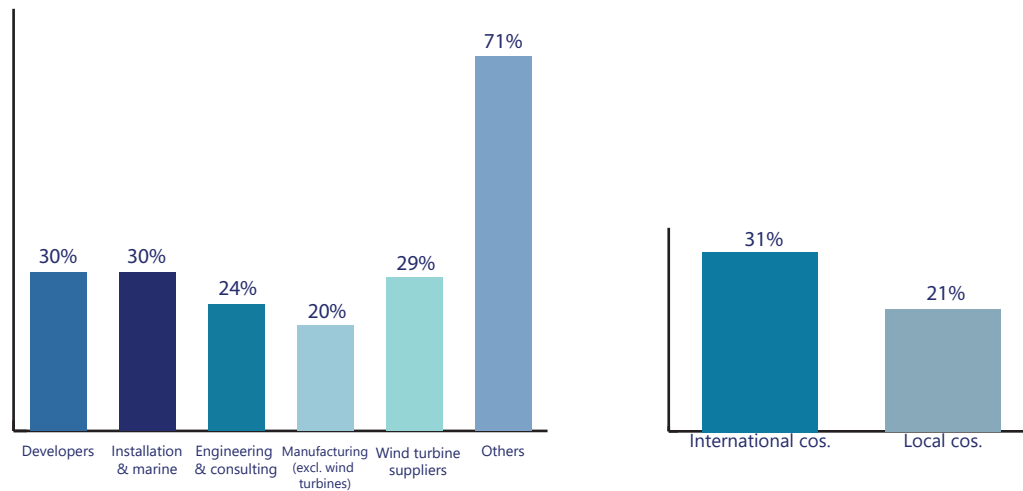
*Source: BCCT WIB survey, 2021

**Source: IRENAonline wind survey, 2019

The BCCT survey revealed differences between different sectors within the offshore wind industry. Sectors dominated by long-standing local companies, such as manufacturing and engineering & consulting, had the lowest participation of women.

The results show higher proportions of women in international companies active in Taiwan, averaging 31% female staff, compared with 21% in local companies.

Proportion of women by sector

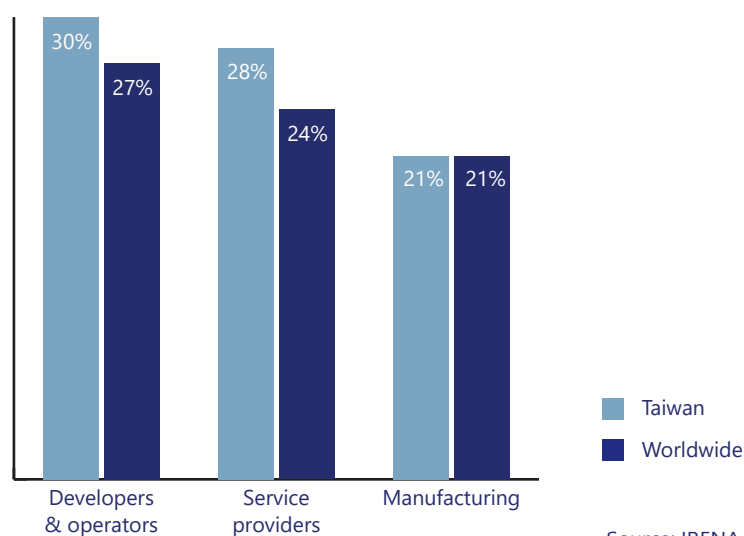


(Note the 'others' sector – 1 government agency and 1 finance company – performs best, but the sector representation was deemed too minor to form any real conclusions.)

Source: BCCT WIB survey, 2021

Looking at IRENA's 2019 wind gender study [9], it is clear that the pattern of female participation across sectors in Taiwan is in line with the global industry profile.

Proportion of women in different types of company Taiwan offshore wind vs Global wind



Source: IRENAonline wind survey, 2019

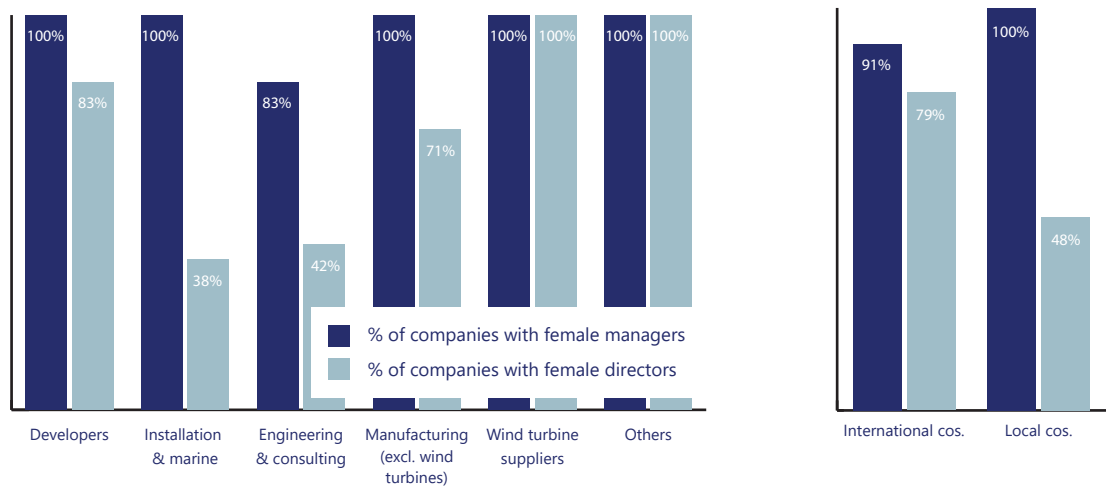
Women In Management

“Gradually, over the past ten years, you’ve started to see more women driving the process, not just doing peripheral jobs, but driving the core business. In Taiwan women are in key roles in development and senior management.”

BCCT WiB insight interviews, 2021

One of the major equality issues already noted in most industries, including energy, is the under-representation of women in senior management roles. This is less of an issue in Taiwan. The survey revealed that 95% of offshore wind companies have women line managers and 60% have female directors, many of whom are right at the top, and exercising significant influence over the development of their companies and the industry as a whole. This feature of the industry in Taiwan was commented on extensively in the in-depth interviews.

Proportion of companies surveyed with women in line management and director positions



Notes: 100% means all companies in the sector have 1 or more women in line management/ director positions

Source: BCCT WiB survey, 2021

The survey results show that only the installation & marine sector has companies that do not yet have any women in line management roles. This sector also has fewer companies with women directors. The results are somewhat expected, as the sector can be perceived as macho, with harsher working conditions that are less attractive for women.

Among engineering & consulting companies, all have women in management, as might be expected, due to the ‘office-based’ nature of the work. However, this sector performs the poorest for companies with women in director positions. It is somewhat surprising that a sector with office-based operations and a pipeline of women line managers has the least number of companies with women in director positions.

Women In Management

Some survey participants gave details on the high ratio of women in Taiwan business compared to other office locations. For example, in one developer, over 50% of management roles in Taiwan are held by women, compared with 20% throughout the international group as a whole. Meanwhile in another firm, 65% of the entire office is female, in complete contrast to the same company's offices in Korea and Japan, where women make up just 20% of the employee base.

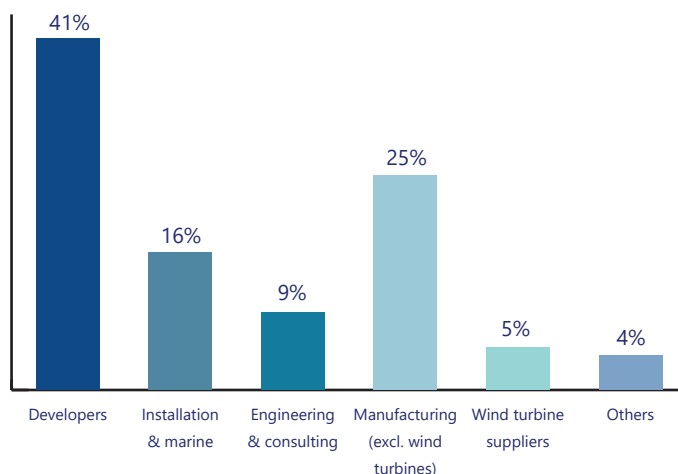
It is noticeable, too, that local enterprises are embracing female empowerment. 48% of local companies

have women directors, way ahead of the levels seen elsewhere in Asia.

The highest concentration of women in senior management is amongst developers – this sector is home to 41% of all female directors. This could be partially reflecting the maturity of the offshore industry in Taiwan, as work done by developers dominates the work in the early stages of the industry. In contrast, the engineering & consulting firms, which are also active in the early stages of industry, have only 9% of all women directors.

Which offshore wind sectors have the most women directors?

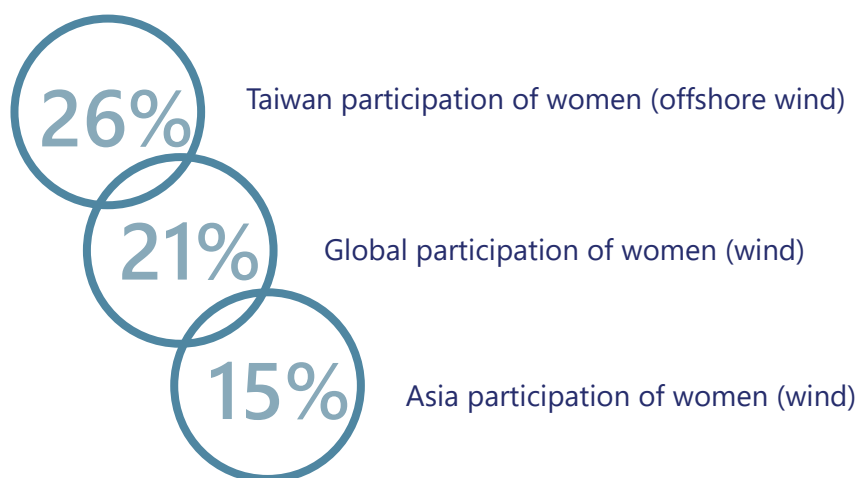
Proportion of female directors by sector



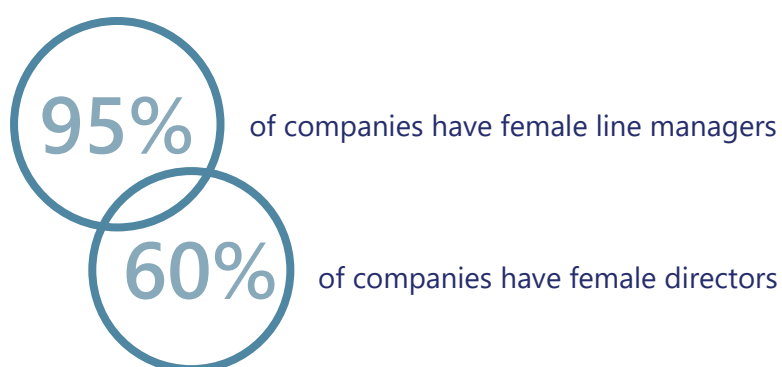
Source: BCCT WIB survey, 2021

Key Findings Of The BCCT WIB Taiwan Women In Offshore Wind Survey

There are more women working in offshore wind in Taiwan compared with the global and Asia Pacific average:



There is broad participation of women in management, especially in senior roles:



- Developers have the highest concentration of women directors
- One third of companies are pro-actively supporting their female employees
- Similar trends are seen in both local companies and international companies operating in Taiwan

Insights From Women In Leadership Roles

"We don't differentiate on gender or otherwise, but we notice an increasing pool of women with a strong desire to push themselves and succeed."

BCCT WiB insight interviews, 2021

Taiwan Has A High Social Acceptance Of Women In Leadership

Those who have been involved in renewables in Taiwan for several years commented on how the whole sector has evolved over time, particularly with women coming through into positions of influence within the bureaucracy and in semi-state organisations, reflecting the general trend in Taiwan towards greater female participation in the labour force and in managerial roles.

A decade ago, eyebrows would be raised when a female senior company representative came into an energy industry meeting, but that is rarely the case today, as many more women are now active in the sector at all levels, in contrast to the wider

Asian business environment. While female executives may still be greeted with surprise when meeting business contacts for the first time, they are usually readily accepted and are judged purely on their competence and ability, rather than their gender.

This applies even when dealing with local suppliers, manufacturers, and construction companies, which tend to be extremely traditional and "local" in their approach and way of operating, and very much male dominated. Nevertheless, they are equally ready to do business with male or female counterparts.

Taiwan Has A Strong And Diverse Female Talent Pool

The gender ratios across all types of offshore wind business in Taiwan are ahead of current industry norms, as illustrated previously.

In a complex industry like energy production there is a large number of players and stakeholders, covering a broad swathe of disciplines and activities. In Taiwan just as in other markets, staff are needed for project planning and equipment manufacturing, construction and installation, operations and maintenance of facilities and in a broad array of support areas, such as finance, information technology, administration, marketing, legal, human resources, public relations, business development, and, particularly critically, government affairs.

Companies set out to tap into Taiwan's extensive talent pool and experience showed, in many cases, that female candidates offered a better blend of

applicable skills for the designated roles than men. Senior persons interviewed did indicate that female applicants often have a lot to offer.

Several opinion leaders reported that, in disciplines such as government affairs that place demands on communication ability, on interpersonal skills, on negotiating ability, on collaboration and on patience, they have found that women often have the edge over men. The result has been an influx of 'super-talented, super-ambitious' young women into the industry, who have now progressed into more senior positions and begun to establish a nucleus of home-grown offshore wind industry specialists to carry the business forward successfully. Furthermore, importing talent from a wide range of backgrounds injects life and creativity into the business, bringing in fresh ideas, alternative thinking, and a broader perspective. Diversity fuels innovation.

Insights From Women In Leadership Roles

"I think, in general, you will find more women in renewables because of the ethics behind it. A lot of women put doing something good for the world high up on their priority list"

BCCT WiB insight interviews, 2021

Candidates Want To Have A Positive Impact On Society

Companies have been heartened by the level of interest and the quality of the talent – both men and women – seeking to join the young industry. The attraction of participating in a business that will have a positive impact on society is a strong motivator for many young people. This generation cares about Taiwan, they care about the environment and the impact humans are having on it and they are eager to make a difference. This is evident among both sexes, but some industry insiders see it even more strongly among the modern generation of women.

As a new industry, offshore wind presents a different challenge from the established sectors and, coupled with the chance to bring about change for the betterment of society, brings with it a special buzz and excitement lacking in conventional careers. Industry experts see it appealing to individuals with a strong sense of entrepreneurialism and a desire and an ability to solve problems creatively in an environment where there are few, if any, established precedents.

"The development of renewable energy is a kind of revolution because it has totally changed the energy scene in Taiwan. Offshore wind attracts someone with fresh ideas about energy, and that's why I think there are higher numbers of younger people and women"

BCCT WiB insight interviews, 2021

Offshore wind companies are recognising the need to support women, especially those with families

Many organisations in the offshore wind industry are already paying special attention to the welfare of their female employees. One third of the companies that took part in the BCCT survey, a mix of international and local, indicated that they are offering enhanced benefits and supporting initiatives beyond the statutory requirements to women, such as:

1. More flexible hours
 2. Flexible working hours and locations if they need to take care of themselves or kids
 3. Longer maternity leave
 4. Fully paid menstrual leave
 5. Longer sick leave allowance
 6. More generous holiday allowances
 7. Annual health check (above statutory)
 8. Additional healthcare coverage
 9. Childbirth subsidy and marriage subsidy
 10. Nursery room and female staff lounge
 11. Women's in-house support networks and social groups
-

REMAINING BARRIERS AND POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS



Remaining Barriers And Potential Solutions

As mentioned previously, perhaps the most encouraging point to come out of the study is that there is minimal pure gender-based prejudice in Taiwan. The opinion leaders in the survey commented that they personally had not encountered gender bias in their business dealings in recent times, observing that the atmosphere in Taiwan had opened up significantly over time.

There are, however, two significant barriers to be overcome in Taiwan to achieve true gender equality, both of which were pinpointed in the IRENA reports [9, 10], and both which feature highly in all the literature around gender equality.

Deeply embedded societal norms and cultural values

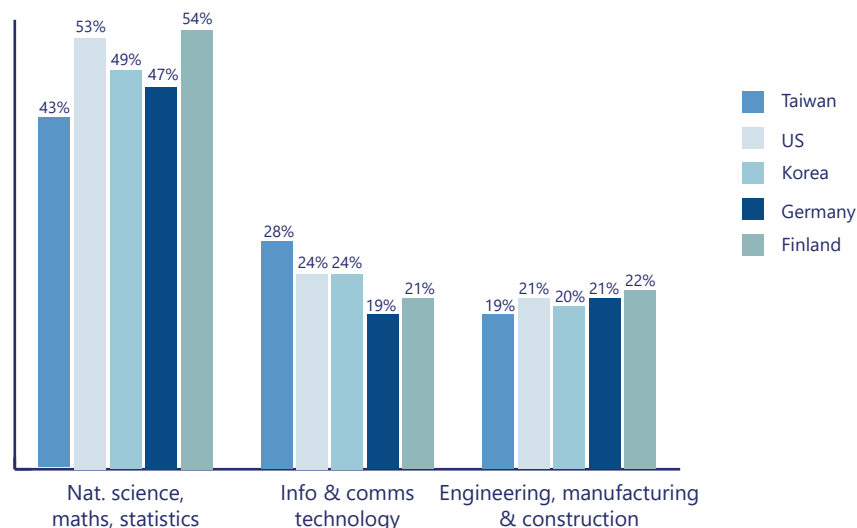
Limited female enrolment in technical and engineering education



Limited Female Enrolment In Technical And Engineering Education


In Taiwan, in contrast to the ready supply of skilled females coming into administration, finance, government affairs, marketing and other roles, few women target the technical and engineering functions, resulting in the lower percentage of women found in construction and manufacturing firms, the 'front line' of the industry. These positions are open to all, but there is a limited pipeline of female candidates emerging from the engineering and technical departments of Taiwan's universities. The so-called STEM fields of study – science, technology, engineering, and mathematics – have traditionally attracted male students, with conventional wisdom being that the jobs this type of study areas lead to are "unsuitable" for women. While equal numbers of men and women graduate from Taiwan's universities and colleges each year, male STEM graduates outnumber female, much as in other developed countries.

Ratio of female graduates in STEM disciplines 2018
International comparisons



Source: Gender At A Glance in Taiwan, 2021; Dept. of Gender Equality, Executive Yuan

This imbalance is changing slowly and the ingrained sentiment against women studying STEM subjects is weakening, but even as more young women are signing up, the potential career openings in offshore wind may not be immediately obvious or well defined in students' minds. The industry is only too well aware of this, and companies are taking steps to build their profile, and to define the career paths through offshore wind for the next generations of executives, both male and female.



"We really need to join forces to educate the public and showcase the variety of job opportunities in the offshore wind industry to attract diverse talent from different backgrounds. The industry must come up with concrete actions together with government to support the education system so more young women are attracted to the industry"

BCCT WiB insight interviews, 2021

This imbalance is changing slowly and the ingrained sentiment against women studying STEM subjects is weakening, but even as more young women are signing up, the potential career openings in offshore wind may not be immediately obvious or well defined in students' minds. The industry is only too well aware of this, and companies are taking steps to build their profile, and to define the career paths through offshore wind for the next generations of executives, both male and female.

Companies are fully cognisant of the need for action and have also identified the need to reach out as well to students' parent generation (and even grandparents), who exert considerable influence on their children's choices and have much more fixed ideas on what are, and what aren't, suitable careers.

One additional point of interest is the industry's desire for government help in broadening the appeal of STEM studies and raising the profile of the offshore wind industry. This could be challenging due to the fact that offshore wind comes under the Ministry of Economic Affairs (MoEA), with no linkage to the Ministry of Education (MOE). Cross-ministry collaboration would go a long way to removing the obstacles and upgrading the profile of offshore wind.

The lack of women coming through as STEM graduates is not unique to Taiwan. According to UNESCO [11], only 35% of STEM students in higher education, globally, are women. IRENA also highlighted this imbalance in their review of gender equality in the renewables industry [10], and this is clearly a significant obstacle all round the world.



Deeply Entrenched Societal Norms And Cultural Values

Taiwan holds traditional values on the role of women in society, although to a lesser extent than other Asian countries

This is the most intractable of all the issues around gender equality, not just in Taiwan and not just in offshore wind, although the values around family and the traditional separation of roles and duties are especially strong and enduring in Asia. Taiwan, though, has moved closer than most to recognising and even encouraging the rising desire among women to have fulfilling and rewarding careers.

The openness that runs through Taiwanese society is a feature frequently commented on and widely praised, with the highest profile

example of it being the broad support for gay pride and the legalisation of same-sex marriage. The younger generation, especially, with their extensive exposure to many different cultural influences through foreign education, travel, and the media, has embraced a whole new set of ideas, which are often at odds with established norms.

One senior executive described young Taiwanese as “extremely independent and strong minded” and young Taiwanese women as “super-talented and super-ambitious with not much holding them back!”

“Asia is very traditional when it comes to gender, and the constraints on women are deeply embedded in society, much more so than in Europe or the US. I do think, in terms of gender diversity, in terms of embracing the modern ideas on gender issues, Taiwan is more advanced than other Asian countries. It is the only Asian country with an elected woman president, which is highly symbolic for society and a huge inspiration for women”

BCCT WiB insight interviews, 2021

Women In Taiwan Can And Do Choose Not To Marry And Have Children

Modern Taiwanese women are well educated, and are casting aside the traditional taboos and responsibilities inherited from previous generations as they seek to make the most of increasing opportunities to develop fulfilling careers and generate their own economic means. As a result, they have more desire and chances to pursue personal growth at work and in their personal lives. Modern Taiwanese women have learned how to enjoy everyday life by rewarding themselves with regular treats and they invest much more time and effort in their physical condition; exercising more often to maintain their shape as well as their good health.

This lifestyle is diametrically opposite to previous generations' and has resulted in an increase in the average age at which women get married. In 1970 it was 22. Last year it was 30. Birth rates have fallen sharply, too, from 4 per mother in 1970, to 1.07 in 2020.

A well-known journalist caught the prevailing mood perfectly:

"I like reading and, well, you can't read if there are children wailing. I think our generation is more selfish. When you have children, you have to sacrifice a lot, and I don't want to do that."

Meanwhile, a 30-something accountant went even further:

"I'm not pursuing marriage, I'm financially independent, and it's more convenient to be single." Although these new values are radically different from those held by their parents and earlier generations, modern women remain firmly committed to many established moral virtues, such as loyalty/filial piety, benevolence, faith, peace, and conformity.

While these changes fly in the face of traditional mores, the openness in Taiwan society means that those who choose career over family are not judged but are accepted as readily as those who follow a more conventional path.

"How to balance work and family is very difficult. No matter how high up a woman is, she still needs to spend a lot of effort to take care of the family. So that's why I think a lot of females, if they have more interest in their career, will choose not to get married. Now our society can accept this. In Taiwan, as females we can decide. There's no pressure from society if you don't want to get married."

BCCT WiB insight interviews, 2021

Despite the rise of 'bachelorism', most women do want a family life, alongside a rewarding career (the total marriage rate declined by a mere 2.5 percentage points between 2009 and 2019). Even in modern Taiwan, this can be very challenging, because traditional stereotyping still dominates, and women are generally expected to be home keepers and nannies as well as breadwinners.

Women who do want to have a family are handicapped

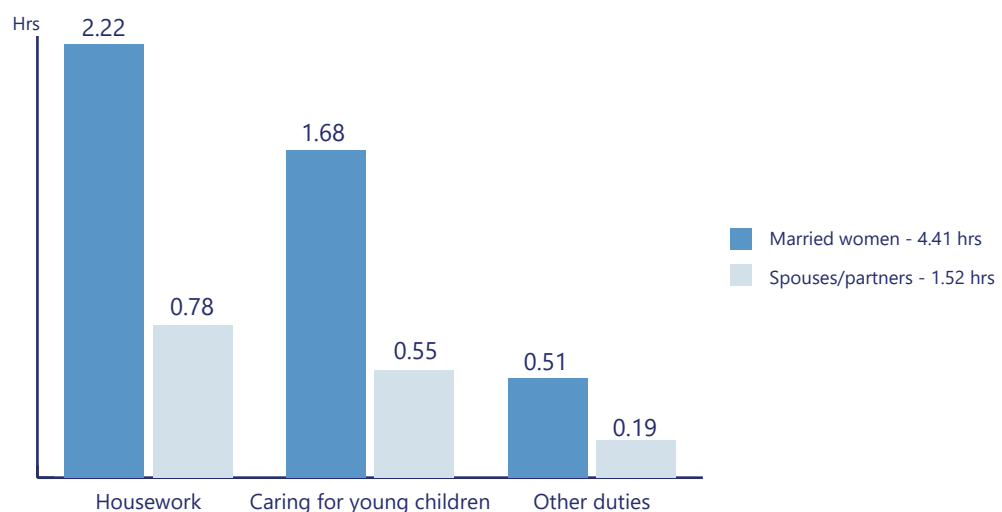
Although Taiwan's labour laws are designed to offer employees' considerable protection against unscrupulous employer exploitation, many of the mandated benefits for working parents are low compared with those set down in Europe. Furthermore, few offshore wind industry leaders interviewed are aware of any government agenda or initiatives to bring about real change in the current situation.

Taiwan still has a long way to go to reach the standards of equality in Nordic countries like Denmark and Sweden, where there is a long tradition of state provision of social welfare

and more company support for employees, coupled with a firm public belief in true sharing of family responsibilities to facilitate a more harmonious balance between family and work life for both men and women.

The impact of this is starkly illustrated in the Executive Yuan's latest Gender Equality Report [7]. Amongst other statistics, the report shows how much more time women spend each day on domestic duties than men.

Time spent each day on unpaid work



Source: Gender At A Glance in Taiwan, 2021; Dept.of Gender Equality, Executive Yuan

CLOSING REMARKS

Globally and within Taiwan, gender equality in the offshore wind industry remains far behind other sectors. Addressing this should be a priority for the offshore wind industry.

However, compared with other countries, Taiwan's offshore wind industry is indeed a leader in terms of the proportion of women and women in management.

1

Women in Taiwan's offshore wind industry are unlikely to be held back due to gender prejudice

a lack of women being educated in STEM subjects means the pool of women available for the offshore wind industry to recruit from is limited

2

3

Women in Taiwan who wish to pursue a career and have a family remain handicapped; lack of policies, coupled with social expectations, puts a lot of pressure on these women.



The education of women in technology and engineering subjects, promotion of careers in offshore wind for women, as well as policies to support working mothers are key areas for to address going forwards. It is a testament to the resilience of the women in the Taiwan offshore industry that they are overcoming these hurdles and paving the way for future generations.

The findings give rise to an interesting question – although there are more women and more senior women in the offshore wind industry in Taiwan than in other countries, are they content?

The last word can be left to Lai Pin-yu, a well-known young legislator:

"Even though people think gender equality in Taiwan is extremely progressive within Asia, that doesn't mean that Taiwan actually enjoys true equality."

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