

WOMEN IN BUSINESS CLIMATE ACTION TAIWAN





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In recent years, a growing emphasis on global climate change from the scientific community and intergovernmental organisations such as the United Nations has triggered a collective drive toward climate action across the world. Taiwan stands out in Asia as a leader in environmental policy, not only in view of its passing of climate action initiatives since 2009, but also due to the innovative measures taken by its local organisations and businesses. If we approach this issue through the lens of gender, we observe that a wealth of research indicates how a more equal representation of women in positions of decision-making and leadership has a mobilising effect on the implementation of climate action initiatives. Taiwan ranks first in gender equality in Asia and seventh worldwide according to the 2022 Gender Inequality Index (GII), though regrettably, world reports continue to illustrate that women remain absent from the majority of decision-making in most echelons of society worldwide.

In 2021, the British Chamber of Commerce in Taipei's (BCCTaipei) Women in Business Committee and the UK Renewables Committee embarked on a joint research project on the status of women in Taiwan's offshore wind industry. Drawing on the success of this report and considering the Taiwan Government's publication of the "Pathway to Net Zero by 2050" (2022), accompanied by enhanced legislation in the Climate Change Response Act, BCCTaipei's Women in Business Committee has launched a new study to investigate climate action initiatives taken by organisations based locally in Taiwan across a diversity of sectors, with an additional focus on gender representation and equality in the workplace. The key findings are set out in this report.





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



British Chamber of Commerce in Taipei

BCCTaipei 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, BCCTaipei is also active in the community in Taiwan and has donated over NT\$19 million to charities.

BCCTaipei would like to express sincere thanks to all its member and non-member organisations who responded to our survey, together with the seven industry leaders who so readily participated in the one-on-one in-depth interviews. Your contributions have been indispensable to the development of our research. Moreover, the authors are extremely grateful to our committee members and to Kathy Chan of the BCCTaipei secretariat for assisting in the realisation of 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 Women in Business Committee aims to be 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.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

2

3

5

9

15

1

2

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

GENDER AND CLIMATE ACTION

- 1.1 The Critical Role of Women in Tackling the Climate Emergency
- 1.2 Taiwan's Progress on Tackling Climate Change

GENDER EQUALITY IN TAIWAN



- 25 2.2 Climate Action Taiwan: BCCTaipei Survey 2022
- 27 2.3 Female Leadership and Retainment
- 31 2.4 Barriers and Potential Solutions
- 34 **REFERENCES**



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The global climate crisis shows little sign of being properly addressed globally. The message from the science is unequivocal – we are around seven years away from reaching the tipping point of carbon dioxide concentration in the atmosphere where an increase in global temperatures of 1.5°C above pre-industrialisation levels will be impossible to avoid. The exact impact of such a rise is unclear, but even now, with a rise of 1.1°C, we are seeing increasing numbers of more damaging extreme weather events all around the world.

The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published its sixth assessment in 2021 and left no doubt that human activity is the principal cause of climate change and that we must be prepared for more and worse weather events in every region across the globe. There will be increases in the frequency and intensity of heatwaves, storms, cyclones, typhoons, hurricanes, and droughts.

While international leaders give the appearance of listening to the science, committing their countries to a net zero future somewhere down the road, the reality is that current policies will come nowhere near capping temperature rise at 1.5°C. Estimates are that the Earth will warm by 2.0°C by 2050 and more beyond that, if current policies are not adjusted. Even the commitments made by governments amid great fanfares after COP 26 in Glasgow in 2021 will only succeed in keeping the rise to 1.8°C by 2050, with further rises to come in the following decades.

The much-heralded COP 21 in Paris in 2015 noted that greenhouse gas emissions would have to be cut by 45% by 2030 to keep global warming within bounds. The reality is that the volume of emissions has increased every year

since (with the exception of 2020, under the influence of COVID-19 emergency measures).

In reviewing the situation around climate change, many commentators from the UN Secretary General down have noted that an immediate imperative is to have women much more actively involved in policy making and implementation of environmental programmes: a sentiment echoed by President Tsai Ing-wen.

At the moment, society is 132 years away from true gender equality, according to the World Economic Forum. In terms of the climate crisis, scientific studies show that women are far more affected than men by climate change. More die in disasters, their access to relief and assistance is much less, and 80% of those displaced are women.

Inequity is also evident in terms of policy making. In the latest national plans forwarded to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, only 27% note the importance of women's participation in decision-making on climate action. Furthermore, in 2020, just 15% of ministers of environmental sectors were women.

These gender gaps are of critical concern, because there is accredited evidence that the equal participation and leadership of women make climate, environment and disaster risk governance more effective, while research from the corporate world suggests that organisations with more women at senior levels outperform firms with lower gender diversity, and that women might generally perform better in a crisis.

Based on this, there is a clear and urgent need for women to be given at least equal opportunity to contribute to tackling the rapidly deteriorating climate emergency.

Taiwan's Progress on Tackling Climate Change

In 2021, Taiwan committed to a target of net zero emissions by 2050 and then published its roadmap in March 2022, entitled "Taiwan's Pathway to Net-Zero Emissions in 2050". This sets out 12 key strategies embracing wind power, solar photovoltaic, hydrogen power, innovative energy, power systems and energy storage, energy conservation, and carbon capture, utilisation and storage.

Taiwan is in a particularly difficult situation at the moment, though, with the likelihood looming of a major energy crunch. Demand for energy has grown consistently in recent years. Electricity consumption rose by 4.5% in 2021, on the back of expanding production in manufacturing, especially in the microchip sector, following the global economic rebound from the pandemic and accelerated by businesses returning from China.

With nuclear power being phased out, transition away from coal-fired power plants underway, and solar and wind power installations behind schedule, Taiwan's challenge is how to satisfy growing demand, while also maintaining the drive to eliminate dependence on environmentally harmful sources of energy. Much of the business community is sceptical about the government's ability to balance continuity of energy supply in the face of rising demand with the bold moves required to reach the declared net zero emissions goals.

Meanwhile, many businesses have already begun implementing programmes to cut their carbon footprints. In the latest BCCTaipei survey, 80% said they are taking steps to reduce their impact on the environment, introducing changes in personal behaviour at the employee and local office level, and also implementing global company-wide policies.

Semiconductors are Taiwan's most important and most visible industry, and the leading companies in the sector are taking the lead in responding to global and local calls for action, while also acting in response to pressure from business partners elsewhere in the supply chain, and from investors.

Clearly, businesses in Taiwan are moving forward aggressively in adapting their ways of working to help address the human-induced climate crisis the world is facing. However, one particularly challenging issue is the extent to which the general public will be willing to accept enforced lifestyle changes to enable the government to meet its goals.

Studies from Pew Research show the Taiwan population recognises how grave a problem climate change is, but only 21% are willing to make "a lot of changes" to help minimise environmental damage. This is a much lower proportion than in almost all other countries Pew surveyed.



Gender Equality in Taiwan

Taiwan stands out as a leader for gender equality, 7th worldwide out of 170 countries, and 1st in Asia. In the political arena, Taiwan is far more advanced than most countries, especially in Asia, with the head of state, over 40% of legislators, and over 40% of staff in the Examination, Control and Judicial Yuans being women. Furthermore, the number of female local government heads in Taiwan reached an all-time high of 56.3% following last year's local elections.

On the downside, the proportion of cabinet members continues to reflect a huge imbalance in favour of men, even though the ratio of women has risen to almost 16% in the new Cabinet, appointed early in 2023. There are also still significant (albeit decreasing) gender gaps in terms of salary and employment levels, while women are far more likely to be the victims of domestic violence.

In the corporate sector, women are still woefully underrepresented. The proportion of female directors in public companies was a mere 14.9% in 2021. Smaller companies, by contrast, are much more likely to be headed by women – 37% of SMEs are female-led.

Data from the BCCTaipei survey found that almost two-thirds of participating companies had at least one woman director and just over half of the organisations have implemented specific initiatives to attract and retain female personnel. In many, diversity and gender inclusivity form a part of their corporate values and culture, and are considered a key element of these organisations' future growth.

Most of the policies address pregnancy and childcare issues, such as extended and/or generously paid maternity leave beyond the government requirements, childcare provisions, as well as breastfeeding facilities on-site and/or pregnancy care packages. Although many of these initiatives appear to cater to the needs of moth-

ers at the workplace, it is striking that only a small proportion offer female-oriented training or cooperation with external business groups aimed at empowering the next generation of female leaders. These programmes tend to be limited to multinational companies and provided throughout their global network, with the aim of cultivating senior female leaders.

Female representation levels were recognised to be quite different between industries. Emerging industries and more unorthodox company structures like start-ups are typically more equal, as they do not come with an implicit gender bias in recruitment, and therefore tend to be more progressive by nature. Consumer goods, services, pharmaceuticals and consulting sectors were noted as having better female representation.

Three-fifths of survey respondents felt that there were no barriers or obstacles to equal gender representation in the workplace in Taiwan. Others took the opposite view.

Some indicated that societal and family expectations are a huge barrier, with parents or in-laws pressuring women to prioritise childcare and domestic duties over their careers in accordance with traditional family values.

There is also lingering prejudice when women apply for jobs, with some employers asking female candidates if they intend to have children in the future.

A further barrier is the lack of women choosing certain fields of education, such as Information & Communications Technology (ICT) or the Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) disciplines, leading to a dearth of female talent in key industries. Female representation in the workplace should improve, provided that a greater proportion of women and girls can be convinced to pursue these high-demand subjects, but the transformation inevitably will not happen overnight.

GENDER AND CLIMATE ACTION



1.1 The Critical Role of Women in Tackling the Climate Emergency

We need more women environment ministers, business leaders and presidents and prime ministers. They can push countries to address the climate crisis, develop green jobs and build a more just and sustainable world.

António Guterres, UN Secretary-General



"If man's energy needs are someday supplied by nuclear power instead of fossil fuels, [the] increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide will eventually cease, one hopes before it has had any measurable ecological or climatological effect."

In 1972, there was still implicit faith in nuclear energy. Today, nuclear is still seen as relatively clean energy, but the focus has moved onto renewable fuels. Nevertheless, the message from "Limits To Growth" was very clear – stop pumping carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Unfortunately, in 1972, the world was in no mood to listen. Now, half a century on, we are already past the point where greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions can be prevented from creating severe damage to the global climate. Average global temperatures are now 1.1°C above pre-industrialisation levels, and the scientific community is seemingly convinced that the increasing number and increasing severity of extreme weather events are the direct result of human influence on the climate. 2022 was a particularly bad year in many parts of the world. Some examples:

In Pakistan monsoon rainfall caused The Horn of Africa is experiencing the longest and flash floods and landslides, submerging most severe drought on record, leaving millions of 1/3 of the country, destroying 1.7 people at risk of starvation; Somalia, Kenya and million peoples' homes and displacing Ethiopia are experiencing a deteriorating food over 32 million. security crisis. Portugal, France, Italy and Romania Brutal heatwaves in India and were severely impacted by wildfires, Pakistan prior to the onset of as extreme heat, dry conditions and the monsoon decimated the wind created ideal conditions for fire. crucial crop-growing season. The drought in Europe also almost dried up larges stretches of key transport arteries along the Rhine and Danube rivers, and severely impacted crop yields across the continent. Powerful storms swept across Japan, southern Africa, the Caribbean, the Philippines and North America.

The Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), published in 2021², observed that:

"Human-induced climate change is already affecting many weather and climate extremes in every region across the globe...

Many changes in the climate system become larger in direct relation to increasing global warming. They include increases in the frequency and intensity of hot extremes, marine heatwaves, heavy precipitation, and, in some regions, agricultural and ecological droughts; [and] an increase in the proportion of intense tropical cyclones."



Not only are these events becoming more frequent, but they are also more intense – heatwaves are hotter, storms are producing more rain, and droughts are more prolonged.

According to the IPCC report, even under the most optimistic scenario where GHGs are immediately cut back, global temperatures will rise by 1.5°C by 2040 and will continue to rise beyond that. Extreme weather events are one, highly visible consequence of human-induced climate change, but the lasting impacts of rising temperatures are far more damaging for the entire ecosystem of the Earth with the potential for making large areas of the planet uninhabitable. Currently 3.3-3.6 billion people (i.e. around 40-45% of the world's population) live in areas that are highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. The IPCC report notes that the hot temperature zones are moving ever further towards the poles, bringing even more people under the potential influence of lethal levels of extreme heat. 2022's summer heatwave in Europe provides a glance into the future, with record high temperatures in many countries, including the first ever reading over 40°C in the UK

In a follow-up report, published in April 2022³, the IPCC ends its 'Summary for Policymakers' with this stark warning:

"The cumulative scientific evidence is unequivocal: climate change is a threat to human well-being and planetary health. Any further delay in concerted anticipatory global action on adaptation and mitigation will miss a brief and rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a liveable and sustainable future for all."

On the surface, there are some positive signs that the world is taking notice, at least in terms of commitments. Currently, 137 countries, which are collectively responsible for 83% of emissions, have pledged and, in some cases, even legislated, to achieve net zero emissions in the coming decades.⁴

The problem is, though, that we are continuing to pump enormous amounts of carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄) and nitrous oxide (N₂O) into the atmosphere. In 2020, according to World Data Lab's "World Emissions Clock", GHG emissions totalled 56.0 gigatonnes⁵; in 2021, this jumped to 57.5 gt and in 2022, it reached the highest level ever, at 57.8 gt..

In 2015, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties in Paris (COP 21) recognised that achieving the goal of limiting temperature rise to "well below 2°C" would require annual GHG emissions to be cut by around 45% by 2030, on the way to zero GHG emissions around 2050. Instead, however, with the exception of 2020, the nations of the world have increased emissions every single year⁶.

Furthermore, demand for fossil fuels has not yet peaked. McKinsey's "Global Energy Perspective 2022"⁷ predicts that, while coal demand has not yet started to decline from its 2013 peak, most recently because of the war in Ukraine, it will start heading downwards, followed by oil from 2025, but demand for natural gas will not peak until 2035.

There is a significant gap between what current policies and strategies will deliver and the pledges made by the world's governments. Both scenarios, though, will be some way from limiting temperature rise to 1.5°C, as Chart 2 shows⁸.



The "implementation gap" between the words of the world's governments ("Commitments" in Chart 2) and their actions ("Current policies") further emphasises the urgent need for change globally, with UN Secretary-General Guterres' words cutting through loud and clear, his sentiments endorsed by President Tsai Ing-wen as she addressed the Women's Power Night reception in March 2022:

66 With our creativity and resilience, women can be powerful agents of change. Only with the participation of women can we hope to develop the solutions needed to address climate change, realize climate justice, and ensure sustainable development.

Although half of the world's population is female, humankind is far away from a state of gender equality. Despite apparent progress towards resolving the imbalance, the World Economic Forum's 2022 "Global Gap" report⁹ calculates that it will take society another 132 years to achieve full parity between men and women.

The inequities are everywhere and very obvious, nowhere more so than in relation to the climate crisis. At the most fundamental level, there is abundant evidence and scientific studies which show that women are far more affected than men by the results of climate change - deforestation, land degradation, desertification, growing water scarcity and inadequate sanitation. Entrenched discrimination and unequal access for women to land and natural resources, finance, technology, knowledge, mobility and other assets constrain their ability to respond to environmental crises. Women's survival rates are lower in disasters, as is their access to relief and assistance, compromising their livelihoods and prospects for recovery¹⁰. Studies also show that 80% of those displaced by climate change are women¹¹.

Drawing on multiple data sources, the report of sion making on climate action.

the Secretary-General of the UN's Economic and Social Council for the Commission on the Status of Women, published in January 2022¹⁰, highlighted the lack of attention given to women in various aspects of policy and decision making in the context of the climate emergency.

The report notes that national legal and policy frameworks on climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction often overlook the rights and needs of women. Only one third of 192 national energy frameworks from 137 countries include some gender considerations. Instead, women are described as vulnerable groups, occasionally as stakeholders, but rarely as agents of change or decision makers with the same rights as men.

Governments update the UNFCCC on their climate change mitigation and adaptation plans regularly. The latest plans showed some progress in references to gender or women, but gender mainstreaming is still too often conspicuously absent: only 24% of 120 countries identify national gender equality institutions as part of climate change governance, while only 27% note the importance of women's participation in decision making on climate action.

Furthermore, the participation and leadership of women fall well short of gender parity or of reaching a critical mass to influence environmental decisions and policies.



In international climate meetings under the UNFCCC in 2021,

49% of delegates and 39% of heads or deputy heads of delegation were women, a reasonably high level of female representation.

However, at the national level, in 2020, just **15%** of ministers of environmental sectors were women, a rise of a mere 3 points from 2015, while the parliamentary representation of women grew from 22% to 25%.

These gender gaps are of critical concern. On the one hand, it is impossible to justify morally denying half of the world population equal rights to determine the future of our species. On the other hand, there is accredited evidence that the equal participation and leadership of women make climate, environment and disaster risk governance more effective. Two academic studies are widely quoted in demonstrating the additional impetus women policymakers can provide in bringing about substantive change.



1. "Gender and climate change:

Astghik Mavisakalyan and Yashar Tarverdi (2017) Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre Working Paper, 17/04, Perth: Curtin University.¹²

2. "Do women make a difference? Analysing environmental attitudes and actions of Members of the European Parliament"

Lena Ramstetter & Fabian Habersack (2020) Environmental Politics, 29:6, 1063-1084, DOI: 10.1080/09644016.2019. 1609156¹³

The first paper examines female political representation across a large number of national parliaments and concludes that higher female representation leads countries to adopt more stringent climate change policies, which lead to reductions in GHG emissions.

The second study looked in depth at attitudes and behaviour among Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) across the sixth and seventh parliamentary sessions (2004-2009 and 2009-2014). The European Parliament is the only multinational parliament in the world and offered the authors a good base for investigation because of its relatively high proportion of female legislators. A survey of MEPs' attitudes revealed no difference in the expressed levels of concern for the environment between men and women. However, detailed examination of MEPs' voting behaviour showed that women were significantly more likely to support environmental legislation than male counterparts in the fight to advance environmental protection.

A further striking example of the potent influence women can have harks back to the preparations for COP 21 and the landmark 'Paris Agreement' of 2015. A group of around 30 prominent female lawyers, diplomats, financiers, and activists, spearheaded by Farhana Yamin, Tessa Tennant, and Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC, came together in Scotland to thrash out the key elements of what became the Paris Agreement. At the heart of their deliberations was the emergence of the concept of net zero, which now forms the basis of national laws, energy transition strategies and business plans around the world.

It is not just for governments to take on the responsibility for tackling change. A Eurobarometer survey, commissioned by the European Union and released in 2021, showed that the majority of the 26,000+ EU citizens interviewed felt that big companies and industry, as well as their national governments and the EU, are responsible for taking action to protect the environment¹⁴. Here too, though, there is huge scope for greater female involvement, both for the good of businesses, but also, critically, for the Some rationale for the better performance of benefit of the environment.

There is a growing body of research that suggests that organisations with a higher representation of women at senior levels outperform firms with lower gender diversity. McKinsey has been tracking this issue for a number of years and the latest report in 2020 ('Diversity Wins')¹⁵ highlights the case.

The study found that companies in the top quartile for gender diversity on executive teams were 25% more likely to have above-average profitability than companies in the lowest quartile, up from 15% in McKinsey's original 2014 analysis, which showed that the greater the proportion of women executives, the greater the differential performance compared with those with less female representation.

It is a sad fact, however, that progress towards higher diversity has been slow, with comparisons across McKinsey's global database showing a mere single point increase in women on executive teams from 14% to 15% in the two years up to the latest report, and over a third of companies still not having any women as part of their executive teams. This pattern is manifested across all industries and in most countries.

companies with women in senior positions is offered by two articles in Harvard Business Review, both contributed by Jack Zenger and Joseph Folkman^{16, 17}. Their corporate research indicated that women in leadership positions are perceived just as or more competent than their male counterparts on 17 of the 19 skills that differentiate excellent leaders from average or poor ones.

Repeating the analysis during phase 1 of the COVID-19 pandemic, Zenger and Folkman found that women leaders were again rated significantly more positively than men and that the differential was even more pronounced, giving rise to the thought that women might generally perform better in a crisis. This was certainly a theory being discussed during the early stages of the pandemic, when women-led countries seemed to respond more effectively to the crisis.

Based on the foregoing, there is a clear and urgent need for women to be given at least equal opportunity to contribute to tackling the rapidly deteriorating climate emergency, exactly as António Guterres suggested. One senior business leader in Taiwan summed up the situation this way:

"From the standpoint of diversity on a global scale, having a group of leaders sitting round a table that is truly representative of the world, having it split 50:50, I think we would come up with different answers to the problems we have today, that could possibly generate a much better outcome than what we've had so far...And you take it from that scale at the macro level of the big countries and the leaders of those countries being represented equally [in gender terms] and you pull that down all the way to the community level, then you would probably see a vastly different approach to things that could be much better than we've got today."

1.2 Taiwan's Progress on Tackling Climate Change

Taiwan has been one of the pioneers in Asia in implementing policies designed to transition to a low-carbon and ultimately net-zero GHG emissions environment. Initial steps were taken in the early 2000s, then, in 2009, the Legislative Yuan passed a renewable energy act aimed at promoting the use of renewable energy, boosting energy diversification, and helping to decrease greenhouse gases.

Policymaking started gathering pace after Tsai Ing-wen was elected president in 2016, promising to eliminate nuclear power and transition to safer, cleaner sources of energy, notably solar and offshore wind. There has been considerable progress, with the creation of wind farms in the Taiwan Strait and the addition of solar capacity to the energy mix.

It has not been trouble-free progress, though. While polls show strong public support for green energy, some solar and wind projects face negative local sentiment and opposition from environmentalists. At the same time, differing points of view within the central government and between local and central government have been an ongoing obstacle for development and COVID-19 added an extra layer of complexity. These roadblocks have inhibited progress towards the government's original goal of having 20% of the energy supply supplied by renewables by 2025. This has since been revised down to 15%, but even that may be optimistic.

Following the lead of many others, Taiwan committed to a target of net-zero emissions by 2050, and the government has written this commitment into law by converting the 2015 Greenhouse Gas Reduction and Management Act into the "Climate Change Response Act". The government also published "Taiwan's Pathway to Net-Zero Emissions in 2050" in March 2022.

According to the National Development Council (NDC), one of the principal sponsors of the policy¹⁸,

"Taiwan's 2050 net-zero emissions pathway is based on the 4 major transition strategies of "Energy Transition", "Industrial Transition", "Lifestyle Transition", and "Social Transition", as well as the 2 governance foundations of "Technology R&D" and "Climate Legislation" and is supplemented by "12 Key Strategies". It aims to develop action plans for key areas of expected growth with regard to energy, industrial, and life transition to implement net zero transition goals." The 12 strategies embrace wind power, solar photovoltaic, hydrogen power, innovative energy, power systems and energy storage, energy conservation, and carbon capture, utilisation and storage, and are directed in five major areas, as shown in the table below.

Sectors & Objectives	Key Goals
BUILDINGS Improve exterior design, energy efficiency & energy efficient appliances.	100% of new buildings & over 85% of existing buildings are nearly zero-emis- sion by 2050.
TRANSPORT Change travel habits, reduce demand for transportation; switch to elec- tro-mobility.	All urban buses, official cars electric by 2030; 100% of car & scooter sales electric by 2040.
INDUSTRY Improve energy efficiency, fuel switch- ing, circular economy & innovative technologies. Widely replace equipment in industry - 80-90% in steel industry, 100% in textile industry.	Fully adopt low-carbon processes – ironmaking using hydrogen energy, recycle CO2 to synthesize hydrocarbon fuel etc. (2050)
ELECTRICITY Scale up renewable energy, develop new energy technologies, energy stor- age, and power grid upgrade.	No new coal-fired power plants (2025); 60% of electricity generation from renewables (2050)
NEGATIVE EMISSION TECHNOLOGIES	Installation of CCUS in coal & gas-fired power plants (2040).

Table 1: Pathway to Net Zero Emissions by 2050

Source: Taiwan's Pathway to Net Zero Emissions, NDC. March 2022¹⁸

The Pathway documents Taiwan's vision as to how the government plans to reach its declared goal for tackling climate change. Key elements of the programme have been in development for a number of years, albeit slowly, such as investment in offshore wind (OSW), establishing Taiwan as the lead market in Asia and a potential hub for the international OSW community, alongside the Tsai administration's commitment to phase out nuclear energy.

Chart 3 below emphasises just how much of Taiwan's current electricity production is still dependent on fossil fuels – 81% in 2021, 7 points higher than it was in 2010, albeit with the slightly less-polluting natural gas on the increase, while coal has dropped slightly. Renewables, though, are still not even half of the amount they are expected to contribute in 2025.



By 2050, the government plans to have decar- With nuclear power being phased out, coal- and bonised the energy sector completely and envisages a totally different energy mix, with renewables generating 60-70% of electricity, hydrogen 9-12%, and gas, offset by carbon capture, utilisation, and storage (CCUS), 20-27%¹⁸. Coal, oil and nuclear will be out of the picture completely and 50% of energy will be sourced locally, compared with almost total reliance on imports at the moment.

All countries are facing significant challenges in achieving their emission reduction targets, but Taiwan is in a particularly difficult situation at the moment, with the likelihood looming of a major energy crunch. Taiwan has seen demand for energy increase consistently in recent years. Electricity consumption rose by 4.5% in 2021, on the back of expanding production in the manufacturing sector, following the global economic followed by 1.7% a year untill 2050). Commonrebound from the pandemic and accelerated by businesses returning from China. Chip manufac- confidence in being able to meet demand and turing has been especially vibrant, but the industry requires vast quantities of electricity. In 2020, for example, TSMC alone accounted for 6% of energy supply further, making an energy crisis total energy consumption and this share is projected to grow to over 12% in 2025, as new chip facilities come on stream.

gas-fired power plants increasingly unacceptable in a world heading towards zero emissions, and solar and wind power installations behind schedule, Taiwan is presented with a major conundrum - how to satisfy growing demand, while also maintaining the drive to eliminate dependence on environmentally harmful sources of energy.

According to Commonwealth Magazine¹⁹, The Ministry of Economic Affairs (MOEA) was relatively sanguine about the situation in May 2021, anticipating almost a perfect match between supply and demand (i.e. with little buffer of energy reserves) in 2023, but projecting from 2024 onwards a relatively healthy buffer of around 15%, despite continuing increases in demand (in the 'Pathway', the government forecast 2.6% annual increases up untill 2030, wealth Magazine is not convinced by the MOEA's speculates that the closure of the last remaining nuclear facility in 2025 will increase pressure on even more likely.

It seems that a large section of the business community is similarly sceptical. The American Chamber of Commerce's Business Climate Survey, released early in 2023, showed that 74% of companies were concerned about the sufficiency of Taiwan's power supply and 68% were concerned about the availability of green energy, both measures registering a significant jump since 2021²⁰.

Participants in the BCCTaipei survey also expressed concerns about Taiwan's ability to balance the need to ensure continuity of energy supply in the face of rising demand, with the bold moves required to reach the declared net zero emissions goals.

There was broad recognition and approval for the government's drive to decarbonise but this was accompanied by a widespread feeling that the 'Pathway' declaration must be supported by decisive, science-based, comprehensive policies. The consensus is that Taiwan is not yet taking the radical action that the climate situation demands. The two comments below highlight the observations made in the interviews.

We're not yet going in the right direction. I'm really happy to see renewable energy in terms of some solar, offshore wind and onshore wind, but I've also seen Taiwan really ramping up the coal and gas and it seems like you have one hand working against the other.

> The key to solving global warming and carbon reduction is the energy policy and strategy. In Taiwan, unfortunately, the policy and strategy is not formed by science or engineering. It was formed by politicians and, as they say, the horse is running away, off track. When you form the policy, you have to be very clear about the updated technology and the limits of technology...For 2050, at the top, the decision makers, they have to be clear in their minds what sort of structure for the energy [sector] they need to set up. I think that is the core issue.

Other comments questioned whether the administration's firm non-nuclear stance should be abandoned and emphasised the critical importance of engaging both industry and the general public, to ensure a unified societal response to the climate emergency. Many businesses have already begun implementing programmes to cut their carbon footprints, as part of their responsibility to be good corporate citizens. In the survey, 80% of companies said they are taking steps to reduce their impact on the environment and 52% added that they have introduced initiatives in line with the Greenhouse Gas Reduction & Management Act/Climate Change Response Act (Chart 4).



Company actions encompass both changes in personal behaviour at the employee and local office level and also the implementation of global company-wide policies, as these quotations from survey respondents illustrate:

"We continue to work hard to do more to protect the environment, often in partnership with others, with the aim of a net zero impact on climate and a net positive impact on nature by 2030 across our entire value chain...We've set clear and measurable targets to help achieve these goals...[In the Taiwan office] we work to make sure there's no waste in the office space: think twice before you print, implement Adobe Sign for both internal and external documents, and reducing carbon emissions from travel by requiring all meetings to have virtual options."

"[We have] internal policies locally for staff to minimise the environmental impact of operations e.g. travel, events, procurement. HQ also has [global] policies and guidance."

"Although [as a service organisation] the company is not a heavy consumer of energy, it is dedicated to energy conservation and carbon reduction by implementing measures such as installing LED lighting and solar panels, optimising energy efficiency plus maintaining the office's Green Building certificate. In 2021, [we] advanced the paperless office policy through adopting the official electronic document management system. The measure reduced the paper usage by 2.67 million A4 sheets, which is equivalent to a decrease of 19,217kg CO2 emissions." "1. A priority is green buildings for our offices: currently, the offices in Taipei, Taichung and Kaohsiung are all green buildings.

2. Promote paperless policy: develop internal online platforms, adopt electronic signatures, encourage staff to reduce printing as much as possible, and reduce per capita paper consumption by 29% in 2021 compared to the previous year.

3. Lights out policy: encourage staff to reduce overtime work at night and save electricity."

Semiconductors are Taiwan's most important and most visible industry, and the leading companies in the sector are taking the lead in responding to global and local calls for action. Foxconn has announced a series of climate-related commitments, including achieving net zero GHG emissions by 2050. The company aims to align its climate-focused actions with the proposals of Climate Action 100+, a global investor-led initiative that seeks to ensure the world's largest corporate greenhouse gas emitters take necessary action on climate change.

Foxconn has further implemented a number of environmental programmes within the business in the following areas:



Waste water and waste gas management and improved water management.



Prioritising the use of environmentally-friendly chemicals, and enhancing the safety and hygiene of chemical use, transportation and storage.



Energy efficiency improvement through replacing high energy-consuming equipment and energy-saving processes.



Increasing the proportion of clean energy use by means of self-built and acquired solar power plant capacity and renewable energy procurement.



Low-carbon product development.

Meanwhile, TSMC has pledged that a quarter of the electricity it uses worldwide will be generated from renewable sources by 2030 and the company inked a 20-year deal here in Taiwan with Ørsted to buy all of the offshore wind power from Ørsted's Taiwan Offshore Wind developments. TSMC also plans to partner with multinational corporations on research into carbon capture and storage technologies. At the same time, TSMC has "strongly urged" its more than 700 suppliers to embrace green supply concepts and asked vendors who supply equipment for its advanced process operations to reduce their energy consumption by 20% by 2030.

TSMC and UMC are two of 23 Taiwan companies to have joined the RE100 alliance, which brings together large businesses across the world to drive climate action and promote zero carbon emissions, with a commitment to use 100% renewable electricity by 2050.

Companies are also acting in response to pressure from business partners elsewhere in the supply chain and from investors. Apple has announced plans for its manufacturing supply chain and product life cycle to become carbon neutral by 2030, thereby requiring all of its Taiwan partners and suppliers to take similar steps.

Clearly, businesses in Taiwan are moving forward aggressively in adapting their ways of working to help address the human-induced climate crisis the world is facing. Building a partnership between government and business, therefore, may be reasonably straightforward. However, effecting the required social and lifestyle transition among the general population may prove more challenging.

The government recognises the criticality of establishing an ongoing "dialogue with citizens", for the purposes of...

- ...agreeing common goals
- ...ensuring collective responsibility
- ...driving collective action¹⁸



Research studies by the Pew Center^{21, 22}, conducted in 2019 and 2021 showed that the Taiwan population recognises how grave a problem climate change is, with a very real possibility that it will cause them personal harm. And the majority (60%) feel that the government is not doing enough to address the situation. On the other hand, there seems to be a limit as to the amount of lifestyle change people are prepared to accept – only 21% say they are willing to make "a lot of changes" to ensure that environmental damage is minimised. Most other countries are more open to personal disruption. Across the 15 nations where the study was undertaken, only the Japanese were more resistant to change than Taiwan.

In an article in Taiwan Insight in 2021²³, Professor Ming-sho Ho from the Department of Sociology at National Taiwan University and Director of the Research Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences, Ministry of Science and Technology, explored this apparent lack of readiness to accommodate much change in lifestyle or standard of living, and highlighted both a high degree of public ignorance about Taiwan's energy environment and government policy and also a deeply held sense that cheap energy is almost a God-given right as major hurdles to be overcome if the goal of a carbonless economy is to be realised.

Yearly research studies from the Taiwan Institute for Sustainable Energy revealed that Taiwanese generally know little about the country's dependence on energy imports and the primary sources of electrical power. Furthermore, despite the obvious concern about the climate in the Pew Center research, Academia Sinica found, in 2019, that climate change was only the fifth most pressing concern in people's minds, behind a number of perceived threats from the immediate surroundings, such as food tainted with toxic chemicals, air pollution and road safety. Of course, those results are from 2019, so, as the effects of climate change become more obvious, it is reasonable to expect that individuals' atti-

tudes will change. Nevertheless, there is clearly a responsibility for those in power to mount a sustained campaign of public education around all of the key issues so that people are fully and properly informed. Without this basis of knowledge, the government will be hard pressed to achieve the sense of collective responsibility so essential to the process of reform.

Professor Ho also questioned whether Taiwan's citizens are willing to share the cost of transitioning to the carbon-neutral future. Even though Taipower distributes electricity to consumers at below-cost price, policymakers will most likely run scared of even hinting at the need for price hikes, fearing the inevitable consumer backlash. Previous attempts to raise energy prices have caused public outrage and resulted in big drops in administrations' popularity. Hamstrung by this inability to fund energy transition through realistic pricing, Taiwan's ability to implement its net zero strategy may well be compromised.

In conclusion, Professor Ho questions to the extent to which "Taiwan's citizens are ready for a substantial readjustment of their lifestyle for the sake of the earth's future," a concern that the Pew Center's research findings also seem to reinforce.



GENDER EQUALITY IN TAIWAN



Overview

In the long and arduous journey towards gender equality, Taiwan stands out as a leader not only in the East Asia region, but also globally. Using metrics developed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) for its Global Inequality Index (GII), the Executive Yuan's Department of Gender Equality (DGE) has calculated that Taiwan ranks 7th worldwide out of 170 countries measured, and 1st in Asia¹. When compared alongside highly developed OECD countries, Taiwan even ranks higher than, for example, Germany and Iceland². By another metric, in 2021 Taiwan was ranked 38th for gender equality according to the Gender Gap Index (GGI)². In comparison to its neighbours, Taiwan outperforms Japan, South Korea and Mainland China in terms of women's economic participation and opportunity², as well as political empowerment, in part due to the election of a female president and the growing female presence in the Legislative Yuan. In a similar vein, Taiwan's gender pay gap appears less pronounced than in the USA, Japan and South Korea, having narrowed from 17.9% in 2009 to 15.8% in 2021¹.

Whereas gender in the population as a whole is evenly balanced, Taiwan's workforce shows a distinct male skew. 66.9% of men are working, compared to 51.5% of women¹, although this proportion for women has been increasing gradually over the last decade³. If we break this figure down, we find that the majority of women working in Taiwan are aged between 25 and 39, however participation in the workforce declines steadily after this age, with much lower engagement among women over 50 than in other major countries². Nevertheless, the statistics reveal change in other domains of social life: as of 2020, 49.0% of women vs. 51.2% of men are married, representing a reduction of 2.2% and 1.4% respectively compared to 2010²; meanwhile, women are currently having children below the population replacement level, with the average

number of children per woman being 0.98 in 2021⁴, and the average age of first-time mothers being 31.2 years in 2021⁵. As is typical in many industrialised countries, in Taiwan women outlive men in general with an average life expectancy of 84.3 and 77.7 years for women and men respectively⁶. Although the statistics about childbearing and marriage may suggest a positive transformation in respect to gender equality, other areas of public life remain problematic: in education, as of 2018 the ratio of male-to-female higher education graduates was almost 2:12; in addition, with respect to the issue of personal safety, in 2020 women represented 80.4% of reported sexual assault victims, as well as 80.2% of documented incidences of relationship-based domestic violence².

In view of these statistics, it should be noted that there has been a concerted effort in many spheres of Taiwan to march forwards towards gender equality, which can be seen from the upper and lower strata of society. From the political domain, on 08 March 2022, President Tsai Ing-wen inaugurated Taiwan Gender Equality Week with Women's Power Night, wherein one of the key foci was the promotion of climate action through women⁷; a week later, on 15 March 2022, Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and the Foundation for Women's Rights Promotion & Development jointly held the online Climate Justice Leaders' Seminar in response to the United Nations' (UN) 66th session of the Commission on the Status of Women⁸. From another stratum of social life, there are also many examples of grassroot initiatives led by women, such as the renewable energy project spearheaded by Taiwan's indigenous Skatang tribe where two-thirds of the community are women⁹, or the social enterprise and green energy provider Green Profit Sharing and Green Energy Charity founded by Chen Hui-ping¹⁰.

2.2 Climate Action Taiwan: BCCTaipei Survey 2022

Drawing upon both the success of BCCTaipei's Women in the Taiwan Offshore Wind Industry (2021) report and the above-mentioned research, BCCTaipei launched an empirical inquiry to investigate and acknowledge the innovative ways through which Taiwan-based organisations from diverse sectors are contributing towards Taiwan's commitment to achieve 'net zero' emissions by the year 2050, in accordance with the goals laid out in COP 26 and the 'Climate Change Response Act'. As a project led by the Women in Business (WiB) Committee, this topic was approached through the lens of women in the workplace, which incorporated an additional focus on the status of female leadership in key industries. With this, we set out to gather data and achieve cross-sectoral representation from small, medium and large organisations from the private and non-profit sectors, from both international companies based in Taiwan and local Taiwanese organisations. We believe that our research is closely aligned not only with Taiwan's national interests in terms of climate action and gender equality, but also the broader objectives of COP 26 and the values of the U.K. Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). Considering the shared ambitions between Taiwan and the UK, BCCTaipei hopes that this research will help strengthen Taiwan's all-round approach to climate action.

Data collection methods

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used in our data collection, involving a structured questionnaire sent to BCCTaipei members and a large number of non-member organisations operating in Taiwan.

Survey

The survey ran from June to mid-July 2022, and consisted of ten questions aimed at gathering information on organisation size, female leadership and climate action in Taiwan. First, we elicited data on the number of employees in Taiwan, and the number of women in senior leadership roles (managers, directors and/or above), and an open-response question about any specific initiatives being taken to attract and retain female staff, followed by another open-response question about the obstacles to gender equality in Taiwan. Second, we inquired as to whether these participating organisations had implemented any plans or initiatives in line with the 'Greenhouse' Gas Reduction & Management Act' (or the 'Climate Change Response Act'), asking respondents to elaborate on any measures taken to reduce their impact on the environment. In total, 75 responses were received from private and non-profit organisations based in a broad range of industries, including automobile production, fashion and apparel, healthcare, hospitality and F&B, international trade and development, the legal industry, management consulting, marketing, advertising and public relations, mechanical and industrial engineering, oil and energy, pharmaceuticals and biotechnology, renewables and the environment, financial services, social enterprise, business and logistics services, and supply, distribution and wholesale.



In-depth interviews

Once the survey had closed, interviewees were selected from among the respondents, and selected based on their self-reported climate action initiatives, the gender distribution within their organisation, and their insights into existing obstacles to gender equality in Taiwan. In these interviews, participants were asked to expand on various aspects of their survey responses, which predominately included: the perceived effectiveness of their organisation's current initiatives to retain and attract female employees; prospective initiatives which they feel would be beneficial; the current status of gender equality in Taiwan; whether business sectors differ in the extent of their success in regards to gender equality; and the government's role in moving the process forward. With an explicit emphasis on climate action, we also inquired into the role of women in driving the process of climate action and gathered perspectives on how well they believed Taiwan is doing in reaching the goal of 'net zero'.



2.3 Female Leadership and Retainment

General trends in Taiwan demonstrate that female leadership is on the increase, however the move towards equal gender representation has not been as quick as some would have anticipated: since 2013, the proportion of female directors in public companies has grown by only 3.1 percentage points, and, in 2021, women still accounted for only **14.9%** of the total¹.

In the political arena, there has been a significant transformation in recent decades, especially in positions of influence and decision-making. At present, the proportion of female legislators exceeds 40%, including seats reserved specifically for women. Meanwhile, the number of female local government heads in Taiwan reached a historic high of 56.3% following the 2022 local elections, a huge jump of almost 19 percentage points compared to the local elections in 2018¹. The government promotes a "one-third gender rule" to promote fairer representation, which

stipulates that at least one-third of those serving must be women. This has been achieved in many, though not all sectors, as seen in the proportion of women serving in the Examination, Control and Judicial Yuans (over 40% in 2020). Despite achievements such as these, other domains are less encouraging: in 2020, the proportion of politically appointed female officials was 22.1%², while the proportion of female ministers in the new Cabinet, sworn in recently, is still only around 16%, falling far short of the "one-third gender rule"¹.

Even so, when considered alongside neighbouring countries in Asia with a similar level of economic development, Taiwan's proportion of female legislators ranks much higher than Singapore, Mainland China, South Korea and Japan, where proportions stand at²-



Within the private sector, the number of female legal representatives at small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) has grown year-on-year: from 2012 to 2020, there was a 20% increase in the proportion of female leaders in such companies, accounting for 37% of all SMEs in 2020. As one might expect, these figures differ substantially depending on the sector: the highest percentage of male-led SMEs are in construction, mining and quarrying, and electricity and gas supply, whereas the highest percentage of female-led SMEs can be found in education, accommodation and food services, and human health and social work².

With regards to BCCTaipei survey data, while the total number of employees in participating organisations ranged from just 1 to almost 4,700, 81.9% of respondents reported having at least one female manager or more, whereas 65.3% had at least one woman in a director position or above. Just over half of our 75 respondents (53.3%) reported that their organisations implement specific initiatives to attract and retain female employees (Chart 5).



Among those that provided further commentary on the existence of such initiatives, almost a quarter indicated that diversity and gender inclusivity formed part-and-parcel of their corporate values and culture and constituted a key focus in the future growth of their organisation (24.4%). Interestingly, the survey results revealed that most of the policies tailored towards women seek to address pregnancy and childcare issues, since the most widely reported initiative was the option (and often, encouragement) for employees to work flexible hours or from home (31.7%); however, it is unclear as to what extent such initiatives were issued simply in response to local COVID-19 regulations. In this vein, whereas nearly one third (29.3%) indicated that their organisation offers extended and/or generously paid maternity leave beyond government-stipulated requirements, which at times includes childcare provisions, around 14.6% provide breastfeeding facilities on-site and/or pregnancy care packages. Although many of these initiatives appear to cater to the needs of mothers at the workplace, what is perhaps most striking in terms of the promotion of women is that only 12.2% offer female-oriented training or business groups, such as co-operation with external agencies or foundations aimed at empowering female leaders. From the small number of follow-up interviews, we were able to acquire deeper insights into the status of female leadership. Most of our interviewees placed an emphasis on the role of fair maternity leave, explaining that their organisations offered generous and extended maternity leave, as well as breastfeeding rooms and flexible hours, though this provision was generally extended to all members as opposed to just women with children. Broadly, while it was apparent that maternity leave was perceived to be an important part of driving forward gender equality in the organisations interviewed, there was a greater focus on representation of women and their empowerment to assume more senior positions. Arguably, this serves as a reminder that conversations about this subject often jump immediately to the issue of pregnancy for women in the workplace, which might be viewed as problematic in itself, since many of our interviewees focused rather on the value of tailored training schemes and mentorship programmes.

In several of the multinational companies interviewed, women-oriented training programmes were "top-down", and provided throughout their global offices:



Nevertheless, the content of existing schemes ranged from introspective work such as identifying one's leadership style, to more practical endeavours such as how to ensure effective communication within a team.



One went far beyond this, citing a partnership with a local NGO to raise awareness and incentivise retainment among female staff, along with a social media campaign where followers could participate.

From another angle, most of the organisations interviewed maintained offices in more than one country, predominately in Europe and North America, which appears correlated with an emphasis on inclusivity and diversity in the workplace. Among these, diversity was considered both a core value and a strength, particularly for multinational corporations, arguing that a workforce coming from diverse backgrounds with a variety of perspectives and experiences was essential for company growth, as such a condition helps generate new and innovative ideas. All the organisations interviewed reported having initiatives and policies aimed at retaining and attracting female employees, however the broad consensus was that the more favourable representation of women in their respective organisations was the result of talent and suitability for the roles in guestion, not due to the implementation of initiatives. Women made up the majority of employees in more than one, with one company having 100% female staff.



Furthermore, most of those interviewed felt that female representation varied greatly across industries, though many stressed that the success within their own organisation broke the trend. One participant commented that traditionally male-dominated sectors, such as engineering, are the hardest to break, and by contrast, emerging industries and more unorthodox company structures like start-ups are typically more equal, as they do not come with an implicit gender bias in recruitment, and therefore tend to be more progressive by nature.



Consumer goods (FMCG), the service sector, pharmaceuticals and consulting were noted to have better female representation all-round, while one stated that the government had also seen a greater commitment to gender equality in recent years. In comparison to countries like Japan and South Korea, it was considered that Taiwan was leading in the region, however the consensus was that there is still a long way to go on a domestic level. When compared to other regions outside of North America and Europe, Taiwan was also noted as being far ahead.

2.4 Barriers and Potential Solutions

With a view to better understanding these figures, attitudes to gender equality in the workplace were examined. Three-fifths of BCCTaipei survey respondents (Chart 6) felt that there were no barriers or obstacles to equal gender representation in the workplace in Taiwan.



However, among those that provided commentary on the presence of such obstacles, one-third (33.3%) indicated that societal and family expectations were a huge barrier, explaining that many families and in-laws pressure women to stunt their career development or resign themselves to providing the majority of childcare in accordance with traditional family values. Such insights from the survey data were supported by the interview respondents, many of whom mentioned that bias from the older generation, particularly the elderly, was a significant obstacle for women. Anecdotally, from among the interviewees there were several instances in which women and girls had been discouraged, if not nearly financially prohibited, from pursuing further education in hopes from their families that they would find a suitable husband and commit to being a homemaker. It appears that such prejudice also filters down into women's recruitment experiences, since a small percentage of survey respondents (12.5%) cited that fears about female employees becoming pregnant or resigning prematurely to get married often led to discrimination, with some having been asked to disclose whether

they intended to have children in the future.

Besides this aspect, from several of our interviews it emerged that education in certain fields, most notably heavy industry and STEM, was a huge factor in women's future access to senior leadership positions, as well as in their equal representation more broadly. One respondent stressed that Taiwan's social climate is such that female representation in the workplace should improve provided that a greater proportion of women and girls pursue subjects that are in high demand. University figures suggest that this is improving, however the transformation inevitably will not happen overnight and the government's own statistics, published in EY's "Gender Equality At A Glance 2022"² show just how much of an imbalance exists in terms of higher education. In 2018, 52.2% of graduates of higher education were female, but the higher the education level, the lower the proportion of female graduates there were, indicating that there is room for improvement when it comes to female higher education at at postgraduate levels.



Furthermore, there is a massive skew towards education and arts and humanities, and an under representation of female graduates, to some extent, in science, mathematics and statistics and engineering, and especially in ICT, manufacturing and construction disciplines (Chart 7). other women, perhaps due to ease-of-communication. This might present a 'double-edged sword': on the one hand, it is a channel for increasing the proportion of women active in the workplace, but on the other hand, it may, in the long-term, lead to the opposite problem, i.e.

Again, these sentiments were echoed in our survey, as around 20.8% of respondents mentioned that lack of experience or training among female jobseekers, largely due to lack of women and girls studying in key sectors such as STEM (20.8%) was a substantial barrier, alongside payment imbalance between men and women and lack of access to affordable childcare (20.8%).

Oddly, one factor which appears as both a symptom and a reinforcer of unequal female representation is the lack of women in senior roles itself. In the interviews, one participant commented that women benefit from examples of success and role models to inspire them; similarly, it was mentioned that women in senior leadership positions are also more likely to recruit was common. Such bias appears other barriers reported in the su culture of male dominance in co which is tied to some organisat take female representation in the ously (despite, at times, paying and frequent lack of investmer ented training schemes (20.8%).

cation. This might present a 'double-edged sword': on the one hand, it is a channel for increasing the proportion of women active in the workplace, but on the other hand, it may, in the long-term, lead to the opposite problem, i.e. male-dominated workplaces in one camp, and female-dominated workplaces in another, which could serve to reinforce issues of gender inequality. If we compare this to our survey findings, around one-fifth of respondents (20.8%) stated that fixed perceptions about women's roles at work, i.e. that they should be in predominately office-based or non-managerial positions, was common. Such bias appears to be linked to other barriers reported in the survey, such as the culture of male dominance in certain industries. which is tied to some organisations refusing to take female representation in the workplace seriously (despite, at times, paying lip-service to it), and frequent lack of investment in female-oriAlthough praise or criticism of the government's role did not feature heavily in comments from the survey, there were mixed reviews about its effectiveness in our interviews. Whereas some were unable or unwilling to comment in much depth, others felt that the government had made gender representation a core goal in recent years, having provided flexibility and support for companies across the board.



the annual increase in the proportion of women serving in government,



Evidence of this positive transformation include the appointment of President Tsai Ing-wen,



the nationwide crackdown on sexual harassment,



and amendments to public education, including sex education and an increased emphasis on women's safety.

This aside, criticisms include: that the government should provide more hard-line requirements for businesses, such as tax breaks aimed at incentivising female promotion and leadership; compulsory appointment of at least one director per company; and a move towards creative means to attract and facilitate women entering in-demand industries where they are underrepresented, as opposed to quotas.

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