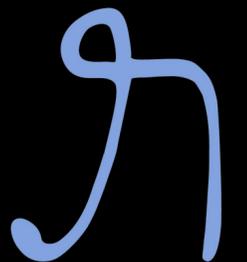


Gender Parity in Asia:

**The Moment**

**of Truth**



NINEby9



# About **NINEby9**

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## **NINEby9**

is a non-profit founded in 2021 with the objective of attaining gender parity in the Asian workforce over the next 9 years through proprietary research and data-driven solutions. From the perspective of the working woman, our research shows how women in Asia experience gender parity.

We also offer an action-based framework for change that is research based, timely, and sustainable. Our framework incorporates insights from our proprietary research in Asia, as well as best practices shared by Diversity, Equity and Inclusion leaders at Asia-based multinationals.

For you, as regional companies and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Asia, we hope the practical wisdom in this report is eye-opening and beneficial to your organisations. The Asian century is just beginning and the ambitious, hopeful women in Asia will propel us forward.



Foreword:

# Dr. Vinika D. Rao

Executive Director, INSEAD Emerging Markets Institute & Gender Initiative  
Asia Director, Hoffman Global Institute for Business & Society

## ***Dear Reader,***

With the 21st century poised to be the Asian Century, this is an exciting time for organisations operating in the continent. As Asia exercises its political, economic and cultural influence on global trends, these organisations have the opportunity for unprecedented economic growth fueled by a young, innovative and diverse talent pool. To leverage this opportunity, harnessing the full talent pool, across genders, will be key.

Early evidence of the impact of Covid-19 on gender balance shows the disturbing trend of women being disproportionately impacted.

This is especially true in some Asian nations where persistent societal norms may have put a greater burden on women, as pandemic-induced restrictions transpired.

However, Asia's diversity defies being painted in broad brush strokes, national and cultural nuances play an important differentiating role.

By highlighting the concerns of working women across six Asian nations, this report provides timely insights into the unique challenges they face and possible solutions at organisational and individual levels.

“**Harnessing the full talent pool, across genders, will be key.**”

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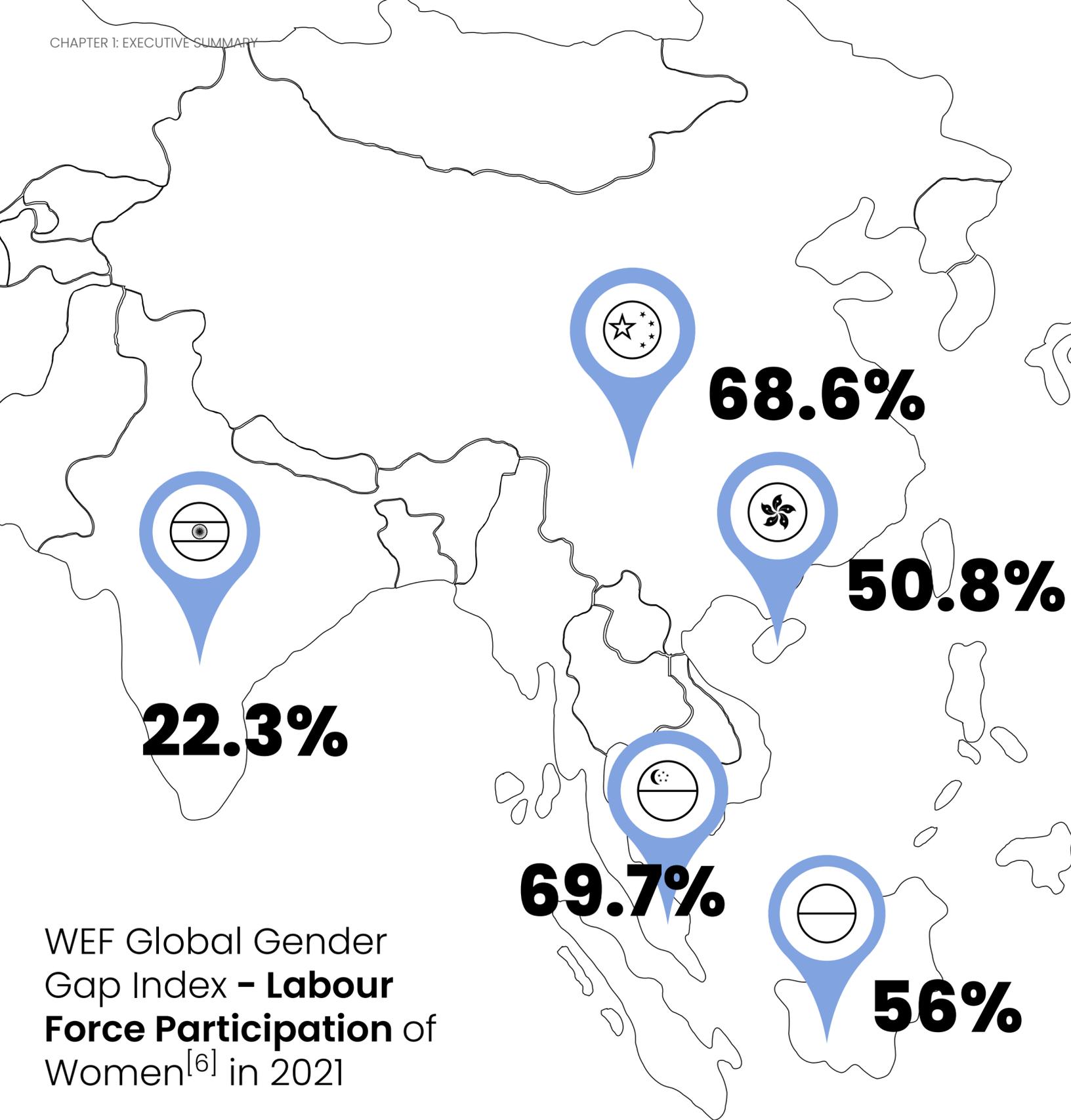
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# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: 9 TRUTHS AND 9 ACTIONS**

# The **Asian Century** is just beginning.

Asia remains the fastest growing region globally with a predicted economic growth of **6.5%**<sup>1</sup> in 2021. There are many reasons to be positive about this region. By 2030, Asia will drive **60%**<sup>2</sup> of global GDP growth and contribute **90%**<sup>3</sup> of the new entrants to the middle class globally.



# And gender parity has far to go

Women hold only **20%**<sup>4</sup> of managerial positions and just **15%**<sup>5</sup> of board positions in Asia and it could take **165**<sup>6</sup> years to attain gender parity in Asia at the rate forecasted by the latest report from the World Economic Forum.

WEF Global Gender Gap Index - **Labour Force Participation** of Women<sup>[6]</sup> in 2021

# By 2025, gender parity could add **4.5 trillion dollars** to Asia Pacific economies

A McKinsey report in 2018 estimated that by advancing women's equality, \$4.5 trillion<sup>7</sup> could be added to the economies of Asia Pacific by 2025. However, performative diversity initiatives that add women to the workforce but do not support their career advancement aren't enough.

In the next phase of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Asia, we need to create inclusionary workplaces that support women, leverage their strengths, and are serious about tackling unconscious bias. True inclusion of women in the workforce will capture the trillions of dollars of economic opportunity and ensure equal rights for all.

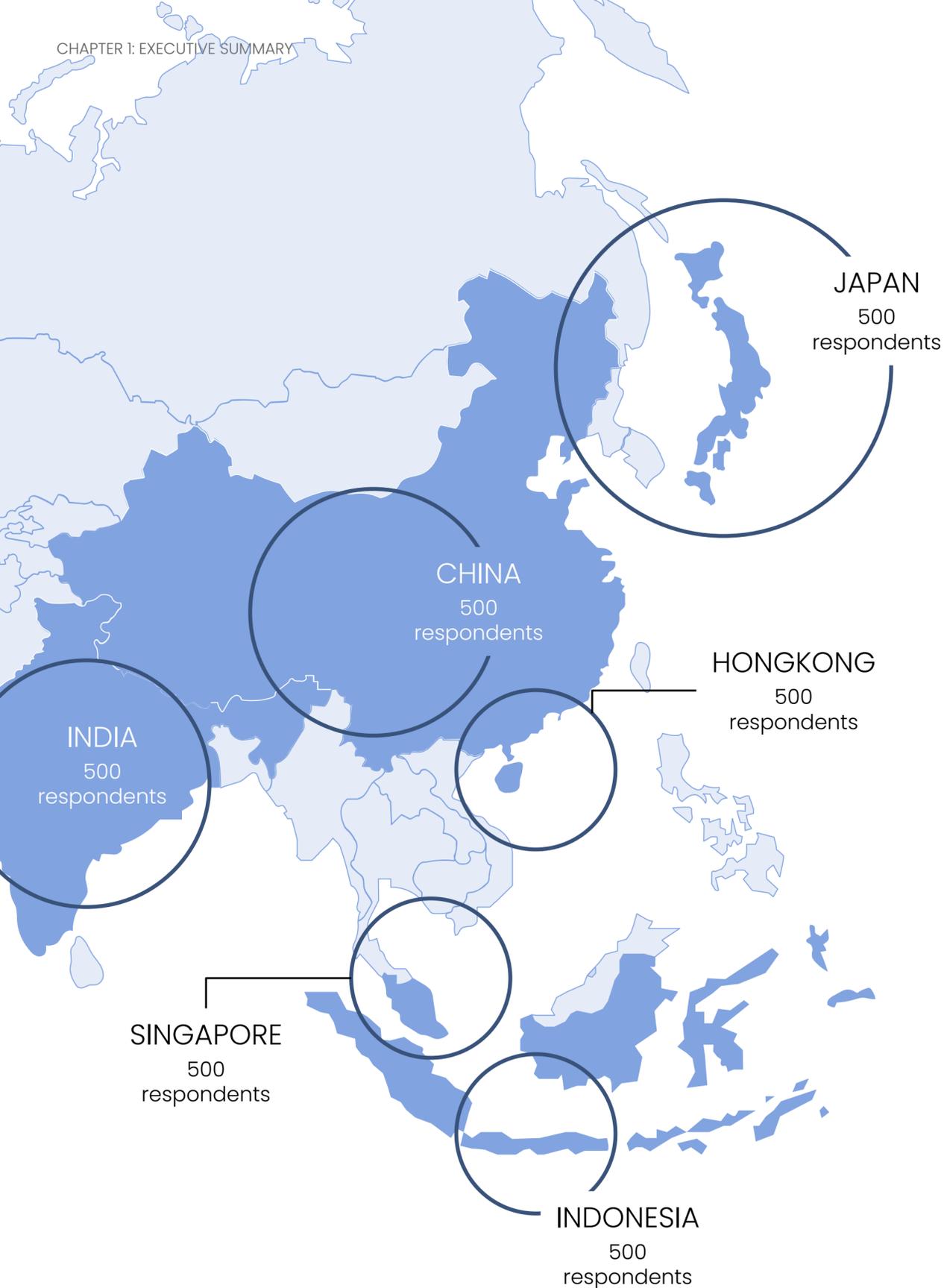


# Yet, one size does not fit all for **2.3 billion** women

As a first step, it is imperative to recognise that Asia is a heterogeneous collection of geographies and cultures. A one-size-fits-all solution doesn't work for the 2.3 billion women in Asia.

More importantly, we cannot copy and paste gender parity initiatives, or narratives of women's experiences in the workplace from Western countries in Asian economies.





# Who we **spoke** with

In collaboration with NINEby9, global research firm Kadence International, supported by Yale-NUS and Dynata, conducted a survey into what drives gender parity for the women of Asia. The survey involved a total of **3,000** working women from eight markets in 6 geographies of China (Shanghai and Shenzhen), India (Mumbai and Bengaluru), Japan, Indonesia, Hong Kong and Singapore.

Through this survey, we understood views from the women of these markets, on whether they believe they have gender parity, what their role is in driving gender parity and what it would take to create further equality in their world.

We also asked respondents to share their stories of gender parity in various contexts and received over **7,500** responses which we coded and analyzed for sentiment and themes.

Furthermore,, we spoke with over 50 leaders in the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) space in Asia, in academia, and in industry to learn about the history of and cultural nuances around DEI practices in Asian markets. We then sought their global and regional best practices to expand on the 'how's' in our framework for action.

# Our Methodology

## 1 Field Study

Gather academic findings from best-in-class researchers.

Identify key markets, including both developing and developed across cultures - CN, IN, ID, JP, HK, SG.

## 3 Analysis

Identify drivers of gender parity by demographic segments - age, industry and cultural nuances.

## 2 Research

Design and conduct a quantitative study and capture personal stories from **3,000** working women.

Respondents span across regions and age bands - 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s.

## 4 Action

Gather and distil industry best practices to address the "how" of our proposed framework.

**4 languages**  
**8 cities**  
**3,000 women**  
**7,500 stories**

To ensure accuracy and to avoid loss in translations, our surveys were conducted, analysed and coded in local languages.

Research Partner:



YaleNUSCollege

**1**

Women in Asia believe they have equality in pay and opportunity, **even though they do not.**

**79%** of our respondents agree that they receive equal benefits and pay to men in equivalent roles. A further **81%** of women believe that men and women have equal opportunity to be promoted. However, the reality on ground doesn't match perception. The income gap between men and women is **23%** in Indonesia<sup>8</sup>. When it comes to economic participation of women, India and Japan are **151st** and **117th** according to the WEF<sup>[6]</sup>. In China, women still hold only **16.7%**<sup>9</sup> of senior roles. The conflicting statistics leave us curious, what drives this belief of parity?

**2**

Only 1 in 5 women have a positive gender parity story to share. But it is **a very mixed picture** across the region.

We asked women to share stories of when someone in their working world went out of their way to make them feel equal in the workplace, and only **20%** of women have positive stories to share. Country differences abound, **1 out of 10** women in China and Japan have positive stories to share vs. more than **1 out of 3** women in India and Indonesia.

**3**

76% of women say they **do not see** driving gender equality in the workplace **as their problem.**

Of the **24%** of the women who say driving equality in the workplace is important, only half of these actively contribute. The other half of the 24% say they don't know how to contribute. For the remaining 76%, equality is demoted to a 'nice to have' or isn't top of mind



4

Women are still **unsure of how to speak up** for their rights and are concerned about repercussions.

**65%** of women say that there would be serious repercussions for their professional progression, if they push for gender parity in their workplace.

5

Yet, the **appetite for growth is bigger than we think**, with 79% of women saying growth is their top career goal.

Women have many different ways they are looking to grow; from job title, to remuneration, to personal brand, to starting their own business. The results differ by country: remuneration is a critical motivator in Singapore and Hong Kong, while senior roles and power are more appealing in India and Indonesia.

6

Women returning to the workforce **after starting a family** are twice as likely to prioritise organisational growth over personal growth

When speaking of future goals, women with children are twice as likely to prioritize company growth and hitting their targets as a key leadership and career goal for themselves, than women without children, dispelling myths about women with children lacking commitment toward the workplace



**7** While there are some similarities, women's aspirations and challenges **differ considerably** across geographies.

Women in India, China and Indonesia are three times more likely to want to play an active role in driving gender parity, than women in Singapore, Hong Kong and Japan. Women in China and India are also most likely to aspire to leadership positions (**1 in 3**) while women in Japan are least likely (**1 in 10**).

**8** Managers who actively support gender parity **foster greater loyalty** for the company amongst their direct reports.

The results are surprisingly consistent across countries, **8 out of 10** women say managers who are active in supporting gender parity, engender loyalty. Japan is the only exception to this trend.

**9** **Unconscious bias** remains our biggest hurdle.

The barriers in the workplace are mostly unseen and unconscious. When we asked women if they need to 'hide who they are to be accepted by their male colleagues', nearly **70%** of women in China, and over **50%** of women in India and Singapore said yes, they need to hide who they are.

# How do we create **change**?

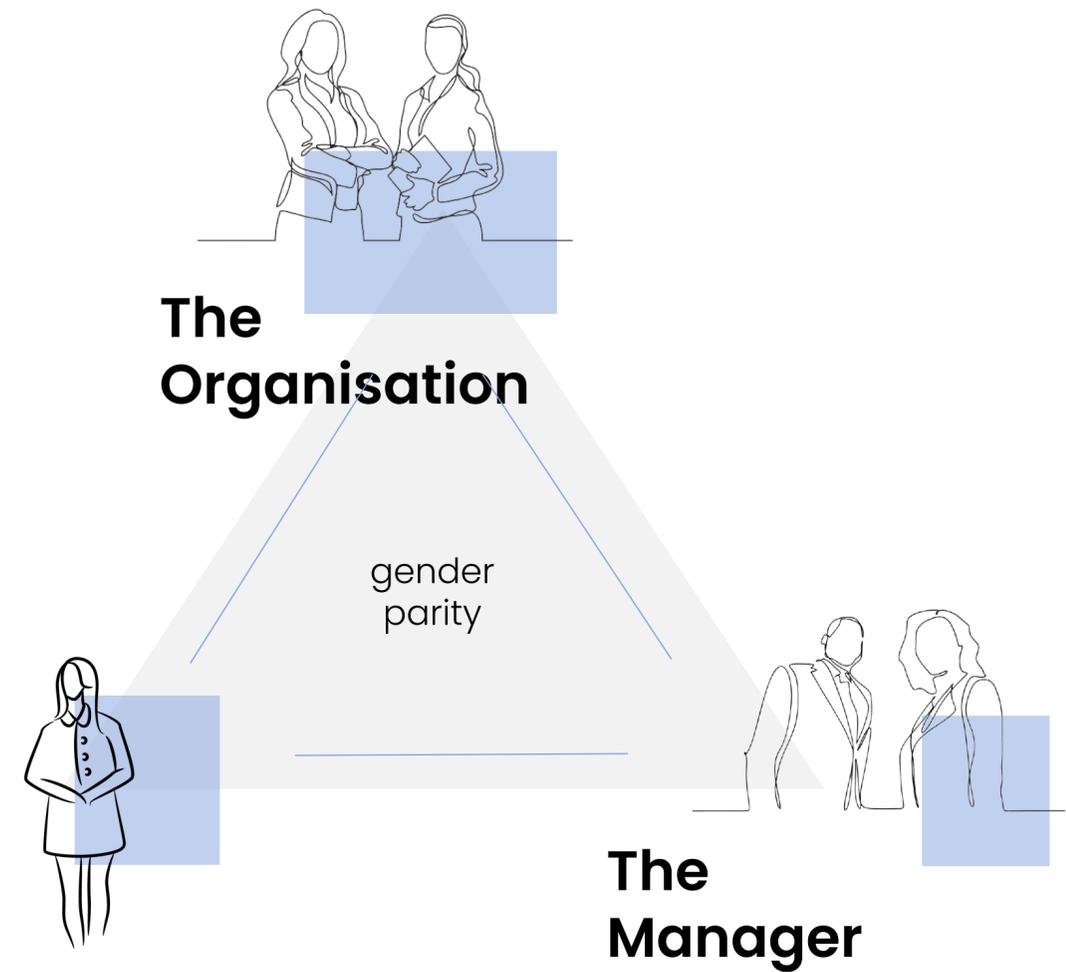
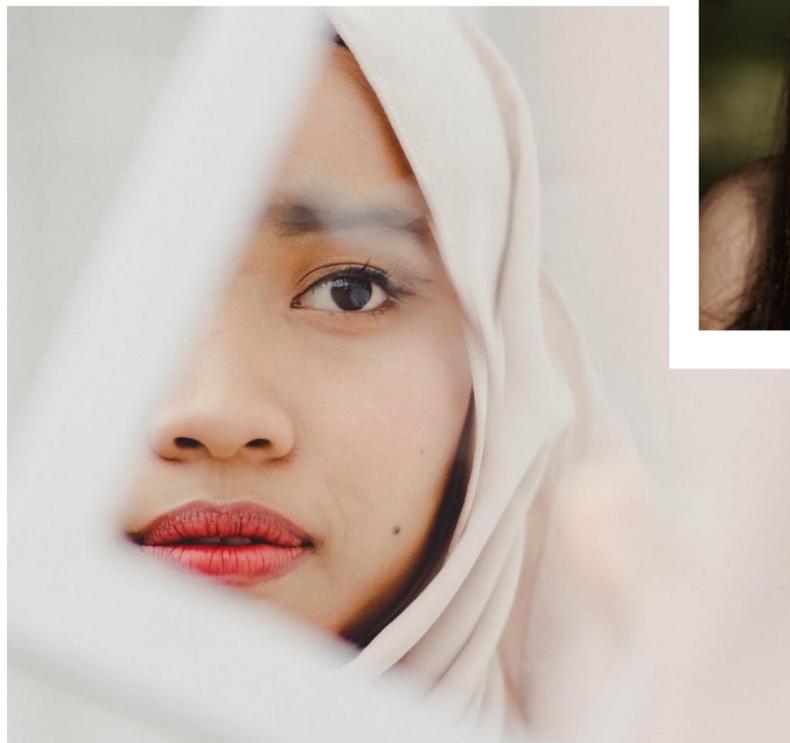
# How do we create **change**?

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**Through the stories that women shared, we started to see three stakeholders emerge clearly.**

There is the *manager* that stands up for you, there is your *company* that makes it possible for you to feel equal through their policies and finally there is *you*, the individual woman who speaks up, takes action and finds role models.

# Who needs to create **change**?



# Nine actions **for change**

Are you being inclusive and driving equality in the workplace?  
[Click here](#) to evaluate the effectiveness of your actions.



as an  
**organisation**

**demonstrate visible proof**

We demonstrate to all employees that they have equal opportunity for growth. We are transparent about how remuneration is set and linked to performance. We amplify stories of women who role model success in our organisations and provide roadmaps for the next generation of leaders.

**create specific policies**

We create policies to support and champion women. We recognise that women may have physical needs that are different and find ways to support these needs so women feel comfortable in the workplace.

**encourage male allies**

We encourage men in our organisation to demonstrate that gender parity matters to them, that they recognise the world is unequal and that our company will be better if we are more equal. Men are encouraged to step up when they see discrimination against their co-workers.



as a  
**manager**

**reinforce culture of equality**

I demonstrate that the company policies are not just on paper, that all members of my team are truly equal. I promote and remunerate men and women equally and champion company practices driving equality.

**recognise contribution**

I value skills and performance in an unbiased way. I recognise that I need to enhance the confidence of those that have competence in my team through regular feedback that reinforces their effort and impact.

**ensure work-life balance**

I recognise that the women on my team may traditionally carry a heavier caregiver load and may struggle to speak up because they do not want to be treated differently or have negative consequences. I encourage open dialogue amongst my team and find solutions to ensure work life balance for all.



as a  
**working woman**

**create personal belief**

I believe my gender does not dictate the industries I can work in or my chance to succeed in these industries.

**seek role models**

I proactively seek out trusted mentors and role models within and outside my organisation.

**raise important topics**

I recognise it is my right to raise topics related to promotions, work-life balance, health needs, sexism in my workplace. I know that if I don't speak up people may not know the extent to which these challenges exist.



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# **WOMEN IN ASIA HAVE PARITY, OR DO THEY?**

truth #1

**80% of women  
in Asia** believe  
they have  
gender parity



truth #1

# 80% of women in Asia believe they have gender parity

Our survey findings reveal that women in Asia believe they have parity.

**Of our respondents, 79% say that they receive equal benefits and pay to males in equivalent roles. 81% say they have equal opportunity for promotion.**

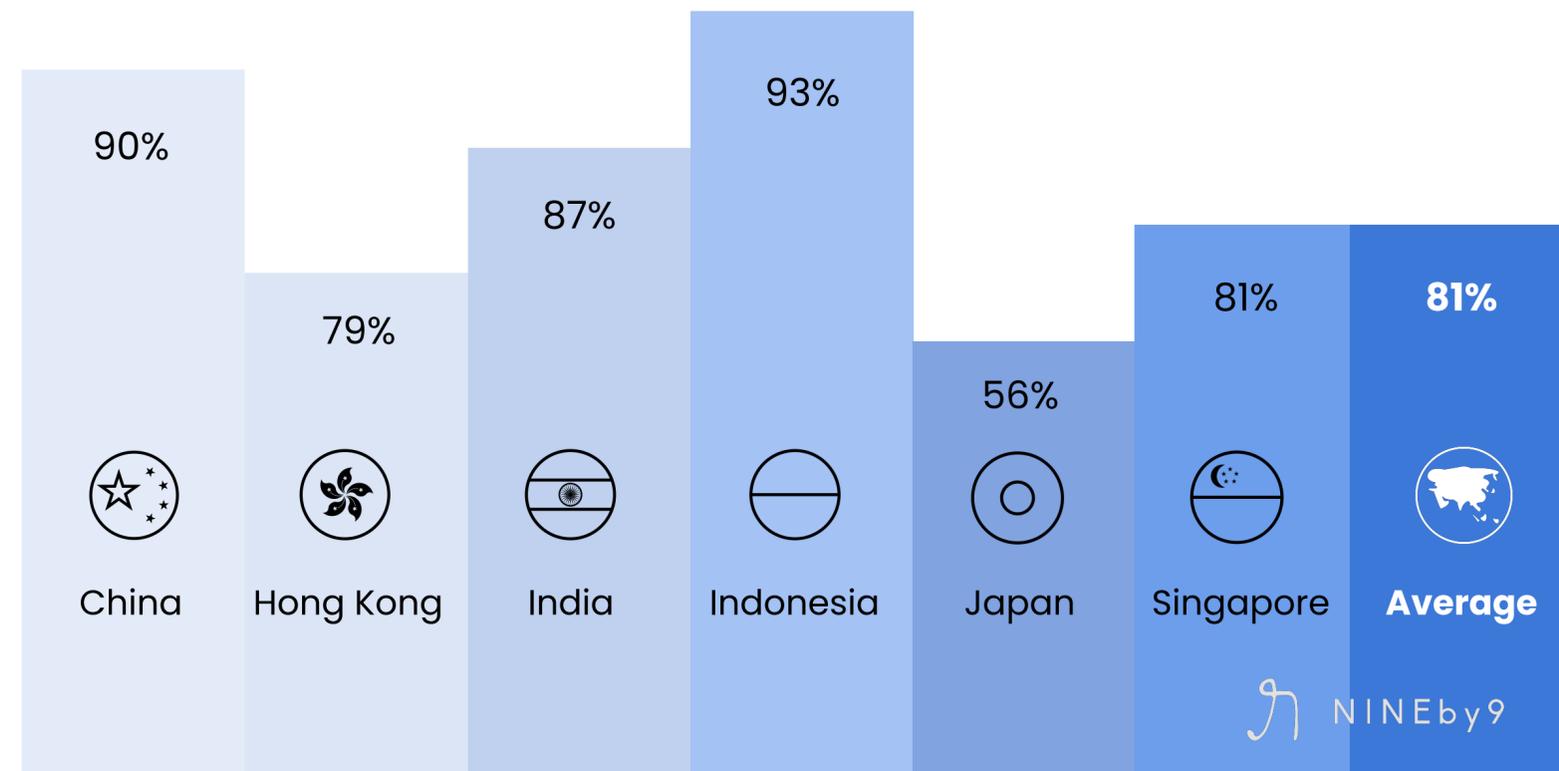
The findings across countries are not consistent, with Japanese women being outliers.

Only 60% of respondents in Japan believe they receive equal pay vs. 85% of respondents in China, India and Indonesia. **56%** of women in Japan agree with the statement that men and women have equal opportunity to get promoted vs. **90%** of women in India, Indonesia and China.



**Women believe there already is equality in pay and opportunity**

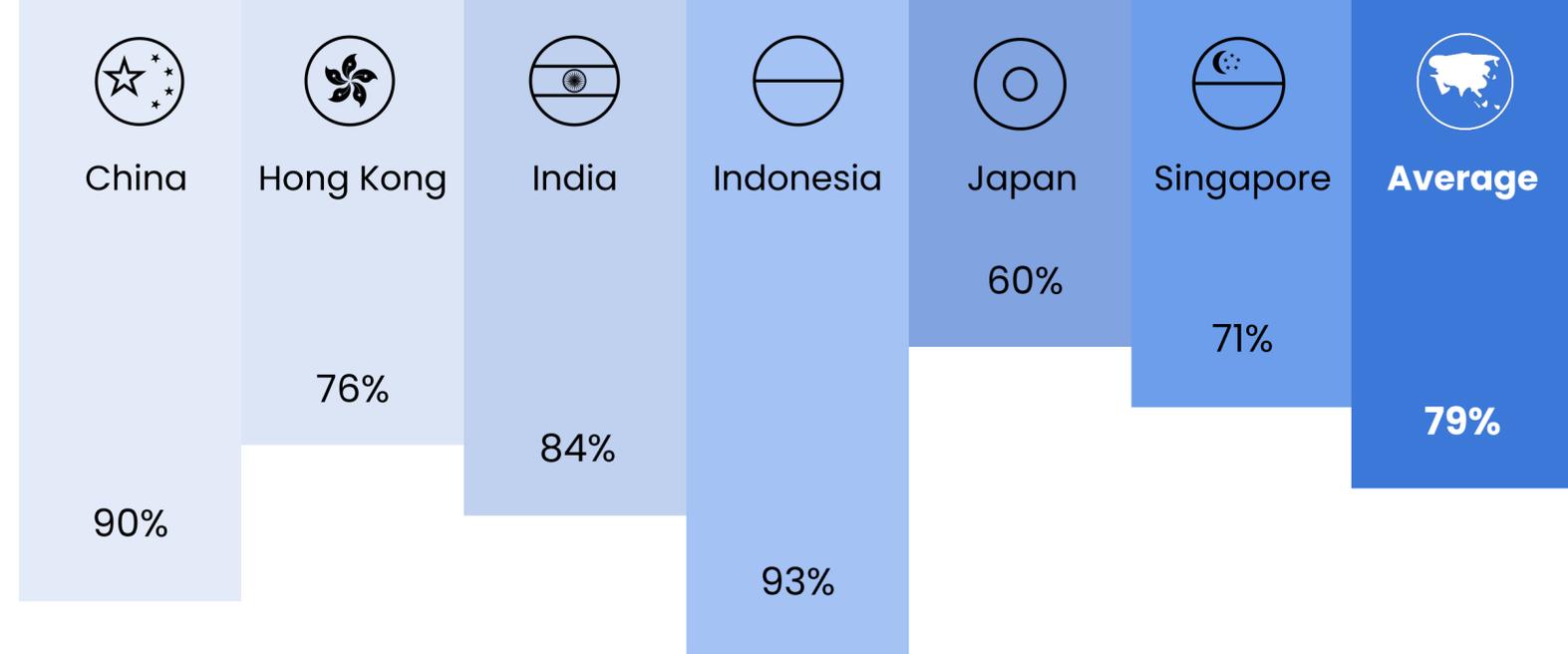
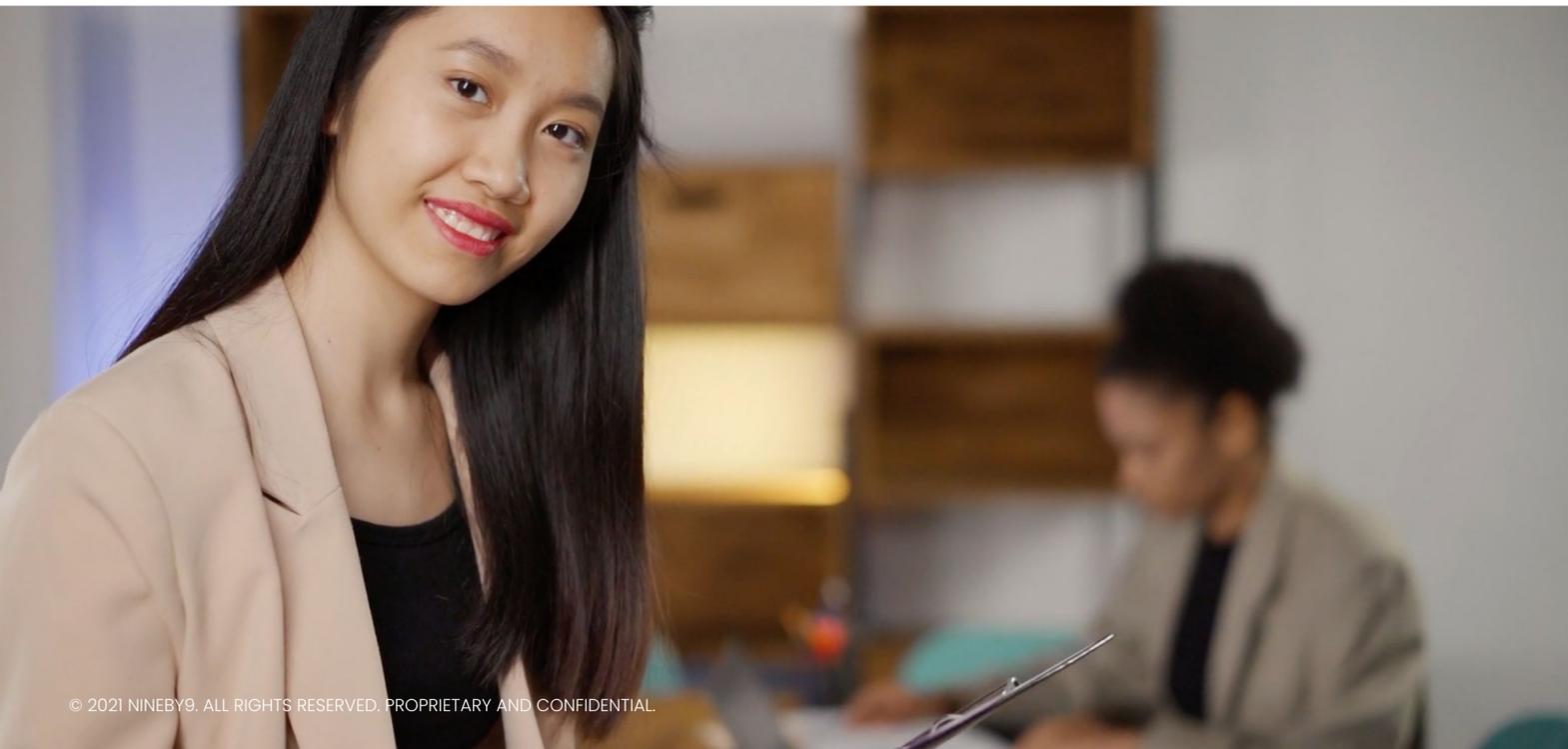
“ **In my company, men and women *have equal opportunity to be promoted*** ”



**Does perception match reality? Unfortunately not. Women in Asia are still 150+ years away from equality.**

Women hold only **20%** of management positions in Asia<sup>[4]</sup> and only **~15.1%** of board positions in Asia Pacific, up only 2.3% points from 12.8% in 2017<sup>[5]</sup>. A Korn Ferry report in 2018<sup>10</sup> shows a **>15%** pay gap across Asia.

Indonesia has a **23%** income gap<sup>[8]</sup>. India is ranked 151st in the world by the WEF<sup>[6]</sup> when it comes to economic opportunities for women. Only **16.7%**<sup>[6]</sup> of senior roles in China were held by women. Japan is ranked 117 when it comes to economic participation by women and **14.7%**<sup>[6]</sup> of senior roles are held by women.



**“ I am confident I receive equal salary and benefits to males in equivalent roles to me ”**

The World Economic Forum states that with the current state of affairs and speed of change between 2006 and 2021, it will take between **165.1 years** in East Asia to **195.4 years**<sup>[6]</sup> in South Asia to close the gender gap. In comparison, they predict it will take **52.1** years to close the gender gap in Western Europe.

Why? In addition to slowing change on gender parity in recent years, the pandemic has pushed gender parity efforts back by a generation.

**So why do women believe they have gender parity in Asia if the data clearly shows disparity?**

***A combination of second generation bias and cultural context.***

In 1984, social psychologist Faye Crosby<sup>11</sup> famously discovered that most women aren't aware of facing gender discrimination and aren't convinced even when confronted with the facts. In addition, in parts of Asia, patriarchal traditions and the expected role of woman as the primary caregiver<sup>12</sup> further entrench and normalize gender bias.



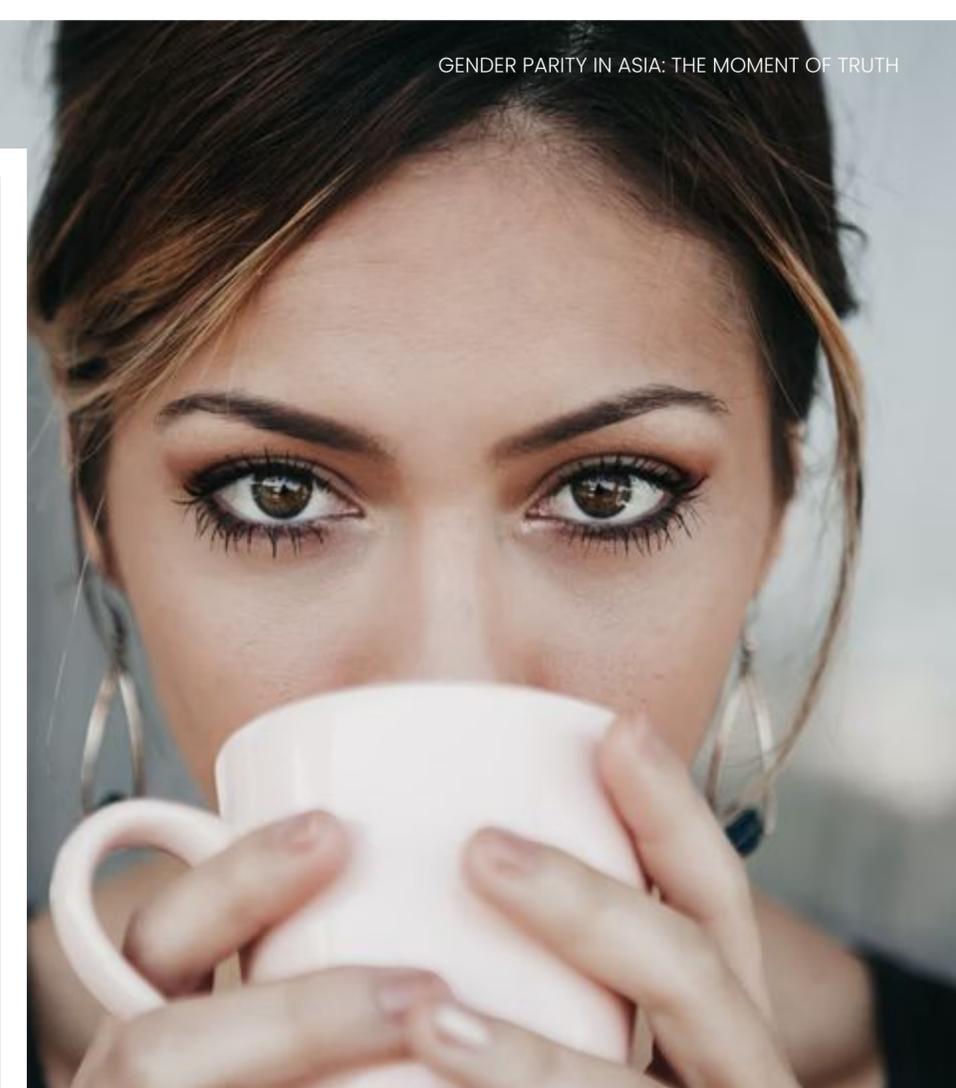
*The burn-your-bra kind of movement **is not here at all**. Women are being fed the narrative that things are fair and equal in Asia.*

*When we take on gender parity initiatives, women believe we're doing them favors and they don't wish to have those favors.*

*As such, we have to intentionally design DEI initiatives by firstly, shining a light on the lack of accessibility faced by women (due to their gender and other intersectional identities) and secondly, demonstrating that these initiatives will level set the playing field and put them on par with their men co-workers.*

**- Kathy Teoh**

*Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Leader,  
Lloyd's Register*



truth #2

Only **1 in 5 women** have a positive gender parity story to share



truth #2

# Only 1 in 5 women have a positive gender parity story to share

Only **1 out of 5** women has a positive story to share about someone going above and beyond for them in the workplace to make them feel equal. **And unfortunately, the stories are not inspiring.**

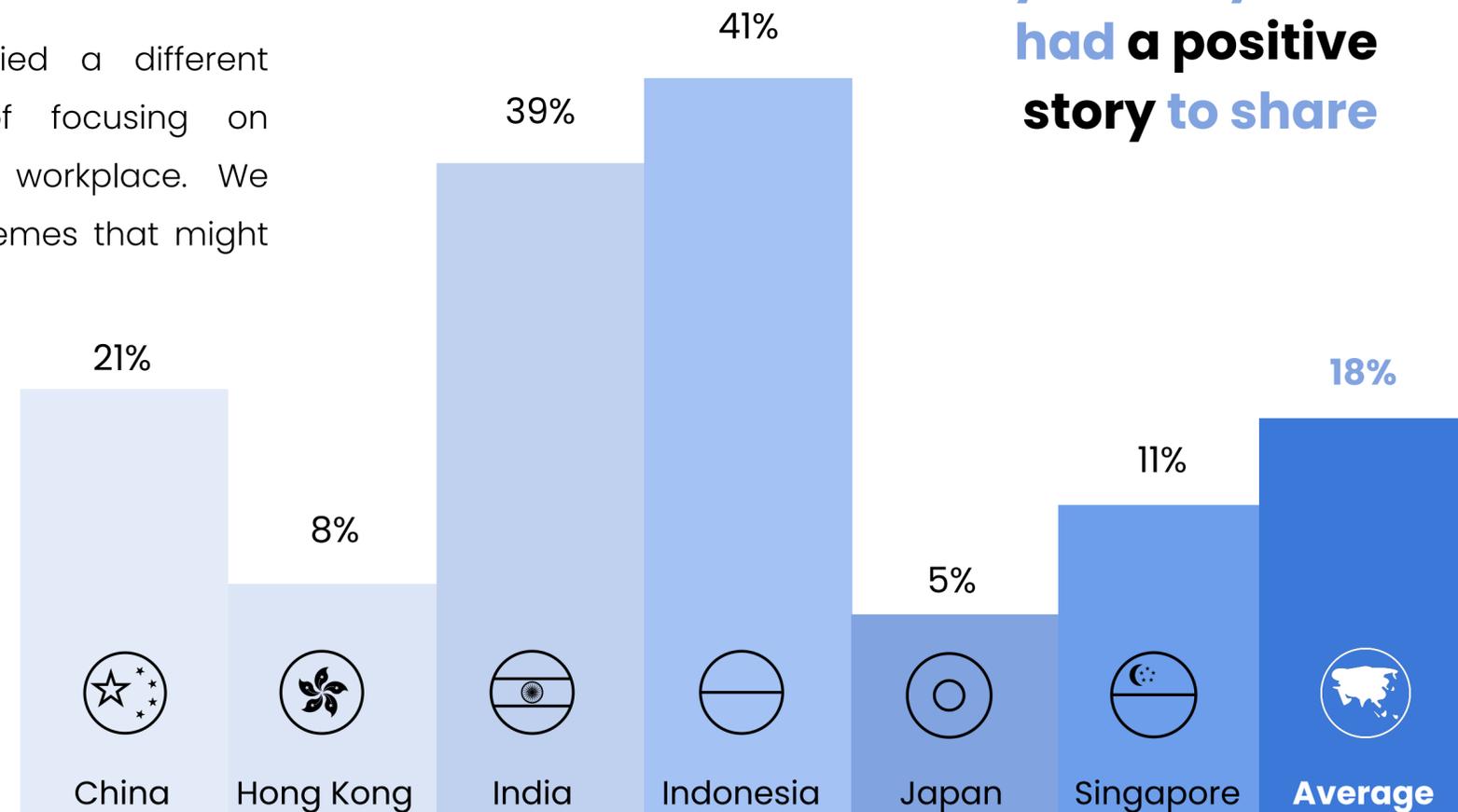
Based on our Quantified Narrative Analysis, a meaningful story is defined as containing more than 8-word description, positive subject matter, and self-categorized as emotionally intense.

For more positive narratives, we tried a different open-question approach instead of focusing on negative experiences for women in the workplace. We wanted to see if there were unique themes that might stand out.

Yet, the first theme we noticed was that **there is low awareness of what it truly means to have gender parity.**

Stories we heard include women being surprised that they were not fired for getting pregnant; of being thankful that male colleagues organised takeout meals; of being allowed to take leave from work when dealing with injuries like fractures. These stories were what our respondents believe is going over and above to drive equality in the workplace.

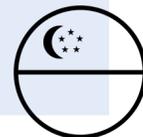
**% of women by country who had a positive story to share**



Second, a high proportion of positive stories feature male colleagues. Men who stepped up in support of their female colleague when they were faced with discrimination or didn't receive equal opportunities.

“Five years ago, I worked at a Japanese company which **prioritised men over women**. I was denied enrollment in a work-related Business Writing Workshop, whereas an unqualified male colleague was accepted.

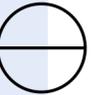
My manager felt unjustified so he went to our Japanese GM's office. After an hour, he came to me with a smiling face and said: “Angie, go ahead with the workshop! I [fought] for your rights and you deserve the chance.” I'm **so grateful for his bravery** to confront the GM... This company normally treats women unfairly because of belief that men are more capable than women.



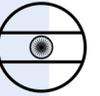
“My leaders **did not deprive me** of my position because I had children



“When the ordered goods arrive, it's **not only the women** who carry the goods, the men also came along



“A person in my workplace **helped me** in placing the file on the proper place



A third theme involves managers championing women and noticing their competence, not their gender. Finally, a fourth theme is centred around organisational policies that provide equal pay, opportunities and services.

**The number of shared stories differs dramatically by country with 4 in 10 women in India and Indonesia sharing positive stories vs. 1 in 10 women in China and Japan.**



truth #3

**76% of women**  
do not see  
driving equality  
as their challenge



truth #3

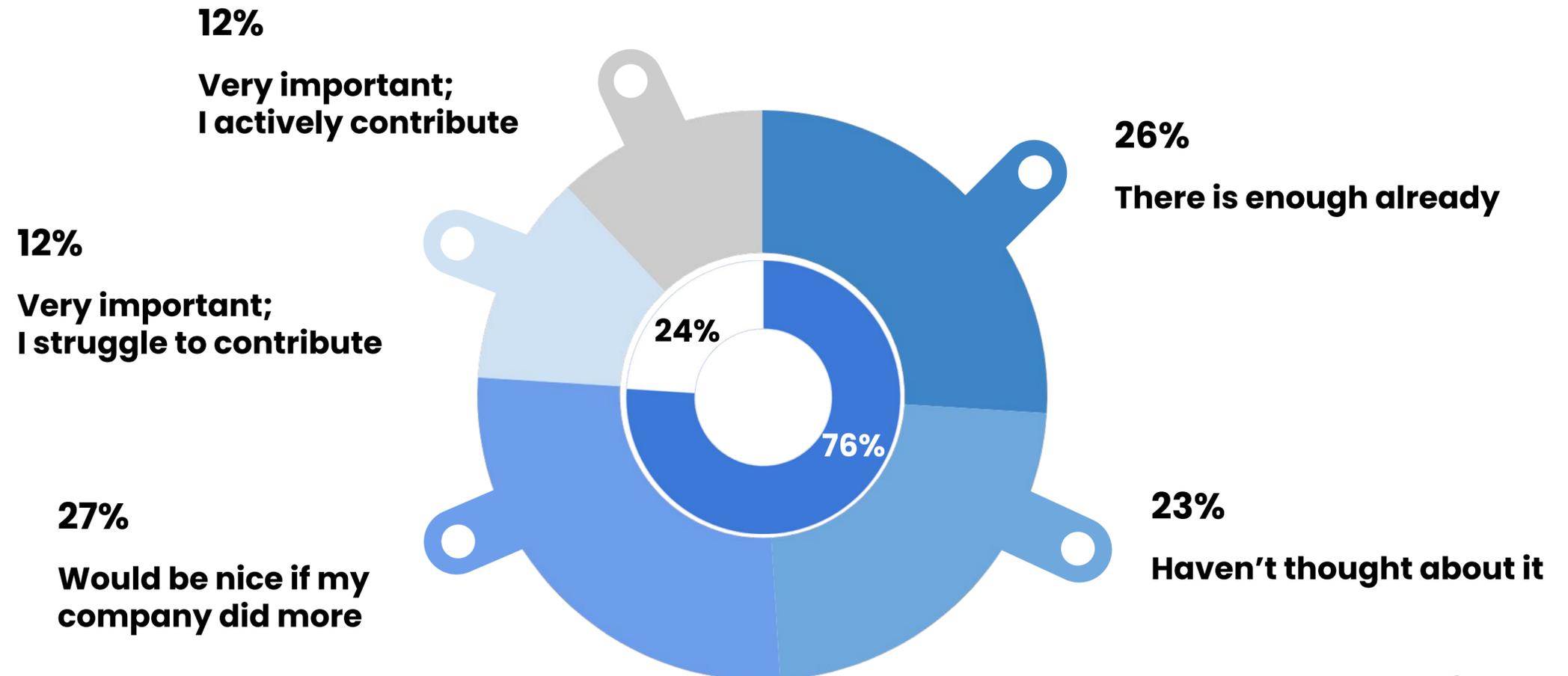
# 76% of women do not see driving equality as their challenge

When asked “How important is driving equality in your workplace”, **76%** of women say they don’t see equality as something they personally need to participate in driving.

Only **12%** of women say it is very important and that they actively contribute. Another **12%** say it is very important, but they struggle to contribute.

Surprisingly, nearly **50%** of women say they think there is enough equality or that they have never thought about equality.

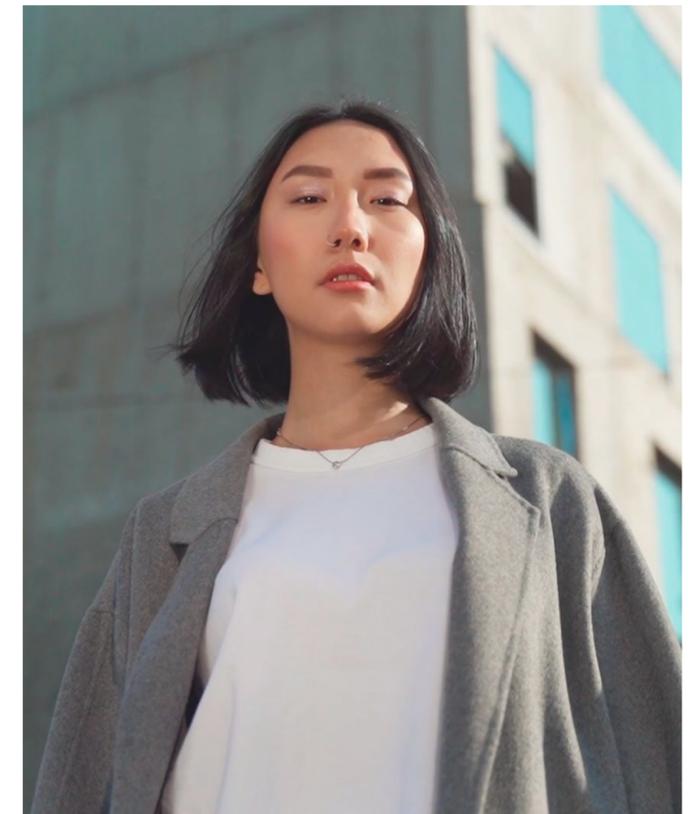
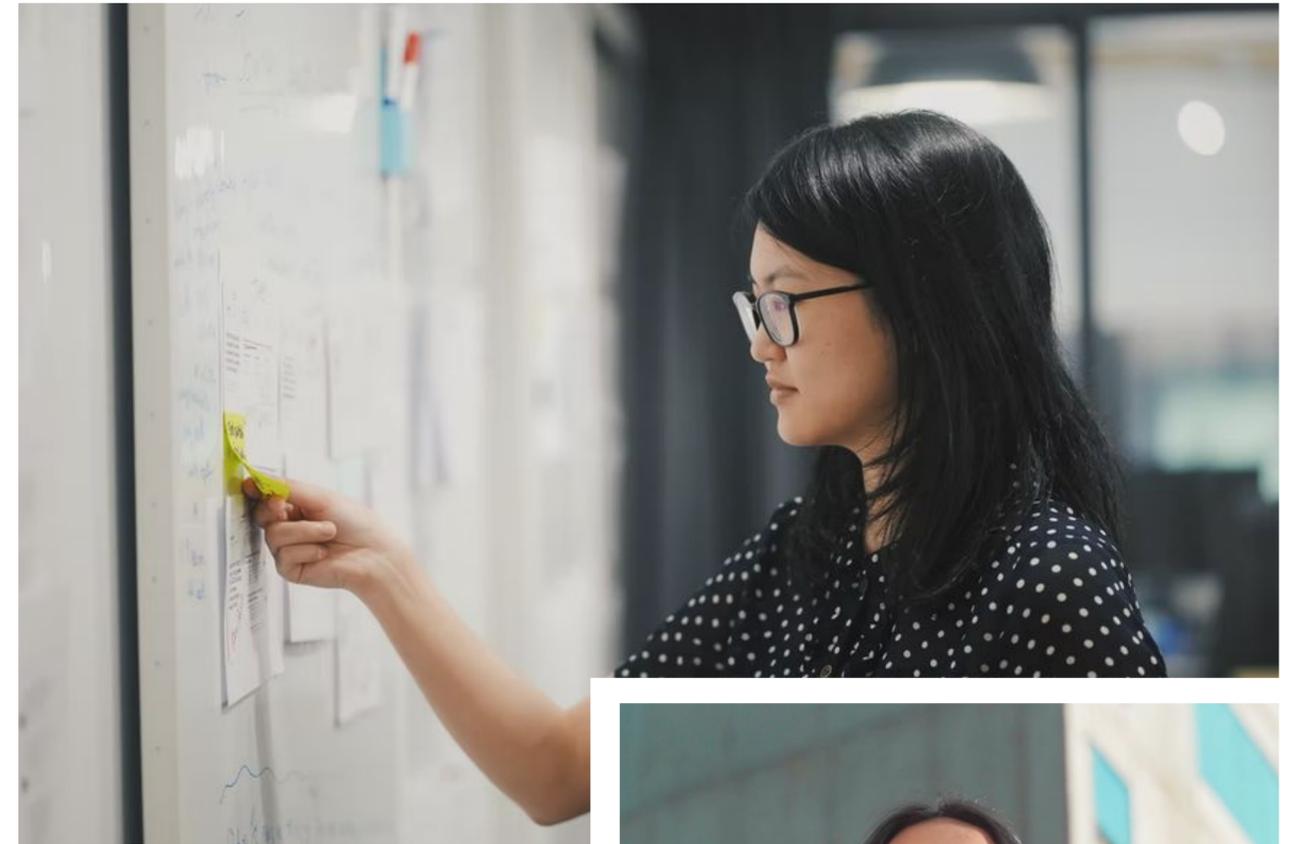
Our largest group, at **27%**, says it would be nice if their company did more to drive equality. We did find differences by age group and stage of life: women in their twenties without children, on average, expect their companies to do more to drive equality.



## So why are women in Asia not contributing actively to drive gender parity in their workplace?

When we ran these results by Diversity, Equity and Inclusion regional leaders, they noted that these findings are not surprising, companies make the mistake of copying and pasting expectations of and activism around diversity from the US and Europe into the Asian context.

One participant from a multinational said, “Often, we come from a western mindset around diversity and inclusion, assuming people must fight for their rights. Companies have started employee resource groups here on diversity topics that would’ve been very popular in a western country, but here they don’t have sufficient participation. We can’t assume people will knock on doors in Asia and scream for their rights.”



In addition to cultural context, our experts observed that **unconscious bias** plays a key role in Asian women not recognising when they are being discriminated against.



truth #4

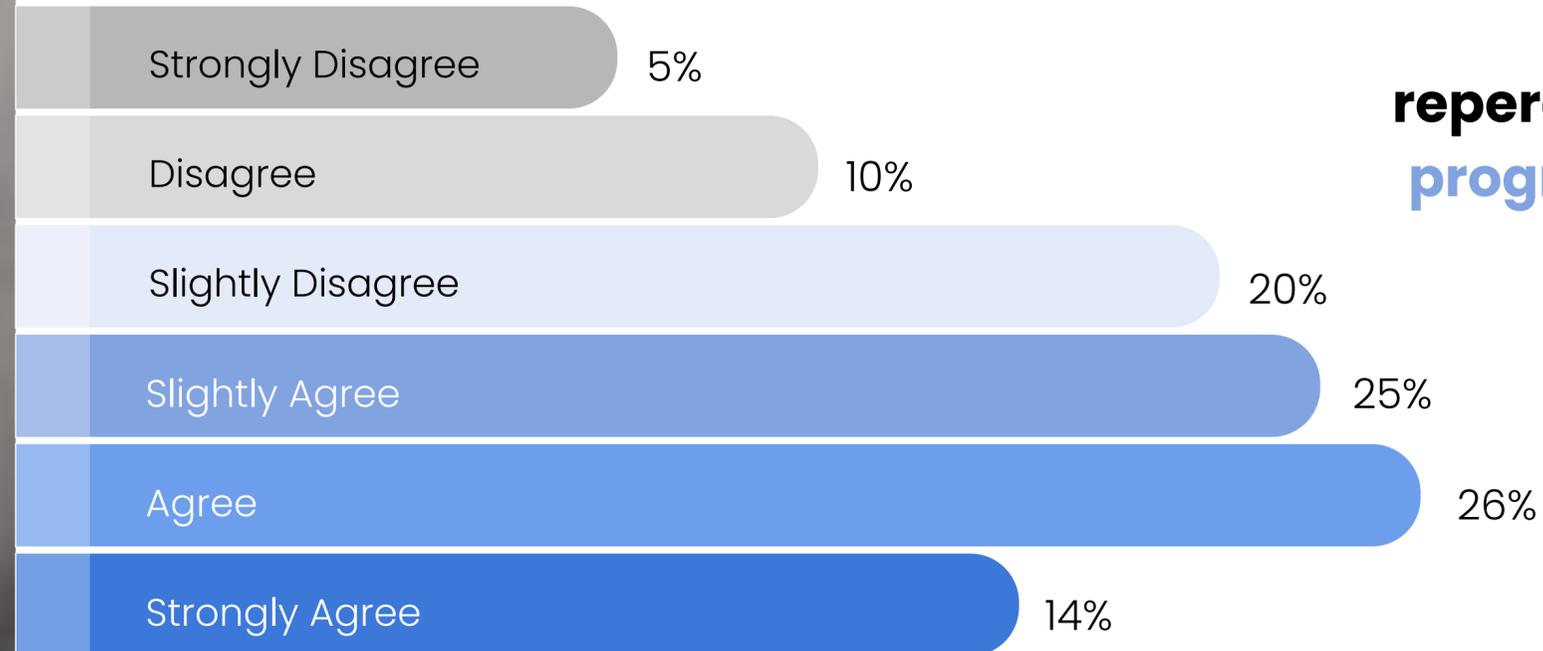
Women are still  
unsure of how to  
speak up for  
**their rights**

truth #4

# Women are still unsure of how to speak up for their rights

## 3 out of 10

women say they feel **uncomfortable negotiating a pay rise** or an increase in benefits with their managers.



## 7 out of 10

women believe there would be **serious repercussions** for their professional progression if they pushed for parity.

“ **There would be serious repercussions for my professional progression if I pushed for gender parity in my workplace** ”



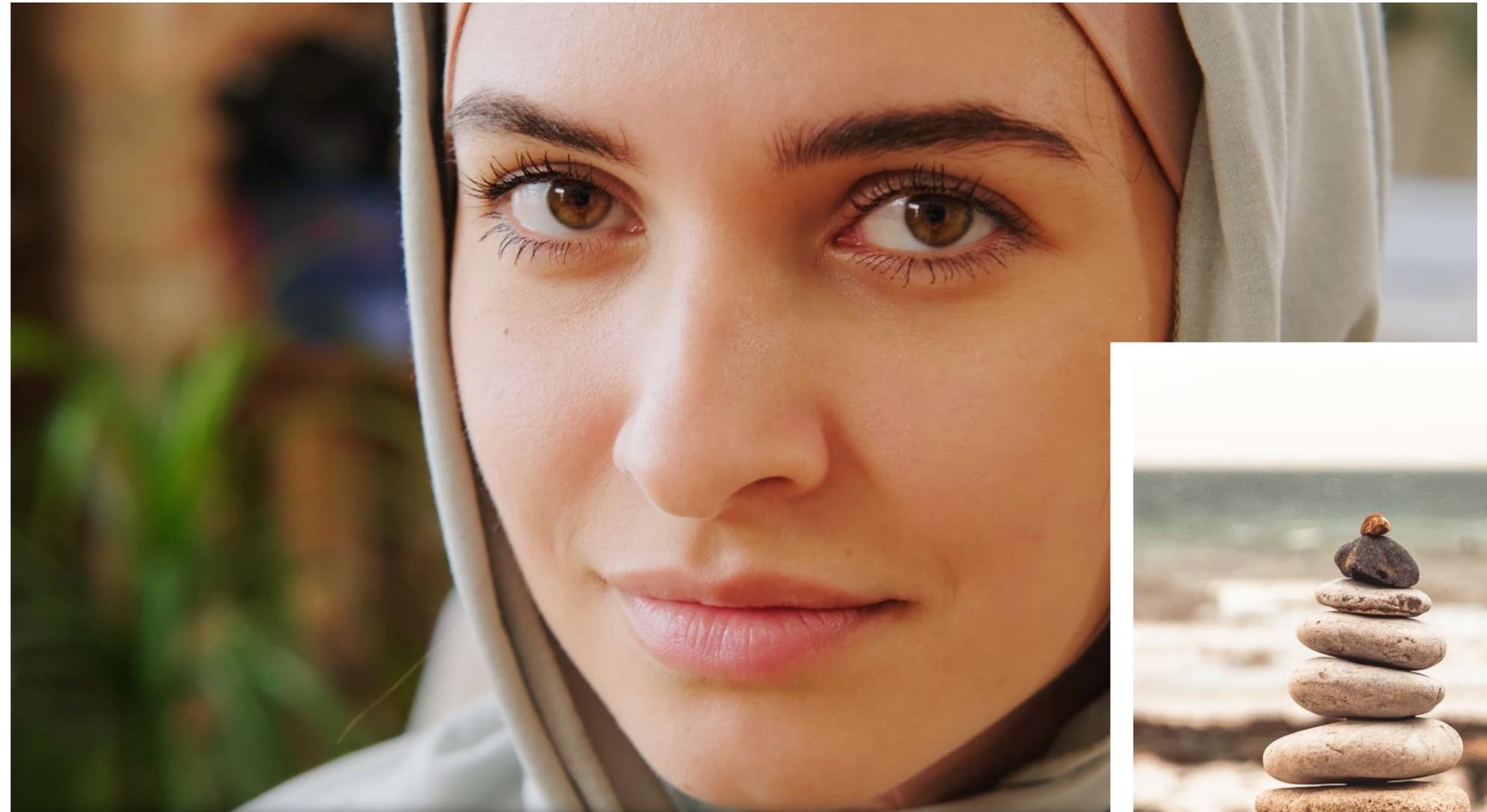
Yet, for a majority of respondents who aspire to leadership positions, an **increase in income is the primary driving force.**

**So what makes women feel cautious about negotiating higher salaries?**

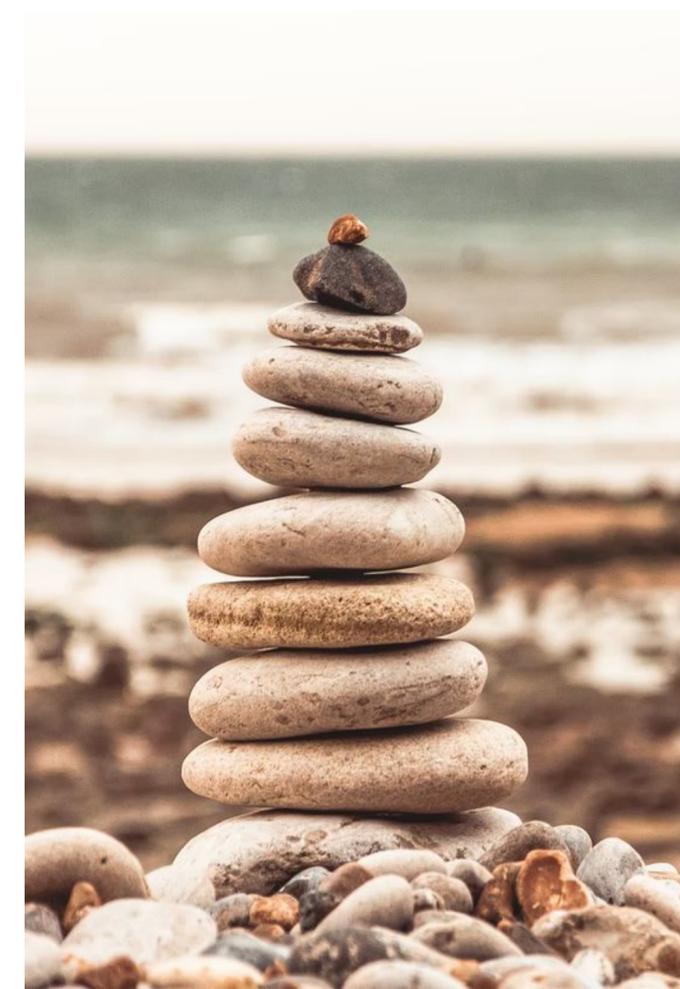
We hypothesise that speaking up for their rights, is difficult for women in Asia given the omnipresence of hierarchy in corporate environments.

Lending support to that hypothesis, nearly **7 out of 10** women say there would be serious repercussions for their professional progress, if they push for gender parity in the workplace.

Yet, over **3 in 4** of women say they know the right channel for voicing their opinion, and they believe they're supported by senior management, when it comes to voicing sexism in the workplace.



If women feel supported and have channels for communication, why do **7 out of 10** women still feel uncomfortable pushing for gender parity? Where is psychological safety breaking down in organisations?



truth #5

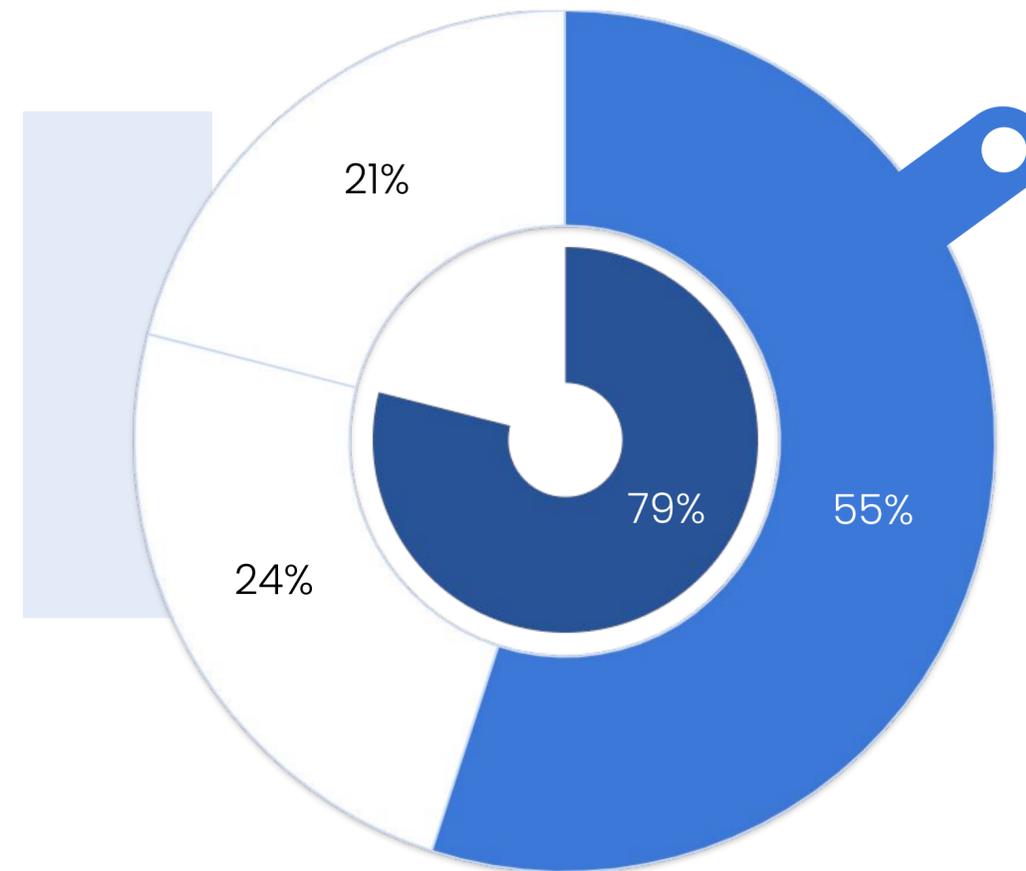
At **79%**, the appetite for growth is bigger than we think



## truth #5

At **79%**, the appetite for growth is bigger than we think

For our respondents, growth is an overarching desire. Growth has two distinct features, personal career growth and the development of others.



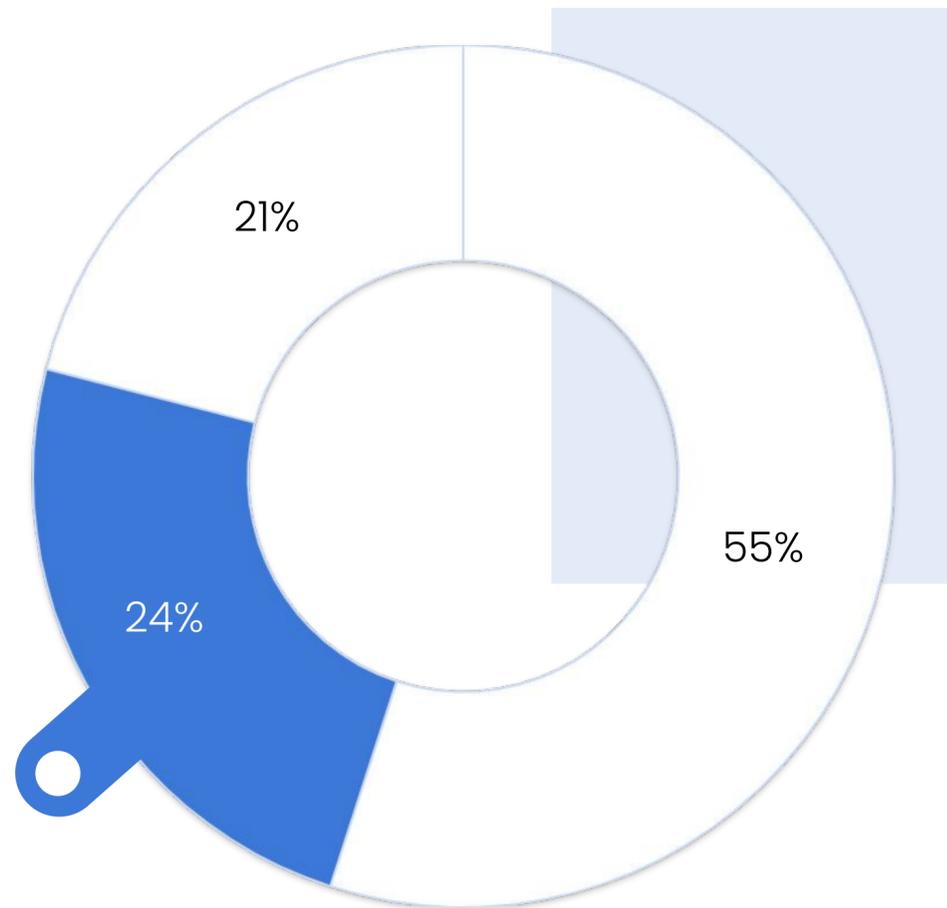
For **55%** of women, growth in their personal careers ranges from building a personal brand to getting promoted to receiving a pay-hike to starting their own business.

## 55% CAREER GROWTH

**Women have many different ways they are looking to grow: from job title, to remuneration, to personal brand, to beginning their own business.**

- **Increase** in salary/ improvement in benefits
- **Improve** or expand my skillset
- **Increase** professional knowledge and training
- **Attain** a leadership / more senior role  
e.g C-suite level, board member, and/or company owner
- **Boost** my career network / reputation
- **Start** / grow my own company
- **Improve** / grow the company I work for
- **Hit** a particular sales / productivity goal for my company

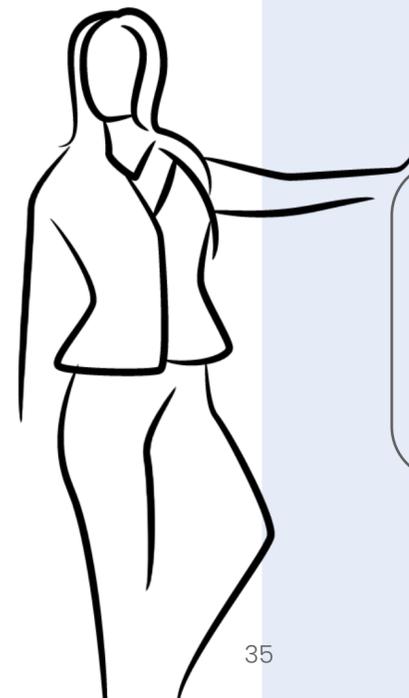
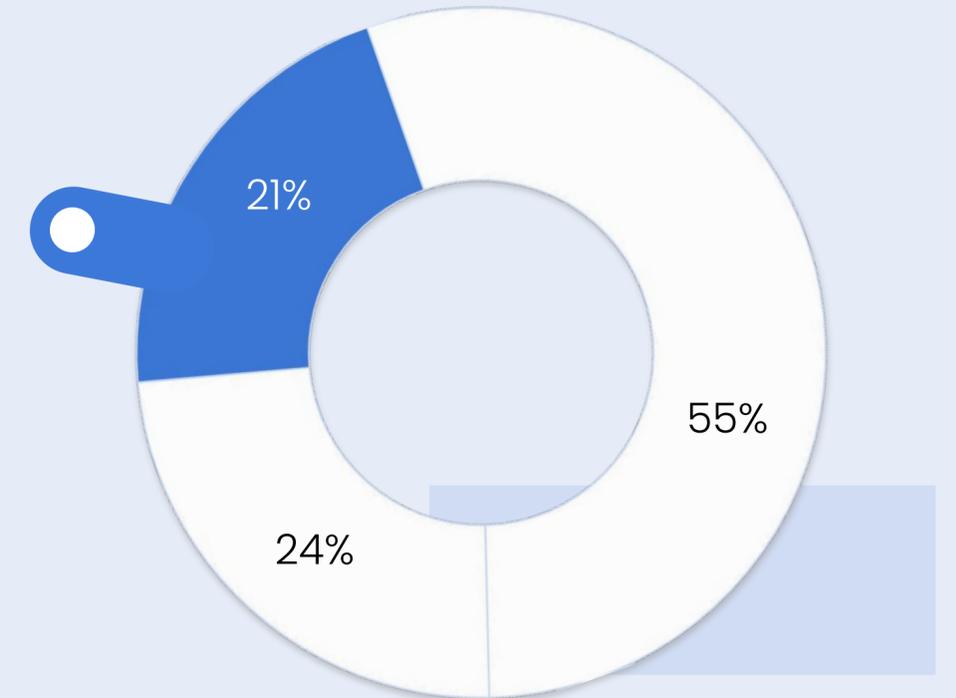
A further **24%** of women say that developing others is their primary career goal for the future. This includes becoming a mentor, working in an inspiring team, or driving social impact.



# 24% DEVELOP OTHERS

Finally, **21%** of our respondents want their careers to evolve. This means more work-life balance, changing scope, attaining fulfilment, and achieving financial stability.

# 21% EVOLVE



**The results differ by country: remuneration is critical in Singapore and Hong Kong while senior roles and power are more appealing in India and Indonesia.**

truth #6

Women with children are **2X**<sup>a</sup> **more likely to focus on company growth** vs. personal growth

truth #6

Women with children are **2X more likely to focus on company growth vs. personal growth**

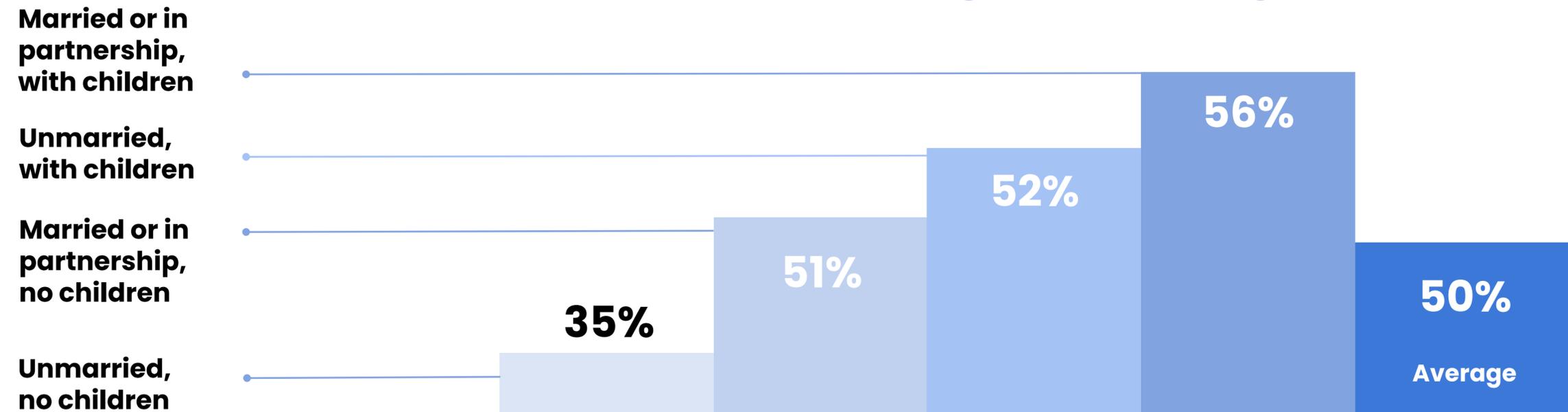
Amongst the women who say they aspire to leadership positions, motivations are varied. Demographically, women with children, are twice as likely as women without children, to want to drive company growth and hit their targets.

Not only is company growth important to women with children, it is as important to them as receiving an increase in their remuneration and benefits, or improving their skill sets.

In comparison, women without children were **4** times more likely to prioritise a pay increase over driving growth in the organisation, shattering myths about women becoming less committed to organisations after starting families.

Interestingly, women with children also seem most confident that there will be significant progress towards equality by 2030. Women with children are **25%** more likely to be confident or very confident of seeing progress vs. women without children.

“ To be in a stronger position to drive change within the organisation



truth #7

While there are similarities, women across Asia have **different challenges, perspectives and aspirations**



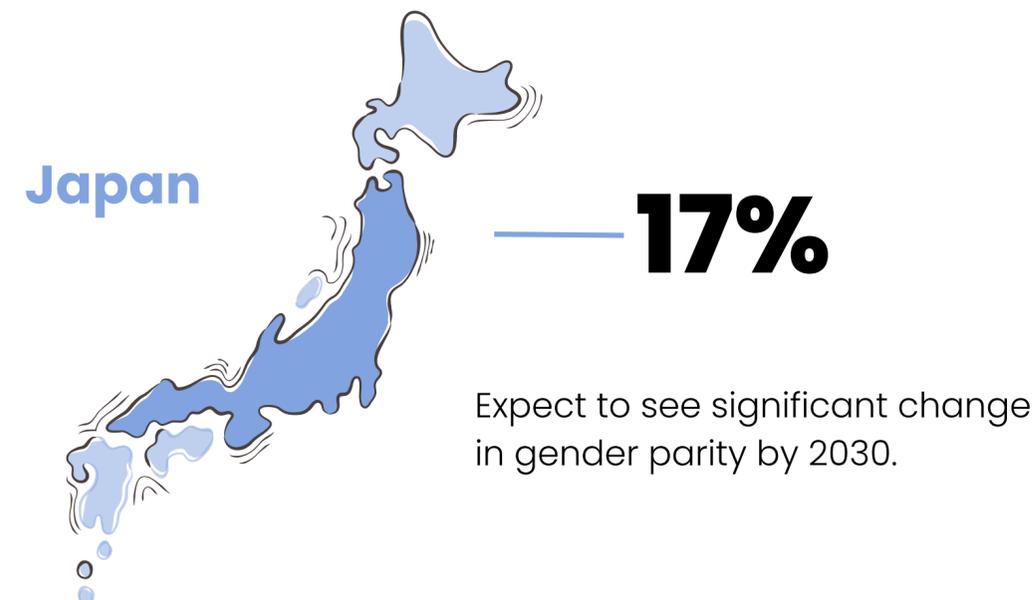
## truth #7

## While there are similarities, women across Asia have different challenges, perspectives and aspirations

Although it should be apparent that the 2.3 billion women across Asia have different needs, challenges and aspirations, their needs are often bucketed as 'Asia'.

Among our respondents, while **12%** of women say they actively contribute to driving parity in the workplace, women in China, India and Indonesia are **3X** more likely to agree with that statement.

Unsurprisingly, women in China, India, Indonesia are also the most confident, that they will see significant moves towards equality in their workplaces by 2030. **85%** of women in China, India and Indonesia were positive there would be noticeable change vs. **17%** of women in Japan.



When it comes to leadership aspirations, our respondents differ considerably too. Only **1 in 10** women aspire to leadership roles in Japan although women's economic participation in Japan is **72.8%**, higher than any other country in our survey.

On the other hand, **1 in 3** women in China and India, **1 in 4** women in Indonesia, and **1 in 5** women in Hong Kong and Singapore aspire to leadership roles. Surprisingly, women in countries with higher economic participation of women have lower leadership aspirations, leading to a concern that perfunctory diversity initiatives bring women into the workforce, but fail them when it comes to opportunities for career advancement.

Aspirations towards leadership are motivated by remuneration in Hong Kong, Singapore and Japan, organisational change and women's empowerment in India and Indonesia, and all these factors carry comparable weight in China.

truth #8

Managers who actively support gender parity inspire greater loyalty



## truth #8

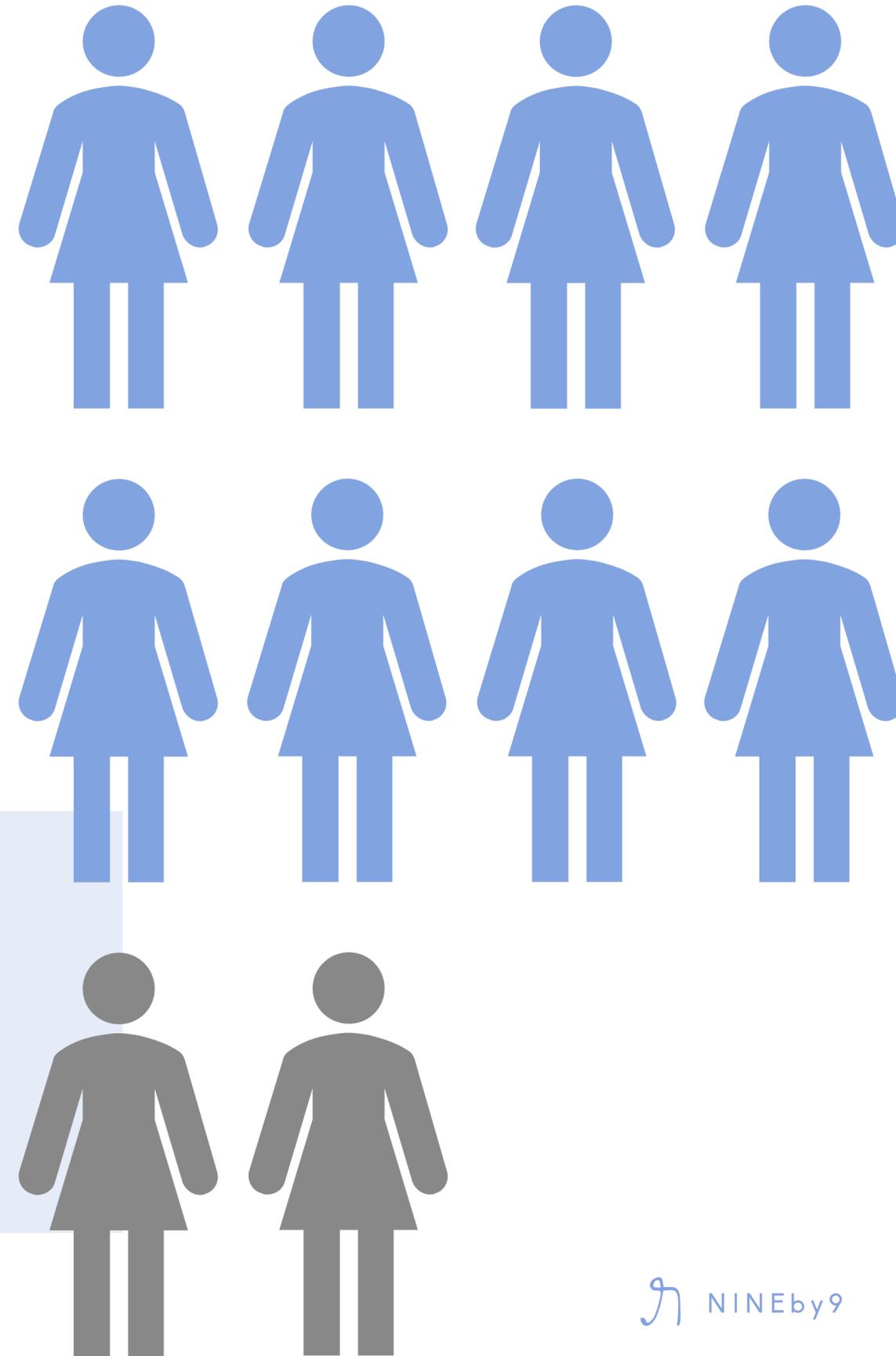
# Managers who actively support gender parity inspire greater loyalty

Across countries, **8 in 10** women say that they are more loyal to a company, where their boss supports gender parity. Noticeably, less than **4 in 10** women in Japan agree.

The importance of a manager, in driving gender parity cannot be overstated. If you recall, **7 out of 10** women say there will be serious repercussions for their career trajectory, if they push for gender parity in the workplace. Yet, over **75%** of women say they know the right channel for voicing their opinion and they believe they're supported by senior management, when it comes to voicing sexism in the workplace.



*Been working in the same company for 5 years and had not have a chance to be promoted. When the new manager took over, he reviewed my work and decided that I had done much better than any other higher-position colleagues. Hence, he put up promotion request for me.*



INSEAD's Asia emerging markets survey<sup>13</sup> revealed **95%** of women mentioned their current or prior direct supervisor as playing a critical role in their career success. Separate research shows that women were "over-mentored but under-sponsored"<sup>14</sup>, and that having a mentor isn't enough - women need a sponsor within the organisation, who will step up for them.



*The Manager level positions in our department has a mandatory hiring clause: A married woman is disallowed to apply for the said position because the position required international travels at short notice.*

*However, with continuous support from my immediate supervisor and a series of discussion with higher management, the clause was amended in my favor.*

*I was promoted to the said position with absolutely no resistance from my fellow team members.*

Putting these data points together, it leads us to believe that the **direct manager plays a key role in the experience women have of gender parity**, affecting their ability to speak up and in their loyalty to their organisations.

**The stories women shared with us, allude to the criticality of a manager who stands up for them: whether it is by being fair in their performance evaluation or in stepping up to ensure they have equal opportunities or in creating work-life balance.**



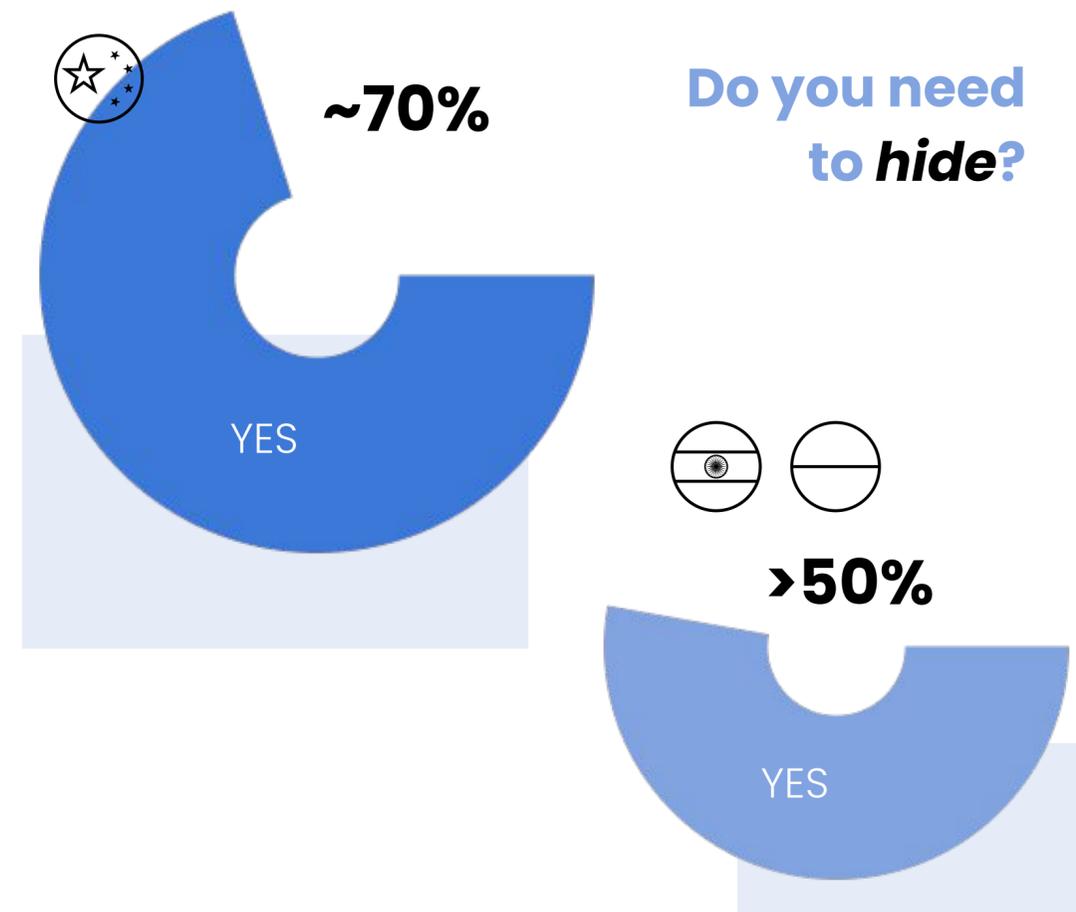
truth #9

**Unconscious bias** remains our biggest hurdle in Asia

truth #9

# Unconscious bias remains our biggest hurdle in Asia

We conclude that the barriers in the workplace are mostly unseen and this is even more so in Asia. When we asked women if they need to hide who they are, to be accepted by their male colleagues, nearly **70%** of women in China, and over **50%** of women in India and Singapore agreed, they feel the need to hide who they truly are.



Our conclusion that unconscious bias is a huge hurdle in Asia comes from internal and external findings. First, there were disappointingly few stories of truly 'positive' experiences of gender parity, leaving much to be desired.

Second, the number of contradictory statements paint a picture that doesn't demonstrate equality. On one hand, women say they have equal opportunities and pay, yet they are concerned about professional repercussions if they push for gender parity in the workplace. Our respondents also admit they're uncomfortable being themselves around their male colleagues.

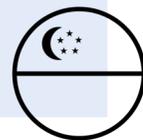


*"There are times when male colleagues help and complement my shortcomings as a woman. They take over jobs that are more easily done by men, namely checking and lifting heavy items. I am grateful for that."*

External research such as INSEAD's emerging market gender research in Asia in 2018<sup>[13]</sup> corroborates our findings,  $\frac{2}{3}$  of men and over **50%** of women admitted to having exhibited unconscious bias towards women. Leading global diversity researchers<sup>15</sup> have also been beating the drum about 'second generation bias' which makes women believe they have equality, for decades.



*There was a fiber break near the office and someone has to go to fix it. Due to me being a girl, I was always left in the office to do paperwork and often disregarded for any field work. There was a time when a co-worker had no choice but to include me in the task. I was able to carry out the same task, as men do.*



*When I first interviewed, it was easy to be timid as a girl. When I did this, my superior leaders gave me a lot of help and encouragement.*

**Furthermore, in parts of Asia, patriarchal societies<sup>16</sup> drive deeply ingrained expectations of women as a homemaker, caregiver, mother and wife. Thus women believe that opportunities and equality exist in workplaces and perhaps they are the ones falling behind vs. seeing systemic issues that block their path forward.**



# NINE ACTIONS FOR CHANGE IN NINE YEARS

# We hypothesised **9 themes** and **46 areas** to measure gender parity

## Gender Parity Themes

Hypothesized based on secondary research



**Career progression and opportunities**



**Empowering my voice and opinions**



**Recognizing my achievements**



**Company and career role models**



**Mentorship opportunities**



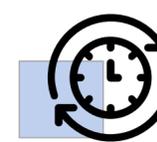
**Remuneration package**



**Company culture**



**Pastoral care and personal support**



**Work-life balance**

## Gender Parity Proof Points

Hypothesized to be areas under each theme based on secondary research

**Respect**

**Growth opportunities**

**Equal treatment**

**Support from senior management**

**Comfort in negotiating**

**Family situation**

**Clear goals**

**Workplace role models**

**Support from male colleagues**

**Balance**

**Flexibility**

**Proper channels**

**Comfort in raising concerns**

**Transparency**

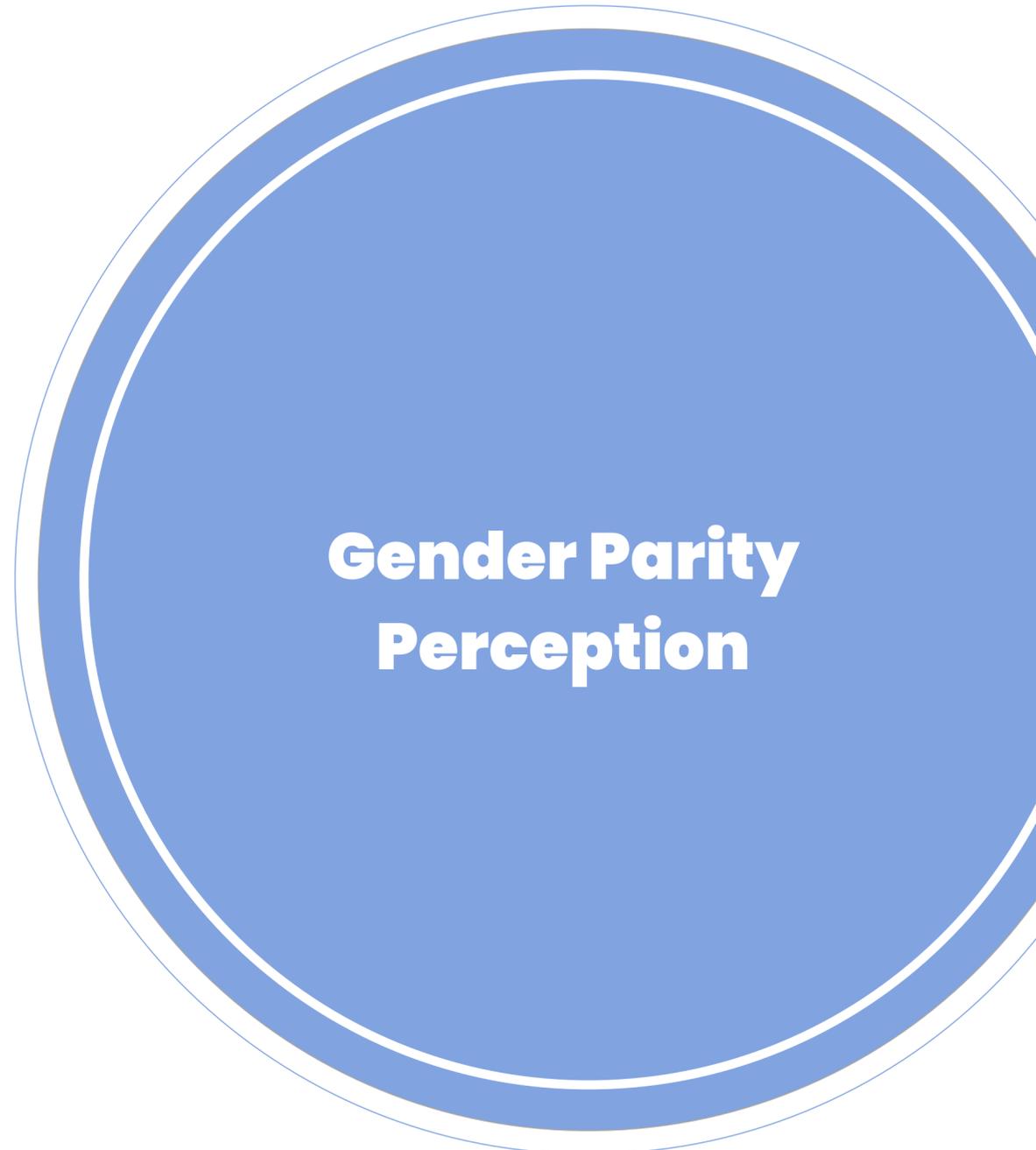
**Female leaders**

**Equal treatment**

**Support from fellow women**

# We **derived importance** of each area using regression analysis

**Linear regression analysis** measures to what extent each of the **independent variables** (gender parity proof points) have a relationship with the **dependent variables** (perception of gender parity).



I have individuals in my workplace who I can look up to as role models



I feel supported by male colleagues in my workplace



My personal views are as respected as colleagues of the opposite gender in my workplace



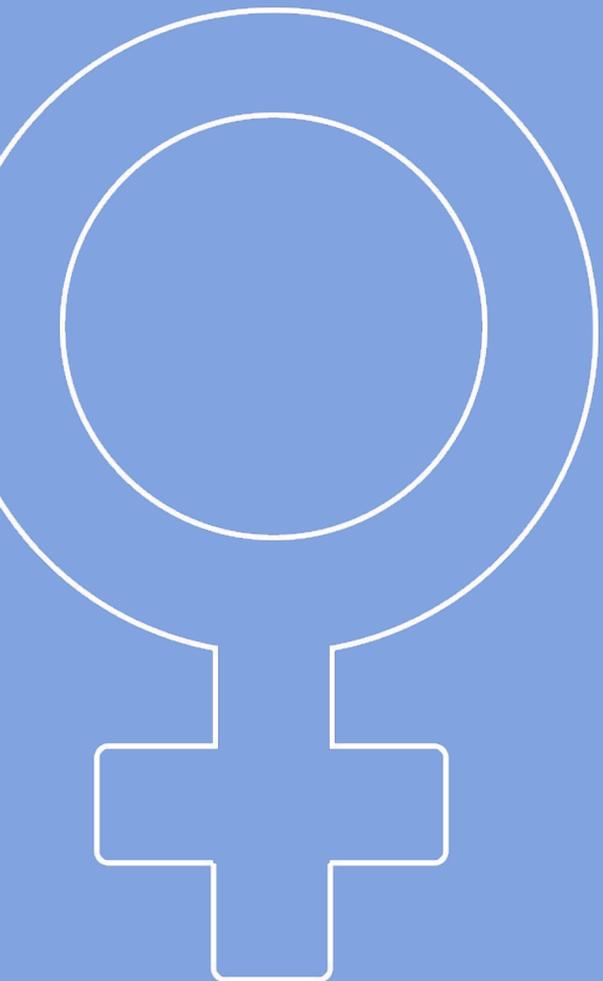
I have a clear understanding of what I need to achieve in my role to progress to the next level



I have all the flexibility I want in how I complete my work (eg. flexi-time, flexi-place)



# What will drive **gender parity** for the women of Asia?



our **framework**

  
driven by **organisations**

**demonstrate.**  
**visible proof**

**create.**  
**specific policies**

**encourage.**  
**male allies**

  
driven by **managers**

**reinforce.**  
**culture of equality**

**recognise.**  
**contribution**

**ensure.**  
**work-life balance**

  
driven by **women**

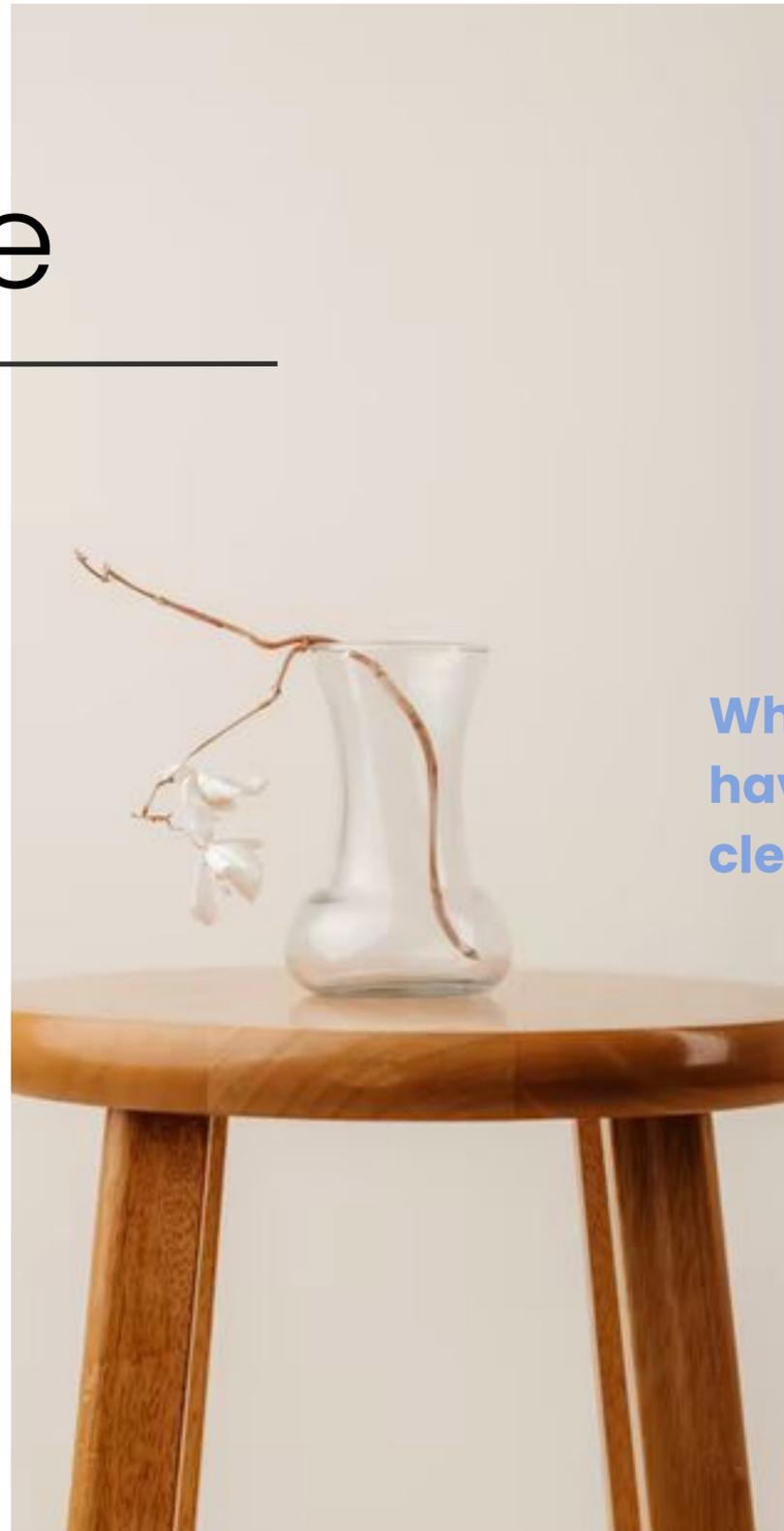
**create.**  
**personal belief**

**seek.**  
**role models**

**raise.**  
**important topics**

# DEI Roundtable

In September 2021, after analysing the findings from our in-market research,, we brought together experienced diversity, equity and inclusion leaders, from multinationals and regional companies to get their perspectives on our results. We requested these industry leaders to contribute their best in class practices for us to share with the SMEs and regional firms reading this report.



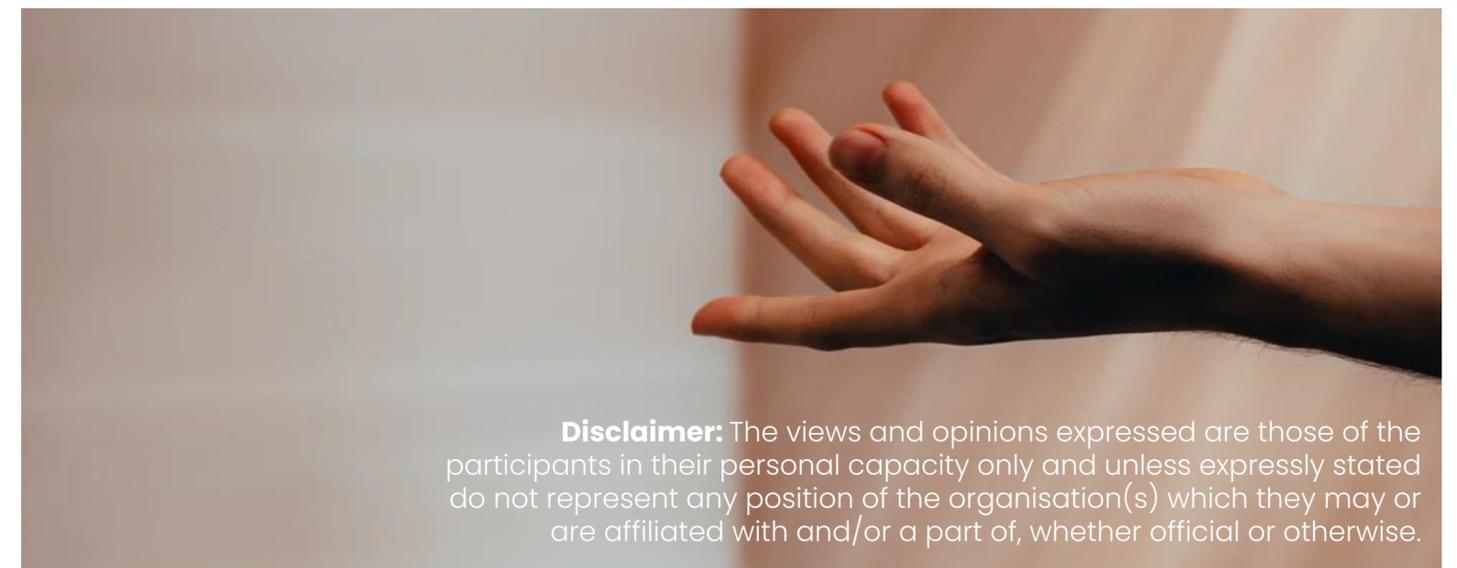
We sought to answer: **How might we drive the outcomes women say will be critical to creating gender parity in the workplace?**

Why are there gaps? What had these firms, who were ahead of the curve, done that had been impactful?

**Why do women believe they have equality when the data clearly shows that they do not?**

We then formulated the NINEby9 Framework and Action Checklist based on:

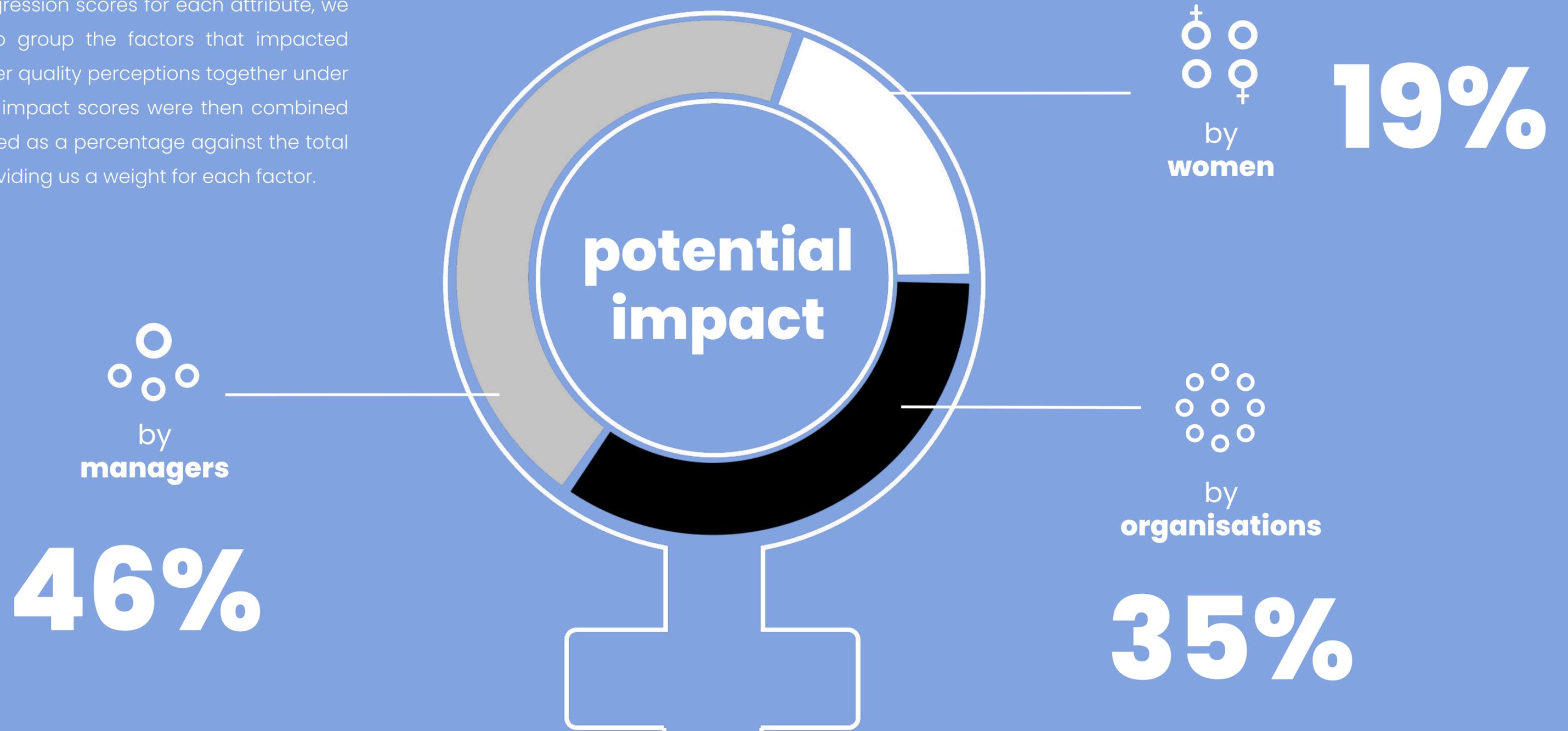
1. Themes that emerged through **our research**
2. Best practices from **regional DEI experts**
3. Searching the **literature** for best practices related to the themes that emerged through our research.



**Disclaimer:** The views and opinions expressed are those of the participants in their personal capacity only and unless expressly stated do not represent any position of the organisation(s) which they may or are affiliated with and/or a part of, whether official or otherwise.

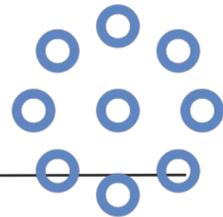
# Nine actions **for change**

Using our regression scores for each attribute, we were able to group the factors that impacted overall gender quality perceptions together under 9 areas. The impact scores were then combined and compared as a percentage against the total impact - providing us a weight for each factor.



# Through our research, **three stakeholders** stood out

## 1 Organisations

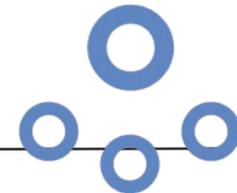


**1/3** of the opportunity rests with organisations.

In recent decades, organisations have made moves to bring in more diversity into organisations and reacted to critical movements that lit “fires” like the #metoo movement.

This next decade is an opportunity for not just diversity in the workforce but for true inclusion and equal opportunities for women. We heard that women want visible proof of the organisation’s efforts, not just lip service. We also heard that women value male allyship as much as they value additional policies being created to support their differing needs.

## 2 Managers

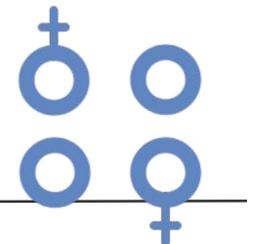


Our research shows that managers drive nearly **half** the opportunity for impact towards parity.

Countries in Asia are dramatically different from one another but where they are similar is in their attitude towards hierarchy vs. egalitarianism<sup>17</sup> with hierarchical cultures being the norm. This preference for and deference to hierarchy reiterates the importance of someone senior championing a woman in the workplace.

Our findings showed that the manager’s role tends to be critical to the female employee especially in three key areas: reinforcing the culture of equality through their actions, recognising contributions, and ensuring work-life balance. As reported, **8 out of 10** women said they’d be more loyal to a boss who supports parity.

## 3 Women



Less than **a fifth** of the potential for change rests on the shoulders of the woman herself.

With gender discrimination often being largely invisible and unconscious even for the woman herself, the initiatives that we share directly combat that unconscious bias.

First, creating personal belief that a woman can work in any industry, in any position is necessary to erase decades of societal conditioning that impact a woman’s confidence and expectations of parity. Second, the psychological safety to raise important topics without risk of repercussions is critical to making progress. Finally, organisational sponsorship makes a significant difference in a woman’s career trajectory.



As an  
**Organisation**

# Organisation: Demonstrate Visible Proof

It isn't surprising that a key factor in driving gender parity for the women of Asia is for organisations to demonstrate visible proof of their commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.

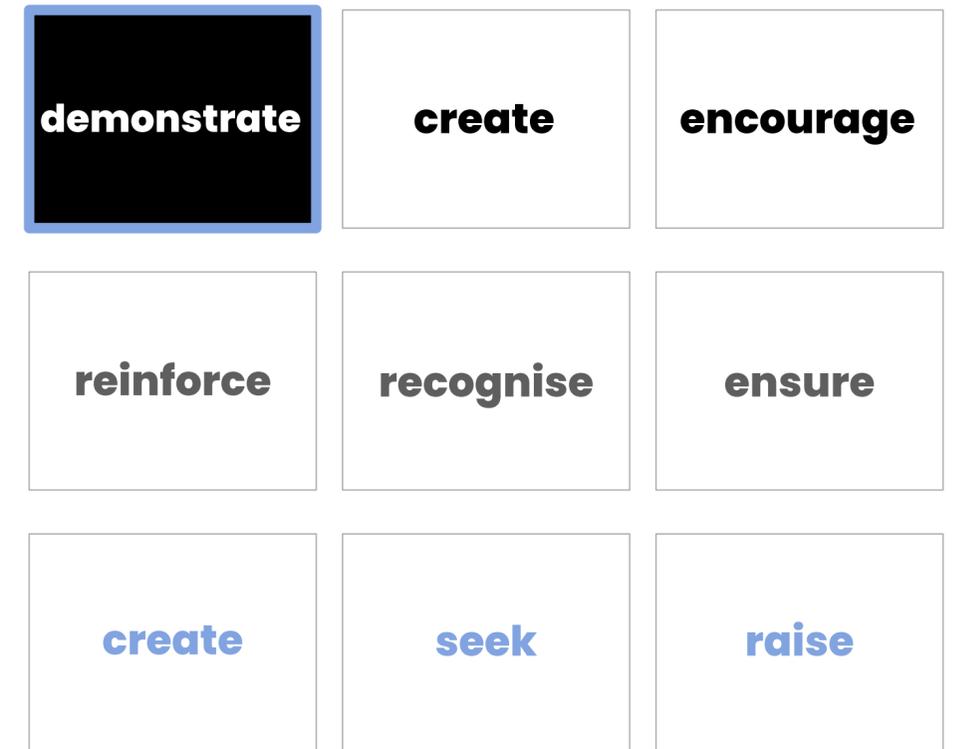


The women who answered our survey wanted organisations to **prove that men and women have equal opportunities to get promoted.**

They want to be confident that their salaries and benefits match those of men in equivalent positions. They also want their workplace to offer transparency in terms of remuneration and to understand how remuneration is linked to performance.

**We've moved beyond the 'salary is a black box' era.** Women now want visible proof that they are being compensated fairly and equally.

Finally, women want to see that their company has a strong pipeline of female leaders. Creating a strong pipeline of female leaders indicates longer term thinking and organisational investment vs. performative DEI efforts.



# Organisation: Demonstrate Visible Proof

## Self Assessment

Are we demonstrating visible proof as an organisation?

*This list was compiled through interviews with DEI experts, literature search of best practices and insights from our survey.*

### Equal Pay and Opportunities

- Do we pay men and women similarly for the same role from the moment they join the organisation?
- Are we transparent about pay scales and levels?
- Is our process for promotions transparent?
- Have we actively weeded out unconscious bias from our promotion process?

### Leadership Pipeline

- Are we actively building out a pipeline of female leaders who will move into senior positions over time?
- Do we give women access to training and development opportunities designed for them vs. to train them to lead like men?
- Are women given equal opportunities for high profile projects?

### Measurement

- Do we conduct gender parity audits to gauge how engaged and included women feel regularly?
- Do we share these results and our actions openly with the organisation?
- Are our engagement metrics for inclusion improving?
- Is gender parity a topic our board holds us responsible for making progress on?

### Leadership Buy-in

- Do we educate senior leaders on inclusion practices not just on diversity?

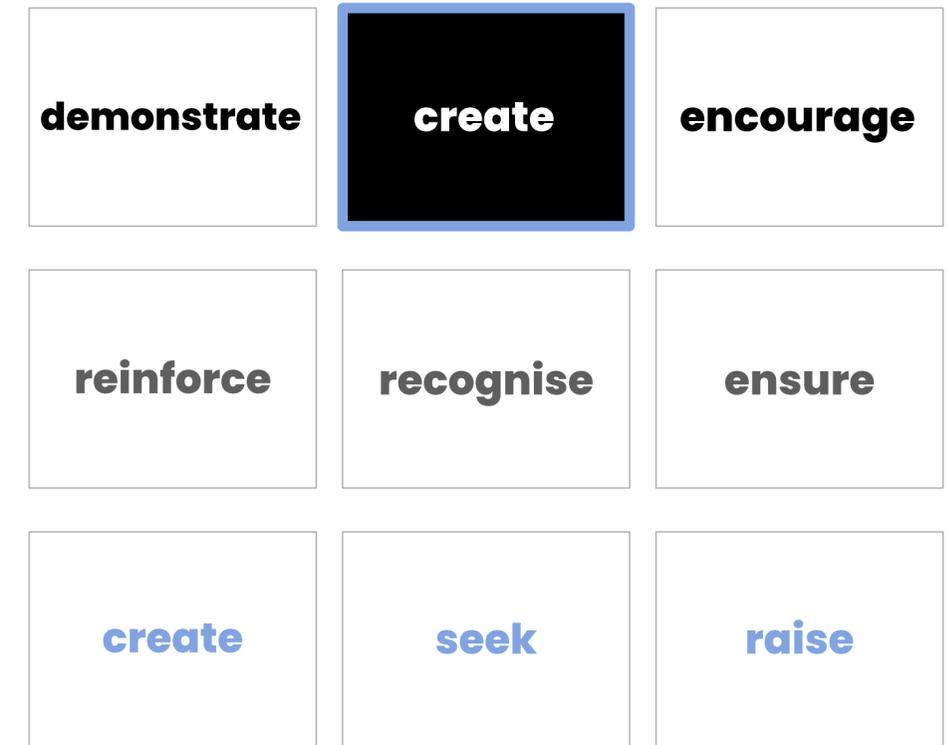
# Organisation: Create Policies

Nearly **40%** of women in Asia say that while gender parity matters, they aren't sure of how to drive parity in the workplace or it would be nice if their organisations did more.

What do women want from their organisations? First and foremost, women want their organisations to have policies in place to support and champion women. This is especially true for women in Indonesia and China. For women in China, organisational support is the most important factor when it comes to driving parity in the workplace. Given the Asian context where collectivism prevails over individualism, it isn't surprising to see so much emphasis on the organisation.

However, as a 2019 survey<sup>[9]</sup> shows, while a number of organisations in Asia have Diversity, Equality and Inclusion efforts with over **80%** focused on gender parity, and most executives think DEI is important, less than **40%** of individuals are satisfied with the efforts of the organisation. There is still a lot more to be done, especially as DEI leaders in Asia start to look at intersectionality.

On a related note, women also want their organisations to support their physical needs tied to being a woman in the workplace. This is especially true for women in India and Singapore and far less so in Hong Kong.



contribution to potential impact

# Organisation: Create Policies

Are we creating policies to support gender parity as an organisation?

*A common refrain is: "we couldn't find women for the role." In situations like this, the hiring manager needs to get into the details of the process. Did the role description signal gender bias? Was there a gatekeeper who stopped you from seeing candidates who may have been a fit? Which candidates were dropped in the process, and why?*

**- Heather Matla  
Director, Talent SEA & ANZ,  
Netflix**

## Equal Pay and Opportunities

- Do we have policies that drive transparent and equal pay for men and women?
- Are our performance reviews and decisions on promotions based on transparent, unbiased, objective metrics?

## Recruitment and Leadership Development

- Do we have checks and balances in place to ensure our recruiting process is inclusive e.g. avoiding language that will alienate women in JDs?
- Do we train and develop women to take on leadership roles early and often?
- Do we audit our recruiting processes when we find they're not expanding our hiring pool?

## Flexibility

- Do our policies support flexibility for people with varied needs e.g. part time work?
- Do career paths get affected for employees who partake in our flexible policies?

## Leave and Wellbeing

- Is our parental leave policy fair towards employees coming from different life circumstances e.g. homes where the men are primary caregivers?
- Do we provide the right support for physical needs that may be unique to women e.g. breastfeeding?

# Organisation: Encourage Male Allies

Men dominate leadership positions in Asia holding ~80% of managerial positions<sup>[5]</sup>, more active male voices are thus critical in supporting gender parity efforts.

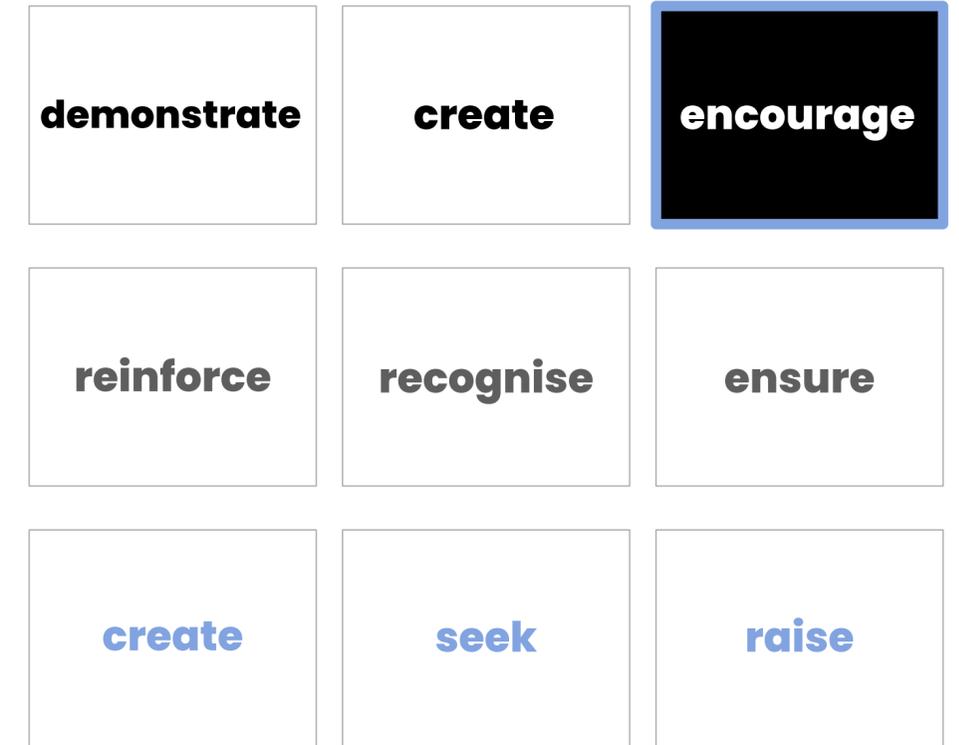
While male managers can make a significant difference to a woman’s experience of parity due to their station, men in the workplace can also be strong allies to women. Our respondents across countries emphasised the importance of supportive male colleagues who actively drove gender parity in the workplace. From speaking up when they witnessed sexism to sharing in the housekeeping tasks in the workplace or to stepping up to ensure equal opportunities, male allies made a significant difference to a woman’s experience.

Amongst the countries, women in China stood out in their strong desire for male allyship in the workplace.

While organisational efforts to drive gender parity in Asia need strong backing from men in the workplace to be successful, we want to be careful of positioning men as saviors of women, especially in multinational companies where having a white male ‘savior’<sup>18</sup> of an Asian woman could play to unhealthy power imbalances.



*There was a Client who tried to take advantage of me, but a male friend stepped in, berated the Client and helped me out.*



contribution to potential impact

# Organisation: Encourage Male Allies

Are we encouraging  
male allies as an  
organisation?

*When women see other women raising and speaking about important topics, they feel more confident to speak up. And when you see another male colleague or a senior leader echo some of the thoughts, it encourages people to speak up, creating a safe space for deeper conversations.*

**- Anitta Krishnan**  
**Global Head of People and**  
**Strategy, Tik-Tok**

## Education

- Are we clear about the distinction between male allies vs. male saviors in our organisation?
- Have we shared case studies on the power of inclusive workplaces with our employees?
- Do we educate men on what may come across as sexist in the workplace? Are they aware of unconscious bias?
- Do we give women a chance to share their lived experiences of sexism in the workplace with men?

## Allyship

- Do we bring gender parity related topics to the mainstream in the organisation or do we limit them to groups of women?
- Do we encourage men to participate in Employee Resource Groups supporting diversity as allies?
- Do we encourage men to step up when they come across sexism in the workplace?



As a  
**Manager**

# Managers: Reinforcing a Culture of Equality

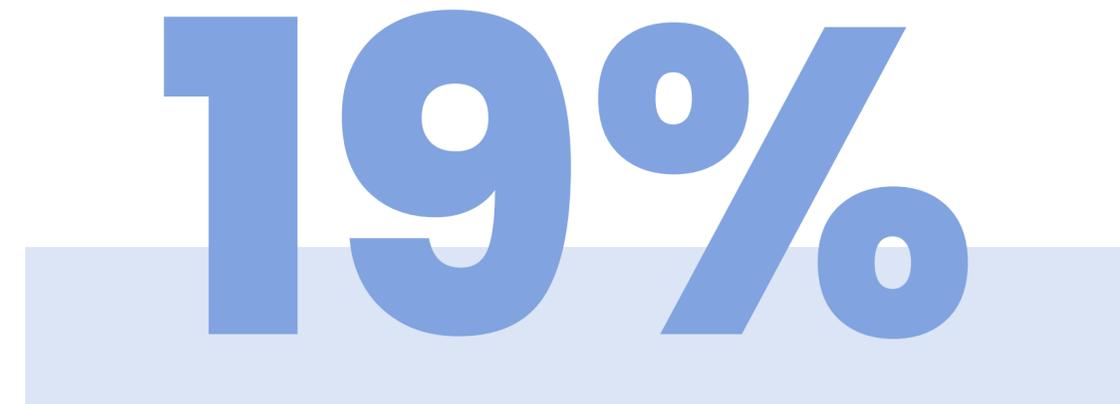
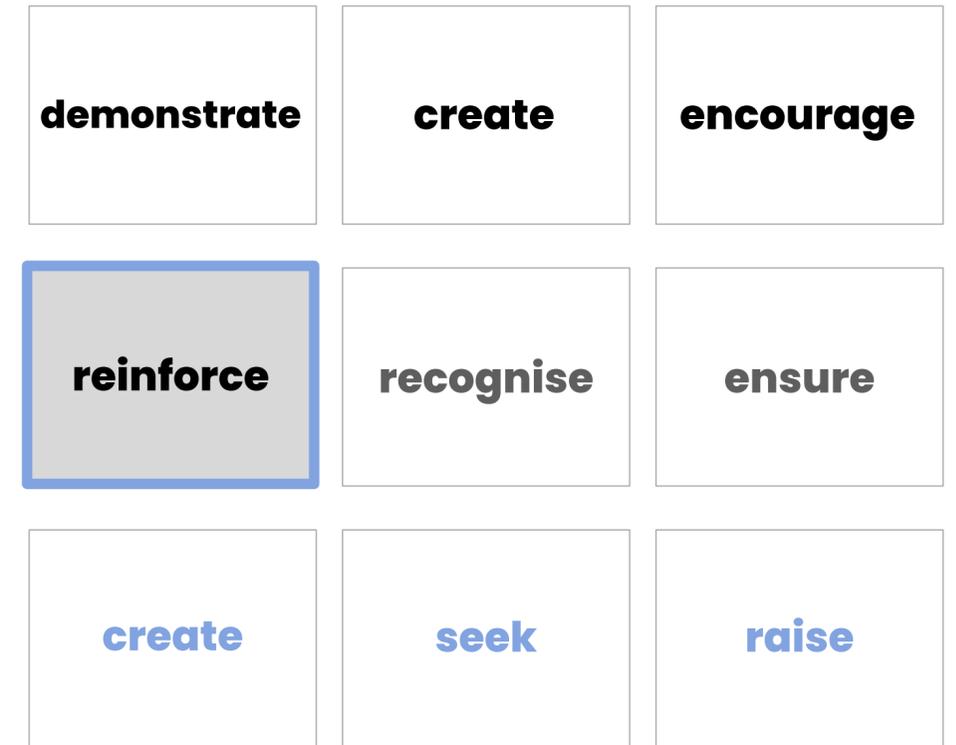
Nearly 1/5th of women’s experience of gender parity in the workplace can be attributed to managers reinforcing a culture of equality. As mentioned in the NINE truths from our research, having a manager support equality, drives loyalty amongst **8 out of 10** women in the workplace.

A manager reinforcing equality includes treating male and female colleagues similarly in the workplace, having women’s views heard and respected and feeling supported by other colleagues in the workplace.

Country differences abound, in Japan, being treated similarly to male colleagues stands out as the single most important factor in establishing gender parity at work. It is almost as critical in India and Singapore, important in Hong Kong but less critical in Indonesia and China.

The role of a manager in reinforcing a culture of equality cannot be emphasised enough. Our survey highlights a reluctance in women to speak up about issues, whether out of a fear of repercussions or due to the futility of the effort.

“*My male boss used to actively fight for my salary increase, arguing that the percentage should be equal to that of other male colleagues of the same age.*”



contribution to potential impact

# Managers: Reinforcing a Culture of Equality

## Are we reinforcing a culture of equality?

*Managers need to create  
psychological safety for women to  
raise important issues.*

**– Jasmine Bahen**  
**Chief Talent Officer, APAC,**  
**Edelman**

### As a Manager: Am I reinforcing a culture of equality?

- Does my team have the psychological safety they need to speak up i.e. they feel safe sharing their thoughts, taking risks etc.?
- Do I ensure women on my team are given the same opportunities that men have?
- Am I aware of the double bind i.e. women are perceived as likeable or competent, but not both?
- Do I actively focus on contribution and goal achievement when assessing women in my team?
- Do I actively solicit opinions from the women on my team during team meetings?
- Do I ensure that the men on my team don't restate the same ideas from female colleagues and receive the credit?

### As an Organisation: Are we reinforcing a culture of equality?

- Do we evaluate and compensate managers not just on their performance but also on how inclusive they are to their team?
- Do we have a process for women to report discrimination or have difficult conversations candidly, without concern for repercussions?
- Have we equipped teams and managers with the vocabulary to have difficult conversations about diversity and inclusion?

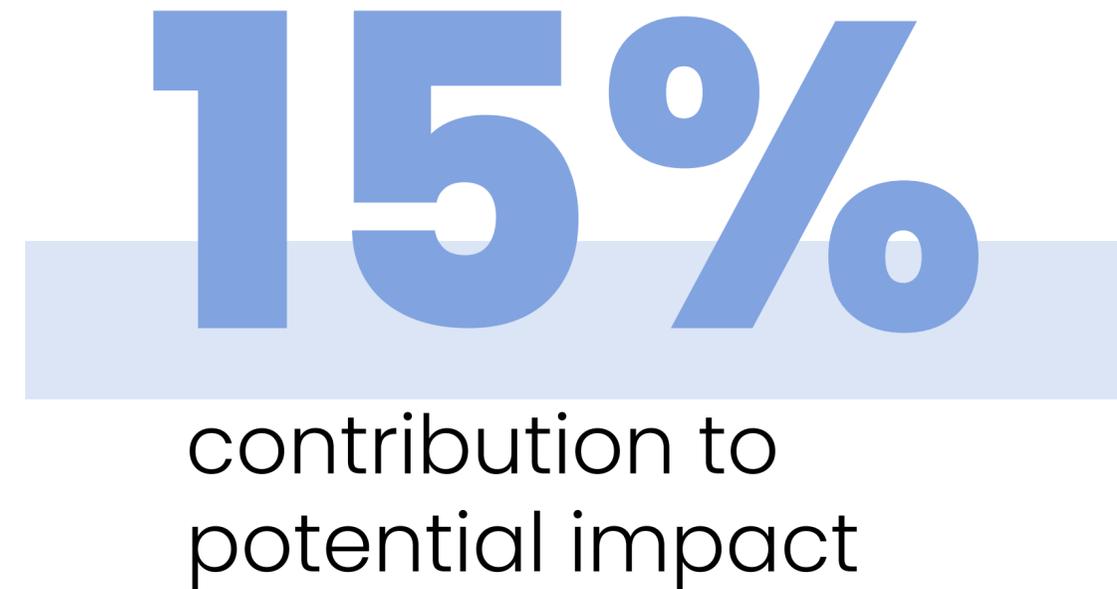
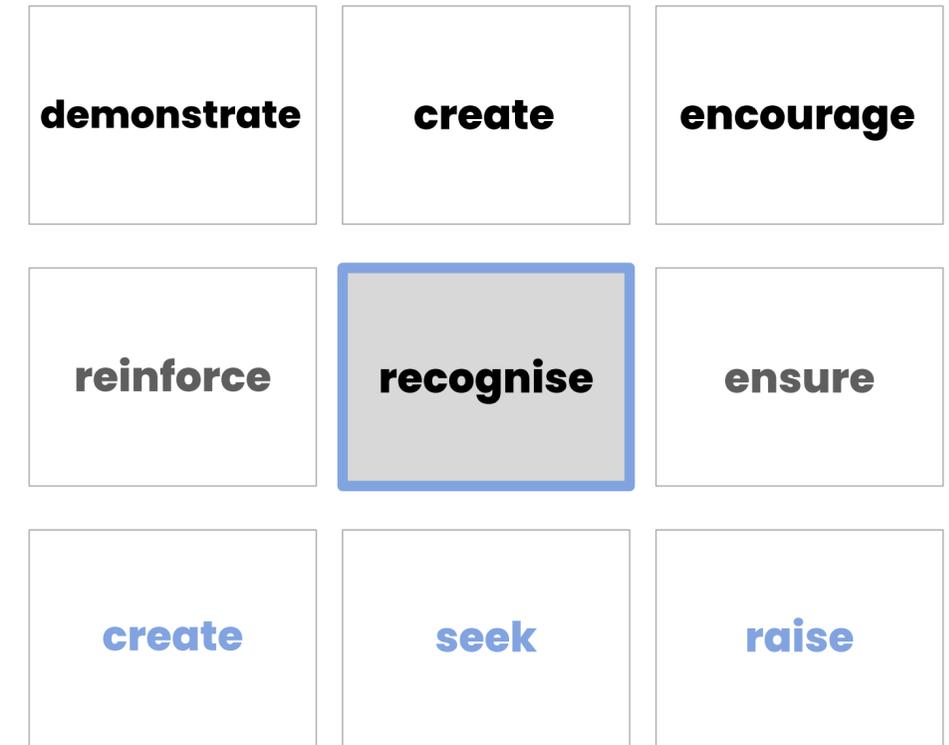
# Managers: Recognise Contribution

It is an established fact<sup>19</sup> that women take on more of the ‘housekeeping’ work in organisations. This includes sending meeting agendas, taking minutes, organizing voluntary events etc.

A McKinsey report noted that women have also taken up a lot more work around mental wellbeing & DEI efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic and are burning out as a result<sup>20</sup>. Women are rarely recognised for this work. It is both expected and taken for granted, due to unconscious bias towards women playing the role of caregiver, even in the workplace.

In addition, research has also shown<sup>21</sup> that women are **1.4** times more likely to receive critical subjective feedback than men in performance reviews.

It is thus not surprising that our respondents want their organisations to recognise the time and effort they put into their jobs. Furthermore, their stories indicate that being recognised gives them a sense of confidence and feeling supported. Given the representative of the company that has the most impact on a woman is the direct manager and a manager is also most likely to influence a woman’s opportunities for promotion, we suggest managers take it upon themselves to ensure women are receiving the recognition they deserve.



# Managers: Recognise Contribution

## How am I doing on recognising contribution?

*At Twitter, we recognise the challenges teams have in building an inclusive and collaborative culture. Our #InclusiveManagerBadge initiative encourages manager participation in company-wide I&D programs, team training, participation in our BRG events and maintaining an 'Inclusive Manager' score in our employee engagement survey. This holds managers accountable while providing the support they need to build an inclusive mindset.*

**– Preet Grewal**  
**Head of Inclusion and Diversity**  
**APAC, Twitter**

### Awareness

- Am I aware of the invisible work or 'housekeeping' work that the women on my team take on?
- Do I acknowledge their effort?
- Do I recognise the unique strengths that the women on my team bring?

### Action

- Am I distributing housekeeping (voluntary, low impact or profile work) and admin work equally across genders on my team?
- Am I transparent about what work I consider most important while making decisions on promotions?
- Do I encourage women to leverage their strengths or do I ask them to emulate gendered stereotypes?

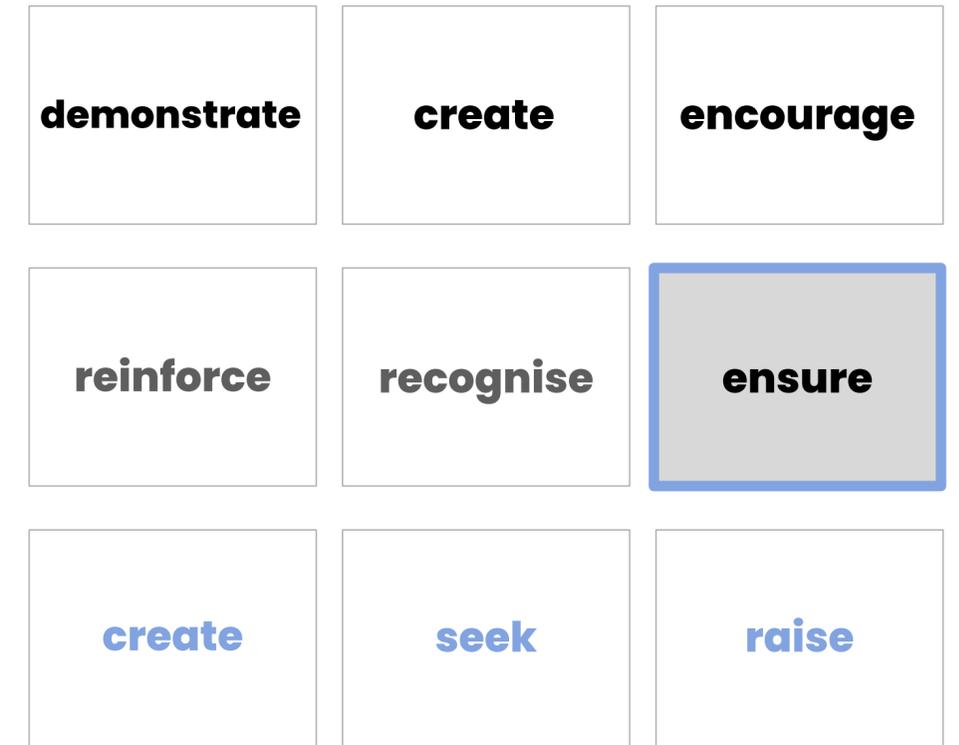
# Managers: Ensure Work-life Balance

Burnout has been pervasive during the the COVID-19 pandemic. As we shared, women take on more of the housekeeping work in the workplace and, during the pandemic, have also taken on a critical role in improving mental wellbeing of other colleagues. Women also often play primary caregiver at home, this is especially true in Asia. Thus it is no surprise that women are burning out.

Women in our survey state that a key contributor to parity in the workplace is being happy with the number of hours they work in their current roles. A further **20%** indicate wanting to make career moves, in order to achieve work-life balance in the future.

Balance is unique to each individual depending on their circumstances, yet, what is undoubtedly important is creating options for individuals to design their work life. A desire for flexibility is on the rise across the globe and this desire isn't just limited to women.

Yet, flexible arrangements in themselves are not enough. Often, they serve to derail women's careers because career advancement in flexible career paths is not treated similarly to that on traditional paths. In addition to creating flexible options that are not a double-edged sword, companies and managers also need to address the root cause that drives the need for flexibility in the first place i.e. the expectation of a 24X7 work culture<sup>22</sup>.



# Managers: Ensure Work- life Balance

Are we ensuring  
work-life balance?

*What is top of mind for us is mental  
wellbeing and health.*

**- Annie Lim**  
VP, Head of HR,  
Hummingbird Bioscience

## As a Manager: Do I ensure work-life balance?

### Awareness

- Am I aware of my direct report's personal circumstances?
- Am I thoughtful about flexibility, work-load etc. for my team?
- Is there unconscious bias in how I treat my male vs. female employees, who have families etc. praising the man and knocking points off for the woman?
- Does my team feel psychologically safe enough, to bring up work life balance issues to me?

### Action

- Do I encourage usage of technologies to allow for flexible work arrangements?
- Do I demand participation on projects or make assessments based on criteria that would disadvantage individuals, who have dual roles as caregivers at home?
- Do I actively seek feedback from my team on their satisfaction with their work-life balance?

## As an Organisation: Do we ensure work-life balance?

- Are we aware of our employee's satisfaction with their work life balance and working hours?
- Do we have safe channels through which they can share feedback?



As a  
**Woman**

# Women: Create Personal Belief

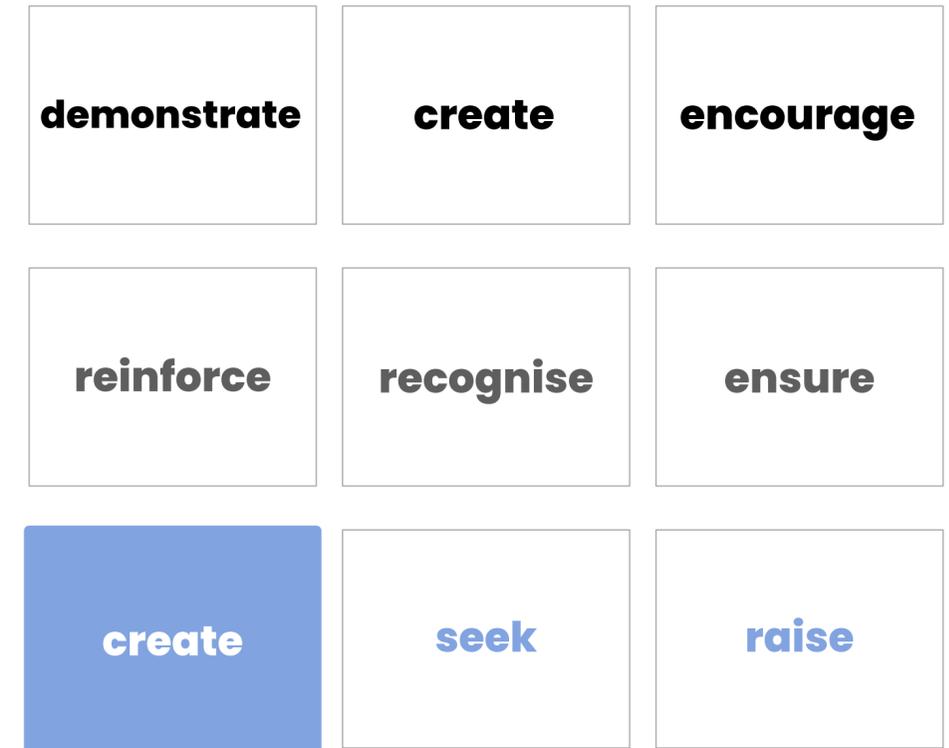
Unsurprisingly, our research shows that individuals as a category have the least direct impact on gender parity in the workplace. And even in actions where individuals can exert influence, the organisation and the manager wield a great deal more power.

Women, especially in China and Japan, want to create a personal belief that their gender does not dictate the industries that they can work in.

The stories we heard from women ranged from positive stories such as, “My organisation respects me as an engineer, and does not doubt my capabilities” to less positive stories such as “Despite my many years of experience as a frontline attendant in property management, many companies dislike or disregard you, when they see that you are a woman.”

Unfortunately, there are industries like construction, technology etc. where the representation of women leaves a lot to be desired. What is most concerning is that women are already being left behind in frontier industries, like AI and data science. A WEF report in 2020<sup>23</sup> stated that female workers make up only **1/4th** of data science and AI roles. We’re already seeding inequality into new sectors that will shape the world for generations to come.

Breaking down barriers and dispelling stereotypes of the type of person that will be successful in these industries, is critical to foster the belief amongst women that they can work in any industry.



contribution to potential impact

# Women: Create Personal Belief

## Do we have a personal belief?

*We have seen generations of male leaders where many women look and say "OK I have to act like this if I want to succeed". I think it's about creating the confidence for women to be themselves and be able to say "I will act the way I am"*

**– Gustavo Palerosi-Carneiro**  
**SVP Agricultural Solutions APAC,**  
**BASF**

## As a Woman: Am I creating personal belief?

### Self-awareness

- Am I clear on which industry I want to work in, and why?
- Do I have the skills and capabilities required?
- Have I sought feedback on what skills I may be missing, and am I actively closing those gaps?

### Effort

- Have I tried to find roles in these industries?
- Have I asked my organisation for support on upskilling, and developing new competencies to ensure my skills don't become redundant?

### Confidence

- Do I seek stories of other women who have been successful in these industries?
- Do I lead with my strengths when I recruit for these industries, or do I focus on my differences vs. a male candidate?

## As an Organisation: Are we helping create personal belief?

- Do we empower women to believe they can work in any industry that a man can, with the right skills and training?
- Am we developing and training women to take on previously gendered roles?

# Women: Seek Role Models

**91%** of women said that success stories of female leaders motivated them. And from our model, we derived that two elements of role modelling were important for women.

The first was to find individuals in the workplace they could look up to, **as role models**.

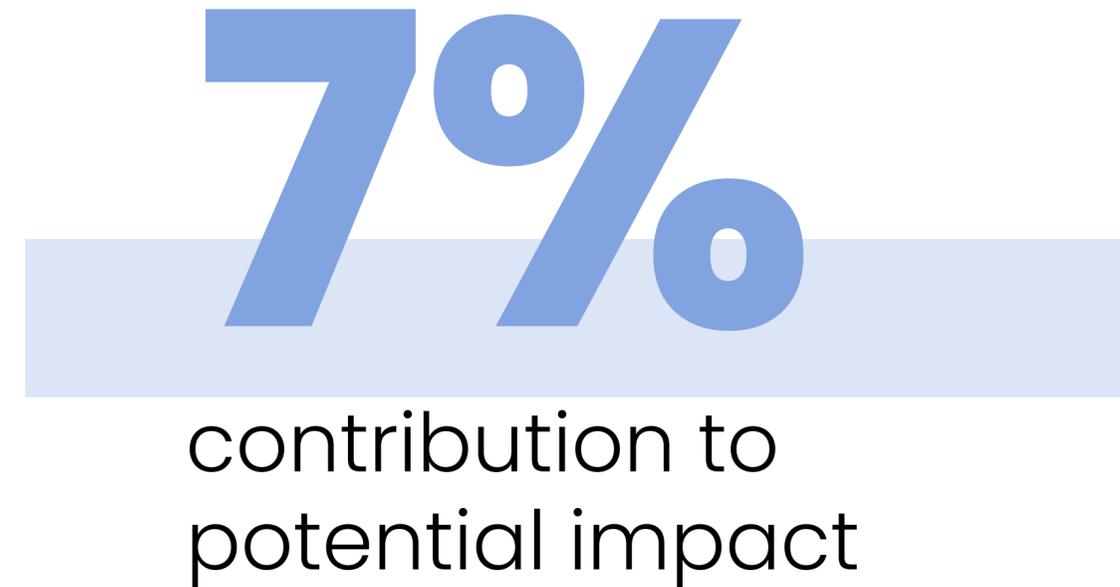
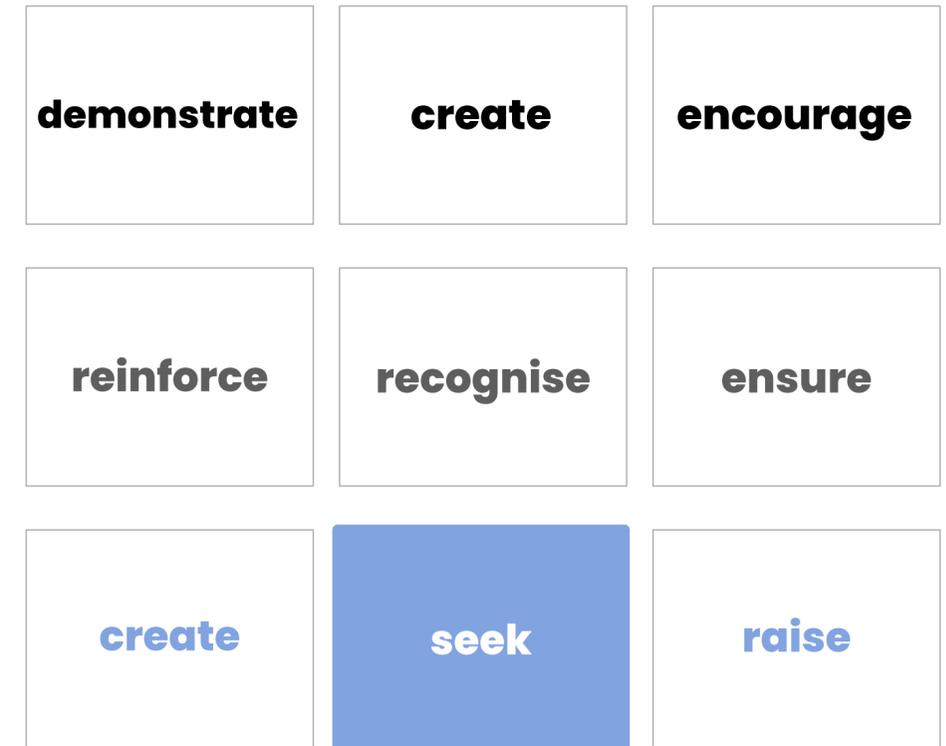


The second was to have trusted mentors within their organisations, who would look out for their interests.

The second point echoes what external research indicates<sup>1</sup>, that mentorship for women needs to be active sponsorship for it to be successful. It is said that women are “over-mentored and under-sponsored”<sup>[14]</sup>.

A sponsor is someone who will actively step up and “bash down doors” to help a woman move forward in her career. While a mentor may give advice, they may not take the actions necessary to truly impact a woman’s experience of inclusion and equality.

In Singapore, the support of a mentor looking out for her interests, was the most critical factor in a woman’s experience of parity..



# Women: Seek Role Models

## Do I have a role model at work?

*You only get to certain places if you have a tribe that is rooting for you, where they are going to drop your name in every circle they know and then you hear 'I know someone who would be the perfect collaborator for this..', you need these personal advocates to thrive. We can all lift one another up.*

– **Anitta Krishnan**  
**Global Head of People &  
Strategy, Tik-Tok**

## As a Woman: Do I seek role models?

### Career Planning and Sponsorship

- Do I have a sponsor in my organisation?
- Have I developed a plan for my career that I can share with my sponsor for advice?
- Do I meet with them regularly and proactively bring up my goals?
- Do I seek specific feedback from them, so I can continue to build my strengths and tackle my weaknesses?

### Mentorship and Inspiration

- Are there women in my organisation I look up to? Do I know their stories of success?
- Are there women in my industry I look up to? Can I learn more about their journeys?
- Am I actively becoming a role model for other women?

## As a Manager: Do I sponsor women on my team?

- Do I knock down doors to ensure women on my team get equal opportunities?
- Do I actively call out unconscious bias in promotion processes?

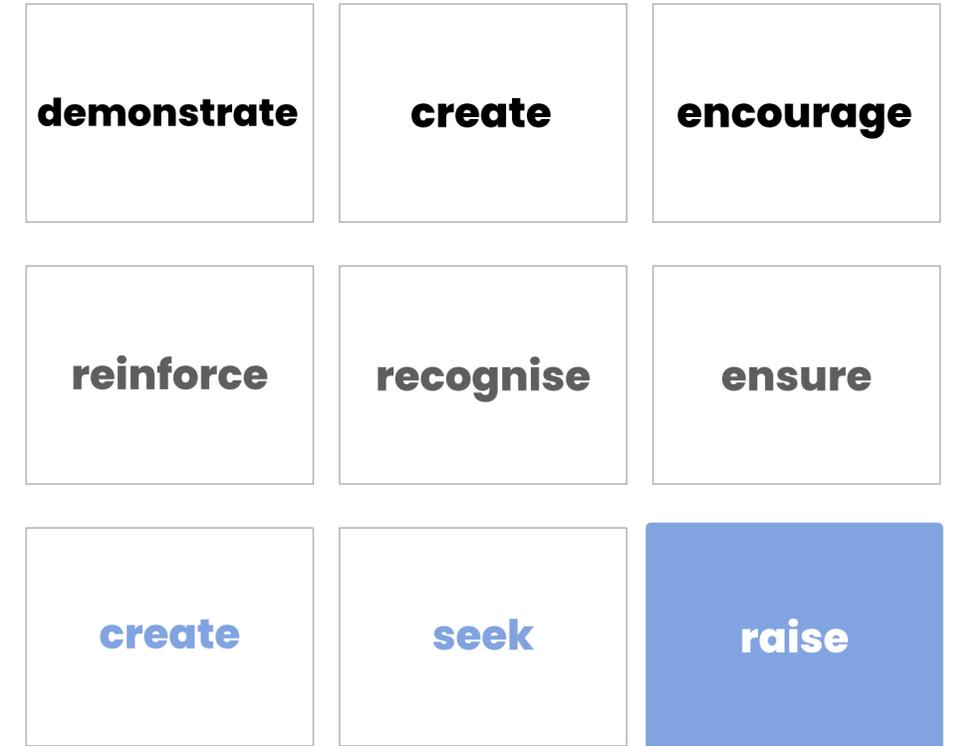
# Women: Raise Important Topics

A key area of opportunity for women in Asia that is highly dependent on organisations and managers creating psychological safety, is raising important topics.

Unlike the individualistic cultures of the Western world, Asian cultures tend to be more collectivist<sup>24</sup>. Rarely will you see women banging on doors with signs demanding their rights. Yet, there are topics that require women to speak up, and require organisations to make it comfortable to speak up.

There are two areas where women struggle to speak up:

1. **Negotiation:** Asking for promotions, changes in roles, saying no to work that disrupts work-life balance, raising female health related topics in the workplace
2. **Speaking up when wronged:** Bringing up sexism in the workplace emerged as an important topic. Given **7 out of 10** women felt uncomfortable raising topics related to gender parity in the workplace, this desire to be supported when speaking up about sexism was consistent.



contribution to potential impact



# Women: Raise Important Topics

## Do we raise important topics?

*The ultimate goal of DEI is for people to feel included, to feel like they belong.*

**- Annie Lim**  
**VP, Head of HR,**  
**Hummingbird Bioscience**

## As a Woman: Do I raise important topics?

### Awareness

- Am I clear on what topics are of consequence to me, and why?
- Am I clear on the challenges I face, and the outcomes I want?

### Support and Action

- Do I raise issues that are of consequence to me in a timely manner with the right person in my organisation?
- Have I armed myself with the right skills e.g. negotiation, conflict management to be able to have tough conversations?
- Do I try to seek help from a mentor or sponsor if I've struggled to raise a topic in the past?
- Have I found other women who share my concerns, and do we as a group identify how to tackle difficult topics to progress our cause?

## As an Organisation: Do we support women in raising important topics?

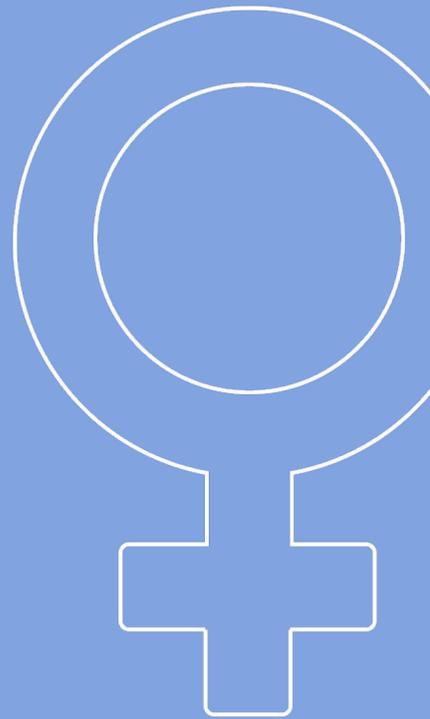
- Do we educate women on their rights in the workplace?
- Do we educate women on unconscious bias, including their own, and how it may play out in the workplace?

## As a Manager: Do I support women in raising important topics?

- Does my team feel psychologically safe and can they raise tough issues?

# As a **Leader,**

here are 3 questions to challenge your organisation:



**Are we trying to hit diversity KPIs** or are we building a truly inclusive organisation where individuals can **thrive, advance and feel equal** irrespective of gender?

Do women in my organisation **feel psychologically safe** and can they raise topics related to equality **without fear for repercussions?**

**Have I educated** the women in my organisation about unconscious bias and gender parity, or am I content with their belief that the world is equal, **even though it's not?**



# SELECT COUNTRY NUANCES

# China



## What you need to know:

- China has the most number of women who aspire to leadership positions/
- Women in China who aspire to leadership positions want better remuneration and equally, as well as improved societal perception of women in leadership. Yet, women in China also struggle with cultural expectations and how to balance their career goals.
- Support from the broader society, organisations, and male allies will go a long way in championing Chinese women's aspirations in the workplace.

## What matters most to women for parity:

### 1 Specific Policies

My organisation has policies in place to support and champion women.

### 2 Work-life Balance

I struggle to balance my career goals with what is expected to me in my culture.

### 3 Visible Proof

In my company, men and women have equal opportunity to get promoted.

### Top **focus areas** for women in China today:

## > 1 out of 3

women aspire to leadership positions driven equally by a desire to earn more and to influence more change



18%  
Sports and  
Physical Health

15%  
Career and Work



### Top **reasons** why you would like to be in a leadership role in the future:



**Better remuneration package (e.g. salary, leave policy and benefits)**

————— 52%



**To be in a stronger position to drive societal perception of women in senior positions**

————— 50%



**To be in a stronger position to drive change within the organisation**

————— 45%

13%  
Family and  
Marriage



10%  
Mental  
Wellbeing

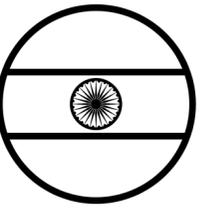


13%  
Learning, Skills and  
Development

# India

## What you need to know:

- India closely follows China when it comes to women aspiring to leadership positions with **1 in 3** women stating their aspiration to climb the corporate ladder.
- However, women in India want to leverage their leadership positions to drive change in their organisations and to boost societal perceptions of women in senior positions over their own monetary interests.
- Work and family rule the roost for Indian women followed by learning and development.
- To retain these ambitious, hard-working women with great aspirations to drive organisational change and gender parity, managers and organisations need to acknowledge their efforts and ensure they receive the same opportunities and treatment bestowed upon their male colleagues.



## What matters most to women for parity:

### 1 Recognise Contribution

My company fully recognises the time and effort I put into my job.

### 2 Reinforce Equality Culture

I am treated exactly the same as male colleagues in my workplace.

### 3 Visible Proof

In my company, men and women have equal opportunity to get promoted.

[https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2021.pdf](https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2021.pdf)

### Top **focus areas** for women in India today:

# ~ 3 out of 4

women aspire to leadership positions driven by a desire to create an impact within the organisation



20%  
Career and Work

18%  
Family and Marriage



### Top **reasons** why you would like to be in a leadership role in the future:



To be in a stronger position to drive change within the organisation

70%



To be in a stronger position to drive societal perception of women in senior positions

59%



Better remuneration package (e.g. salary, leave policy and benefits)

48%

17%

Learning, Skills and Development



11%

Travel and Experiences



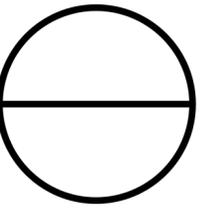
14%

Mental Wellbeing

# Indonesia

## What you need to know:

- In Indonesia, **1 in 4** women are targeting leadership positions in the future. Similar to India, they're motivated by the ability to effect change and improve the perception of senior women.
- Unlike other countries, religion, family and marriage are of utmost importance for Indonesian women, closely followed by career.
- The influence of gender roles is important to acknowledge. Indonesian women want support in balancing their work commitments with their gender roles. In addition, they want equal opportunities and to have the explicit support of male colleagues in the workplace.



## What matters most to women for parity:

### 1 Visible Proof

In my company, men and women have equal opportunity to get promoted.

### 2 Work-life Balance

My company supports me in balancing my work commitments with my gender role in my family.

### 3 Male Allies

I feel supported by male colleagues in my workplace.

Top **focus areas** for women in Indonesia today:

**~ 2 out of 3**

women aspire to leadership positions driven by a desire to drive organisational change and societal perception of women

Top **reasons** why you would like to be in a leadership role in the future:



**To be in a stronger position to drive change within the organisation**

64%



**To be in a stronger position to drive societal perception of women in senior positions**

52%



**Better remuneration package (e.g. salary, leave policy and benefits)**

44%



20%  
Family and Marriage

20%  
Religion



18%  
Career and Work



11%  
Learning, Skills and Development

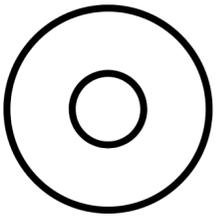


12%  
Mental Wellbeing

# Japan

## What you need to know:

- Women in Japan are least likely to aspire to leadership positions, with an alarmingly low, **1 in 10** women, keen on becoming leaders in the future. For the women who do aspire to leadership, remuneration is far more important than any other factor.
- Compared to other countries, family and marriage is nearly twice as important in Japan, and career less than half as important on average. Women in Japan also placed more emphasis on mental wellbeing, than any other geography we surveyed.
- When it comes to gender parity in the workplace, in addition to wanting to feel equal to men in treatment and compensation, raising female health-related questions and concerns is top of mind for women in Japan.



## What matters most to women for parity:

### 1 Reinforce Equality Culture

I am treated exactly the same as male colleagues in my workplace.

### 2 Raise Important Issues

I feel comfortable raising female health-related questions / concerns in my workplace.

### 3 Visible Proof

In my company, men and women have equal opportunity to get promoted.

# 1 out of 10

women aspire to leadership positions driven by better package and the ability to become a mentor or role model

Top **reasons** why you would like to be in a leadership role in the future:



**Better remuneration package (e.g. salary, leave policy and benefits)**

————— 47%



**Able to become a mentor or role model for others**

————— 38%



**To be in a stronger position to drive societal perception of women in senior positions**

————— 31%

## Top **focus areas** for women in Japan today:



**36%**  
Family and Marriage

**21%**  
Mental Wellbeing



**18%**  
Hobbies and Entertainment



**6%**  
Career and Work



**7%**  
Travel and Experiences

# Hong Kong

GDP  
**USD 346.6 B<sup>28</sup>**

POPULATION  
**7.48 M<sup>29</sup>**

Women's economic  
participation  
**50.8%<sup>30</sup>**



## What you need to know:

- **1 in 5** women in Hong Kong aspire to leadership positions and the desire for increased remuneration is 2x more critical to that aspiration than any other factor.
- Health, whether physical or mental and marriage/family are key focus areas for women in Hong Kong, with career playing a less critical role.
- When it comes to gender parity in the workplace, the importance of marriage and family is reiterated. Women in Hong Kong want equal opportunities and support from men, but they also want their gender to be taken into consideration, in order to create a work life balance.

## What matters most to women for parity:

### 1 Visible Proof

In my company, men and women have equal opportunity to get promoted.

### 2 Male Allies

I feel supported by male colleagues in my workplace.

### 3 Work-life Balance

My company supports me in balancing my work commitments with my gender role in my family.

### Top **focus areas** for women in Hong Kong today:

## 1 out of 5

women aspire to leadership positions driven mostly by a desire to have a better remuneration package



23%  
Family and Marriage

20%  
Sports and Physical Health



Top **reasons** why you would like to be in a leadership role in the future:



**Better remuneration package (e.g. salary, leave policy and benefits)**

80%



**Wider career network or reputation**

33%



**Able to become a mentor or role model for others**

31%

14%  
Mental Wellbeing



10%  
Hobbies and Entertainment

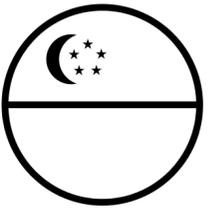


12%  
Career and Work

# Singapore

## What you need to know:

- Similar to Hong Kong, **1 out of 5** women in Singapore aspire to leadership positions, with remuneration as a key driver, followed by the ability to effect change.
- Women in Singapore are second only to Japan in their prioritisation of family and marriage, followed by mental wellbeing and then career.
- For women in Singapore, mentorship is a key driver of gender parity, followed by work-life balance and equal treatment to male colleagues in the workplace.



## What matters most to women for parity:

### 1 Visible Proof

In my company, men and women have equal opportunity to get promoted.

### 2 Male Allies

I feel supported by male colleagues in my workplace.

### 3 Work-life Balance

My company supports me in balancing my work commitments with my gender role in my family.

[https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2021.pdf](https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2021.pdf)  
<https://stats.mom.gov.sg/Pages/Singapores-Adjusted-Gender-Pay-Gap.aspx>

Top **focus areas** for women in Singapore today:

# 1 out of 5

women aspire to leadership positions driven by better remuneration and the desire to drive change



**20%**  
Family and Marriage

**17%**  
Mental Wellbeing



Top **reasons** why you would like to be in a leadership role in the future:



**Better remuneration package (e.g. salary, leave policy and benefits)**

68%



**To be in a stronger position to drive change within the organisation**

50%



**Able to become a mentor or role model for others**

44%



**12%**  
Career and Work



**9%**  
Travel and Experiences



**11%**  
Learning, Skills and Development

# Acknowledgments

We've worked in Asia for over 3 decades and experienced how difficult it is for a woman to climb the corporate ladder. Our lofty ambition in starting NINEby9 was thus to create a more equal world for our children and for generations to come. This research report that is so key to driving our mission would not have been possible without the voluntary contributions of so many, including the following individuals and organisations.

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