



Finding New Talent in the Logistics Industry

How embracing gender balance is a win-win



Growing Prosperity Through Trade



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ABOUT TRADEMARK EAST AFRICA

TradeMark East Africa (TMEA) is an aid-for-trade organisation that was established with the aim of growing prosperity in East Africa through increased trade. TMEA operates on a not-for-profit basis and is funded by the development agencies of the following countries: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden, UK, and USA. TMEA works closely with East African Community (EAC) institutions, national governments, the private sector and civil society organisations.

TMEA seeks to increase trade by unlocking economic potential through three strategic objectives:

- Increasing physical access to markets;
- Enhancing trade environment; and
- Improving business competitiveness.

Increased trade contributes to stronger economic growth, a reduction in poverty and subsequently greater prosperity. TMEA has its headquarters in Nairobi with offices in Arusha, Bujumbura, Dar es Salaam, Juba, Kampala and Kigali.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

FEEAFFA	Federation of East African Freight Forwarding Associations
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
TMEA	TradeMark East Africa

PART 1.

What do we know? The situation today

The logistics industry has traditionally been regarded as ‘no place for a woman’. This is true of East Africa where women are massively under-represented in the industry, despite their much larger position in the regional labour market.

While women are as capable as men of working in the logistics sector, most are not attracted to it, often because of the stereotypical view that the sector is ‘masculine’: better suited to strong males who can operate heavy machinery, drive huge trucks and stay away from home for extended periods.

In addition, evidence from an industry survey suggests that the logistics sector is replete with features and practices that create barriers to retaining women workers. These include discrimination, an unsupportive work environment, sexual harassment and cultural and social barriers, all combined with a lack of information about the industry that, if available, might serve to attract female staff.

Five forms of discrimination have been identified:

- **Pay gap:** Men are paid more than women for doing the same job.
- **The metaphorical ‘glass ceiling’**- an invisible yet present barrier that prevents women from being promoted in favour of men who may be less suited to the position, or even less competent.
- **A seat at the table:** A lack of consultation with women when the industry negotiates with government and regulatory bodies.
- An absence of anti-discrimination guidelines in the work place.
- **Discrimination:** A work place bias that sees women as better suited to low paid clerical positions.

The study established that the industry work environment is unsupportive to women. The following are challenges women face within the logistics sector:

- Poor welfare facilities, including multi-gender toilets, which are often dirty and unhygienic. These are a hazard for pregnant and breastfeeding women.
- As a 24-hour industry, the long, inflexible working hours often interfere with a woman's childcare responsibilities, and which, in turn, may impact on their work.
- Unrealistic expectations from mostly male employers when designing work procedures, which mean that women are expected to excel in every aspect of their lives, whether at work or at home.
- Remote work locations that pose problems of security for women travelling to and from work.
- Insufficient rest stops for truck drivers on busy highways. While this challenge also affects men, it is, for a menstruating woman, an additional challenge.

Sexual harassment is not just limited to rape or sexual assault but includes practices that are sexually suggestive and unwelcome. For example, sexual innuendo, unwanted gifts, deliberate physical contact and suggestive sounds, comments and conversation.

As with the 'glass ceiling', cultural and social barriers are intangible barriers resulting from inherent perceptions of women in society. For example:

- Women are perceived to have less labour value than men.
- Employers adopt a totalitarian style that does not embrace women's views.
- A woman's family is unsupportive because the logistics sector is not a woman's traditional work place.
- The industry presents itself as a man's world, discouraging women from aspiring to certain jobs. Men often reinforce this.
- The industry is aggressive and intimidating towards women workers who are often patronised by men. Ambitious women may also adopt these tactics to get ahead.

Finally, lack of industry information, such as opportunities, benefits and conditions. In addition, the industry does not facilitate women's networking groups and nor does it provide obvious support or mentors.

“When I tell you I manage a company that moves ships you see a man seated at that chair. That means we need to sensitise women that the logistics industry can take women.”

LILIAN BABIRYE - standing out in the logistics crowd

As Uganda country manager of the Mediterranean Shipping Company¹, Lillian Babirye oversees all operational, technical, customer service and business development activities in the country. She runs a very lean team that provides liaison support to the bigger organisation in Mombasa, Kenya.

Lillian began working in logistics after dropping out of school following the death of her parents. Together with her twin brother she provided for six younger brothers and sisters. Only after her siblings completed school did Lillian begin evening classes to pursue a degree in human resource management. Although her passion was logistics, at that time there were no degree programmes in that subject, so she opted for HR because she knew she would always need to deal with people. She then supplemented her technical skills with certificate and diploma courses in logistics.



Logistics is a male dominated industry and although Lillian’s biggest challenge was men doubting her ability to do the work, she does attribute her success to her first boss, *“He felt that I was a very good*

¹ Mediterranean Shipping Company S.A. (MSC) is the world’s second-largest shipping line in terms of container vessel capacity. As of the end of December 2014, MSC was operating 471 container vessels with an intake capacity of 2,435,000 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU). The Geneva-headquartered company operates in all major ports of the world.

employee and he gave me all the chances that I needed to grow.”

Most people, she feels, believe that women are better suited for office work because the core logistics environment requires a lot of stamina. In addition, Lillian has had first-hand experience of sexual harassment when dealing with a client. *“This was my first encounter with blatant harassment”,* she explains, *“and it made me very uncomfortable.”*

Lillian says there are very few logistics companies that embrace the concept of women empowerment and she can recall only four women that hold key roles in the industry. So, it’s perhaps not surprising that young women do not perceive the logistics industry as a career option. Even those women that are in the industry often get into it by accident, adds Lillian.

The demands of Lillian’s work took a toll in her broken marriage. *“There are three things here; there’s support, there is the job versus the marriage and the marriage versus the job. When you put in extra time, your husband will see it like you’re neglecting responsibilities. My husband wasn’t willing to understand. At the end of the day I had to make my choices.”*

Lillian strongly feels that for women to grow in the industry they need to get up and choose logistics. *“When I tell you I manage a company that moves ships you see a man seated at that chair. That means we need to sensitise women that the logistics industry can take women.”* How to do that is the question. Lillian suggests reaching out to girls at school so they can appreciate early on the opportunities that exist for careers in the logistics industry and creating more role models.

“I’m an example,” she says. *“I stand out. Because I am coming from a point of knowledge and authority people respect me. So, I just want to tell women to work hard and gain the necessary skills and knowledge and not give credence to what the society thinks about them.”*

PART 2. How do we know? The survey in brief

TMEA works to facilitate trade across borders and, by corollary, is heavily involved with the logistics sector. TMEA also prioritises gender mainstreaming in its programmes, and was therefore happy to provide technical assistance in carrying out a study to determine the challenges facing women in the sector and ways to mitigate them.

The study conducted a survey among 97 freight and logistics firms across East Africa, which established that over the whole region less than 20% of the sector consists of women workers. Rwanda has the highest proportion, at around 33%, followed by Kenya at 20.5%, Uganda and Tanzania at 17%, with Burundi the lowest at just under 16%. The survey found that those women working in the industry were mainly employed in supporting clerical roles and that those in managerial positions were in departments such as communications, human resources and business development.

However, the study noted that technological advancements, such as hydraulic lifting equipment and automatic gearboxes, are increasing

opportunities for women, in that machinery once considered too heavy or dangerous for a woman is now much easier to manage.

Who are the respondents?

AGE	PERCENTAGE
Under 20	<1
20- 24	6%
25- 29	31%
30- 34	29%
35- 39	19%
Over 40	15%
Over 50	<2

Young women often enter the job market from the age of 20, having just completed secondary school, so one might expect the percentage to be higher in the 20 to 24 age group. The fact that it

is low would suggest that younger women are unable, or unwilling to enter the logistics sector and only do so after they have gained experience in other industries.

What is their education and training?

Figure 1 below illustrates the education levels of women in the logistics sector, per the survey. About 41% of women in the industry

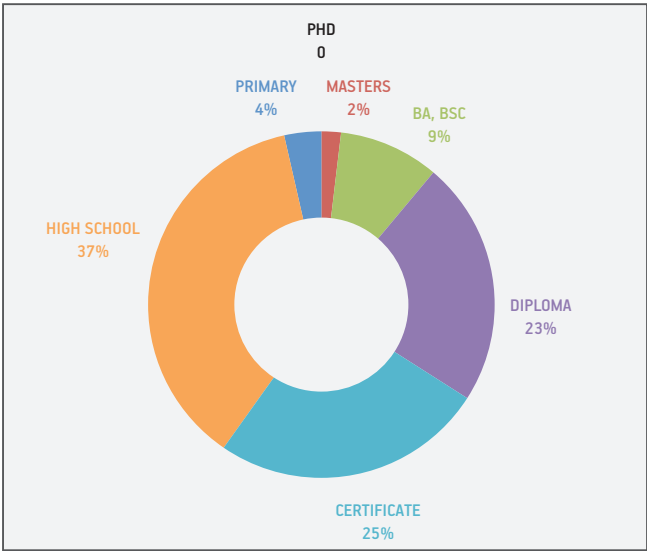


Figure 1. Level of education of the survey's respondents

do not have education beyond secondary level, while less than 12% of the women employed are university graduates.

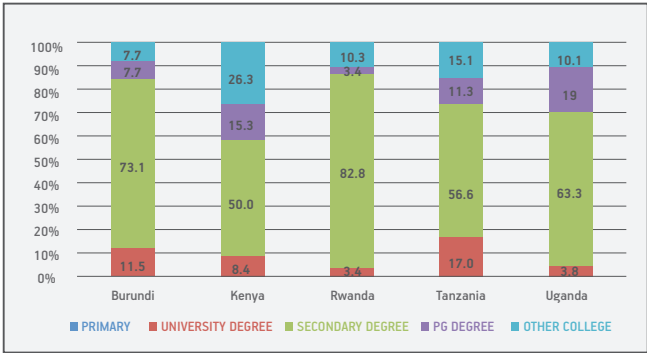


Figure 2. Education level by country

Even though Rwanda has the highest percentage of women working in the logistics sector, it has the lowest percentage of graduates in the sector, at only 3.4% (see Figure 2).

To attract qualified women into the sector it is important to ensure that appropriate education opportunities are available. The Federation of East African Freight Forwarding Associations (FEAFFA) has a mandatory programme for all customs agents in East Africa, which ensures that women receive further training.

While responding to a question about the training they have had in logistics; Over 88% of the women said that they did not have any formal training. This relegated them to employment in support roles as opposed to core functions. This indicates a need for more on the job training and support for skills improvements. Mentoring and coaching could also be encouraged as a way of increasing women’s participation in core industry functions.

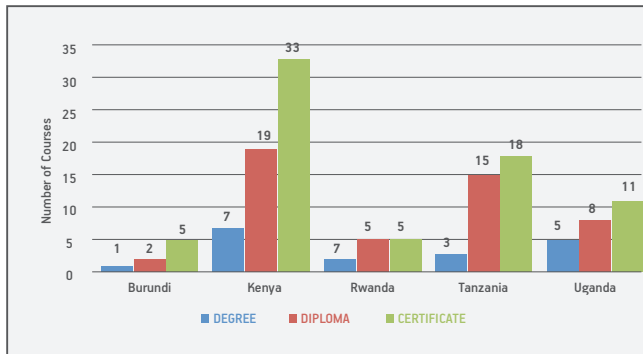


Figure 3 Number of logistics related courses by country

Kenya has the most college-based logistics training courses (see Figure 3 below) at certificate, diploma and degree level, and consequently the highest number of women taking courses. However, although Tanzania has fewer courses than Kenya the ratio of men to women is closer.

The survey also revealed that, although the proportion of female to male graduates from these courses is still small it has been steadily increasing since 2013. In 2013, about 26% of logistics graduates in East Africa were female, rising to 34% in 2014 and 41% in 2015.

What is the marital status of women in the industry?

Over 50% of women working in the logistics sector are either married (37%) or divorced (15%) indicating that many of them probably have some sort of family or childcare responsibility. 25% of those interviewed were not comfortable discussing their living arrangements. It is surmised that they could be living in any of the following arrangements: ranging from living with a parent, living in a ‘rocky’ relationship, or perhaps widowed or a single parent.

Almost 80% of the women who responded have at least one child and almost 60% have two or more children, indicating the magnitude of childcare needs that may impact on the workplace. A significant percentage of respondents said that they would not change their workplace role at the expense of family obligations. This demonstrates the need for facilities, such as a room for breastfeeding mothers, and more flexible working hours that would improve the work/life balance of women in the logistics sector.

Where do the women work and how long have they been there?

Despite the road sector being the largest by volume of freight within the logistics industry it comes fourth in a list of 5 employers of women. The major regional employer is ‘third party’ logistics (companies that have logistics functions, such as transport and warehousing outsourced to them) at close to 50%, followed by rail at nearly 19%, air at almost 15%, road at 14.5% and water at 5%. When disaggregated by country the figures are influenced by infrastructure and geography. For example, Tanzania has the largest rail network and thus the largest proportion of women employed (6.2%). Burundi and Uganda have a small but important water logistics sector (6.5% and 4% respectively) thanks to Lake Victoria and Lake Tanganyika, while Rwanda has a relatively high air sector (33%). The fact that Kenya and Tanzania are both coastal, accounts for the higher number of women employed in the water transport sector (8.5% and 11% respectively).

The length of employment at one organisation can be an indication of the career opportunities available, or lack of (see Figure 4). The survey showed that more than two thirds of the women employed in the regional logistics sector have worked in the same organisation for less than 5 years. In addition, about 20% of female workers have been employed for less than a year and 10% for less than 6 months, showing that a significant proportion of female staff are relatively new employees. The trend is similar across the separate countries,

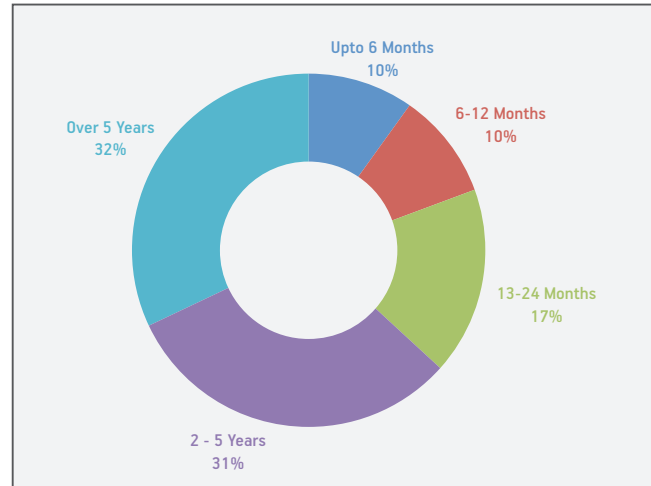


Figure 4. Duration worked at current organisation

with only Rwanda having more than 50% of female employees in the industry for more than 5 years. Female staff turnover in Uganda is relatively high, with almost 30% having worked for less than a year, and only 23% having worked more than 5 years.

From the women's perspective

Are women equal in the work place?

- Work Conditions:**

Poor or very poor: 68% (2/3 cited the environment including: hours of work, physical amenities, and legal rights and responsibilities as, poor or very poor.

Fair conditions: 19%

Excellent: 13%.

Yet, most of the women work in the third-party logistics sector, or in administration, both of which tend to be more comfortable than the shop floor where the core functions are usually located.

- Career advancement:**

49% felt their career opportunities were not equal to men at the same level.

24 % felt positively about career advancement while 27% did not know.

Rwanda stands out as having the highest positive perception of equal opportunities, at 41%, followed by Kenya (31%) and Uganda (24%). However, almost two thirds of respondents in Burundi felt that they did not have equal opportunities (Figure 5).

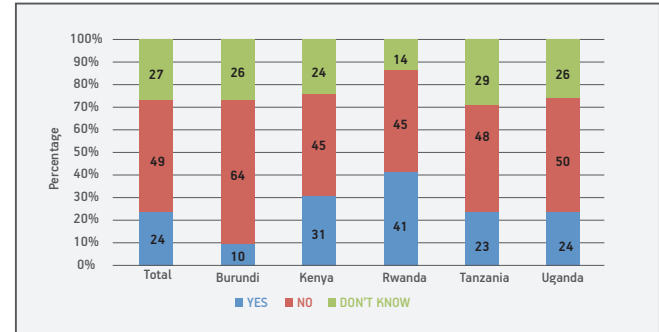


Figure 5. Do logistics companies offer equal opportunities for career advancement? (Disaggregated by country.)

Just over two thirds of women questioned believe that women get paid less than men for doing the same work (see Figure 6). This was perceived to be a major issue with the industry.

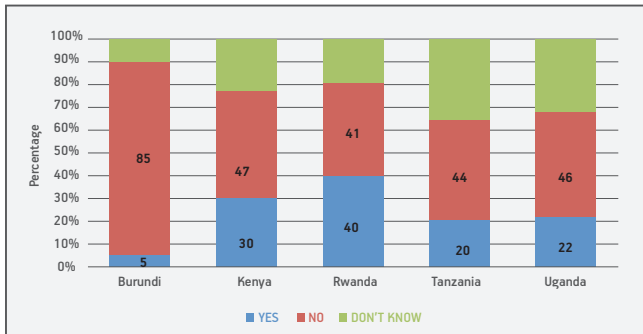


Figure 6. Do logistics companies give equal pay for the same work?

Rwanda stands out with 40% of women perceiving that there was equal pay for equal work, while in Burundi only 5% of respondents agreed.

- **Training opportunities:**

61% felt that they did not have the same access to training opportunities as men. Despite that, about 30% felt that chances to access training were equal, while 9% didn't know.

How easy is it to access information?

While responding to how they got information about job opportunity, a quarter of the respondents found jobs through advertisements, while over a third got jobs through personal connections and another 16% through a relative. About 22% obtained jobs by other means, which might include personal enquiries or social media.

75% of respondents stated that acquiring information about career opportunities in the logistics industry was difficult. While men could apparently find out through their networks, women said that they had no adequate channels.

Do women get support from their families? If not, why?

According to the survey just over 50% of women in the industry feel that they have family support for their chosen career in logistics. Another 44%, however, said that their families do not support them. Considering that the industry is male-oriented, marked by communal toilets, the absence of separate changing rooms, poor sanitation, insufficient safety and security, and sexual discrimination and harassment, it is hardly surprising that so many families do not support their wife, mother, sister or partner who is working in the industry.

Three quarters (72%) of the respondents in the region have experienced sexual harassment and of the remainder, 11% did not want to discuss the issue. On a country by country basis, the minimum 'yes' response was 60% (Kenya), while the maximum 'yes' response was 74% (Burundi) with Tanzania and Uganda at 73%. Despite such high incidents of sexual harassment, women often do not speak out openly for fear of losing their jobs.

What hinders and what helps women in the logistics industry?

When asked about impediments that affect a woman's career in logistics respondents cited 12 factors, with the top 4 being: lack

of qualifications (25%); lack of adequate experience (23%) lack of managerial support (15%); and preference to stay in the same job (12%). See Figure 7 below for the complete list.

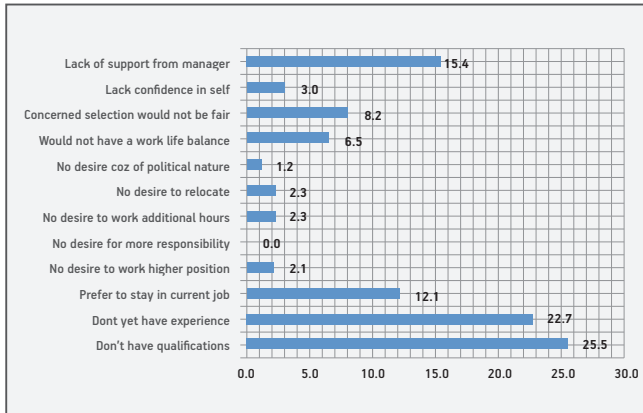


Figure 7. Issues that impede women's careers in logistics

Clearly, qualifications and experience are prerequisites for a successful career in logistics. Support from a supervising manager might give a woman the confidence to reject sexual harassment or discrimination. The preference to stay in the same job (and not take a risk by applying for another) may stem from insecurity in the job market combined with a woman's home responsibilities.

Women cited 14 factors that they care about at work. Top two are: health benefits (97%); job security (94%). Figure 8 shows the complete list, with ease of getting to work, gender segregated social amenities, opportunities for advancement, and pay and benefits also scoring high. A feeling of accomplishment and effective management were rated as highly important by a high percentage of respondents.

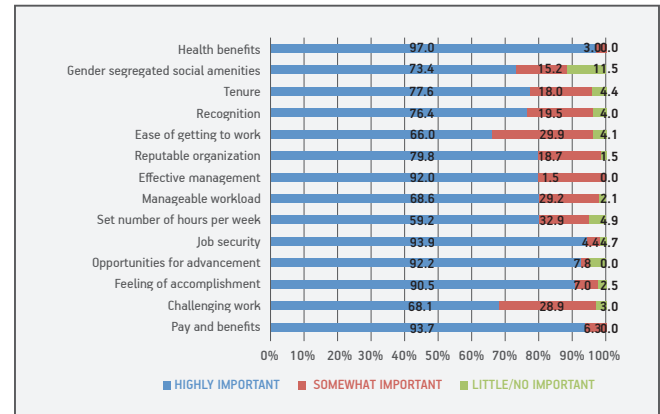


Figure 8. Top job factors

Women truck drivers are extremely rare in East Africa, as the job is perceived to be masculine.

CATHERINE

A woman on the road

Catherine is a long-distance driver with the region's largest road haulage company, Multiple Hauliers. Multiple Hauliers have a fleet of over 1500 trucks plying along the northern transport corridor. Women truck drivers are few in East Africa, as the job is perceived to be masculine. The conditions 'en route' aren't too comfortable either, especially as Catherine may have to share toilet facilities with men. However, having ventured in to the truck-driving realm Catherine finds the job and its environment challenging, fulfilling and, she says, it pays well.



PART 3.

What can we do about it? An action plan

As stated in Part 1, women in the East African logistics industry face many challenges, categorised as: Sexual discrimination; An unsupportive industry and work environment; Sexual harassment; Cultural and social barriers; and a lack of adequate information.

The study interrogated prevailing best practices in the industry that would address the above challenges in East Africa. The suggested actions can be divided into **industry support, information and communications support, educational support and government support**. They include opportunities for partnership.

Industry support

The industry should create guidelines, procedures and institutions, which include:

Guidelines on gender sensitive occupational health and safety systems, which would explain how to mainstream gender issues into workplace design and management, considering the specific realities of being a woman.

Guidelines on gender equality best practices in the workplace, which would explain how to encourage equal job opportunities for both external and workplace applicants and minimize discrimination when assessing applications. TMEA can support the creation of these guidelines and compliance to them—the latter through awarding certificates for different levels of compliance.

Code of conduct on sexual harassment in the workplace. Sexual harassment is responsible for anxiety and stress in the workplace and can result in loss of productivity, low morale, absenteeism and high staff turnover. TMEA and other agencies can work with the industry to develop a code of conduct that would assist employers and workers to develop their own regulations on preventing sexual harassment.

A regional think-tank to support women in logistics should be established, under the auspices of regional bodies, with responsibility for enhancing women's participation in the East African logistics sector.

Members would be voluntary and drawn from all sectors of the industry, such as regulators, third party logistics companies and training institutions. The object is to develop a regional gender strategy that will attract women to, and retain them in the logistics sector. The think tank should also create binding MoUs with industry stakeholders.

Women in Logistics Association. With support from appropriate institutions, women working in logistics should create their own networking organisation, (initially at a national level, progressing to regional level) which will both promote their achievements and minimise their challenges. It will unite women already in the industry and allow them to support each other in career development, possibly through mentoring programmes.

Information and communications support

Arrange an annual logistics career and training expo. This would be an opportunity to showcase annually the career opportunities available in the logistics sector. It would be open to the public, including schools, and would connect employers to potential employees. TMEA and other organizations could support this initiative by ensuring maximum attendance from educational establishments, particularly females.

Establish annual industry gender awards. These would recognise and reward individuals and companies in the region that use good gender practices. The awards would take place at a prestigious annual event. Again, TMEA and other organizations could work with the industry to support these awards.

Initiate a ‘HeForShe’ in Logistics’ campaign. Based off the principles of UNWOMEN global campaign, TMEA and other organizations could support a ‘men in solidarity with women’ campaign, in which men become ‘change agents’ by acting for women when they are faced with unfair and unequal practices within the logistics workplace. The initiative is grounded in the concept that gender equality affects all people in any sphere of life.

Create a gender equality and women’s empowerment campaign. This would be a year-long campaign, conducted in print and media with the aim of informing both governments and industry of the challenges faced by women in logistics and the benefits to be gained by empowering them.

Carry out a benefits and compensation survey. This would be carried out by a professional agencies through support from TMEA or other organizations, in collaboration with the industry, to collect information about employee compensation for both women and men. Not only would it highlight inequalities, but it would also act as a benchmarking and advocacy tool.

Educational support

Women in leadership training. In collaboration with educational institutions TMEA and other organizations could devise leadership training for women in logistics. It would enhance management and business skills, enabling women to progress up the career ladder and become more influential in the regional industry.

Logistics clubs in schools. These can be created with appropriate support in schools and other educational settings. The clubs will encourage girls and boys to consider a career in the logistics industry through activities and excursions that will allow them to see, and aspire to the opportunities available.

Government support

East African governments should identify and strengthen anti-discrimination and anti-sexual harassment laws, together with their responding and reporting mechanisms. At the same time, TMEA could work with industry stakeholders to advise on appropriate policies and legislation.

Why should you support this agenda?

All the above actions would not only ensure equal opportunities in the logistics workplace, but would have the added benefit of finding new talent for an industry that is essential to the growth of the business sector in East Africa. Many women are locked out of the industry by perceived cultural and social practices; and thus, dealing with those issues would provide employment and income, much of which would go towards educating the next generation.

For East Africa as a whole the action plan is a forward thinking strategy that would position the logistics industry as an employer with progressive, up to date global standards that are attractive to all.

“I totally forget that I am a woman in a male dominated career. They have taken me as one of their own and are nurturing me to become the best I could ever be.”

ELIZABETH WAKESHO MARIAM

**A pioneer and a pace setter -
Kenya's first woman marine pilot**

27 years old Elizabeth Wakesho Mariam is Kenya's first woman marine pilot at the Kenya Ports Authority. She assists a senior pilot to navigate vessels into the port harbour and guide them to the berths.

According to the International Labour Organization, women in the maritime industry account for only about 2% of the world's 1.25 million seafarers. Elizabeth pursued a 5-year nautical studies degree at the Academy of Science, Technology and Maritime Transport in Alexandria, Egypt. In a largely male dominated sector, she managed to pave the way, against all the odds, for women to venture into the maritime field.

Elizabeth vividly recalls the first time she boarded a ship with her male colleagues, and notes the stereotyping she contended with. *“There were moments when I would board the ships and the captains*



would want to take a picture, while some would even assume I was accompanying my father due to my petite nature, or my gender;” she says. *“But it has been an exciting journey.”*

Because of the long working hours and technical nature of operations, few women aspire for a career in the shipping and logistics segment. But this was before individual firms began to empower their female staff to join the male domain.

The other pilots, she adds, have given her immense support. *“I totally forget that I am a woman in a male dominated career. They have taken me as one of their own and are nurturing me to become the best I could ever be.”*

Elizabeth’s parents are her biggest inspiration. *“It is through their support that I decided it is ship ahoy for me.”* And she doesn’t have to look far for role models. She says Kenya’s PS for Maritime Affairs and former Kenya Maritime Authority Director General Nancy Karigithu has also been her inspiration.

“Madam Karigithu has given me direction, encouraged me and held me by her hand as I learn the ropes”, she states. She adds that, *“Evelyn Chibule, the head of conventional cargo at the port of Mombasa and chairperson of Women in Maritime in Eastern and Southern Africa (WOMESA), not only inspires me by the heights she has scaled in this career, but has also been a driving force for me,”*

“I believe in being a pacesetter in the maritime field here in Kenya”, she concludes. *“I cannot afford to fail and ruin the chances for those women who come after me.”*



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