



Best Practice: Safe Company Brand: Free from Violence and Discrimination against Women

Ms. Carmen LEDESMA (Peru)

Violence Against Women in Peru (VAW)

In Peru, VAW is a permanent problem that occurs both in the private and public spheres. Victims experience health problems and a reduced ability to participate in public life because it affects their relationships and work performance. According to the National Institute of Statistics and Informatics (INEI)¹, 65.4 % of Peruvian women have suffered psychological, physical or sexual violence in their lives at the hands of their partners. During 2018, Peru registered 146 femicides and has already (April) registered 52 additional femicides in 2019.

Private enterprise is a propitious space to promote measures for the prevention of violence and gender discrimination because there are women workers living in situations of violence, as well as men who commit violence against women. In addition, it is possible to establish relationships in companies, as areas of interaction between men and women, that reproduce stereotypes about the roles of men and women who tolerate or justify violence against women. Violence has a negative effect on society, from which private companies are not exempt. However, it has been a challenge to get them involved in VAW prevention through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). A private university that has undertaken scientific and academic research on the effects of VAW in intimate partner relationships in the private sector notes that:

- 71.2% of the owners of formal microenterprises have been assaulted by their partners at least once in their relationship.
- In a month, 33.6% of women have been attacked by their partner, with an average of 9 attacks per month, generating a loss of 47.3 productive days per year and a loss in a value added business of US \$ 9,130².

The study Impact of Violence Against Women in Labor Productivity, conducted by University San Martín de Porres (USMP) and Germany Cooperation Agency, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) notes that the costs of VAW in relationships in Peru cost \$11,453.4 million annually to the business sector, which equals 5.72% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP)³.

Another study by the same authors determined that each microenterprise loses an average of \$9,100 annually, because of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) suffered by their owners. In the formal microenterprise sector headed by women⁴, the cost is around \$2 million per year⁴.

¹ INEI 2018 - https://www.inei.gob.pe/media/MenuRecursivo/publicaciones_digitales/Est/Lib1584/libro.pdf

² APEC 2018 - Public and Private Sectors' Strategies to Prevent Gender-based Violence, Reduce Costs and Develop Capacity in APEC Economies <https://www.apec.org/Publications/2018/04/Public-and-Private-Sectors-Strategies-to-Prevent-Gender-based-Violence> Page 15 (Vara-Horna, A. (2015). Los costos de la violencia contra las mujeres en las microempresas formales peruanas. Una estimación de su impacto económico).

³ <https://www.apec.org/Publications/2018/04/Public-and-Private-Sectors-Strategies-to-Prevent-Gender-based-Violence>, page 49 (Vara-Horna, A. (2016). Impacto de la violencia contra las mujeres en la productividad laboral Una comparación internacional entre Bolivia, Paraguay y Perú).

⁴ <https://www.apec.org/Publications/2018/04/Public-and-Private-Sectors-Strategies-to-Prevent-Gender-based-Violence>, page 49 (Vara-Horna, A. et al (2015). Los costos de la violencia contra las mujeres en las microempresas formales peruanas. Una estimación de su impacto económico).

The goal of these studies was not only to advise companies on reactive measures, but also to develop proactive measures for greater positive impact.

“Safe Company Seal: Free from Violence and Discrimination against Women”:

In order to incorporate the private sector as ally, the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations (MIMP) established the “Safe Company Seal: Free from Violence and Discrimination against Women” in 2011 to motivate companies to address gender violence prevention as part of their social responsibility agendas. To date, there have been three editions in 2013, 2015 and 2017 in which more than 150 companies have participated and 35 have been awarded the seal. All small, medium- and large-sized companies in the public and private sector can participate. Currently, more than 300 companies have expressed an interest in participating in the seal award processes.

Benefits of the Brand: Improve the working climate and level of productivity; Promote greater loyalty of consumers; Achieve positive ratings for the image and brand; Promote sustainability of the business in the long term; Position company in the market as a socially responsible corporation.

A company that wishes to be recognized must meet the following requirements:

A) Compliance with legal provisions: current labor legislation linked to equal opportunities between men and women, discrimination prohibition, prevention and attention to VAW, such as policies about prevention and punishment of sexual harassment at work, maternity and paternity leave, provision of breastfeeding space and time, and rights of victims of violence, among other rules.

B) Organizational culture: Code of Ethics, personnel policy that promotes equal opportunities in recruitment, selection and promotions processes; marketing policy that excludes sexist advertising.

C) Daily practice: Women rights dissemination, internal training on the subject, work-life balance strategies, wage policies, orientation and referral of cases of violence.

D) Work with and for the community: VAW informative or preventive activities with the families of staff, educational institutions, and social organizations.

Lessons learned from the first round of awards led to several modifications to streamline the process and expand the self-evaluation criteria to include maternity leave provision and punishment in cases of sexual harassment.

Since March 2018, the Seal has become a Registered Brand with a high level of recognition. Four editions will be awarded in November 2019.

