



World Vision Australia Case Study

Organisational Background

World Vision is Australia's largest overseas aid and humanitarian organisation. The head office is situated in Melbourne, with smaller offices located in each State and Territory. World Vision's focus is directed at eliminating poverty and its causes, thus funding for staff initiatives is limited. A People, Culture and Learning Department services the different business units, helping them to develop appropriate practices for managing and retaining staff. There has been a steady increase in the numbers of women moving into senior roles and this has been attributed to the support and visible commitment to EEO issues by the organisation's CEO.

In 2005, 20 staff members were sent to the Asian region to assist with the tsunami disaster. These employees were in positions such as management support, logistics, child protection and IT. Both women and men represented the organisation. The recent implementation of a Learning Framework provided greater understanding of the competencies of staff within the global organisation. It is also likely to assist in identifying international career opportunities in the future.

QUICK FACTS

- **Industry** – Foreign Aid, Charity
- **Number of Employees** – 487 FTE
- **2006 Gender Split** – 70% women and 30% men. 33% of women at Executive level.
- **2006 EOWA Status** – Waived

Recruitment & Selection

ISSUES IDENTIFIED

During the last 2-3 years, there has been a focus on recruiting women into senior roles within the organisation. Whilst there has been a very high proportion of women at other ranks of World Vision Australia, this was not reflected at Senior or Executive levels. There was also a need to develop a more systematic approach to recruitment and selection and to manage staff perceptions about equity of access to some roles.

INITIATIVES

There is now a comprehensive recruitment process in place to ensure that a wider pool of applicants are accessed, as well as specific steps to check that the process that has been used is balanced before an appointment is made. Steps toward improvement have included:

- Advertising through a broad range of outlets (both websites and print media) to reach a wider pool of applicants

- Utilising church networks and international development agency networks in recruitment processes
- Ensuring gender-balanced interview panels as far as possible
- Using behavioural-based interview techniques
- Offering after hours interviews
- Reviewing psychological tools for assessing candidates

In addition, the HR team has developed and implemented a Recruitment and Selection Kit. Initially, this kit was a resource to supplement the interview training sessions but it is now available to all managers via the online staff handbook. All existing and new managers have been trained in the behavioural interviewing process.

RESULTS

- The proportion of female employees in the workplace (70%) has not changed in the past year. Among new starters, 72% are females.
- During the past year, women were selected for jobs at all levels of the organisation with the exception of executive management, where no vacancies arose.
- In the past 3 years, there has been a noticeable change of attitude, especially amongst those at senior levels, regarding the appointing of women to senior roles.
- There are currently two senior women job-sharing. This is a very successful arrangement, with both women working on separate days except on the 'cross-over' day'. There are very clear boundaries as to who is responsible for what and their performance is managed on results rather than time in the office. Each person had a direct reporting relationship with only one of the managers and performance is managed in this way. Good communication has been key to the success of this arrangement, which includes being available for urgent issues on days off (while still maintaining overall work/life balance) and having the cross-over day where both managers are in the office. Also, being aware of their similarities and differences has helped them to manage their relationships with team members and to capitalise on each others' strengths and minimise each others' weaknesses.
- When two senior roles became available in different areas, World Vision's management recognised that there was a female employee in each area who had potential but had the lowest level of experience required for the roles. Discussion took place among the senior management team, along with conversations with each individual to see what could be done to ensure they could develop while performing the role. As a result, both women were provided with an externally-sourced mentor to help them to develop in the areas where this was required.

Both women were also included in the lead team (senior management plus other leaders as needed for content, gender balance or development needs), so that they could gain senior-level experience in decision-making and have access to the whole senior management team, including the CEO. The lead team discussed the women's professional development and worked together to ensure that they succeeded in their roles.

Work Organisation

ISSUES IDENTIFIED

Increasing numbers of both female and male staff were indicating that the issue of flexible working hours needed to be addressed to enable them to achieve work/life balance. In addition, despite providing six weeks paid maternity leave, there were, and continue to be, opportunities for the organisation to improve the rate of women returning to work.

INITIATIVES

- HR facilitated a series of focus groups for women staff members only. These helped to identify what policies, programs and behaviours were supportive of women in the workplace as well as highlighting opportunities for action.
- World Vision has introduced core hours with the opportunity for staff to negotiate starting and finishing times.
- The option of 48/52 has been introduced, allowing staff to access eight weeks leave per year.
- A Working From Home policy has been implemented to provide a structure for this to take place and staff are able to access the computer network from home.
- Part-time and job-share options are available.
- A fully-equipped parenting room is available so parents can care for a child (who is not infectious) when child-care is not available. A breast pump is also available for mothers who are breastfeeding.
- A Keeping in Touch Program for staff on parental leave includes monthly afternoon teas for those particular members of staff.

RESULTS

- The number of women in full-time positions increased from 55% in 2003 to 61% in 2006. The number of women in part-time roles has remained constant.
- In 2004, 43% of Senior Management roles were undertaken by women. This increased to 57% in 2006.
- There was an increase in the return rate from maternity leave (69% in 2006, up from 27% in 2004). However, around 1 in 3 women continue to exercise their choice to stay at home full-time with their child/ren and are not interested in returning to work at this point.

EXAMPLE

The monthly afternoon teas include pregnant staff and mothers who have recently returned to work as well as those staff currently on maternity leave. This is a vibrant group where stories are shared from all spectrums of the experience providing encouragement and ideas on motherhood in general and specifically being a mum at our workplace.

Arrangements for Dealing with Sex-Based Harassment

ISSUES IDENTIFIED

There were no formal complaints in 2004-05, although information collected via exit interviews indicated that there was a slight increase in the perception that more could be done to address inappropriate behaviour in the workplace. An OH&S inspection also highlighted concerns about workplace stress and bullying.

INITIATIVES

A program of ongoing training, education and coaching for all staff and managers was developed and implemented. Linkages between the organisation's core values and the EEO, Harassment, Bullying and Occupational Violence policies were reinforced.

- Policies were reviewed and updated where required and placed on the organisation's Intranet.
- Training on workplace behaviours is now included as part of the Induction process for all new staff members.
- All staff were required to attend a half-day refresher workshop on workplace behaviour and employees' rights and responsibilities in relation to the legislation.
- Contact Officers are trained and steps are being taken to ensure that a sufficient number of people are trained and that there are Contact Officers working in each state office. The training involves:
 - An outline of the objectives of equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation
 - The identification of inappropriate workplace behaviour
 - Establishing the parameters of the Contact Officer role and the knowledge and skills required to fulfil this role effectively
 - Exploring the steps involved in a complaint-handling process and the role of the Contact Officer within this process.

RESULTS

As the refresher training was just conducted this past year, there has as yet been no formal evaluation of its success. However, it should be noted that currently, there have been no harassment complaints recorded.

QUOTES

"Having an understanding of appropriate workplace behaviours and being able to apply the values to my work, to use the values for self assessment and gain better understanding of the organisation will help me to do my job" Course Participant

Other Strategies

World Vision's CEO and Executive team are focused on addressing any possible inequities within the organisation. Whilst such an approach would be expected of an organisation whose purpose is to deliver humanitarian aid, it is not always practised in reality. Within World Vision Australia, the CEO regularly discusses EEO issues at team meetings. He frequently invites high potential women and men to executive meetings to discuss key issues affecting the organisation. This not only gives the

Executive team a different perspective of the organisation but it also helps staff members to develop their own skills of presentation and discussion at an executive level.

As a recent example of how World Vision is committed to developing the talent and skills of staff across the organisation, a female employee was invited to apply for a position in the regional office in Europe when it became available. When her application was successful her partner and three children were required to relocate. World Vision provided her with assistance to relocate, payment of school fees for her children to receive an Australian equivalent education and home leave for the family was provided every two years. She remained in Europe for five years and successfully returned to work in the Australian World Vision office when her assignment was completed.