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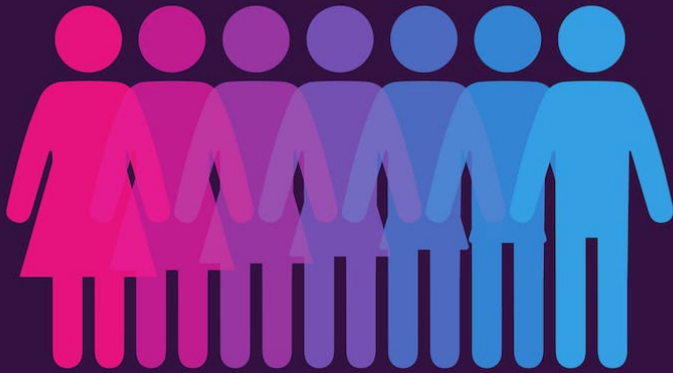
MINET THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

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INSPIRING INCLUSIVITY IS A SURE PATHWAY TO ACCELERATING PROGRESS

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In the Kenyan cultural fabric, women are revered as homemakers whose decisions define the future of their family's future as a successful, progressive, and closely-knit loving unit. Historically, women's success is judged not by their achievement in the public realm but by the relationships they forge in the personal realm.

A survey report released in 2023 by IBM Institute for Business Value (IBV)

and Chief reported a higher representation of women in junior professional or specialist roles in Kenya at 41 percent compared to the global average of 40 percent. However, the number of women at the executive level stood at 11 percent, and 10 percent at the board level.

While this was seen to be slightly below the global representation of 12 percent for both C-suite and Board levels, Kenya has done well in growing the representation of women in junior professional or specialist roles. This evidently points to the growing prominence of women in Kenya's corporate world.

The report which is entitled "Women in Leadership: Why Perception Outpaces the Pipeline and What to Do about It," concludes with an affirmative action call, "To thrive in a rapidly changing world, Kenyan organizations must prioritize advancing women – and all historically under-represented groups – and take action to challenge structural barriers and unconscious bias.'

Studies show that enhancing the modern woman's voice at the decision-making table not only benefits immediate families but society and hence the national economy as well. Research shows that a broad range of talents and skills on executive teams contributes to better decision-making, corporate governance, and company profitability, which drives economic growth.

There is mounting evidence around the globe that promoting gender diversity among employees,



management, and boards can boost the performance of a business. Studies have affirmed that companies that embrace gender inclusivity tend to be more innovative, adaptable, and resilient. They are better equipped to understand diverse customer needs, tap into new markets, and navigate complex global challenges. Moreover, diverse teams foster creativity and problem-solving by bringing together individuals with unique insights and approaches.

According to the International Labor Organization, an increase in inclusivity on average increases creativity, openness, and innovation by 59.1 percent, which can lead to smarter and more longitudinal business decisions and enhances the company's image by 57.8 percent among consumers. Increasing gender diversity in leadership roles, for instance on boards, has even higher outcomes, with enterprises 20 percent more likely to experience better business outcomes. These findings point to the fact that fostering an environment of gender inclusion in the workplace is not just a moral imperative but has been found to have a strategic advantage.

This is a key learning that Minet has taken on board by creating a culture where every voice matters. By fostering an environment of openness and respect, we have dismantled barriers that might otherwise stifle creativity and collaboration. Employees feel empowered to express themselves authentically, knowing that their perspectives are valued and embraced.

Moreover, Minet has prioritized inclusivity in its recruitment and hiring practices. By casting a wide net and actively seeking out talent from people of diverse backgrounds, Minet has built a team that reflects the importance of inclusivity in driving success.

All in all, achieving diversity and inclusion is a continuous journey that requires a continuous commitment to introspection, learning, and growth. But as we navigate the complexities of the 21st century, it is clear that diversity and inclusion are not just nice to have – it is an essential ingredient for accelerating progress in society.

In a world characterized by rapid globalization, technological advancement, and interconnectedness, the value of gender inclusivity cannot be overstated. It is not merely about ticking boxes or meeting quotas; it's about recognizing and celebrating the myriad perspectives, experiences, and talents that each individual brings to the table. Inclusion, then, becomes the cornerstone upon which diverse voices are not only heard but actively engaged and empowered.

In 2024, this message reverberates louder than ever, urging us to embrace the richness of gender inclusivity as a source of strength. As we chart our course into the future, the International Women's Day serves as a lesson for us to inspire and embrace gender inclusivity in all its forms, knowing that it is our greatest strength. Let's build a world where every individual feels seen, heard, and valued—a world where inclusion isn't just a goal but a lived reality.

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