



EVOLVIN' women

In Hospitality, differently

In support of

**WOMEN'S
EMPOWERMENT
PRINCIPLES**

Established by UN Women and the
UN Global Compact Office

WE SUPPORT



EVOLVIN' WOMEN

Communication on Progress

While governments and NGOs are committed to building **inclusive economies**, and the private sector is committed to becoming more **socially responsible**, we are preparing unemployed women to tackle both challenges!

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Claire Uwamahoro
Rwanda
2021 Enrollment



In 2022, Evolvin' Women continued to take giant strides forward, placing over 800 ladies in positions of employment across the Hospitality, Retail, Health, Wellness, and Logistics sectors in the Middle East.

Historically, the organisation's talent pool included unemployed women with some experience in the Hospitality Industry. The expansion across other industries in 2022, has proved that its programme has the scope to enter Aviation, Healthcare, and other sectors.

With the expansion from our base in the UAE into other countries in the Middle East, Evolvin' Women supported one of the largest global sports events by providing over 600 skilled ladies to join their operations. With the support of the public sector, ladies from Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia, Namibia, and South Africa travelled throughout the year to take up residence and complete skills development for between three to seven months.

Prior to the deployment of these ladies, Evolvin' Women strengthened its Partner network and pool of talent across Africa by engaging with renowned Technology, Business, and Hospitality Schools, and establishing Memorandums of Understanding. In doing so, the schools are able to position themselves with a competitive advantage as establishments with international partnerships and the graduates, therefore, have access to Evolvin' Women opportunities across the region.

In alignment with SDG #4–Quality Education and SDG #5–Gender Equality, in 2022 our organisation has deepened its commitment to democratising learning by providing equal opportunities to women with limited access to education.

With social impact at the core of our enterprise, I am pleased to confirm that Evolvin' Women reaffirms its support of the Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment, and Anti-Corruption. Working towards implementing the Global Compact principles is what drives our business. The Evolvin' Women annual Communication on Progress (COP) is part of the organisation's commitment to the United Nations Global Compact.

Keep evolvin'

Assia Riccio

Founder Evolvin' Women



About

Established in 2017 and based in Dubai, Evolvin' Women helps build sustainable economies in developing countries through the advancement of women with limited access to education and skill development. Motivated by multi-stakeholder engagement, our programme's unique format brings together international collaborators from private, public, and academic sectors to provide our participants access to the first international hospitality skills development programme in the UAE. We currently operate in Ghana, Rwanda, Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Uganda, South Africa, Ethiopia, and Namibia.

Evolvin' Women has been presented as a sustainable tourism initiative at the Women's Economic Empowerment Global Summit by the UN WOMEN, the African Women in Tourism Summit, the Arabian Travel Market in Dubai, and at the ChangeNOW Summit in France where Evolvin' Women was selected by the Dubai Government to represent Dubai on sustainability.

Evolvin' Women has also been proud to support the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) SDG #4- Quality Education, SDG #5-Gender Equality and SDG #8-Decent Work, to be one of the first micro-enterprises to become a signatory of the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) and to chair the steering committee in the UAE to deliver the 7 Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs), the result of a collaboration between UN Women and the UNGC.



Key Goals

Programme

INITIAL PREPARATION TRAINING IN HOME COUNTRY

PAID JOB PLACEMENT IN THE UAE

ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

EDUCATION AND MENTORING

POST PROGRAMME EMPLOYMENT

Results

SECURE JOB IN THE UAE AND RELOCATION

START EARNING A SALARY, BECOME FINANCIALLY STABLE, BEGIN TO SUPPORT FAMILY BACK HOME

BUILD RELEVANT SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE, PREPARE FOR FURTHER POTENTIAL EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATIONS

SUPPORT LEADERSHIP GROWTH AND GOAL DIRECTED SOCIAL IMPACT

CONTINUE BUILDING A CAREER AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, INCREASE EARNING AND POTENTIAL, FULL INDEPENDENCE AND FAMILY SUPPORT

Return to their home countries and improve their social and economic status by gaining professional roles to increase their monthly salaries, often by up to 5X; and also to access higher education to continue their professional development and career paths.



Nana Aisha Rabiou

From rural Ghana to Food & Beverage and subsequently to Front Desk Agent in Swissotel Dubai, and recipient of the highly commended Waitress of the Year Award 2021 by Caterer Middle East.



Ayishatu Mohammed

From rural Ghana to becoming the first woman in her family to receive a Harvard certification facilitated by Hilton.



Blessing Jacobs

From Zimbabwe to becoming the first woman in logistics securing a placement with DHL in Dubai.

9

COUNTRIES OF
OPERATION

500

GLOBAL PARTNERS



3

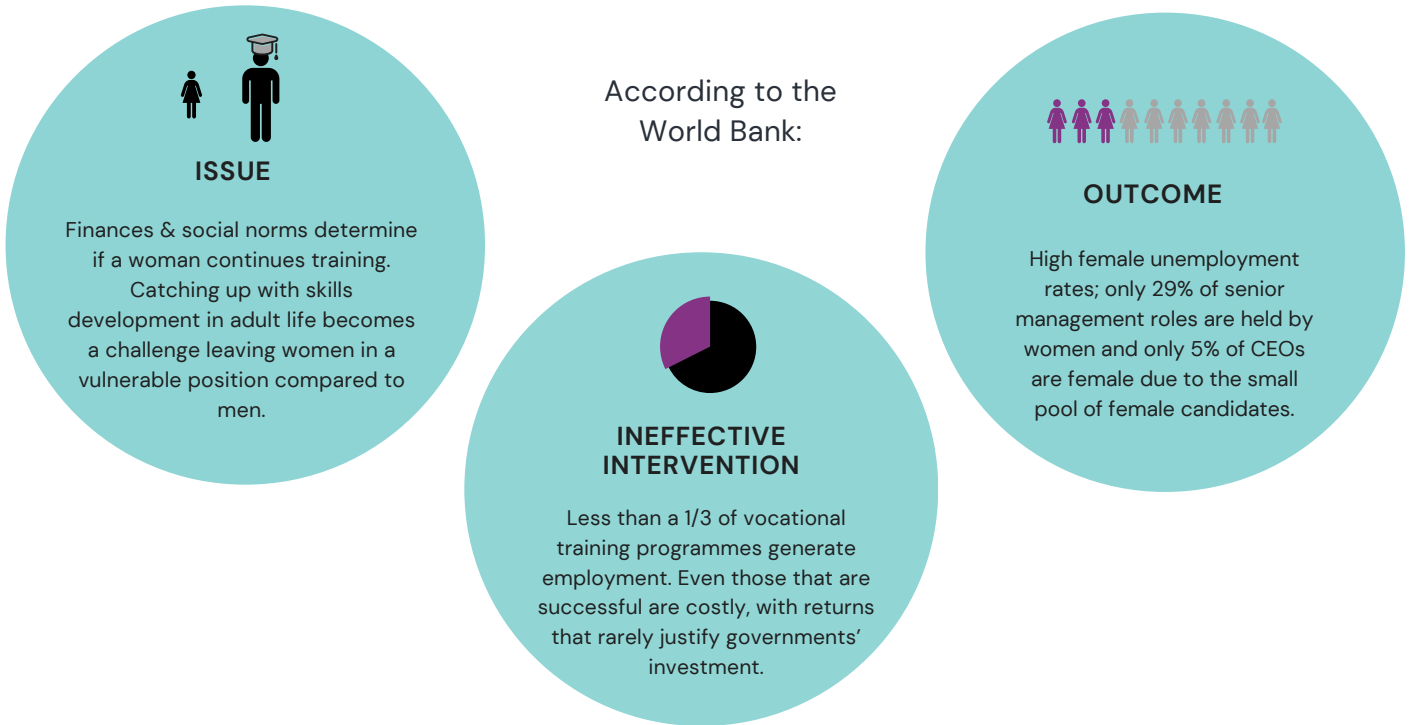
INDUSTRIES

800

WOMEN ENROLLED

The social issue – THE WHY

In Africa, where female unemployment rates can reach 50% in rural areas, meeting our vision is crucial to building sustainable economies, intensifying the fight against extreme poverty, and achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.



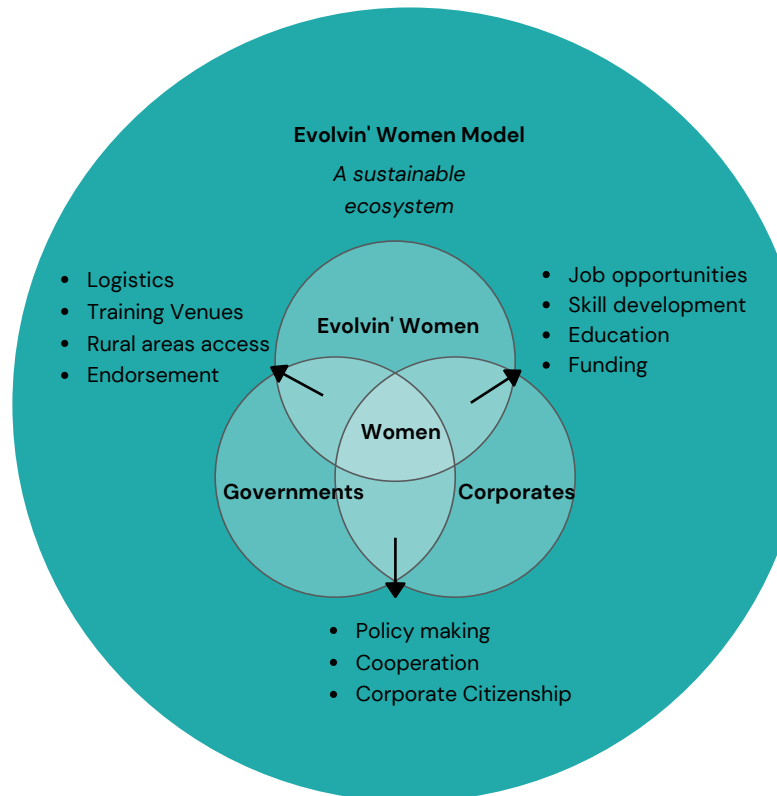
Our Theory of Change at glance

We believe that by bringing together the public and private sectors to deliver a programme with employment and transferable skills as outcomes, we will enable unemployed women to increase their economic participation in society.

Our effective intervention includes a rigorous selection process, preparation training and two years of professional training and mentoring.

Through this intervention, women gain a level of experience that will allow them to be fully equipped to enter full-time employment in their home country.

We aim for outcomes where our programme graduates increase female employment participation rates, including at senior levels.



The social issue – THE HOW

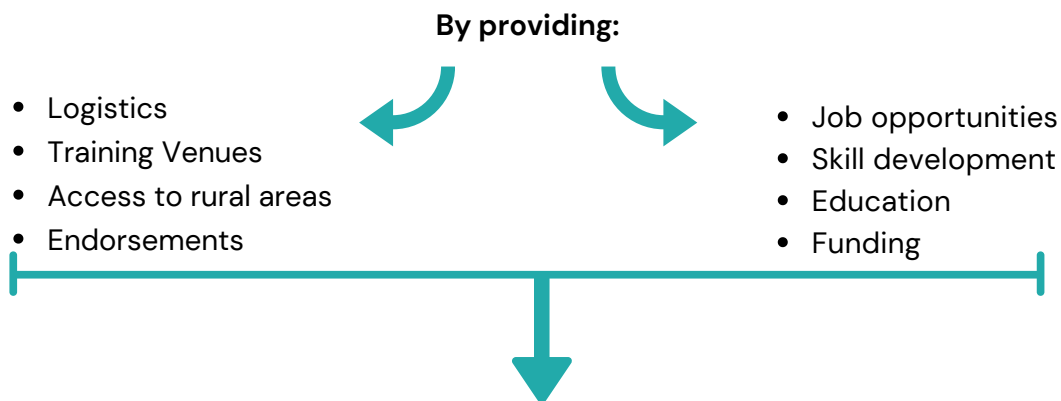
By implementing our Theory of Change we provide a solution to the challenges faced by both private and public sectors:

The challenge for governments

Governments in Africa are working towards increasing women's economic participation and their representation in senior management roles through capacity-building programmes. Yet these programs are not yielding results sufficient to address the problem.

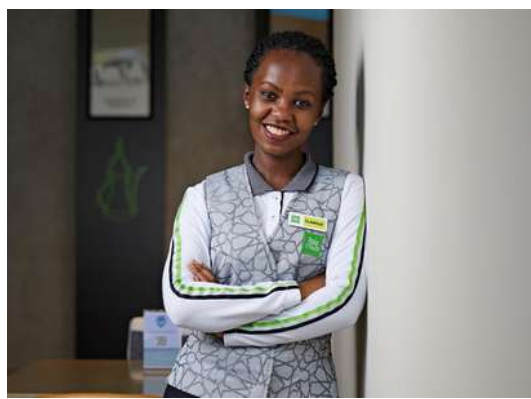
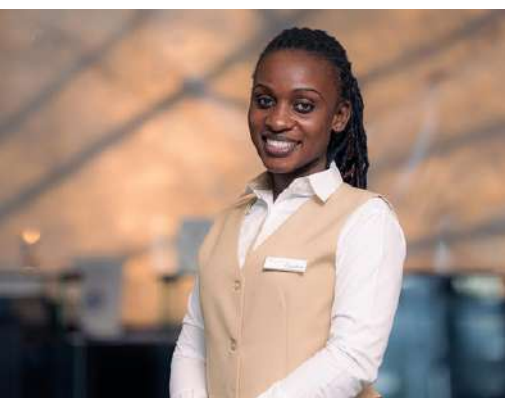
The challenge for corporates

The private sector is addressing the challenge of finding projects that increase their social impact participation and position them as trusted corporate citizens.



Evolvin' Women delivers a 27 month employability programme inclusive of:

- Pre-Departure Preparation Training and Briefings
- On-the-job training
- Access to online training
- Access to face-to-face training
- Mentoring and coaching
- Fully paid job placement for 2 years Salary, Housing, Health Insurance, and other benefits as per Labour Law Completion Certificate
- A return ticket to their home country
- Impact reporting



The social issue – THE WHO & THE IMPACT

Participants are socially excluded, dependent, vulnerable, unemployed women with no income

“Socially excluded” means being excluded from society, or parts of society, as a result of one or more of the following factors: child sexual exploitation; victim of rape; victim of verbal abuse; unemployment or unpaid labour; financial hardship; well-being (physical or mental); poor educational or skills attainment; relationship and family breakdown; refugee status. The above is not an exhaustive list, and Evolvin' Women will adapt to the changing needs of society.

According to the United Nations (UN)[1]:

“Social exclusion is a multidimensional phenomenon not limited to material deprivation; poverty is an important dimension of exclusion, albeit only one dimension.”

“Social exclusion is what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime, poor health and family breakdown.”[2]

The UN notes that symptoms of exclusion include: unequal access to resources; unequal participation; and denial of opportunities. At Evolvin' Women, we see these as both symptoms and causes of exclusion and aim to address them through our programme as follows:

[1] <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/rwss/2016/chapter1.pdf>

[2] United Kingdom Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2004, p. 2





Global Compact Principles

Evolvin' Women is currently working within the framework of the United Nations Global Compact.

We are actively committed to all ten of its principles.

Below is an outline of how we are executing policies and actions to ensure we comply with these principles.

Cleopatra Mutoki
Zambia
2022 Enrollment

Human Rights Principles

Principle 1: Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights

Evolvin' Women works closely with the Government of the United Arab Emirates and foreign Embassies in Dubai to protect women while they are in the UAE. Women have access to medical insurance, a work visa, a suitable means of travel to and from their place of work, suitable accommodation, and competitive remuneration for the duration of the programme.

We have developed relationships with the Embassies of Zambia, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Uganda and Kenya and meetings are held by each Embassy to ensure and check the wellbeing of women enrolled.

Principle 2: Make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses

We have monthly meetings and calls with each woman to provide them with an opportunity to be heard and share successes and concerns. We ask questions to find out if there are any incidents of bullying and abuse while working with our partners. The monthly meeting policy is to ensure there are no abuses of power and if situations are brought to our attention an investigation is launched and monitored.

We also conduct quarterly meetings with our partners and interview Heads of Departments and Human Resources representatives to compile data and feedback on the performance of our participants. This process allows us to compare our participants' feedback with their managers' feedback and identify any areas of concern that need to be addressed.

Evolvin' Women has a number available 24/7 that participants can call in case of emergency.

Pre-onboarding training is also delivered prior to their arrival in the Middle East to ensure that laws and cultural norms are clear and understood.

Labour Principles

Principle 3: Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining

Labour unions or workers councils are not legal in the U.A.E labour law. The authority that is primarily responsible for the employees' rights protection is the Ministry of Labour. Our supply chain policy, allows us to work only with licensed organisations and ensures that our partners work in compliance with the UAE labor law. Many are signatories to the UNGC as well as to WEPs. The business conducted within Evolvin' Women gives participants the flexibility to control their participation. The training and tasks assigned are provided with a flexible timeframe so participants can learn at their own pace and get the most out of the tools at their disposal. It is our priority to partner with employers who have training and ethical employment policies aligned with the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact

Principle 4: the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour

Evolvin' Women works closely with its partners in the Middle East and foreign countries to ensure that participants are motivated, dedicated, and willing to improve their quality of education and seek other means of employment. As per our policy, participants travel when they have an employment contract and work visa according to the local Labour Law. They voluntarily make the decision to come based on the contract they reviewed and signed. Therefore they can stay up to 2 years but are free to resign at their own discretion.

When our participants return to their home countries, they are not forced into employment but rather are given the opportunity to decide what industry-specific field is most appropriate and enjoyable.

Principle 5: the effective abolition of child labour

Evolvin' Women does not associate itself with brands, companies or entities that have a history of possible or proven child labour to our best knowledge. We do not enrol anyone under the legal age of work. We only work with unemployed women 21 and over.

Principle 6: the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation

By teaching women regardless of their race, age, socioeconomic background or nationality, Evolvin' Women has demonstrated its commitment to diversity, education and to the implementation of WEPs. Elimination of discrimination is at the heart of Evolvin' Women.

Training is delivered to participants and the team on the understanding of bias, such as the #IamRemarkable workshop. This is a Google initiative empowering women and other underrepresented groups to celebrate their achievements in the workplace and beyond while understanding and appreciating diversity in the workplace. Additionally, the multicultural work environment in the Middle East provides a great opportunity to develop such skills and become mindful of inclusivity.

Environmental Principles

Principle 7: Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges

Evolvin' Women is aware of the challenges that arise with global warming and a changing environmental landscape.

All projects are launched with this in mind. In 2022, the Nia Coffee project helped organisations in the UAE implement Gender Responsive Procurement practices while creating market access for female farmers from Africa.

The packaging of the coffee sold through this programme is recycled, biodegradable, and compostable. Packaging is prepared in the UAE to reduce CO2 emissions from imports. The organisation also conducts a vetting process that includes farms' environmental responsibility

Principle 8: undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility

Evolvin' Women has demonstrated its commitment to promoting greater environmental responsibility through its conscious use of resources and commitment to working with partners that engage in environmental initiatives. Examples are our continued partnerships in 2022 with:

- Hilton Travel with Purpose initiative represents Hilton's commitment to redefining sustainable travel and driving positive environmental and social change across its operations, supply chain, and communities.

- Accor Planet 21 programme demonstrates the Group's ambitious goals around four strategic priorities: work with its employees, involve its customers, innovate with its partners and work with local communities to tackle key issues including green buildings and environmental sustainability.
- Marriott – Nurture Our World programme supports sustainability and increases the resilience of the communities in which they do business, and invests in biodiversity initiatives such as coral restoration, rainforest protection, and reforestation efforts.
- IHG Green Engage™ system offers an online sustainability management tool that shows their hotels how they can minimise their impact on the local environment from using less energy and conserving water to reduce waste.

Principle 9: encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies

Nia products are an example of this. We share details about our supply chain with our clients and encourage them to follow similar guidelines. We have also developed a social entrepreneurship programme to support those participants who wish to develop enterprises that generate environmental and social impact on their return home.

Anti-Corruption Principles

**Principle 10:
Businesses should work
against corruption in all its
forms, including extortion and
bribery**

The introduction of the Anti-Bribery and Anti-Corruption Policy in 2020, lays out our individual responsibility to comply with anti-bribery and anti-corruption laws and to ensure that any third parties that we engage to act on our behalf do the same.


We ensure our policy is effectively implemented by working with the respective embassies in the Middle East and foreign ministries and others in the country of origin to ensure our women are protected against risks of corrupt practices.

Corporate Citizenship Strategy & Approach

Our strategy includes 4 pillars:

- Ethical Governance
- Partnerships
- Women Advancement
- Community Advancement & Environment

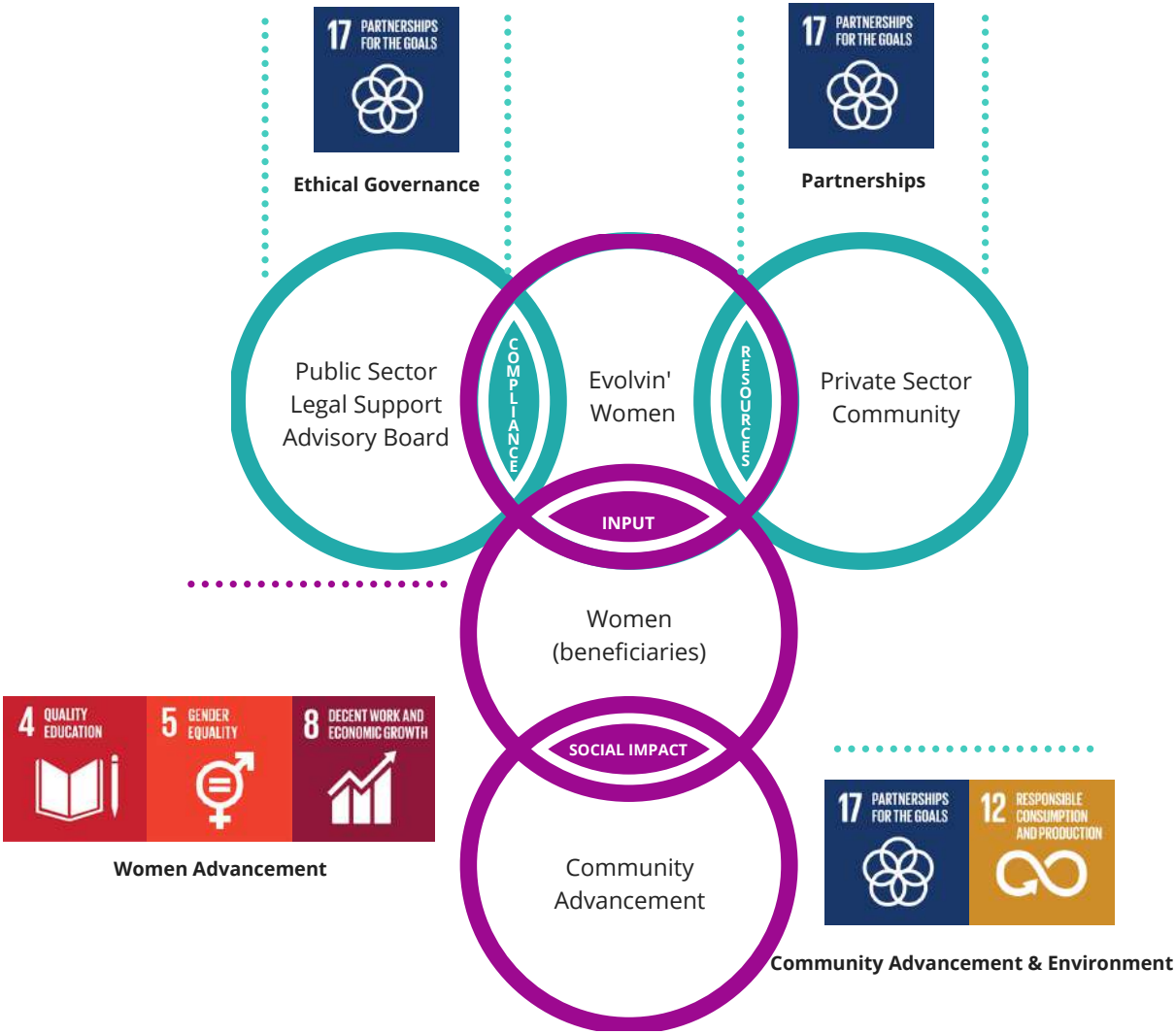
Our inputs, outputs and outcomes are motivated by and explicitly in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

A portrait of Mary Banda, a woman with dark skin and braided hair, wearing a green blazer over a white t-shirt. She is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey.

Mary Banda
Zambia
2022 Enrollment

Corporate Citizen Strategy & Approach

Below is an outline of our outcomes and how we are executing tactics to ensure they are reached. This is done with a view to maintaining profitability while improving the quality of life of our beneficiaries and their communities.



Ethical governance

Evolvin' Women is driven by the commitment to develop a framework of rules and practices that ensures accountability, fairness, and transparency in our relationship with all stakeholders.

Advisory board

In January 2022 Evolvin' Women confirmed its commitment to having a Corporate Advisory Board (CAB) to enhance its overall strategy development, corporate governance and independent oversight. The CAB, consisting of six external Advisors with diverse backgrounds and relevant experience, meets regularly with management and provides frequent inputs into the governance, strategy, planning and development of the organisation.

The strengthening of the organisation's governance structure is aimed at supporting the expansion of Evolvin' Women in the mission of creating meaningful, lasting, measurable impact in the communities we support.

Legal support



We have clear contracts in place with all our stakeholders issued and reviewed by Squire Patton Boggs in Dubai. Evolvin' Women policies available on our website are prepared by the legal firm.



Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, in particular developing countries.

In 2022, we have established further relationships and partnerships with the public sector in Africa, including Kenya, Ethiopia and Zimbabwe. We introduce our participants to the Ambassadors of their country in Dubai, and have ongoing relationships with relevant government bodies in each country of operation. The endorsement we receive from the public sector allows us to guarantee transparency and be accountable while working on our contribution to the achievement of SDGs.



In 2022, we strengthened our relationship with the Dubai Chamber of Commerce by introducing new projects to support female farmers in Africa.

We have also established a new partnership this year with Palo Alto, a multi-award-winning agency that is helping Evolvin' Women raise awareness of SDG #17 across the world through strategic public relations, digital media, content production, and marketing expertise.

Partnerships

Community Engagement

By engaging with the community we aim at making a positive change that transcends borders, cultures and backgrounds.

Private Sector – CAPACITY BUILDING

We are committed to establishing partnerships for capacity building by engaging with the private sector and the community.



Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building

in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the sustainable development goals.

We have developed Partnerships within the Hospitality, Luxury Retail, and Logistic sectors to secure placement opportunities and on-the-job training. This has been achieved through corporate agreements in alignment with CSR strategies such as:



Travel with Purpose that brings urgent focus and committed action to the pursuit of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, and to the protection of human rights.



Women in Leadership campaign that highlights the importance of women's advancement in the workplace.



Planet 21 and RiiSE movement that fosters diversity and inclusion across all areas of operations.



"Great Hotels Guests Love" that promotes responsible business by making a positive impact on the world while building a business.



Empower Through Opportunity aimed at addressing unemployment and underemployment due to inequality and lack of opportunity.



Corporate CSR Steering Committee that is responsible for agreeing on the strategic direction, themes, and focus areas for the business as a whole to promote equality and diversity



A Culture of Diversity & Inclusion Programme that fosters an inclusive culture which reflects their diverse customers around the world



D&I programmes in DHL that commit to building a safe, inclusive, and equitable environment where everyone has a sense of belonging while supporting 3 key Sustainable Development Goals of Gender Equality, Decent Work and Economic Growth, and Reduced Inequalities.

Partnerships have also been developed to secure training, coaching, knowledge exchange, and operational logistics for the benefit of participants. This has been achieved through agreements in alignment with CSR strategies such as:



DMCC has enabled Evolvin' Women to register in the free zone, access office space, and engage the wider community through their Corporate Social Responsibility. Through this partnership Evolvin' Women can access a conference venue to hold its annual forum and bring together participants to share experiences and learnings on the programme.



Zanaco places importance on improving lives and meeting the needs of its citizens in the communities in which they operate by promoting sustainable change. Its Education and Financial Education/Literacy Pillar aims at supporting the development of both women and communities.



Accenture Skills to Succeed Academy and Rosetta Stone - language training, have enabled Evolvin' Women to bring education to rural areas and help our participants build skills and confidence to make career choices and develop the key employability skills they need to find and sustain employment.



PwC Academy has appointed trainers to deliver professional development courses that include the provision of capacity-building programmes on Finance, Human Resources, Leadership, and Digital Skills.



D'Nour is a luxury jewelry brand celebrating femininity. EVOLVE is the jewelry line designed by D'Nour to support our Programme by funding scholarships for more women to enrol in further training and education.



Squire Patton Boggs supports Evolvin' Women in helping understand partnership contracts and providing expertise to reach out to more businesses and secure more career opportunities for women from developing countries.



ADG Legal's support ranges from legal to capacity-building training.

Women Advancement

Employability Skills

Our programme is designed to work alongside full-time employment with our partner employers. There is an average of 4 hours per week time commitment which participants have the flexibility to do as time permits. The underlying concepts and practical work involved in each of our learning modules are set up to work in sync with participants' work experience. The online training is delivered over 24 months through the Evolvin' Women e-learning platform that includes:

- online, interactive learning material with practicals and assessments
- completing assignments
- self-reflective writing pieces, and
- projects

Entrepreneurship Skills

Programmes have been developed to facilitate hospitality and farming concept development in Africa.

From beekeeping to business planning, marketing, and finance for start-ups courses

OVER

9,600 Coaching hours delivered

27,000 Training hours delivered

1,000 Training course available



Community Advancement & Environment



At Evolvin' Women, we are committed to turning vulnerable ecosystems into viable conservation economies and investable projects through sustainability and inclusion. To achieve this, we are starting the development of a collection of eco-lodges – Ubuntu Eco-Lodges – as eco-tourism models. Community engagement provides a return on investment while creating self-sufficient communities with access to education and healthcare. The construction of the first lodge was due to start in South Africa in 2022. Post Covid-19, we have begun the planning again.

We are also committed to reducing our environmental footprint and working towards fostering sustainable growth for our company and our clients. It is our plan to extend our social impact within the home countries of our participants by developing lodges that are ecologically and environmentally sustainable.



By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse



Specifically, the lodges have been designed in partnership with Eco Domes, a social enterprise based in South Africa that develops eco-buildings that are cost-efficient, creates local jobs and co-operatives and are environmentally safe (no wood or steel used in the building, much less cement than conventional construction and zero-waste green infrastructure integrated at design level). The current building project includes the use of solar panels to provide a constant electricity source to the hub; the installation of greywater systems to ensure water supply is managed; the use of an effective recycling system with minimal waste; and the planting of trees and plants to ensure that the hub will not negatively impact its surroundings.

Performance table Outcomes Reached

Women Trained (enrolled in the programme) - Total	Number of participants who received training offered by the organization and its partners during the reporting period.	650
Vocational/Technical Training Hours Total	Total Number of training hours* provided by the organization and its partners for participants during the reporting period.	14,120
Vocational/Technical Training Hours Individual	Number of training hours provided by the organization and its partners to each participant during the reporting period.	21.5
Learning Hours Total	Number of total learning hours** provided by the organization and its partners for participants during the reporting period.	36,600
Learning Hours Individual	Number of learning hours provided to each participant during the reporting period.	60
Skill development Placement Rate	Percentage of the participants who were placed in skill development placement for 2 years during the reporting period.	92.6%
Skill development Placement	Number of participants who were placed in skills development placements for 2-years during the reporting period.	602


*Number of total training hours provided by Evolvin' Women and its partners during the reporting period. This includes on-job training and other specific sector training

** Number of total learning hours include all training hours completed in all Evolvin' Women disciplines (Vocational/Technical Training, soft skills, mentoring, employability skills, life skills), across the following areas:

- Global & Cultural Competencies
- Communication
- Interview Skills
- Leadership
- Disciplined Knowledge
- Health & Wellness

(9,600 hours of mentoring, 9880 hours of face-to-face training and 3000 hours of online training)

Performance table Outcomes Reached

INPUT	OUTPUT	OUTCOME
Skill development placements with on-the-job training, mentoring, face-to-face and online training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 650 women enrolled - 9,600 hours of mentoring - 9880 face-to-face training hours - 3000 online training hours 	 <p>Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex 650 participants have improved skills and knowledge through self-assessments and on-the-job training.</p>

Social Impact

Our 3 strategic pillars support 5 outcomes set to generate social impact in the future

Participants must:

- be able to secure a full-time salaried job in their home country within 6 months from the end of the Programme;
- attain an increase in salary compared to the salary they were able to receive based on their CV before the Programme
- have an improved financial position, creating life options such as independent living within 2-3 years from starting a full-time job in their home country
- be able to have a bank account and directly access their salaries and life savings
- secure a managerial role (if they choose to) within 5-7 years from starting a full-time job in their home country



Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, by type of skill

55 participants have had access to computers, technology expertise and a work environment where the best technology is used to meet guests' needs. They are exposed to new ways of doing business and are able to generate ideas to implement in their home country and advance the service industry.



Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location

By providing employability skill training sessions, interview simulation sessions and coaching 602 women secured skill development placements in the Middle East.



Proportion of adults (15 years and older) with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider

602 participants are financially independent, have a bank account and direct and sole access to their income and life savings.



Ubuntu Eco-Lodge - planning stage

Thank you for your ongoing support of our programme

Established in 2017 and based in Dubai, Evolvin' Women aims to build sustainable economies in developing countries through the advancement of women with limited access to education and skill development. Evolvin' Women was born to address this social issue by providing the private sector with a socially responsible solution to their recruitment and operational needs while helping governments in developing countries reduce female unemployment and build inclusive economies.

Evolvin' Women
PF Office 2
Silver Tower
Cluster I
Dubai
United Arab Emirates

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