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The Governing Body

United Nations Global Compact

Dear Sirs/Madams,

We are writing to express our unwavering commitment to advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) through our participation in the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC). As the Chief Executive Officer of SLIM I recognize the critical role that businesses play in creating a sustainable and equitable future for all.

At SLIM, we understand that sustainable development is not just a responsibility but a strategic imperative. We acknowledge the urgency of addressing global challenges such as climate change, inequality, poverty, and injustice. In alignment with the UNGC principles, we pledge to integrate these values into our core business operations, ensuring that sustainability becomes a cornerstone of our corporate identity.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Signed

Sanath Senanayake

CEO / Executive Director

Sri Lanka Institute of Marketing

# Liyaka Mahima, Women Empowerment Program by SLIM

## PROGRAM

"Liyaka Mahima," hailed as a premier national initiative by the Sri Lanka Institute of Marketing (SLIM) and the SAARC Business Association of Home-Based Workers (SABAH), stands as a beacon for female empowerment in the business realm of Sri Lanka. In response to the pressing need to recognize and enhance the latent potential of female entrepreneurship, this project emerges as a pivotal tool during an era where discussions surrounding women's empowerment have never been more critical.

This initiative unfolds through a multi-faceted approach, featuring Entrepreneurial Skills Development Workshops that delve into crucial marketing strategies. A Trade Fair, orchestrated in Colombo, serves as a valuable platform for female entrepreneurs to expand their horizons by tapping into new markets.

A distinguishing feature of "Liyaka Mahima" lies in its commitment to inclusivity, with all sessions conducted in Sinhala with Tamil translation where necessary, ensuring accessibility for a broader demographic. The culmination of these efforts results in the issuance of certificates, recognizing and validating the achievements of the participants, making "Liyaka Mahima" a transformative force in crafting a prominent and empowered presence for women in the traditionally male-dominated business landscape of Sri Lanka.

## DESCRIPTION OF ACTIONS

"Liyaka Mahima" unfolds a dynamic array of actions, meticulously designed to empower female entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka. In response to the imperative to recognize and enhance the often-untapped potential of female entrepreneurship, the project is a beacon during a time when women's empowerment takes center

stage. The initiative encompasses Entrepreneurial Skills Development Workshops, strategically aimed at imparting crucial marketing strategies. A pivotal Trade Fair in Colombo opens doors for entrepreneurs to expand their market presence and tap into new opportunities.

## STAKEHOLDERS

Sri Lanka Institute of Marketing (SLIM)

SAARC Business Association of Home-Based Workers (SABAH)

Female entrepreneurs of Sri Lanka

Divisional Secretariats and District-level authoritative bodies

## BENEFICIARIES

Female entrepreneurs seeking to enhance their business skills and market presence.

SLIM and SABAH, benefiting from the success and positive impact of the initiative.

## PROBLEM

The identified problem lies in the existing barriers and challenges that hinder the empowerment and recognition of female entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka. Despite being a prominent national initiative, "Liyaka Mahima" addresses the issue of an underutilized and unrecognized potential among female entrepreneurs. The problem stems from the prevailing gender disparity in the business world, where women face significant hurdles in establishing a robust presence and gaining recognition. Furthermore, the lack of marketing acumen.

In a society where women's empowerment is increasingly acknowledged, the project recognizes a critical problem – the need to break through the gender norms and stereotypes that dominate the business landscape. The initiative implies that, historically, the far-flung potential of female entrepreneurship has been

overlooked or underestimated. This underrepresentation, coupled with a lack of opportunities, resources and lack of marketing knowledge, are a fundamental challenge that "Liyaka Mahima" aims to rectify. By doing so, the project seeks to address the broader societal issue of gender inequality in the business domain, providing a platform for women to thrive and contribute significantly to the economy, upskilling and enhancing their knowledge in respect of marketing.

## Solution

The solution derived from the information provided involves a multi-faceted approach to address the challenges faced by female entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka and promote their empowerment through the "Liyaka Mahima" initiative.

### Comprehensive Training Programs:

Expand and tailor the Entrepreneurial Skills Development Workshops to cover a wide range of skills, including marketing, financial management, leadership, and technology. This ensures a holistic development approach for female entrepreneurs.

### Regional Outreach:

Increase the frequency and accessibility of Training Sessions at Divisional Secretariat and District levels to reach women in rural and remote areas. This regional expansion ensures that opportunities are accessible to women across the country.

### Mentorship Programs:

Implemented mentorship programs where experienced entrepreneurs, both male and female, can provide guidance and support to female participants. This facilitates knowledge transfer, networking, and fosters a supportive business community.

### Collaborative Marketing Opportunities:

Enhance the Trade Fair component by fostering collaborations with established businesses, both local and international. This provides female entrepreneurs with valuable exposure and opportunities to tap into new markets.

### Digital Integration:

Integrate digital literacy components into the training curriculum to equip female entrepreneurs with essential digital skills. This empowers them to leverage technology for marketing, communication, and business operations.

### Continuous Evaluation and Feedback:

Establish a robust system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the training programs. Collect feedback from participants to continuously improve and tailor future sessions to meet evolving needs.

### Network Building:

Facilitate networking events within the training programs to encourage collaboration and resource-sharing among female entrepreneurs. Building a supportive network can contribute significantly to their success.

By implementing these solutions, "Liyaka Mahima" can evolve into a more impactful and inclusive initiative, fostering the development of a thriving community of empowered female entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka.

## IMPACT /] EXPECTED OUTCOME

The impact and expected outcomes of the "Liyaka Mahima" initiative are poised to be transformative, contributing significantly to the landscape of female entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka. The anticipated effects are multifaceted and encompass various dimensions:

### Enhanced Female Entrepreneurship Presence:

The initiative aims to catalyze a noticeable increase in the presence of female entrepreneurs in the business domain. By addressing barriers and providing comprehensive training, "Liyaka Mahima" seeks to create a more inclusive and diverse entrepreneurial ecosystem.

### Improved Business Skills and Market Reach:

Entrepreneurial Skills Development Workshops are designed to equip female entrepreneurs with essential business skills, particularly in marketing strategies. This knowledge enhancement is expected to result in improved business acumen and expanded market reach for the participants.

#### Access to New Markets:

The Trade Fair organized in Colombo serves as a valuable platform for female entrepreneurs to tap into new markets. The anticipated outcome is an increased exposure for businesses, leading to potential collaborations and market expansion.

#### Regional Socio-Economic Impact:

Training Sessions conducted at Divisional Secretariat and District levels are poised to have a positive socio-economic impact at the regional level. By empowering female entrepreneurs across different geographical areas, the initiative contributes to a more balanced economic development.

#### Contribution to National Women Empowerment Discourse:

As one of the prominent national initiatives, "Liyaka Mahima" is expected to contribute to the ongoing national discourse on women's empowerment. By showcasing success stories and positive outcomes, the initiative becomes a catalyst for broader societal changes.

### ATTITUDANAL CHANGES

The "Liyaka Mahima" initiative is poised to bring about significant attitudinal changes in the landscape of female entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka. The key attitudinal shifts expected include:

#### Increased Confidence and Self-Esteem:

Through the comprehensive Entrepreneurial Skills Development Workshops and recognition, female entrepreneurs are likely to experience a boost in confidence and self-esteem. This newfound confidence can empower them to navigate and succeed in a traditionally male-dominated business environment.

### Perception of Women as Business Leaders:

The project's focus on recognizing and improving the potential of female entrepreneurship challenges traditional gender norms. Attitudes toward women as capable business leaders are expected to evolve, fostering a more inclusive perception of their roles in the business world.

### Positive Perception of Women's Contributions:

By organizing a Trade Fair and nationwide Training Sessions, "Liyaka Mahima" showcases the contributions of female entrepreneurs. This exposure is likely to change perceptions, emphasizing the valuable role women play in the business sector and highlighting their potential for significant contributions.

### Shift in Gender Dynamics:

The project's emphasis on women's empowerment and recognition within the business realm contributes to a shift in gender dynamics. Attitudes towards women in business are anticipated to become more supportive, acknowledging their competence and potential for leadership roles.

### Cultural Inclusivity:

Conducting all Training Sessions in Sinhala and Tamil demonstrates cultural inclusivity. This approach is likely to foster a positive attitude among participants, making them feel valued and represented within the initiative, thereby contributing to a more inclusive and supportive cultural mindset.

### Recognition of Female Entrepreneurial Potential:

"Liyaka Mahima" aims to recognize and enhance the far-flung potential of female entrepreneurship. This recognition can lead to a change in societal attitudes, challenging preconceived notions about the limitations of women in business and fostering an environment that values and supports their entrepreneurial endeavors.

## MEASUREMENTS OF OUTCOME

Measuring the outcome of the "Liyaka Mahima" initiative involves assessing various key performance indicators (KPIs) to determine the effectiveness and impact of the programs. Here are some of the implemented measures:

#### Participation Rates:

Track the number of female entrepreneurs participating in Entrepreneurial Skills Development Workshops, the Trade Fair, and Training Sessions. This provides insights into the reach and engagement of the initiative.

#### Geographic Coverage:

Assess the geographic coverage of Training Sessions by monitoring the number of sessions conducted at Divisional Secretariat and District levels. Evaluate whether the initiative effectively reaches women in diverse regions.

#### Diversity and Inclusion:

Measure the diversity of participants by considering factors such as age, educational background, and business sectors. This ensures inclusivity and assesses whether the initiative caters to a broad demographic.

#### Market Expansion:

Evaluate the success of the Trade Fair by measuring the number of new markets tapped into by participants. Assess the impact on the entrepreneurs' scope and market reach as a result of their participation.

#### Skill Development:

Implement pre- and post-training assessments to measure the improvement in entrepreneurial skills among participants. Focus on key areas such as marketing strategies, financial management, and leadership.

#### Language Accessibility:

Monitor the effectiveness of conducting sessions in Sinhala and Tamil by gathering feedback on language accessibility. Ensure that language barriers are minimized to enhance participant engagement.

#### Post-Program Surveys:



Conduct surveys or interviews with participants after the programs to gather qualitative feedback on the perceived impact of "Liyaka Mahima" on their businesses, confidence, and market presence.

#### Long-Term Success Stories:

Identify and document success stories of female entrepreneurs who attribute their achievements to the skills and opportunities provided by "Liyaka Mahima." This qualitative measure highlights the initiative's long-term impact.

#### Collaborations and Partnerships:

Assess the number and quality of collaborations and partnerships formed as a result of the initiative, especially concerning the Trade Fair. This indicates the initiative's success in creating valuable networking opportunities for female entrepreneurs.

Regularly monitoring and evaluating these metrics will provide valuable insights into the overall success and impact of "Liyaka Mahima" in empowering female entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka. Adjustments and improvements can be made based on the feedback and outcomes measured over time.

Sri Lanka Institute of Marketing

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