



An AB Sugar company

DRIVING FOR CHANGE IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA THIS INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

07 March 2019

A blog by Gavin Dalglish, Group Managing Director of Illovo Sugar Africa

Gender diversity is important to Illovo. It's central to the success of our business in each of our locations, as well as the ongoing sustainable growth of our operations. With a footprint in six countries across sub-Saharan Africa; we appreciate and acknowledge the unique position as a driver for change that we hold on the continent.

And this International Women's Day, I wanted to share how we're striving to improve gender equality, through a variety of initiatives within our local communities and value chains.

Empowering women in southern Africa

Across each of our countries of operation; Eswatini, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia; we are empowering women within our workforce and across our value chain. We are doing this through working together on projects and initiatives to provide support, training, and expertise to enable women to thrive in both the workplace and community.

Our footprint means our supply chains are diverse in their nature, scope, size and complexity; often meaning we need to take multi-stakeholder approaches to improve livelihoods on the ground. In rural communities, female growers are particularly vulnerable; holding less power due to societal views and gender bias. We recognise this, and in partnership with USAID, have helped to [educate female smallholder farmers](#) in Mozambique about their land rights, while increasing the technical skills of community members; half of which are women. This has been a particularly successful partnership in helping female growers understand and formalise their land rights, offering them greater security with legal land tenure and a route to greater prosperity.

In addition, we also support the [South African Fairtrade Sugar Project](#), which encourages growers to form cooperatives to access finance to help grow or develop their community or business.

We're not just focused on those within our workforce and value chain; through our community provision, we also provide education services to communities. For example in Zambia, we have been involved in constructing and renovating essential schools infrastructure such as classrooms, laboratories and sanitary facilities. It is estimated that this reached over 2,750 pupils and 100 teachers across three separate schools. The provision of sanitary facilities enabled girls, in particular, to increase their attendance. We also donated nine computers to the school for students to access as part of their curriculum¹.

Providing opportunities and supporting development

Creating prosperity and improving livelihoods around our operations while ensuring we create social economic impact is pivotal to our work, as many of our operations are present in parts of the world that are very poor. Some of our mills are located in often isolated communities, therefore we help to provide a range of services from education, healthcare and infrastructure, to the benefit of the local community. We believe it's important to co-exist with a community that benefits from us being there.

As well as engaging with stakeholders within our value chain; we also support our own employees to develop and progress within their careers. We've started to share some of some inspirational case studies of women from across our supply chains to demonstrate the impact we are having on the ground. From our growers such as [Nomusa](#) and [Sindiwise](#); to a Cooperative Leader [Margarida](#), through to [Georgina](#) and

¹ <https://www.illovosugarafica.com/UserContent/Documents/Illovo-Impact-Report-Group-Dec17.pdf> - page 27 'Case study: Supporting schools in Zambia'



An AB Sugar company

[Hlelile](#) who work in our sugar mills in Malawi and Eswatini respectively; to [Rebecca](#) who is Managing Director of Zambia Sugar Plc. These individuals are success stories that we want to continue shouting about, to inspire the next generation to join our growing industry.

Working together for a brighter future

As a leader today; I am passionate about Africa's developmental agenda. I also see myself as the custodian of a great organisation; and strive to ensure that we are better than we were yesterday, to the benefit of our workforce, our communities and the regions where we operate. I believe that to ensure a brighter future we need to invest in women throughout their life; to support their dreams and ambitions, to continue to give them a voice in their communities to lead change, and to provide opportunities across our workforce for them to have an impact and make a difference.

Ends

Illovo Sugar Africa (Pty) Ltd is a Pan-African consumer business with its roots in growing and making sugar and related products. It is Africa's largest sugar producer and has extensive agricultural operations in six southern African countries – Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania and Zambia - manufacturing sugar and downstream products from cane supplied by its own agricultural operations and independent growers. The group is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Associated British Foods plc (ABF), a diversified international food, ingredients and retail group operating in more than 50 countries.

Illovo employs more than 12 000 people in permanent positions across the group with a further 18 000 people employed on a temporary basis. In a recent [independent socio-economic study](#), the company is estimated to support at least 71 443 jobs across the group and for each of Illovo's 29 663 direct employees, at least 1.4 additional jobs are estimated to be supported through grower communities and wider multiplier effects throughout the economy. Illovo has a proud history of significant contribution to local economies in which it operates and its positive social impact across this region on rural communities is substantial. Illovo's total economic impact, including direct, indirect and induced impacts, was estimated at R 23.8 billion in 2016/17.