

YuGrow as Female Leadership Programme at Vodacom:

Empowering Women, Transforming Leadership at Vodacom

1. Background and Primary Impact: Unlocking barriers to Gender Equity within Vodacom by accelerating readiness of female talent to and at Executive levels

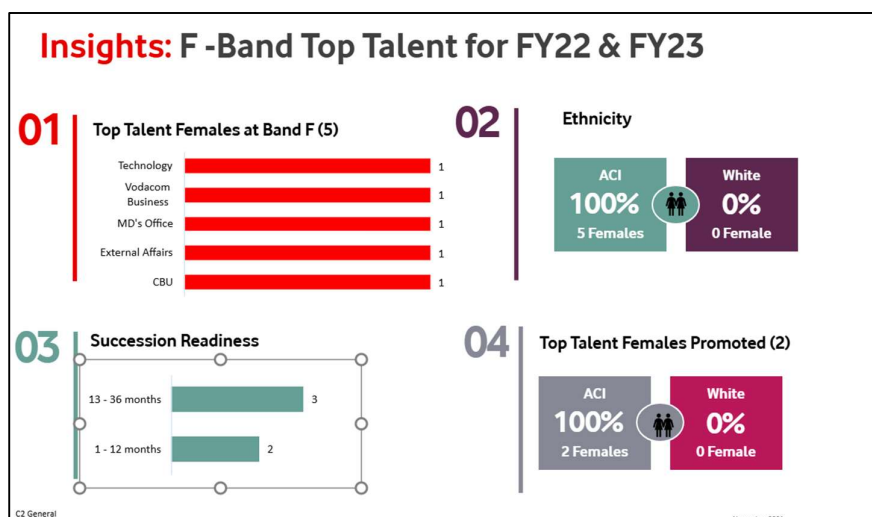
Gender equality in the workplace is not only a moral imperative but also a **significant driver of business success**. Research consistently shows that organisations with **greater gender diversity**, especially in leadership roles, tend to **perform better financially**.

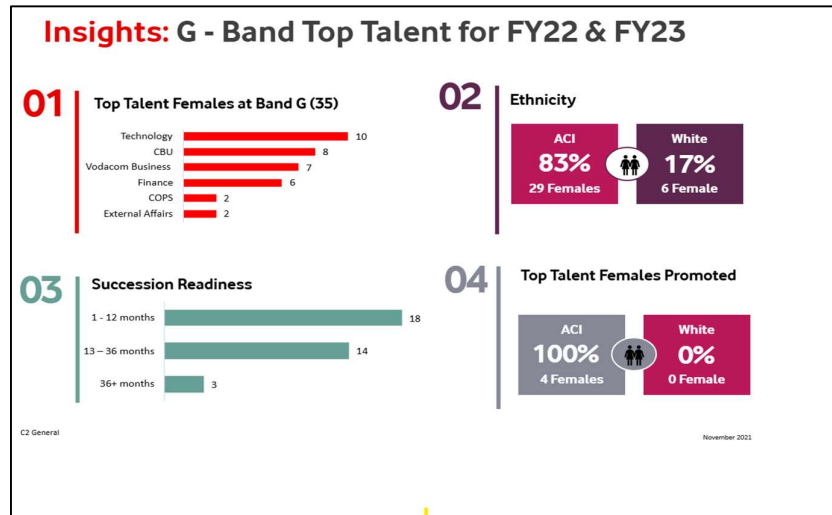
For instance, McKinsey's Diversity Matters research from 2015 found that organisations with higher gender diversity in leadership roles are more likely to have better financial performance. The findings indicate that diversity is statistically significant in terms of increased profitability.

Inclusive teams are shown to make better business decisions up to 87% of the time, while teams with less diversity are more likely to make poor choices for their companies.

Vodacom's strategic ambition is to achieve a gender-balanced workforce by 2025, highlighted a critical gap: **the delayed readiness of female talent for succession roles**. Traditional leadership programmes were found to be homogenous and insufficiently responsive to the unique contexts and challenges faced by women. Vodacom was specific on partnering with a provider who are able to address both self-imposed and challenges imposed by society and the environment the women worked and lived in.

Baseline indicators in August FY2023-FY2024:





1.1 Root cause for current performance gaps: Delayed readiness of female talent for succession roles

- Lack of visibility of entry and mid-level high potential female leaders at Senior leadership levels
- Traditional leadership programs were found to be homogenous and insufficiently responsive addressing unique challenges faced by women such as self-imposed and societal challenges.
- Psychological safety of women to show up as their authentic self within the workplace in fear of being judged
- Perception that job role was not strategic and the internal and external environment was not enabling for females to thrive in

1.2 Stakeholder's objectives:

- Executive Committee: Vodacom's strategic ambition is to achieve a gender-balanced workforce by 2025, and business continuity enablement by fast-tacking entry and mid management female successor readiness and enabling female agency
- Line Managers: Accelerated development gap closure as identified during the Potential assessments and successor readiness evaluation
- Delegates: Personal and professional growth to enable improved career growth trajectory and confidence through self-awareness, understanding of root cause of challenges, application of the learning and mastery of the new skills within the organisation
- Leadership Development and Talent Management: A differentiated female leadership programme that deliver quality and effectiveness at a Kirkpatrick level 4 to accelerate female leadership development by providing unique learning experiences and a data driven approach to progress tracking

1.3 Stakeholder Impact Measures:

- 100% improved readiness of delegates on the programme within a year from programme completion
- 10% Promotions within 2 years of programme completion
- >10% attrition of Top female talent who attended the programme, 1 year post programme completion
- Impact to be achieved at a Kirkpatrick level 4, to ensure both Personal and Business performance. This would be accomplished through awareness, understanding, applied learning and eventual mastery of self and environment.

2. The Learning solution:

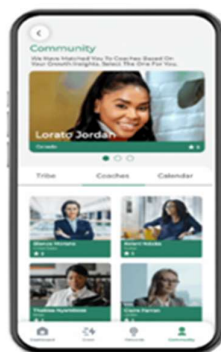
2.1 Programme Approach and Overview:

Vodacom partnered with **YuGrow** a female-led, female leader development partner who provides a Behaviour Tech platform, that combines behavioural science and shared value principles, to promote and inspire behavioural change at a micro level to enable females to maximise and seize opportunities for growth and to unleash latent potential. The programme delivers a **hyper-personalised, blended learning experience** for women who want to break barriers, drive growth and in so doing, close the economic gender gap.

The Yugrow solution is data-driven that enables progress tracking and insights which informs individual and Corporate insights, intended to enable the delegates and business to take corrective action on challenges and risks identified during the course of the learning intervention.

2.2 Target group and selection:

This unique learning solution has been identified for our entry to middle management level female executives, who has received a Top talent rating over 2 consecutive years. Furthermore, the selected delegate would have identified, Leadership as an area of development.



Connect & Support You

Get matched to a global base of coaches to stretch and provide perspective on your growth journey and partner with your own personal growth Tribe.

3. Learning Solution Overview

The YuGrow programme is **designed on high impact coaching and support network enablement**, structured around a **12-month journey** divided into four thematic quarters:

- Surfacing, Challenging & Breaking Internal Barriers
- Connecting to Self & Crystallising Personal Purpose
- Stretching High Impact Goals (HIGs)
- Living & Embodying Personal Leadership Philosophy

3.1 Key components and data collection inputs includes:

1. **Growth Diagnostics:** Baseline and delta assessments to track behavioural shifts.
2. **Personalised Micro-Actions & Nudges:** Tailored interventions based on individual growth zones.
3. **360 Pulse Feedback:** Multi-stakeholder input to refine leadership behaviours.
4. **Group Coaching & Inspiring Leadership Series:** Peer learning and exposure to senior leaders.
5. **Cross-Organisational Tribes:** Networking and support across business units.
6. **Intelligent Coaching Engine:** AI-driven matching and progress tracking

3.2 Communication stakeholders on Results and Impact:

- Delegates: Progress and development gap closures from a personal and professional perspective
- Leadership Development and Talent Management: Programme effectiveness and as agreed related to the Kirk Patrick model
- HR Director and Talent & Culture Managing Director: Programme success as measured by the agreed key performance areas
- Executive Committee: Programme success as measured by the agreed key performance areas and areas of improvement from an environmental and leadership perspective.
- Line Managers: Progress and gap closure on development areas identified during the baseline assessments, challenges within the environment that stifles growth and progress that should be removed or decreased to optimise delegate progress and enable promotion

3.3 Tracked Impact:

- The YuGrow programme has delivered measurable outcomes: Participants have progressed into senior leadership roles (E and F Bands), including traditionally male-dominated fields like Big Data and Robotic Process Automation
- FY23-FY24
 - 20% of G-Bands promoted in FY24
 - 360% F-Bands promoted in FY24
- FY24-25

- 4.06% G-Band females (AT) promoted in FY25
- 20% G-Band females (TT) promoted in FY25
- 30–38% of Participants report increased **self-belief, motivation, and leadership confidence**, with many citing the programme as a “life-changing milestone”. The programme has strengthened Vodacom’s brand as a **purpose-driven organisation**, demonstrating a commitment to societal impact beyond internal talent pipelines

Organisational Insights:



- **Great improvement in Growth zone indicators:**
 - Seeking growth increase from 12.5% to 53% in 10 months of the programme
 - Approaching growth increase by 15%
 - Realising Growth improved significantly from 6% to 50%
 - Growing growth has improved by 12.5%
- **Shifts in the Environment**
 - 17% increase in Strategic focus, reflecting a shift driven by the programs focus on reframing accountability.
 - 23% reduction in the Burnout likelihood indicator which is driven by an improved wellbeing sparked by compulsory monthly consultation with a wellness coach
 - 38% reduction in “Trapped Talent” which reflects women leveraging more of their talents and capacity to elevate their contributions within their roles and teams
 - Increase of 18% in Positive team dynamics reflecting a reduction in the trust deficit with colleagues
 - 57% increase in the Enabling of the environment which measures how women experience and realise how the organisation is supportive of their career and personal goals
 - The only indicator that remained unchanged is “Bringing whole self” pointing to the discomfort amongst women about how receptive the environment is to authenticity
- **Testimonial:** Participants have reported increased self-belief, motivation, and leadership confidence, with many citing the program as a "life-changing milestone"

Yolanda Qumza's: Cohort 1- FY24-25



YugrowTestimonial_Yolanda Qumza.mp4

4. Opportunities for Improvement

While the programme has achieved significant success, several areas for enhancement have been identified:

- **Scalability:** Expanding access to more cohorts, especially in underrepresented regions and functions as well as the broader South African and African markets.
- **Integration with Broader Talent Systems:** Aligning YuGrow outcomes with Vodacom's career portals and internal mobility frameworks.
- **Cost Efficiency:** Exploring discounted models and partnerships to reduce per-delegate costs while maintaining quality

5. Secondary Impacts:

- Catalysing Cultural Transformation, YuGrow has driven a shift toward inclusive leadership and personalized development:
- Empowering Women with Agency, YuGrow addresses internal barriers that often go unspoken
- Driving Broader Economic and Social Value, the program strengthens Vodacom's brand as a **purpose-driven organisation**, committed to societal transformation.
- It also aligns with global imperatives to close the **economic gender gap**, which the World Economic Forum estimates would require up to \$7.8 trillion annually in developing economies

5.1 Beneficiaries, measures and communication of the Secondary Impacts

1. Catalysing Cultural Transformation:

- **Beneficiaries:** The entire organisation benefits from a shift towards inclusive leadership and personalized development. This includes both male and female employees who experience a more inclusive and supportive work environment
- **Measures:** Indicators such as improved team dynamics, increased strategic focus, and reduced burnout likelihood reflect the cultural transformation
- **Communication:** Results and impacts are communicated to delegates, leadership development and talent management teams, HR directors, and the executive committee

2. Empowering Women with Agency:

- **Beneficiaries:** Female employees, particularly those in entry to middle management levels, benefit from addressing internal barriers and gaining confidence and leadership skills
- **Measures:** Success is measured by the promotion rates of participants, increased self-belief, motivation, and leadership confidence
- **Communication:** Progress and development gap closures are communicated to delegates, line managers, and leadership development teams

3. Driving Broader Economic and Social Value:

- **Beneficiaries:** Vodacom as an organisation benefit from being seen as a purpose-driven entity committed to societal transformation. This also aligns with the organisation's strategic imperatives to close the economic gender gap.
- **Measures:** The program's success is reflected in the strengthened brand image and alignment with global gender equity goals
- **Communication:** The impact is communicated to the Executive Committee, HR directors and the Talent and culture team

6. Conclusion

The YuGrow Female Leadership Programme at Vodacom is a prime example of how empowering women and fostering gender equality can transform leadership and drive business success. This unique accelerated leadership development program has led to a significant increase in the representation of women in senior leadership roles, particularly in traditionally male-dominated fields like Big Data and Robotic Process Automation.

This programme has not only accelerated female leadership readiness but also reshaped the organisation's talent culture. Its continued evolution will be key to sustaining impact and achieving Vodacom's gender equity goals.

7. Bibliography

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