Women are underrepresented in water utilities. A new report shows that women are less attracted to the water sector, are recruited at lower rates, face hurdles in retention, and often have fewer opportunities to advance in their careers. But there are many promising approaches utilities can adopt to address these barriers and make the sector more diverse.

1. **Attraction**

Water utilities often do not attract women due to entrenched social norms and practices. However, attracting more female candidates can bring numerous benefits to a company, including increased financial productivity, greater innovation, and improved customer satisfaction.

2. **Recruitment**

Fewer women are recruited to water utilities (in past year)

- 20% of all utility workers recruited are women.
- 23% of engineers recruited are women.
- 15% of managers recruited are women.

Women have historically been underrepresented in water utilities; to this day they have lower chances of being hired.

3. **Retention**

| Female Employees Leave Utilities at a Higher Rate Than Men (in past year) |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Offices           | Treatment Plants  | Pumping Stations  |
| 82%               | 48%               | 37%               |

Inadequate facilities and working conditions contribute to the low retention rates of female employees.

4. **Advancement**

Women in water utilities do not always have the same opportunities as men to advance in their careers. Simple interventions and approaches can enable women to grow professionally, which can bring benefits to the organization, such as by improving employee satisfaction and thereby driving performance results.

**Examples of Promising Approaches**

- Career talks, role models, and other outreach campaigns
- Bring your daughter to work day
- Scholarships for women in STEM studies
- Women engineers recruited directly from universities
- Inclusive job advertisements
- Gender-balanced hiring committee
- Maternity, paternity, and parental leave policies
- Separate sanitation facilities for men and women
- On-site lactation rooms
- Regular pay gap assessments


All graphs are based on data from 64 utilities in 28 economies, as collected by the World Bank Utility Survey, 2018-19.