IRD 318 ASSIGNMENT

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QUESTION: What is Glass Ceiling? Is breaking the Glass Ceiling possible in Africa and what are the challenges.

ANSWERS

Glass ceiling are those impenetrable barriers which prevent women from leading in an organization or stop women from reaching a higher position in an organization. It is also an intangible barrier within a hierarchy that prevents women or minorities from obtaining upper level positions. Glass ceiling is also When people [refer](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/refer) to a [glass](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/glass) [ceiling](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/ceiling), they are [talking](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/talk) about the [attitudes](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/attitude) and [traditions](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/tradition) in a [society](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/society) that prevent women from [rising](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/rising) to the [top](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/top) [jobs](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/jobs).

**IS BREAKING GLASS CEILING POSSIBLE IN AFRICA**

Glass Ceiling can be broken in Africa, if the women voice out their opinion, talk about the issue, understand what glass ceiling is all about, when men or the society can change their mentality about the way they see women, etc. There are measures to be taken and if these measures are followed then Glass Ceiling can be broken in Africa, but it will be a lot of work on the path of African. Also, the corporation of both men and women, not only women, because in Africa, men feel superior to women in all aspects of life, so this will definitely affect the women. If there is corporation between the men and women, and the following measures below are followed, then breaking Glass Ceiling in Africa is possible.

**1 Understand the Glass Ceiling**

By now, you should have a strong understanding of what the glass ceiling are, the different types of barriers women and minorities face and some high-level ideas around why and how such barriers exist. Understanding this is the foundation of combating such barriers, and you can’t do it alone.

**2** **Talk about the Glass Ceiling**

Once you've got a solid grasp on how the glass ceiling operates, spark conversations with others. Help them understand what the glass ceiling is, why it exists and how they can help break it. Such conversations can be challenging and complex, but if you compassionately listen and share your own knowledge and resources, it will shine light on the topic among your colleagues and peers. These conversations will also undoubtedly advance your knowledge on the subject, how others view it and vice versa.

**3 Conduct Blind Screenings**

In order to reduce unconscious bias when hiring and promoting employees, consider making your application and screening processes blind. Blind screenings exclude information about candidates, like their name, interests and experiences (unrelated to the role), that may reveal their assumed gender, race or ethnicity.

As we mentioned above, blind applications increase a woman’s chance of [getting a job by 25-46%](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/28/magazine/is-blind-hiring-the-best-hiring.html) and not only that, but women were also more likely to be hired. Another study found that resumes with African American-sounding names were [14% less likely to receive a call-back](http://www.npr.org/2015/10/01/444912628/despite-improving-job-market-blacks-still-face-tougher-prospects) than resumes with white-sounding names. Blind screenings are a simple way to compare candidates based on skills and experiences and diminish some of the biases that come with reading over strangers' resumes.

### 4 Implement Regular Bias and Stereotype Training

Bringing in a diversity and inclusion expert or implementing unconscious bias training will help ensure that your team is on the same page. It can also initiate a conversation that people are either reluctant to have or are unsure of where to start. Implicit biases are challenging topics to cover, especially when you have a diverse team of individuals with different experiences and opinions that will likely arise during such conversations. Having an expert in the room will take the pressure off your team and ensure the conversations are productive and inclusive.

Consider providing additional training for managers and executives because they are the people who are hiring and promoting individuals. You want ensure your leadership team is able to support individual contributors in all aspects of their career.

### 5 Support Sexual Harassment Survivors

Yes, this is a very challenging topic, especially when you look back at the statistics. It’s no surprise that women would rather quit their job than bring up such a topic with a leader at their company or even HR. As a company, you should have readily available resources for anyone at your company to anonymously file a complaint. Not only is this a moral expectation, but if you don’t, you will continue to lose great employees and potentially keep offenders on your team until someone is brave enough to come forward. If you’re not sure where to start, [check out the resources available on RAINN](https://www.rainn.org/consulting-services).

**6 Set Diversity Hiring and Promoting Goals**

To actually walk the walk, you need to set diversity hiring and promoting goals. Start by assessing how diverse your company is and identifying which demographics are noticeably absent from your company. Document this by department, team and seniority levels to help you set goals based on the facts.

Also, ask for anonymous feedback from your employees about where they have experienced bias, [micro aggressions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microaggression), harassment and barriers in their careers and specifically at your company. This information will create a clear benchmark of where you are today and help you determine the next steps for improving diversity and breaking down the glass ceiling within your company.

### 7 Establish Anti-Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Policies

Most companies establish themselves as an equal opportunity employer and define this with an [equal opportunity employer policy statement](https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/policies/pages/cms_005022.aspx) on their career page, employee handbook and job descriptions. There are a number of variations of these statements, so if you don’t already have one, do some research to identify the right language and policies that reflect your company, mission and values.

**CHALLENGES OF GLASS CEILING**

**1** **Family Obligations**

Every working mother in Baker’s study reported that balancing a growing career with family obligations was a struggle, despite [research that shows](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/43452882_Doing_Gender_in_Context_Household_Bargaining_and_Risk_of_Divorce_in_Germany_and_the_United_States) when moms and dads contribute equally to housework, childcare and finances, the rate of divorce is reduced by half. Still, women continue to be responsible for [nearly twice](https://www.amazon.com/Getting-50-Working-Couples-Sharing/dp/0553806556) the amount of home obligations.

When my children were young teens, I decided to hire a “wife.” I relied on her to assume some family obligations for just two to three hours a day, such as handling laundry and starting dinner. But companies can also play an important role in diminishing this obstacle. Poll your people. What challenges do they have? What can the company create together? Consider offering on-site nanny services, flexible morning and afternoon hours, or the ability to work from home.

**2** **Limited Advancement**

Baker found that women lacked vertical opportunities for growth in their current organizations, either as a result of age or need to further education.

At my company, I have created a culture of coaching and feedback. As a group, and individually, we have trained under an executive business coach to improve leadership and emotional intelligence skills. Aren’t we better off teaching leadership to someone fresh out of college rather than waiting for them to learn it on their own? Find ways to coach your own staff members toward advancement.

**3** **Gender-Based Discrimination**

This factor has three facets. The first, coined the “double bind,” is a result of leadership stereotypes regarding gender and women feeling darned if they do, darned if they don’t. The second is the dynamic of men holding women back from advancing their careers. The third is the relationship dynamics of women holding other women back.

Based on what I have seen, it’s easy for baby boomer and Gen X women to hold back other women because of a belief that they must “earn their stripes,” just like we did. As a Gen X leader of millennial women, however, I realized I needed to change how I saw age, tenure and the promotional ladder. It’s important to drop old views and, instead, focus on what the individual brings to the role.

**4** **A Crisis in Confidence**

Baker believes confidence is the common denominator for all four challenges. When speaking with women in all different industries and at all different levels in their careers, it became clear that, even when women earn their seat at the table, they often feel they don’t have the right to have a voice at that table. Ultimately, we are not bumping our heads against a glass ceiling. The glass ceiling is a myth. The crisis in confidence is real. Confidence doesn’t just arise. It comes from starting a new process, learning something new, asking for an opportunity.

There was a pivotal moment in my career when my confidence began to grow. My business coach told me, "Women don’t ask for what they want. Men do it instinctively. Go ask for what you want." I taught this to my team members, who now ask me for what they want a promotion, a new resource, an opportunity.