

In 2011 I joined the baby nutrition division of Danone as HR Director. At the time women represented 50% of the company: they were present at the base of the pyramid of the organization and looking at the internal survey they expressed a poor level of engagement compared to men in all the dimensions.

My objectives was to boost people engagement and increase productivity. I asked my management to reshape workplace to increase women engagement and participation.

Therefore in 2011 I created the Baby Decalogue, ten golden "rules" to help mothers and then fathers in the workplace. The Baby Decalogue became the Danone Parental Policy (gender neutral) and is based on 4 PILLARS: PSYCO-EMOTIONAL, CULTURAL, ORGANIZATIONAL AND ECONOMIC. All these pillars are important and interdependent. The Psycho-emotional: I started 11 years ago to meet all mums and dads that are back from parental leave and re-enter into the organization. So I have the possibility to understand and check if the policy is still appropriate to support their needs.

The Organisational pillar is about the time flexibility to work based on objectives and not according to presentism.

The Economical pillar is about the integration of the state leave indemnity, the welfare, a tax free measure applied to all care services and the fact of keeping mums in the merit increase even during the leave.

The Cultural pillar is about father paid leave; ie. the possibility for new dads to have a paid leave (5, THEN 10 AND THEN 20 days starting from 2021) in order support the first days of the newborn's life; being parents means committing oneself to the growth of a new life together.

Unfortunately, this is still not the case in many contexts in Italy, because culturally women are the only ones who take care of children. Dads are many times "stigmatized".

Observing many women coming back from maternity leaves I observed a change in terms of capabilities and I begun to measure them using external partners. We discovered that maternity and paternity are outstanding gyms in terms of learning opportunities; in fact care activities increase crucial

competencies such as priority setting, organizational skills, delegation. We really believe that being parents gives back better professionals to the companies and through that Master we were able to demonstrates that Professionals themselves when they take care of a person, recognize a clear improvement in most of their skills, a greater engagement, a greater closeness to the company and a better synergy between life and work. This is possible because care activities give back better people and this also benefits businesses and organizations. The best ground to learn is life and not the classroom, especially in the most relevant moments of transition such as becoming parents or taking care of a diseased or elderly family member. About that, we have promoted a Caregiver policy, to support those among our people who take care of their family members, whether elderly or in difficulty, because care is the basis of our daily actions and the force that leads us in our lives.

The parental policy applied since 2011 in a diligent way have produced outstanding results:

100% of moms come back

100% of Dads take the leave

Women at management level from 38% to 67%;

the pay gap has been eliminated

the absenteeism close to zero

people engagement is very high

talents are attracted and retained so the cost of hiring and learning are reduced

there is a strong solidarity among people

on average 20% of the promotions go to moms back.

Birth rate is 7% against 4% at country level.

The higher the female employment is, the higher is the birth rate

In our view the measure that can sustain the most female employment, participation and growth is the possibility to adopt a legislation that allows a more equal distribution of responsibility in the work environment and a more equal distribution of the care at home. Giving the possibility to the couple to decide who will take the leave. So extending the paternal leave to the fathers that are in the private, public sector and entrepreneurs with an economical indemnity.

Institutions can really invert negative trends of female employment, female career and birth rate with the establishment of a measure that ensure not only social justice but also better productivity and competitiveness. And allow that a precious element such as female human capital contribute in our digitalized economic world.