

# Mexico2Equal Plus (EM-X+)

**Economic Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities & Sexual and Gender Minorities**



## About Mexico2Equal Plus (EM-X+)

The Mexico2Equal Plus Peer Learning Platform (known in Spanish as *Empresas Mexicanas X la Inclusión*, or EM-X+) benefitted 12 companies in Mexico through concrete actions on inclusion of persons with disabilities and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) people. The partnership offered an opportunity for a group of leading Mexican companies to learn, share knowledge, and make commitments to promote more inclusive workplaces, products, and services.

**Over the course of 14 months in 2023 and 2024, IFC supported 12 companies to take 33 actions to advance opportunities for persons with disabilities and/or LGBTI persons.** IFC organized 4 learning workshops to cover key definitions, inclusive HR data collection, inclusive workspaces, employee resource groups and inclusive leadership. Additionally, IFC organized 2 in-person networking sessions to provide a space where participating companies and local allies could exchange experiences and useful tools to advance LGBTI and disability inclusion. The

12 participating companies agreed to make specific commitments in their operations, including a range of actions such as raising awareness on disability and/or LGBTI inclusion, adapting company policies and procedures on recruitment to partnering with community organizations, and building a pipeline for inclusive hiring. The companies achieved 97 percent of their commitments (32/33), which resulted in positive business impacts like increased employee satisfaction, increased employee safety at work, access to new markets, and reduced absenteeism.

## Participating Companies

The 12 Mexico2Equal Plus companies represent diverse sectors, including financial institutions, pharmaceuticals, manufacturing, payment aggregators, retail, digital economy, tourism, and energy. This group includes the following companies: Clip, FEMSA, Genomma Lab, Grupo Neolpharma, Grupo Xcaret, HSBC México, Iberdrola Mexico, Kavak, Mastercard, PayPal México, Sempra Infraestructura, and Siegfried Rhein.



## Disability and LGBTI Inclusion: The Mexico Context

About [85 million persons with disabilities](#) live in Latin America and the Caribbean, while the latest estimates suggest that the LGBTI population is significant and comparable to other major groups, rising to [almost 20 percent](#) globally for the younger generations. In Mexico, LGBTI people are [estimated](#) around 8 million, [with a purchasing power of about US\\$ 65 billion](#). Persons with disabilities or physical limitations represent 16.5% of the Mexican population. Globally, persons with disabilities and their family members hold [\\$13 trillion USD in disposable income](#), and LGBTI people hold a comparable amount in global household wealth. The size and potential of the vastly untapped market comprising of persons with disabilities and the LGBTI population in Mexico is significant.

The Mexican private sector stands to gain a lot from more inclusive workplaces and markets, including through the optimal provision of goods and services to these populations and full utilization of these populations' talents and contributions in the workplace and in companies' supply chains.

Closing gender gaps in the labor market is a key opportunity for Mexico, the economy with the second highest GDP in Latin America and the Caribbean. Mexico is one of the most advanced countries in terms of legislation that protects the rights of the LGBTI community. For example, it was a pioneer in decriminalizing same-sex sexual acts (1871), and Mexico City first legalized same-sex marriage in 2009. In 2015, the Supreme Court declared state laws preventing same-sex marriage unconstitutional, and in October 2022 same-sex marriage became legal at the national level. The Mexican government has also passed several laws ranging from [employment protection](#), to [hate crimes](#) or [joint adoption](#). Mexico has signed and ratified the [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](#). Since the adoption of the UN CRPD in 2007, the Mexican government has passed national legislation to protect persons with disabilities from discrimination within specific legislation such as the General Act on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, which promotes the right to work and employment.

**The business and development case** for inclusion of persons with disabilities and LGBTI persons points to significant impacts on corporate culture and performance including:

- **Increased business performance:** Disability inclusive companies see a 25 percent higher revenue, double net income and 30 percent profit margins increase, whilst LGBTI-inclusive companies consistently outperform the general equity market.
- **Untapped talent pool:** Given the estimated proportion of persons with disabilities and LGBTI people in Mexico who are unemployed, the size and potential of the untapped talent pool is significant. In addition, diverse and inclusive workplaces are more innovative, productive and have higher retention rates.
- **Market sizing:**
  1. Consumers with disabilities constitute a market of \$1.9 trillion USD in annual disposable income globally.
  2. A conservative estimate of 5 percent of the global LGBTI population is estimated to deliver \$4-5 trillion USD in purchasing power.
  3. Accessible and inclusive products appeal to and benefit multiple consumer groups including older people, persons with temporary injuries, pregnant women, and children.
- **The development case:** Access to goods and services and inclusion in the workforce enable persons with disabilities and LGBTI persons to be active in the economy, generating value to individuals, companies, and societies, and creating a win-win-win for all involved.

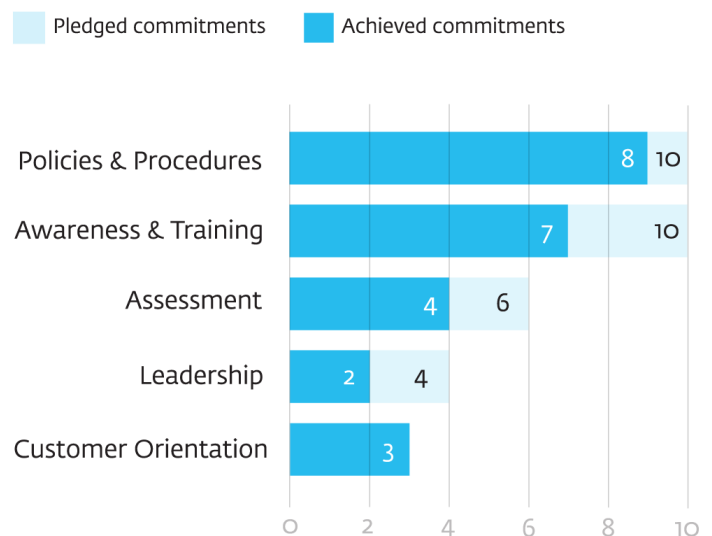
## Company Actions to Advance Disability and/or LGBTI Inclusion

Through the EM-X+ partnership, companies made progress on a minimum of two actions each to advance the inclusion of persons with disabilities and LGBTI persons, collectively progressing 33 actions across the following five priority areas:

- **Assessment**
- **Awareness and Training**
- **Policies and Procedures**
- **Leadership**
- **Customer Orientation**

### Number of commitments in each action area

Source: EM-X+ Endline Survey, January 2024.



## 0.1 Assessment

**Five companies conducted internal assessments to identify gaps and opportunities for strengthening workplace inclusion.** For example, Clip, Grupo Xcaret, FEMSA and Iberdrola chose to conduct self-assessments on employment for persons with disabilities, while Sempra Infraestructura, FEMSA and Grupo Xcaret decided to focus their assessments on LGBTI people. These led to creating open spaces for dialogue, establishing a clear picture of the companies' internal profiles, and subsequently retrofitting some facilities to make them more accessible. Most of the companies partnered with local organizations they met through the EM-X+ program.

*"We conducted an analysis through Great Place to Work and obtain a first understanding of our staff with disabilities. As a next step, we are conducting a diagnosis of our facilities with the support of the Spanish Network for Accessible Tourism (Red Española de Turismo Accesible or Red Estable), which will inform the design of a work plan to introduce reasonable adjustments to improve accessibility for visitors and employees. The guidance and focus that EM-X+ gave us helped us decide which steps to take to obtain this first analysis".*

**Head of Diversity,  
Equity and Inclusion,  
Grupo Xcaret**

### Accessibility and inclusion assessment for the labor inclusion of persons with disability by Iberdrola Mexico

In 2023, Iberdrola Mexico established its 2030 D&I Strategy and allocated resources to achieve its objectives. The company's directors signed a D&I ten-step guide, reaffirming their commitment to inclusion. As part of their commitments with EM-X+, Iberdrola Mexico decided to conduct an analysis of accessibility in the corporate office building to identify and improve existing physical barriers, as well as a review of recruitment processes and internal practices to promote inclusion of persons

*"We sought out some of the allies that we met through EM-X+ to assess the accessibility of our facilities. With this information, we have designed a path for labor inclusion for people with disabilities. We have committed a strong investment to make all Iberdrola Mexico's facilities accessible by 2030, as well as to increase the percentage of people with disabilities on the payroll."*

**Head of the Diversity,  
Equity and Inclusion Office,  
Iberdrola México**

with disabilities. EM-X+ was a vehicle for the company to connect with local organizations focused on disability like [Éntrale](#) and [Libre Acceso](#), that carried out the analysis and supported the company to develop a work plan with clear goals and deadlines to achieve universal accessibility, including a roadmap for the inclusion of people with disabilities in recruitment processes.

By the end of EM-X+, Iberdrola Mexico began working on a reasonable adjustments and accessibility policy and posting job openings specifically targeting talent with disabilities. Additionally, the company had allocated budget to carry out 5 accessibility projects in 2024 and begun the bidding process for each one.

## 0.2 Awareness and Training

**Eight companies took action to increase awareness and train staff** on the inclusion of persons with disabilities and LGBTI persons. They engaged with community groups to conduct training to raise awareness, bust myths and conscious and unconscious biases, promote empathy, and increase compliance with company policies. Some of these actions included:

- **Grupo Xcaret** coordinated with a local organization to carry out courses and workshops in Mexican Sign Language, promoting the inclusion of people with hearing disabilities in Art and Culture projects.
- **Kavak** included collaboration with community partners in their 2024 workplan. They have offered workshops and awareness raising and volunteering activities with communities, focusing on LGBTI issues and women with disabilities.

## 0.3 Policies and Procedures

**Eight EM-X+ companies introduced policies and procedures** to foster the inclusion of LGBTI persons and persons with disabilities. During EM-X+, companies took steps to identify gaps and opportunities in existing policies and procedures or establish new policies and accompanying processes to build more inclusive workplaces and more inclusive recruiting efforts.

- **FEMSA, Genomma Lab, Grupo Neolpharma, and Siegfried Rhein** established and/or updated their inclusive, equal opportunity employment policies that now specifically mention persons with disabilities and LGBTI people.
- **FEMSA, Genomma Lab, Grupo Neolpharma, HSBC, Mastercard, and Sempra Infrastructure** established external recruitment efforts that are specifically geared towards hiring persons with disabilities and/or LGBTI people.



*"We updated our Inclusion and Non-Discrimination Policy, incorporating responsibilities and guidelines at all levels to achieve labor inclusion of people with disabilities and the LGTBI community in safe work environments. Partnering with EM-X+ allowed us to achieve this with the support of experts and feedback from colleagues who have faced similar challenges, giving us a deeper understanding of labor inclusion in order to know where and how to start."*

**Sustainability Manager,  
Grupo Neolpharma**



### **OXXO Targeted Job Training Centers for persons with disabilities**

FEMSA is a Mexican multinational company that participates in the retail industry, including OXXO, a chain of small-format stores, and other related retail formats, such as the European retail unit that operates convenience and foodvenience stores. It also participates through pharmacies and related activities; and in Digital@FEMSA, which includes Spin by OXXO and Spin Premia, among other digital financial services initiatives. In the beverage industry, it participates in operating Coca-Cola FEMSA, the world's largest bottler of Coca-Cola products by sales volume. OXXO operates more than 21,000 stores in Mexico and employs over 150,000 employees. FEMSA's mission is to create economic and social value in the communities where it operates through a strategy of Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI).

The practice shared by FEMSA with their peers were the OXXO Targeted Job Training Centers (*Centros de Capacitación Laboral Dirigida*, or CCLDs), in partnership with subnational governments through the System for Integral Family Development (*Sistema de Desarrollo Integral de la Familia*, or DIF). The OXXO CCLDs provide job training tailored for people with disabilities during 3 months in spaces that simulate the operation of an OXXO store. When apprentices successfully complete their training, they are awarded a certificate documenting the experience acquired, which facilitates their insertion in OXXO or other companies in the retail sector. To date, OXXO has 29 CCLDs across Mexico and employs over 2,000 people with disabilities working in operative roles, as well as in corporate offices.

FEMSA attributes the success of this initiative to the sponsorship of the company's leadership (resources to set up the CCLDs, time and dedication to establish an alliance with DIF) and their understanding and commitment to the company's JEDI strategy.

## 0.4 Leadership

**To ensure the success and sustainability of inclusion efforts, four EM-X+ companies took steps to secure commitment from leadership.**

Research by [Accenture](#) points to the business benefits seen by companies led by leaders engaged on disability inclusion, which include growing sales 2.9x faster and profits 4.1x faster than their peers. PayPal, Genomma Lab, Sigfried Rhein, and FEMSA appointed senior leaders who are accountable for the implementation of their company's inclusion policy and strategy.

*"We relaunched the Global Diversity, Inclusion and Gender Equality Committee, which has helped us drive initiatives in the countries where we operate. Several people in our top management participate in the DEI Committee, including the General Manager for Colombia, the Global Social Responsibility Leader, and the Global HR Leader."*

**Social Responsibility and Sustainability Coordinator,  
Genomma Lab México**

## 0.5 Customer Orientation

**Three EM-X+ companies took action to address the needs of consumers with disabilities and LGBTI consumers.** Mastercard, FEMSA, and Grupo Xcaret revised company communications and commercial materials to increase inclusive representation and ensure accurate and positive representation of persons with disabilities and/or LGBTI people. Grupo Xcaret began the development of Guidelines for Inclusive Language to align the entire organization in the way in which they express themselves, communicate and write inclusively.

### Manos Xuaves by Grupo Xcaret

Grupo Xcaret is a leading sustainable and socially-responsible tourism company in Mexico, which operates a series of parks, hotels and tours in Cancun and the Riviera Maya. As part of their commitments with EM-X+, in December 2023, Grupo Xcaret implemented the "Manos Xuaves" (Soft Hands) program in the signature show "Xcaret México Espectacular," (Xcaret Spectacular Mexico) which is performed every night at Xcaret Park. The program, implemented in collaboration with a local organization called *Manos Especiales*, hired and trained staff to interpret all the musical numbers in the show in Mexican Sign Language for the hearing-impaired public, as well as deaf artists for the final act of the "Xcaret Mexico Espectacular" show, who interpret the song "México en la piel" in Mexican Sign Language.

According to Grupo Xcaret, this practice has allowed them to broaden the horizon of representation, giving visibility to the diversity of Mexico's population from a more inclusive angle. "Manos Xuaves" sets a positive example for the tourism industry, fostering a culture of diversity and inclusion.



## Results of EM-X+

### Improved corporate culture and image

Of the 12 participating companies:

**11** reported that EM-X+ contributed to improving their company's reputation or brand.

**9** reported that EM-X+ helped improve their company policies.

**8** reported that EM-X+ had an impact in their employees' satisfaction and well-being.

### Increased knowledge

All individual participants and all 12 companies reported improving their knowledge, awareness and practices relating to disability and LGBTI inclusion because of their participation in the EM-X+ partnership.

*"The workshops offered by EM-X+ were very helpful, especially for providing the opportunity to listen to other companies, which allowed us to strengthen our own actions guided by their best practices. At a personal level, engaging in this program improved my knowledge and my sensitivity when addressing these issues, motivating me to strengthen the DEI culture within my organization."*

**Associate Managing Consultant,  
Mastercard Mexico**

### Lessons learned from EM-X+ to foster an inclusive private sector

- **Senior leadership buy-in is a determining factor in the success of a company's inclusion journey.** Within the EM-X+ partnership, companies took steps to engage senior leadership by raising awareness, communicating the business case and assessment findings. Companies also sought out senior leaders who were willing to be role models for disability and/or LGBTI inclusion within the company and externally by communicating the company's commitments and efforts on inclusion.
- **Engaging with local organizations can support companies in their implementation and ongoing efforts beyond EM-X+.** The participation of local organizations such as [ADIL Diversidad e Inclusión Laboral](#), [Éntrale, Inclúyeme.com](#) and [Pride Connection Mexico](#) in EM-X+ led to further collaboration with the 12 EM-X+ companies to deepen their understanding of inclusion, improve recruitment practices and strengthen accessibility.
- **Engaging companies at various stages of their inclusion journey enables peer learning and support.** Participating companies reported that hearing from other EM-X+ members during sessions helped them learn from other companies and made them aware of potential challenges and benefits. Company-to-company collaboration extended beyond EM-X+: Companies reached out and learned directly from other participating companies about their inclusion journey in the Mexican context. Companies who were more mature in their inclusion journey also provided capacity building to others.





Figure 1 - Luis Manuel Uribe, Head of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Office at Iberdrola, at the award ceremony of the 2024 Company Committed to the Labor Inclusion of People with Disabilities Distinction by Éntrale.

## The role of local partners to foster the sustainability of LBGTI and Disability inclusion

ADIL Diversidad e Inclusión Laboral, HRC's implementing partner for the [Equidad MX: Global Workplace Equality Program](#), was one of EM-X+'s local allies. ADIL facilitated a presentation during a EM-X+ learning session on the Equidad MX initiative, which helps employers become LGBTQ+ inclusive by assessing corporate practices and policies through an annual survey. 11 out of the 12 companies that joined EM-X+<sup>1</sup> decided to participate in the [2024 edition of Equidad MX](#), and 8 achieved the score to obtain the "Best Places to Work for LGBTQ+ Equity" certification. These companies are Coca-Cola FEMSA, Genomma Lab Mexico, HSBC Mexico, Iberdrola Mexico, Kavak, PayPal Mexico, Sempra Infraestructura, and Siegfried Rhein.

Éntrale "Alliance for the labor inclusion of people with disabilities" was another EM-X+ local partner that conducts an annual benchmark focused on disability. [The Labor Inclusion Index of People with Disabilities \(IILPCD\)](#) is a free self-diagnostic tool that allows companies to assess how inclusive and accessible their internal processes are for persons with disabilities. Companies that obtain outstanding results in the IILPCD are awarded the "Company Committed to the Labor Inclusion of People with Disabilities Distinction". Iberdrola Mexico, one of the companies that participated in EM-X+, was [one of the 36 companies that were awarded with this distinction in the 2024 edition of the IILPCD](#).

Engaging with local organizations can expand the companies' networks and facilitate collaborative initiatives for diversity and inclusion in the long term. Furthermore, participating in regular benchmarking provides tools for companies to set goals, track their progress and encourage continuous improvement. Being associated with reputable local benchmarking organizations also demonstrates a commitment to transparency and accountability from companies, enhancing their brand and reputation.

<sup>1</sup> Before EM-X+, 7 of the participating companies had pursued the certification in previous editions of Equidad MX.

## Contact

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