



27	Chapter 5: The Human Impact – Gender Balance, Fatherhood and Family Well-being
33	Chapter 6: Innovation Beyond Policy
38	Chapter 7: Measuring What Matters - How Success is Tracked and Sustained
40	Chapter 8: From Insight to Legacy – The UAE as a Global Model
46	References



Building a prosperous and sustainable future begins with the child who develops within a healthy family, the nucleus of society and the source of its strength and stability.

The United Arab Emirates is confidently advancing with innovative policies that place quality of life at the heart of its priorities, guided by the vision of our wise leadership, which has made human well-being its foremost goal and central focus.

The Parent-Friendly Label™ program embodies this vision and transforms it into a tangible reality. It is not merely a regulatory initiative, but a comprehensive national framework that redefines workplaces in the UAE—making it more inclusive and humane, and better equipped to embrace the needs of families and children.

This program stands out for its ability to align economic and social objectives, by empowering parents in the workplace to foster family balance and build a more stable and productive society.

At the Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority, we will continue to advance this national agenda that places the family and children at the heart of development, reinforcing the UAE's position as a leading nation in shaping a prosperous and sustainable future for generations to come.

H.H. Sheikh Theyab bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority



The family is the birthplace of society, and the source of its values that shape the identity of its generations and guide their path.

Investing in a work environment that understands and appreciates the needs of working parents and young children is not merely a support for employees—it is a strategic investment in building a safe society marked by cohesion and harmony.

The Parent-Friendly Label™ program highlights the role of modern workplaces as a space for humanity just as much as it is a space for productivity. Organizations that embrace their employees in all their roles are most capable of realizing sustainable growth.

We believe that caring for the family and child is not the responsibility of a single entity, but a shared commitment among society and all its institutions—as we see the duty of raising a child inseparable from the environment in which their parents work.

Today, we witness a unique Emirati model that embodies the family values and workplace realities—a model that celebrates the human being as a ultimate asset and affirms that family balance is the foundation upon which the strength and sustainability of societies are built.

H.H. Sheikha Mariam bint Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan Member of the Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority Board of Trustees





The Parent-Friendly Label™ program represents a bold national initiative that translates the vision of the United Arab Emirates' leadership into actionable organizational policies and practices. These efforts are designed to elevate family wellbeing and quality of life, while reinforcing the UAE's global standing as a frontrunner in cultivating inclusive, humancentered, and sustainable work environments that recognize and address to the needs of working parents and young children.

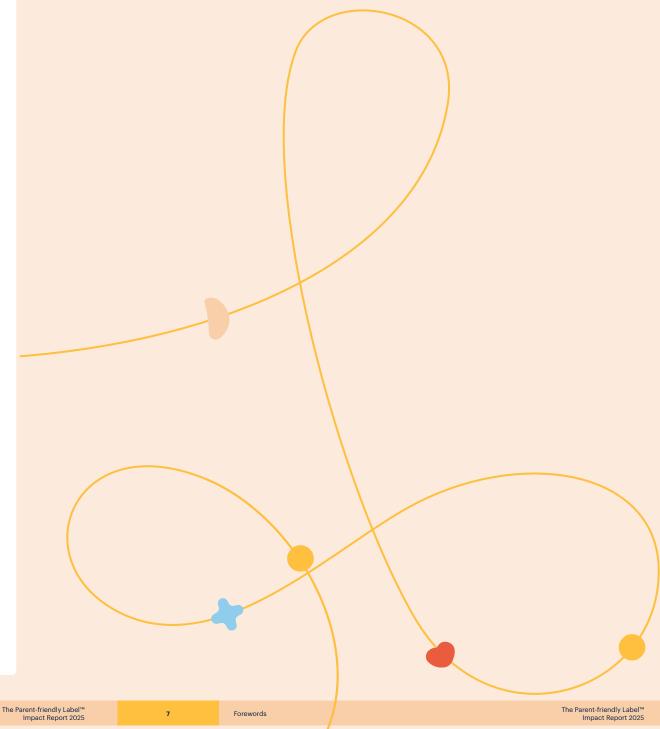
Over the course of its successive cycles, the program has demonstrated that empowering working parents is not merely a social or economic affair, but a comprehensive developmental strategy. Its positive impact extends across multiple dimensions, strengthening families, enhancing community cohesion, and contributing to economic resilience. In particular, the outcomes of the program's third cycle reflect a notable development in organizational maturity and the emergence of high-value partnerships across sectors. These developments have played a key role in embedding a flexible and equitable workplace culture that honors the role of families in national development.

Today, the program serves as a strategic platform for redefining workplace norms across the UAE. It affirms that professional environments can -and should- be spaces of empathy and inclusion, not solely productivity. The program has demonstrated how organizations that embrace the multifaceted roles of their employees, are better equipped to innovate, grow, and sustain long-term success.

At the Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority, we firmly believe that family wellbeing begins within the workplace, as supporting parents in their caregiving responsibilities directly influences early childhood development and contributes to the broader stability of society. Guided by this conviction, we continue to push the boundaries of the program's reach, sustain its outcomes, and support forward-looking policies that place children and families at the heart of organizational growth and national development.

The achievements realized reaffirm our strong belief in the value of investing in families as the most strategic investment in the future. Every organization that adopts this approach actively contributes to shaping a more balanced, cohesive, and prosperous society, where human dignity and family values are the bedrock to sustainable development.

Her Excellency Sana bint Mohammed Suhail Minister of Family and Director General of Abu Dhabi Early **Childhood Authority**



Chapter 1:

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From the UAE to the World: A New Era for Working Parents

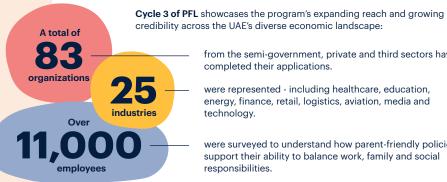


The Parent-friendly Label™ (PFL), launched by the Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority (ECA) and championed by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) leadership, has rapidly emerged within just three cycles as one of the nation's most compelling stories of social innovation. Designed to reshape workplace culture in alignment with the UAE's vision for strong families and thriving communities, the PFL has evolved into both a national movement and a global benchmark, proving that family wellbeing is now a cornerstone of organizational excellence and everyday work life.

At its heart, the PFL acts as a strategic bridge between government vision and employer leadership, reinforced by a culture of accountability that ensures commitments are not only declared but also actively lived. Through mechanisms such as employee feedback, utilization tracking and continuous improvement, the program guarantees that supportive workplace practices are not just designed but consistently experienced.

This unwavering commitment has positioned the UAE as a global exemplary in harmonizing family, work and wellbeing, thereby setting a new standard for how nations and organizations can embed care, inclusion and resilience into the fabric of professional life.

Scale and Reach: Evidence at Unprecedented Levels



from the semi-government, private and third sectors have

were represented - including healthcare, education, energy, finance, retail, logistics, aviation, media and technology.

were surveyed to understand how parent-friendly policies support their ability to balance work, family and social responsibilities.

This level of engagement reflects far more than participation; it signals a deep cultural shift. The PFL captures and amplifies the authentic voices of working parents across the UAE, from homegrown businesses to small enterprises and multinational corporations, offering one of the most comprehensive insights into how families live, work and thrive in today's economy.

completed their applications.

Impact Proven by Data: Wellbeing Translates to Performance

The evidence from Cycle 3 is decisive. Family-friendly practices are not symbolic perks but proven drivers of performance, retention and loyalty.

would recommend their organization as a parent-friendly place to work.

report satisfaction with the support provided, with nearly 68% linking it to their decision to stay for at least two years which delivers a direct return on investment by reducing costly turnover and safeguarding talent pipelines.

Parents, both mothers and fathers, report that parentfriendly support improves daily productivity, with 67% of mothers and 73% of fathers affirming the positive impact.

For women, this support reduces post-maternity dropoff and sustains careers, while for men it normalizes caregiving and strengthens shared responsibility.

These findings reflect a new cultural reality. What was once considered progressive is now the baseline. Organizations that embrace this shift are seeing tangible benefits: lower attrition, stronger employee commitment and enhanced reputation. These outcomes resonate with leadership and translate into strategic advantages for long-term competitiveness.

Policy Innovation and Embedding Family Support into Sustainable Workplace Structures

Cycle 3 marks a pivotal shift in how organizations are institutionalizing family support not as temporary gestures of flexibility but as enduring policies that reflect a culture of equity, sustainability and care. What began as responsive accommodations has matured into a dependable framework that recognizes parenthood as a valued dimension of working life.

Key measures introduced include:





Extended paternity leave of up to 45 days

Hybrid work arrangements during the nursing period

The Parent-friendly Label³ The Parent-friendly Label Chapter 1: Executive Summary Chapter 1: Executive Summary Impact Report 2025 Impact Report 2025



Childcare allowances and family wellbeing funds to support working parents



Leave entitlements for miscarriage, stillbirth and adoption



Nursing benefits, including flexible hours and access to breastfeeding facilities



Flex Fund, introduced based on PFL recommendations, offers tailored support when standard policies fall short by enabling employees to customize benefits for life transitions such as education, therapy or nanny support



For families of Children of Determination, committees, childcare and therapy support drive real impact; female employees receive maternity leave plus 30 extra paid days



Additional maternity leave for special circumstances such as multiple births

These measures reflect a paradigm shift: parenthood is no longer a challenge to be managed but a life stage to be supported and celebrated. The UAE's commitment to embedding these practices confirms its role as a regional and global leader in redefining how workplaces support families.

UAE's Positioning as a Global Leader

The UAE has rapidly emerged as a regional and global benchmark for family-friendly workplace innovation. Its approach blends national vision with voluntary employer commitment, reinforced by robust accountability mechanisms such as leave tracking, employee surveys and real-time feedback loops. This ensures that family-supportive policies are not only announced but institutionalized within organizational culture.

The UAE's leadership is gaining international recognition. Forward-thinking organizations and policymakers are

actively studying the PFL model to inform policy reform, leadership development and workforce strategy. The UAE is increasingly cited as proof of concept, demonstrating that social priorities like family support can directly enhance economic performance by driving gains in productivity, employee retention and national competitiveness.

By positioning family wellbeing as a strategic imperative, the UAE is not just participating in the global conversation but shaping it, offering a replicable model that inspires transformation across borders and sectors.

National Alignment: Advancing Vision 2031 and Gender Balance

PFL is a direct enabler of the UAE's national priorities, aligning seamlessly with Vision 2031, which aspires to offer the best quality of life in the world. By embedding flexibility, childcare support and employee wellbeing into workplace structures, the PFL transforms this vision into tangible, everyday realities for working families.

It also plays a pivotal role in advancing the UAE Gender Balance Strategy and the Policy for the Empowerment of Emirati Women. Through measures that reduce post-maternity attrition, sustain women's career progression and normalize fatherhood participation such as extended paternity leave, the PFL ensures that gender balance is not just a policy statement but a lived experience across sectors.

In doing so, the PFL strengthens national competitiveness, secures a resilient and inclusive workforce and deepens social cohesion.

three pillars at the heart of the UAE's future. It reflects a forward-thinking model where family wellbeing is recognized as a strategic asset driving both human development and economic sustainability.



Forward Aspiration: From Certification to Influence

The PFL has evolved from a recognition mechanism into a powerful catalyst for cultural transformation. It now serves as a strategic framework guiding organizations across sectors to embed family-first values into their operational DNA. This paradigm shift not only enhances the well-being of employees and their families but also generates ripple effects that strengthen communities, especially for children in their most formative years aged 0 to 8.

10 Chapter 1: Executive Summary The Parent-friendly Label™ Impact Report 2025

11 Chapter 1: Executive Summary The Parent-friendly Label™ Impact Report 2025

12 Chapter 1: Executive Summary Impact Report 2025

In the UAE, the PFL is not just part of the global conversation on family friendly workplaces. It is actively shaping it. The program positions the nation as a leader, offering a model that inspires other countries, organizations and institutions to adopt similar family focused practices. Its impact is tangible, touching thousands of employees and working parents and fostering environments that nurture meaningful parent-child interactions during these formative years.

The ECA highlights the critical importance of early development, noting that 90% of a child's brain forms by age five. Its comprehensive approach spans health and nutrition, child protection, family support including the PFL program and early childhood education. By fostering positive early experiences, the ECA lays a strong foundation for lifelong learning and achievement.



Closing Reflection

In just three cycles, the UAE has redefined what it means to support working families by moving from policies written on paper to cultures that lived in practice. Parenthood is no longer viewed as a barrier to career growth but as a pillar of national strength.



The PFL has evolved from a local initiative into a global influence, extending its reach from Abu Dhabi to the world and setting a new benchmark for how nations can align family, work and wellbeing.

This journey affirms a powerful new reality: parenthood fuels progress. Once considered a private responsibility, it is now recognized as a visible driver of competitiveness, community resilience and global leadership. The UAE's commitment to embedding family-first values into workplace structures is not only transforming lives but also shaping the future of work itself.

Chapter 2:

WHY PARENT-FRIENDLY WORKPLACES MATTER NOW

What makes a workplace truly competitive today? Higher pay, advanced technology, or the ability for parents to thrive at work while raising families?

In today's rapidly evolving workforce, the ability to support working parents is no longer a differentiator but a necessity. As nations compete for talent and resilience, workplaces that embed family-first values are emerging as the true engines of innovation, inclusion and long-term growth.

The UAE, through the Parentfriendly Label™ (PFL), is leading this transformation and setting a new standard for how work and family can thrive together.

Global and National Drivers for Change

The gender gap remains wide. Globally women enjoy only two thirds of the legal rights available to men, including maternity and paternity leave, protection from pregnancy-related dismissal, equal pay legislation and workplace discrimination safeguards, yet fewer than 40% of the frameworks needed to enforce these laws are in place.

Against this backdrop, the UAE stands out. It scores 82.5 out of 100 in the World Bank's Women, Business and the Law Index, well above the global average of 64.2, reflecting strong workplace rights ². In the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index 2025, the UAE advanced five places, from 74th to 69th globally, reinforcing its role as a benchmark for gender inclusion³.

At the same time, workplace expectations are evolving everywhere. Access to flexible and hybrid work arrangements are now ranked among the top three factors influencing job choice worldwide⁴.

Governments worldwide are accelerating reforms in parental leave and childcare. The UAE is at the forefront, with a distinctive blend of policy innovation and employer adoption that sets a benchmark for others, where childcare support takes shape through on-site facilities, nursery partnerships and allowances under the PFL.

These global gaps underscore the urgency of action. The UAE's progress, reflected in its rising global rankings and robust legal frameworks, is not just commendable but instructive. Through initiatives like the PFL, the UAE offers a replicable model for how policy, employer commitment and cultural accountability can converge to drive meaningful change. The message is clear: family support is not a soft issue but a strategic advantage.

The Social and Economic Case

This is not only about fairness but also about economics. Family-friendly policies have proven to generate measurable returns for organizations, reducing costs and strengthening long-term business performance.



Companies that offer childcare benefits report up to 425% Return on Investment (ROI),

with parents missing an average of 16 fewer workdays per year and showing stronger loyalty (BCG⁵ & Business Insider 2024⁶).

UNICEF research shows every

\$1 invested in family-friendly policies yields up to \$3 in productivity gains.

When women are granted paid parental leave, over 93% return to employment

within 9-12 months after childbirth, a finding reported by UNICEF*.

71% of employees

73% of employees

In the UAE, the case is equally strong:

In the PFL Cycle 3 survey,

said supportive policies directly improved their productivity and influenced their decision to stay at the organization for at least two years.

feel the UAE is "a parent-friendly place to work".

Cycle 3 data shows that parent-friendly practices resonate across different segments of employees and communities:



Experienced professionals in PFL workplaces show high satisfaction and trust across career stages.



UAE residents and GCC nationals confirm the inclusiveness of the PFL model across communities.

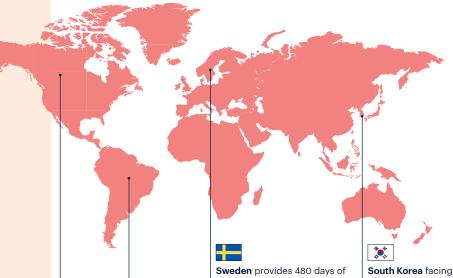


The PFL framework ensures benefits are widely recognized and strengthens family well-being.

The ROI is clear: investing in parents is investing in talent sustainability and that investment is reaching diverse groups across the UAE.

Global Benchmarks and Lessons

Countries around the world are charting different approaches to supporting parents, shaped by their demographics and economic scale, from high-income nations like Sweden and Canada to emerging economies such as Brazil and South Korea.



Sweden provides 480 days of paid parental leave per child, with 390 days compensated based on the parent's income (up to a ceiling) and 90 days reserved individually for each parent [mother/father], encouraging shared childcare. 9,10

•

Under the Programa Empresa Cidadã, **Brazil** extends maternity leave from 120 to 180 days and paternity leave to 20 days, with tax incentives for employers to participate.¹⁸

South Korea facing a record-low fertility rate of 0.72 in 2023¹³, the country extended parental leave to 18 months per child, increased childcare subsidies¹⁴, and provides 90 days maternity leave (120 days for multiple pregnancies, 100 days for premature births) ^{15,16}, plus 10 days paid paternity leave.¹⁷



Canada offers up to 69 weeks (483 days) of shared parental leave under its Employment Insurance system, including 15 weeks (105 days) of maternity leave and 40 weeks (280 days) of standard parental leave that parents can share or extend.¹¹ In Quebec, families also benefit from a universal CA\$10/day childcare program, among the most affordable in the world, with the federal government working to expand similar support nationwide.¹²

Each model is different, but the lesson is the same: parent-friendly policies are not perks, they are **economic survival strategies** for retaining talent and ensuring competitiveness.

The UAE's Distinctive Path

The UAE is carving out its own model, blending statutory reform with cultural accountability.



Maternity leave increased to 90 fully paid days,

with some organizations offering extensions for multiple births or flexible return pathways; others provide 19 weeks (133 days) fully paid plus 2 months (60 days) unpaid.¹⁹

Paternity leave enhanced to 5 fully paid days

under federal law, with some organizations providing extended benefits (e.g., up to 2 weeks fully paid), and further enhancements planned in 2025.20



Innovative initiatives

such as Wedding 2024 provide incentives for employees getting married, including paid leave and financial benefits.

A 4.5-day public sector workweek,

among the most progressive globally, with employees working Monday to Thursday full-day and a half-day on Friday.²¹



What makes the UAE distinctive is how the PFL turns policy into culture. It goes beyond compliance by measuring employee experience and actual uptake. In Cycle 3, 74% of fathers in PFL organizations said managers encouraged them to take paternity leave, while 73% reported encouragement from colleagues.

This is more than ticking boxes, it is culture in motion, with policy being lived and reinforced in everyday workplace life.

Why This Matters Now

Parent-friendly workplaces are no longer optional. They are the foundation of a future-ready workforce. They determine whether mothers return after childbirth, whether fathers participate in caregiving and whether companies and economies can retain their brightest talent.

For the UAE, the PFL is more than an initiative. It is a blueprint for growth and part of a continuous journey of improvement, combining global best practice, national policy and cultural accountability into a model that others can learn from

When parents thrive, societies thrive. And in the UAE, that truth is becoming a national advantage. The UAE's journey from policy to practice and from initiative to influence is redefining what it means to be a future-ready nation. The PFL is more than a workplace program; it is a blueprint for societal progress. As the world watches, the UAE is proving that when parents thrive, economies flourish and communities grow stronger. This is not just a national achievement, it is a global invitation to reimagine the future of work.

Chapter 3:

INSIDE THE PARENT-FRIENDLY LABEL™ AND THE JOURNEY TO CHANGE

Origins, Purpose and Recognition Model

The Parent-friendly Label™ (PFL) is more than a workplace initiative; it is a national innovation.

Designed to embed family wellbeing into the heart of organizational culture, the PFL reflects the UAE's bold vision to lead globally in shaping inclusive, future-ready workplaces. This chapter explores how the Label has evolved from concept to catalyst, transforming policies into lived experiences and setting a new standard for how nations can align work, family and wellbeing.

From the outset, the Label has been anchored in the UAE's vision to become a global leader in family-friendly workplaces. What sets it apart is its unique blend of global benchmarks and local context, ensuring that the best international practice is tailored to national priorities. In a country where more than 200 nationalities live and work together, the PFL reflects this diversity by creating an inclusive model that balances cultural nuance with universal standards, making it distinct from initiatives elsewhere in the world.



The PFL is:

A market differentiator

Boosting employer brands and enhancing their ability to attract and retain top talent.



Data-driven

Built on verified employee sentiment to ensure real-world impact rather than policies that remain on paper.



A catalyst for change

Encouraging organizations to innovate with policies that matter most to their employees, which can include extended paternity leave, hybrid work during nursing periods and childcare allowances.



A reform driver

Pushing organizations from compliance to cultural transformation and showcasing impact stories that highlight loyalty gains and improved global reputation.



Proven in practice

With policy innovations ranging from flexible hour-based paternity leave that extends entitlements by up to 6 days, family support committees reaching 100% of parent employees and enhanced maternity benefits including 4 additional weeks (28 days) of paid leave in complex birth cases.



Grounded in real outcomes

With case studies showing how the Label has strengthened loyalty, improved talent pipelines and enhanced global reputation.

The result? The PFL is proving that parent-friendly reform is not symbolic but systemic, enabling organizations to turn ambition into action and culture into accountability.

Certification Process and Milestones: Growth from Cycle 1 to Cycle 3

Rigorous Framework & Evaluation

The PFL awarding process is built on independent verification, strong criteria and structured improvement feedback. Organizations are assessed across five categories: Parental leave, Flexible working, Family care, Family wellbeing and Workplace Culture and Innovation, with the Innovation criterion focusing on recognizing and promoting creativity and forward-thinking in the development of policies and practices that support parents. This ensures that policies are not only designed but also experienced by employees in practice.

Growth Across Cycles: From Early Adopters to Policy Maturity

The PFL's evolution can be understood as a three-stage transformation framework:



Cycle 1: Spark

Early adopters ignited a movement, testing new models and proving that change was possible.



Cycle 2: Shift

Organizations moved from compliance to innovation, designing policies that reflected real employee needs.



Cycle 3: Scale

Parent-friendly practices became embedded across industries, signaling a cultural reset and policy maturity.

This framework helps readers grasp the strategic progression and sets the stage for future cycles.

Together, these stages show a clear maturity curve. What started with a few pioneers grew into advancement and has now become everyday practice across industries. Importantly, this shift is not only transforming workplaces but also shaping better outcomes for children, as parents are more supported, present and engaged. The PFL has moved from early trials to a proven model that makes parent-friendly reform both practical and sustainable.

Overview of Label Earners

The PFL has proven its ability to work across different sectors, industries and organizational sizes, showing that parent-friendly reform is both practical and scalable.

 Representation spans private sector, semi-government and third-sector organizations proving the model works across diverse organizational contexts.

 Employers range from home-grown small and medium enterprises to large multinational corporations, demonstrating relevance across different organizational structures and scales.

 Coverage extends across 25 industries, including investment, retail, technology, media, energy, healthcare, education, logistics and hospitality.

The scale of participation reflects the national and global footprint of the PFL:

Across the three program cycles, the PFL has demonstrated steady growth in participation and global reach.

Cycle 1 reached more than

20,000

employees in the UAE.

Cycle 2 reached more than

127,000

employees in the UAE.

Cycle 3 reached more than

163,000

employees in the UAE.



In total, the program has engaged more than

1 million

employees worldwide, including more than

311,000

in the UAE.

Chapter 3: Inside the Parent-friendly Label™
and the Journey to Change

The Parent-friendly Label™
Impact Report 2025

The Parent-friendly Label™
Impact Report 2025

19
Chapter 3: Inside the Parent-friendly Label™
and the Journey to Change

When Feedback Becomes a Catalyst - A Story of Change

While the breadth of Label Earners shows the scale of the PFL, numbers alone do not capture its full impact. The real measure of change lies in how employees experience these policies and how organizations respond to their feedback.

One organization's journey illustrates this clearly. In Cycle 2, survey findings exposed significant gaps: satisfaction with flexible work stood at just 70%, managerial support for parents was inconsistent and women's leadership satisfaction lagged at only 50%. These results underscored the need for stronger policies and a cultural reset.

The organization received a detailed, customized feedback report under the PFL framework, designed to highlight areas for reform and provide a roadmap for building a parent-friendly culture. Using these insights, it strengthened policies, trained managers and created visible signals of support that employees could trust.

By Cycle 3, the results were transformative:



Satisfaction with flexible work rose from 70% to 87%.



88% of employees reported that managers consistently supported parental needs, compared to 63% one cycle earlier.



Women's leadership satisfaction leapt from 50% to 86% (up to 36 points).



The share of employees satisfied with how their feedback was addressed increased from 57% to 85%.

This was not a marginal shift; it was a cultural reset. We have seen several organizations make significant changes throughout the process, many of them critical, such as enhancing parental leave, expanding nursing support and embedding inclusive policies. Together, these shifts mark a broader move from policy gaps to workplaces built on trust, inclusivity and accountability.

From Reach to Impact

The PFL has shown that real reform begins with listening to employees, to families and to the lived realities of working parents. Its strength lies not only in what it measures but in what it inspires: trust, accountability and innovation. As the UAE continues to lead, the PFL offers a blueprint for others to follow, a model where family wellbeing is not a benefit but a foundation for national progress.

Cycle by cycle, the Label has proven its ability to drive reform. But it is in Cycle 3 where scale, impact and cultural change truly come into focus.

What lessons does this pivotal cycle reveal for the future of parent-friendly workplaces?

Chapter 4:

CYCLE 3 IN FOCUS



Cycle 3 marks the moment when the Parent-friendly Label™ (PFL) reaches a new level of influence, captured through thousands of responses from employees and organizations. Together, these insights reveal a clear maturity curve, showing how policies are no longer promises on paper, but practices lived every day across workplaces and families. What started as pilot initiatives is now ready to scale nationally.

Applicant Profile and Industry Reach

In Cycle 3, a total of 83 organizations from the semi-government, private and third sectors participated in the PFL program. This diverse cohort reflects the broad national footprint of the initiative, spanning entities with just a few hundred employees to multinational corporations with global operations. The Label's reach extended across 25 industries, with particularly strong representation in investment, retail, energy, healthcare, logistics, technology and hospitality, sectors that are central to the UAE's economic diversification and social development goals.

While most applicants were UAE-based, several organizations carried the Label's

ethos across borders through their international networks, demonstrating the scalability and adaptability of the PFL model. One example comes from a leading healthcare organization which has extended its UAE Label policies to remote employees in KSA, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Egypt, Sri Lanka, China and Kenya. This shows how the Label's ethos can travel with organizations and shape global operations.

This proves that parent-friendly reform is not exclusive to large corporates but achievable across sectors, organizational sizes and geographies, reinforcing the UAE's leadership in shaping inclusive workplace cultures.

Workforce Demographics and Reach



Cycle 3 also achieved significant reach.

were supported by PFL organizations, a 57% increase compared to Cycle 2.

including 60,000 parents of children aged under 8 years and 2,250 parents of children of determination, reflecting the inclusivity of the program.

The survey revealed the richness of today's workforce. Three out of four respondents were parents, with most aged 35 to 44. Nearly four in ten parents shared care equally with a partner, while two-thirds said they cared for a child of determination, underscoring the depth and diversity of caregiving responsibilities that workplaces must respond to.

At a glance: Cycle 3 reach



163,000

employees supported in the UAE (57% increase compared to Cycle 2)



2,250

parents of children of determination (51% increase)



of respondents are parents, mos aged 35 to 44



105,000

working parents, including

60,000

with children under 8

Notable Practices Emerging in Cycle 3

One of the clearest points on the maturity curve in Cycle 3 was the shift from practices once dependent on a manager's goodwill to clear company rules. Employees can now rely on standardized policies that protect and support them, rather than on personal discretion.

Standout practices included:

Practice to Policy Shifts

The strongest signal of progress was the movement from flexible practices to codified rights.

Flexible hours, nursing breaks and paternity leave are now integrated into policy manuals and contracts.

Several organizations went further by adding antenatal leave, adoption leave, or miscarriage clauses and by extending nursing breaks from one hour to two hours per day. Protection during pregnancy has also been formalized, ensuring parents are safeguarded as a matter of right rather than discretion.

Special Leave for Inclusive Families

Cycle 3 also brought forward types of leave that remain rare in many global contexts. Employers introduced miscarriage leave earlier in pregnancy, extended support after stillbirth and additional emergency leave to cover childcare or the critical illness of a family member.

One employer, for example, now offers up to 16 hours of antenatal appointments as part of paid leave. These forms of special leave reflect a more inclusive approach that acknowledges the diverse realities of family life.

Wellbeing Built In

Wellbeing has moved from being seen as a perk to becoming part of everyday employee support.

Organizations expanded counselling services, introduced digital wellbeing apps and offered screenings for menopause, diabetes and cancer.



Some employers went further by creating family support funds to cover education, childcare, or health costs, giving parents the flexibility to use benefits in the way that suited them most. Employees are responding positively:

said they are satisfied with the mental and physical wellbeing services available.

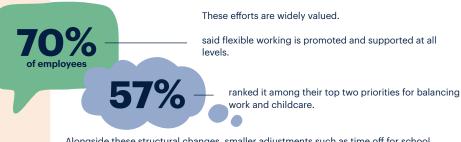
confirmed these programs are communicated clearly within their organization.

Together, these results show that wellbeing is now embedded in workplace culture and no longer treated as an optional extra, a theme that is expanded on in Chapters 5 and 6.

Flexibility that Works for Families

Cycle 3 organizations embraced multiple ways of working, from staggered hours and hybrid models to part-time roles and job sharing. Some also allowed employees to work from another country for up to 15 days to deal with family emergencies.

The Parent-friendly Label™
Chapter 4: Cycle 3 in Focus
The Parent-friendly Label™
Impact Report 2025
The Parent-friendly Label™
The Parent-friendly Label™
Impact Report 2025
The Parent-friendly Label™
The Pare



Alongside these structural changes, smaller adjustments such as time off for school events, flexible schedules during the first weeks of school and short study leave for older children made a daily difference for parents.

Childcare Support and Connection

Employers are also investing in childcare solutions. Some began planning for onsite nursery services, designed to provide both early education and specialized care for children of determination.

Others created opportunities for children to connect with their parents' workplaces, where they were welcomed through fun activities and learning experiences that helped them understand the professional world. These investments matter, with 71% of parents in Cycle 3 saying childcare and related family policies directly improved their daily work-life balance.

Communication and Awareness

Organizations in Cycle 3 invested in making policies clear, accessible and widely used. Many developed parental benefit booklets, intranet portals, awareness campaigns and parent peer networks. Some set up dedicated resource groups to keep policies alive through workshops and events, while others established feedback loops to refine policies further.

70% of employees 63%

The impact is clear:

said their organization clearly communicates wellbeing programs for families.

said they are informed about nursing support and facilities.

These results show that communication is not only improving awareness but also strengthening confidence in using policies. This culture of awareness and feedback creates the foundation for accountability loops, which will be explored further in Chapter 7.

These practices show that Cycle 3 was not only about innovation but about normalization. The organizations that stood out were those that moved beyond writing policies to embedding them in culture.

Employee Voice and Resonance



The clearest measure of success lies in the voices of employees themselves. In Cycle 3,

of parents said they felt supported to maintain a healthy work life balance.

said they would recommend their employer as a parent-friendly workplace.

Employees also made a crucial link between policies and performance. They reported that wellbeing programs and flexibility not only reduced stress but directly boosted productivity and loyalty. Most importantly, many noted that they now felt confident using leave without stigma, a cultural shift that cannot be measured in policy documents alone.

Cultural Shifts Taking Root

Beyond numbers, Cycle 3 confirmed that culture is catching up with policy.



Manager-led signals:

74%

of fathers said managers actively supported them to take full paternity leave, helping normalize caregiving as a shared responsibility.



Peer validation:

73%

of fathers felt encouraged by colleagues to take their leave, embedding family-first norms into team culture.



Confidence for mothers:

82%

of mothers reported strong support to take their full maternity leave, reflecting stronger cultural reinforcement of entitlements.

 24
 Chapter 4: Cycle 3 in Focus
 The Parent-friendly Label™
 25
 Chapter 4: Cycle 3 in Focus
 The Parent-friendly Label™

Flexibility without penalty:



of employees said they could request flexible work arrangements without fear of stigma, while

said they were satisfied with the support offered during last-minute child emergencies.

These results show that trust-based flexibility is becoming part of everyday workplace practice.

Together, these findings show that parent-friendly workplaces in the UAE are no longer exceptions. They are becoming part of the cultural fabric of teams and organizations.

Why Cycle 3 Matters

Cycle 3 is more than a milestone. It marks a turning point. What began as flexible practices has matured into clear entitlements and what was once seen as a workplace perk is now part of everyday policy. Most importantly, culture is catching up with policy, with caregiving increasingly recognized as a shared and natural part of working life.

The result is momentum. Parent friendly practices are no longer scattered experiments but part of everyday workplace life. They are embedded, measurable and genuinely felt by employees. The challenge

now is to carry forward the lessons of Cycle 3 and use this momentum to spark an even broader change in the cycles ahead.

Building on the progress of Cycle 3, the next step is to ensure these practices are institutionalized at scale across sectors. The "From Pilot to Policy" framework provides a structured, three-tier approach to guide organizations, leaders and sectors in embedding parent-friendly policies nationwide. This framework can be applied in future cycles to help embed and expand parent-friendly practices across organizations and industries.

From Pilot to Policy: A Framework for National Scale



Policy Integration

Encourage organizations to embed parent-friendly practices into HR manuals, contracts and performance systems.



Sector-wide Adoption

Partner with industry regulators and associations to promote sector-specific standards for parent-friendly workplaces.



Leadership Accountability

Require senior leaders to report on family support metrics and link them to organizational KPIs.

This framework ensures that parent-friendly practices move from isolated organizational policies to a nationwide ecosystem, reinforcing the UAE's global leadership in creating inclusive and future-ready workplaces.

PFL Impact at a Glance

Here are the key statistics demonstrating the impact for each category of the PFL, based on Cycle 3 findings:

Parental Leave

82%

of mothers reported strong support to take their full maternity leave, reflecting stronger cultural reinforcement of entitlements.

Almost

74%

of fathers said managers actively supported them to take full paternity leave, helping normalize caregiving as a shared responsibility.

65%

of mothers reported easier transitions back to work, supported by hybrid arrangements, nursing flexibility, and reintegration programs.

Flexible Work

Parents,

67%

of mother and

73%

of fathers, reported that parent-friendly support improves daily productivity.

57%

ranked it among their top two priorities for balancing work and childcare.

70%

of employees said flexible working is promoted and supported at all levels of their organization.

Family Care

72%

of employees are satisfied with the supportive culture that enables mothers to comfortably take their nursing breaks.

63%

of respondents are satisfied with how clearly their organization communicates the nursing support and facilities available, including nursing hours, location, amenities, and signage.



The Parent-friendly Label³ The Parent-friendly Label¹¹ Chanter 4: Cycle 3 in Focus 27 Chapter 4: Cycle 3 in Focus Impact Report 2025 Impact Report 2025

Family Well-being

71%

of parents said they felt supported to maintain a healthy work-life balance. 66%

said they are satisfied with the mental and physical well-being services available. **70%**

of employees said their organization clearly communicates well-being programs for families.

Culture

In Cycle 3, satisfaction with parent-friendly support was widespread, and more than

70%

of employees said these measures improved their productivity and affected their decision to stay in the organization.



74%

of fathers said managers encouraged them to take paternity leave, while

73%

reported encouragement from colleagues.

73%

of employees feel the UAE is a parent-friendly place to work.

80%

of mothers reported that managers enable them to use maternity leave in ways that suit their family needs.

77%

said they would recommend their employer as a parentfriendly workplace.

Chapter 5:

THE HUMAN IMPACT – GENDER BALANCE, FATHERHOOD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING

If Cycle 3 proved that parent-friendly workplaces are achievable at scale, this chapter reveals their true impact on the lives they touch. It brings into focus the human stories behind the data: mothers returning to work with renewed confidence, fathers stepping into caregiving roles with pride and families finding stability through cultures that genuinely support them. These shifts are not just policy wins but societal milestones, showing how inclusive workplace practices can reshape gender norms, strengthen family bonds and elevate well-being across generations.

Women's Re-entry and Career Continuity

For women, the ability to return to work after childbirth and sustain their careers is one of the ultimate tests of whether policies work in practice. In Cycle 3, the signs are positive.

More than 66% of mothers expressed satisfaction with the number of maternity leave days

offered, with resident mothers voicing the strongest approval, closely followed by GCC National and UAE Citizens.

Nearly 82% of mothers feel supported to take their full maternity leave entitlement,

led by Resident, followed by GCC National and UAE citizens. The same pattern is observed for flexibility, with 80% of mothers reporting that managers enable them to use maternity leave in ways that suit their family needs and GCC nationals expressing the highest confidence, followed by residents and UAE citizens. These results demonstrate that support is not only consistent across groups but in many cases exemplary, establishing benchmarks that show when leadership and culture are aligned, maternity policies become a lived reality rather than a written promise.





Organizations are also introducing expanded maternity support that goes beyond statutory entitlements. Some offering 100 days of fully paid maternity leave, with the option to extend through three months (90 days) of unpaid or annual leave. In one case, mothers can split 90 days of unpaid leave into three separate blocks, allowing for a gradual and supported return. Employees have praised these measures for easing the transition back to work.

Cycle 3 data also show progress in broader workplace experience:

Re-entry made smoother

More than 65% of mothers reported easier transitions back to work, supported by hybrid arrangements, nursing flexibility and reintegration programs.





Career continuity protected and advanced

Women highlighted that promotions, bonuses and leadership opportunities remain open during and after maternity leave. As one mother explained.

"All employees are safe from termination and get recognized for their efforts even during maternity leave. This includes the yearly bonus."

Others pointed to mentorship and training initiatives such as "Women in Leadership" and executive coaching clinics that ensure professional development does not pause during parenting journeys.

Inclusivity is widening as well. Organizations are increasingly formalizing support for sensitive yet vital realities, including miscarriage, stillbirth and extended nursing arrangements, ensuring that employees feel recognized and supported through every stage of parenthood. For example:

Mothers receive two 30 minute nursing breaks daily for

18 months

(540 days), which can be combined into one hour and remain valid even during Ramadan.

In cases of stillbirth or pregnancy loss after 24 weeks (168 days), mothers receive

full maternity leave

(90 calendar days), while fathers access paternity leave and both parents are eligible for additional compassionate leave.



In cases of miscarriage before 24 weeks (168 days), women are entitled to

2 weeks'

unpaid leave plus five days of fully paid compassionate leave.

Fathers are also eligible for five days of compassionate leave and up to 30 days of medical escort leave if treatment is abroad.

Employees value these provisions deeply. As one mother explained: "All mothers in our organization are eligible for nursing hours and have used it completely."

Fatherhood and Shared Caregiving

Fatherhood is emerging as one of the clearest indicators of cultural change. Nearly three-quarters of fathers feel encouraged by their managers to take paternity leave, with 74% agreeing. A similar share, 73% say their peers support them

in doing so. Together, these shifts signal that caregiving is becoming a shared workplace responsibility, supported across genders and roles.



Younger fathers were the most confident: those aged 18–25 recorded the highest satisfaction at 78%, followed by

74% in the 26-34 age group.

These results suggest that younger fathers are stepping forward with confidence, signaling that a new generation is helping make caregiving a normal part of workplace culture.



Entitlements for fathers are expanding significantly. Some organizations now offer 45 days of paid paternity leave. Others are introducing progressive models, such as four full weeks of paid leave available from early 2025, which can be taken flexibly from one month (30 days) before the birth up to six months (180 days) after. In another case, both male and female employees gained access to five days of parental leave if they had children under the age of one. Flexibility is also deepening, with fathers able to combine paternity leave with annual leave and additional unpaid leave, supported by policies that allow them to adapt time off around family milestones and urgent needs.



70%

of fathers said they could combine annual and unpaid leave with paternity leave, enabled by flexible policies that support caregiving without compromising work.

Additional supports are appearing alongside paternity leave:



Caregiver leave of five paid days for family emergencies



Compassionate leave and the option to combine parental leave with annual or unpaid leave



Flexibility to adapt leave around family milestones and urgent needs

Still, challenges remain. Despite progressive policies, some fathers hesitate to take their full entitlement, often due to workload pressures or concerns about perception. In response, employers are training managers and People and Culture teams to actively encourage fathers to use their benefits fully and without stigma.

The shift is crucial. Managers are increasingly treating paternity leave as a right rather than a favor, reducing stigma and normalizing caregiving across genders.

Global research confirms the impact: longer paternity leave strengthens father involvement and increases female labor force participation.

By adopting such measures, Cycle 3 organizations are aligning with global best practice while building a distinct UAE model.

Family Well-being and Workplace Support

Cycle 3 shows clearly that family well-being and workplace support go hand in hand. Employees themselves make this link: 71% of parents, 74% of GCC National and 68% in leadership position said parent-friendly policies improved their productivity and encouraged longer tenure.

Survey data reinforces the point:

73%

comfortable requesting flexible work

78%

satisfied with last-minut childcare emergencies



71%

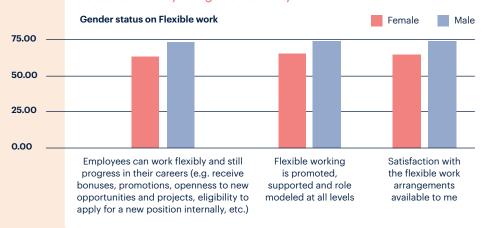
of parents felt supported to maintain a healthy work-life balance 68%

said parent-friendly benefits influenced their decision to stay 77%

would recommend their employer as a parentfriendly workplace

Organizations are increasingly embedding flexible work as a core practice, helping employees balance career progression with personal responsibilities. Overall, 79–86% of employees feel that flexible working is supported, promoted and role-modelled.

Men report slightly higher agreement than women across all measures: 73% of men and 63% of women report that flexible work allows career progression, 74% of men and 66% of women observe flexible working being promoted and role-modelled and 75% of men and 65% of women are satisfied with the arrangements available. These results indicate that while flexible working is widely embraced, there remains scope to design initiatives that ensure women experience the same confidence in career continuity alongside flexibility.

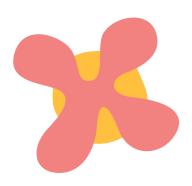


Support for families now stretches beyond parents, as some organizations are piloting onsite nursery services designed not only for childcare but also for early education and specialized care for children of determination. Others have created familyoriented events in the workplace, bringing together employees and their loved ones for interactive learning, well-being sessions and a wide range of engaging activities. One such event brought together more than 800 children, offering opportunities for awareness talks, creative workshops, games and performances that strengthened bonds between work and home life.



Holistic well-being initiatives are also moving into the mainstream. Employers are offering counselling, wellness days and peer support networks, while inclusive fertility benefits are emerging as a powerful signal of care with further details available in Chapter 6. Employees notice the difference, recognizing that such initiatives boost their confidence, expand their options and make them feel genuinely supported.

Global research echoes these findings. UNICEF® and the International Labor Organization (ILO)® confirm that family-friendly workplaces reduce absenteeism, improve child outcomes and strengthen communities. Cycle 3 demonstrates these truths within the UAE.



Why This Human Impact Matters

Cycle 3 demonstrates that parent-friendly workplaces do more than transform policies; they reshape lives.

Mothers are returning to work with renewed confidence; fathers are embracing caregiving as a shared responsibility and families are finding greater stability through cultures of genuine support.

This is the true power of the Parent-friendly Label™ (PFL): it bridges workplace reform with family resilience, gender equity and social progress. It proves that when parents thrive, organizations flourish and societies move forward with them.



Chapter 6:

INNOVATION BEYOND POLICY

Workplaces across the UAE are showing that parent-friendly excellence cannot be reduced to leave days and flexible schedules alone. In Cycle 3, organizations are reimagining what it means to put families first, weaving care, technology and well-being into the fabric of daily work. These are not symbolic policies. They are tools, services and cultural signals that reassure parents, support children and strengthen family bonds.

Technology Enabled Support

Technology is becoming a quiet but powerful lifeline for working parents. Some organizations introduced nursery livestreams, allowing parents to check in on their children during the workday, reducing anxiety and strengthening emotional connection. Another innovation is the introduction of digital nursing room booking systems, which remove awkwardness and ensure dignity and fairness in accessing private spaces.

Well-being is also moving into the digital sphere. Meditation apps, virtual counselling and fitness platforms are now embedded in benefit packages, giving families access to support whenever they need it. A few workplaces even piloted flexible learning pods and virtual classrooms for schoolaged children, transforming offices into safe extensions of home life.

Globally, technology is being harnessed for parents in new ways - from childcare marketplaces in Europe to Al-driven career coaching platforms in the US. The UAE's innovations show how these solutions can be adapted locally, making technology a bridge between work, family and community life.



Expanded Benefits for Diverse Caregivers

Cycle 3 showed that care at work is no longer confined to the everyday routines of parenting.

Organizations began recognizing the more difficult and often invisible parts of family life. From pregnancy loss to adoption, policies once left unspoken are now written into formal entitlements, sending a message that every parent's journey deserves dignity and support.



For families raising children of determination, this recognition has meant tangible relief. Emergency childcare and tailored services are giving parents the confidence that they will not have to face sudden disruptions alone. Neurodivergent needs are also being met with greater care. Some organizations introduced Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) coverage, while others offered sessions with medical and insurance experts to guide parents through complex therapy approvals.

Employees themselves affirm this progress, with 57% saying that the support for parents of children of determination is clearly defined and sufficient to help balance work and caregiving responsibilities.

Some organizations also provide mothers of Children of Determination with an additional 30 paid maternity days.

Beyond family benefits, organizations are also forming dedicated committees on People of Determination (POD) to shape strategies, remove barriers and recommend integrated programs. Coupled with recognition as POD-Friendly Workplaces, partnerships with national bodies and accredited training on disability etiquette, these measures turn inclusivity from a slogan into lived reality.

Fertility Support as a National Priority

With the UAE's fertility rate declining from 4.4 births per woman in 1990 to just 1.4 in 2023, the urgency is clear.

Instead of waiting for a demographic crisis, the Parent-friendly Label™ (PFL) is proactively positioning workplaces as allies in sustaining family life.

Forward-thinking organizations are now offering inclusive fertility benefits, covering treatments, elective egg and sperm freezing and extending support to both men and women regardless of marital status. Peer networks and fertility support groups are also emerging, creating safe spaces for employees to share their journeys and feel less alone.

Employees describe these benefits as transformative. One single woman in her midthirties shared:

"For the first time, I feel my options have opened up. Knowing that my workplace supports my choices makes me feel seen, valued and hopeful about my future family."

These stories reveal that fertility policies are not just protecting careers but nurturing aspirations. By embedding fertility and family support into workplace culture, the PFL ensures that support for parents is inclusive, compassionate and future-focused, aligning national priorities with personal possibilities.

Well-being and Career Continuity

Well-being has moved to the center of organizational life. Employers now provide counselling services, onsite health screenings, wellness days, breast cancer checks, men's health awareness programs and yoga sessions. Flu vaccination campaigns and digital well-being apps further extend support, ensuring employees can care for their health proactively.



Some organizations have gone further by creating Family Well-being Funds, giving parents the freedom to use support for childcare, education, or health costs. Others have introduced phased return options for mothers, extended nursing hours and reintegration programs that make re-entry to work smoother and less stressful.

Employees are responding positively. In Cycle 3, nearly two-thirds of women reported smoother transitions back into the workplace after maternity leave, helped by these flexible return pathways and holistic well-being services. For many, parenthood no longer feels like a disruption to careers but part of a supported journey of growth and continuity.

Childcare Support and Family Connection

Childcare is being reimagined as a bridge between home and work. In some organizations, plans for onsite nurseries go beyond supervision to include early learning and specialized care. Others host family days and interactive programs that allow children to step into their parents' professional world, blending joy with pride.

The smallest policies are often the most powerful. One company introduced "School Event Leave," giving parents a few hours each year to attend milestones like the first day of school or concerts, a benefit employees described as carrying emotional weight far beyond its hours. Another made annual leave available in hourly segments, so parents could be present in moments that truly matter.

36 Chapter 6: Innovation Beyond Policy The Parent-friendly Label™ Impact Report 2025

The Parent-friendly Label™ Chapter 6: Innovation Beyond Policy The Parent-friendly Label™ Impact Report 2025

The Parent-friendly Label™ Chapter 6: Innovation Beyond Policy Impact Report 2025

Support also extends beyond the office. Some organizations provide employee discount programs that ease the cost of essentials such as education, transport and healthcare, while also creating access to leisure and cultural experiences. From school fee savings to family outings, these benefits reduce financial strain and bring more balance to everyday life.

Comprehensive family contracts introduced by certain employers add another layer of security, covering healthcare for employees, spouses and dependents, along with visas and education assistance. For many households, this has translated into peace of mind and the confidence that their employer is invested in their family's future.

Supporting Vulnerable Workers

Innovation has also extended to vulnerable workers. Some organizations created Emergency Funds, allowing employees in financial difficulty to access timely assistance. Occupational leave policies were strengthened to guarantee full pay and medical coverage in the event of workplace injury or illness. Such measures build fairness and compassion into the core of organizational practice.

Equally important are the channels for employee innovation. Platforms for sharing ideas have been launched, where staff propose new benefits and workplace solutions. Hundreds of contributions have already led to real policy changes, showing that innovation is not only top-down but also employee-driven.





Youth and Family Engagement



Innovation has also extended to children and youth of the UAE. Employers have introduced STEM challenges, school-linked learning programs and junior caregiver initiatives where teenagers shadow professionals during holidays. These activities spark ambition and pride, helping children connect to their parents' professional world.

Family days brought children into workplaces through fun activities, well-being sessions and learning experiences. These moments remind families that work and home are not opposing forces, but part of a shared journey where both can thrive.

Why Innovation Matters Now

Innovation is redefining what it means to be a parent-friendly workplace. From fertility benefits and family well-being funds to yoga sessions and interactive family days, organizations are proving that care and competitiveness can grow side by side.

In the UAE, the PFL ensures these innovations are not isolated efforts but part of a unified national movement. They directly support key priorities: increasing female workforce participation, strengthening family structures and fostering social cohesion.

The ripple effects are profound:



Parents experience reduced stress, stronger well-being and deeper loyalty



Children gain security and opportunities to grow



Organizations enhance their reputation, retention and productivity



Society moves closer to achieving Sustainable Development Goals, especially in health, gender equality and decent work

These innovations are not just workplace enhancements but building blocks of a more resilient and inclusive future.



8 Chapter 6: Innovation Beyond Policy The Parent-friendly Label™ 39 Chapter 6: Innovation Beyond Policy Impact Report 2025 The Parent-friendly Label™ Impact Report 2025

Chapter 7:

MEASURING WHAT MATTERS - HOW SUCCESS IS TRACKED AND SUSTAINED

Parent-friendly culture is credible only when it is tested, measured and refined. Policies on paper mean little unless employees feel them in action. In Cycle 3, success was defined not by introducing new benefits but by ensuring they were lived, monitored and continuously improved. Employees consistently reported that when feedback led to visible change, trust deepened and with it came higher well-being, productivity and loyalty.

Core KPIs That Define Impact

Certified organizations track a set of clear indicators to prove that parent-friendly commitments are real in practice.



Leave utilization

Shows whether benefits are genuinely used without stigma. When employees see colleagues confidently taking maternity, paternity, or caregiver leave, they are reassured that support is authentic.



Return-to-work and retention

Highlight whether women can sustain careers after childbirth. In Cycle 3, 65% of mothers said their re-entry was smoother, thanks to flexible pathways and leadership commitment.



Employee sentiment

Is tracked through engagement surveys and pulse checks. Transparency in these processes has been shown to lift satisfaction levels, confirming that feedback is not ignored but acted upon.



Career progression

Is monitored to ensure parents are not left behind. Employees emphasize that advancing while working flexibly signals fairness and motivates retention over the long term.

Mechanisms of Continuous Measurement

Under the Parent-friendly Label™(PFL), parental benefits are not static. Many organizations now review policies annually or bi-annually, refreshing them to reflect evolving family needs. Employees recognize these reviews as proof of leadership commitment.

Post-implementation tracking is also expanding and the results show why measurement builds confidence. Employees say they trust policies more when they are explained clearly and adapted to their stage of life.

In Cycle 3, 70% agreed that well-being programs were communicated effectively, with satisfaction peaking among men aged 45–54 (76%) and those 55 and above (75%), who emphasized the value of predictability and clarity in workplace support.

Women also reflected this confidence, with those 55+ and in the age group of 45–54 reporting the highest satisfaction (69%) and younger women aged 18–25 at 67%. These results show that transparent communication and flexible design reassure both experienced employees and early-career that benefits are not just theoretical but designed with their realities in mind.

At the program level, indicators such as childcare support usage, nursing hour uptake and counselling participation are monitored. These tie benefits directly to well-being outcomes, ensuring that the impact of policies is both measurable and meaningful.



Feedback and Accountability Loops

Feedback has become the strongest measure of credibility. Managers are now expected not only to allow but also to actively encourage the use of parental benefits, helping to normalize them in daily practice.

Monitoring whether employees move from awareness to actual uptake is essential. Employees emphasize that psychological safety, the ability to use benefits without career penalty, is as important as the policies themselves.

New tools such as pulse surveys and realtime sentiment checks are emerging to capture parental experiences more quickly. In Cycle 3, 70% of employees said they were satisfied with how their feedback was considered.

Satisfaction was slightly higher among men at 74%, while women followed closely at 65%. This shows that accountability and responsiveness are no longer optional. They are central to sustaining a supportive work culture.

Chapter 8:

FROM INSIGHT TO LEGACY – THE UAE AS A GLOBAL MODEL

Each chapter of this journey, from leadership vision to employee voice, from policy innovation to cultural change, has carried a single principle: that parent-friendly workplaces are nation-strengthening workplaces. Today, the Parent-friendly Label™ (PFL) emerges not as a symbol but as a legacy for the UAE and a model for the world.

The PFL: A Benchmark for Impact, Not Just a certification

The PFL has evolved into one of the UAE's most powerful levers for cultural and economic change. While organizations earn the label, its true value lies in being a practical framework that drives measurable improvements in how organizations

support parents and families. What makes it distinct is the way it combines **policy innovation** (extended leave, flexible work, childcare, wellbeing) with **cultural accountability** (tracking uptake, employee sentiment, feedback loops).

Policy Innovation



Cultural Accountability

This combination has set a new benchmark. In Cycle 3, satisfaction with parent-friendly support was widespread and more than 70% of employees said these measures improved their productivity and affected their decision to stay. The result is proof that family wellbeing is not symbolic. It delivers tangible returns for employees, organizations and society.

Bringing Vision 2031 to Life

The PFL is not just transforming workplaces; it is actively advancing the UAE's long-term ambitions under Vision 2031, embedding family wellbeing, gender balance and productivity as cornerstones of national progress.

1 Qu

Quality of life

Vision 2031 sets out the UAE's ambition to position its cities among the top 10 globally in quality of life and to rank among the top 10 countries in the Human Development Index. The PFL brings this vision to life by embedding family support directly into the workplace. Through hybrid work arrangements, extended parental leave, accessible childcare and wellbeing funds, families are already experiencing real security and balance.

Employees are noticing the difference. In Cycle 3, 77% said they would recommend their employer and 79% of mothers reported that parental support improved productivity and eased their return after maternity leave.

Parents are experiencing lower stress, stronger wellbeing and greater loyalty, proving that enhancing quality of life is not just a national aspiration, but a reality unfolding in workplaces today.

Human capital development

Protecting women's career continuity and keeping parents in the workforce strengthens national capability. Nearly two-thirds of women in Cycle 3 reported smoother re-entry post-maternity, supported by flexible pathways and manager enablement. These measures keep skilled parents engaged and ensure talent pipelines remain resilient.

Alignment with the UAE's Gender Balance Agenda



The PFL operationalizes national gender goals inside organizations. Women report smoother re-entry supported by flexible pathways and manager enablement, fathers take leave with encouragement from managers and peers, while career progression remains open while working flexibly. Together, these shifts reduce post-maternity attrition, normalize shared caregiving and keep skilled parents in the talent pipeline.



Employee Wellbeing as economic strength



Wellbeing is now integral to work, not a perk, as reflected in Cycle 3.

Over 70% of employees see work-life balance as essential for sustained engagement,

while a similar share say wellbeing programs are clearly communicated. In addition, 65% express satisfaction with the services. The result is higher confidence, greater uptake and stronger teams.

Productivity and economic growth

Employees consistently connect supportive policies with stronger performance, with 73% of fathers and 67% of mothers reporting that access to parent-friendly support enhances their daily productivity.

The impact goes further: 65% of mothers and 70% of fathers said such support influences their decision to remain with their organization for at least two years. For organizations, this translates into stronger teams and reduced turnover. For the UAE, it builds competitiveness anchored in engaged and resilient talent.

Family cohesion as national strength

With fertility declining globally, workplaces have become anchors of family stability. Policies such as parental leave, childcare support and family emergency leave help parents be present at milestones, strengthening emotional security for children and reinforcing families as the foundation of social progress.



Global competitiveness

The PFL is setting up a new reference point internationally. By embedding employee voice, cultural accountability and continuous measurement, it demonstrates that family support is not symbolic but a

lived culture. Internationally, this positions the UAE as a leader where economic strength is reinforced by inclusive and resilient workplaces, making its model a benchmark for others.

PFL as a Regional Benchmark

The PFL is fast becoming one of the Gulf's most pioneering workplace programs. Its strength lies not only in recognizing organizations but in sparking genuine policy reform, encouraging employers to exceed statutory requirements in parental leave, flexible work and caregiving support.

The momentum is clear across the region. Oman's 2023 reforms, for example, extended maternity leave to 14 fully paid weeks for both nationals and non-nationals, alongside paternity leave and stronger job protections. Private employers in the Gulf are also raising standards by expanding leave entitlements, piloting flexible work models and introducing wellbeing benefits that go beyond legal minimum.

Against this backdrop, the PFL is not just keeping pace but setting the pace. By bridging law, policy and workplace culture, it is emerging as a unique regional benchmark and a reference point as neighboring countries shape their own family-friendly standards.

Global Relevance: Why the PFL model matters beyond the UAE

The PFL is not only a national success. It is also a model of international significance.

Scalable design:

The PFL demonstrates that family-first frameworks can thrive across sectors of every size and complexity, from large multinationals to smaller enterprises.

Cultural integration:

By weaving family-first values into recruitment, onboarding and employer branding, the PFL ensures parent-friendliness is lived culture, not just policy on paper.

Employee sentiment reinforces this global relevance. About 77% said they would recommend their workplace, while employee surveys also show a direct link between family support, reduced stress and stronger well-being.

The PFL: A Catalyst for National Change

The PFL has evolved far beyond a workplace certification; it is now a national mechanism for cultural transformation. By linking family well-being with economic competitiveness and social cohesion, the PFL is shaping a future where supportive workplaces are not the exception but the norm.

Cycle 3 proved that parentfriendly practices are no longer aspirational; they are lived realities across sectors and industries. From energy and aviation to healthcare, retail and logistics, semi-government, private and third-sector organizations have embraced the Label, demonstrating its adaptability to every workplace context.



Cultural shifts are equally profound.

Paternity leave is becoming normalized, maternity support is expanding and flexible work is widely accepted. These changes are not only reshaping organizational norms but also redefining how families, schools and communities view caregiving as a shared responsibility and a cornerstone of national resilience.

Forward-Looking

The PFL has laid strong foundations across workplaces in the UAE. The next stage is about building this progress with a sharper focus on culture, national priorities and global leadership. Looking ahead, four directions will define its future impact:

Community and cultural impact

Label earners have already shifted workplace norms by normalizing paternity leave, expanding maternity support and embedding flexible work without stigma. These changes are expected to deepen further, shaping how families, schools and communities view caregiving as a shared responsibility.



Supporting national priorities

The PFL directly advances Vision 2031's quality of life pillar and aligns with the National Gender Balance Strategy. By sustaining women's career continuity and enabling active fatherhood, it strengthens the nation's talent pipeline and reinforces family wellbeing as a pillar of national strength.

Positioning the UAE globally

By combining policy innovation in areas like leave, childcare and wellbeing with cultural accountability through tracking uptake, employee voice and sentiment surveys, the UAE is setting a new benchmark. Few countries have been able to integrate both structure and culture so seamlessly, making the PFL a reference point for global peers.





Trusted and celebrated

With 77% of employees recommending their organization as a parentfriendly workplace, the Label has earned credibility across sectors. The focus now is on deepening its reach, widening its influence and cementing the UAE's position as a global leader in parental support.

What's Next: Recommendations for Cycle 4 and Beyond



Sector-specific deep dives

While the reach across 25 industries is impressive, deeper insights into sector-specific challenges and innovations can help tailor future reforms. Launching industry-specific reports that analyze how parent-friendly practices are evolving in sectors such as healthcare, energy, or logistics will identify unique needs and scalable solutions.





Global expansion strategy

Several organizations have already extended the ethos of the Label internationally, signaling strong potential for global influence. Developing a PFL Global Framework will support UAE-based multinationals and international partners in adopting the Label abroad, positioning the UAE as a global reference point for family-friendly workplace reform.





SME inclusion program

Smaller entities are participating but often face resource constraints in implementing reforms. A dedicated support track for SMEs, including simplified evaluation tools. shared service models such as pooled childcare and mentorship from larger Label earners, will ensure inclusive growth across all organizational sizes.

The PFL is becoming a lasting legacy for the UAE - strengthening families, enriching workplaces and inspiring global change. It is more than a policy framework or workplace initiative. It is a blueprint for how nations can thrive when productivity and human wellbeing move forward together, positioning the UAE as a model for the future of work and family life.

REFERENCES

- 1. First Things First (FTF), Why Early Childhood Matters: Brain Development, https://www.firstthingsfirst.org/early-childhood-matters/brain-development/#:~:text=lt%20keeps20growing%20to%20about,to%20language%20and%20problem%2Dsolving
- 2. World Bank Group, 'Women, Business and the Law 2024', 16 March 2024, World Bank, Women, Business and the Law 2024
- 3. Waheed Abbas, 'More women bosses in UAE? Nation leads in gender equality', Khaleej Times. 13 Jun 2025.

World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index 2025

- 4. Abbot, Lydia, 'The Future of Recruiting 2024', LinkedIn, 2024, LinkedIn Global Talent Trends 2024
- 5. Kos, Emily; Clark, Kelsey; De Santis, Nicole; and Joseph, Tyler, 'Childcare Benefits More Than Pay for Themselves at US Companies', Boston Consulting Group, 26 March 2024, BCG & Moms First (2024)
- 6. Kelly, Allie, 'The benefit that pays for itself and increases worker productivity', Business Insider, 29 March 2024

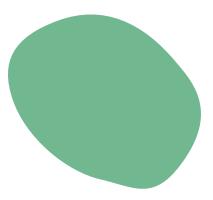
Business Insider (2024) - Childcare Benefits Boost Productivity and Retention

- 7. UNICEF, 'Family-Friendly Policies: Handbook For Business', June 2020, UNICEF Family friendly policies
- 8. UNICEF 'The hidden power of family-friendly workplaces', Maternity leave & retention
- 9. OECD Family Database, 'Parental leave systems', February 2024 <u>Parental Leave Systems</u>
- 10. Sweden Sverige, 'Work-life balance', 16 April 2025 Sweden Work-life Balance
- 11. Government of Canada, 'Maternity and Parental Benefits', 4 February 2025 Canada Maternity and Parental Leave
- 12. Government of Canada, 'Towards \$10-a-day: Early Learning and Child Care', 24 March 2025

Canada Early Learning and Child Care

- 13. Lee, Jihoon and Kim, Cynthia 'In South Korea, world's lowest fertility rate plunges again in 2023', 28 February 2024 South Korea Fertility Rate
- 14. Asinta, 'South Korea Expands Parental Leave: What HR Executives Need to Know in 2025', 18 February 2025 South Korea Parental Leave

- 15. Invest Korea, 'Work-Family Balance Assistance' Work-Family Balance Assistance
- 16. Lockton, 'South Korea Expands Family Leave Entitlements', 6 January 2025 Family Leave Entitlements
- 17. Vacation Tracker, 'South Korea Leave Laws & Holidays', 20 February 2024 South Korea Leave Laws and Holidays
- 18. Government of Brazil, 'Join the Corporate Citizen program', 19 August 2025 Corporate Citizen Program
- 19. Desk, Web, 'Abu Dhabi's new 90-day paternity leave for some private sector staff to begin on Sept 1', Khaleej Times, 27 August 2024 Abu Dhabi's Private Sector Paternity Leave
- 20. United Arab Emirates Government, 'Maternity and Paternity Leave', 11 August 2025 UAE Maternity and Paternity Leave
- 21. United Arab Emirates Government, 'Maternity and Paternity Leave, 11 August 2025 UAE Maternity and Paternity Leave
- 22. ILO News, 'Employment-intensive investments can contribute to creating 299 million decent jobs in the care economy', International Labor Organization, 16 July 2025, Investing in childcare



Published by:

Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority. **Copyright** © **2025.**

All rights reserved to the publisher. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any mean, electronic, electrostatic, magnetic tape, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning or otherwise, without permission in writing from the publisher.

48 References The Parent-friendly Label™ 49 References Impact Report 2025

References Support Report 2025

The Parent-friendly Label™ 49 References Support Report 2025





LinkedIn:



Instagram:

