



BPW International 1930 - 2011

The International Federation of Business and Professional Women

fact sheet 5:

ADVOCACY AND AWARENESS RAISING

As civil society participants, BPW has a critical role to play in raising awareness of the WEPs, a partnership initiative of UN Women and UN Global Compact. With an expansive network of Affiliates in over 90 countries, BPW Federations and clubs are best placed to work collaboratively with local UN Women, UN Global Compact Local Networks, government, the private sector, industry groups and academia to engage with them through well planned consultations or events.

There will be two phases of WEPs support. Initially members are encouraged to raise awareness of the principles by running their own WEPs consultations, events and encouraging companies to report back 'good practices' and have their CEOs sign the CEO Statement of Support. The second phase will involve implementation of the WEPs and strategies are currently being considered that will assist companies with organisational changes and measuring their progress.

BPW Affiliates are invited to assist us with the first stage of our work which is to raise awareness. An essential component of this work is ongoing reporting of good practices that have been implemented by companies. Soliciting the practices that companies may already have put in place to advance women will be very helpful in building the business case for the benefits of workplace choices and builds on the continuous register of [Companies Leading the Way: Putting the Principles into Practice](#) that UN Women and UN Global Compact update regularly. They are intended to raise awareness of

the many ways in which business can promote gender equality in the workplace, marketplace and community. The actions and policies adopted by these companies demonstrate the abundance of ways that business can contribute to the advancement of women's empowerment around the world. We are always interested in hearing from our members and your feedback is important to our ongoing work in this area.

For now, the work of members is limited to the first phase focused on raising awareness of the WEPs and we encourage members to take the following two actions after a WEPs consultation or event:

- Report back 'good practices' identified during consultations that empower and advance women in business;
- Send a call to action to participants that have expressed support for advancing equality between women and men by inviting their CEOs to sign the [CEO Statement of Support for the Women's Empowerment Principles](#).

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A good practice example: **Using the WEPs to create national attention**

BPW Korea used the visit of the BPW International President in the lead-up to the 2010 G20 Summit, as an opportunity to hold a major WEPs event in their country. The Federation contacted the UN Global Compact office in their country and were able to work together in preparations for the event that included suggesting names of possible speakers and invited guests. They partnered with the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family also and the seminar became a national event generating significant media interest with President Benham interviewed by several media agencies and featured in more than 20 news articles. According to the President of BPW Korea, the collaboration has seen the Federation reinvigorated with a clear opportunity to build on new contacts and grow.

A d v o c a c y

Advocacy efforts with government have largely been on the basis that government has a responsibility to ensure that policies and programs are provided to support its commitment to gender equality expressed through instruments such as the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action developed at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. There are 30 articles to the Convention which sets an agenda for national action to end discrimination against women, and promote equality. Article 11 is of particular interest to BPW international as it states that parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights. Equality in the workplace is what we are striving for.

About CEDAW and Beijing Platform for Action

The WEPs are consistent with many of the UN conventions and declarations that are used in our advocacy. These include:

The eight [Millennium Development Goals](#) (MDG) that were agreed by world leaders in the Millennium General Assembly special session in 2000 at UN Headquarters in New York. The outcome document, known as the United Nations Millennium Declaration, aims to reduce extreme poverty and sets out a series of time-bound targets with a final deadline of 2015.

The [Beijing Platform for Action](#) adopted by all 189 United Nations member countries at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 provides a global framework for the empowerment of women and equality. It upholds the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women that was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979 and has been ratified by 170 countries.

CEDAW calls on governments to implement measures to accelerate substantive equality outcomes. Many governments have put in place and reviewed federal discrimination laws. While BPW International welcomes such measures, it is important to ensure any more broad-based anti-discrimination or equality legislation is adequately incorporated into a country's specific human rights obligations under CEDAW.

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ADVOCACY AND AWARENESS RAISING

- How the WEPs relate to existing BPW Activities Worldwide

BPW International believes that the WEPs initiative offers an invaluable opportunity to promote the focus on equality for women in economic participation and decision making.

In March 2010, over 80 BPW leaders were gathered to attend the 2nd BPW Presidents Seminar in New York during CSW 54. They were introduced to the WEPs initiative (prior to their official launch) and four UN officials were present to discuss the principles in detail. A breakout session followed. BPW Leaders discussed and highlighted existing BPW programs within regions that align with the Principles discussing strategies that would enhance existing BPW networks and programs in support of the WEPs initiative. The results are included in the table overleaf.

BPW Affiliates were encouraged to develop country-specific approaches to work in collaboration with UN Women and the UN Global Compact, CEO associations, and other civil society organisations to build awareness and momentum for the principles and their adoption, beginning in June 2010 and beyond. Here's what the leaders had to say:

BPW Leaders believe it is important to support the WEPs because:

-  The WEPs enable business and companies to support and apply a framework to support diversity and empowerment of women.
-  Rather than developing individual corporate solutions, the WEPs are a framework likened to a basket of initiatives delivered in a well-established CSR framework. It maps a clear road map that companies can set internal targets to achieve gender equality..

To support implementation on a country-by-country basis, we encourage BPW Affiliates to contact local UN Women and UN Global Compact focal groups to engage with them and to promote awareness and consultation at the local level.

-  Find out which Companies in your region or country are already signatories to the UN Global Compact. A list of companies whose CEOs have signed the letter of support can be found at: http://www.unglobalcompact.org/docs/issues_doc/human_rights/WEPs_CEO_Statement_of_Support_Signatories.pdf
-  Contact your local UN Global Compact focal group.
-  Initiate a Consultation and communication with Business and Industry to increase awareness of the WEPs.

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BPW Region Affiliate

What is happening in your region that aligns with the WEPs

Africa	Ivory Coast	Principles 1, 4 and 5
	Egypt	Regular monthly platform for CEOs Awards for women’s leadership Women’s Entrepreneur Projects
	Nigeria	Priorities Principles 3, 4 and 5 Have long commitment to Women’s Health at work: Keep fit; cancer screening; Banks: Crèche /childcare provided with employment. Education: Vocational training for child bearing women in the off-season (farming) in conjunction with primary/secondary education.
Asia Pacific	Benin	Report comparative gender outcomes (men vs. women) in a report for civil society. Current campaigns: Career shadowing Pay Equity Campaigns – in coalition with other groups Violence Against Women Campaigns Promoting Women in Leadership in conjunction with Human Rights Commission; EOWA Research for Her stories - reward these women Paid Maternity Leave
		European initiatives regarding Equal Pay Day Awareness raising Use of CEDAW report for catalogue of demands Good contacts in the political world Women politicians needed
		Campaigns on: Ending Violence against Women Pay Equity Education of Women’s Issues Hostile Work Environment
North America & English-speaking Caribbean		
South America & Spanish-speaking Caribbean	Brazil	Brazil already has a number of initiatives to promote women in the global marketplace and in decision making including: Women’s Program with the Brazilian Stock Exchange Program for women in Enterprise National Plan for Women



STRATEGIES SUGGESTED - BY BPW LEADERS

As part of a broader discussion around the WEPs, the following ideas were generated by the BPW leaders attending the BPW International President's Seminar during CSW54 in March 2010.

Business & Industry

- BPW Affiliates should promote the WEPs as a complete package; it was not recommended to break them up and only work on a few.
- Connect with the local UN Global Compact focal point if one is established in-country.
- Identify and first work with companies supporting the UN Global Compact and the WEPs. Take a uniform approach so that company headquarters are approached nationally, followed by regions.
- Connect and work with the UN Women offices in the region to promote WEPs. BPW Affiliates can target public and private sector with UN Women to get companies on board with the WEPs.
- Connect with Business and Industry – introduce the WEPs to local Federations of Industry and Chambers of Commerce; Institutes of Directors etc...
- Raise Awareness – initiate consultations and gather information from companies about approaches, pilots and policies that have worked in the workplace. (Refer to the BPW International Website for support materials and templates).
- Positive Profile for Companies Supporting the WEPs – Reward companies that are making the right moves – consider Awards for good practice.
- Inform women which are the “good” companies – which are the companies that support the WEPs? Which companies already support women and are the leaders in the local market for empowering women and adopting good practices?
- Evidence to support Equality Means Business – Show the facts to support each principle; refer to support materials on BPW International, UN Women and UN Global Compact websites.
- Mentoring – BPW has a role to play in ‘mentoring’ individuals and also organisations about good practices that support the WEPs.
- Training – Initiate Training on the legal framework that relates to the WEPs

Media

- Combine Awards and positive public acknowledgement of companies that are supporting the WEPs and working to implement the WEPs. Eg BPW Asia Pacific Awards/Rewards
- Media – Build local media profile regarding the WEPs – identify journalists writing on women on boards; gender diversity, corporate social responsibility and corporate governance – inform them about the WEPs (and local BPW Consultations as appropriate)

Government

- Advocacy and Capacity Building – lobby government about the WEPs
- Raise Awareness with Existing Supporters – engage with BPW members and supporters in government and politics regarding the WEPs
- Engage with local politicians to support WEPs; Open doors to have WEPs integrated in existing government policy and programs that relate to women
- Inter-Government Forums – build awareness of the WEPs through Government and Regional Inter-Government Forums (eg. in Asia-Pacific - APEC Women Leaders Network)

BPW

- BPW Programs – align and combine with existing programs – including Equal Pay initiatives and mentoring
- BPW Regional, National and State Conferences – Convene a WEPs session to raise awareness among local BPW members and to showcase examples of leading companies and the WEPs.
- Local BPW Club level – Make all BPW clubs aware of the WEP so they can promote in their own areas. WEP brochures are available in Portuguese, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, French, English, and Russian on the UN Global Compact Website: http://www.unglobalcompact.org/Issues/human_rights/index.html under Women's Empowerment Principles (then go to the bottom of the page 'Key Documents')

