



BPW International 1930 - 2011

The International Federation of Business and Professional Women

fact sheet 1:

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE WEPs TOOLKIT

Addressing workplace cultures and attitudes towards women in the workplace, often entrenched in the minds of employers and employees alike, is a complex challenge. Redressing the many dimensions of gender inequality requires the mobilization of the private, government and NGO sectors.

As a leading women's civil society organisation, BPW International is well placed to achieve this. McKinsey & Company has noted that: *Unless the current rules of the promotion system are changed, the growth in female graduate numbers will have a very marginal impact on women's representation on governing bodies. In essence, unless we address the root causes of the problem, the notorious 'glass ceiling' will stay firmly in place, and women's participation in corporate leadership over the next 30 years will remain low².*

BPW International believes that women should not have to wait another 30 years to see gender parity in management and at boardroom level. Credible research and reports from a growing

number of academics and leading consultancies build the business case and clearly explain why women mean business for the 21st century. We see the Women's Empowerment Principles as a vital tool providing a 'gender lens' through which business can review and analyse current initiatives, benchmarks and reporting practices. For companies that need to establish policies and practices, the WEPs offer a blueprint or a roadmap of key issues that need to be addressed. More importantly, the WEPs allow us to bring the business case to the attention of CEOs around the world.

The *Women's Empowerment Principles – Equality Means Business* is a partnership initiative of UNIFEM (part of UN Women)

and the UN Global Compact. It encourages engagement with the private sector, non-governmental organizations, the United Nations and governments to advance and empower women in the workplace, marketplace and community. While designed as a tool for the private sector to strengthen and create company policies and programmes to achieve gender equality, the WEP's seven principles provide a platform for all stakeholders to move their commitments to gender equality closer to implementation. The principles emphasize the business case for corporate action to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, and are informed by real-life business practices and input gathered from across the globe.



As a global organization of business and professional women, BPW International endorses the WEPs and has made their promotion and realization a top organizational priority.

BPW International is committed to raising awareness of the WEPs around the world and we have developed resources to help members to run their own WEPs events and consultations. These take the form of a series of 10 Fact Sheets designed a practical guide for members to build the private and public sector's awareness around the WEPs.

HOW DOES
THE WEPs
TOOLKIT
ADVANCE
BPW
INTERNATIONAL'S
CORE WORK?

The way we execute our core business in relation to women in the economy and women in decision making levels over the next term will be influenced by the success measures and activities of clubs/Affiliates as set out in the toolkit.

Not all areas of the toolkit will apply to all regions in the same way. Each region will need to review what they do and how they do it giving consideration to their respective country and region culture.

The Fact Sheets are designed to provide members with the

necessary knowledge and resources to host a meeting or consultation with key stakeholders. They contain examples of how the WEPs have been successfully used by Federations/Clubs around the world. We look forward to hearing more about your experiences, so that we can update the Fact Sheets and spread "best practice" examples further.

We invite all BPW members to make a difference through their support for the Women's Empowerment Principles.

wep



AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION: GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Gender mainstreaming is an international strategy to achieve gender equality in all aspects of society that has been gradually adopted since 1995 by many governments in developing and developed countries. It was defined by the United Nation's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 1997 as follows:

Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.

Gender awareness/analysis programs provide a means for ensuring that gender considerations form part of the development of policies or programs. This is especially important in areas that women are still disadvantaged such as health, economic security, work-life balance, safety and leadership.

Gender differences are apparent in the labour market. Women's workforce participation has increased in the last few decades however women remain over-represented in the traditionally female-dominated and lower-paid industries such as care work or retail work. Additionally they comprise the majority of part time and casual workers. Women still make up the vast majority of carers, and many take on an unpaid caring role at the expense of paid work, to their financial detriment. As a result, the gap between male and female pay is persistently wide. BPW Members around the world continue to raise awareness of their country's pay gap through the national Equal Pay Day awareness

campaigns [The BPW International Equal Pay Day Awareness Campaign was launched in 2009].

Being aware of the diverse and different experiences of women and men can assist the private sector and government agencies develop more effective procedures and precise targeting for developing, implementing and evaluating workforce participation and work-life balance policies, programs and legislation.

You will find updated information and, over time, additional Fact Sheets on the WEPs pages of the BPW International website: www.bpw-international.org.

Find out more about UNIFEM (part of UN Women) at:

http://www.unifem.org/partnerships/womens_empowerment_principles/

UN Global Compact at:

http://www.unglobalcompact.org/Issues/human_rights/equality_means_business.html

