



TOWARDS EQUALITY
IN BUSINESS

PUTTING
GENDER EQUALITY
AT THE HEART OF THE
BUSINESS SECTOR
IN GEORGIA

**WOMEN'S
EMPOWERMENT
PRINCIPLES**

Established by UN Women and the
UN Global Compact Office



Norwegian Ministry
of Foreign Affairs



ABOUT THE PUBLICATION

This publication provides information on companies' opportunities to promote women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplace and community. It presents a snapshot of the situation for women globally and in Georgia, and it provides information on how companies can use, with UN Women's support, the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) to advance gender equality. It also contains examples of company action to inspire companies to become WEPs signatories and actively participate in the global WEPs movement.

The publication was prepared within the framework of the project "A Joint Action for Women's Economic Empowerment in Georgia" implemented with financial support from the Norwegian Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The project seeks to further strengthen the private sector's engagement in women's economic empowerment in Georgia.

UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. It supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and it works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. UN Women stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against the needs and interests of women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. It also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.

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GLOBAL CONTEXT FOR WOMEN

In recent decades, empowering women and girls has become an aspirational goal for an increasing variety of organizations, ranging from grass-roots organizations to governments and corporations. It is common knowledge that women's empowerment benefits not only women but also families, communities, companies and society at large. Closing gender gaps is the key to not only achieving Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality but also the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a whole.

Significant achievements in women's empowerment have been made: More girls have access to education, and more women are working, getting elected and assuming leadership positions. Once regarded as a private matter, now preventing and redressing violence against women and girls is finally on the public policy agenda.

While hugely important, though, these changes have not yet resulted in equal outcomes for women and men. Women's potential is still underutilized and undervalued. Gender gaps persist across many dimensions. Due to gender-specific barriers preventing women's full participation in political, economic and social life, they are still gravely underrepresented in power and decision-making roles, receive unequal pay for equal work and continue to be targets of physical and sexual abuse. For most women, significant gains in education have not translated into better labour market outcomes.¹ Additionally, women-owned enterprises are economically disadvantaged and lack equal opportunity to compete for business opportunities.

Only 67 women participate in the labour force for every 100 men globally.² Persistent gender inequalities are linked to countries' economic performance and development: Data show that female non-participation in the economy slows economic growth,³ and overall, gender gaps have been estimated to cost the economy some 15 per cent of GDP.⁴ Conversely, when more women work, economies grow. Women's economic empowerment has been seen to boost productivity and increase economic and income equality, in addition to other positive development outcomes.⁵

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- 1 UN Women, *Progress of the World's Women 2015-2016: Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights* (2015), p. 69. Available at http://progress.unwomen.org/en/2015/pdf/UNW_progressreport.pdf.
 - 2 World Bank, "Ratio of female to male labor force participation rate (%) (modeled ILO estimate)", World Bank Open Data (2019). Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.CACT.FM.ZS>.
 - 3 Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Gender Equality in Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship: Final Report to the MCM 2012* (2012). Available at <https://www.oecd.org/els/soc/50423364.pdf>.
 - 4 David Cuberes and Marc Teignier, "Aggregate Effects of Gender Gaps in the Labor Market: A Quantitative Estimate", *Journal of Human Capital*, vol. 10, No. 1 (Spring 2016), pp. 1–32. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1086/683847>; Gaëlle Ferrant and Alexandre Kolev, "Does gender discrimination in social institutions matter for long-term growth?: Cross-country evidence", OECD Development Centre Working Papers, No. 330 (Paris, OECD Publishing, 2016). Available at <https://doi.org/10.1787/5jm2hz8dgl6-en>.
 - 5 International Monetary Fund, "Pursuing Women's Economic Empowerment", Policy Papers (Washington, D.C., 2018). Available at <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/Policy-Papers/Issues/2018/05/31/pp053118pursuing-womens-economic-empowerment>.

QUICK FACTS

Women carry out **three times as much** of the care work as men⁶

Women are more likely to be unemployed than men: In 2017, global unemployment rates for men and women stood at **5.5 per cent and 6.2 per cent**, respectively⁷

Women earn **only 77 per cent** of what men earn⁸

Women are constrained from achieving the highest leadership positions: **Only 5 per cent** of Fortune **500** CEOs are women⁹

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- 6 International Labour Organization, Care work and care jobs for the future of decent work (Geneva, International Labour Office, 2018). Available at https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_633135.pdf.
- 7 International Labour Organization, World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends for Women 2018 – Global snapshot (Geneva, International Labour Office, 2018). Available at: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_619577.pdf.
- 8 UN Women, Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (New York, 2018). Available at <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/2/gender-equality-in-the-2030-agenda-for-sustainable-development-2018>.
- 9 Catalyst, “Women CEOs of the S&P 500”, 4 October 2019. Available at <http://www.catalyst.org/knowledge/women-ceos-sp-500>.

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC ACTIVITY IN GEORGIA

IN GEORGIA, WOMEN ARE LESS ACTIVE ECONOMICALLY THAN MEN

UN Women's data suggests that the main reasons for women's economic inactivity are the gendered division of labour in society and the associated unpaid care work burden that women bear. On average, women report spending 45 hours a week on homemaking.¹⁰

A secondary driver of women's economic inactivity is the weaker financial incentives women have to work, which are reflected in the gender pay gap. Women earn significantly less than men. For example, in 2017, women in Georgia earned GEL 0.65 against GEL 1 earned by men on a monthly basis. The gender pay gap is partly explained by the horizontal and vertical segregation of the labour market: Women are overrepresented in lower-paying sectors and positions. Due to unpaid household work, they also have less time for paid work. However, the difference in hourly earnings, taking into account personal characteristics (age, education) and other factors (position held, sector of employment, etc.), still comprises a significant 24.8 per cent.¹¹

The factor that has the largest, positive impact on women's labour force participation in Georgia is education. Yet, education does not automatically translate to equal employment outcomes: The labour force participation rate among women with tertiary education is still significantly lower than the participation rate for men, regardless of whether or not men have higher education.¹²

To advance gender equality, it is crucial that paid work be compatible with women's and men's shared responsibility for unpaid care and domestic work, where earnings are sufficient to maintain an adequate standard of living and where women are treated with respect and dignity.

10 Women's Economic Inactivity and Engagement in the Informal Sector in Georgia, <https://georgia.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/12/womens-economic-inactivity-and-engagement-in-the-informal-sector-in-georgia>.

11 UN Women Georgia, "Dialogue to be launched on policy aiming to eliminate gender pay gap", 22 May 2019. Available at <https://georgia.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2019/05/dialogue-to-be-launched-on-policy-aiming-to-eliminate-gender-pay-gap>.

12 UN Women, Women's Economic Inactivity and Engagement in the Informal Sector in Georgia.

QUICK FACTS

IN GEORGIA:

Of all women (age 15 +), **49 per cent** are employed, compared to 63 per cent of men¹³

The average nominal monthly salary is **GEL 823 for women**, compared to GEL 1,281 for men¹⁴

Of the enterprises established in 2018, **52 per cent** were established by men, whereas only **29 per cent** were established by women¹⁵

Women spend **45 hours a week** on homemaking – the equivalent of working a full-time job, with regular overtime¹⁶

Women currently hold only **15 per cent** of the seats in Parliament¹⁷

Among 64 mayors, there is only **one** woman

13 National Statistics Office of Georgia, “Women and Men in Georgia, 2019” (data from 2018).

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

16 UN Women, *Women’s Economic Inactivity and Engagement in the Informal Sector in Georgia*.

17 As of 11 November 2019, Inter-Parliamentary Union, “Georgia”. Available at <https://www.ipu.org/parliament/GE>.

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT – OPPORTUNITY FOR BUSINESS

Businesses can contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment in multiple ways. Beyond the basic responsibilities of respecting human rights, companies can choose from a menu of options to advance women's empowerment within their workplaces, marketplaces and communities. A growing number of businesses are adapting their policies, programmes and initiatives to create inclusive environments where women and girls can succeed. An increasing number of companies are focusing on non-discrimination in the workplace and are adopting policies and mechanisms against sexual harassment. In addition, companies can create inclusive business models and invest in women's economic empowerment programmes; they can partner with other organizations to advance women's rights and advocate for gender equality policies; and they can make an effort to include women in their supply chain.

The "Women's Empowerment Principles - Equality Means Business" initiative offers a framework for companies to contribute to gender equality.

To empower women economically, businesses can:

Remove the barriers that limit women's development in the workplace

Establish internal policies to accelerate gender equality

Recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work by providing paid parental leave (for mothers and fathers)

Promote women's financial inclusion and their access to capital

Provide mentorship, internship and other support to women to succeed as employees and/or entrepreneurs

Publicly campaign for gender equality and women's empowerment

Include women in their value chain and contribute to their sustainable development








These actions will have a positive impact on inclusive and sustainable economic growth in Georgia and around the world.

AND THIS PHENOMENAL OPPORTUNITY IS IN YOUR HANDS!

THE WEPS IN BRIEF

- A set of seven principles for business, offering guidance on how to empower women in the workplace, marketplace and in the community
- Created jointly by UN Women and the UN Global Compact
- Launched on International Women’s Day in 2010
- Provide a gender lens to help businesses analyse current initiatives, benchmarks and reporting practices
- Help companies mainstream gender equality throughout their business operations

SEVEN PRINCIPLES FOR BUSINESS TO ADVANCE WOMEN

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|--|---|---|---|
| <p>Principle 1</p>  <p>Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality</p> | <p>Principle 2</p>  <p>Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and non-discrimination</p> | <p>Principle 3</p>  <p>Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers</p> | <p>Principle 4</p>  <p>Promote education, training and professional development for women</p> |
| <p>Principle 5</p>  <p>Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women</p> | <p>Principle 6</p>  <p>Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy</p> | <p>Principle 7</p>  <p>Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality</p> | |

WHY CHOOSE THE WEPS

Multiple studies show that:

- Supporting women's health leads to a **higher return** and **reduces absenteeism**
- Reaching out to women candidates **broadens the talent pool**
- Addressing violence against women **reduces company costs**
- Creating diverse workplaces **increases productivity**
- Investing in women-owned businesses yields a **higher return on investment**
- Taking advantage of women's consumer power is a **smart business decision**
- Placing more women in leadership roles leads to **organizational effectiveness**

HOW TO MAKE THE WEPS REAL



Principle 1: Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality

Importance of the Principle

The first principle, which stresses the importance of leadership in achieving gender equality, provides a basis for the successful implementation of all seven principles. Within the context of this principle, the top executives of corporations are expected to agree on the importance of gender equality and offer consistent, spirited leadership at every level of the corporation.

Ways to Implement the Principle

- Affirm high-level support and direct top-level policies for gender equality and human rights
- Establish company-wide goals and targets for gender equality and include progress as a factor in managers' performance reviews
- Engage internal and external stakeholders in the development of company policies, programmes and implementation plans that advance equality
- Ensure that all policies are gender-sensitive – identifying factors that impact women and men differently – and that corporate culture advances equality and inclusion

The Principle in Practice

In Georgia, more than 30 companies have developed WEPS Action Plans. Companies such as the audit and consulting company RSM Georgia and the livestock breeding company Caucasus Genetics have used their companies' social media to spread the news about their WEPS commitment.



Principle 2: Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and non-discrimination

Importance of the Principle

In order to promote a non-discriminatory environment in which men and women enjoy equal professional development opportunities, the first step for any organization is to understand that there are challenges that demand specific measures. So, while companies are developing non-discriminatory policies in terms of gender equality, such as equal pay for equal work, they also need to consider women's specific needs. When implementing this principle,

companies should focus on adopting a gender-sensitive approach in working principles, disciplinary actions, ethical behavioural codes and human resources policies; clarify the responsibilities of managers and employees; and monitor the related indicators.

Ways to Implement the Principle

- Pay equal remuneration, including benefits, for work of equal value and strive to pay a living wage to all women and men
- Ensure that workplace policies and practices are free from gender-based discrimination
- Implement gender-sensitive recruitment and retention practices, and proactively recruit and appoint women to managerial and executive positions and to the corporate board of directors
- Assure sufficient participation of women – 30 per cent or greater – in decision-making and governance at all levels and across all business areas
- Offer flexible work options, leave and re-entry opportunities to positions of equal pay and status
- Support access to child and dependent care by providing services, resources and information to both women and men

The Principle in Practice

The proportion of women in senior management at the real estate company m2 increased from 20 per cent in 2016 to 50 per cent in 2018. Several companies, including APM Terminals Poti, revised their key human resources policies from a gender perspective and trained their managers on gender equality and diversity, non-discrimination and the WEPs. The research and consulting firm ACT enhanced their childcare facilities in the office to improve their employees' access to child and dependent care.



Principle 3: Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers

Importance of the Principle

People's health and safety needs are influenced, among other factors, by their gender. It is important that companies recognize this when planning the scope of their health plans, team structures and working conditions in order to preserve the physical and emotional health and safety of all collaborators.

Ways to Implement the Principle

- Provide safe working conditions and protection from exposure to hazardous materials and disclose potential risks, including to reproductive health
- Establish a zero-tolerance policy towards all forms of violence at work, including verbal and/or physical abuse, and prevent sexual harassment
- Strive to offer health insurance or other needed services – including for survivors of domestic violence – and ensure equal access for all employees
- Respect women and men workers' rights to time off for medical care and counselling for themselves and their dependants
- In consultation with employees, identify and address security issues, including the safety of women travelling to and from work and on company-related business
- Train security staff and managers to recognize signs of violence against women and understand laws and company policies on human trafficking, labour and sexual exploitation

The Principle in Practice

Multiple companies in Georgia have established sexual harassment complaints mechanisms at work and provided information sessions or trainings on harassment. The communications company GEPRA has ensured that all employees have completed the online course "Prevention of sexual harassment at work".



Principle 4: Promote education, training and professional development for women

Importance of the Principle

Providing education, training and professional development opportunities is not only important for the personal development of employees but also critical in empowering companies. However, some inequalities may occur between women and men in terms of accessing and benefiting from these resources. Therefore, measures must be taken to guarantee women's access to training or professional development opportunities.

Ways to Implement the Principle

- Invest in workplace policies and programmes that open avenues for the advancement of women at all levels and across all business areas, and encourage women to enter non-traditional job fields
- Ensure equal access to all company-supported education and training programmes, including literacy classes and vocational and information technology training
- Provide equal opportunities for formal and informal networking and mentoring
- Articulate the company's business case for women's empowerment and the positive impact of inclusion for men as well as women

The Principle in Practice

Dio, a company producing aluminium doors, windows and blinds, and some other companies in Georgia have established workplace mentoring programmes for women as part of their WEPs implementation. The private sector Business and Technology University has established a coding school for women to support women's engagement in the IT sector.



Principle 5: Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women

Importance of the Principle

Companies have a great opportunity to promote gender equality through their relationships with their suppliers, as well as through the values they promote in their marketing campaigns. Through their supply chain policies, companies can both directly support women entrepreneurs and encourage suppliers to develop internal gender equality practices. Companies in the financial sector are specifically well-placed to support women's access to finance – a crucial challenge for many women in Georgia and worldwide.

Ways to Implement the Principle

- Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women
- Expand business relationships with women entrepreneurs and women-owned enterprises, including small businesses
- Support gender-sensitive solutions to credit and lending barriers
- Respect the dignity of women in all marketing and other company materials

The Principle in Practice

Symantec, a U.S.-based software company, conducted a benchmark audit to evaluate how gender is represented through a company's branding. Materials were reviewed by looking at the representation of women and men in terms of numbers as well as their position of power in images. In Georgia, the financial inclusion organization Crystal issued GEL 15 million in corporate bonds in 2019. Recognizing the crucial role of women entrepreneurs, a significant portion of the bond proceeds are directed towards women's economic empowerment, including lending with favourable terms.



Principle 6: Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy

Importance of the Principle

Companies have several opportunities to lead by example and contribute to women's empowerment within the wider community. They can play a crucial role in achieving gender equality through corporate social responsibility projects in fields such as health, sports, the arts, culture and the environment, as well as through other initiatives such as grant programmes. Through these community initiatives, companies create opportunities to promote their activities for gender equality and women's empowerment within their network of corporate representatives, suppliers and vendors, business partners, public officials and the broader public.

Ways to Implement the Principle

- Leverage influence, alone or in partnership, to advocate for gender equality and collaborate with business partners, suppliers and community leaders to promote inclusion
- Work with community stakeholders, officials and others to eliminate discrimination and exploitation and open opportunities for women and girls
- Use philanthropy and grants programmes to support company commitment to inclusion, equality and human rights

The Principle in Practice

The IT company Orient Logic and the financial services company Micro Business Capital have trained women's self-help groups in western Georgia to support their access to livelihoods. The trainings have focused on CV writing and interview skills, as well as business proposal writing. To combat stereotypes about so-called "male professions" and highlight women's skills, the oil and gas company SOCAR Georgia produced a video featuring Mary Gvasalia, a female car mechanic.



Principle 7: Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality

Importance of the Principle

Measuring and reporting the goals and identifying the shortcomings in existing policies and processes will provide opportunities to define road maps and popularize effective initiatives. By using standardized parameters to appraise progress, companies can more clearly compare their performance to others and provide indications of progress to stakeholders. Although reporting WEPs actions is not compulsory, this principle stresses the importance of accountability and transparency. Annual reports on a company's gender equality policies, plans and activities, as well as the inclusion of gender equality in performance indicators, fall within the scope of this principle.

Ways to Implement the Principle

- Make public the company policies and implementation plan for promoting gender equality
- Establish benchmarks that quantify the inclusion of women at all levels
- Measure and report on progress, both internally and externally, using sex-disaggregated data
- Incorporate gender markers into ongoing reporting obligations

The Principle in Practice

Endesa, a utility company in Spain and in Latin America, annually sets concrete and measurable targets in order to measure the indicators and to report on the achievements made, creating the Senda Plan to hire more women. Multiple companies in Georgia, including Adjara Group Hospitality and the insurance company GPI Holding, have publicly shared their goals and plans to implement the WEPs.

CONSIDERING JOINING THE WEPS? SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE

In 2019 and 2020, with the support of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UN Women – jointly with the Georgian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Business Leaders' Federation "Women for Tomorrow" – is supporting companies in Georgia to:

- Conduct a gender gap analysis to assess the current status of gender equality
- Develop WEPS Action Plans
- Establish partnerships for the promotion of women's empowerment
- Strengthen key staff skills to implement the WEPS
- Increase employees' understanding of gender equality principles and sexual harassment
- Share WEPS implementation experiences among the business community
- Report on WEPS implementation
- Disseminate promising practices in WEPS implementation in Georgia and abroad

WHAT NEXT? JOIN THE GLOBAL WEPS MOVEMENT

The formal commitment to implement the WEPS involves the following steps:

1. The company's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) **signs the CEO Statement of Support** for the WEPS
2. The **current status** on gender equality and women's empowerment at work is reviewed
3. An **action plan** for the WEPS is developed
4. The WEPS action plan is **implemented**
5. **Results** of the action plan are monitored and reported
6. **Best practices** are communicated and replicated

If your company would like to learn more information and join the WEPS movement in Georgia, please contact the UN Women Georgia Country Office:

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