



WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES IN GEORGIA:

PROMISING
PRACTICES 2019

**WOMEN'S
EMPOWERMENT
PRINCIPLES**

Established by UN Women and the
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UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It 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 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. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.

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OVERVIEW

HOW THE WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES ARE EMPOWERING WOMEN

The world is seeing dramatic technological advances, social movements, demographic shifts and geopolitical disruptions that are causing substantial changes to how organizations do business. Meanwhile, forward-thinking organizations are reimagining their diversity and inclusion efforts in a system that keeps the humanity of the workforce at its core. An increasing number of companies are concluding that it is now time to look at their operations through the lens of diversity, equity and inclusion to achieve maximum opportunities for all genders. These companies often understand that considering equality is both the right thing to do and good for business.

In 2010, UN Women and the UN Global Compact joined forces to help companies worldwide to promote gender equality in the workforce and society. Consequently, the Women's Empowerment Principles: Equality Means Business (WEPs) came into being. These seven principles provide a basic framework to guide companies, large or small, to empower women in the workplace, marketplace and community.

The WEPs movement is growing, both globally and in Georgia. 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 examine their performance with the help of a gender gap analysis tool (WEPs tool) and to design action plans and aligned activities for making women's empowerment a reality.

Every company chooses its own way of empowering women. This booklet presents selected examples of how WEPs companies in Georgia confronted opportunities and challenges as they strode further towards empowering women in 2019. As shown in this booklet, a new trend we observed during the year is that an increasing number of companies expanded their WEPs work beyond the workplace into the marketplace and communities and took steps to empower female entrepreneurs and local women. The diverse stories we share here demonstrate that every step taken towards women's empowerment is very unique and valuable and that the WEPs are making a positive contribution to Georgia's path towards gender equality.

We hope that the promising practices featured in this booklet will inspire other companies in Georgia and elsewhere to join the WEPs movement and implement gender-responsive measures in 2020 and beyond.

THE SEVEN WEPS EXPLAINED



Principle 1: Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality. By stressing the leadership's role, this principle provides a basis for the successful implementation of all seven principles. The principle advises corporate leaders to offer consistent leadership at every level of the organization, establish company goals for achieving equality and ensure these goals will be reached.



Principle 2: Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and non-discrimination. This principle focuses attention to equal wages, benefits, access to childcare and women's participation in decision-making at all levels and across all business areas. All contribute to mutual respect and support for non-discrimination in the workforce.



Principle 3: Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers. It is the employer's obligation to create healthy and safe working environments. This includes ensuring safety when working with hazardous materials and respecting and providing time off for employees' medical care, in addition to ensuring freedom from violence through designing and implementing a zero-tolerance policy on sexual harassment.



Principle 4: Promote education, training and professional development for women. This can be achieved by encouraging women to enter non-traditional jobs and by expanding women's access to education, skills development programmes and networking opportunities. This is not only important for the personal development of employees but also critical in empowering the corporation.



Principle 5: Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women. This principle expands the company's efforts towards women's empowerment beyond the workplace. It advises companies to expand business relationships to women entrepreneurs, respect women in the company's marketing materials and ensure that company products, services and facilities are not used for human trafficking and/or labour or sexual exploitation.



Principle 6: Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy. It is important for corporations to share their experiences, successes and knowledge with the wider public and to assume a pioneering role in emphasizing the significance of gender equality. Each corporation can play a crucial role in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment through community projects as well as through other initiatives such as grant programmes.



Principle 7: Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality. This principle stresses the importance of accountability and transparency. Companies are advised to make their policies public, establish benchmarks that quantify the inclusion of women at all levels, and measure and report on progress.

PROMISING PRACTICES

CRYSTAL – SUPPORTING FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS AND EMPLOYEES

Increasing women’s access to financial services remains a strong business opportunity. Globally, women are less likely than men to have access to financial institutions or have a bank account. While 65 per cent of men report having an account at a formal financial institution, only 58 per cent of women report the same.¹ Not only does a lack of access limit these women’s economic potential, but it hampers the well-being of their families and communities as well. Research shows that small and medium-sized enterprises run by women are better at reinvesting profits in the business, investing in their families’ health and education, and strengthening local communities.²

Crystal, a financial inclusion organization, was one of the first companies that joined the WEPs movement in Georgia in 2016. It has been taking several steps to promote gender equality ever since. “There is more than enough evidence that promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment is not just the right thing to do, but it is also a smart business decision, and at Crystal we deeply believe in it,” notes CEO Iliia Revia. “It is because of our holistic and step-by-step approach to women’s empowerment that Crystal has been recognized as the winner of the UN SDG 5 (Gender Equality) category in the nationwide corporate social responsibility competition.”³

In March 2019, aligned with the implementation of Principle 5 and to support women’s access to finance, the company announced the issuance of Women’s Corporate Bonds worth GEL 15 million (more than USD 5 million) for the economic development of thousands of female customers, providing them with the financial products and equal access to capital in order to grow their small businesses. So far, that meant developing special proposals for female entrepreneurs and reducing their credit service fees by 5 per cent. As a result, more than 2,300 women received loans that amounted to a total of GEL 4.7 million (more than USD 1.5 million).

1 Asli Demircug-Kunt and others, “The Global Findex Database 2014: Measuring Financial Inclusion around the World”, Policy Research Working Paper, No. 7255 (Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2015). Available at <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/187761468179367706/pdf/WPS7255.pdf>.

2 UN Women, *Progress of the World’s Women 2015-2016: Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights* (2015). Available at http://progress.unwomen.org/en/2015/pdf/UNW_progressreport.pdf.

3 The 2019 Corporate Social Responsibility Award contest was organized by the Georgian Corporate Social Responsibility Club (CSR Club), Civil Development Agency (CiDA) and the UN Global Compact Network in Georgia. The aim of the contest is to boost the involvement of the business sector in the promotion of corporate social responsibility. The contest was held for the first time in 2018.

“It’s also worth mentioning that the majority of Crystal’s more than 1,000 employees are women, as well as half of Crystal’s 100,000 customers,” continues Mr. Revia. “We have issued the first Women’s Corporate Bonds in the regions, but there’s still lots of room for development in this direction. Therefore, we are planning to raise the awareness and self-esteem of our women customers in order to help them grow through our planned women-tailored special activities and programmes.”

In spring 2019, after receiving training in mentorship from UN Women’s partner Creative Development Center (CDC), Crystal also took steps to implement Principle 4 and initiated a workplace mentorship programme for women employees.⁴ The programme is considered a valuable tool in improving employee retention and productivity as well as advancing workplace diversity and inclusion and increasing performance.

Maya Kobalia, Head of the Environmental and Social Division at Crystal, acknowledges, “The journey of empowering women is a continuous process, and there’s still a huge gap between where we are today and where we should be – and the only way to close that gap is to lift and empower one another.”



Crystal receives the 2019 Corporate Social Responsibility Award for Gender Equality (SDG 5) and the 2019 UN Global Compact SDG Young Pioneer Award. Photo: Corporate Social Responsibility Award 2019

4 For a video about the programme, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nF-1haalH2g>.

MERCURE TBILISI OLD TOWN HOTEL - EQUALITY IS MUCH MORE THAN JUST GIVING WOMEN THEIR FAIR SHARE

Hotels Mercure & IBIS Styles Tbilisi signed onto the WEPs in 2018. The company is committed to corporate values of equality between men and women, diversity in the workplace and sharing knowledge on solidarity and combating stereotypes. The company launched the internal project “RiiSE”, where the double “i” symbolizes men and women.

Tamuna Chkhikvadze, SD Quality and Project Manager, explains: “At Mercure, we strongly believe in our core values. No progress can be made without gender equality and diversity, [which are] key drivers for collective performance. In 2019, we were extremely busy with activities: all employees were enrolled in the RiiSE network and received training on diversity, inclusion and equality in the workplace. In addition to gender equality, the RiiSE diversity concept also aims at encouraging the emergence of mixed teams in terms of generations and cultures. We are an international company presented all over the world with thousands of talents who rise together with RiiSE”.

In partnership with UN Women and CDC, the company’s employees undertook training in mentorship, which resulted in 10 mentor-mentee pairs in the company. Other projects implemented by Mercure include: strategic leaders’ development training; implementation of Inclusion and Diversity Week; and the deployment of People Policy, an internal document based on principles of equality and diversity. Since March 2019, every employee has been introduced to and signed onto the policy.

Recently, the company signed a Memorandum of Understanding with ATIPfund Georgia (the State Fund for Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking) to arrange certified internships for women residing in shelters, aligned with Principle 4.

By starting its implementation of Principle 5, Mercure has learned that gender-responsive procurement can be a smart and cost-effective practice to promote women’s empowerment in the country. In 2019, the company added a special stand in the restaurant to expose and sell women-produced wines and honey from “Baia’s Wine”⁵ and “Eka’s Honey”⁶ respectively.

5 Produced by a women-run family winery in the village of Obcha in the Imereti region of western Georgia.

6 Produced by Eka Gogatishvili in the village of Perevi in the Imereti region of western Georgia.

BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY'S CODING SCHOOL FOR WOMEN – DON'T LIMIT HER!

Once Business and Technology University (BTU) in Tbilisi became a signee of the WEPs in 2018, the university carried out a gender gap analysis and developed a plan for actions to make women's empowerment a reality. Of all the executive managerial positions at BTU, 70 per cent are currently held by women, including the position of rector, but the company saw it necessary to empower women outside the university's management level as well.

For BTU, it was more than obvious that the domination of men in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) areas of education and employment vividly demonstrate gender stereotypes not only in Georgia but also worldwide. Women are still less likely to choose STEM sectors for their education and employment. Meanwhile, adding more women with technical skills to STEM fields offers a great opportunity to reduce bias and create a diverse and inclusive society.

Consequently, aligned with Principle 4, BTU launched the six-month vocational education course "Coding School for Women" in 2019. The goal of the project is to enhance the role and increase the number of women in the field of technology, with a focus on women aspiring to study ICT. With the initiative, BTU made its first attempt at scaling up women's participation in IT, diversifying the workforce in the tech industry and, more importantly, increasing employment opportunities for these women. The project was fully funded by BTU for 20 women participants and turned out to be very successful and in demand among girls and women. Therefore, the university plans to continue with more programmes in Tbilisi and the regions.

Another thought-provoking project implemented by BTU was also about gender equality in professions and resonated with the focus of Principle 6 in communities and advocacy. Organized in collaboration with UN Women, an ideathon for students entitled "Professions Have No Gender" aimed to start a dialogue on gender equality among the students and generate ideas about increasing women's participation in technical professions and entrepreneurship.

"We want to move forward and see a real shift in mindsets, as we believe in girls' talent and power," explains Nino Enukidze, Rector of BTU. "Our new partner Dell will help us plan a new conference and working meeting entitled "Women in Tech".



CODING SCHOOL FOR WOMEN
თქო მანგურაშვილი



Theo Zangurashvili, student at the Coding School for Women. Photo: BTU

SCHOOL EURO-2000 – GENDER, AS I SEE IT, STARTS WITH ME

The purpose of education is to provide equal opportunities for personal development and improved quality of life, including opportunities for employment and professional growth. Unfortunately, the system sometimes fails to serve this lofty goal and even helps to reinforce inequality and reproduce existing patterns of stereotypes. Education studies worldwide show that gender is an important factor predicting differential achievements and success in careers.

Since joining the WEPs in 2018, School Euro-2000 in Batumi has set multiple goals across several principles, such as: aligning policy documents with the WEPs and integrating aspects of equality into them; raising the awareness of teachers and students on gender equality in education and sexual harassment; and providing career guidance and professional orientation services to students.

“We have achieved almost every target we had set for 2019,” says Elene Kalandadze, the school’s legal expert. “It was important to revise internal policies through a gender lens. About 20 employees were trained in mentorship, resulting in five mentor-mentee pairs. I am excited to be a mentor to my colleague, though I wish to have a mentor for myself too – it is an amazing opportunity for everyone.”

In partnership with UN Women, a sexual harassment reporting mechanism was put in place to ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers as per Principle 3; and aligned with Principle 4, 20 teachers and school staff were trained on gender equality in education. Importantly, a career guidance service for upper-secondary school students, with a focus on girls’ participation in STEM areas of education, was established. The school psychologist, a former mentee who participated in the training on gender equality, initiated a project with senior students on gender equality and inclusion called “Gender, as I see it, starts with ME”. The project includes conversations with students about gender equality, human rights, violence against women and other relevant topics.

APM TERMINALS POTI – NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE

Success is possible when women are full partners in the workplace. Indeed, multiple research studies find that leaders who embrace a more holistic view of diversity, equity and inclusion can build a more innovative and collaborative workforce, which is associated with increased productivity, better business results and a balanced work environment.

As the workforce continues to diversify and widen across the globe, this challenge has become an imperative for APM Terminals Poti, one of the biggest operators and employers at the Black Sea port and a WEPs signee since 2018. With their goal of increasing diversity in the workplace, which is 90 per cent male-dominated, the company formed partnerships with six technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions to support women's economic empowerment and education. This joint venture allowed APM Terminals Poti to implement Principle 4 and identify the required female workforce through the TVET centres for jobs that are traditionally occupied by men: crane operation, information technologies, health and safety, welding, electrical engineering and mechanical engineering. The company then provided the identified women with paid internships and on-the-job training. Since spring 2019, four young women have received internships, one of whom is now employed as a crane operator after completing her internship with the company. By specifically recruiting women, this partnership enables them to enter traditionally male-dominated professions, master professional skills in a safe environment, confront stereotypes and gain access to employment opportunities.



Ana Otiashvili, their first female crane operator trainee, came to APM Terminals Poti in 2019 from Batumi State Maritime Academy. She is now employed by the company as a crane operator. Photo: APM Terminals

In 2019, the company also worked on gender equality with their current employees. The company designed and implemented a workplace environment survey to get feedback from their employees and used the findings in their training programme. Following UN Women's Training-of-Trainers training on the WEPs, the company also provided internal trainings on the WEPs to employees as well as revised policy documents and established a complaints mechanism for reporting incidents of sexual harassment. WEPs work has been implemented by the company since 2018.

EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY – GIVING EMPLOYEES THE SPACE THEY NEED TO BE GREAT

European University joined and started implementing the WEPs in 2019. After analyzing their gender gaps and developing a thorough plan of actions, the university decided to prioritize their initial activities and focus on creating a workplace that people enjoy being in.

The WEPs helped the company understand that the university can be more than a space in which people work or study. In many ways, it is a home away from home for many employees and students where they spend most hours of the day. For people to do their best work, the space should provide areas that can meet various needs and encourage inspiration, creativity and productivity.

As many of the university's employees and students have small children, it became obvious that providing healthier work-life benefits could be highly valued by the vast majority of the university community. The idea of creating a space for small kids in the university was very well received and is aligned with Principle 2.

“Our Kids’ Space is a colourful and picturesque area arranged in the university for the children of our employees and students. From now on, while mothers and fathers are studying and working, their kids can have great time here,” explains Tamar Kerdzaia, Rector of European University.



The Kids’ Space at European University. Photo: European University

This initiative is expected to, among others, reduce the rate of absenteeism, reduce students’ and employees’ stress levels and increase overall satisfaction. The initiative may also increase the university’s productivity and reduce turnover: Many studies provide evidence that people who are happy with their work-life benefits actually work 21 per cent harder and are 33 per cent more likely to stay at the organization.⁷

7 Katherine Lewis, “Research About How Work-Life Benefits Improve Productivity”, The Balance Careers, 14 October 2019. Available at <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/work-life-benefits-improve-productivity-3545181>.

CRON PALACE TBILISI HOTEL – EXPANDING BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS TO WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

There are many good reasons to implement Principle 5 and promote gender-responsive enterprise development and supply chain practices that empower women. The implementation does not only support women entrepreneurs but can also be beneficial for business. For example, a survey conducted by McKinsey found that approximately 34 per cent of companies who had diversified their supplier base by engaging with women-owned businesses reported a positive impact on their profitability.⁸

By adopting diverse supply chain policies and practices, companies can also enhance their brands among women consumers. The Women’s Business Enterprise National Council reports that when women are aware a company supports women-owned businesses, 78 per cent will try the company’s products or services, and 80 per cent will solidify their brand loyalty.⁹

The combination of women’s empowerment and business profits was an important motivator for Cron Palace to join the WEPs in 2018. In 2019, the company started implementing Principle 5 by looking for new women-owned businesses as their suppliers on the market and integrating them into the company supply chain.

Maia Makhatadze, General Manager of Cron Palace, explains the hotel’s approach: “It has become our priority to empower women by supporting women farmers and women entrepreneurs in the regions of Georgia. Before we started buying agricultural products from these women to enrich our breakfast menu, we tested and tried many different products produced by women small-scale entrepreneurs. Now, guests of Cron Palace can try new varieties of honey, tea and the Georgian hot, spicy sauce ajika. Customers can even buy the products they like.”

In line with Principle 6, the company has also started printing and distributing marketing materials, thereby further promoting women small-scale entrepreneurs and the agricultural products they produce.

8 National Women’s Business Council, Research on Women’s Participation in Corporate Supplier Diversity Programs (2016), p. 10. Available at <https://cdn.www.nwbc.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/13134704/Womens-Participation-in-Corporate-Supplier-Diversity-Programs.pdf>.

9 Andrew J. Sherman and Elizabeth A. Vazquez, *Buying For Impact: How to Buy From Women and Change Our World* (Charleston, South Carolina, Advantage, 2013).



Tika Didishvili, producer of green ajika (Georgian hot, spicy sauce) in Zugdidi municipality in western Georgia's Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region, became one of Cron Palace's new female suppliers in 2019. Photo: UN Women

GPI HOLDING – MAKING BUSINESS INSURANCE A HABIT FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

The insurance company GPI Holding joined the WEPs in 2018. Since then, the company has revised its policies and business activities to help both men and women to access and enjoy decent jobs, career development, training and promotion.

In 2019, and in compliance with Principle 5, GPI Holding started supporting women entrepreneurs who are running their own businesses by offering them specially designed, more affordable insurance packages. The insurance package includes insurance for business interruptions and business risks and covers not only buildings and premises but also equipment and stock. The business risks include but are not limited to fire, explosions, natural disasters and burglary. Women entrepreneurs can receive risk insurance at a special price (with a 25 per cent discount) and receive interruption insurance for free. Only women-owned or women-led enterprises are eligible for this special package. The expectation is that affordable packages will help local women entrepreneurs get into the habit of insuring their businesses.

“UN Women inspired us to develop this service package,” notes Tinatin Stambolishvili, Director of Communications at GPI Holding. “First, we piloted the product to learn the real needs of this segment and then to develop better conditions for our customers. We hope this product will take its place in our permanent product list, enabling us to continue its implementation.”

In 2019, GPI Holding also ran the third phase of the large-scale employment programme for hiring sales representatives they had launched in 2016. The programme was originally born when, after careful analysis of the business portfolio, the ideal candidate profile came out to be a woman. Therefore, the employment campaign addressed mainly women and offered them a career, irrespective of their previous experience or age.

Aligned with Principle 6’s focus on advocacy, the employment campaign involved not only advertisement of the job offering but also educational material and an influential campaign in order to convince potential candidates to apply. The selected women were offered a six-month training course free of charge and a salary from the beginning of the work. Overall, more than 700 candidates, 80 per cent of whom were women, were hired during the three phases between 2016 and 2019. About 45 women were hired during the latest phase of the employment programme.

According to the company, the programme has brought positive changes in terms of business results as well as overall culture within the company. Women with diverse backgrounds, experience and age have joined the company, generating a cultural transformation. As a result of the company’s significant investment in creating a supportive environment and learning infrastructure, sales increased by 50 per cent, and the employee retention rate even doubled. Most importantly, the programme offers women of different age groups an opportunity to obtain employment without meeting any specific experience or education requirements.

IMPACT HUB TBILISI – BOOSTING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN OVER 60

Impact Hub Tbilisi is an international co-working space aimed at promoting entrepreneurship through diverse programmes and projects. Since signing the WEPs in 2018, the company has revised its internal policy documents, has become aware of gender discriminatory job hiring practices and has carried out information sessions on sexual harassment to company employees and clients to implement Principles 2 and 3.

In order to implement Principle 6 at the community level and boost entrepreneurship interest among mature women, Impact Hub Tbilisi, in partnership with Liberty Bank, implemented the project “Restart 60+”. The project has targeted housewives in their sixties and older women who are eager to work and participate in social life and/or wish to improve their income. Interest in the project was significant: among 220 applicants, 15 women were selected and trained in the basics of entrepreneurship and culinary business during a three-month period.

Co-founder Ketevan Ebanoidze explains: “The projects we are implementing contribute to the development and well-being of people. Restart 60+ was special – our target group appeared to be extremely productive and creative. According to the participants’ feedback, the training was transformative. It challenged the stigma and stereotypes associated with age and assisted older women in regaining self-confidence and catching up with the outside world.”



Participants of the project “Restart 60+”. Photo: Impact Hub

Impact Hub Tbilisi also promoted women’s and girls’ participation in its other programmes, such as its electrical engineering course, which attracted 19 per cent girls, and the “Start-Up Alphabet” project, which taught school-age kids the basics of entrepreneurship and had more girls than boys (55 per cent) enrolled. Impact Hub also promotes women and their work in the community: in 2019, some 70 per cent of the company’s Social Impact Award recipients were women. Finally, when it comes to storytelling, women have something to say: Impact Hub organized the ZEG Tbilisi Storytelling Festival and invited inspirational guest speakers, 56 per cent of whom were female.

MICRO BUSINESS CAPITAL - CLOSING THE GAP IN WOMEN'S FINANCIAL LITERACY

Micro Business Capital (MBC) joined the WEPs in 2018. The company strongly believes in women's empowerment, human potential development and achieving business success through adherence to responsive and sustainable business conduct. "Resources dedicated to developing human potential represent a form of investment with long-term returns," explains Tamta Aslanishvili, CSR Consultant at MBC. "The empowerment of our employees, by revealing their maximum potential and providing them with training and education opportunities, is MBC's main priority. On the other hand, our employees are actively involved in different social and volunteering activities. They train and educate IDPs and other vulnerable groups to make them economically active."

In line with Principle 6, MBC used their "Financial Advisor" service to train women residing in the villages of Jgali and Muzhava in Samegrelo's highlands (western Georgia) in financial literacy and business plan writing in 2019. The training aimed to help 22 rural women – all project beneficiaries of UN Women and the non-governmental women's organization TASO Foundation – to prepare for a grant competition and compete for business grants. The Financial Advisor service is a fully funded social project initiated by MBC to increase the level of financial literacy of the population, mainly rural people.

As a follow-up activity, the director of the TASO Foundation was invited to train 17 MBC members in gender equality, the Georgian legislative framework on gender equality and the international commitments of Georgia under the Istanbul Convention and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).



Rural women attending a training on financial literacy. Photo: MBC

As a member of Pro Bono Network Georgia, MBC assisted the social enterprise "Poteria" in improving their communication strategy and social media presence. Poteria is a workshop-studio for ceramic art that provides a training space for women probationers and former prisoners to acquire new job skills. MBC's communications specialist consulted and trained the representatives of Poteria in social media management, including web page and Facebook management.

KANT'S ACADEMY – STRENGTHENING WOMEN'S VOICES THROUGH EDUCATION

Kant's Academy is an education platform working with Georgia's youth since 2015. The overall objective of the academy is to enrich the emotional intellect of youth and improve their critical thinking.

Since joining the WEPs in 2019, the academy swiftly started to plan and implement women's empowerment activities in the regions of Georgia. For the women in Samtskhe-Javakheti's villages of Sviri and Toloshi, the company's staff carried out several workshops on motivation, target setting, career development and professional orientation, including CV writing and job interview techniques. Another series of workshops and meetings with rural women included the topics of leadership, women leaders, self-empowerment and the importance of brand marketing and effective communication.

The implemented activities are aligned with Principle 4 and aim at equipping rural women with the skills necessary for employment and economic empowerment.



*Kant's Academy trainings for women in Samtskhe-Javakheti.
Photo: Kant's Academy*

THE WAY FORWARD

At the end of 2019, the number of WEPs signees in Georgia has reached 40. In addition to the companies presented in this booklet, many other companies that subscribe to the principles also took actions for women's empowerment by developing their own WEPs action plans, communicating and disseminating WEPs news and enacting sexual harassment complaints mechanisms within the workplace, among other measures. Several companies provided female-targeted internships specifically in social media marketing and even decided to keep the interns as their employees, thus providing invaluable employment for women. Other companies took dedicated actions to increase women's representation in their male-dominated professions or supported women's businesses to brand their businesses.

UN Women's WEPs work in Georgia will continue in 2020. We look forward to seeing the number of WEPs signatories and the range of promising practices for women's empowerment increase.

