



## WEPs AROUND THE WORLD

### TAKING HOLD: WEPs CHAMPIONS AND COALITIONS GROW

Let's go back in time to June 2010: The Women's Empowerment Principles, just four months following their 'public' launch in New York timed to observe International Women's Day, issue a call to the world's CEOs to join the effort, implement the WEPs and showcase **Principle 1 – Leadership**. With 39 CEO champions, the WEPs CEO Statement of Support hits the airwaves. The partnership initiative of UN Women and the UN Global Compact works with allies around the world, bringing the WEPs Principles and its message: Equality Means Business to diverse companies and stakeholders.

Fast forward to March 2014: The WEPs CEO Statement of Support roster grows; at least one CEO leader stepped up daily in 2013, expanding the community of 'champions' to nearly 700 from 50 countries. For the exact count on any given day, consult [WEPrinciples.org](http://WEPrinciples.org) where you can search for companies, countries and business sectors as well. The continued expansion of WEPs signers, and the diversity of sectors represented, signals the staying power of the **Women's Empowerment Principles –Equality Means Business**.

While the WEPs offer a roadmap for business to advance and empower women in the workplace, marketplace and community through their individually shaped implementation of the 7 Principles, the WEPs ability to engage an array of stakeholders resonates in every region and globally. These coalitions and relationships attest to the realization that tackling gender equality, women's economic participation, advancing development and driving business are essential pieces of the same puzzle. Here are some examples from around the world illustrating how they fit together.

#### VIETNAM WORKS TO MAINSTREAM THE 7 PRINCIPLES

In Vietnam, a broad coalition of business, the UN, women's organizations, the Government of Vietnam, the World Bank and the Spanish NGO Peace and Development (*Pazy Desarrollo, PyD*), which provided both financial and technical assistance, have gathered around the WEPs. Their common cause? Analyzing the "traditional, regulatory and gender-based obstacles that influence Vietnamese women entrepreneurs." In October 2013, the partners hosted a forum to share experiences on women's economic empowerment as part of the Vietnam Women Innovation Day, a national program promoting women's innovation and economic rights at the workplace. Co-organized by the Vietnam Women's Union, UN women and the World Bank Office in Vietnam, the forum marked the one-year anniversary of

the WEPs Vietnam launch and focused on how Vietnamese enterprises are implementing the WEPs highlighting lessons and good practices.

### **WEPs STAKEHOLDERS IN SERBIA FOCUS ON WOMEN'S PRIORITIES**

Private and public Serbian companies working with Government officials, business and women's organizations, along with the UN, provide the energy behind the efforts to galvanize support for the Women's Empowerment Principles and end gender discrimination in both the public and private sectors. The Serbian groups focused on raising the business and social case for gender equality and women's economic empowerment whether in urban or rural settings. The coalition kicked off activities with a WEPs launch observing International Women's Day in March 2012 involving more than 200 participants from the corporate sector at a Belgrade event addressed by the President of the Republic of Serbia. Subsequently, major public companies joined the WEPs and collaborated with UN Women, the UN Global Compact and the Serbian Provincial Ombudsman's (PO) national initiative to promote gender equality and empower rural women to claim their social and economic rights. Bringing the activities to villages, the project focused on building skills, starting businesses and helping rural women to understand their legal rights to be free of discrimination and domestic violence

### **WOMEN COCOA FARMERS: HARVESTING ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT**

In February 2013, Oxfam launched the *Behind the Brands* campaign to shine a light on how the world's top ten food and beverage companies impact people in developing countries, including women farm workers and small scale producers in the supply chain. The WEPs figured as a key component of their Scorecard, which assesses the agricultural sourcing policies. The campaign called on the companies to sign the Women's Empowerment Principles.

Major food companies Mars, Mondelez and Nestle' – three of Oxfam's targeted companies – stepped up and signed the WEPs in 2013. Announcing their WEPs signature in April 2013, Mars called it "a demonstration of our commitment to empowering women in the cocoa sector" and paired the announcement made in Côte d'Ivoire with the release of the report, *A Sustainably Thriving Cocoa Sector for Future Generations*. According to the company, while women cocoa farmers in the country provide 45 percent of the sector's labor they are held back from fully participating in the cocoa sector "due to inequitable civil liberties and cultural norms in the country..." Mars is publicly committed to developing a full gender outreach plan for implementation in 2014.

### **WEPs GO TO COLLEGE: KNOWLEDGE AND TOOLS**

Developing data, best practices, management models and accessible tools support the implementation of the WEPs and advancing gender equality in workplaces and beyond. Integrating gender equality into all aspects of management education is essential to shaping tomorrow's business and civic leaders and bringing much needed gender sensitivity to management education institutions. Stimulated by the WEPs, a working group on Gender Equality within Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME), developed and launched the global Repository, a rich resource for faculties to integrate gender issues management education. The Repository, which continues to be strengthened, covers 11

disciplinary subjects including Accounting, Corporate Governance, Economics, Entrepreneurship, Law, Leadership, Management and more. Simply [click here](#).

A WEPs cohort of 92 Spanish companies provided fuel for a University of the Basque Country and the Autonomous University of Madrid to carry out a three-year resource project funded by the Spanish Ministry of Equality to explore best gender equality management models and collect best practices. The investigation, which relied on information from WEPs signing Spanish companies, focused on Gendered Social Responsibility (GSR), as the scholars noted that gender issues tend to be invisible or overlooked in much of CSR work and that GSR represents an approach to incorporate gender equality objectives throughout a company's CSR initiatives. The study identified work-life balance and empowering women along the value chain as key challenges.

### **WEPs GLOBE TROTting**

**Pakistan:** A multi-stakeholder group, convened by the UNGC Local Network, gathered in Karachi to launch the WEPs, bringing attention to the importance of integrating women's empowerment in overall CSR and sustainable development. Encouraging the business community to advance and empower women in the workplace, marketplace and community contributes to the country's economic and social development.

**Germany:** UN Women's German National Committee raised the issues of gender equity in development and also in Germany at the annual Global Media Forum in Bonn. Citing the connections between building strong economies and women's economic participation, the Gender Equitable Economic Development session reminded those that in Germany, only 3.7% of board members are women, so the need to empower women as integral to sustainable development at home and abroad remains challenging.

**Brazil:** The active coalition of companies and WEPs partners launched the first Brazilian WEPs Leadership Award to salute companies leading the way on implementing the 7 Principles and advancing gender equality. Led by Itaipu Binacional, and partners Tempo de Mulher, Planeta Sustentável, Espaço Mulheres Executivas Paraná-MEX, Global Reporting Initiative, with the cooperation of the Brazilian Global Compact Local Network and United Nations Women in Brazil. Recognizing the need to make the WEPs more accessible in the country Itaipu translated and launched the WEPs website in Portuguese (<http://portuguese.weprinciples.org>).

**Japan:** A Tokyo symposium, "Promoting Women's Participation – The WEPs as Key", examined how women's full economic participation has been shown to accelerate business development. Organized by the UNGC Local Network, the UN Women Japan National Committee, and the Government, speakers from business, NGOs and the UN discussed how the promotion of the WEPs helps develop strategies within companies and the positive effects that women's economic participation has on business and local communities.

**Ukraine:** Observing Global Entrepreneurship Week drew to Kyiv a diverse group of women in business from all over the Ukraine to discuss equal opportunities in business and the public sectors in that

country. Organized by the League of Professional Women (LPW) in partnership with KPMG Ukraine and Metro Cash & Carry Ukraine, the group looked at newly emerging global programs that open new opportunities to local suppliers to reach the world market.

**Switzerland:** Involving all stakeholders is a core WEPs approach and an event in Bern, organized by the UN Women Swiss National Committee and business, put the issue front and center. The meeting focused on how to involve men to advance gender equality and to be advocates for WEPs implementation within their companies.

**Turkey:** Raising awareness of the WEPs among key Turkish stakeholders and also those in countries in the Middle East and Gulf Region brought participants to the annual Equality Means Business even held in Istanbul. Organized by the Turkish Chapter of Business and Professional Women (BPW), in partnership with Turkey's Ministry of Family and Social Affairs and the UNGC Local Network, meeting participants discussed lessons on how to bring the WEPs to their organizations and businesses.

**India:** The coalition of UN Women, CARE and the UNGC Local Network, brought together business, NGOs, the UN and government officials in New Delhi to share ideas on how to expand the WEPs in India and strengthen their coalition.

**Mexico:** Increasing opportunities for women all along the value chain – a key component of Principle 5—was the focus of the second annual Women Vendors Exhibition and Forum (WVEFII), organized by the International Trade Centre (ITC) in Mexico City in November 2012. Aligned with the WEPs and working with both the UNGC and UNW, the ITC provides an important avenue for companies to expand business relationships with women owned enterprises. Due to the ongoing series of exhibitions, millions of dollars in trade for women vendors has opened up.

Like any tour, this summary can only highlight a limited number of examples. However, they do showcase how the WEPs are indeed *Taking Hold* and how the many *champions*, known and unknown, are clearing new and needed paths for gender equality in business, academia, NGOs, the UN and Governments.