

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES

Strategic Partnership for Positive Change

Equality
Means
Business

– A PARTNERSHIP FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT
BPW INTERNATIONAL – WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT
– EQUALITY MEANS BUSINESS – BPW CANADA V
STATUS OF WOMEN CANADA – EQUALITY MEAN
GOVERNMENT LEADERS – MPs/MLAs – BPW CAN
LAUNCH – BUSINESS LEADERS – CEOs – BPW INT
WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES BPW CA
LAUNCH – WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES



BPW International

BPW Canada

In partnership with BPWI, UN Women & UN Global Compact



BPW Canada

BPW CANADA (The Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women) has taken up the challenge to advance and empower women in the workplace, marketplace and civil society. We invite all stakeholders to participate in the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) National Project and to demonstrate their commitment to gender equality in Canada.

Why Gender-based Economic Equality Matters?

In the aftermath of the 2008 economic crisis it is clear that the "TIME IS NOW" to utilize all societal and economic assets to leverage the untapped brain trust of over 50% of our workforce. With women now comprising over 50% of the graduates from our universities, governments and corporations are wise to maximize the benefit of a full return on our tax dollar investments in post secondary education.

The seven Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) emphasize the business case for leaders in both our government and corporate Canada to take action to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. The WEPs provides a "gender lens" through which business and government can analyze current practices and benchmark successful initiatives that will result in an improved bottom line. Credible research and business reports continue to build the business case for why *women mean business* for the 21st Century. In what is poised to be an extremely competitive job market in the context of a shrinking talent pool, corporations will wisely take steps today to strengthen a reputation for being an employer of choice and gain valuable recognition by discerning consumers for their attention to gender equity in the workplace and business practices.

Despite legislated policies that support the universal international precept that equality between men and women is a fundamental human right, we continue to fall short in our common aspirations for a life where the doors of opportunity are open to all. The WEPs offers a blueprint for the necessary cultural, behavioural and programmatic changes in the workplace to achieve this goal. CEOs and Government leaders who explore these seven principles within our current reality will find new perspectives and new opportunities to create a workplace where women are empowered and equal in the market place, and where our communities and society as a whole are more prosperous and just for all.

The Seven Women's Empowerment Principles

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

While designed as a tool for the private sector to strengthen company policies and programs to create a culture that can achieve gender equality, the WEPs seven principles provides a platform for all stakeholders to move forward with their commitments to gender equality. Together we can create a Canada where the economic capacity of Canadian women is unleashed and where women are fully engaged in positions of leadership and decision making; thereby benefiting all Canadians.

Collaboration

BPW International was the first NGOs to recognize the importance of being part of the international multi-stakeholder consultation process launched in 2009. The Women's Empowerment Principles is the result of a collaborative partnership between UNIFEM (part of UN Women) and the UN Global Compact that encourages engagement of government, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and the United Nations to advance gender equality.

BPW Canada through its affiliation with BPW International, using its expansive network of affiliates across Canada, is well positioned to work collaboratively with the government and private sector; business, industry and civil society to achieve gender equality in Canada.

The BPW Canada WEPs Strategic Dialogue

BPW Canada engaged government leaders responsible for women's issues in discussions to elicit strategic support for the official launch of the Women's Empowerment Principles in Canada. Thought provoking discussions with the Honourable Rona Ambose, Minister Responsible for Women's Issues and Suzanne Clément, Coordinator for the Status of Women Canada, and Critics on Women's Issues, Irene Mathysen (NDP) and Judy Sgro (Liberal), lead to this conceptual framework to advance women's equality to the next level. Further correspondence with Members of Parliament, private and public companies has indicated additional support for gender equality and the WEPs program. Recent activity with the London Chamber of Commerce and Council for the City of London further indicates the potential benefits for a community that engages in a strategic partnership to promote an inclusive business culture.

We are committed to work in collaboration with all stakeholders, our elected Government representatives, the Status of Women Canada, Corporations and CEO's across the country and are more than willing to explore any partnerships that can advance the Women's Empowerment Principles in Canada.

Please find attached the BPW Canada Women's Empowerment Principles Statement of Support. We look forward to further discussions and to working together to advance the WEPs project in Canada.

BPW Canada Past President
WEPs Chair



Doris E. Hall

WEPs Vision:

Transform corporate behavior and intentionally position gender and women empowerment as essential core business objectives.

WEPs Objective:

Motivate and guide business to take wide ranging actions to empower women in the workplace, marketplace and community and to view such action as an integral and necessary part of corporate sustainability.



BPW Canada
www.bpwwcanada.com



BPW International
www.bpw-international.org



Statement of Support and Signatories Form Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) Canada



We, the business and governmental leaders from across Canada, express support for advancing equality between women and men to:

- Bring the broadest pool of talent to our endeavours;
- Further our company's and country's competitiveness;
- Meet our corporate responsibility and sustainability commitments;
- Model behaviour within our companies and agencies that reflects the society we would like for our employees, fellow citizens and families;
- Encourage economic and social conditions that provide opportunities for women and men, girls and boys; and
- Foster sustainable development in the countries in which we operate.

Therefore, we welcome the provisions of the Women's Empowerment Principles – Equality Means Business, produced and disseminated by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the United Nations Global Compact. BPW Canada as a founding member of BPW International has taken up the charge to contribute to the success of engaging a broader audience through an awareness campaign and engaging consultations with private sector, government and civil society in Canada. The Women's Empowerment Principles present seven steps that business, government and other sectors can take to advance and empower Canadian women.

Equal treatment of women and men is not just the right thing to do – it is also good for business. The full participation of women in our enterprises and in the larger community makes sound business sense now and in the future. A broad concept of sustainability and corporate responsibility that embraces women's empowerment as a key goal will benefit us all. Our collective commitment to the Women's Empowerment Principles will help us realize these opportunities.

We encourage business and governmental leaders to join us and to use the Principles as guidance for strategic actions that we can all take in the workplace, marketplace and community to empower women and benefit our companies and Nation. We will strive to use sex-disaggregated data in our sustainability reporting to communicate our progress to our own stakeholders.

Please join us.



Signing the WEPs Statement of Support

Women’s Empowerment Principles – *Equality Means Business*



Please complete this form and return it to Sheila Crook (sheila@smcperformanceplus.com, 705 743-2323)
OR Doris Hall (dorish@rogers.com, 519 473-3505). Please let us know if you have any questions.

COMPANY/ CONSTITUENCY / AGENCY

- Name
- Industry/Sector
- Country
- City and Province
- No. of Employees

CHIEF EXECUTIVE /MP / EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

- Salutation (Mr.; Ms.; etc)
- First/Given Name
- Last/Family Name
- Full Job Title
- Signature

Date: _____

PRIMARY CONTACT PERSON

- Salutation (Mr.; Ms.; etc)
- First/Given Name
- Last/Family Name
- Full Job Title
- Email
- Telephone +

***** Please complete the enclosed Engaging with the WEPs form. The feedback received will inform activities, topics and reflect company and government priorities.**



Engaging with the WEPs

1. CEO/MP/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR QUOTE (optional)

Please provide a quote from your CEO/MP/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR about the reasons she/he signed the Statement of Support and why women's empowerment is a priority. The quote will be included with WEPs materials, both web-based and hard copy, to highlight the company's commitment.

2. EXAMPLE OF POLICY, PRACTICE OR INITIATIVE (optional)

Please provide an example of, or link to, one or more of your policies, practices or initiatives relevant to gender equality and women's empowerment. The examples will be included in our publication Companies Leading the Way included with WEPs materials, both web-based and hard copy, to highlight the company's commitment.

3. AREAS OF INTEREST

Please indicate any areas of particular interest to help us to arrange events and other activities to assist with implementation of the WEPs (e.g. guidance on reporting, equal pay for equal work, value chain, community initiatives etc):

4. VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTION

There is no charge associated with signing the Statement of Support. However, voluntary contributions and/or event sponsorship are welcome to help fund activities to assist companies with implementation. Should your company be interested in sponsoring a community event, or the BPW Canada bi-annual WEPs Leadership Event, please contact Doris Hall for further information at dorish@rogers.com.

YES

Amount

NO

5. BROADER PROJECT SUPPORT

To advance the partnership initiative and serve WEPs companies and stakeholders, broader project support is being sought in the areas of communication and outreach, fact finding and research, reporting and documenting WEPs implementation best practices. Contact the BPW International President's office (president.office@bpw-international.org)

At the UN Global Compact level suggested annual contributions are USD 5,000 for large companies and USD 500 for small companies payable to the Foundation for the Global Compact. Please indicate if the Foundation may send the indicated contact person an invoice and, if so, for what amount.

YES

Amount

NO