

► Advocating for Policy and Regulatory Reform

WE Empower: Fostering Trickle-Down Effects in G7 Countries



When: 2018-2021



Where: Multiple regions



Funding: Other Inter-Governmental Organizations



Website: <https://www.empowerwomen.org/en/projects/we-empower-g7>

The G7 recognizes that the private sector plays a vital role in creating an environment in which women can more meaningfully participate in the economy and has set concrete targets to achieve this, such as reducing the gender gap in labour force participation rates and increasing spending on Technical Education and Vocational Training (TVET). In this context, the G7 countries have committed to (1) invest in women's skills development and TVET; (2) facilitate women's labour force participation, career advancement, and work-life balance; (3) stimulate women's entrepreneurship and the growth and sustainability of women-owned businesses; and (4) accelerate the adoption and implementation of the UN Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs).

In line with these priorities, the WE Empower project (2018-2021), funded by the EU Partnership Instrument and implemented in partnership with the EU and UN Women, aimed at supporting sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth by promoting women's economic empowerment in both public and private sectors across G7 countries.

The Project at a Glance

WE Empower focuses on twofold interventions:

- Facilitating dialogue and exchanges among G7 countries' public and private sector actors on the WEPs through policy dialogue and knowledge management
- Engaging the private sector in the elimination of gender inequality, by fostering the implementation of the WEPs

The strength of this project lies in the fact that many multinational companies have their headquarters in G7 countries. As a consequence, creating impact and results for women's economic empowerment in these sites can generate important trickle-down effects on their operations across the world. To this end, the project created and disseminated a wide range of resources for private and public sector actors, including e-learning materials, webinars, training videos and publications. Many of these, particularly those on work-life balance and its gendered dimension, have been taken up and adapted rapidly to different local contexts in the Americas and Africa, a clear indication of the need for such tools in other contexts and the project's ability to fill a needs gap.

A Focus on supportive company policies for gender-responsive supply chain management

WE Empower advocated for supportive policies towards gender equality by developing [guidance](#) and recommendations for multinational companies based in G7 countries and governments on how to adopt gender-responsive supply chain management practices and identifying best practices. The project's recommendations include quantifying the proportion of spending devoted to women's and gender-responsive enterprises, carrying out legal and legislative framework reviews to advocate for reform, using international certifications, seeking guidance from employers' organizations, and supporting existing suppliers in becoming more gender-responsive.

Among the best practices that WE Empower brought to light is the Government of Canada's [Women Entrepreneurship Strategy](#) (2018-2025), which is applicable to all parts of the Canadian government. The Strategy aims to support women-owned businesses and help them to compete in national and international markets. It focuses on investment in supply chain integration, international marketing, development and management. The Women Entrepreneurship Fund, which represents a core part of the Strategy, received a total of 30 million CAD to support 300 projects, with 2.5 million CAD allocated specifically to indigenous women entrepreneurs.

WE Empower also helped create a specific section on non-discrimination and equality in the ILO Helpdesk for Business, the one-stop shop for company managers and workers to help them better align business operations with international labour standards and build good industrial relations. It provides information and resources on a wide range of labour topics, including discrimination and equality and is free, and confidential.

Emerging Learning

Hold multinational companies and governments to account for gender-sensitive supply chain management and procurement practices. Leveraging the ILO's and UN Women's expertise, WE Empower pushed both multinational companies and governments to adopt more gender-responsive, inclusive, and sustainable business practices, through policy dialogue and exchange.

Be relevant and timely. The resources created as part of WE Empower, particularly on work-life and gender, were very timely and relevant to changing needs of workers and employers in the COVID-19 context. In fact, the project was among the first to produce guidance tailored to the challenges facing employers and workers as a result of COVID-19, starting from existing material co-written with UN partners. Disseminating these resources in the first months of the pandemic inspired others to make them their own.