

The Coalition for Women's Economic Empowerment and Equality (CWEEE) is an advocacy coalition that seeks to advance women's economic empowerment and equality as a foreign policy priority of the U.S. government and multilateral development institutions. Our members are technical experts, implementing NGOs, advocacy-focused NGOs, and research organizations.

What is Women's Economic Empowerment and Equality?

Women's economic empowerment is defined as having access to the resources that create economic growth as well as the agency to act on and make economic decisions.¹ Gender equality is met when people of all genders have equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities, across all sectors of society, including decision making and economic participation. Access to resources as well as decision making power are interrelated and dependent. Economic advancement contributes to power and agency which in turn strengthen and reinforce advancement. Both components are necessary to improve the lives and wellbeing of women, their families, and communities.

A growing body of research and experience shows that the economic empowerment of women is foundational to the success of international development efforts. Investing in opportunities for women has direct ties to poverty alleviation, gender equality, economic growth, and overall

sustainable human development. Women make huge contributions to economies through unpaid care work, formal or informal employment, and entrepreneurship. Additionally, half a billion women have joined the global workforce over the past 30 years boosting productivity and economic outputs at the local, national, and global levels.

However, women lag behind men in earnings, asset and property ownership, and control of capital, even when they have the same level or higher of education. Women are also disadvantaged from meaningfully participating in economic advancement opportunities due to barriers such as gender-based violence and discrimination, limited access to comprehensive health care, poor access to education and skills training, unpaid care work and time poverty, challenges in forming supportive networks or collective associations, social or cultural norms, and other obstacles rooted in gender inequality. This highlights the urgent need to invest in women's economic empowerment programs and to address gender discrimination.

Coalition Objectives

CWEEE seeks the advancement of women's economic empowerment and equality as a priority for the United States in its foreign policy and assistance. The U.S. should build on its track record in this area by developing a coherent and unifying strategy that articulates its foreign policy and assistance goals and leverages investments to date, scaling where those investments have demonstrated success.

CWEEE also seeks to work with multilateral organizations and financial institutions to encourage broader investments for all women. Such mechanisms and approaches should be leveraged and built upon in order to reach women at every socioeconomic level, including women that live at or below poverty levels, work in the informal sector or rural areas, are internally displaced or refugees, or are otherwise marginalized.

¹Golla, Anne Marie; Malhotra, Anju; Nanda, Priya; Mehra, Rekha. "Understanding and Measuring Women's Economic Empowerment: Definition, Framework, and Indicators" International Center for Research on Women, 2011