



WeProsper

GLOBAL COALITION FOR
WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

WeProsper: Global Coalition for Women's Economic Empowerment

WeProsper is a global coalition that promotes women's economic empowerment (WEE) by engaging in strategic advocacy to advance gender equality, address structural barriers, and foster women's and girls' voice and power as economic actors. Together, we work to build and utilize the global evidence-base on women's economic empowerment using a feminist and intersectional approach to meaningfully inform global policy, increase funding for WEE, and support prosperity for women and girls in all their diversity.



Photo: Paula Bronstein/Getty Images/Images of Empowerment, India

A Critical Moment for Women's Economic Empowerment

Women's economic empowerment (WEE) is essential for the rights of women, for their well-being, agency, power, and equality, as well as for the success of businesses and economies.¹ Yet, compared to gender gaps in education and health that have narrowed, gender gaps in economic participation and opportunity have remained large and persistent, even pre-COVID-19. The World Economic Forum estimates that at the current rate, it will take 276.6 years to close this gender gap.² Further, COVID has set back hard-fought gains globally in women's economic empowerment, impacting women's jobs, businesses, unpaid care work, access to finance and essential resources, and rates of poverty.^{3,4,5} It is a critical moment to support WEE – to secure the livelihoods of women and their families, to assure inclusive and sustainable economic recoveries, and to ensure progress is not lost for gender equality.

WeProsper was created to catalyze global action on women's economic empowerment in this critical time of COVID response and the larger pivotal decade of action to achieve the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 agenda.⁶ We believe that policy and funding must go further than ever before to not only prevent setbacks, but to begin to see meaningful progress for the livelihoods, opportunities, and economic justice and rights of women and girls across the globe. Our global membership is comprised of a diverse group of more than 30 local, regional, and global civil society organizations, academic institutions, advocacy organizations, women-led and feminist groups, and private sector entities that focus on issues across the spectrum of WEE. WeProsper has come together across sectors and the globe to use our collective depth and breadth of knowledge and experience to inform strategic advocacy for WEE through rigorous evidence-based recommendations for policy and funding.



Photo: Paula Bronstein/Getty Images/Images of Empowerment, India

WeProsper is guided by the following principles:

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|  | <p>1</p> <p>Utilize an intersectional, feminist approach</p> |  | <p>2</p> <p>Integrate and elevate a holistic conception of WEE</p> |
| <p>3</p> <p>Address structural and systemic barriers to WEE</p> |  | <p>4</p> <p>Build the power and amplify the voices of women in Low and Middle Income Countries</p> |  |
|  | <p>5</p> <p>Build and utilize the global evidence-base on WEE</p> |  | <p>6</p> <p>Engage in strategic, evidence-based advocacy</p> |
| <p>7</p> <p>Facilitate inclusive and sustainable economic and development processes</p> |  | <p>8</p> <p>Foster accountability</p> |  |

Launching a Global Coalition for Women's Economic Empowerment

WeProsper's Holistic Approach to WEE

WeProsper recognizes that women's economic empowerment is defined in many different ways, but often, these definitions are too narrow and lead to piecemeal approaches to WEE which do not address structural and rights-based issues.^{7,8} The evidence is clear: without addressing structural issues and supporting rights, progress on WEE will stall.⁹ WeProsper takes a holistic approach to WEE, which expands the lens from solely focusing on getting women into markets or supporting them as entrepreneurs (though these are critical components of WEE), to addressing structural and systemic issues that determine economic outcomes. These include:

Social structures:

Gender norms: Norms regarding the gendered division of labor, "appropriate" work for women, and women's subordinate status constrain their ability to access decent work and perpetuate gender-based violence, with compounding economic effects and impacts to their well-being over their lifetimes.^{10,11}

Unpaid care work: Globally, responsibilities for unpaid care work kept 42 percent of women, but only six percent of men, outside of paid work and contribute to longer working days and time poverty for women.^{12,13}

Labor markets:

Occupational segregation: Discrimination, legal restrictions, and disproportionate responsibilities for unpaid care and domestic work crowd women into a limited number of occupations, often in precarious employment, with negative impacts on pay, benefits, and working conditions.¹⁴

Decent work: The majority of women workers are in the informal sector, lacking protections from labor laws and access to benefits such as pensions, health insurance, or sick leave.¹⁵ Gender wage gaps are prevalent, as is discrimination and harassment, which deprives them of decent work.¹⁶ Fifty percent of women will experience discrimination, violence, and harassment at work in their lifetimes.¹⁷

Legal rights:

Land rights: Unequal land rights, including laws regarding inheritance, contribute to major gender disparities in land ownership, which is often the main livelihood support. Women own between 5-20% of agricultural land in developing regions.¹⁸

Economic rights: Women only have three-quarters of the legal rights of men essential for economic inclusion, such as equal pay for equal work, and they face laws restricting employment in certain occupations.¹⁹

Macroeconomic policies:

Fiscal space: Promoting WEE requires significant expenditures from governments, and numerous aspects of macroeconomic policy are necessary to ensure that there is the fiscal space available for these investments, including taxation, monetary, fiscal, and debt management policies.^{20,21}

Social protections: The structure of social protection systems is key in determining whether women have equitable access and resources to support their livelihoods, particularly given that in many countries, the majority of women are in the informal economy.^{22,23}

Building and Utilizing the Global Evidence-base on WEE

WeProsper's cross-sectoral membership yields a wealth of evidence generation, and we are working collectively to synthesize a wide range of research with evidence from the lived experience of women, girls, and historically marginalized groups from around the world. Women's economic empowerment is a complex topic with numerous dimensions when viewed holistically, requiring robust indicators and intersectional gender data to measure these dimensions and assess changes over time.²⁴ Our members are committed to advocacy for better gender data, and we are engaging in rigorous dialogues regarding the measurement of WEE, such as the [WEE Measurement Learning Collaborative](#).^{25 26 27} These efforts build a rich and comprehensive body of knowledge, from which we act as a valuable bridge from research to policy, translating research into recommendations which enable policymakers to most effectively accelerate progress for WEE.

Engaging Globally to Accelerate Progress in WEE

With our holistic, evidence-based approach and diverse membership, WeProsper is poised to expand the lens and enrich the dialogue on WEE at the global level, calling attention to context-specific factors and the overlapping inequalities that many groups of women and girls face. It is imperative to account the ways that race, ethnicity, caste, nationality, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, and age, among others, intertwine to determine economic outcomes for women and girls. Our global coalition works closely with regional and country coalitions and grassroots organizations to ensure that these dimensions of WEE, as well as local and country-specific enabling environment factors, inform our evidence-based recommendations and strategic advocacy.

WeProsper engages in strategic advocacy for:

- Sustainable and inclusive economic systems, which support decent work and livelihoods and the equitable distribution of wealth;
- Care work to be recognized, rewarded, represented, and equitably distributed within households and between households and the state;
- Women and girls in all of their diversity to have equal power and say in decision making, including freedom from violence and exploitation, choice in the economic activities they participate in, fair compensation, and equal access to what is not only needed to live, but to thrive; and
- Policymakers and international institutions to center the needs of women and girls and design, implement, and fund inclusive, evidence-based, feminist, intersectional, and gender-transformative solutions to the challenges they face.



Photo: Jonathan Torgovnik/Getty Images, Ghana

Join Us to Make Meaningful Progress

More voices and experience make our advocacy even stronger at this critical time. WeProsper invites local, regional, and global civil society organizations, academic institutions, advocacy organizations, women-led and feminist groups, and private sector organizations that are interested in contributing to the coalition's shared mission and vision to join us! Coalition members

share information regularly over email and convene quarterly; our working groups strategize on advocacy and messaging, share information and research, and increase their own knowledge and capacity on WEE.

For more information and to join, contact Kelsey Harris (kharris@icrw.org)

Endnotes

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Coalition Members





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