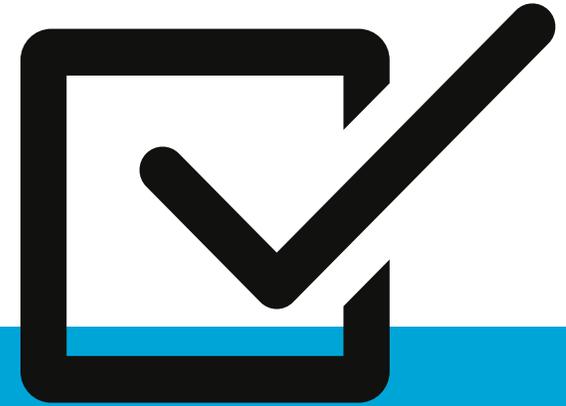


# WEPS Global Survey Report • 2025



WOMEN'S  
EMPOWERMENT  
PRINCIPLES

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**Design:** Oliver Gantner

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## Thanks to our Survey Participants

A heartfelt thank you to all the companies that responded to the first WEPs Global Survey in 2025. This report would not have been possible without your openness in sharing progress, lessons learned, and the challenges you face in advancing gender equality.

Your honest reflections and thoughtful recommendations are instrumental in shaping the future of the WEPs community. They will directly inform how UN Women strengthens its tools and resources to better support you on your WEPs journey. These efforts will pay particular attention to companies, especially SMEs, that have expressed the need for more targeted resources and simplified or tiered reporting.

As a token of appreciation, your company has been awarded a WEPs Survey Badge, now visible on your company profile.

**Thank you for your leadership and commitment to driving lasting change  
for all women and girls.**

**Anna Fälth**  
Global Head of WEPs, UN Women



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In 2025, over 800 private sector entities across 118 countries shared how they are advancing gender equality through the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs). Their collective voices form the foundation of this global survey—the first of its kind—highlighting where businesses stand, where they aspire to go, and what support they need to turn bold commitments into measurable change.

The data tells a story of rising ambition. From microenterprises to multinationals, companies across 50 industries are weaving gender equality into leadership, workplace culture and strategy. Sixty per cent of respondents are small or medium-sized enterprises, and nearly half are women-led, a powerful signal of the WEPs growing relevance across diverse business contexts.

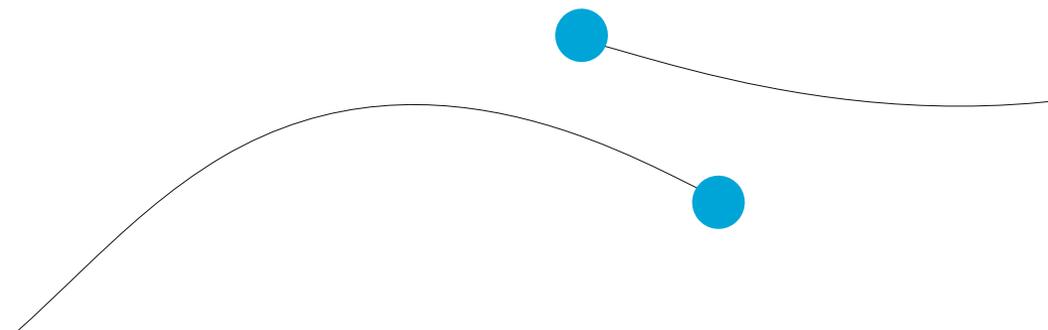
Companies are making meaningful progress. Yet, progress is uneven. While companies are prioritizing internal transformation, efforts in supply chains, procurement, and data tracking lag behind. Fewer than one-third have set procurement targets for women-owned or gender-responsive businesses, and nearly half do not track spending on gender equality at all.

Crucially, companies recognize that change starts from the top. Leadership buy-in, gender-disaggregated data, flexible work, mentoring and a strong culture of inclusion emerged as the most impactful drivers of progress. Still, deep-rooted gender norms, limited resources, and competing business demands—especially for SMEs—remain significant barriers.

Reporting remains a key area for growth. Only half of respondents reported on gender equality in 2024, and even fewer used the WEPs reporting platform. Many called for simplified, SME-friendly reporting tools, sector-specific case studies, and step-by-step guidance to stay accountable.

Despite these challenges, the WEPs community is energized. More than half of companies want to deepen their engagement with UN Women—seeking tailored support, peer learning, and country-level mentorship. Their priorities for the next 3-5 years are clear: advancing women's leadership, building inclusive and flexible workplaces, and embedding accountability through strategy and metrics.

This report confirms that businesses are not waiting on change—they are generating it, contributing to building a future for all women and girls. With continued support, practical tools, and a stronger sense of community, WEPs signatories are well-positioned to lead a new era of gender equality in the private sector—one that is bold, systemic, and global in reach.



## 1. Strong engagement with values and culture

**90%** of companies have embedded gender equality into business values, plans and organizational culture.

**88%** have reviewed their policies for discrimination and bias.

## 2. Safety is a top workplace priority

**86%** have policies and procedures in place to prevent violence and harassment in the workplace and support survivors.

## 3. Companies are investing in women's advancement

**86%** conduct inclusive hiring and offer flexible work.

**80%** offer women's professional development initiatives.

**76%** provide formal or informal networking opportunities.

**72%** run leadership development programmes.

## 4. Formal accountability and transparency remain limited

**57%** hold managers accountable for gender equality goals in performance reviews.

**30%** do not track key indicators like gender pay gaps, promotions, or retention.

**57%** report gender data publicly.

**45%** do not track spending on gender equality.

## 5. Gender-responsive procurement is still nascent

**27%** track procurement with women-owned businesses.

**26%** track procurement with gender-responsive businesses.

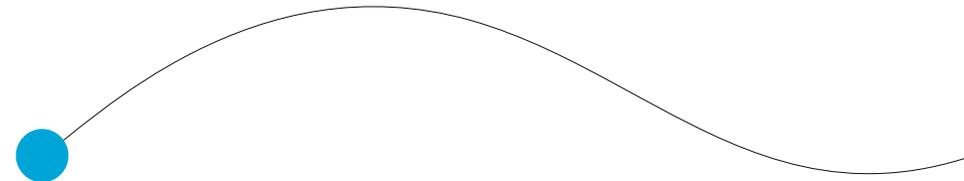
The **Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs)** are a set of principles offering guidance to the private sector on how to advance gender equality and women's empowerment through governance and leadership, in the workplace, marketplace, and community, and by fostering transparency and accountability. WEPs were established jointly by UN Women and the UN Global Compact in 2010. Since 2017, the WEPs – and its Secretariat – has been led by UN Women as its primary platform for engaging the private sector.

The WEPs are grounded in international labour and human rights standards and in the recognition that the private sector has both a responsibility and a critical role to play in advancing gender equality. The WEPs provide a holistic framework for companies to align their policies and practices with global standards and contribute directly to the gender equality dimensions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Sustainable Development Goal 5.

By endorsing the WEPs, business leaders publicly signal their commitment at the highest levels to fostering gender equality within their organizations. This commitment extends beyond internal policies to the full spectrum of corporate operations, including adopting gender-responsive supply chain and marketing practices, and taking sector specific actions to advance, for example, digital and financial inclusion.

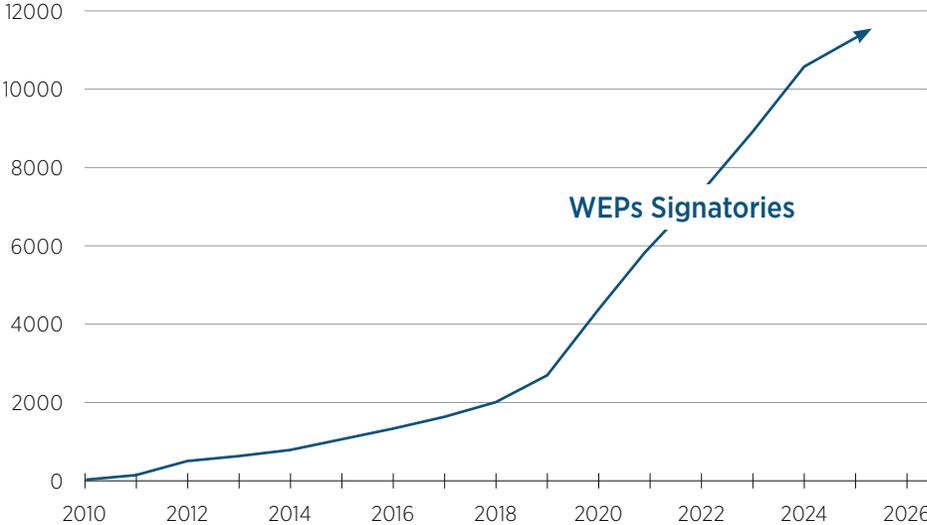
Since the launch of the WEPs in 2010, the network of signatories has grown steadily, with a significant jump from 665 new signatories in 2019 to 1,668 in 2020, reaching a total of 4,401 signatories that year (*Figure 1*). This surge can be explained from both demand and supply perspectives. On the demand side, the global spread of COVID-19 in 2020 heightened awareness of employers' role in safeguarding employee health, wellbeing, and rights—key to resilience and sustainability. On the supply side, UN Women released a suite of new WEPs tools and resources, helping companies translate commitment into action. As of September 2025, 11,553 CEOs have signed on and embarked on the WEPs Journey.

The 2025 **WEPs Global Survey** was designed to better understand how signatory companies have operationalized their WEPs commitment, and to capture insights on their progress, challenges, motivations, and future priorities in engaging with the WEPs. The Survey also aimed to inform the strategic direction of the WEPs initiative, including through the continuous improvement of resources and tools, and for UN Women and the WEPs Secretariat to meet the evolving needs of businesses worldwide.



**Participation in the survey** was voluntary and open to all WEPs signatories from the end of April to June 2025. A total of 810 companies responded to the survey, reflecting a broad cross-section of businesses across regions, industries and organizational sizes. While the findings cannot be assumed to represent the entirety of the WEPs community, nor are they audited or validated, the diversity of the responses provides a strong indication of trends and priorities among the engaged signatory base. On average, companies spent four hours completing the survey.

To ensure accessibility and inclusivity, the survey was made available in twelve languages: Chinese, English, French, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Thai, Turkish and Vietnamese. This multilingual approach reflects the global nature of the WEPs and the Secretariat’s commitment to fostering participation from diverse linguistic and cultural contexts.



Growth of WEPs signatories since 2010

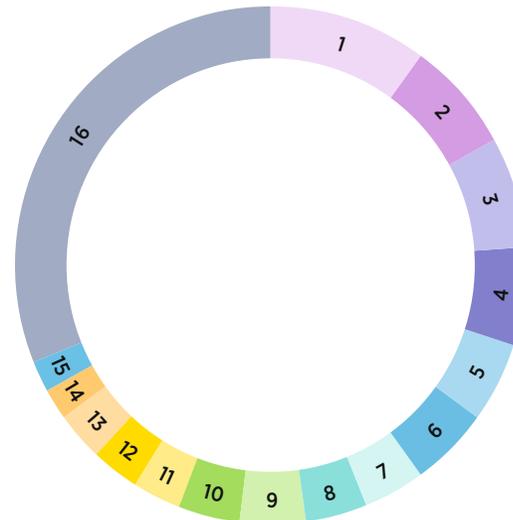
FIGURE 1



# 3. Survey respondent profiles

The 2025 WEPs Global Survey captured responses from a highly diverse group of companies representing a wide range of industries and geographical locations. This diversity underscores the breadth of the WEPs network and the relevance of gender equality as a business imperative across sectors and regions.

Survey respondents operate in more than **50 industries and sectors**, with particularly strong participation from financial services, including banks and diversified financial institutions. This cross-sector representation reflects the universality of the WEPs and their relevance across both product and service-based industries. The top 15 industries are reflected in *Figure 2*.



1. Financial institutions, incl. banks	10%
2. Food (producers and retailers)	7%
3. Software and IT services	7%
4. Education and training	6%
5. Consulting	5%
6. Retail	5%
7. Media and communication	4%
8. Commercial services	4%
9. Construction and engineering	4%
10. Textiles and apparel	4%
11. Transport and transportation infrastructure	3%
12. Travel, lodging and amusement	3%
13. Legal services	3%
14. Health care	2%
15. Insurance	2%
16. Other	31%

Survey respondents by industry

FIGURE 2

3. Survey respondent profiles

The **size of companies** represented in the survey ranged from self-employed to large multinationals with over 200,000 employees. The majority of respondents are small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which collectively make up 60 per cent of respondents.

**Geographically**, the responses span 118 countries, with substantial participation from across all regions. The top 15 largest groups of respondents are illustrated in *Figure 3*.

Türkiye	42	India	26	United Kingdom	19
Brazil	38	Spain	24	Vietnam	17
Mexico	31	Jordan	23	France	16
Italy	31	United States	23	Lebanon	15
Argentina	26	China	21	Kenya	14

It is not surprising that Türkiye and Brazil had the largest number of respondents as the largest groups of WEPS signatories are based there.

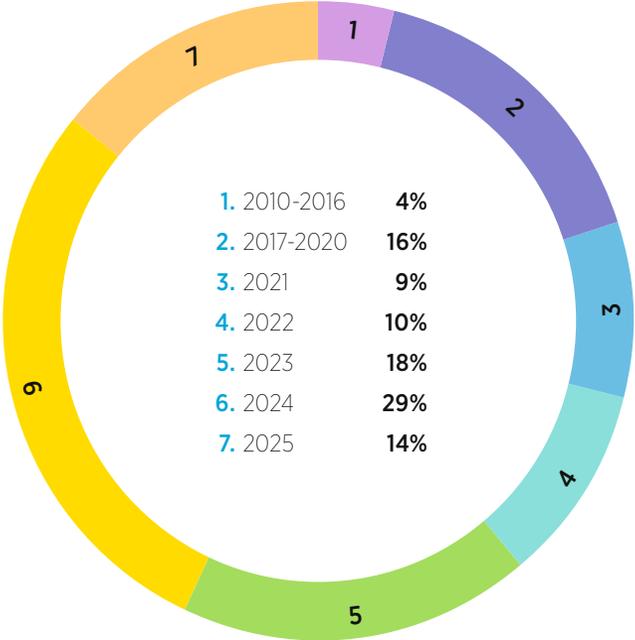


Countries with the largest group of respondents

FIGURE 3

At the same time, the survey also captured perspectives from companies operating in smaller markets or countries with emerging WEPs engagement, such as Iceland, Guinea, Kuwait, Madagascar, New Caledonia and Timor-Leste. The scope of participation underscores the truly global reach of the WEPs community and highlights that gender equality is a shared priority across a diverse array of economic, social and cultural contexts.

The data shows strong growth in **WEPs engagement** among survey respondents over time (See *Figure 4*). Overall, the survey reflects a good spread across the years of joining. As expected, those who joined in 2025 report fewer results on WEPs implementation so far, given the limited time since signing.

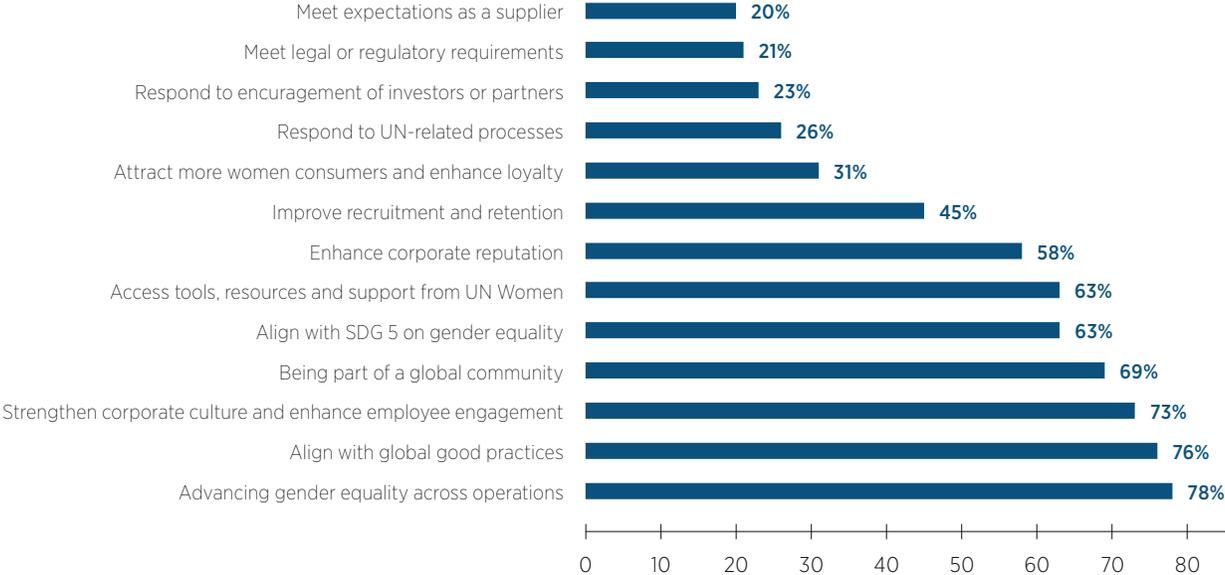


Survey respondents by year of joining the WEPs community

FIGURE 4

Company leadership and ownership patterns reveal a significant presence of women-led businesses within the survey cohort. Of the 810 respondents, 46 per cent reported that their company is women-owned or led, which is slightly higher than the average for WEPs companies (39 per cent) and notably higher than global averages.

For most companies, joining the WEPs is a values-driven decision –rooted in a genuine belief in gender equality and reinforced by strategic business goals (See Figure 5). The leading motivation is a strong commitment to advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment across their operations. Many also joined to align with recognized global standards and practices, viewing the WEPs as a trusted international benchmark for responsible business.



Motivations for joining the WEPs

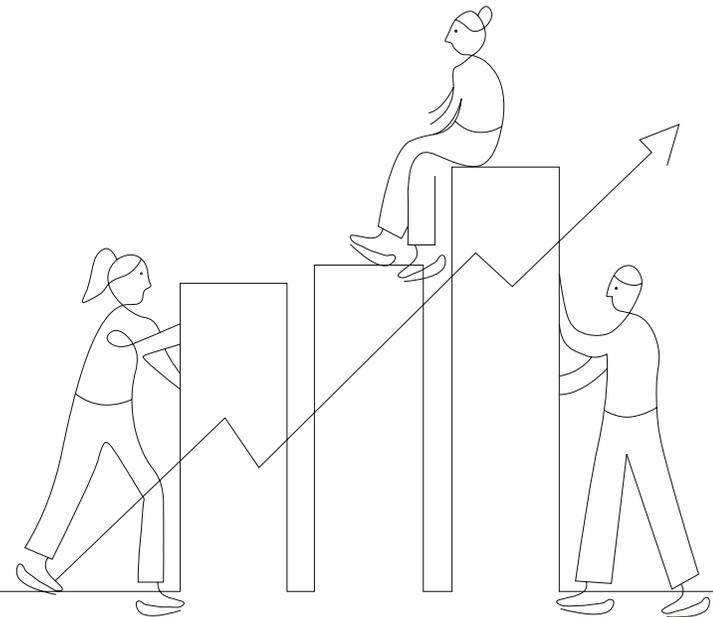
FIGURE 5



Beyond values and standards, companies identified strong internal and external business drivers. Strengthening corporate culture, improving employee engagement and fostering a more inclusive workplace were frequently cited outcomes. Being part of a global community of like-minded businesses also matters – companies value the opportunity to learn from peers and share their own experiences along the WEPs journey.

While motivations, such as brand reputation, improved recruitment and retention and responding to investor or partner expectations played a role, these tend to be secondary. Overall, the responses suggest that WEPs participation is driven more by purpose and long-term alignment than by short-term compliance.

Together, these insights underscore how the WEPs serve as a catalyst for cultural transformation, strategic alignment and belonging to a global movement grounded in shared values.



# 4. Action for impact

A resourced WEPs action plan is essential for WEPs signatories to create inclusive, high-performing companies that meet the expectations of all stakeholders, including employees, managers, board members and other key stakeholders. It provides a clear roadmap for addressing gaps, setting measurable goals and targets and holding leadership accountable for progress. By aligning policies and practices with a structured action plan, companies can move beyond ad hoc activities toward sustained, system-wide change.

Along the same lines, a dedicated budget and team is essential for an effective and sustainable action plan. Without allocated resources, even the most well-intentioned strategies or initiatives risk remaining symbolic or under-implemented. Resource allocations signal that gender equality is a business priority and strengthens internal accountability and external credibility.

**Most companies have taken the first step—now it is time to move from ad hoc implementation to structured, measurable action planning.**

**55%** of companies have a formal gender equality strategy with targets, KPIs and timelines.

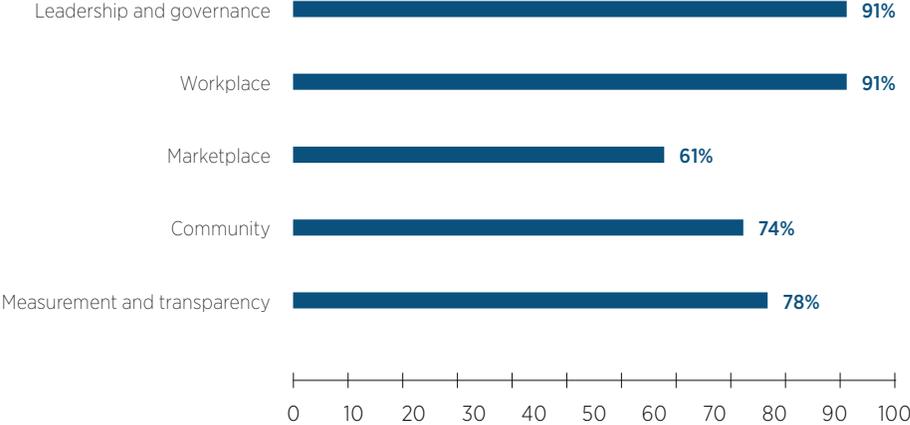
**30%** of companies have started implementing gender equality activities without a formal strategy—highlighting a transitional stage and a key support opportunity.

The survey shows encouraging momentum in strategic planning for gender equality, with a majority of companies moving beyond ad hoc actions to formalize their commitments. Over half of all respondents (55%) reported having a dedicated gender equality strategy that includes targets, KPIs, and timelines—signaling growing organizational maturity.

Of those, most are not just planning but actively executing: more than half of companies with a strategy (53%) said they are either currently implementing it or tracking progress against clear performance indicators. Yet, a substantial share of companies remains in early stages. Three in ten companies (30%) have begun implementing gender-related activities without yet developing a formal strategy, and 14 per cent said they want to build one but have not started. This underscores a need for tailored support, especially for newer or smaller signatories still navigating their early steps in the WEPs journey.

Where strategies do exist, their content is encouragingly broad.<sup>1</sup> Gender equality plans most commonly focus on corporate leadership and governance (91%) and workplace practices (91%), in strong alignment with WEPs Principles 1-4. Many companies are also extending their strategies to include measurement and transparency (78%), community engagement (74%), and, to a slightly lesser extent, marketplace and supply chain practices (61%) (See Figure 6).

The overall picture is one of gradual but clear progress: while a growing number of companies are embedding gender equality into formal strategy and implementation, others still rely on informal or emerging approaches. Ensuring that all companies have access to practical guidance and peer learning will be key to transforming commitment into measurable, sustained change.



Action plans by WEPs pillar

FIGURE 6



1. Some survey questions were designed with multiple-response options, meaning companies could select more than one action, with the implications that the percentages do not necessarily add up to 100 per cent.

Without investment, commitments stall: financial resources and tracking systems remain the missing link in turning gender equality ambitions into reality.

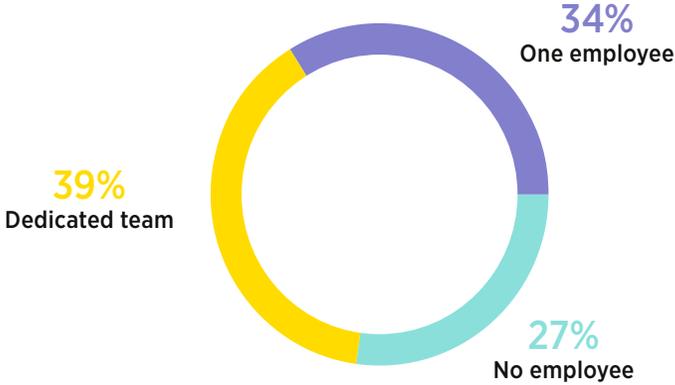
**39%** reported having a dedicated team to lead gender equality efforts.

**6%** of companies invested more than USD 10,000 in internal gender equality efforts, revealing how rare significant financial commitment remains.

While many companies are advancing gender equality through leadership, policy and culture transformation, the survey reveals a clear gap: financial investment and tracking of such investments. A striking number of companies still lack both the dedicated resources and systems needed to fund and monitor their efforts, putting long-term impact at risk.

Internally

Internally, most companies have some structure and resources in place, but it is often minimal. Some 39 per cent reported having a dedicated team to lead gender equality efforts, and 34 per cent rely on a single staff member. The remaining group of companies (27%) have no one formally responsible, potentially undermining accountability (See Figure 7).



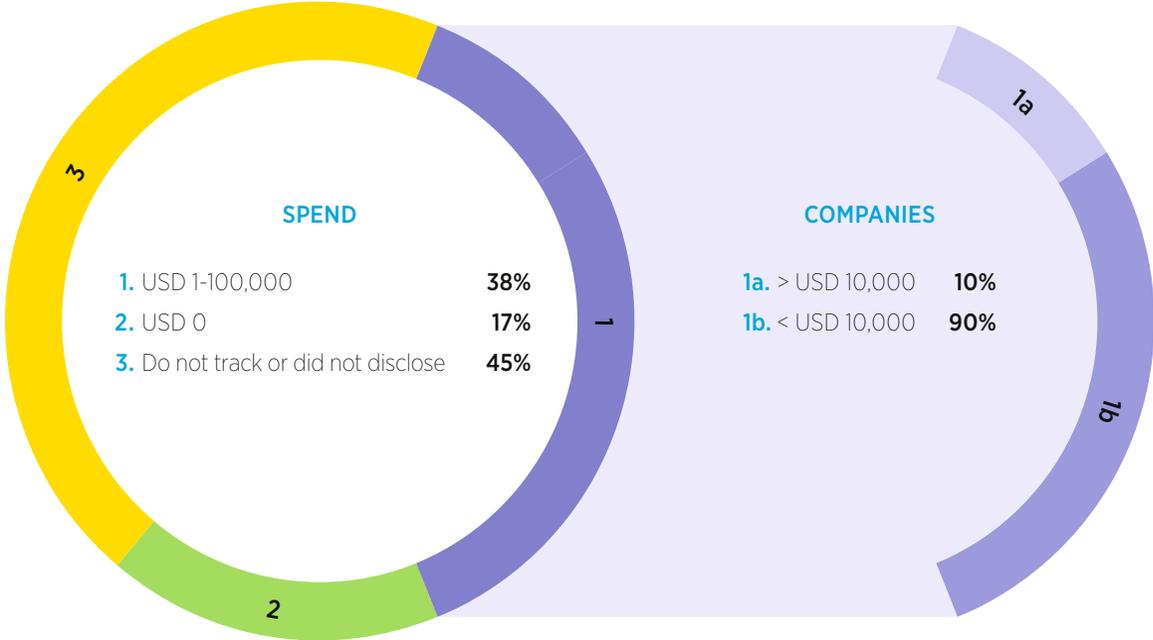
Capacity to work on gender equality

FIGURE 7

When it comes to gender equality budgets, the picture is even more fragmented.

Some 17 per cent reported no spending at all in 2024, and 45 per cent said they do not track this information or preferred not to disclose. While they may be actively implementing the WEPS, many companies embed gender equality work within broader human resources or sustainability activities, making spending hard to isolate. Many smaller companies may lack robust monitoring and financial tagging.

Yet, 38 per cent of companies reported spending up to USD 100,000 on internal gender equality and WEPS-related work. Of these, 10 per cent of companies invested more than USD 10,000. As shown in *Figure 8*, medium-size companies reported the lowest average spending of the three groups (USD 16,000) despite often having more capacity than smaller companies.



Average spend on internal gender equality work

FIGURE 8

This unexpected trend suggests that mid-sized companies may face specific challenges. For example, they may not face the same level of regulatory, investor or public scrutiny that typically pushes larger companies to allocate and track visible budgets for gender equality. Unlike small firms, which can be nimble and commit funds directly when leadership is motivated, medium firms may have more bureaucracy but without the scale to justify a substantial, standalone budget.

*“We’ve faced challenges mainly due to the lack of a dedicated budget to support WEPs-related initiatives, which limits what we can implement.”*

Survey respondent from Serbia

Most companies that reported investing in internal gender equality actions also indicated having a dedicated person or team in place to manage this work. Whether these companies were led by a woman or a man appeared to have no significant influence on implementation or outcomes.

### Externally

Similarly, external financing shows limited allocations. While 4 per cent of companies invested over USD 100,000 in community programmes, partnerships or support to women’s organizations, 66 per cent either did not track such investments, reported no spending in 2024 or chose not to disclose. Overall, just 34 per cent of companies reported investment in external gender equality efforts with smaller companies making up the largest group of those who did.

Procurement from women-owned or gender-responsive businesses shows the weakest performance overall. Nearly half (78%) acknowledged that they do not track this spending at all, do not spend or do not want to disclose. These results may reflect the limitations of SMEs —the majority of respondents— who often operate with smaller procurement budgets due to their size or the nature of their business, such as service-based industries.

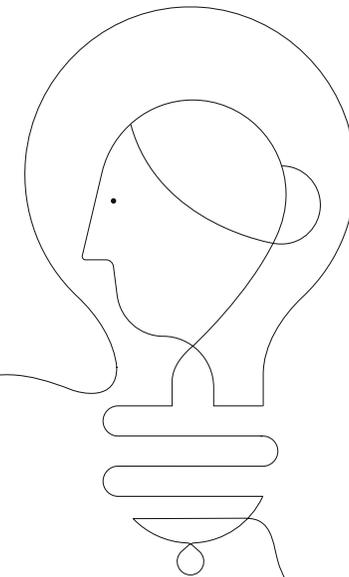
Yet, among the 22 per cent companies that spend their procurement budgets with women-owned or gender-responsive businesses.

**65%** were small businesses.

**16%** were medium-sized companies.

**19%** were large companies. Two per cent spent more than USD 100,000.

Overall, the findings highlight that gender-responsive procurement remains an underleveraged area of action, with most companies neither tracking nor prioritizing it. While smaller firms make up the majority of those engaging with women-owned or gender-responsive businesses, their spending levels tend to be modest, reflecting both budget constraints and sectoral realities. This suggests that stronger commitment, particularly from larger companies with greater purchasing power, is needed to unlock the full potential of procurement as a driver of gender equality and women's empowerment.



# 5. Actions by WEPs Pillar

This section is structured around the five pillars of the WEPs: Governance and Leadership (Principle 1); Workplace (Principle 2-4), Marketplace (Principle 5), Community (Principle 6) and Measurement and Transparency (Principle 7).

While each pillar addresses a distinct dimension of business action, they are deeply interconnected with progress in one area fueling momentum in others. Together, they form a holistic roadmap for companies to embed gender equality across their operations and influence, from the boardroom to the supply chain and to the community.

Embedding gender equality into workplace policies and practices is essential not only for fostering an inclusive and equitable internal culture but also for driving positive change across a company's external operations and societal footprint. When gender equality is integrated into how a company hires, promotes, compensates, and supports its workforce, it creates an environment where all employees can thrive—leading to stronger engagement and performance. This internal transformation strengthens a company's credibility and influence with customers, suppliers and partners, allowing it to model inclusive business practices and inspire change throughout its value chain. In turn, companies become more powerful agents of societal progress, helping to advance women's empowerment and reduce inequalities in the broader communities where they operate.

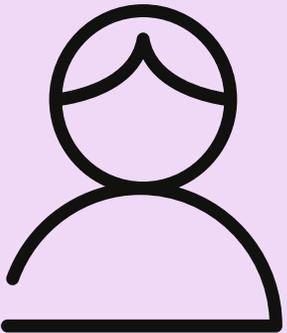
-  1 Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality
-  2 Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and nondiscrimination
-  3 Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers
-  4 Promote education, training and professional development 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.



## PILLAR 1: Governance and Leadership

Embedding gender equality into corporate governance and leadership principles is essential for driving meaningful and lasting change. When equality is reflected in the values, culture, structures, and decision-making processes at the highest levels of a company, it sets the tone for the entire organization. It ensures that gender perspectives are integrated into strategic planning, risk management, and performance evaluation, rather than being treated as isolated or secondary concerns. This not only enhances accountability and transparency but also helps build more inclusive, innovative and resilient companies. By making gender equality a governance priority, companies signal their commitment to fairness, sustainability, and long-term value creation.

**Principle 1:**  
Establish high-level  
corporate leadership  
for gender equality



**Companies are embedding gender equality in their values and culture—but formal leadership accountability and measurable targets remain uneven.**

**90%** are embedding gender equality into their business values, strategies and culture.

**57%** hold managers accountable for delivering gender equality goals through performance reviews.

Across the board, companies are anchoring their gender equality efforts in strong organizational values and culture. The most widely adopted governance action—reported by 90 per cent of respondents—is the integration of gender equality into business values, strategies, and organizational culture. This foundational step is often where many companies begin their WEPs journey, alongside ensuring that existing workplace policies are gender-sensitive and that internal culture actively promotes inclusion.

*“Without leadership, this work stalls. With it, everything else becomes possible.”*

Survey respondent from India

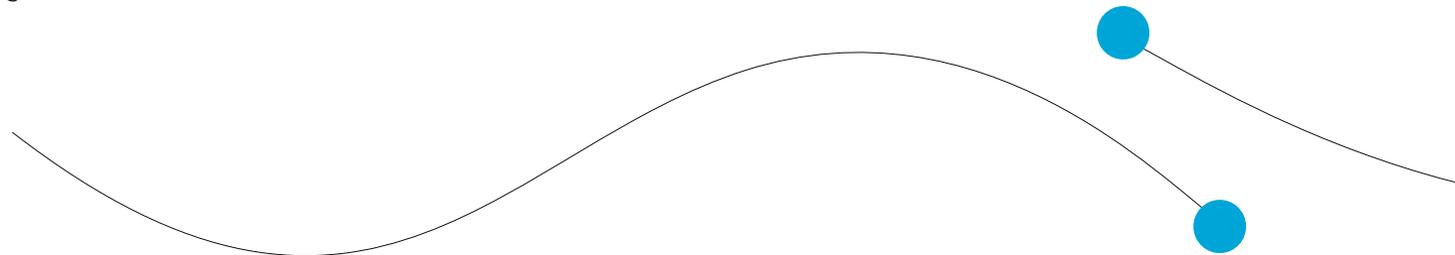
Employee engagement is also a priority. A large majority (86%) of companies reported regular engagement with employees to better understand their needs and perspectives. While fewer (77%) indicated that board members have been briefed on gender equality goals, the data shows growing efforts to build leadership alignment and internal communication on these issues.

However, more formal governance and accountability structures appear less developed. Just 57 per cent of companies currently hold managers accountable for gender equality through performance reviews—leaving a significant gap in leadership accountability. However, 69 per cent have reviewed board membership criteria to eliminate bias and promote more equitable representation at the highest levels of decision-making.

Setting measurable gender equality targets is also still emerging. While 70 per cent of companies have introduced formal goals, this lags behind the broader effort to embed gender equality in values and workplace culture—indicating a need for more concrete performance metrics and tracking mechanisms.

The least prioritized governance action is external engagement. Some 60 per cent of companies reported involving external stakeholders—such as suppliers, partners, or community actors—in the design or implementation of gender equality initiatives. This suggests that many companies are focused first on internal transformation before extending their commitments outward.

Looking across the timeline, most actions began before 2023, especially foundational ones like embedding values and updating policies. A surge in activity occurred in 2024, particularly around board briefings, target-setting and governance reforms. In 2025, newer signatories began to implement early-stage actions, showing steady momentum among companies just joining the WEPs journey.

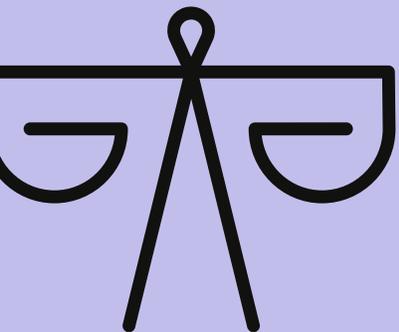


## PILLAR 2: Workplace

Embedding gender equality into workplace policies and practices is critical to creating an environment where all employees can thrive. It ensures that recruitment, retention, promotion, pay and flexibility are designed and implemented in a way that actively addresses barriers faced by women employees. When equality is integrated into the fabric of workplace operations, companies benefit from higher employee engagement, improved morale, and stronger performance. It also reduces the risk of discrimination and harassment, while fostering a culture of respect, safety, and inclusion. Ultimately, a gender-equal workplace is not only fairer—it is more innovative, productive, and better positioned to attract and retain top talent.

### Principle 2:

Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and non-discrimination



**WEPs signatories are prioritizing inclusive hiring – but still falling short on engaging men on gender equality and offering caregiving solutions.**

**9 in 10** have reviewed policies to eliminate gender bias.

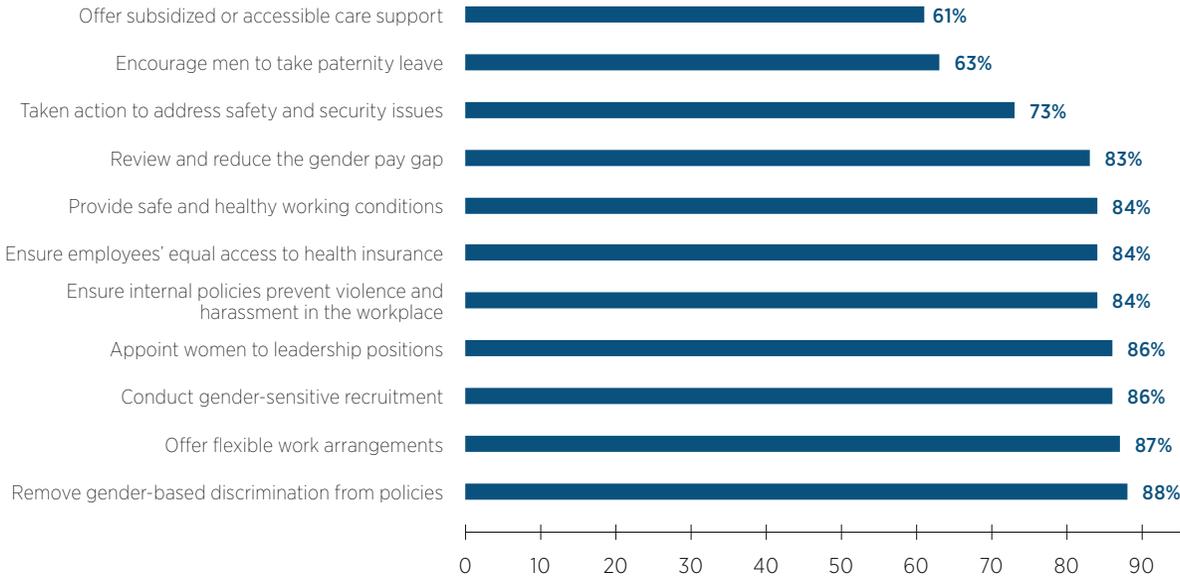
**6 in 10** offer care-related support.

Companies are increasingly taking meaningful steps to promote gender equality internally within their workplace—starting with the fundamentals. The most reported actions focused on eliminating gender-based discrimination from workplace policies and practices, signaling this as a widely recognized first step in building inclusive workplaces.

Many also introduced or expanded flexible work arrangements to meet diverse employee needs, reformed recruitment policies to promote gender sensitivity, and took deliberate steps to increase the representation of women in leadership roles. Together, these actions reflect a strong emphasis on fair hiring, inclusive career progression and equitable workplace culture (see *Figure 9*).

However, when it comes to closing the gender pay gap, progress has been more uneven. While a large share of companies reported efforts to review and address disparities in pay, bonuses, and benefits, these actions still lag behind other workplace reforms—suggesting that pay equity remains one of the more complex and underaddressed aspects of gender equality.

In contrast, the least prioritized workplace actions were those related to caregiving and shared responsibilities at home—a foundational enabler of women’s participation in the workforce. Fewer companies reported offering or promoting paternity leave or taking active steps to normalize men’s caregiving roles. Likewise, support for employees with care responsibilities—such as on-site childcare, dependent care subsidies, or flexible caregiving leave—remained limited. These gaps point to a persistent challenge: without addressing unpaid care and gender-specific expectations around caregiving, workplace equality will remain out of reach for many.

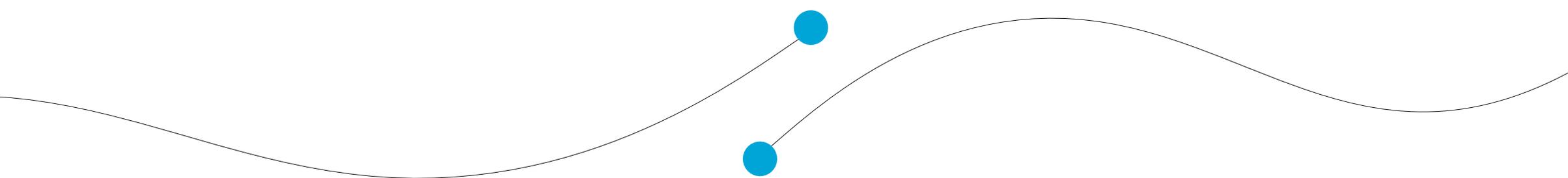


Average spend on internal gender equality work

FIGURE 9

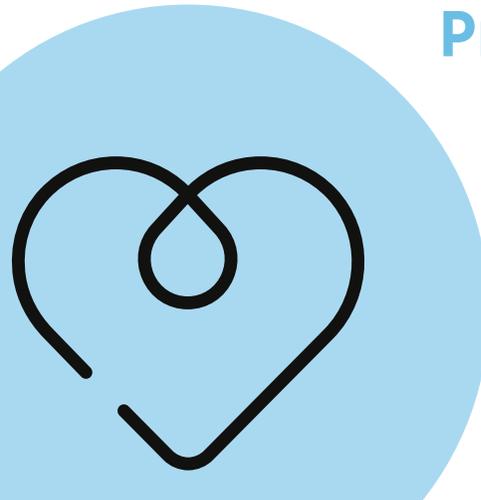
*“Stereotypes such as ‘women don’t want to be managers’ and ‘technical jobs are men’s jobs’ create conscious or unconscious resistance [...] especially in male-dominated sectors such as manufacturing and automotive. Some male employees may think that the opportunities provided to female employees are ‘discriminatory’.”*

Survey respondent from Türkiye



Ensuring a safe, respectful, and healthy work environment remains a strong focus for most WEPs signatories. A large majority of companies (86%) reported having workplace policies, procedures, and support services in place to prevent violence and harassment—demonstrating that psychological safety and dignity at work are widely recognized as essential to gender equality.

Similarly, 85 per cent of companies have taken steps to protect workers' health and safety by addressing hazardous conditions, disclosing potential risks—including those to reproductive health—and promoting safe working environments. These are vital protections, especially in sectors where occupational risks may disproportionately impact women.



### Principle 3:

## Ensure health, safety and wellbeing of all women and men workers

**Companies are prioritizing workplace safety and harassment prevention—but broader protections, like safe travel and reproductive health, receive less attention.**

**86%** have policies, reporting mechanisms or survivor support in place to address workplace violence and harassment.

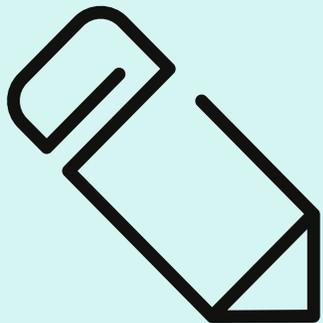
**73%** address safety for workers commuting or travelling for business.

However, safety actions outside the office—such as protecting employees during commutes or work travel—are less consistently addressed. Seventy-three per cent of companies have implemented measures to ensure workers' safety beyond the workplace, highlighting a gap between internal protections and broader wellbeing.

The overall pattern shows that while companies are making progress in traditional workplace safety and anti-harassment efforts, fewer are extending that responsibility to include holistic health, equal benefits access, caregiving support, and reproductive health rights—areas that remain critical to full and equal participation in the workforce.

Training and capacity building are essential for driving meaningful and lasting progress on gender equality. Providing all employees with training on gender equality issues—such as unconscious bias, respectful workplace practices, and inclusive leadership—helps foster a more equitable and supportive work environment. At the same time, targeted initiatives for women, including leadership development, career advancement, and support for transitioning into nontraditional roles, are vital for breaking down systemic barriers and unlocking women’s full potential. Extending capacity-building efforts to suppliers and community members further amplifies impact, promoting gender-responsive practices throughout the value chain and creating ripple effects in the broader society. This comprehensive approach ensures that gender equality is not only embedded within the company’s culture but also championed across its ecosystem.

## Principle 4: Promote education, training and professional development for women



**Companies are investing in women’s career development—but far fewer are supporting entry into male-dominated roles or addressing gender-based violence through training.**

**86%** provide gender equality awareness training and communication initiatives.

**64%** offer training for staff and managers on how to recognize signs of gender-based violence, human trafficking or exploitation.

Training and education are key tools for unlocking women’s full potential in the workplace—and many companies are putting this into action. The most common approach is building internal awareness of gender equality through ongoing training, communication, and employee resource groups. Reported by 86 per cent of companies, this step is often the entry point in their WEPs journey.

Beyond awareness, companies are also investing in career advancement for women: 80 per cent offer professional development initiatives, and 76 per cent provide access to formal or informal networking opportunities. These efforts reflect growing recognition that career growth depends not just on skills, but also on access to mentors, sponsors, and peer communities.

About 72 per cent of companies offer leadership development programmes for women, including mentoring and coaching. While significant, this figure still lags behind general awareness-building, indicating an opportunity to strengthen pathways to leadership.

However, deeper, issue-specific training remains underdeveloped. Only 64 per cent of companies provide training for staff and managers on how to recognize signs of gender-based violence, human trafficking, or exploitation. This means over one-third of companies have yet to act on a critical dimension of workplace safety and responsibility. With violence against women remaining alarmingly high, this gap underscores the urgent need for companies to step up their role in prevention and support.

The least prioritized action is training to encourage women into nontraditional job roles or male-dominated sectors—reported by 64 per cent of companies. This underscores a persistent gap in tackling occupational segregation and expanding women's access to high-growth, higher-paying fields. For some companies, this may be seen as less immediately relevant, yet its long-term importance for equality and competitiveness cannot be overstated.

Outside the workplace, progress is more limited. Just over half of companies support women entrepreneurs with training, mentorship or financing (51%), or offer education and skills-building opportunities for women and girls in their communities (58%). These figures highlight that most companies still focus inward, with fewer extending

their gender equality efforts into their supply chains, markets or local ecosystems. Given that a majority of survey respondents are SMEs, this pattern may also reflect their more limited resources and capacity to engage externally.

*“What has worked best for us is a combination of capacity-building, mentorship, and visibility. Providing women with access to training, networking opportunities, and platforms to share their success stories has proven highly effective.”*

Survey respondent from Jordan

The timeline shows that most actions began before 2023, with sustained momentum in 2024 and emerging activity among newer WEPs signatories in 2025. The pattern is clear: companies are building strong foundations through awareness and development—but still need to address persistent gaps in leadership pathways and gender-based violence.

### PILLAR 3: Marketplace

Implementing enterprise development, supply chain, and marketing practices that empower women is a critical lever for advancing gender equality beyond the workplace. By promoting procurement from women-owned and gender-responsive businesses, companies not only strengthen their supply chains but also unlock access to underserved market segments. Inclusive marketing practices—free from harmful stereotypes—ensure that products and services are developed and communicated in ways that respect and reflect the diversity of society. Supporting suppliers and partners to adopt gender-equality standards, adopting the WEPs, and offering gender equality training drives systemic change across industries and supply chains. These efforts enable companies to align their business models with social impact, reinforcing their role as agents of inclusive growth and sustainable development.

**Principle 5:**  
Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women

**Companies are tackling exploitation and gender bias in marketing—but gender-responsive procurement remains the most underdeveloped area of marketplace action.**

**76%** ensure their products and services are not used for human trafficking and exploitation.

**26%** track procurement spend with gender responsive suppliers.

When it comes to advancing gender equality in the marketplace, companies are showing the strongest commitment to preventing harm and promoting ethical practices. The most widely reported action—taken by 76 per cent of companies—was ensuring that their products, services, and facilities are not used for human trafficking or for labour or sexual exploitation. This reflects growing awareness of the private sector's responsibility to uphold human rights beyond the workplace.

Marketing and communications are also key focus areas. A significant majority of companies (71%) reported reviewing their advertising materials for gender bias and stereotypes, and 65 per cent are actively promoting gender-responsive marketing content. These figures suggest that many businesses are beginning to see their public messaging as part of the solution in challenging harmful norms and promoting more equitable narratives.

By contrast, gender equality in supply chains and procurement practices remains a major gap. Less than half (44%) of companies encourage their suppliers and business partners to adopt the WEPs, and just over one-third have set procurement targets for sourcing from women-owned (35%) or gender-responsive companies (33%). Tracking procurement spend shows even lower levels of implementation, with only 27 per cent monitoring spend with women-owned businesses and 26 per cent doing so for gender-responsive suppliers.

One area showing moderate progress is the promotion of a living wage in supply chains, reported by 57 per cent of companies—a sign that some companies are addressing economic fairness, even if gender remains less integrated in those efforts.

*“Implementing changes that affect our supply chain have been the most challenging. Last year we updated our expectations to suppliers, but we still have a long way to improve accountability of our vendors and suppliers.”*

Survey respondent from Jordan

*“The biggest challenge is to advance in a male-dominated industry, and to influence the supply chain to meet the standards we seek to set.”*

Survey respondent from Albania

Companies are also more engaged in capacity-building than formal procurement reforms with 51 per cent offering mentorship, training, or financing opportunities to women entrepreneurs. And 67 per cent are participating in industry-wide gender equality initiatives, indicating that collective action and sectoral coalitions are increasingly seen as strategic tools for marketplace transformation.

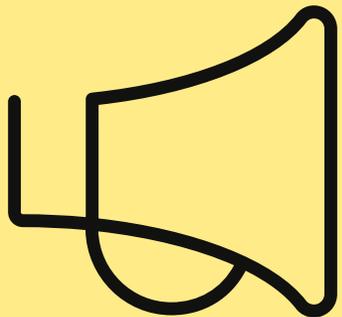
The timeline reveals a consistent pattern: efforts to prevent exploitation and address gender bias in marketing started earlier, while actions to reform procurement practices—especially those that require setting measurable targets or tracking spend—are newer, slower to gain traction, or not yet initiated.

In sum, companies are making strides in ethical marketing and human rights due diligence, but much stronger leadership, transparency, and accountability are needed to ensure that procurement and supply chains actively contribute to women’s economic empowerment.

## PILLAR 4: Community

Engaging with women and girls in local communities is essential for companies seeking to create sustainable, inclusive impact beyond the workplace and marketplace. By listening to and investing in the needs, ideas, and aspirations of women and girls, companies can design products, services, and social investments that are more relevant, equitable and effective. This engagement helps build trust, enhances corporate reputation, and strengthens the social license to operate—especially in regions where community relationships are critical. By supporting education, skills development, and economic opportunities for women and girls, businesses contribute to broader societal progress and help shape a future talent pool that is more diverse and empowered.

### Principle 6: Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy



**Companies are using their influence to support local communities—but gender-focused due diligence remains the weakest link in community engagement.**

**69%** are leveraging their influence—alone or in partnership—to promote gender equality in local communities.

**45%** conduct human due diligence from a gender perspective in their community engagement.

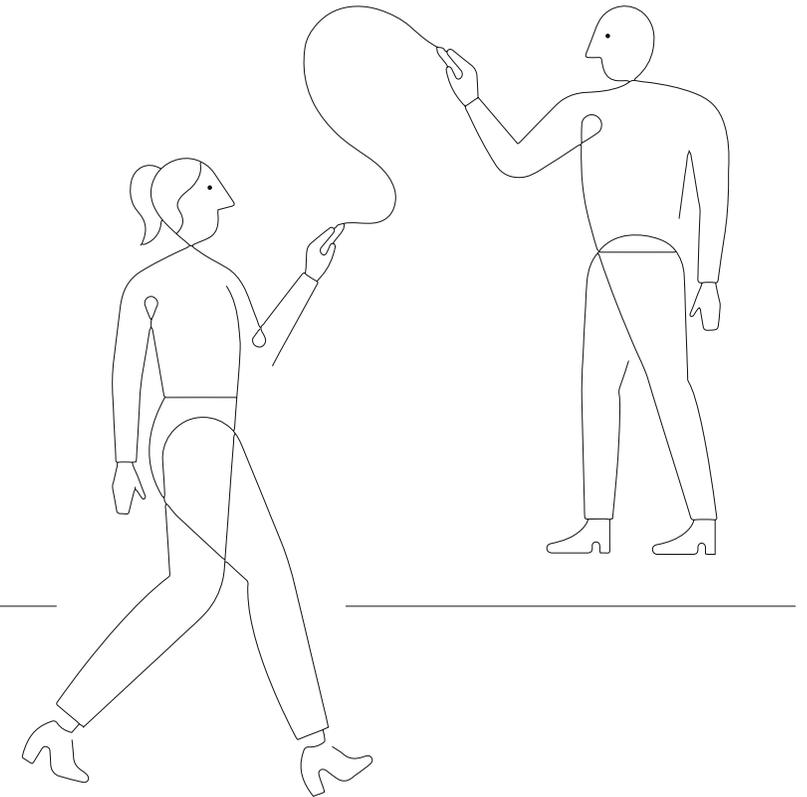
Many companies are extending their gender equality efforts beyond the workplace and marketplace—using their influence to support local communities and women’s empowerment. The most common action reported was leveraging corporate influence, alone or through partnerships to promote gender equality in the community. Nearly 7 in 10 companies (69%) reported doing so, making this the most widespread community-focused approach.

Over half of companies are providing direct support for women and girls through skills development and awareness-raising programmes (58%) or conducting community consultations (54%) to better understand local needs and perspectives. Just over half (51%) are also contributing to community initiatives through grants or funding, while 54 per cent are participating in broader community alliances or advocacy campaigns.

Yet despite these encouraging efforts, more structured and accountability-focused actions are significantly less common. Only 45 per cent of companies reported conducting human rights due diligence with a gender lens in their community engagements—leaving 55 per cent with no formal process in place to assess risks or unintended consequences. This represents the highest rate of inaction across all community engagement practices.

The timeline shows that most companies began their community-focused efforts before 2023, particularly around influence, programming, and consultation. However, newer or more formalized actions—such as gender-sensitive due diligence—remain less frequently implemented, pointing to an important area for further growth.

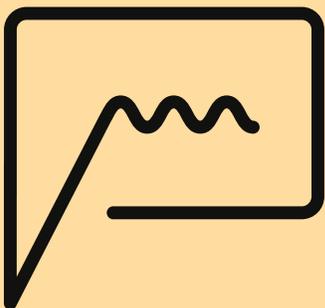
The pattern is clear: while companies are ready to be visible champions of gender equality in their communities, more structured processes and safeguards are needed to ensure their actions are inclusive, ethical, and impactful.



## PILLAR 5: Measurement and transparency

Measurement and transparency are essential for turning gender equality commitments into tangible outcomes. By systematically collecting and analyzing gender-disaggregated data, companies gain clear insight into how well their strategies are working—whether in hiring, pay equity, leadership or engagement with suppliers and communities—and where gaps or challenges remain. This understanding enables smarter decision-making, the setting of meaningful targets, and the development of evidence-based strategies.

While reporting on progress against the WEPs framework remains voluntary, it is a key aspect of signatories' accountability. Transparent communication of progress—both internally and externally—not only builds trust with employees, investors, suppliers, and other stakeholders but also drives accountability across the business. Ultimately, measurement and transparency create a feedback loop that accelerates learning, enhances credibility, and supports sustained progress toward gender equality across industries and regions.



**Principle 7:**  
Measure and publicly report on progress and achieve gender equality

The majority of companies are tracking progress on gender equality—but stronger accountability systems and external validation remain the missing link.

**64%** have identified gender equality indicators to guide internal performance tracking.

**27%** have undergone an independent gender equality audit or certification.

Acknowledging that measurement and transparency are essential for driving meaningful progress on gender equality, many companies are taking foundational steps in this direction. The most commonly reported actions include identifying key performance indicators (64%) and collecting, analyzing, and using gender data to track progress (62%). These internal efforts reflect a growing commitment to embedding gender equality into corporate performance metrics.

Just under 60 per cent of companies (57%) go a step further by publicly reporting gender data—an encouraging sign of transparency and leadership accountability. Meanwhile, nearly half (45%) have used the WEPs Gender Gap Analysis Tool, helping them assess where they stand and where more effort is needed.

However, more structured mechanisms to drive accountability and external validation remain underutilized. Only 41 per cent of companies have shared lessons learned or contributed good practices through the WEPs platform, and just 33 per cent have introduced incentive structures that link gender equality performance to staff or managerial evaluations.

The largest gaps are in third-party assessments and specialized self-assessment tools. Fewer than one-third (27%) of companies have undergone an independent gender equality audit or certification, and only 26 per cent have used the WEPs Gender-Responsive Procurement Assessment Tool—the lowest uptake of any transparency or accountability measure reported.

Most measurement-focused actions began before 2023, especially those related to tracking indicators and reporting. More recent signatories have started to expand into areas like performance-based incentives and procurement assessment—but these still represent significant opportunities for deeper implementation.

*“Translating commitments into tangible actions and ensuring long-term impact. These challenges include [...] fostering true leadership accountability and developing effective monitoring and reporting systems.”*

Survey respondent from Mexico

Overall, while companies are increasingly tracking gender equality internally, the next frontier lies in formalizing accountability through audits, certifications, and performance-linked incentives—key steps for demonstrating real progress and building trust with stakeholders.

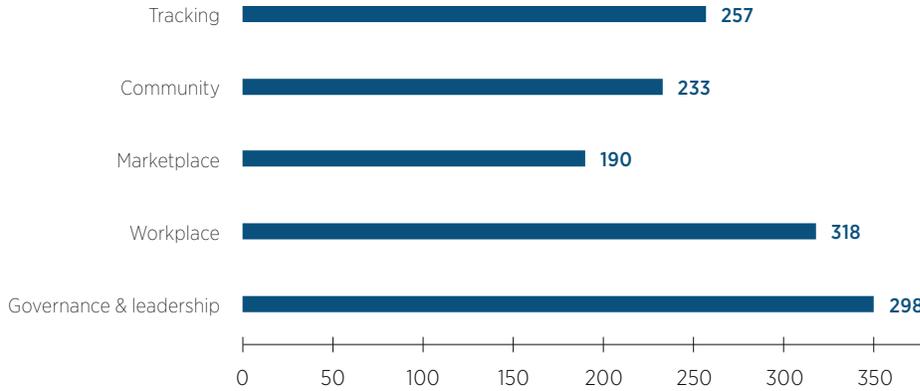
Companies value the WEPs reporting framework—but uptake is low, especially on marketplace, community, and accountability measures.

**7%** used the WEPs company profile to report on gender equality progress.  
**23%** reported on marketplace and supply chain metrics.

While many companies recognize the value of the WEPs reporting framework, its overall uptake remains limited. Just under half of respondents confirmed reporting on gender equality progress in 2024, while a majority (51%) indicated they had not used any formal channel to report.

Among those who did report, only 11 per cent did so through external corporate reports such as sustainability or annual disclosures, and just 7 per cent used the WEPs company profile as a reporting tool. Reporting directly to boards or partners was even less common (5%), and comprehensive reporting across all channels remains rare—just 3 per cent of companies used all available mechanisms.

The content of company reporting is also uneven. As seen in *Figure 10*, most companies focused on workplace measures and governance and leadership, with fewer reporting on tracking, transparency and accountability, community engagement, and marketplace or supply chain actions. This mirrors broader trends across the WEPs pillars, where workplace and governance efforts are better developed than external engagement and transparency mechanisms.



Reporting areas

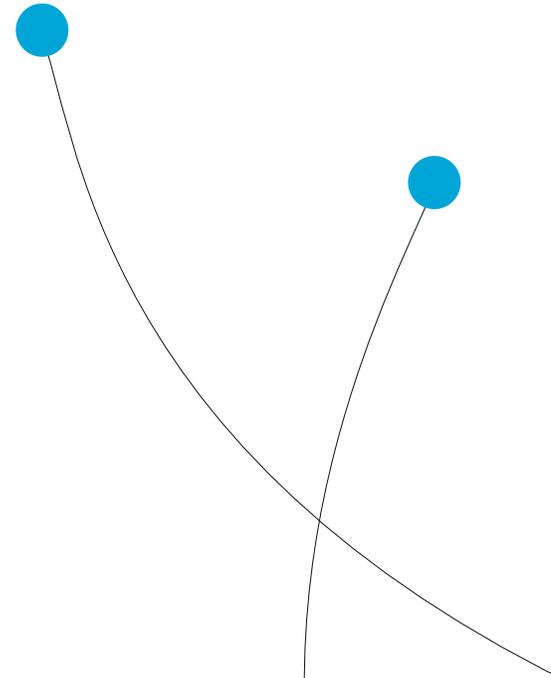
FIGURE 10

Barriers to reporting are especially pronounced among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), who cited lack of time, staff and resources. Many noted that reporting responsibilities often fall to teams without dedicated expertise in gender or sustainability, making it difficult to prioritize.

Despite these challenges, companies offered clear recommendations for improving the WEPs reporting process. Suggestions included:

- Aligning WEPs reporting with other frameworks to reduce duplication.
- Tailoring reporting formats to company size and offering comparative benchmarking data.
- Creating peer learning and mentoring opportunities, especially between mature and newer signatories.
- Providing recognition and visibility, such as certificates or being featured on UN Women platforms, to motivate and incentivize participation.

**The message is clear:** companies see value in WEPs reporting and want to engage—but they need clearer guidance, technical support, and practical incentives to do so effectively. Strengthening reporting practices and tools will be essential to driving transparency and accelerating real progress on gender equality.



# 6. Impact of the WEPs Journey

While gender parity is common in the workforce, women remain underrepresented in leadership and widespread data gaps hinder real accountability.

**51%** reported that women make up half or more of their workforce.

**34%** reported that women hold half or more of senior leadership roles.

The survey reveals a complex and uneven picture of gender equality outcomes across companies. While many report on gender parity or even a majority of women in their workforces, leadership representation, promotion rates and data tracking continue to lag.

**Workforce composition.** among companies that track this area, 51 per cent reported that women make up half or more of their full-time employees, reflecting encouraging gender balance at the overall employment level. However, parity does not extend to decision-making roles. Some 34 per cent of companies said women hold half or more of senior management positions, while two-thirds reported women hold less than 50 per cent. Notably, 15 per cent reported that women comprise less than 15 per cent of their senior leadership—a stark indicator of persistent gender gaps in power and influence.

**Board representation** shows similar disparities: just 28 per cent of companies reported gender parity or better on their boards, while 24 per cent reported that women make up less than 15 per cent of board members.

**Hiring trends** show uneven progress. Of companies that track, 49 per cent reported that newly hired women represent 50 per cent or more of hires, while 51 per cent reported less than 50 per cent.

**Promotions by gender** were tracked by only one-third of companies. The available data shows that gender imbalances deepen as women move up the pipeline. Just 34 per cent of companies reported that women account for half or more of promotions, while 66 per cent fell below this threshold. Among them, one-quarter reported that women comprised less than 30 per cent of all promotions.

On **gender pay gaps**, the picture is mixed. One-third of companies do not track the gap at all, limiting transparency and accountability, and undermining efforts to close disparities. Of the two-thirds that do track, 63 per cent report a gap of 0-15 per cent, while 21 per cent report a wider gap. Another 16 per cent chose not to disclose their figures.

**Parental leave retention** shows relatively strong results. Among the 32 per cent of companies that track it, 62 per cent retain 90–100 per cent of women returning from leave. Still, 38 per cent report lower retention, with nearly a quarter retaining fewer than 70 per cent.

**Overall female retention** mirrors this pattern: more than one-third of companies do not collect the data. Among those that do, 62 per cent report high retention (90–100%), while 38 per cent fall below this level, including 17 per cent reporting retention under 50 per cent.

The findings point to a dual reality: while gender parity in overall employment is increasingly common, women remain underrepresented where power and influence are concentrated—in leadership, promotions, and boards. Persistent pay gaps, uneven promotion rates and widespread data gaps further limit progress and accountability. The lack of systematic tracking across critical areas, from pay equity to retention, suggests that many companies are still operating without the full picture needed to drive change. Closing these gaps will require more robust and transparent data collection to help organizations understand where they are on the gender equality journey, so that they can foster strengthened accountable for progress and results.



# 7. Lessons learned

**Gender equality gains momentum when leadership is committed, culture shifts and practical actions reinforce values every day.**

**Leadership buy-in**  
is the largest catalyst for change.  
**Cultural transformation**  
is just as critical as policy.

The survey respondents' insights into what works best to advance gender equality are consistently clear: real progress requires leadership, culture change and practices to put strategies and policies into action by all stakeholders. Companies emphasized that lasting change happens when gender equality is embedded into business strategy, fueled by data, and sustained through inclusive behaviors and practical support systems.

Across all regions and sectors, the single most consistent message was the power of visible, committed leadership. When senior executives champion gender equality—not just in words but through actions like setting gender targets, showing up at inclusion events and incorporating gender goals into performance metrics—the rest of the organization takes notice.

Equally powerful was the idea that small, deliberate actions often unlock larger change. Companies reported that steps like requiring at least one woman on every recruitment shortlist, revising job descriptions to remove biased language, or offering flexible work hours created ripple effects that reshaped internal culture over time.

Data-driven decision-making also emerged as a game-changer. For many, the act of collecting and analyzing gender-disaggregated data revealed uncomfortable truths—pay gaps, promotion imbalances, or invisible barriers to leadership. This transparency allowed them to set clearer goals and monitor change more effectively.

*“We assumed we were doing fine until the numbers showed us otherwise.”*

Survey respondent from Denmark

Yet, even the best policies proved insufficient without cultural transformation. Companies underscored the importance of tackling unconscious bias, creating safe and respectful environments, and opening space for honest dialogue about experiences of exclusion.

*“Policies give you the structure, but culture is what brings it to life.”*

Survey respondent from Italy

Flexibility consistently stood out as one of the most impactful tools—not just for working parents, but for building inclusive, high-trust workplaces. From hybrid models and extended parental leave to childcare support and safe transport, companies saw these initiatives improve morale, productivity, and retention across the board.

Many also pointed to the effectiveness of mentorship and sponsorship, particularly in helping women build confidence and leadership pathways. Simply elevating the visibility of women leaders inside and outside the company had a measurable effect on shifting norms and inspiring others.

*“[The training] was a wake-up call about how vital it is to create an environment where women feel valued—not just in principle, but in practice.”*

Survey respondent from India

A key realization for many was that gender equality is not a ‘women’s issue’—men must be part of the solution. Engaging men as allies, addressing biases, and promoting shared caregiving responsibilities helped shift the workplace from compliance to collaboration.

Importantly, companies recognized that their responsibility extends beyond their internal operations. Bringing gender equality into supply chains, customer engagement, and community programmes was both a challenge and a catalyst for broader impact. Involving suppliers, clients and local communities helped scale their efforts far beyond the office walls.

Across the board, the lessons are consistent: progress is possible when leadership leads, when data drives decisions, when actions reinforce values, and when organizations commit to cultures of respect, inclusion, and shared accountability.

Turning commitment into culture: Companies cite mindset shifts, limited capacity, and complex supply chains as the largest hurdles to advancing gender equality.

**Mindset** and culture change remain the #1 challenge  
—even in companies with formal policies.

**SMEs** often lack the resources to turn  
commitments into action.

Despite widespread support from the WEPs Secretariat, companies across all regions and industries face consistent, structural challenges when putting their commitments into practice. From cultural resistance to resource constraints, the process of advancing gender equality is as much about overcoming barriers as it is about making progress.

Among the most common and persistent challenge is shifting deep-seated mindsets and workplace cultures. Especially in male-dominated industries, companies report that changing long-held gender stereotypes and decision-making norms requires sustained leadership and constant internal engagement.

*“The big challenge is unequal roles and the male mindset culture at the senior level. We have strong principles, but we lack the actions to make them real.”*

Survey respondent from Cambodia

Capacity constraints are a major barrier, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Many companies shared that despite strong commitment, limited staff, time and budgets make it difficult to develop formal policies, collect data or maintain progress.

Operationalizing gender equality in supply chains and procurement emerged as a third significant challenge. Companies noted that influencing suppliers—especially those in regions where gender equality is not a priority—requires leverage, data and incentives that many businesses do not yet have in place. A lack of gender-disaggregated data from vendors and partners compounds the issue.

Recruitment barriers in traditionally male-dominated fields like STEM, manufacturing and logistics were also frequently mentioned. Companies struggle to find qualified women in technical roles, a structural issue that reflects broader education and pipeline gaps.

*“We don’t have enough women in STEM. It’s hard to find women computer engineers.”*

Survey respondent from Türkiye

Some companies also reported internal resistance or misconceptions about fairness, including concerns about reverse discrimination.

*“Many think it’s unfair to capable men and say it is reverse discrimination. It’s a tough conversation to navigate.”*

Survey respondent from South Korea

This highlights the need for clear communication, internal buy-in, and change management strategies alongside policy development.

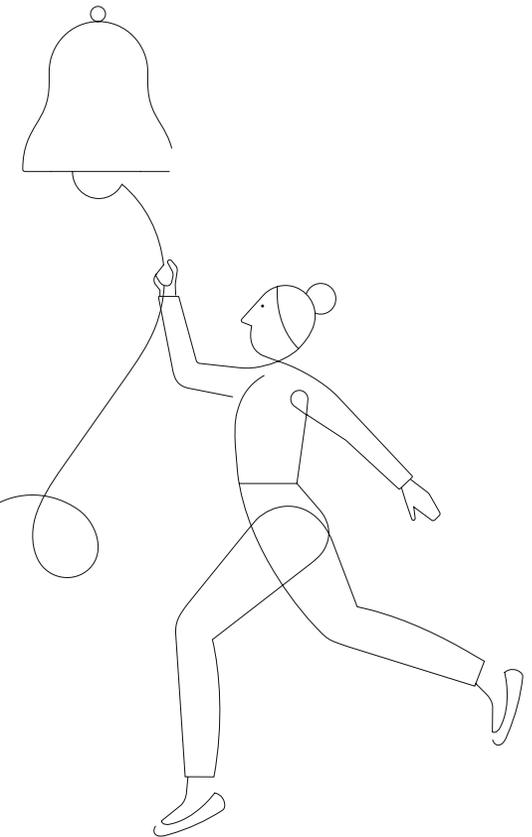
Other widespread challenges include:

**Lack of** gender-disaggregated data to monitor and report on progress.  
**Competing** business priorities, leading to fatigue or loss of momentum over time.  
**Despite** these difficulties, companies overwhelmingly described their WEPs journey as transformative.

*“Integrating the WEPs has meant challenging deep-rooted assumptions and reshaping how success is defined across all levels of the business. The real work has been in turning principles into culture—quietly, consistently, and without shortcut.”*

Survey respondent from Libya

The key takeaway from the survey is that implementing the WEPs is not a box-ticking exercise but a process that demands patience, persistence and purpose, especially when the path is challenging.



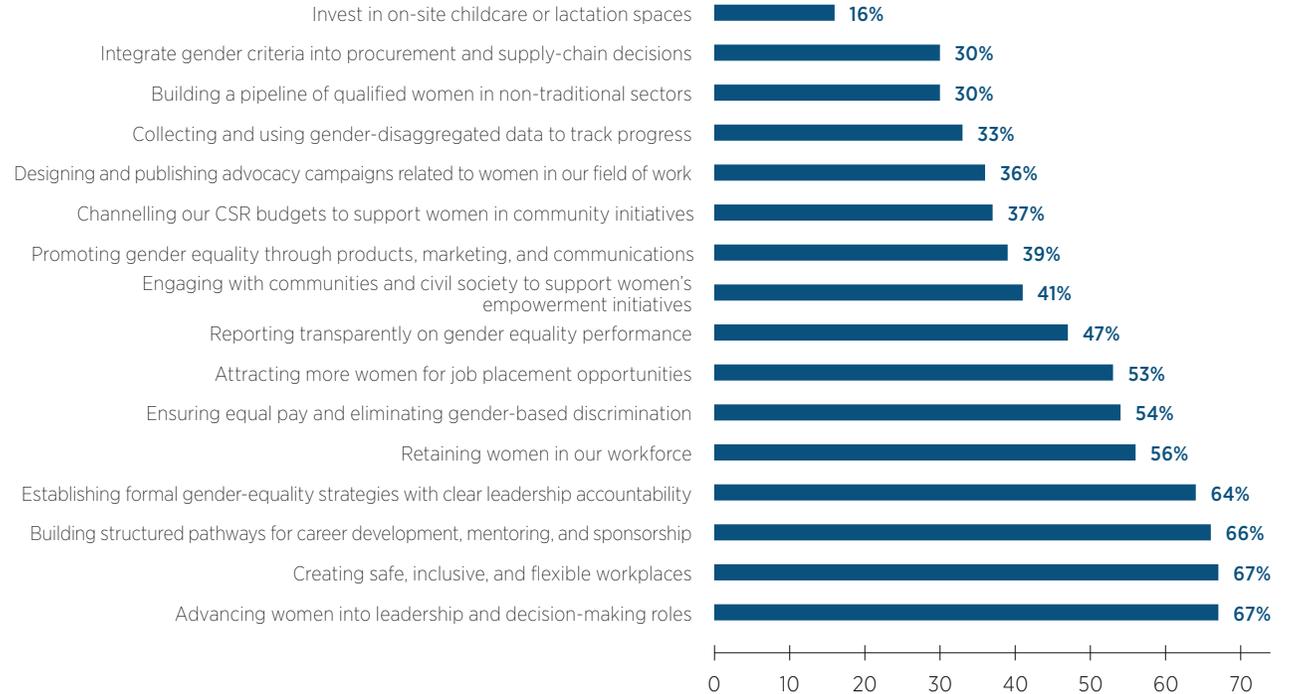
# 8. Priorities and future plans

Companies are prioritizing internal transformation, with marketplace and infrastructure actions lagging behind.

**67%** will prioritize women’s leadership and inclusive workplace culture.

**16%** plan to invest in on-site childcare or lactation spaces.

Looking ahead over the next three to five years (*Figure 11*), companies are signaling a strategic shift from ad hoc gender equality efforts toward more systemic, business-integrated approaches. Advancing women into leadership and decision-making roles, fostering safe, inclusive, and flexible workplaces, and creating structured pathways for career progression—such as mentoring and sponsorship—emerge as top priorities. These actions suggest a growing recognition that gender equality is not only a social imperative but also a lever for organizational performance and resilience.



Priority areas over the next 3-5 years

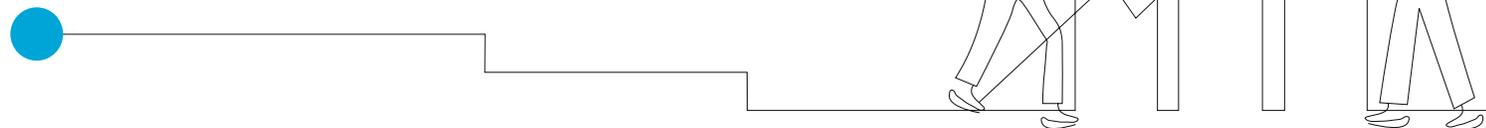
FIGURE 11

Equally significant is the increasing emphasis on formalizing gender-equality strategies with clear leadership accountability, reflecting a move toward embedding equality into governance and operational frameworks. At the same time, companies are focusing on retention and workplace equality—aiming to keep women in the workforce while actively addressing pay gaps and discriminatory practices. This points to a deeper understanding that achieving gender parity requires sustained effort across the employee lifecycle, from recruitment and advancement to equitable compensation and inclusive culture.

In contrast to internal workplace priorities, far fewer companies are planning action in areas that require external engagement or infrastructure investment. Integrating gender considerations into procurement and supply-chain decisions remains a low priority, suggesting that gender-responsive sourcing is still seen as peripheral rather than strategic. Similarly, limited plans to invest in on-site childcare or lactation facilities point to an ongoing gap in supporting the structural needs that enable women's full

participation in the workforce. These trends highlight a disconnect between internal policy commitments and the broader ecosystem changes needed to drive sustainable, system-wide gender equality.

Encouragingly, many companies are eager to go further: more than half expressed interest in joining focus groups, sharing case studies, or deepening collaboration with UN Women. The momentum is there—now is the time to build on it.



# 9. WEPs resources and activities

**WEPs sessions are building knowledge and accelerating action and impact.**

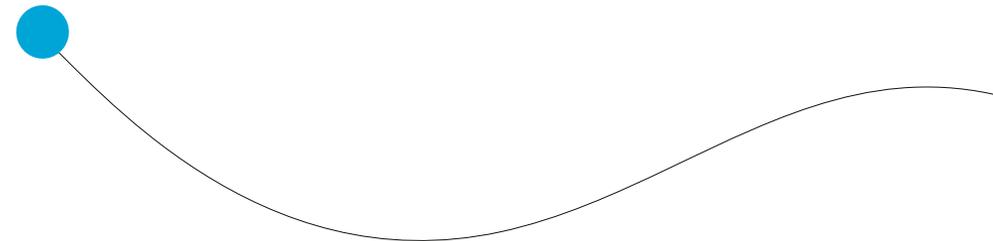
**93%** rated the “WEPs Basics” as useful or very useful.

The WEPs initiative offers a robust suite of tools and resources designed to support signatories at every stage of their gender equality journey. These include guidance notes, case studies, templates, and toolkits to help companies translate the WEPs into practical action. Monthly webinars provide an interactive platform for awareness-raising, knowledge sharing, and peer learning, with a focus on good and emerging practices as well as deep dives into specific gender equality issues. All resources are developed to meet the needs of WEPs signatories and are aimed at building capacity, strengthening accountability, and accelerating progress toward gender equality across the world.

Companies report tangible benefits from WEPs implementation. For 42 per cent, the WEPs now serve as a strategic framework guiding their work. Over half (52%) say WEPs have strengthened their equality-focused culture, and 42 per cent report a reputational boost. Market-facing outcomes, such as customer loyalty (14%) and investor engagement (13%), are less commonly cited.

The WEPs resources, events and learning sessions are proving to be highly effective in building knowledge, strengthening capacity, and inspiring companies to take concrete action. In 2024, more than half of all survey respondents reported that they—or someone in their company—participated in at least one session organized by UN Women.

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive. The most popular sessions were ‘Basics about the WEPs’ (e.g. WEPs 101 and WEPs Induction), receiving a 93 per cent satisfaction rate, with participants praising it as a practical and motivating entry point into the WEPs journey. The WEPs Deep Dive series also received a high satisfaction rate (90%). Other sessions, including network meetings and thematic virtual events, were also widely rated as “very useful,” overall reflecting strong appreciation for both the content and peer-learning opportunities.



### Participation in these sessions led to meaningful outcomes.

**93%** reported improved understanding of gender equality and the WEPs.

As a result, companies adopted or reformed workplace policies, using WEPs as a strategic framework, and strengthened peer connections across industries and regions.

At the same time, the data suggests there is room to expand this impact further. Among the companies that did not attend or were unsure (48%), the most common reason was simply not being aware of the sessions—especially among newer signatories. This highlights a valuable opportunity to strengthen outreach and accessibility, so that more companies can benefit from the resources already available.

Companies also shared suggestions to expand reach and value, including greater alignment with other initiatives, peer mentoring, recognition incentives, and more tailored support for different company sizes and capacities.

Overall, WEPs sessions are catalyzing real progress—and by deepening engagement and addressing access barriers, they can become an even more powerful driver of implementation across all sectors and regions.



# 10. Recommendations

Companies are calling for more hands-on support, tailored tools, and peer connections to turn their WEPs commitments into measurable results.

**52%** are ready to join deeper engagement efforts like focus groups, interviews, or case studies with UN Women.

**The most** common request from companies was practical, step-by-step tools tailored to SMEs and local contexts to help them start and stay on track.

As companies look to deepen their WEPs implementation over the next two years, their message to UN Women is clear: they need more practical, localized and hands-on support to translate commitments into sustained change. Many are eager to engage in peer mentoring and participate in spaces to share and learn together.

Top of the list is the need for SME-friendly reporting templates, tailored training, and peer-learning networks—especially for new and smaller companies. Many companies emphasized the importance of step-by-step guidance, sector- and country-specific case studies, and check-ins for accountability, particularly during the early stages of implementation.



*“The most valuable support would be guidance on where and how to start... and mentoring to help us stay on track.”*

Survey respondent from Georgia

Across regions and sectors, companies repeatedly asked for stronger local engagement. Suggestions included in-country workshops, communities of practice organized by industry, and mentors who understand national contexts, labour laws and cultural norms. Several companies also highlighted the motivational power of public recognition, such as case studies, spotlights, awards or other forms of visibility on UN Women platforms.

Crucially, many companies called for support that goes beyond the workplace—especially in engaging suppliers, sourcing from women-owned businesses, or attracting gender-lens investors. A frequently mentioned idea was a searchable directory of local WEPs signatories—both buyers and suppliers—and gender advocates to facilitate collaboration and market alignment, especially for SMEs in the Global South.

The final open-ended question confirmed these themes. Companies want practical tools they can adapt, mentoring from peers, and spaces to share and learn together—whether through regional roundtables or online platforms. This sense of connection, shared experience, and visibility is what many say drives real momentum.

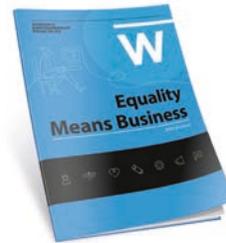
Ultimately, companies do not lack ambition. But to move from principle to practice, they need lighter reporting burdens, contextualized support, credible incentives, and human connection. By expanding peer-learning platforms, offering more localized assistance, and recognizing progress, the WEPs Secretariat has a unique opportunity to help signatories turn aspiration into lasting impact.

## Starting the WEPs Journey



**Welcome and Communication Package**

<https://www.weps.org/resource/weps-welcome-package-0>



**WEPs Handbook**

<https://www.weps.org/resource/equality-means-business-weps-brochure>



**10 Action Points of a WEPs Signatory**

<https://www.weps.org/resource/10-action-points-weps-signatory>

## Workplace, marketplace and community



**Gender Responsive Recruitment Checklist**

<https://www.weps.org/resource/checklist-gender-responsive-recruitment>



**Gender Responsive Procurement Assessment Tool**

<https://www.weps.org/resource/weps-gender-responsive-procurement-assessment-tool>

## Governance and leadership



### WEPs Gender Gap Analysis Tool

<https://www.weps.org/resource/weps-gender-gap-analysis-tool>



### Inclusive Action Planning

<https://learn.weps.org/course/index.php>



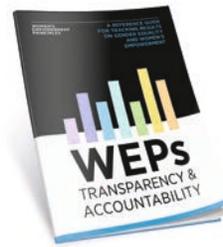
### WEPs Gender Action Plan Template

<https://www.weps.org/resource/weps-gender-action-plan-template>



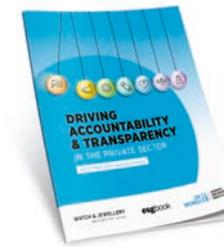
### WEPs Toolkit

<https://www.weps.org/resource/weps-toolkit>



### WEPs Transparency and Accountability Framework

<https://www.weps.org/resource/weps-transparency-and-accountability-framework-reference-guide>



### Driving Accountability and Transparency in the Private Sector

<https://www.weps.org/resource/driving-accountability-transparency-private-sector>

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