



Introduction

The Women's Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment (WEEE) Act was led by Senators Boozman (R-AR), Cardin (D-MD), Shaheen (D-NH), and Rubio (R-FL) and supported by the Coalition for Women's Economic Empowerment. This bill makes it U.S. policy to reduce gender disparities related to economic participation and opportunity, work towards eliminating gender-based violence, support women's property rights, and improve the ability of women and girls to shape their futures.

Why it matters

Globally, more than one billion women are currently left out of the formal financial system. Not only is this a human rights issue, but these disparities significantly limit economic growth. Research shows that achieving gender parity in economic activity could add as much as \$28 trillion to annual global GDP by 2025. Women's economic empowerment is foundational to their capacity to thrive across a lifetime. Amongst other things, this includes a safe and quality education, freedom from violence, equal access to land and property, and the highest possible standard of well-being.

Quick facts:

- Women earn 23 percent less than men around the world.
- One in three women has experienced gender-based violence.
- Less than 20 percent of landholders are women.
- If women had equal access to agricultural resources, they could increase yields 30% which could reduce the number of undernourished people in the world by 17%.

Neelima's Story

Neelima, 30, is a wife and mother of two children in the coastal region of South West Bangladesh. When high unclean water prevented her community from effectively growing produce, her family faced an almost daily struggle to feed their daughters. In 2016, Neelima was identified as a lead farmer for a USAID Nobo Jatra climate smart demonstration plot. Bangladeshi women often find it difficult to explore roles outside of the home due to social norms, but Neelima's neighbors and the wider village community knew she could excel in this new role. Once she completed the training, Neelima was able to provide for her family and she became the community focal point for 200 general producers within her jurisdiction. As a leader of a producer group comprising 25 members, 12 of whom are female, Neelima is truly a beacon of hope and possibility to both men and women in her community.



We know what works

- Microenterprise and microfinance development programs, which seek to reduce by giving loans to female entrepreneurs for both small and medium businesses, have been a useful mechanism to help families weather economic shocks.
- Savings groups primarily comprised of women are recognized as a vital entry point to formal financial services, especially for poor and very poor women. Key to these outcomes is investing in financial literacy, business leadership training, and mentorship.
- Inspiring a worldview that empowers women to make positive changes in their own lives and improve the way they relate to family members, other community members, and the environment.

ASK

This bill articulates that it is the policy of the United States to reduce gender disparities in economic participation and opportunity, to decrease gender-based violence, to support women's rights to own land, and to increase the capability of women and girls to determine their life outcomes. Please cosponsor the Women's Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act (S.3247).