

Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative Communications Strategy

Context

Helping small and medium-sized businesses that are owned and run by women generates high returns for developing countries – by creating jobs, increasing incomes, and reducing poverty. This is the focus of We-Fi, and the communications strategy outlined here aims to support and enhance the initiative. It has been developed by the Secretariat with input from We-Fi implementing partners and observers.

We-Fi is now in its second year of a five-year program, after a successful launch in 2017 at the World Bank Group/IMF Annual meetings, with substantial press and social media coverage in key regions. The communications program has helped keep up the momentum, including through select Leadership Champion outreach, special side events at the World Government Summit in Dubai and at the World Bank Group/IMF Spring Meetings in Washington, and announcements about funding.

We-Fi funded programs and projects are still in the early stages of implementation, and may not have far-reaching results to highlight before mid to late 2019. In the meantime, it will be important to keep stakeholders regularly informed while continuing to make the case for investments in We-Fi's work and its beneficiaries.

Communications Strategy Objectives

Promote We-Fi programs and projects, while headlining results and the value they create:

- Continue building global support for We-Fi and its efforts to stimulate women's entrepreneurship in SMEs.
- Engage current and potential donors through regular updates of progress in administration, operationalization and timeline towards having results available to showcase.
- Lay the foundation for and inspire future investments in support of women's entrepreneurship in We-Fi eligible countries/territories.

Goals

- **Inform** - Regularly update donors on progress in administration, operationalization, and results timeline for We-Fi investments.
- **Advocate** - Demonstrate to stakeholders how supporting the success of women-owned small and medium-sized businesses can help break the cycle of poverty while enabling women to help themselves. Inspire and educate many advocates to tell the We-Fi story – the Leadership Champions, entrepreneurs from developing countries, and influencers with platforms, among others. Provide them with the right materials on a regular basis to make it easy for them to be advocates. Maximize partners' channels.
- **Showcase** - Once available, showcase results from current investments, including to key donor constituent-facing outlets and select recipient country publications, to help bolster the regional and country-level work.

Approach

- **Focus** – Identify engagements that have the most impact given available resources, and do them well.
- **Strategic** – Before commencing an activity, ensure that it:
 - maps to the strategy’s goals
 - offers the biggest “bang for the buck”
 - amplifies our messages to key audiences
- **Narrative** – Further refine the overarching narrative that all stakeholders can use.

Audiences

Our strategy focuses on key audiences:

- Decision-makers and public and private sector influencers in donor countries as well as the We-Fi Governing Committee
- Recipient country governments, private sector and NGOs that are engaged in women’s entrepreneurship

Program Elements

Core Program

- **Information flow** - An email package will be delivered to each Governing Committee member and Implementing Partner (IP), including their communications contact, every other month.
- **Events – The Secretariat will host two dedicated events per year, which could include:**
 - A Regional Summit in a recipient country;
 - An event at either the World Bank Spring or Annual Meetings.We-Fi will also participate in other topical events, as appropriate, such as the Global Entrepreneur Summit.
- **Website** – We-Fi’s website traffic continues to grow. All donors, partners and friends of We-Fi are encouraged to link to it in social media posts and press releases. We continue to update and refresh the site as needed.

Traditional and Social Media

- **News** – Announcements will be planned for maximum international impact with key publications. Each January, we will map out the expected announcements for the year. See Annex III.
- **Social media** – Sample posts with graphics will be provided to the Governing Committee, partners, and observers on a regular basis. Social media focus days will encourage We-Fi participants to cross-promote each other’s posts. We are evaluating establishing a We-Fi twitter account in the coming year. We will continue to use social media channels of the World Bank Group, Governing Committee members, Leadership Champions, and Implementing Partners where these have strong engagement. The hashtag #WeFi continues to be promoted via We-Fi host and partner channels.

- **Op-ed/blog outlines** – Develop an op-ed/blog outline with current results data that can be used to develop individual op-eds for those on the Governing Committee as they see fit. A different version could be developed for the Leadership Champions.

Cross-cutting

- **Leadership Champions** – The We-Fi Leadership Champions are an asset. They will receive quarterly updates with a menu of options to help them amplify We-Fi messages. On social media focus days, Champions can choose to interact with one another and We-Fi partners. A full Champions communications plan is in development.
- **The Faces of We-Fi** – We will gather and share the stories of women entrepreneurs from developing countries. These women will be able to tell how being an entrepreneur changed their lives and those of their families and communities. A larger plan is under development to showcase these stories.
 - **Phase I:** The first round will feature entrepreneurs from other programs, as we await results from We-Fi projects. We could help these women tell their stories by supporting writing and translation.
 - **Phase II: We-Fi Entrepreneur Stories** – Once entrepreneurs are identified and have had time to show results, we will engage photographers, videographers and writers to tell their stories. Images and brief low-tech videos could be captured on-site and shared via social media depending on budget. At the end of the initiative, a We-Fi success reel could be compiled, among many other uses depending on budget.

Optional:

- **We-Fi Knowledge Kit** - Build a knowledge kit based on existing materials to inform influencers who speak regularly on gender equality in the developing world. We will scout agendas for relevant conferences and symposiums to identify speakers on these topics as well as influencers from media coverage and social media. The kit will make them knowledgeable enough about the program to talk about it, helping expand our reach. These influencers would not be members of the press.

Challenges and Risks

Effective communications can help mitigate potential reputational risks. Potential issues include:

- The media climate - Competition for international news coverage is fierce. We-Fi news not only competes with domestic news in each country, but also with other gender issues and development news. Journalists could impose their perspective on stories and select angles that distract from the We-Fi mission. This can be mitigated to some extent by educating reporters and continuing to generate positive news.
- Negative incidents in projects – Implementing Partners have rigorous vetting in place to help prevent such an occurrence, and a communications plan in place should a project become involved in negative publicity.
- Lack of qualitative stories – The projects that We-Fi is investing in take time to show progress. And once progress has started, language and location can be barriers to sharing some stories widely. We plan to talk about the success of other women entrepreneurs in the developing world until we have specific We-Fi projects to highlight.

ANNEX – DETAILS OF STRATEGY

Messages

- *Unlocking women’s economic potential can make a huge contribution to global growth, prosperity and peace.*
 - Entrepreneurship, particularly through small and medium enterprises, has proven to help break the cycle of poverty for women, families, and their communities in the developing world.
- *We-Fi’s goal is to unlock billions of dollars in financing for women-owned/led small and medium-sized business by supporting activities that improve access to finance, markets, technology, mentoring, and other services while also creating an enabling policy, legal and regulatory environment across developing countries.*
 - Harnessing the public and private sectors opens new doors for women entrepreneurs.
- *Through We-Fi’s first round of activities alone, the initiative expects to support over 45,000 women owned/led businesses and create 57,400 new jobs, improve sales and profits for these businesses, and address a wide variety of legal and regulatory reforms.*
- *We-Fi is a collaborative partnership of governments, multilateral development banks (MDBs), and other public and private stakeholders.*
- We-Fi can reach scale and make a huge impact by using grant money to leverage additional support.
- With support from 14 governments, We-Fi has already raised over \$350 million; the first round of funds allocated to programs and projects amounting to \$120 million is mobilizing and additional \$1.6 billion.
 - With these funds – and a focus on leverage and maximizing financing for development – We-Fi will help knock down the major barriers facing women entrepreneurs in developing countries by supporting projects that reach scale and bring new approaches.
 - In April 2018, just six months after opening for business, We-Fi announced its first round of funding.
 - Some 58% of first-round funds will be directed to IDA/FCS settings, with some 47% expected to go to projects in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- *In October 2018, We-Fi announced its second call for proposals, which closed on February 4, 2019. Allocations under this second round are expected in April 2019.*

2019 Communications Focus

The focus in 2019 will be to continue to grow the influence of We-Fi and its programs. Since we won’t have We-Fi entrepreneurs ready to highlight until later in the year, we will tell the stories of other women entrepreneurs from the developing world. In addition to the core program, we anticipate the following milestones:

News – Highlights will include the release of the Annual Report, allocations for the second round of funding, and a possible third call for proposals.

- Second-round funding announcement - April 10 or 11: press release, event at World Bank Spring Meetings, social media and Champion outreach.

- Annual Report (date TBD): send to select members of the press with executive summary, social media and Champion outreach.
- Third call for proposals (TBC): press release, social media and Champion outreach.

Faces of We-Fi

We will identify and develop three-to-five stories of women entrepreneurs in the developing world for in promoting the causes We-Fi supports.

- Provide quotes and success stories for announcements, the We-Fi website and social media
- Demonstrate the value of We-Fi by showcasing how our program can help break the cycle of poverty
- Provide reporters with additional fodder for coverage

We-Fi Summit in West Africa

This event is being rescheduled from earlier in the year and will provide a forum for regional attention.

Anticipated We-Fi Milestones

- April (tbc): Publication of We-Fi's first Annual Report.
- April 10: We-Fi's Second Round of funding allocations expected to be announced.
- April 17: We-Fi Summit in West Africa.
- July (tbc): We-Fi funded phase of IsDB BRAVE Women project expected to begin yielding results. We-Fi funded ADB project in Sri Lanka may also produce early case studies.
- October 2019: World Bank Annual Meetings; We-Fi Governing Committee to meet in sidelines, opportunity for a We-Fi sponsored event.
- October (tbc): Possible third call for proposals.
- April 2020: World Bank Spring Meetings; We-Fi Governing Committee to meet in sidelines; opportunity for a We-Fi sponsored event.
- April 2020: Possible announcement of third round of funding allocations.

We-Fi Website

The We-Fi.org website, launched in April 2018, attracts 3,000 users each month; 80 percent are first-time visitors.¹ The site supports We-Fi's goals by informing the public of our activities, highlighting the need for interventions that support women's entrepreneurship. It positions We-Fi as the leading global initiative to advance women's entrepreneurship in developing countries, and provides project details and results to show how donor funds are making a difference for women entrepreneurs and their communities.

¹ For comparison, the GFF website, launched in 2015, receives roughly 4000 monthly visitors (2018 calendar year average), about a third more traffic than We-Fi's. The GFF spends roughly a third more on its communication staffing with 3 FTE.

We-Fi's online reach has grown. A quarter of users are from the United States and 20 percent from Africa, followed by users from India, the UK, Canada, China, France, and Germany. Almost half access the site from mobile devices. The increase in traffic follows media coverage from events and press releases.

A "Programs and Projects" page detailing proposals approved under the first round and their expected results was recently added. It will be expanded following the second-round funding announcements. As project results materialize, the site will be the primary platform for highlighting We-Fi's achievements and lessons, with content from each active project provided by Implementing Partners including interviews, stories, and images. This will help demonstrate We-Fi's impact on women entrepreneurs and their communities.

As the site continues to expand, updates will be needed to accommodate the growth in content and enhance navigation. The full site is available only in English, with select material in French and Spanish.

ANNEX II – COMMUNICATION RESULTS TO DATE

Results to Date

In its first year, We-Fi communications and advocacy have centered on creating a wider understanding of We-Fi’s rationale, objectives and structure; establishing a brand and narrative; and raising support.

Activities included four We-Fi events (October 2017 at the World Bank/IMF Annual Meetings, February 2018 at the World Government Summit in Dubai, April 2018 at the World Bank/IMF Spring Meetings, and September 2018 in the margins of UNGA), development of the We-Fi website, sponsorship of the One World Media Award for the “Women Entrepreneurs Reporting,” production of collateral, and induction of Leadership Champions with personalized engagement plans to support them in their advocacy role.

We-Fi enjoyed prominent print and broadcast media coverage during its first year of operations and hundreds of thousands of mentions on social media, largely responding to announcements such as We-Fi’s launch and the first round of funding allocations.

We-Fi Events

The four high-level events organized by the Secretariat helped raise awareness and understanding of We-Fi and its objectives. They showcased the stories of successful women entrepreneurs, highlighted how disruptive technologies had contributed to their success, and discussed the barriers women face when trying to build and expand their businesses in difficult environments.

1. **“Taking Women-owned Businesses to the Next Level,”** October 2017 at the World Bank Group–IMF Annual Meetings. Following We-Fi’s first operational meeting, this public event showcased the stories of three successful women entrepreneurs and the barriers women face when trying to build and expand their businesses. World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim hosted a panel discussion with Ivanka Trump, Advisor to the U.S. President; United Arab Emirates Minister of International Cooperation Her Excellency Reem Bint Ebrahim Al Hashimy; Steven Puig, CEO, Banco BHD; and Philippe Le Houérou, CEO of IFC. The event attracted an in-person audience of over 500 and was streamed live by CNN and the World Bank.
2. **“Women Entrepreneurs Rising Worldwide,” February 2018 at the World Government Summit in Dubai.** Jointly organized by the We-Fi Secretariat, IFC’s Dubai office, and the UAE government as part of the Summit, the event featured a panel discussion with Bank Group President Jim Kim; UAE Minister of International Cooperation Reem Al Hashimy; and Fadi Ghandour, CEO of Wamda Capital. Three women entrepreneurs also spoke about their inspiring journeys in growing their businesses and what had helped them succeed. The audience included representatives from We-Fi member country governments, MDBs, the W20, UN Women, and the private sector.
3. **“Disrupting the Gender Divide: The Power of Online Platforms,”** April 2018 at the World Bank Group–IMF Spring Meetings. This event, cohosted by the We-Fi Secretariat and IFC, showcased two successful women entrepreneurs with online businesses and highlighted how disruptive technologies had contributed to their success. Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim addressed the importance of women participating in the economic life of developing countries. The panel included two We-Fi Leadership Champions: Anne Finucane, Vice Chairman, Bank of America, United States; and Ulla Tørnæs, Minister

for Development Cooperation, Denmark. An estimated 300 people were in the audience, including many notable attendees; and the event was streamed on the World Bank Live website.

4. **“Building a Better World for Women Entrepreneurs,”** September 2018, New York, on the margins of the UN General Assembly. The inaugural meeting of We-Fi’s Leadership Champions, the event was organized by the We-Fi Secretariat in partnership with the UAE government. It brought together the Champions along with other high-level representatives from We-Fi sponsoring and recipient countries; We-Fi Governing Committee members; other stakeholders, including the MDBs, UN Women, W20, ONE Campaign, and Vital Voices; and other key influencers. The objectives of the event were to: (1) boost awareness of We-Fi and its goal of women’s economic empowerment through entrepreneurship; (2) provide Champions and We-Fi partners an opportunity to convey their key messages and perspectives on women’s economic empowerment and entrepreneurship, with a view to informing We-Fi’s future directions; and (3) facilitate interaction and knowledge-sharing among stakeholders and influencers.

Leadership Champions

The 18 Leadership Champions have been nominated, confirmed, and briefed by the Secretariat individually. A range of advocacy opportunities have been identified in line with their individual interests and experience.

Early activities by the Champions in FY 2018 included:

- Danièle Henkel marked her nomination as a Champion at an event hosted by Minister Bibeau of Canada in Montreal and in an interview with Radio Canada.
- We-Fi Champion Ulla Tørnæs, Denmark’s Minister for Development, gave an interview to Womanity – Women in Unity, a gender-based radio program produced and presented by Dr. Amaleya Goneos-Malka and broadcast by SABC across Africa. Tørnæs spoke about her career, her goals as minister, and We-Fi’s work in supporting women entrepreneurs.
- Champions Anne Finucane and Ulla Tørnæs addressed a live audience at the *Disrupting the Gender Divide* public event during the World Bank Group Spring Meetings.
- Indonesia’s Minister of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Susi Pudjiastuti shared her personal story as a successful entrepreneur in the fisheries and transportation sectors during the World Bank Group Annual Meetings in Bali.

Print and Broadcast Media

We-Fi benefited from significant early media coverage centering on its launch event and the announcement of the first round of funding allocations.

We-Fi’s October 2017 launch received prominent coverage from the New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, Boston Herald, ABC News, Devex, Bloomberg, and Al Jazeera, among others. Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim authored an op-ed featuring We-Fi, published by Inc. Magazine and titled “Why Women-Owned Startups Could End Poverty (and the Numbers Back It Up)”.

The first round of funding was announced by press release in April 2018, generating several strong articles from Devex. The Asian Development Bank published a press release announcing its funding award, generating further coverage of We-Fi in Asia.

One World Media Awards

The One World Media Awards took place in London in June 2018, including the first Women Entrepreneurs Reporting Award, which was sponsored by We-Fi. Of three shortlisted entries, “Jordan’s Water Wise Women” took the trophy – a short documentary film produced for Al Jazeera about an initiative that trains local women as plumbers.

We-Fi supported this award in recognition of the role that quality media coverage can play, not just in highlighting the barriers that women face in starting and growing businesses, but also in showcasing how women have overcome daunting challenges to build successful businesses.

Social Media

The #WeFi hashtag first featured in social media posts after the announcement of We-Fi at the Hamburg G20 meeting in July 2017. During the following week, We-Fi received 12,000 direct mentions and 155,000 further engagements on Twitter (including likes, comments, shares, and retweets). Facebook channels of major news outlets also saw high engagement (Fox News, The Washington Post, ABC News, PBS News Hour, and The Washington Times) with further engagement on YouTube via CNN. Some 82 percent of the conversation in social media could be attributed to We-Fi donor countries.

In the week after We-Fi’s official launch in October 2017, We-Fi was mentioned in 14,700 digital content results, including social media, online news, blogs, and forums. Conversation took place primarily on social media, which generated 140,000 engagements, with Twitter accounting for the largest percentage. On October 14, the “Taking Women-owned Businesses to the Next Level” event, mentions peaked at almost 4,000. Some 88 percent of engagement came from users in We-Fi’s donor countries.

The announcement of We-Fi’s first round of funding and associated event in April 2018 attracted 56,000 engagements on social media, with 6,800 specific mentions, including from the China Global Television Network, the Red Cross, and Council on Foreign Relations. The online broadcast of the event on World Bank Live had 7,000 views and was the top event in live views at the Spring Meetings. Viewers were predominantly located outside the United States; top hits were from India, Algeria, and Egypt, with the majority listening to Arabic, Spanish, or French translations. The Secretariat also produced social media content supporting the funding announcement, which was pushed out by World Bank social media channels and by donors and other implementing partners.

The inaugural meeting of the Leadership Champions in September 2018 was a closed event and not broadcast online. Nevertheless, over 18,000 online engagements were spurred by tweets from guests including Ivanka Trump, USAID’s Michelle Bekkering, Bank Group President Jim Kim, Devex, and the UN Foundation’s Emily Prior. The Secretariat produced a social media package, which was translated into French, Spanish and Arabic and promoted by the World Bank, donors, Leadership Champions, and other implementing partners.