

Gender Equity



A gender equity and human rights promotion initiative of
the World Congress of Muslim Philanthropists





Empowerment through Enlightenment is a gender equity and human rights promotion initiative of the World Congress of Muslim Philanthropists, unveiled at the ECOSOC's special meeting on "Engaging Philanthropy to Promote Women Empowerment and Gender Equality" in 2010.

The stature of WCMP as the premier worldwide forum of Muslim philanthropy and the relationships and agreements it has fostered enables it to address the critical but highly sensitive issue of women's empowerment in majority Muslim societies. WCMP asserts that a rational discussion will be effective only through a convergence of four key components:

- The discussion must be led by Muslims themselves
- The religious dimension must be addressed upfront
- The diversity of cultural perspectives on gender must be acknowledged
- The Muslim male must become enlightened on the religious as well as constitutional rights of women.

WCMP is uniquely positioned to address the multiple conflicts between religious and cultural perspectives on gender equity, and how those conflicts impact poverty, health, education, and civic engagement. The program's overall aim is to make a positive impact on the lives of Muslim women across nations, regions, and cultures. To do that, the Empowerment through Enlightenment program has the following goals:

- To serve as a model for addressing a sensitive topic and for developing concrete guidelines and solutions for policymakers, educators, and opinion makers.
- To enable constructive social dialogue about gender equity in Muslim-majority societies.
- To engage a diverse representation of philanthropic leaders in developing a multi-faceted and multi-sectorial platform for promoting and encouraging female empowerment.
- To identify, promote and support philanthropic standards for addressing gender issues in Muslim-majority societies.
- To identify, promote and support concrete best practice models for encouraging female empowerment in Muslim societies.
- To alter the societal attitude towards women rights, particularly the access to education, share in inheritance, business or asset ownership, consent to marriage, and right to seek divorce and remarriage.

Over the next year, program activities will include

- Formation of a working group with diverse representation of 20-25 grantmakers, legislators, religious scholars, civil society representatives, and subject matter experts [by June 2011]
- Hosting two working group meetings over the course of 12 months.
- Development and ratification of an organizational platform on women and gender, as well as position papers with guidelines for donors and CSOs seeking to assist women in Muslim-majority countries in the areas of health, education, and economic empowerment.
- And finally, dissemination of all documents throughout the policy and philanthropic circles, as well as to CSOs, mosques, academic institutions, and media to reach out to larger audience in the Muslim world.

The World Congress of Muslim Philanthropists is currently recruiting working group members, and funding and program partners for the Empowerment through Enlightenment program. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact WCMP at info@thewcmp.org.

