



WEDU STRATEGY 2025-2027



**From Barriers to Bridges:
Transforming Women's
Leadership in Asia**

Summary version



OUR PURPOSE

We offer lifelong support to women leaders in South and Southeast Asia.

Currently, it will take 134 years to close the global gender leadership gap—roughly five generations beyond the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target.

In South and Southeast Asia alone, over 1 billion women may not realise their full leadership potential because of barriers to accessing four forms of capital: Decisional Capital, Dream Capital, Financial Capital, and Social Capital.

For women leaders in South and Southeast Asia, these barriers are further exacerbated due to three concurrent crises: the climate crisis, the care economy, and constraints to economic development.

The 2025-2027 Wedu Strategy aims to enable women's leadership by deconstructing barriers to the four leadership capitals while targeting the three concurrent crises affecting women in the region.





STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

2025-2027 



 **Enabling women leaders to be resilient in the face of the climate crisis**



 **Shift how society and women leaders think of unpaid care work**



 **Enabling the economic empowerment of women leaders**



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OUR VISION

A world where half of all leaders are women.

OUR MISSION

To provide women leaders in South and Southeast Asia with leadership development opportunities, a lifelong supportive community, and plentiful capital to achieve their leadership aspirations.

We focus on three enabling factors to ensure that women leaders thrive:

01. Capability

We transform women leaders by developing their capabilities and expanding their definition of leadership.

02. Capital

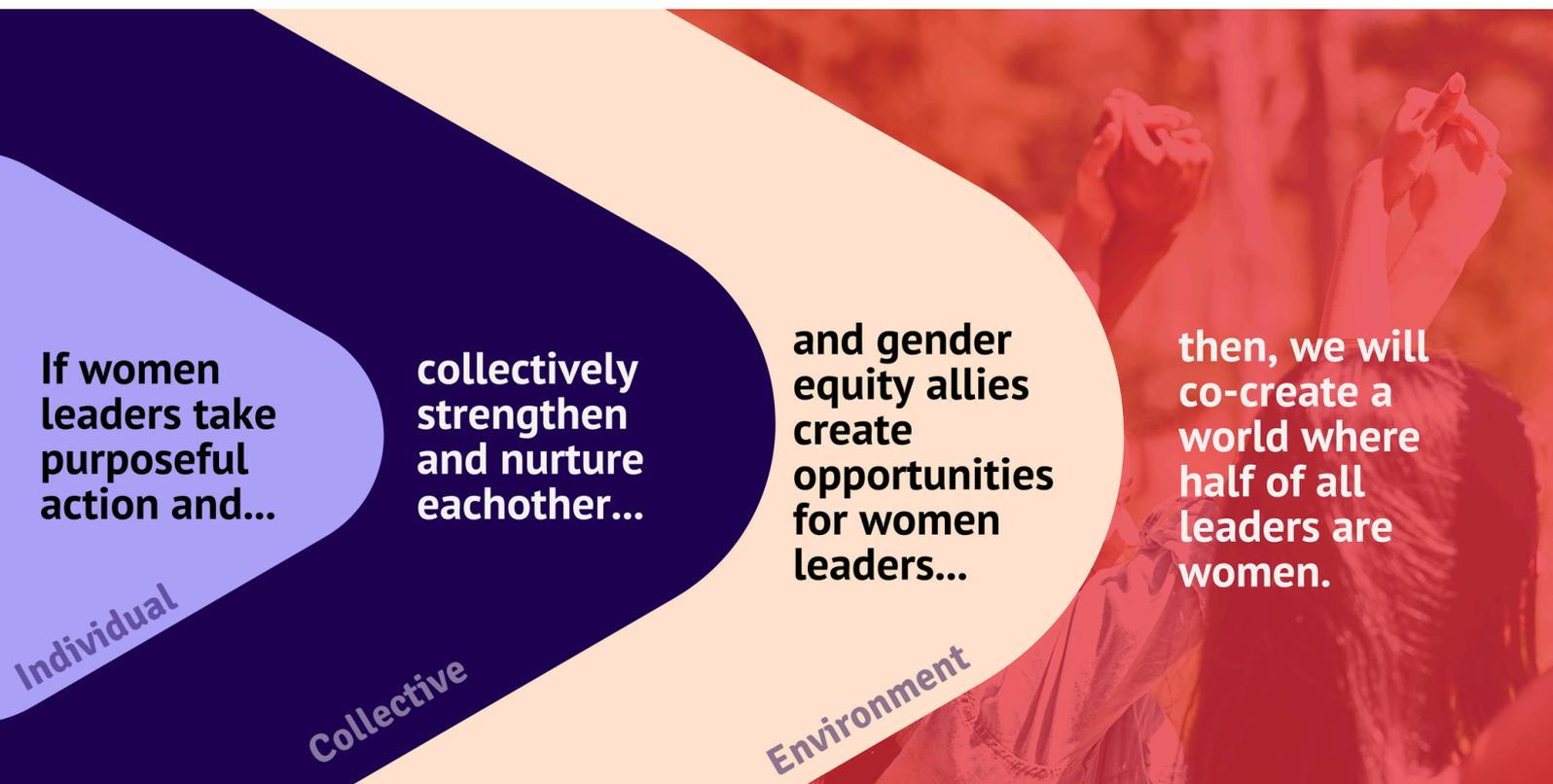
We invest in women leaders so they can access education and leadership development opportunities.

03. Community

We nurture women leaders through a lifelong supportive community of mentors, allies, and friends.



OUR THEORY OF CHANGE



We believe that **if women leaders** who demonstrate a willingness and commitment to their leadership and changemaking ambitions **take:**

(Change Pathway #1) purposeful **action to advance their leadership** and pursue their goals; and

(Change Pathway #2) collectively strengthen and **nurture each other** as leaders

and gender equity allies who demonstrate curiosity, openness, and commitment to closing the gender leadership gap (Change Pathway #3) **create opportunities for and champion women leaders, then we will co-create a world where half of all leaders are women.**



OUR VALUES

We take purposeful action



We embrace a profound sense of responsibility to be a force for change in our contexts, systems, and home planet.

We are passionate about (un)learning and we celebrate reflective practice.

We build collective power



We believe power is multiplied when it's shared. Our work is rooted in principles of solidarity, care, and reciprocity.

We call in diverse allies to be active champions and sponsors of women leaders.

We show up with courage



Because our vision requires boldness, we cultivate resilience and transformational presence.

We lead by example



We strive to model the feminist future we're co-creating, even if we don't get it right 100% of the time.



THE THREE CRISES

exacerbating women's leadership in South and Southeast Asia

The Climate Crisis

Displacement and damage brought by the climate crisis has cascading gendered impacts, affecting women's personal and professional lives. Due to climate change, women lose their livelihoods - increasing economic dependence, intimate partner violence and rates of child marriage- and are burdened by gendered customs and domestic tasks- like gathering water- that are made worse by climate change.

The Care Economy

Women bear the brunt of unpaid caring responsibilities in their families, simultaneously as society does not tend to recognise parenting or caregiving as acts of leadership. In South and Southeast Asia, there is also the often unquestioned) societal expectation that women will care for both the next generation (either their own children or siblings) as well as for the previous generation (their parents and/or grandparents and/or other older caregivers).

Unpaid care work and gendered expectations have a direct impact on women's ability to invest time, money, and energy into their leadership development.

Constraints to Economic Empowerment

Women-led and women-owned Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises in South and Southeast Asia were disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and continue to suffer the consequences of this. Furthermore, the climate crisis is exacerbating the barriers to economic empowerment, as nature-based livelihoods are severely disrupted. Add to this the disproportionate unpaid care work that women bear, and we have a system that is stacked against women's ability to be economically empowered.



THE FOUR LEADERSHIP CAPITALS



We have identified four forms of capital essential to women's leadership. These four capitals enable women to prioritise, pursue, and craft their own leadership journey - supporting their development and moving towards gender parity in the region.

Decisional Capital

The resources and capacity to make sound decisions, and to have your decisions mediated and respected by your environment.

Financial Capital

The economic resources that enable women to pursue their personal goals, gain autonomy and foster independence.

Dream Capital

The ability to dream beyond your immediate circumstances. Through increased *access* and *exposure*, women are able to broaden their imagination on what is possible.

Social Capital

The networks of relationships which are productive towards advancing women's goals.



THE CONTEXT OF WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

Women leaders in the region face structural, economic, and cultural barriers in attaining the four forms of capital.

Women's *decisional capital* is often undermined due to gender biases that question their expertise and leadership abilities. Societal expectations and internalised barriers limit women's ability to dream freely (*dream capital*) and pursue leadership positions, especially in male-dominated industries. Unequal access to financial resources limits women's ability to invest (*financial capital*) in their own leadership development. Women often have limited access to influential social networks that provide career and leadership advancement opportunities (*social capital*).

The combined effects of barriers to capital and the three concurrent crises have intergenerational and profound impacts on women leaders in South and Southeast Asia. These impacts do not only affect women leaders but also their families, communities, and the next generation of girls and women leaders.



OUR SOLUTION

BUILD CAPABILITY

Through online and in-person, introductory and in-depth leadership programmes, and our Global Mentorship Programme, we enable women to develop the personal and professional skills necessary to reach their leadership goals.

INCREASE CAPITALS

Through our education funding programme, we enable women to flexibly pursue further education. Through education, women expand their dreams, build important networks, and are able to access better economic opportunities.

PROVIDE COMMUNITY

The Wedu Community offers women a safe space to learn, un-learn and share stories - building a self-sustaining network of women guiding and supporting each other in their leadership journeys. Women also get access to a global network of mentors, practical resources, learning events and development opportunities.



HOW WE AMPLIFY OUR IMPACT

All of our programmes are customisable, accessible and flexible - allowing us to bring women's leadership development to other organisations through a paid-partnership model.

Partner with us!

Send an email to directors@weduglobal.org or learn more about the partnerships we offer by visiting our website, [click here](#).

Fostering a global movement

We connect global mentors and regional industry experts to the organisations and women leaders that need them.

Enabling women leaders in diverse sectors

We offer tailored mentorship and leadership programmes to any industry and/or organisation.

Cooperation for impact

Through paid-partnerships we reach more women and increase our impact across the region.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY #1

Strategic Goal

1,000 women leaders in South and Southeast Asia have the skills, resources, and networks to drive climate-resilient solutions by 2027.

**Enabling women
leaders to be
resilient in the face
of the climate crisis**

Outcomes: The change we want to see by 2027

1. Women leaders are leading climate-resilience projects in their communities.
2. Increased access to education financing for women pursuing climate-related leadership roles or studies.
3. Strengthened mentorship and peer-support networks that enhance women's capacity to address climate challenges.
4. Our leadership development and mentorship expertise is being utilised by climate-focused organisations.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY #2

Strategic Goal

By 2027, addressing unpaid care work is recognised as a critical factor in advancing women's leadership, by women leaders and our allies.

**Shift how society
and women
leaders think of
unpaid care work**

Outcomes: The change we want to see by 2027

1. Women leaders supported by Wedu will benefit from improved and accessible Leadership Development Programmes addressing the unique challenges faced by carers.
2. Women affected by the multiple-care burden will have increased access to targeted education financing to alleviate the barriers posed by caregiving duties.
3. Wedu women leaders and allies view unpaid care work as both an act of leadership and a potential barrier, highlighted through conversations, events, and campaigns.
4. Wedu partners use data captured from Wedu programmes in their advocacy work.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY #3

Strategic Goal

By 2027, enhance the economic empowerment of 1000 women leaders, especially those leading MSMEs through capacity-building, education financing, strategic partnerships, and community support.

Enabling the economic empowerment of women leaders

Outcomes: The change we want to see by 2027

1. Women leaders gain skills to grow and sustain MSMEs through tailored leadership modules and mentorship opportunities.
2. Women entrepreneurs access education financing, such as ISAs, to scale businesses.
3. Women-led MSMEs gain visibility and recognition through platforms like Wedu Awards and Local Chapters.
4. Wedu has formalised collaborations with organisations advancing women's economic empowerment.

This strategy is our courageous contribution to bridging the gender leadership gap within our lifetime.

More important than the document itself, is the mindset required to ensure that Wedu continues to enable women leaders until we have co-created a world where half of all leaders are women.

The required mindset is one of continuous innovation—of learning by doing and reflecting as we go. As such, we reserve the right to try, to be brave enough to fail, to learn, to try again, and to adjust course as needed.





Will you join us on this journey and invest in women leading the change?



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directors@weduglobal.org



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Wedu is a not-for-profit foundation working to bridge the gender leadership gap within our lifetime.

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