

Chapter 5: Women Entrepreneurship Programme (WEP)

"I am very grateful for doing the Women Entrepreneurship Programme; through it... I had guts to leave my job three months ago, won a tender for three vacant plots, sold them and is currently negotiating to become a Pam Golding franchisee...and the negotiations are very positive!"

- Pumeza Dziba (WEP delegate)

"My WEP experience has been one of the most exciting experiences of my life. (And I have had an extraordinary life!) I would like to compare myself to a dried out sponge that suddenly had some water sprinkled over it and I could feel myself expanding during the course of the week as my mind was continually stimulated and fed and I soaked up every little bit of it!"

- Lynn Angel (WEP delegate)

5.1 Introduction

Before establishing a training programme for entrepreneurs, as for any other training programme, it is crucial to clearly establish and define the target group's needs, as well as their current level of training. The Women Entrepreneurship Programme (WEP) has done so and focuses on the training needs of potential, start-up and already established women entrepreneurs. The WEP is a training intervention specifically designed and delivered for women, by women, and Figure 5.1 below illustrates the logo that is used by the various role-players of the WEP.

Figure 5.1: The WEP logo as registered with the Companies and Intellectual Property Registration Office (CIPRO)



The WEP was designed after a study conducted by the University of Pretoria (UP) in 2002 and 2003, on constraints to women entrepreneurs' access to finance. The study concluded that women-owned businesses were generally less competitive, and less equipped to present convincing business proposals to financial institutions. The growth of these businesses was very limited and failure rates high. The barriers to accessing finance could all be related to the patriarchal South African legal framework, the socialisation process and the limited business opportunity and experience associated with women as a gender.

This chapter highlights the overview and background of the WEP and explains how and why the programme was established and how it satisfies the training needs of women entrepreneurs. The lessons learned from the WEP pilot programmes are shared. The objectives, outcomes and contributions of the programme are stated and the design and content of the WEP are examined, bringing to light the current strengths and weaknesses of the programme. All the WEP service providers and sponsors are identified and their contributions to the WEP explained. The final sections of this chapter will investigate how the WEP is measured against the improved entrepreneurship training model that was developed in Chapter 3.

5.2 The WEP overview and background

The WEP is intended for women who want to start their own businesses, and for those who have already started their own businesses and want to improve their entrepreneurial and management skills. The WEP also includes potential women entrepreneurs or, as the literature calls them, the would-be entrepreneurs, who represent the most important group from the point of view of government policy. The WEP is a one-stop solution that seeks to improve financial service delivery and access to markets for growth-orientated women-owned small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs); and thus promote women's participation in the economy. The programme will show women that they can conduct business on their own and become financially independent. It integrates personality profiling, business planning training, coaching, access to business networks, access to markets and finance.

The purpose of the WEP is to facilitate the significant growth of women-owned enterprises through offering relevant entrepreneurial training that will enable their enterprises to become more competitive and attractive to financiers. According to Dlamini and Motsepe (2004: 2), the WEP components are in line with the Industrial Finance Corporation (IFC)/World Bank SMME Department development pillars of:

- **Creating and enabling business environment**

The University of Pretoria conducted a study in 2002 and 2003 on constraints to women entrepreneurs' access to finance and other barriers, which identified the need for entrepreneurial training. The main findings of that study informed the design of the WEP.

- **Access to business development services**

The training module on business planning offered under the WEP covers a range of topics (including gender empowerment) deemed relevant to the survival and success of women-owned and managed enterprises in South Africa. It emphasises topics such as financial management, marketing management and networking, as these were found to be the areas in which women entrepreneurs often fall short.

Training is run over a four-week period. During that month participants are given about ten days in between the classroom sessions to work on their business plans. Only those who get at least 50 % for their business plan at the end of the training component are offered certificates of competence by the UP. The rest of the participants who have completed the programme are given certificates of attendance.

- **Access to markets and information**

A business plan simply articulates how one plans to win and grow a sustainable paying customer base; and manage internal resources to minimise the cost of inputs. The starting point of planning a business is therefore the market. Women entrepreneurs in particular struggle to access new and sustainable markets. Their enterprises tend to be smaller and their business concepts traditional. Many women go the route of trying to commercialise domestically acquired skills (for

example catering, cleaning and childcare) rather than looking for actual market needs to fulfil. This lack of market intelligence, personal and business branding techniques and business networks is addressed under the WEP by the Insights SA counselling service, SAIBL and SAWEN market linkage and networking services that will be explained in section 5.4 of this chapter.

- **Access to finance**

As already identified in Chapter 4, entrepreneurs often cite the lack of access to finance as a key barrier to growth. The WEP participants are introduced to an ABSA Bank representative in their area, where it is hoped that ABSA Bank will assign woman relationship bankers to the WEP at selected branches. ABSA relationship banker contact information will be provided to WEP participants at the end of each training sessions. This will enable participants to consult with ABSA Bank on specific issues before submitting their business plans for adjudication. ABSA Bank is one of the sponsors of the WEP, as indicated later in section 5.4.

5.2.1 The WEP pilot programmes

The WEP was piloted in Gauteng in November 2002, when nine participants attended, and again in November 2003, when 16 participants attended. Of the pilot programme it was found that 75 % of the participants passed the training component during the pilot phase and that ABSA Bank considered 30 % of the adjudicated business plans feasible, though it has not yet invited any loan applications (Dhlamini & Motsepe, 2004: 3). Feedback from the pilot phase suggested the following improvements. The partners (identified later in this chapter) responsible for implementing the listed changes appear in brackets:

- The WEP should target growth-oriented women-owned enterprises and screen applications accordingly. The partners should design and apply a suitable screening tool (APDF).
- More time should be given to participants to develop their business plans. This can be achieved by splitting the course into two three-day sections with some time in between. This should give the participants at least two weeks in between training (UP).

- More attention needs to be given to the financial modelling component of the programme, and appropriate software should be distributed as part of the course (APDF).
- More attention should be given to the operational aspect of the business plan and management accounts. The participants should be given a management reporting/ accounts template (UP).
- More attention needs to be given to how to conduct product research and develop new products in the training session (UP).
- Inclusion of a presentation on the company registration process and options by the Department of Trade and Industry; and the protection of intellectual property was recommended by the participants (DTI).
- Pre-, mid- and post assessment of participant understanding and knowledge should be done to monitor progress more closely (UP).
- A team of qualified coaches should be retained to assist with business plan finalisation before adjudication by ABSA Bank. This process should be closely supervised to ensure effectiveness (APDF).
- ABSA Bank should judge the best business plan from each course and the programme should certify the provincial participants. The prizegiving, however, should be done at a national end-of-year function (ABSA Bank).
- More attention is to be given to public relations and media exposure (APDF).

All these improvements have been implemented. The most significant ones are the inclusion of Insights SA in the service delivery consortium; and APDF providing participants with a CD with a financial modelling tool.

Based on this success of the pilot programmes, the sponsors of the WEP decided to roll it out to all South African provinces. The WEP was successfully executed in Gauteng in January and April 2004 with 34 Gauteng based women entrepreneurs. There was a great demand for the programme even at the pilot stages. Twice as many people as could be accommodated registered for the WEP. The next training sessions took place in KwaZulu-Natal in October 2004, Western Cape in April 2005, Free State and Northern Cape combined in June 2005 and the last training that will be included in this study took place in Limpopo in September 2005.

5.2.2 Objectives, outcomes and possible contributions of the WEP

The following objectives are set out in the WEP to train women on how to:

1. Compile a business plan;
2. Start their own business;
3. Grow their own business;
4. Register their own businesses, patents, logos and trademarks;
5. Obtain financial assistance for the start-up or expansion business;
6. Manage the growth of the business;
7. Develop their own products and/or services;
8. Be more creative and innovative in running their own business;
9. Develop a sustainable competitive advantage for their business;
10. Compile financial statements and understand financial aspects of their business;
11. Network with other women in business;
12. Overcome the barriers that women face in a business environment;
13. Be aware of failure signs and know how to turn a troubled business around; and
14. Market their business, products and services effectively.

The objectives will be coordinated with the WEP design and content phases in section 5.3.4.

As learning outcomes after the completion of the WEP participants should be able to:

- prepare and present a business plan;
- use the business plan that they prepared to obtain financial assistance;
- start their own business;
- grow their own business;
- register their businesses, patents, logos and trademarks;
- develop new products or services;
- incorporate the sustainable competitive advantage developed during the programme;
- compile and interpret their own financial statements;
- determine their own break-even analysis for their business;
- improve the general management and marketing skills; and
- improve their confidence and morale levels.

The possible economic contributions of the WEP are: the number of new firms, number of employees, increased turnover and productivity and other impacts on the economy (for example innovation). The possible contributions of the WEP to the individual participant are: self-employment and ability to act as independent operator of venture, personal and business satisfaction, knowledge and skills acquisition, changed attitude and achievement of economic objectives.

5.2.3 The WEP targets and training schedule

The WEP targets as identified in Table 5.1 were set before the actual commencement of training in 2004 and the findings of this study are presented in Chapter 7, which will determine whether the targets set in this chapter were met.

The most important WEP targets are to:

- Screen and profile 240 women entrepreneurs for growth orientation;
- Train and coach 120 growth-orientated women entrepreneurs;
- Assist the WEP participants to mobilise significant amounts of finance;
- Link participating women-owned enterprises to new markets; and
- Facilitate access to the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) business incentives and export support for growth-orientated enterprises.

Table 5.1: The WEP targets

Indicator	Target	Notes
Number of enterprises screened and profiled	240	Branding advice offered to all
Number trained	120	Growth-orientated women entrepreneurs
Number qualified	90	75% get UP qualification
Number financed	36	20% get financed
Increase in turnover	5% (average)	Assessed after six months
Increase in jobs	5% (average)	Assessed after six months

Source: Dlamini and Motsepe, 2004: 13

For the above-mentioned targets to be achieved, it is evident that a training schedule must be provided to make sure that training in the different provinces takes place. Table 5.2 provides the training schedule for the six groups of participants in seven different provinces that were included in this study.

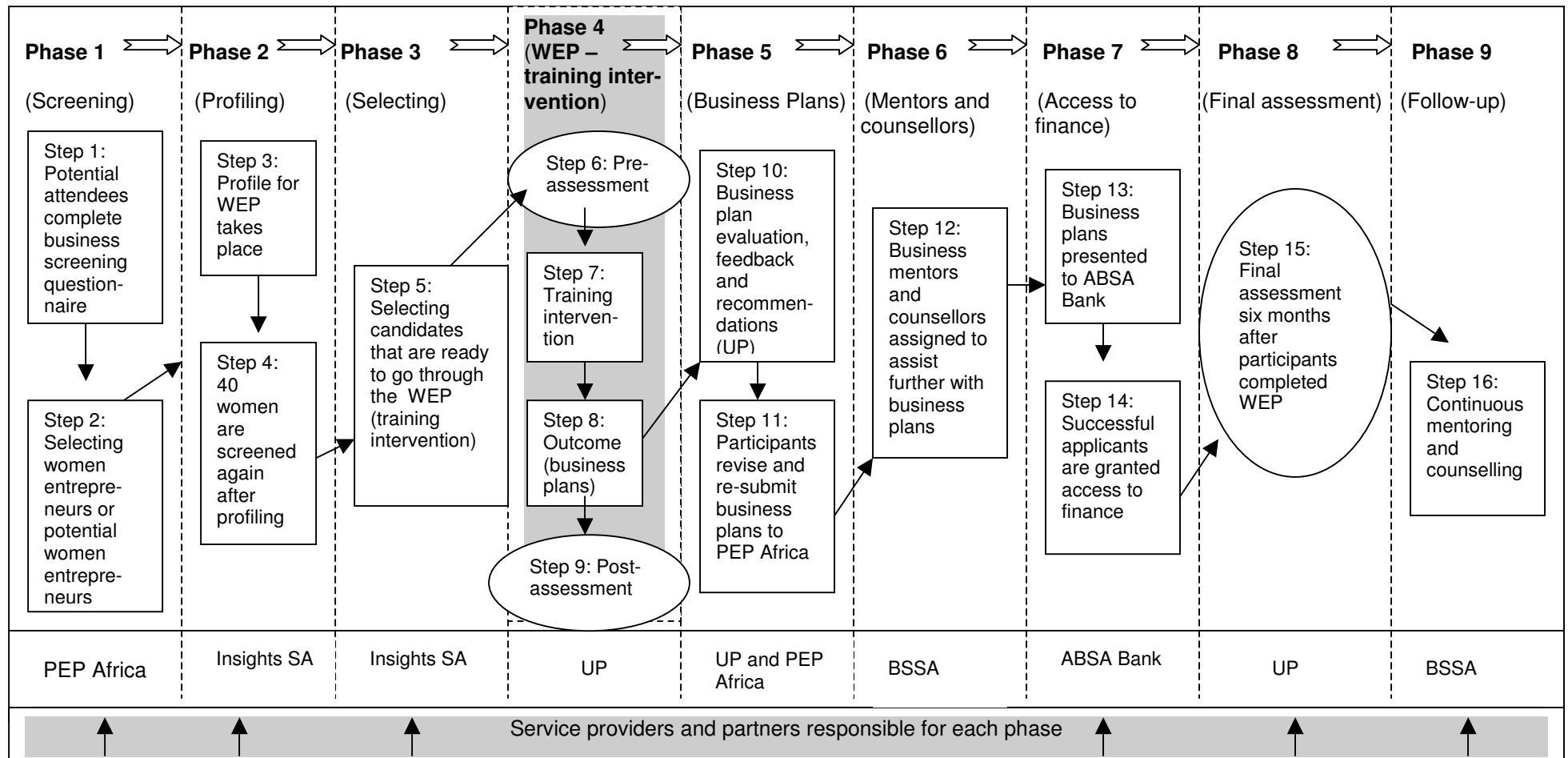
Table 5.2: The WEP training schedule

Training Date	Number of participants (116)	Province	Venue
January 2004	15	Gauteng	University of Pretoria, Pretoria
April 2004	19	Gauteng	University of Pretoria, Pretoria
October 2004	19	KwaZulu-Natal	Holiday Inn, Durban
April 2005	19	Western Cape	Cape Milner, Cape Town
June 2005	22	Free State and Northern Cape	Galeshewe Library, Kimberley
September 2005	22	Limpopo and North West	The Ranch, Polokwane

Source: Own compilation

5.3 The WEP design and content

This section explains in detail the design and content of the WEP emphasising that the programme provides not only entrepreneurial training to women entrepreneurs in South Africa but also profiling, mentoring, counselling and various types of assistance. These elements distinguish the WEP from any other entrepreneurial programme and focus on these areas that are important to women. The following illustration provides a graphical layout of all the phases and steps that the participants of the WEP go through before and after training (WEP framework). The WEP service providers and partners are also highlighted and a detailed explanation follows.

Figure 5.2: The WEP phases and steps that participants go through

Source: Own compilation

Figure 5.2 provides the framework necessary to explain the design and contents of the WEP. As seen from the above diagram, it consists of nine phases and 16 steps.

5.3.1 Phase 1: Screening

Step 1: Potential attendees complete business screening questionnaire

A business screening questionnaire was developed for the purpose of selecting women with growing businesses or women who have the potential to create growing businesses. Once an applicant has completed the questionnaire it is evaluated and rated. The reason why the emphasis of this screening tool is so much on growth is that growth distinguishes an entrepreneurial business from a small business venture, as already explained in Chapter 2. The main areas that the business screening questionnaire investigates are:

- Whether applicants have registered businesses or are in the process of registering their businesses;
- Whether the business has shown signs of growth;
- Whether they have a well-established customer and supplier base;
- Whether the market or industry that they are in is growing.

The selection criteria also require that women should have at least matric (grade 12) or a viable business opportunity; understand, speak and write English and have good communication skills that enable participants to take part in group activities and discussions.

Step 2: Selecting women entrepreneurs or potential women entrepreneurs

The business screening questionnaire is used to select the top 40 women who obtain the highest ratings. These women entrepreneurs are selected to go through the Profile for WEP process, explained in the next phase.

5.3.2 Phase 2: Profiling

Step 3: Profile for WEP and

Step 4: Women are screened again after profiling

The Profile for WEP has been adapted from the standard profile programme, which is a proven intervention for assessing business initiatives and calculating market readiness. The intention of Insights Learning and Development South Africa (Pty) Ltd, the company providing the profile for WEP to the candidates, is to screen each potential entrant into the WEP by means of a profile to test her readiness and ability to take a business idea to the market, or to examine with the candidate her current business and its needs. The profile for WEP is available to candidates in all major centres nationwide and focuses on the development of the woman, by giving her greater independence through maximising her potential in an entrepreneurial context. According to Finch (2005: 2), the coordinator and facilitator of the profile for WEP process, the profile includes personal personality profiling and an in-depth assessment of her business needs and where necessary it offers her branding solutions. It also offers her access to tools to assist her to grow her business successfully.

In the initial step of the Profile for WEP, the candidate completes a simple questionnaire comprising 25 questions, from which a 33-page document on the candidate is produced, detailing every aspect of her personality and highlighting where her business strengths lie. It enables accurate placement of the candidate in the business context and underscores her potential management style, her preferred communication methods, her selling abilities and areas for personal development and the suggested methods to achieve this.

With this information the candidate is taken through a two-hour one-on-one feedback and coaching session with a professional coach and facilitator. Agreed suggestions and outcomes are documented so that the candidate will have her 33-page psychological profile document and a one-page business viability or expansion feedback document to keep on completion of the profile process.

5.3.3 Phase 3: Selecting

Step 5: Selecting candidates that are ready to go through the WEP (training intervention)

Through the effective, simple and non-threatening coaching session of Insights SA, only candidates who are really ready will be referred to undertake the WEP (training intervention). Those who are not yet ready will have the detailed business feasibility outline, together with a in-depth personal profile – both of which offer the candidate a strong foundation for her own development and to assist her to understand the areas of her business initiative that still need improvement and foundation work. Out of the 40 women in each province who go through the profile for WEP, 20 women are selected to go through the WEP.

5.3.4 Phase 4: WEP (training intervention)

Step 6: Pre-assessment

A pre-assessment is done with the 20 participants who have been selected to do the WEP. This assessment is done before the actual commencement of training to investigate the participants' level of skills and knowledge on various entrepreneurship and management topics. A questionnaire is used to do this assessment so that measurement can be done when the post-assessment takes place. The main purpose of the pre-assessment is to investigate what the participants' expectations are about the WEP and to identify their business and personal goals and objectives.

Step 7: Training intervention

The WEP as a training intervention was designed using various training models, as discussed in Chapter 3. The identification of women entrepreneurs' training needs, as discussed in Chapter 4, as well as looking at the different stages of the business life cycle, were also used to develop the WEP. The business life cycle model and stages were explained in Chapter 2. The material was designed and developed in order to enable women to take the first steps into self-employment. Material used is relevant to women's lives, with case study experience, and guest visits from businesswomen and female business professionals. Table 5.3 highlights the design and content of the WEP and demonstrates the different stages that an entrepreneurial venture goes through and the content that is covered over the six days.

Table 5.3 is presented on the next page.

Table 5.3: The design and content of the WEP (training intervention)

DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5	DAY 6
Welcome and registration Stage 1: Birth What is entrepreneurship? Which characteristics should she posses? Why should she start her own business? Idea generation Idea versus opportunity How to spot the gap in the market Window of opportunity	Stage 2: Survival Guest speaker: ABSA Bank How to obtain financial assistance for your start-up Guest speaker: Successful woman entrepreneur Counselling and Mentoring Using mentors and counsellors Role models Networking opportunities for women	Stage 3: Success Why and how to prepare a feasibility study Feasibility check-list	Stage 3: Success Financial Plan as part of the Business Plan Financial Management Need for funds Applying for finance	Hand-in Business plans Stage 4: Expansion How to grow your business Motivation for growth Managing and mismanagement of growth Different ways to grow (growth options) Stages of growth	Stage 6: Maintenance Intensive marketing of an own business, products and services Target markets Positioning the business and its products and services Customer service
TEA	TEA	TEA	TEA	TEA	TEA
How to start your own business Ten simple rules for a successful start-up Understand the reasons for the start-up	Stage 2 continues... Creativity and innovation How to be more creative Visualisation Mental barriers Creative problem solving	How to compile a business plan Elements of a business plan Presentation of a business plan What do financial	Financial statements - Income statement - Balance sheet - Cash-flow Break-even analysis Cash budget	Stage 4 continues...	The four p's of marketing Product Place Price Promotion

Table 5.3 continued...

DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5	DAY 6
phenomenon Influences on the start-up decision		institutions look for in a business plan			
LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH
Legal aspects (CIPRO – Guest speakers): Registration of a company/business Registration of patents, logos and trademarks Financial matters	New product/business development Presentation of new products or services developed	Practical exercise and assignment	Phase 3 continue... Break-even analysis and practical exercises	Stage 5: Maturity How to maintain the competitive advantage Business failure Turnaround measures Harvesting and exiting the venture	Summary of programme and business plan feedback Guest visits from programme sponsors: PEP Africa Representative ECI AFRICA (SAIBL) Representative
TEA	TEA	TEA	TEA	TEA	TEA
Legal aspects continue... Practical exercise (case studies) and summary of day 1	Practical exercise (case studies) and summary of day 2	Summary of day 3	Practical exercise (case studies)	Practical exercise (case studies)	Final remarks and conclusion

Source: Own compilation

It is necessary to briefly explain the different stages of the WEP's business life cycle and the content that is covered during each stage, and the objectives of WEP, as discussed earlier, that are addressed during each stage.

5.3.4.1 Stage 1: Birth (day 1)

During this stage the participants of the WEP are introduced to entrepreneurship and those women who already own their own businesses are taken through the self-evaluation process of what it takes to become a successful entrepreneur. The next part of stage 1 deals with the start-up requirements as well as introducing the women to a representative from CIPRO, explained later in the chapter, who provides information on how to register companies, close corporations, patents, logos and trademarks. The day is concluded by examining case studies of real-life successful entrepreneurs.

Objectives 1, 3, 4 and 12 are met.

5.3.4.2 Stage 2: Survival (day 2)

A female representative from ABSA Bank is invited as a guest speaker to introduce their products and services to the women entrepreneurs and to specify what financial institutions look for in a business plan. The next guest speaker is an established successful woman entrepreneur in the region where the WEP is taking place. She shares her life and success story with the women and serves as a role model who also introduces them to several networking opportunities and organisations in the area. Research in cognitive psychology has demonstrated that learning through observation is one of the most important influences on individuals' perception of their own capabilities. In particular, learning from role models from backgrounds similar to one's own is likely to encourage a positive perception of one's ability to take on new challenges. Arenius *et al.* (2005: 24) agree; they found that there is a strong positive and significant correlation between knowing another entrepreneur and a woman's involvement with starting a new business. This indicates that the existence of role models is a crucial factor in the decision to start a new venture. Stage 2 of the WEP offers many opportunities to the women entrepreneurs to network with the various guest speakers and other participants. Carter (2000: 329) stresses that gender differences in the way networks are created and used have been cited as having an

influence on certain aspects such as enabling improved access to finance and the development of strong relationships with various stakeholders.

The next part of stage 2 introduces the participants to creativity and innovation and provides an enjoyable learning experience. The participants are taught how to be more creative and innovative in their own businesses, how to use creative problem-solving techniques, how to apply methods to change their ideas into feasible opportunities and how to practise memory techniques to remember their customers' names and details. The day is concluded with a break-away session where the women develop their own new products and/or services and present these new products or services in groups in the form of an advertisement.

Objectives 7, 8, 9 and 11 are met.

5.3.4.3 Stage 3: Success (day 3 and 4)

During this stage the essence of the WEP is examined, as the feasibility study and the business plan compilation are studied. The delegates are provided with the information to prepare their own feasibility study in the form of ten steps. These ten steps briefly include: a summary of the business, a list of their goals and objectives for the business, defining their target market and business environment, investigating their infrastructure, preparing a SWOT-analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) of the business, describing their marketing mix, looking at a pre-starting checklist and lastly turning all of their goals into a sustainable business. The feasibility study is a study that is done before the actual business plan is prepared in order to test whether the business, products or services are feasible.

The business plan forms an integral part of this training programme and is important not only for gaining financial assistance but in particular for the entrepreneur, herself, as well as employees, customers, suppliers and other stakeholders. Pretorius (2001: 85) states that the reason why the business plan is so important is that the business plan is the integration of all the elements required to determine the future business success, although it is no guarantee for success during the implementation of the plan. The business plan elements are then examined and delegates are given the opportunity to prepare certain elements for their businesses together with the lecturer/facilitator.

The elements of the business plan that are included in the WEP have already been discussed in Chapter 2, Table 2.5. The delegates are also introduced to the main reasons why business plans fail in obtaining funding, and are given the opportunity to review already drawn-up business plans. The next day of this stage deals with the financial plan as a part of the business plan. Delegates are introduced to the term break-even and are taught how to determine the break-even analysis for their own businesses. They are also shown how to compile and understand financial statements and how to formulate budgets and do cash-flow planning.

Objectives 4,6 and 10 are met.

A ten-day break takes place between stages 3 and 4 and days 4 and 5 to give delegates the opportunity to prepare their business plans. They must hand these business plans in when they return to the WEP on day 5.

5.3.4.4 Stage 4: Expansion (day 5)

Delegates are introduced to growth as an objective for their ventures and are shown how to develop their own growth strategies. They look at how growth can be a motivational tool in a business and also identify in which stage of the business life cycle their businesses lie. The participants are given the opportunity to develop growth strategies for their businesses in groups in which they can take part and assist one another.

Objectives 2 and 5 are met.

5.3.4.5 Stage 5: Maturity (day 5)

During this stage delegates are introduced to the signs of failure and trouble in a venture and they get the opportunity to discuss the most significant problems in their businesses in small groups with similar businesses or industries. It is found to be a very successful strategy, as the women network and assist one another at the same time. They again focus on their sustainable competitive advantage and revise it to ensure that their businesses stay out of the decline stage. The day is concluded with a break-away session where groups are formed and case studies are examined.

Objectives 9, 11 and 13 are met.

5.3.4.6 Stage 6: Maintenance (day 6)

The WEP is concluded in the final stage on the final day with marketing. The reason why marketing is discussed on the last day is that any business must be maintained so that it does not go into the decline stage, and therefore effective marketing is needed. This section also deals with self-marketing and confidence building, as many women do not have the confidence to conduct business activities on their own. Arenius *et al.* (2005: 12) state that a woman's perception of environmental opportunities and confidence in her own capabilities are a powerful predictor of her entrepreneurial behaviour. The WEP is therefore dedicated at this stage to giving the women that additional confidence and morale boost to make them successful entrepreneurs.

The business plans that were prepared by the delegates are given back to them with an evaluation and score card. Suggestions, recommendations and feedback are presented on the plans so that they can revise the plans and implement all the changes suggested. The day and programme is completed with a visit from the two main sponsors of the programme, who introduce other services and assistance that they can offer to the delegates.

Objectives 12 and 14 are met.

A summary of the current strengths and weaknesses of WEP is shown in Table 5.4. It illustrates the most significant shortcomings and positive aspects to date.

Table 5.4: Current strengths and weaknesses of the WEP

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Good networking between the women on the programme	Course material must be made more user friendly
Generally the business plans have improved since the WEP started in 2002	Many participants do not hand in business plans when they must be submitted
The participants are very eager to learn and take in and are well disciplined during training sessions	Some women do not attend all six days of the programme due to various reasons such as work related circumstances and illness

Table 5.4 continued[University of Pretoria etd – Botha, M \(2006\)](#)

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
The creativity session on day 2 is very enjoyable because the participants create new products/services and have to act in an advertisement	Some women do not finish the WEP due to other responsibilities
The catering and venue facilities of previous courses were rated very good	Process of re-submitting business plans to PEP Africa and then ABSA Bank takes extremely long and delegates often have to wait as long as six months for feedback from this financial institution
All outcomes in terms of training are achieved	The duration of the WEP is too short. Participants request more time on the financial section
The participants are generally happy with the two facilitators lecturing on WEP	
They enjoy and learn a lot from the visits from CIPRO, the Business Women's Association and ABSA Bank	

Source: Own compilation

5.3.5 Phase 4: WEP (training intervention) continues

Step 8: Outcome of WEP (Business plans)

As seen from the above discussion on the content of the WEP, the main outcome is for every delegate to prepare her own business plan. It is then submitted to the facilitator of the WEP, whereafter it is evaluated and scored.

Step 9: Post-assessment

The post-assessment is done after the final day of the WEP in order to measure the level of knowledge and skills transfer that took place throughout the WEP. The delegates are presented with a questionnaire with various concepts that they need to explain, as well as stating their general satisfaction with WEP and what they have learned throughout the programme.

5.3.6 Phase 5: Business plans

Step 10: Business plan evaluation, feedback and recommendations

The facilitator evaluates the business plans by making use of an evaluation sheet that lists all the elements of the business plan. Feedback, suggestions and recommendations are made on the plans and then given back to delegates to include those recommendations when they revise their plans.

Step 11: Participants revise and re-submit business plans

The participants have two weeks to modify their plans by implementing all of the changes and recommendations made by the facilitator. After that period they must re-submit their plans to PEP Africa, explained later in the chapter, to get them ready for the next adjudication process.

A summary of the current strengths and weaknesses of the business plans submitted by all the WEP participants to date are shown in Table 5.5 below.

Table 5.5: Current strengths and weaknesses of business plans submitted

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
The executive summary is generally very well prepared and evident in each plan that was submitted	Many participants still struggle with the financial side of the business plan but seem to understand it when the lecturer explains it during the programme
The participants generally know their industries and markets very well and these are well explained in the plan	Many participants have trouble with the time given to prepare the business plan

Table 5.5 continued[University of Pretoria etd – Botha, M \(2006\)](#)

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
After the WEP they are all aware of how many products/services they have to sell per month to break even	The market research section is not well prepared in the plan, due to participants not having time to do it or never having done it before they started their businesses
Marketing plan is well defined in the plan; they know how to advertise and reach customers after the preparation of the business plan	Generally all the participants have never known when their businesses reach the break-even point
The management team is well defined with attached CVs	The design and developmental plan and the operational plan are a general problem for participants as this is the first time that they have come into contact with the concepts
	The financial plan still seem to be a problem, but not as much as before the business plan preparation
	Participants request unrealistic financial assistance amounts from the Bank and have no or limited securities and own contributions

Source: Own compilation

5.3.7 Phase 6: Mentors and counsellors

Step 12: Business mentors and counsellors are assigned to the participants to assist further with the business plans

Business mentors and counsellors are assigned to the participants of WEP to assist them further with their business plans as well as other areas of concern. This has been very effective due to the one-on-one sessions where each participant can discuss her own business problems and get specific assistance on targeted problem

areas. These business mentors often visit the delegates before they have to re-submit their business plans, which makes their help even more effective. According to Arenius *et al.* (2005: 36), mentoring and network support are crucial in boosting women's attitudes to leadership and new venture creation and growth.

5.3.8 Phase 7: Access to finance

Step 13: Business Plans presented to ABSA Bank

The participants are given the opportunity to present their business plans to ABSA Bank to adjudicate and provide feedback from a financial institution's perspective.

Step 14: Successful applicants are granted access to finance

The process of re-submitting the business plans in order for them to be presented to ABSA Bank can take a very long time which contributes to the fact that participants must wait very long to get feedback. It is, however, one of the outcomes of the WEP, that if a business plan is successful, the applicant should receive access to finance.

5.3.9 Phase 8: Final assessment

Step 15: Final assessment six months after participants completed the WEP

The facilitator of the WEP does the final assessment, whereby a questionnaire is distributed to the participants six months after the completion of the programme. The purpose of this final questionnaire is to identify what the delegates have implemented in their businesses based on the skills and knowledge gained from the WEP. The performance of the delegates' businesses are also examined to see whether the WEP had an effect on the success of the business.

5.3.10 Phase 9: Follow-up

Step 16: Continuous mentoring and counselling

The participants of the WEP are monitored on a continuous base and are assigned business mentors for that purpose. Many participants form their own networking

organisations after the WEP and come together on a regular basis to assist and support one another.

5.4 WEP sponsors and partners

Since the beginning of WEP in 2002 many organisations and companies have been involved in the implementation of the WEP. ABSA Bank, APDF (as from 1 July 2005 they are known as PEP Africa of the International Finance Corporation), Ebony Consulting International (hereafter referred to as ECI Africa, SAIBL), DTI and SAWEN (hereafter called the sponsors and partners) joined forces with Insights SA, the University of Pretoria and BSSA to deliver the WEP to growth-orientated women-owned enterprises in South Africa. The main sponsors and partners are briefly discussed below and summarised in Table 5.6. PEP Africa of the IFC and ECI Africa (SAIBL), the two main sponsors, contribute towards two-thirds of the total cost of the WEP and one-third is payable by the delegates themselves. The reason why participants had to pay one-third of the total cost was to ensure that they showed up for the programme; it is also believed that participants put in more effort when they use their own money to pay for the training. The phases that the participants of WEP go through, as seen from the above discussion, are also listed next to the specific partner who is responsible for each phase (information was provided by Dlamini and Motsepe, 2004: 1-20).

5.4.1 The Africa Project Development Facility (APDF) now known as Private Enterprise Partnership for Africa (PEP Africa) – Phases 1 and 5

The Africa Project Development Facility (APDF) is an International Finance Corporation administered multilateral donor-funded agency working with African entrepreneurs to develop viable and competitive businesses in sub-Saharan Africa. It was established in 1986, to bridge the gap in the difficulties experienced by African entrepreneurs in accessing external finance. The APDF is best known for assisting growth-orientated entrepreneurs to verify the feasibility of business concepts and produce viable business and financing proposals. In addition to this the APDF has assisted SMMEs in becoming more profitable by structuring affordable business solution packages, and skills development programmes. For the APDF the WEP

provides an effective avenue to pursue its mission with women entrepreneurs in particular. In its co-ordinating role the APDF undertakes to do the following:

- Oversee the recruitment of the WEP participants and the RSVP process;
- Customer liaison;
- Organise quarterly steering committee meetings and reports;
- Contracting, payment and management of services providers on behalf of the other partners;
- Accounting and billing according to cost-sharing arrangements; and
- Oversee award ceremonies and public relations campaign.

5.4.2 ECI Africa (South African and International Business Linkages, SAIBL)

ECI Africa (SAIBL) is an international economic development consultancy and capacity-building organisation. Founded in 1994 and set up to foster business linkages between South African and American companies, SAIBL has been able to ensure millions of rand's worth of transactions between large and small businesses over the years. The WEP provides SAIBL with the opportunity to access women-owned businesses as well. The current portfolio has very few women-owned businesses on the books. Recently SAIBL started a women section; it expects to grow its women portfolio of clients through the WEP.

5.4.3 ABSA Bank – Phase 7

ABSA is South Africa's leading bank in small business loans (Dlamini and Motsepe, 2004: 18). ABSA Bank is interested in raising its woman empowerment profile, and informing the public of its involvement in South African Women Entrepreneurs Network (SAWEN). ABSA Bank has already set aside funding for SAWEN and intends to channel some of this funding into WEP; as a means of augmenting its Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) portfolio with women-owned enterprises. ABSA expects to find a significant number of viable women-owned businesses to lend to through the WEP.

5.4.4 Insights learning and development South Africa (Pty) Ltd – Phases 2 and 3

Insights South Africa is a training and organisational development company that aims to contribute to the transformation of Africa by releasing the potential in individuals, so that they can achieve personal, team and organisational success.

The company delivers world-class solutions through training, facilitation, accreditation, coaching and consulting services. According to Finch (2005: 2) these activities are supported by providing Discovery Profiles and a wide range of materials. The core offering is the Insights *Discovery* personality profiling system, which provides individuals with a powerful Jung-based report for increasing self-understanding. This also serves as the platform for a wide range of applications from leadership development, team effectiveness and conflict resolution to sales training, change management and business strategy.

Based in Cape Town, South Africa, the company is a joint venture with Insights Learning and Development UK, which is the owner and originator of the Insights Discovery system. Insights' global network extends to 43 countries around the world and Discovery has been translated into 22 languages. This means that support can be offered globally if required and it enjoys a proven track record with some of the most effective and productive organisations worldwide.

5.4.5 Companies and Intellectual Property Registration Office (CIPRO)

CIPRO contributes to WEP through offering presentations to WEP participants on company registrations, intellectual property, patents and other services they offer to enterprises. A CIPRO representative attends each WEP session to make these presentations.

5.4.6 Business Skills South Africa (BSSA) – Phases 6 and 9

BSSA provides the business coaches who assist the WEP participants with business development advice during and after the training. A one-day peer group review session is held with each group, as well as one-on-one sessions.

The participants are able to access one-on-one professional business coaching hours on a “buy one, get one free” basis through WEP, up to the limit of four free hours in between or after the classroom training sessions. The business coaching phase includes a peer review session for the whole group on their revised business plans after they have been evaluated by UP. Only those business plans passed by UP are considered for the next phase of adjudication.

5.4.7 Department of Trade and Industry Woman Empowerment and Gender Unit

The DTI is the South African government’s economic and industry growth driver. The gender unit of the DTI pays special attention to the economic empowerment of women. SAWEN is but one of the many woman empowerment initiatives facilitated by this unit. The unit was established in response to the fact that women entrepreneurs continue to face an array of obstacles and barriers in their business operations. The WEP offers the DTI a chance to better penetrate the market with its many empowerment products and incentives. DTI product uptake reviews show that women entrepreneurs have very little access to its suite of enterprise development services and incentive schemes. The WEP offer the DTI a research sample to find out why access is such a problem for many women.

5.4.7.1 SAWEN

Lindiwe Hendricks, the then Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry, formed the South African Women Entrepreneurs Network (SAWEN) in 2002. Through SAWEN, women entrepreneurs can belong to an identifiable organisation that could serve as an organised link between government, corporate business and organisations including donors.

SAWEN was formed to cater for problems such as the:

- Lack of a coherent and systematic approach in dealing with women's development;
- Absence of a vehicle to ensure that skills, expertise and knowledge is shared and further capacity built to expand their businesses;
- Absence of a forum for networking and doing business with each other;
- Fragmented approach in identifying issues affecting them and engaging government and other institutions to influence policy or decisions affecting their businesses; and
- Lack of a common effective strategy of accountability lines to women in general as a result of a national organisation.

SAWEN is a national networking body which mobilises business resources and gives women entrepreneurs who operate in South Africa a voice on the issues of economic participation and development. As its contribution, ABSA Bank is sponsoring the SAWEN members to attend the WEP. SAWEN has over 3 000 member businesses and is represented in every province through a provincial committee. The SAWEN provincial structures will be asked to tell their members about the WEP and facilitate the registration process. The network organisations seek to increase SAWEN's benefit to members and its membership base by participating in the WEP.

5.4.8 Public relations for the WEP

A public relations expert has been contracted by PEP Africa on behalf of all the partners to assist with media exposure for the WEP that will ensure maximum outreach in all provinces. Various interviews were conducted and published with the following: City Press Newspaper, Sowetan Newspaper, Metro FM Radio, P4 Radio, Kaya FM Radio, Enterprise Zone, Motswako and Small Business Television Programme (Vuk'uzenzele) broadcast on SABC 1.

The mentioned WEP sponsors and their roles are summarised in Table 5.6 on the next page.

Table 5.6: The WEP sponsors and their roles

Partner	Roles
ABSA	Business plans adjudication and possibility of access to finance
PEP Africa (APDF)	Project co-ordination, master coaching and PR management
SAIBL	Market linkages
DTI Gender Unit	Business incentives, registrations and marketing
SAWEN	Business networking

Source: Dlamini and Motsepe (2004: 19)

5.5 Measuring the WEP against the improved entrepreneurship training model

The improved entrepreneurship training model was discussed and presented in Chapter 3, where the statement was made that it should form the foundation of the WEP. The design and content of the WEP, as presented in Table 5.3, will now be measured against this model in Table 5.7.

$$E \text{ for } E/P = f[aF \times bM (cE/S \times dB/S) \times (eA + fB/P)]$$

Where:

- E for E/P = Education for improved Entrepreneurial Performance
- F = Facilitators ability, skills, motivation and experience
- M = Motivation
- E/S = Entrepreneurial Skills
- B/S = Business Skills
- A = Approaches of learning used by facilitator(s)
- B/P = Business Plan utilisation
- a to f = Constants

Table 5.7: The improved entrepreneurship training model measured against the content of the WEP

Entrepreneurial Performance (E/P)	Performance motivation (M)	Entrepreneurial Skills (E/S) and entrepreneurial success themes	Business Skills (B/S)	Facilitator and programme context (F)	Approaches to learning (A)	Business Plan utilisation (B/P)
Establishment of own business (Stage 1 – day 1 and outcome after WEP – those women who are not yet business owners)	Motivation (Stage 2 – day 2)	Risk propensity (Stage 1 – day 1 and stage 5 – day 5)	General management skills (Stage 1 – day 1)	Previous experience of facilitator and participants (All stages by means of practical examples)	Involvement of participant (Last session of all stages and all days – case studies and practical presentations)	Elements (Stage 3 – day 3 and day 4)
Growth in net value of business (Stage 4 – day 5 and outcome after WEP)	Role models (Stage 2 – day 2)	Creativity and Innovation (Stage 2 – day 2)	Marketing skills (Stage 3 – day 3 and stage 6 – day 6)	Outcomes of the programme (Business plans after WEP)	Learning approaches used (All stages, practical application of what participants learned)	Preparation (Between stage 3 and 4 – 10 day break)
Recruitment of employees (Stage 3 – day 3 and stage 6 – day 6 as well as after WEP)	Mentorship (BSSA after WEP)	Opportunity identification (Stage 1 – day 1 and stage 2 – day 2)	Legal skills (Stage 1 – day 1)	Needs analysis of participants (Done before WEP – Chapter 4)		Presentation (After stage 3 – day 4 and again after WEP)
Increasing productivity levels (Outcome after WEP)		Role models (During all stages and after WEP)	Operational skills (Stage 1 – day 1 and stage 3 – day 3)			Evaluation (After stage 3 – day 4 and again after WEP)
Increasing profitability (Outcome after WEP)		Networking (Stage 2 – day 2 as well as during and after WEP)	Human resource management skills (Stage 1 – day 1 and stage 3 – day 3)			
		Leadership (Stage 1 – day 1 and stage 5 day 5)	Communication skills (During all stages)			
		Motivation (During all stages and after WEP)	Financial management (Stage 3 – day 4)			
		Attitude of participant (During all stages and after WEP)	Cash flow management (Stage 3 – day 4)			
		Social skills (Stage 6 – day 6 as well as earlier stages)				
		Start-up skills (Stage 1 – day 1)				

Source: Own compilation as adapted from Antonites (2000: 21)

The most important observations evident from Table 5.7 can be summarised as follows:

- All the concepts of the improved training model are covered before, during the various stages or after the WEP.
- All of the concepts under entrepreneurial performance (E/P) are outcomes that are achieved after the WEP.
- Role models and motivation, as two concepts under performance motivation (M); differ from these two concepts mentioned under entrepreneurial skills (E/S) as the WEP covers the latter as part of learning and the former as an outcome of increased motivation and use of role models after WEP.
- All of the concepts under business skills (B/S) form part of the business plan stage in WEP.
- WEP is so designed that training and learning take place as discussed in Chapter 2, and evaluation of the latter is evident when the participants report back to the facilitator after a practical break-away session.

5.6 Determining and measuring the effectiveness of WEP

To measure the effectiveness of WEP the focus should be on measuring the particular outcomes of WEP. It is therefore necessary to review the objectives of WEP and to measure whether these objectives have been achieved. This will be presented in Chapter 7, together with all the other findings, as well as in Chapter 8 where a conclusion and recommendations regarding WEP will be discussed. The next chapter provides certain levels and key performance measures to determine and assess the effectiveness of the WEP.

5.7 Conclusion

The past 25 years have witnessed an enormous growth in the number of entrepreneurship courses at different educational levels all over the world. This chapter introduces WEP, which can be seen as an experimental intervention that served as a platform for future development and improvement. The major aim of WEP is to formulate ways and means for the kind of training which will equip

participants to start and grow their own businesses – whether they are survival, micro or small. The use of the business plan at all levels is crucial. This chapter addresses topics such as course content, objectives and outcomes and intended results of the WEP. There is a need for much more research on methodologies for measuring entrepreneurship training programme effectiveness for an intervention such as the WEP, which will be addressed in Chapter 6 and 7 of this study.

The main sponsors of the WEP are considering a third phase for the programme in the form of Train-the-Trainer programmes in 2006. This is mainly so that more women entrepreneurs can receive the training in South Africa and even in Africa and abroad. The need to provide WEP to disabled women has also come to light, which will also require further attention and development. The next chapter describes the research methodology and how the effectiveness of the WEP is going to be measured.